Politics dominated the headlines in the early part of the month in the lead-up to and immediate aftermath of the snap election, which saw the formation of the NA/UP coalition and a swath of political newcomers winning seats in Parliament. The latter half of the month switched to the looming coronavirus COVID-19 pandemic, whose scale and spread were only tentatively coming into focus.

--The first Managing Director of St. Maarten Development Fund (SMDF), Keith Fraca, left the organisation after serving seven years at its helm. He was succeeded by Makricia Brooks, who became the country's youngest Managing Director in the collective sector of entities and companies.

--Former Member of Parliament (MP) Silvio Matser and his now defunct company Energizer N.V. were irrevocably convicted of tax evasion by the High Court of the Netherlands on January 7. For these crimes, Matser was sentenced by the Joint Court of Justice to 22 months, 18 of which were suspended, in January 2017. He also had to pay a fine of NAF. 150,000 or spend one year in prison in case of non-compliance. Energizer was fined almost NAF 3.5 million.

--National Alliance (NA) won the most seats in the January 9 snap election, grabbing six out of 15. It was followed by United People's (UP) party with four seats, United St. Maarten Party (US Party) with two, newcomer Party for Progress (PFP) with two, and United Democrats (UD) with one. St. Maarten Christian Party (SMCP) and People's Progressive Alliance (PPA) failed to attain seats. NA's Egbert Doran was the biggest vote-getter, with 863 personal votes. The election saw six new MPs win seats: PFP's Melissa Gumbs and Raeyhon Peterson, US Party's Claudius "Toontje" Buncamper and Akeem Arrindell, and UP's Gisira Heyliger-Marten and Omar Ottley. The voter turnout was 59 per cent, which continued the steady decline since the 2014 election.

--Fed-up teachers of Dr. Martin Luther King Primary School held a walkout on January 15, refusing to continue to work in their unsafe classrooms. Many of the school's classrooms are faced with mould infestations, leaking roofs and lack of electricity, amongst other issues.

--Some NAf 1.9 million was taken from government's treasury to pay about 250 justice workers for part of their long-standing back pay.

--The draft 2020 budget, which was submitted to the Committee for Financial Supervision CFT on January 22, stood at NAf. 486 million, a tad higher than the 2019 budget of some NAf. 478.8 million.

--Two men were arrested on January 23 in connection with no fewer than four contract killings between 2018 and 2020. The Arrest Team apprehended Shaville Parris in the vicinity of the Cole Bay Hill roundabout while the other man, R.J.K.R., was arrested in Marigot by the Gendarmes.

--Mental Health Foundation (MHF) held its New Year's reception on January 25 and introduced three new psychiatrists: Dr. Ilse Kelbrick, Dr. Kitty Pelswijk and Dr. Hendrick Nijdam.

--Port St. Maarten started working closely with Florida Caribbean Cruise Association (FCCA) and its cruise lines about health and safety protocols in response to the outbreak of the then-novel coronavirus COVID-19. Princess Juliana International Airport (PJIA) also started rolling out its pandemic plan.

--MP Frans Richard- son was sentenced to 36 months for corruption at Port St. Maarten. He was also banned from membership in elected bodies for five years. Former chief executive officer (CEO) of St. Maarten Port Authority Mark Mingo and local businessman O’Neal Arrindell were also both found guilty in this case and sentenced to 26 months and 66 months, respectively.

--A shooting in Cole Bay on January 29 left one dead and another wounded. This was the first killing on the Dutch side in 2020.
Coronavirus fears were in full swing by the time February rolled around. First, with supply chain concerns as factories in China decreased production as the initial outbreak crippled its economy, and later as cruise ships became the focal point of the proliferating pandemic. Meanwhile, the newly elected Parliament took their seats and Prime Minister Silveria Jacobs’ Cabinet picks were undergoing screening. By the end of the month, the first two coronavirus COVID-19 cases on the island were discovered, and Jacobs responded by activating the Emergency Operations Center (EOC). This month was also the first time in 2020 that government began negotiating with the Netherlands for liquidity support, a situation which carried through the rest of the year as the local tourism-based economy soon collapsed following global travel restrictions.

--Cruise vessel AIDAprima docked in St. Maarten on February 4 after being turned away by three other Caribbean destinations. Health Minister Pamela Gordon-Carty and Prime Minister Silveria Jacobs said during a hastily-called, urgent national address, that the vessel posed no coronavirus threat to the country.

--St. Maarten and the Dutch Government reached an agreement for the first tranche of liquidity support on February 14. St. Maarten had to meet two preconditions before the funds were released. The first was that the 2020 budget should include enough resources for justice, police and detention. The second was a cut of politicians’ salaries.

--After serving for more than 37 years, Angela Richards-Huggins bade farewell to the Foundation of Catholic Education St. Maarten SKOS and Sundial School.

--Three lawyers sent a letter to Justice Minister Egbert Doran on February 17 demanding the transfer of 37 detainees to safer prisons in Bonaire or the Netherlands within five days. The detainees signed a petition to this effect and the lawyers threatened legal action if the minister failed to comply.

--St. Maarten Housing Development Foundation (SMHDF) requested US $45 million from the World Bank administered Trust Fund money to make repairs to the foundation’s 773 existing rental units and to build an additional 1,000 homes.

--A young man, Trishan Ramphal, was shot and killed in a vehicle in Middle Region around 2:30am on Thursday, February 20. This was the second murder of the year.

--St. Maarten Laboratory Services (SLS) received accreditation for renowned, internationally recognised standards from American Association for Laboratory Accreditation A2LA.

--Ri¢ Productions pulled out of Carnival 2020 because of difficulty in sourcing materials from China due to the coronavirus outbreak, which impacted the delivery of raw materials to make the company’s Carnival costumes.

--COVID-19 affected the delivery of the 2020 number plates, which were sourced in China. The original contractor won the bid pulled out of the project.

--Cruise ship Costa Favolosa docked a day early in St. Maarten after being denied entry in Tortola amid coronavirus fears. The ship was held at anchor in Great Bay on February 26 while local health authorities carried out safety protocols, causing a stir on social media.
Prime Minister Silveria Jacobs, at a press conference convened Sunday, March 1, activated the Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) in connection with two confirmed cases of COVID-19 in French St. Martin. The government of St. Maarten developed an economic stimulus plan to deal with the potential economic fallout from coronavirus COVID-19. Governor Eugene Holiday urged the newly sworn-in government to take up their roles with a united sense of urgency.

--The number of motorists who have paid their motor vehicle (road) tax for the year is significantly lower compared to the corresponding period last year. A total of 9,565 motorists paid their motor vehicle tax on Tuesday, March 3, almost half of the 17,843, who paid the tax around the same period last year.

--Many supermarkets, pharmacies and other establishments have either run out of stock, or are running low, on hand-sanitisers, face masks, gloves, rubbing alcohol and other products since the two cases of COVID-19 were confirmed in French St. Martin.

--Government requested that the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs allow St. Maarten to restrict incom- ing travellers from countries affected by the novel coronavirus COVID-19, said Prime Minister Silveria Jacobs at an EOC press conference.

--Prime Minister and Chair of the EOC Silveria Jacobs, made the decision to postpone Carnival 2020 until further notice in response to the spreading of COVID-19.

--Governor Eugene Holiday for military assistance for St. Maarten to restrict incom ing travellers from countries affected by the novel coronavirus COVID-19, said Prime Minister Silveria Jacobs at an EOC press conference.

As more businesses enforced social distancing within their establishments, the lines outside some businesses were getting longer. This was the scene outside Windward Islands Bank’s (WIB’s) Philipsburg branch on March 26.

--PM Silveria Jacobs told Members of Parliament (MPs) that the potential economic impact of the virus is expected to be “even more devastating to our economy than in the aftermath of hurricanes Irma and Maria in 2017.”

--A local resident who recently travelled to the United Kingdom (UK) via Miami, registered as the country’s first COVID-19 case.

--Schools and businesses providing non-essential services across St. Maarten close for two weeks from Wednesday, March 18, until April 1. The move comes as the country recorded its first confirmed case of the COVID-19.

--A sixteen year old boy severely injured in a fight that took place near Milton Peters College was later flown to Curacao for further medical treatment.

--Finance Minister Ar-dwell Irion and St. Maarten Bankers Association President Derek Downes urged the populace to limit their spending of the United States (US) dollar and to spend more of the country’s national currency – guilders.

--Around 222 tourists primarily from the US, Canada and Europe are currently at hotels, resorts and time-share properties in St. Maarten, trying to return to their respective home- lands amidst the COVID-19 pandemic and travel restrictions gripping a number of countries.

--A student who returned to St. Maarten is the second confirmed COVID-19 case in the country. The student went into immediate isolation.

--An official request was sent to Governor Eugene Holiday for military assistance for St. Maarten in advance of a COVID-19 outbreak in the country.

--On March 18 and March 22, 66 SZV patients who were either discharged, had to undergo elective operations, or had follow-up consultations, returned home. A cement truck doing work at the Cul de Sac cemetery had some sort of failure and rolled, uncontrolled down the hill on Thursday, resulting in the desecration of several graves.

Minister of Education, Culture, Youth and Sport (ECYS) Rodolphe Samuel; Minister of Public Health, Social Development and Labor VSA Richard Pandetiek; Minister of Tourism, Economic Affairs, Transport and Telecommunication (TEATT) Ludmila de Weever; Minister Plenipotentiary Rene Violier; and Governor Eugene Holiday (at podium).

Semana Dominicana Foundation hosted its annual Dominican Republic Independence Day “Dominican Week Parade” in celebration of the 176th anniversary on Sunday, March 1.

Wilfred Hazel celebrated his 100th birthday in a grand celebration held on March 8, at the Emilio Wilson Estate with family, friends and special guest Governor Eugene Holiday and his wife.

--A male resident, who returned to the country from New York City, has been confirmed as the third COVID-19 case for Dutch St. Maarten.

--St. Maarten submitted a request to the Netherlands for a military vessel that can be used as a floating hospital.

--The Police Force of St. Maarten coordinated controls together with their French St. Martin counterparts to enforce the restricted movement, implemented as a preventative measure against the spread of COVID-19.

--TelEm Group said new patterns of work and general measures in the population to help stop the spread of COVID-19 are leading to a surge in demand for Internet service.

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SMMC increased its capacity with the setup of a pavilion at the Royal Ilidge Sports Complex, to be used as additional space for isolation units of COVID-19 confirmed and suspected patients in need of medium and temporary care. The three week extension of the state-of-emergency for St. Maarten went into effect on Sunday, April 19 and remained in effect until Sunday, May 10. The Central Bank of Curaçao and St. Maarten (CBCS) sounded the alarm and issued a warning to the public about fraudulent offers, pyramid schemes and other COVID-19 related scams.

--Princess Juliana International Airport operating company PJIAE officials told Members of Parliament that the airport is shutting down to drastically slash expenses.

--The virtual public meeting on the airport’s reconstruction, finances and chief financial officer (CFO) ended prematurely when Ministers of Parliament (MPs) Sarah Wescott-Williams of United Democrats (UD), and Melissa Gumbs and Raeyhon Peterson of Party for Progress (PFP) logged out of the digital platform used to host the meeting, resulting in lack of quorum.

--Minister of Education Rolando Brison of Party for Progress announced his decision to cancel final year examinations, in a letter to school boards on April 3.

--The Dutch Caribbean Coast Guard, with the assistance of the Dutch military, began intensifying patrols around St. Maarten, St. Eustatius and Saba.

--A motorcycle rider was injured in an accident after he refused to stop when directed to do so by police officers. He had attempted to flee when officers signalled him to stop, lost control of the vehicle, and seriously injured his leg.

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--Ten of the 13 persons who passed away from COVID-19 were from the immigrant community, some of them undocumented with pre-existing conditions, who reported their illness late, disclosed Prime Minister Jacobs.

Many supermarkets were faced with crowds of anxious shoppers, some of whom began queuing up from as early as 7:00 am, to be amongst the first in line to get their groceries.

While many St. Maarten residents were mandated by law to stay at home and indoors due to the threat of COVID-19, a significant number of essential workers had to battle the outside world. One such person was this security guard who was holding down the fort in Maho, wearing a face mask as she kept a watchful eye on her surroundings.

Marines and military vehicles being offloaded after Royal Dutch Navy ship “Zr. Ms. Karel Doorman”, the largest ship in the Dutch Navy’s fleet, made her way into Great Bay and berthed at Port St. Maarten.

Students of the Dutch Caribbean Coast Guard training course BOK volunteered in their home islands to help those in need during the COVID-19 crisis.

The border at Oyster Pond was one of the lesser-used crossings blocked due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The action to block the crossing at Oyster Pond and the one in the Lowlands was to lessen movement between the Dutch and French sides of the island as a means of halting community spread of the virus.

The border at Oyster Pond was one of the lesser-used crossings blocked due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Some one passed by the statue of William Henry Bell, Jr. and realized that he was inadequately protected from the coronavirus COVID-19 as he sat in his chair overlooking Cole Bay and Simpson Bay, and placed a mask over his face to help mitigate the spread of the dreaded disease on the island.

Finance Minister Ardwell Irion painted a grim picture facing the country as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and the “new reality”, while presenting the draft 2020 budget to MPs.

Authorities said that six persons, including one front line worker, was arrested for organizing and participating in the two daring and illicit Fouvert jump-ups that occurred in Dutch Quarter and Fort Willem early Monday morning.

--MPs approved a motion to lower their salaries and those of ministers by five per cent, and voted down another to lower the salaries of these public officials by 15 per cent.

--A lengthy debate amongst all faction leaders.

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The state of Emergency under which the country had been placed in an effort to stem the spread of COVID-19 was extended by one additional week from April 10 to 17, Prime Minister Silveria Jacobs announced. The country was first placed under a state of emergency on April 5, and went on a 24-hour lockdown for two weeks. This was extended by three weeks, which went into effect on Sunday, April 19, and ended on Sunday, May 10. The additional one week extension went into effect as of May 10 and continued until Sunday, May 17.

The Dutch government approved the first tranche of NAf. 20.5 million to assist St. Maarten with the implementation of its St. Maarten Stimulus Support Relief Plan (SSRP). The disclosure was made by Prime Minister and Emergency Operations Center (EOC) Chairperson Silveria Jacobs on May 6, during a virtual meeting of the Central Committee of Parliament on the coronavirus COVID-19.

Two persons who issued threats against Jacobs via social media site was arrested and warned.

Justice Minister Anna Richardson administered the oath of office to at least twenty police officers and marines on Monday, May 11, and continued over a few weeks. This included the three weeks, which went into effect on Sunday, April 19, and ended on Sunday, May 10. The additional one week extension went into effect as of May 10 and continued until Sunday, May 17.

The phased reopening of businesses went into effect on Monday, May 11, and continued over a few weeks with more and more businesses receiving permission to reopen their doors after a prolonged COVID-19 shutdown. Businesses were allowed to open for five days, Monday to Friday, from 8:00am to 6:00pm.

Hundreds of union members went out in solidarity to hear from their respective leaders on the measures imposed by government and the position of unions on the matter.

Pointe Blanche Prison inmates went on strike from Monday, May 25, demanding better living conditions at the house of detention. As part of the strike, inmates refused to do any form of labour within the prison, such as washing, cleaning and cooking activities. These tasks had to be done exclusively by prison personnel.

Justice Minister Anna Richardson said on Thursday, May 28, that she was disappointed that inmates and their legal representatives had not acted in concert to form a general strike at the detention facility. The strike started on the same day in which an inmate was severely injured by other inmates wielding an improvised weapon. He was later transferred to SMMC for treatment. This was at least the second alteration this month that led to an inmate being injured.

Labor issues, a prison strike, the phased reopening of businesses following the lockdown and coronavirus COVID-19 were amongst the many matters making news this month.

Justice Minister Anna Richardson administered the oath of office to at least twenty police officers and marines on Friday, May 1.

Table showing the phased reopening of establishments in St. Maarten.
Labour issues at several organisations, including at TelEm Group, Princess Juliana International Airport (PJIA) and St. Maarten Medical Center (SMMC), coupled with good results recorded at some schools, were some of the issues playing out in June.

--In a letter sent to St. Maarten Communications Union (SMCU) on June 1, TelEm Group announced that it will be implementing a 12.5 per cent salary cut for staffers starting July 1. SMCU originally disagreed with the cost-cutting measures, when it discussed the matter with its members the following day on Tuesday, June 2. However, after a short but intense back and forth letter of correspondences, TelEm and SMCU reached an agreement days later, regarding the cost-cutting measures in fulfilment of government’s request for government-owned companies to cut costs to satisfy the conditions for liquidity support from the Dutch government.

--GERE announced that the company would reduce its personnel related costs for 2020 by 12.5 per cent. Chief Executive Officer Kenrick Chittick said that in an effort to minimise financial repercussions for employees, GERE will look at the total personnel costs prior to reducing its employees’ salaries, vacation allowances and bonuses.

--GERE also said that it will resume its disconnection of clients for outstanding bills as of June 30. The company had temporarily halted disconnections and granted a six-month relief in the form of a lower fuel clause to consumers. However, many said they had not seen any relief, but the company maintained that the relief was applied.

--The police closed a portion of Welgelegen Road on June 8, and evacuated the building housing the St. Maarten Archaeological Center SI-MARC while police safely disposed of a live World War II-era artillery projectile that had been found the week prior during construction work along the upper parts of Monte Vista Road in Pointe Blanche. The projectile was discovered approximately 1.5 metres underground during construction work on June 4.

--Justice Minister Anna Richardson said Immigration regulations will be strictly enforced in the coming “weeks and months” and urged unauthorised immigrants to voluntarily leave the country or face deportation.

--Luckily, no one was injured in a drive-by-style shooting on Sister Modesta Road in Simpson Bay on June 14. Police arrested two men on Union Road in Cole Bay shortly after the incident.

--After an uphill battle to mitigate the spread of COVID-19, on June 14, St. Maarten registered zero active cases, as no new cases had been recorded and the last case on record had recovered at the time.

--National Institute for Professional Advancement (NIPA), American University of the Caribbean (AUC) School of Medicine and Chamberlain University virtually signed a Scope of Service (SOS) agreement for the development of a nursing programme at NIPA. Chamberlain University is said to be the largest nursing school in the United States. The SOS would see AUC and Chamberlain University partner with NIPA to develop an Associate’s Degree nursing programme in St. Maarten, and with that solidifying NIPA’s School of Nursing.

--Despite limitations caused by COVID-19, final exam results showed that PKL/PBL students obtained a 75.8 per cent passing rate. TKL students obtained a 100 per cent passing rate, and VWO students recorded a 76 per cent passing rate.

--PJIA workers stormed out of two separate meetings with Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Brian Mingo on June 17, over their displeasure with cuts being proposed by the company. During the first meeting, held with one group of between 60 to 70 workers in the morning hours, a large group of workers walked out of the meeting in which the CEO was outlining the proposed cost cutting measures to be taken. A similar unplanned walkout occurred during a second meeting held in the afternoon with a different group of workers. On both occasions, some workers eventually re-joined the meeting.

--Windward Islands Chamber of Labour Unions members held a peaceful protest march against discriminatory actions against workers and to demand respect for human rights on Monday, June 22. The march, organised by several unions, began at the Windward Islands Federation of Labour (WI-FOL) building, continued on to Front Street, the Courthouse, Clem Labega Square, the government building and ended at the Little League Stadium.

--SMMC Chief Financial Officer Marco Meuleman submitted his notice of resignation on Wednesday, June 24, after reportedly receiving threats to his personal safety. SMMC staff, especially those of the Finance Department, who claimed to have faced intimidation and bullying by their boss, had been calling for Meuleman’s resignation over a six-day period. Windward Islands Health Care Workers Union Association (WHCWUA), joined by other labour unions, protested at the hospital for several days and called for Meuleman’s resignation. The unions continued their rallying and gathered outside SMMC’s Support Center in Madame Estate on the day he resigned.
Despite the coronavirus COVID-19 pandemic, schools reported tremendous pass rates for the academic year 2019-2020. Community service organizations and private enterprises cooperated to provide much-needed food to the unemployed and vulnerable, as well as appreciation for front-line workers. Faced with a second wave of COVID-19, there was no return to lockdown, but society soldiered on indefatigably under the new circumstances. After weeks of battling with Justice Minister Anna Richardson over pay scales and their function book, Justice workers requested her apology or resignation, while crime continued unabated, some violent, with a focus on car theft and supermarket robbery. Students were brought home to St. Maarten on a limited number of flights, while others were repatriated from cruise ships to their country of origin via Princess Juliana International Airport (PJIA).

Two days after airport workers staged a strike, closing runways to all but emergency medical traffic, airport operating company PJIAE management and union AVBO reached an agreement on back-pay and other issues.

Tropical Storm Edouard formed on July 5, becoming the earliest fifth Atlantic tropical storm on record.

Parliament rejected the Caribbean Reform Entity (CRE) proposed by the Dutch government as a condition for Curacao, Aruba and St. Maarten to receive the third tranche of liquidity support. Prime Minister Silveria Jacobs called it a “total usurpation” of the powers of the government.

The National Ordinance increasing old age pension AOV and the pension age to 65 years was approved by Members of Parliament.

After seven years of work between government’s Department of Interior Affairs and Kingdom Relations BAK and the United Nations Development Programme, the National Development Vision 2020-2030: The Nation Building Project was presented to the prime minister and Parliament. Its objective is to transform St. Maarten into a compassionate, strong and decisive country that is economically resilient and able to sustain its own development.

St. Maarten Housing Development Foundation secured over US $3.2 million to renovate 133 duplex homes in Belvedere, using its own resources but reimbursed by the National Recovery Program Bureau in association with the World Bank. It contemplated more permanent repairs than those post-Hurricane Irma based on the “build back better” concept.

With active COVID-19 cases at 36 and a new record of 114 confirmed cases, Minister of Public Health, Social Development and Labor VSA Richard Panneflek said the ministry was finalising a law mandating mask-wearing in public, enforceable with stiff penalties.

University of St. Martin (USM) decided to continue operating mostly online for the first semester of the 2020-2021 academic year, and to limit access to the campus.

Minister of Education, Culture, Youth and Sport (ECYS) Rodolphe Samuel announced schools would reopen on August 10, with teachers and students observing proper safety protocols. Parents were outraged and although the Compulsory Education law mandates that all school-age children attend school, this date was postponed and schools eventually reopened in October.

The online Electronic Health Authorization System (EHAS) was instituted whereby travellers to St. Maarten from all but low-risk countries had to apply to enter, showing proof of a negative RT-polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test taken within 72 hours of arrival.

Despite Princess Juliana International Airport’s (PJIA) strict entry protocols, French St. Martin’s Préfète Déleguée Sylvia Feucher cited the lack of a second PCR test after seven days on the Dutch side as reason to impose border-crossing restrictions, allowing only those with authorisation based on professional or medical reasons to enter the French side.

The movie “And Here Comes the Groom”, a dramatic comedy about a St. Maarten man in search of love, written and directed by Latoya Lake and produced by Island Media Plus (IMP) SXM, was first screened at St. Maarten Megaplex movie theatre on July 31.

St. Maarten calypsonian and musical stalwart Elias “The Mighty Magic” Rampersad passed away at the age of 86. St. Maarten Carnival Development Foundation (SCDF) expressed its deepest condolences to his family and friends. Juggler Amarnarie removes the “Gift World” sign from its now former location next to Pasanggrahan Royal Guesthouse. The fixture on Front Street for 25 years closed down for good faced with no business since the coronavirus pandemic began.

Bennie Feucher cited the lack of a second PCR test after seven days on the Dutch side as reason to impose border-crossing restrictions, allowing only those with authorisation based on professional or medical reasons to enter the French side.

While the country was not yet accepting American tourists, an Air France flight from Paris, France, landed at Princess Juliana International Airport (PJIA) on July 5. A container blocked the road at the Cupecoy border as some motorists contemplated turning around. The Préfecture’s travel restrictions to the French side started on July 31, in response to St. Maarten opening up air travel to passengers originating in the US. While crime continued unabated, some violent, with a focus on car theft and supermarket robbery. Students were brought home to St. Maarten on a limited number of flights, while others were repatriated from cruise ships to their country of origin via Princess Juliana International Airport (PJIA).

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August saw adaptations to the rapid spread of coronavirus COVID-19 – 89 active cases quickly peaked at 267; deaths went from one to 17. Government restricted business opening hours to slow the spread while St. Maarten Medical Center (SMMC) scaled back, then halted non-emergency services and increased teleconsultations. Firefighters, police and employees at the prison, Social and Health Insurances, Postal Services St. Maarten, Social Services, Customs, Immigration, Academy PSVE, White and Yellow Cross Care Foundation and various private entities tested positive for the virus, forcing temporary closures. Schools prepared for blended learning supported by TelEm Internet connectivity upgrades and donations of digital devices to students and teachers by multiple businesses, foundations, community groups and School Board for Secondary Education SVORE. Meanwhile, tourism from the US resumed in a limited way after a four-month hiatus, although tourists complained at first of unclear travel requirements.

– The Receiver’s Office began distributing stickers issued in lieu of the 2020 number plates, citing delays in manufacturing and shipping the plates from China due to COVID-19.

– St. Maarten was among about 200 countries the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention issued a level-three travel warning for. US travellers were advised to avoid non-essential travel to the country due to the high risk of contracting COVID-19.

– Restricted movement between the French and Dutch sides of the island was extended by the Préfecture to September 1, permitting border crossing only for overriding personal or family reasons (death) or health reasons related to emergencies.

– Minister of Public Housing, Spatial Planning, Environment and Infrastructure VROMI and Deputy Prime Minister Egbert Doran took Prime Minister Silveria Jacobs’ responsibilities while she travelled abroad for “family-related matters”.

– Foresee Foundation and NPWorSt. Maarten reps

As the rate of COVID-19 infections grew, St. Maarten Medical Center increased its COVID care capacity with a Medical Container Park with 16 beds, including four Intensive Care Unit (ICU) beds, each with ventilator capability, alongside the existing Mobile Medical Pavilion and the ICU tent, at the southern end of the Raoul Illidge Sports Complex.

Alston Lourens and Jose Verschuren-Sommers reported to Parliament on their survey of nongovernmental organisations (NGOs), showing that NGOs’ greatest obstacles were funding, taxes, and policies for receiving funding. Some 71 per cent of NGOs projected a loss in income due to COVID-19.

– Windward Islands Chamber of Labour Unions and the Anti-Poverty Platform sought a written commitment to respect and defend workers’ rights and human rights via a memorandum of understanding between the unified unions and the Council of Ministers.

– Nightclubs, bars and adult entertainment establishments were ordered to close completely, August 16-31. Restaurants were told to close at 10:00pm. Casinos could remain open, but with restrictions.

– The Court forbade government to prevent Learn Unlimited (LU) Schools Foundation from providing in-school education for its students, as long as no administrative decision had been taken against LU based on which the law could be enforced.

– Bringing wind and moderate rainfall, Tropical Storm Laura passed St. Maarten late in the night of August 21, causing little damage.

– Finance Minister Ardwell Irion reported the coronavirus pandemic had hit government coffers hard, cutting its monthly income of NAf. 40 million in half.

– The closure of nightlife establishments was extended until September 15 considering the country’s high number of active coronavirus cases and limited medical capacity, but restaurants’ closing time went from 10:00pm back to midnight.

Minister of Justice Anna Richardson (right) presented the “Growing Up Safe St. Maarten” magazine, which was also launched online. The first edition addressed protecting children after a disaster, personal stories on domestic abuse, schooling during the COVID-19 crisis, corporal punishment, highlights of child-protection programmes and professional advice.

Exactly 350 passengers arrived at Princess Juliana International Airport (PJIA) from the United States (US) on August 1, the first day the country reopened to that market in four months. A JetBlue aircraft from New York’s John F. Kennedy International Airport was the first to arrive and was welcomed with a water salute.

Environmental Protection in the Caribbean volunteers and staff continued removing protective pipes from red mangroves seedlings planted in Simpson Bay Lagoon after 80 per cent of them were obliterated by Hurricane Irma in 2017 – allowing the new trees to spread their distinctive prop roots and develop further. Bailey Guzik photo.

A memorial of flowers, candles and empty Heineken and Black Label bottles was laid in Belvedere where a 17-year-old boy was shot and killed, after an argument turned violent. His was the sixth life lost to gun violence in St. Maarten in 2020.

“Carnival Legend”, “Carnival Ecstasy” and “Carnival Liberty” were berthed at Port St. Maarten for crew change/repatriation and provisioning. St. Maarten last saw cruise passengers disembarking in March due to the COVID-19 sailing freeze.
A number of accidents, one of which was fatal, as well as an extension of business closures given the high number of coronavirus COVID-19 cases and the passing of a popular son of the soil, were amongst the issues which made headlines in September.

Businesses in the entertainment industry were ordered to remain closed for two more weeks at the start of September, but restaurants were allowed to stay open until midnight, according to a new government decision. Nightclubs, adult entertainment establishments, discotheques, bars, and lounges were ordered to close on Sunday, August 16. The Ministerial Regulation enforcing these closures expired at the end of October and Minister of Tourism, Economic Affairs, Transport and Telecommunication (TEATT) Ludmila de Weever decided to extend the closure until September 15, considering the country’s limited medical capacities and high number of active coronavirus cases at the time.

St. Maarten was ordered to issue an area of approximately 13,525 square metres of water rights in a long lease to Alegria Real Estate NV, no later than 48 hours after receipt of a verdict in a case involving the matter, a judge in the Court of First Instance decided in an injunction filed by the boutique hotel in Beacon Hill. In case of non-compliance, daily penalties of NAf. 10,000, up to a maximum of NAf. 1 million will have to be paid. Government will also have to pay the cost of these procedures, estimated at NAf. 2,690.50. Alegria Boutique Hotel filed an injunction on August 12, 2020, with regard to this issue which dates back more than two years.

Representatives of the Committee for Financial Supervision CFT did not show up for a Central Committee meeting of Parliament and reportedly did not respond to the meeting request by Parliament Chairperson Rolando Bri- son. A day after the meeting had been scheduled, CFT said it did send a letter to inform Parliament that it would not attend the meeting, countering Bri- son’s claim that it had not responded to the meeting request. This had been the second time this year that CFT was a no-show at a meeting where its presence was requested.

A motorcycle rider was killed when he collided with a car on Airport Boulevard around 6:00pm on Sunday, September 13. The man was reportedly riding a motorcycle on Airport Boulevard towards Princess Juliana International Airport (PJIA) when he collided with a vehicle in the vicinity of Hertz vehicle rental company. The man was reportedly in a group of other motorcycle riders. After the collision, the rider’s bike ended up hitting the metal barrier before coming to a stop on the side of the road by the airport’s perimeter fence.

Members of Parliament (MPs) passed a motion calling for businesses to be allowed to operate for their regular opening hours and for Health Minister Richard Panneflek to immediately explore the possibilities of adjusting the admittance policy to the country by, amongst others, implementing the use of rapid antigen-testing at ports of entry. The motion, which was tabled by United People’s (UP) party MP Omar Ottley, was passed by 11 votes in favour and three against.

Entrepreneurs Lesley and Shirley Bruce of Kenny’s Car Rental and Management, (fourth from left), Minister of TEATT Ludmila de Weever (sixth from left).

The late Michel Hodge, who passed away on September 5 at the age of 71.

Representatives of Qredits with Minister of Finance Ardwell Irion (third from left), Shirley Bruce of Kenny’s Car Rental and Management (fourth from left), and Minister of TEATT Ludmila de Weever (sixth from left).
OCTOBER

Coronavirus COVID-19 active cases dropped from 88 to 52, allowing focus on the 10th anniversary of St. Maarten obtaining country status. Much was said about progress made or lack thereof, and University of St. Martin (USM) and the Lebelle podcast group held the first in a lecture series to reflect on it. USM and The University of the West Indies entered a historic partnership as school teachers bravely restarted part-time in-class instruction. As Governor Eugene Holiday reported 16.2 per cent unemployment, Minister of Economic Affairs Ludmila de Weever proposed abolishing income and profit taxes and introducing a small transaction tax and a fee on remittances to bolster the economy.

--Finance Minister Ardwell Irion announced a pre-paid phone system for civil servants, effective immediately, to address the NAF 19.4 million overspent on phone bills for the past five years.

--In her message to educators on Teachers Appreciation Day, Prime Minister Silveria Jacobs said, “Real superheroes don’t wear capes, they teach.” Minister of Education Rodolph Samuel joined her in high praise for St. Maarten’s teachers, who found ways to adapt to the formidable challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

--The St. Maarten Tourism Bureau, St. Maarten Hospitality and Trade Association and occupational health care Medwork launched the S-aSeal – Clean Standard Seal Certification Program to enable businesses to display adherence to strict hygiene guidelines to counter COVID-19.

--The Central Bank of Curaçao and St. Maarten (CBCS) announced the issue of a NAF 75 million bond on behalf of St. Maarten with a yearly interest rate of five per cent and a 25-year duration. A week later the bond issue was cancelled at the request of Minister of Finance Ardwell Irion, due to concurrent refinancing of a loan from the Netherlands, not to mention talk of illegality from the Committee for Financial Supervision CFT and a request for such State Secretary Raymond Knops.

--The Department of Infrastructure Management executed a country-wide inspection of car wrecks abandoned on public roads and in public areas, of which 111 were collected and placed on the “Irma landfill” to be crushed and exported for recycling.

--Some 450 primary and secondary exam class students resumed face-to-face learning in the third week of October, with hundreds more expected to return that week, and the balance of the some 7,000 students to be in school by mid-November.

--The Ministry of Public Health, Social Development and Labor VSA, through the assistance of the St. Maarten Trust Fund, started developing an Integrated Social Registry System (ISRS) intended to be a primary resource in providing social assistance to vulnerable residents.

--Captain Roger Hodge retired after 30 years of service with Windward Islands Airways International Winair.

--Social and Health Insurances SZV grappled with “bleeding” coffers due to thousands fewer insured and contemplated raising the monthly income threshold to qualify for medical coverage from NAF 5,600 to NAF 10,000.

--A US $5 million Child Resilience and Protection Project developed by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Youth and Sport (ECYS) was approved under the St. Maarten Trust Fund, to be implemented by the Netherlands’ branch of United Nations Children’s Fund UNICEF, to “strengthen the capacity of St. Maarten’s education and child-protection systems.”

--The Integrity Chamber advised creating a Ministerial Gift Policy to define “gift,” but suggested meanwhile that ministers not accept cash and avoid gifts worth over NAF 100, or talking more than NAF 200 from the same source in one year.

Demonstrators formed a chain along Maho Beach to protest a rumoured dolphinarium in Beacon Hill. The required water rights were soon denied to Alegria Boutique Hotel. Robert Luckock photo.

The container used for a water sports business on Mullet Bay Beach was removed by government after the business failed to do so. It had appeared in September, sparking criticism from environmental groups and swimmers. Photo by St. Maarten Nature Foundation.

Recycling and distribution company Cadwell Inc. and utility company NV GESE partnered to export more than a million pounds of recyclables, much of it debris from Hurricane Irma, including poles, transformers, streetlights, cables and metals from the damaged substations and water tanks.

Rainfall from a tropical wave caused widespread flooding across the country. The Fresh Fund overflowed its banks near the roundabout connecting Saguares Road and A.Th. Illidge Road.

Owners of Geateria Milano in Philipsburg reported a car almost hitting a small child on Boardwalk Boulevard, wondering if it would take an injury before authorities took action against this dangerous practice. Soon after, the Boardwalk was blocked to vehicles.

Spatial Planning and Environment Minister Eghbert Doran presented his vision of a new Parliament, Government Building and parking garage to “bring life into Philipsburg” and cut cost, to mixed reviews.

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Integrity Chamber said ministers should not accept gifts in cash, gifts valued at more than NAf. 100, and gifts totalling more than NAf. 200 from the same source in one year. Eleven MPs approved a motion to have the decolonisation process of the former Netherlands Antilles finalised as soon as possible, with opposition from three MPs, one of whom felt that the motion was a "sneaky" approach to push a particular opinion and another saying it trampled on discussions MPs have had over a two-day period.


--The Joint Court of Justice denied the Prosecutor’s Office’s request to prosecute MP Christophe Emmanuel.

--Former MP Frans Richardson faces charges of bribery in the so-called "Aquamarine" investigation into alleged wrongdoing in Bureau Telecommunication and Post (BTP).

--The prosecutor in the Attorney-General’s Office of Curacao, St. Maarten, and Bonaire, St. Eustatius and Saba offered three suspects of money-laundering an out-of-court settlement to the tune of US $220,000.

--St. Maarten is "very, very close" to reaching an agreement with the Netherlands for liquidity support for the country, said Prime Minister Silveria Jacobs.

--The councils of elected officials in St. Maarten/St. Martin are committed to joining a platform to dialogue with European colleagues in quadrilateral meetings to resolve several pending areas of contention for the island, Prime Minister Silveria Jacobs said in her message commemorating St. Maarten/St. Martin Day.

--Talks commenced between St. Maarten and the Netherlands for the third tranche of liquidity support pending St. Maarten’s compliance with the conditions of the second tranche and confirmed commitment to the requirements of the third tranche.

--Motorists in the country able to pay for and pick up their 2021 licence plates, to be used as of the first working day of the New Year, as the plates are already in the country.

--A two-year-old boy had to be admitted to the hospital’s Intensive Care Unit (ICU) on Friday, November 13, after he ingested an unknown quantity of illegal narcotics.

--The travel entry requirements for St. Maarten were updated to include rapid antigen testing effective November 25.

--St. Maarten was granted a four-week extension on a NAf. 50 million loan that was scheduled to mature on Wednesday, November 18.

--Minister of Public Health, Social Development and Labor VSA Richard Pannflek said St. Maarten, together with the Kingdom partners, is looking into the purchase of the coronavirus COVID-19 vaccines.

--Food wholesalers in St. Maarten were accused of manipulating the prices of items before they are brought into the country, driving up the cost of food.

--MPs Christophe Emmanuel of National Alliance (NA) and Raeyhon Peterson of Party for Progress (PP) squared off in a public meeting of Parliament, accusing each other of abuse of power in their former government positions.

--The Dutch Caribbean to share in the number of COVID-19 vaccines that will become available for the Netherlands, confirmed Dutch Minister of Public Health, Welfare and Sport Hugo de Jonge.

--The prosecutor’s Office requested permission from the Joint Court of Justice for the prosecution of current MP Claudius "Toontje" Buncamper.

--Barely two weeks after schools opened their campuses to students, two additional schools reported possible COVID-19 cases. Both St. Dominic High School and Methodist Agogic Centre (MAC) Comprehensive Secondary Education (CSE) sent out letters to parents/guardians alerting them to their situation on Wednesday, November 25.

--The General Audit Chamber has recommended that authorities increase testing capacity for COVID-19 and support economic activity using reliable rapid tests in the country.

Monday morning on November 16 presented the “new” first day back in school for many children in St. Maarten. Sister Magda School pupils had their temperature checked when entering the school’s campus.

Carrefour Market brought in a fresh stock of Christmas trees for residents to ring in the season and add some cheer to their homes.

“Only on SXM” teamed up with local dancer Bianca Di-Jhoffz to bring the Jerusalema dance challenge to St. Maarten. On Wednesday, November 11, they released their take on the challenge featuring local dancers.

The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted the way people gather to celebrate special occasions and mark rites of passage. Diwali, the Indian festival of lights, was celebrated locally in a very subdued way. Families kept to their immediate “bubbles” and the sharing of sweets and hugs were limited.

Honouring the journey and focusing on the future, Philipsburg Jubilee Library (PIL) celebrated its 97th anniversary amongst past and present board members, management and staff, government dignitaries including Prime Minister Silveria Jacobs, investors, and other stakeholders.

Doris Hodge-Wilson celebrated her 99th birthday on October 29. Home Away from Home Foundation brought friends and family together to celebrate.
DECEMBER

The reaching of an agreement with the Netherlands for the third tranche of liquidity support after much back and forth; the saving of a python from death; crime and the resignation of an MP from his party were amongst the prominent stories in December.

-- Four women were severely injured in an accident after speeding and losing control of their vehicle on Welfare Road in Cole Bay on Sunday, December 6. Two had to be pried from the damaged vehicle with the “jaws of life”.

-- Member of Parliament (MP) Christophe Emmanuel has resigned his position as an MP representing the National Alliance (NA) in Parliament and has declared himself Independent. Emmanuel presented a letter informing the legislature of his decision during a meeting of Parliament.

-- Princess Juliana International Airport (PJIA) holding company PJIAH has requested PJIA operating company PJIAJ Chief Executive Officer Brian Minigo to tender his resignation immediately and leave the post by January 4, 2021, citing a growing lack of confidence in his leadership and delays in the reconstruction project.

-- Bureau Telecommunications and Post (BTP) St. Maarten needs US$784,000 to meet its commitments from September to December. BTP Deputy Director Judianne Labega-Hoeye gave this information to Members of Parliament (MPs) during a meeting of the Central Committee of Parliament on BTP’s financial status.

-- Justice system members of the NAPB, ABVO, and WICSU/PSU unions informed their union presidents that they have lost all confidence in Justice Minister Anna Richardson and mandated them to do “everything within their power” to involve Parliament and relay their position. The membership gave the unions three days to pen a letter to Parliament to call Richardson to Parliament for questions “and to provide truthful and concrete answers”.

-- Registered monument Pasanggrahan Royal Guest House has obtained backing from a financial guarantee bond for up to US$8 million from Stockton Fuller and Company in Nashville, Tennessee, to see the renovation of this landmark, which was damaged during Hurricane Irma in 2017, through the next three years. The assistance means Pasanggrahan averted a public auction of the property, which was set for December 10.

-- Police arrested a man A.D.B. on Marigot Hill Road in St. Peters after he allegedly attacked his neighbour and beat him with a rock, leaving him bloody and in need of stitches. The incident started after the victim G.O. and his wife returned home from early morning exercise in St. John’s Estate. In their driveway was B., blocking access to their home. The victim told police that B. became suddenly belligerent, threatened to kill the victim, grabbed him by the throat and hit him repeatedly on the head with a rock, even after he fell to the ground.

-- Police officers accompanied by St. Maarten Nature Foundation removed a 12-foot-long python that was kept in captivity as a family pet. The removal was ordered after a tip was received about a large snake seen in public recently. Python owner Leo Wathey said the snake, named Conda, has been a family pet for more than 25 years. He bought it from a local pet store. Conda was later returned to Wathey after a new enclosure was built for the animal.

-- The St. Maarten Pharmacy Association says the Fund for Civil Servants OZHR has not paid pharmacies for medication dispensed for August, September and October, due to a lack of payment from the government to Social and Health Insurances SZV. The association said that government must release funds to SZV for the amount that has to be paid to healthcare providers, especially pharmacies.

-- A man is in critical condition at St. Maarten Medical Center (SMMC) after being stabbed several times, including in the eye, during a robbery on a Philipsburg alley on December 15. The victim was walking on Van Romondt Steeg when he was attacked by two men, who stabbed him repeatedly.

-- A mandatory travel insurance scheme for international travellers to St. Maarten will be implemented by year’s end, said Tourism Minister Ludmila de Weever. This will be an additional addition to the country’s travel requirements. The cost will be US$30 for persons above 14 years old and $10 for those younger than 14.

-- St. Maarten and the Netherlands signed an accord on December 22, with regard to the conditions for liquidity support. Dutch State Secretary of Home Affairs and Kingdom Relations Raymond Knops and St. Maarten Prime Minister Silveria Jacobs signed the political agreement in a virtual setting after several weeks of talks. Jacobs said the Government of St. Maarten is satisfied that after much deliberations, a signing was held finalising the necessary agreements for the third tranche of liquidity support for the country.

Entrance to the lobby of Pasanggrahan Royal Guest House.

Police talking to several persons near the scene of the crime where a man was stabbed in the eye during a robbery on December 15.

The 12-foot-long python named Conda safely in its new enclosure.

Prime Minister Silveria Jacobs signing the agreement for the third tranche of liquidity support on Tuesday, December 22.

Dec 21, 2020 09:52:18

The 12-foot-long python was taken by police officers on December 15.
2020 was another turbulent year for the French territory – still reeling from the December 2019 blockade against the controversial natural risk prevention plan PPRN, and subsequent interventions by the Gendarmerie to regain law and order. Anger over the PPRN was quelled with the independent Lacroix mission consulting with the local population to come up with well-received recommendations that led to cancellation of the PPRN as it stood, and for a new version to be written. The year saw another major calamity with the arrival of the coronavirus COVID-19 in February. Mandatory health protective measures, lockdowns, and border closures tested the patience of the population, with the virus having a devastating impact on tourism and the economy.

### January

- Préfète Déléguée Sylvie Feucher posted her New Year’s message on the Préfecture’s Facebook page. “Today we are celebrating the end of 2019, a year of intense work marked by the end of 2019, a year of social cohesion, the Collectivité recruited 15 young students at the Lycée in Grand Case.

### FYBRE

- The Collectivité announced formation of two working committees, one on youth and the other on urban planning, to be installed as part of the action plan that it promised to implement following a meeting with the Heads Together collective.

- Préfet Dominique Lacroix’s closing press conference at the end of his 10-day visit offered seven recommendations for revision of the PPRN. These were forwarded to the Minister of Overseas Territories and the Minister of the Environment.

### February

- As part of the actions initiated in 2020 in favour of social cohesion, the Collectivité recruited 15 young people between ages 18 and 25 to serve as environmental ambassadors in French Quarter and Sandy Ground.

- The French Navy patrol vessel La Conférence re-routed a vessel to St. Martin after it was caught in the act of fishing illegally near St. Barths. The vessel was detected fishing in the French Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ).

- Students at the Lycée in Cité Scolaire Robert Weinum staged a protest outside the school gates against E3C interim tests that are part of the new Baccalauréat reform, saying they were not ready to take them because of teacher absenteeism, among other issues.

### March

- At a press conference, Prime Minister Silvia Jacobs disclosed the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) had been activated in connection with two confirmed cases of COVID-19 in French St. Martin.

### April

- President Daniel Gibbs hands over presidency of the RUP 2021 Conference to the President of Mayotte at the conclusion of the 24th conference hosted by St. Martin at Belmond La Samanna on February 7.

### May

- Following the confirmation of the presence of three cases of coronavirus in France, regional health agency ARS announced that it would relay the measures recommended by the Ministry of Solidarity and Health.
FRENCH ST. MARTIN...continued from page 14

viruses pandemic, the Collectivité with State services and associations, strengthened local services for vulnerable people – the elderly, people with disabilities, and people in other precarious situations.

--President Daniel Gibbs disclosed he wrote to Overseas Territories Minister Annick Girardin on April 13 requesting more special human resources and personal protection equipment (PPE), based on a request from the Louis-Constant Fleming Hospital to combat COVID-19.

--Préfète Déléguée Sylvie Feucher disclosed military reserves were deployed to St. Martin in the coming days as a back-up in case of any escalation in the coronavirus health crisis.

--The Préfecture announced the French Armed Forces in the Caribbean were fully mobilised for “Operation Relance” to provide the best response to the COVID-19 crisis in anticipating and preventing the spread of the virus through the French West Indies.

--Amphibious assault helicopter carrier Dixmude began off-loading medical equipment for the Louis-Constant Fleming Hospital following its arrival in St. Martin.

--Organisers announced the 2020 St. Barths Cata Cup that would normally take place in October had been postponed until 2021.

--Water Authority EASAM announced work on implementation of the public sewage system in Grand Case was temporarily halted in view of the health situation – a precautionary measure taken to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

--Due to the COVID-19 crisis, all expired – or due to expire – residence permits, receipts, and long-stay visas between March 16 and May 15, were extended for an additional three months by the Ministry of the Interior.

--The Collectivité’s second coronavirus briefing on Facebook, coincided with President of the Republic Emmanuel Macron’s declaration to the nation that the lockdown will continue until May 11.

--The Collectivité’s activities were geared to protect citizens returning to work after the end of lockdown on May 11.

--The number of St. Martin companies that benefitted from the State’s partial reimbursement of salaries through the French Covid-19 rose to 950 – representing 4,778 employees – as of April 27.

May

--All beaches on the French side reopened on May 8, for swimming or individual sports such as walking or jogging until June 1, 2020.

--The Préfecture confirmed borders will remain closed until May 18, even though the French side is preparing for a phased exit of lockdown from May 11 and a gradual reopening of shops, restaurants, and bars.

--The St. Maarten Chinese Community Foundation began spearheading a food delivery operation on the French side in an action supported by the Collectivité to help the population during the COVID-19 crisis.

--St. Martin Tourism Office launched “Project Stayca”, a promotional campaign to run from July 1 to August 31, to help professionals in the hotel, restaurant and leisure industry experiencing serious difficulties without the normal influx of vacationing tourists.

--Restaurants reopened on the French side on Monday, May 18, Préfète Déléguée Sylvie Feucher announced, and were allowed to stay open until 11:00pm.

--The exceptional five million euro fund which implements the State’s Solidarity Fund was distributed to businesses in the form of zero-interest loans through Association pour le Droit à l’Initiative Economique and the Initiative St Martin Active platforms.

--The 171st anniversary of the Abolition of Slavery in St. Martin was commemorated with a brief low-key ceremony, attended by a handful of Territorial Councillors at the Lady Liberty statue on the Agrané roundabout.

--From May 30, bars were allowed to re-open on the French side until midnight with social distancing and strict hand hygiene measures in place. Restaurants were already permitted to open the week before.

june

--Free circulation between both sides of the island was re-established on June 2 by the Préfecture, with removal of border control checkpoints at the Cole Bay border and at Belle Plaine in French Quarter.

--Announced in a statement on its website, the Préfecture lifted travel restrictions between the islands of Guadeloupe, Martinique, and St. Martin, as the current health situation on the island permitted all trips between the three islands to go ahead.

--Collectivité President Daniel Gibbs wrote to French Prime Minister Edouard Philippe to urge him to lift transatlantic air travel restrictions to the French Caribbean islands, as had been done for Corsica.

--Restaurants and bars reopened on the French side on Monday, May 18, Préfète Déléguée Sylvie Feucher announced, and were allowed to stay open until 11:00pm.

--The Voyager ferry company resumed its service to St. Barths with passengers only allowed to travel with an authorisation issued by the Préfecture.

--Collectivité colleagues, friends, and family mourned the loss of Priscilla Bade Lacroix Mission’s recommendation for the PPRN re-write had been accepted and approved, but felt the need to be vigilant until the final version has been proofread.

--A drab electricity transformer building on Rue Général de Gaulle attracted attention after it was painted in vivid colours by street artists Espa and Wolf, as part of a wider project to beautify the Baie Nettle. The campaign was financed by the Collectivité.

--The Executive Council voted to authorise signing of an agreement with the French Public Investment Bank for the implementation of a “Rebound Loan” post COVID-19.

--The Executive Council ratified the creation of SAS Tintamarre, a business corporation to manage underground digital networks and development of high-speed internet.

--President of the Collectivité Daniel Gibbs welcomed the appointment of Sebastien Lecornu as Minister of French Overseas Territories, succeeding Annick Girardin who was appointed Minister of the Sea.

--Due to restrictions associated with COVID-19, the Collectivité disclosed there would be some changes to the usual format for the celebration of Bastille Day on July 14.

--Three Gendarmes and one civilian were honoured with citations for exceptional acts of bravery and dedication at the Bastille Day wreath-laying ceremony held in the...continued on page 16
AUGUST

St. Martin Chamber of Commerce President Angèle Dormoy sounded the alarm on the economic impact of the border closures and restrictions implemented July 31, in a letter to Préfète Déléguée Sylvie Feucher saying the closures meant “certain death” for companies.

--Préfète Déléguée Sylvie Feucher signed a price-moderation agreement with Super U management for deployment of fibre optic cable in St. Martin.

--AHSM announced it had temporarily stopped issuing personal to travel documents.

--Due to the surge in COVID-19 cases on both sides of the French-Dutch border if it had received confirmation French-Dutch border if it had received confirmation.

--Préfète Déléguée Sylvie Feucher stated she will close the port to incoming US flights due to weather concerns.

--AHSM announced an agreement with Orange for deployment of fibre optic cable in St. Martin.

--Dauphin Telecom signed an agreement with Orange for deployment of fibre optic cable in St. Martin. The agreement essentially sets the stage for the construction of a submarine optic cable in St. Martin.

--Préfète Déléguée Sylvie Feucher reopened the border controls on Tuesday, September 15, for a day-long protest against the Préfecture’s decision to close the border to St. Martin, as well as the way the COVID-19 positive cases were being communicated to the public.

--A group of 25-30 predominately French metropolean business people gather outside the Préfecture to protest the border closures and restrictions, and the impact it is having on the economy.

--Protestors demonstrating in Bellevue demanded Préfète Déléguée Sylvie Feucher reopen the border immediately and return to discussions with the Dutch side government for a collaborative approach to managing the COVID-19 crisis.

--Naïma Dessout was crowned Miss Saint-Martin 2020, as well as the way the COVID-19 positive cases were being communicated to the public.

--Naïma Dessout was elected Miss St. Martin, Miss St. Barths contestant for the Miss France 2021 pageant, but was subsequently disqualified by Miss France organisers for photos submitted of her that were deemed to be “non-compliant”.

--Due to the increase in COVID-19 cases and limited hospital capacity, the Préfecture and ARS, after discussions with the Collectivité and in agreement with Ministry of Overseas France, extended traffic restriction between the two sides of the island until September 15.

--A group of 15 French side doctors spoke out against the Préfecture’s decision to close the border to St. Martin, as well as the way the COVID-19 positive cases were being communicated to the public.

--President Daniel Gibbs expressed his deep sadness on the passing of well-known and popular baker, Gérard Lainez.

--Soualiga United, the citizen movement at the forefront of various protests on the French side, warned it will take action if the Préfecture does not remove the border controls on Tuesday, September 15 and called for a mobilisation of the people.

--A massive mobilisation of the population gathered on the RN7 between Bellevue and the Cole Bay border on September 16, for a day-long protest that ultimately forced the Préfecture to remove checkpoints and reopen borders.

SEPTEMBER

--President Daniel Gibbs disclosed he contacted Sébastien Lecornu Minister for Overseas France on September 7, requesting he lift border controls and instead strengthen health resources and protocols in St. Martin.

--President of the Collectivité Daniel Gibbs and Vice-Recteur Michel Sanz visited Lycée Robert Wei-nnum and College Soualiga to observe the first day back to school, before visiting Hervé Williams School, and kindergarten Evelyn Halley School.

--Due to the increase in COVID-19 cases and limited hospital capacity, the Préfecture and ARS, after discussions with the Collectivité and in agreement with Ministry of Overseas France, extended traffic restriction between the two sides of the island until September 15.

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The Préfecture organised a free distribution of face masks on May 27, like this one in Sandy Ground, for the population in all the districts. (Robert Luckock photo)

OCTOBER

--Employees from Collectivité services and Caisse Territorial des Oeuvres Scolaire (CTOS) returned to work after a protocol was signed with the Collectivité to end the strike, UNI-T 978 union representative Albert Blake confirmed.

--A mission, comprising authors from the Territorial Accounting Chamber CTC of St. Martin and St. Barths and the Court of Auditors, were in St. Martin from October 10 to 17, to evaluate the crisis management response following Hurricane Irma in September 2017, and subsequent reconstruction of the two territories.

--Representatives from urban planning firm Cittanova visited St. Martin for the second time to continue work...continued from page 17

continued on page 17

In the Hotel de la Collectivité garden on his first day of work, December 16. He replaced Préfète Déléguée Sylvie Feucher.
on Plan d'Aménagement et de Développement de Saint-Martin (PDSM) - a plan for sustainable development over the next ten years.

-Miss France contestant Naïma Dessout was disqualified by the Miss France organising committee and forbidden to participate in the Miss France 2021 pageant due to personal photos judged to be “non-compliant”.

-Dutch side charter boat operators who normally take their clients to the French side for excursions as part of their tour promotions, expressed concerns and anger over the heavy toll on St. Martin’s current maritime restrictions have put on their businesses.

-Association Sportif de Marigot’s (ASM) gifted, young cyclist, Kenny Carby (16) left for Toulouse, France to pursue his education and develop his cycling and racing career there. He joined a club with the hopes of turning professional.

NOVEMBER

-Tenants began moving into the new but temporary Collectivité lolos on the Marigot waterfront a year behind schedule.

-The collective of school transporters complained that non-payment of invoices, some since 2017, forced the interruption of school bus transport of school children.

-The Collectivité indicated Grand Case Boulevard would have priority for the first phase of rehabilitation to the road network’s northern section – Agreement to Oyster Pond – with the Boulevard undergoing preparations for its resurfacing on November 14.

-The 30th anniversary of the Unity Flag was commemorated with ceremonies at the Belle Plaine and Bellevue borders. Originally planned for St. Martin’s Day, the event organised by Soualiga United had been postponed due to the inclement weather.

-American visitors to the island were given permission to stay in French side hotels as of December 1, 2020, pending finalisation of a sanitary protocol already in preparation.

-President of the Collectivité Daniel Gibbs said authorization granted to St. Martin to welcome North American tourists through implementation of an experimental sanitary protocol was “excellent news”.

-French side hotels, villas and guesthouses were required, individually, to sign an agreement taking responsibility for their foreign and American guests by instructing those guests to take a COVID-19 test where applicable and to follow-up on test results.

-Serge Gouteyron was appointed new Préfet Délégué for St. Martin and St. Barths, replacing Préfête Déléguée Sylvie Feucher, the Council of Minsters announced in Paris.

-Préfecture lifted the ban on swimming in all French side beaches December 10. Authorities stressed an autopsy would confirm if it was a shark attack or another cause of death. A 48-hour ban on swimming was implemented. The autopsy on the body of the French tourist (38) confirmed she was attacked by a Tiger shark, the Préfecture disclosed at the second press conference on this incident. The Collectivité and Préfecture lifted the ban on swimming and water sports for all French side beaches December 19, contrary to the previous announcement that the ban would remain in place until December 22.

-A convention was signed for shopkeepers first introduced in 2018. The Gendarmerie’s consultant for territorial security was also introduced.

-St. Martin was among the beneficiaries of a 278 million euro agriculture budget following an agreement reached, and confirmed that the Programme d’Option Spécifique à l’Éloignement et l’Insularité (POSEI) will be maintained at its current level in favour of overseas agriculture.

-Belmonde La Samanna Hotel will re-open on February 15, 2021, President of the Collectivité Daniel Gibbs announced on his Facebook page.

-A French tourist (38) on vacation died from a suspected shark attack in Orient Bay while swimming on November 14. The Collectivité and Préfecture confirmed it was a shark attack in Orient Bay on December 10. Authorities stressed an autopsy would confirm if it was a shark attack or another cause of death. A 48-hour ban on swimming was implemented. The autopsy on the body of the French tourist (38) confirmed she was attacked by a Tiger shark, the Préfecture disclosed at the second press conference on this incident. The Collectivité and Préfecture lifted the ban on swimming and water sports for all French side beaches December 19, contrary to the previous announcement that the ban would remain in place until December 22. A convention was signed for shopkeepers first introduced in 2018. The Gendarmerie’s consultant for territorial security was also introduced.

-Incoming Préfet Délégué of St. Martin and St. Barths Serge Gouteyron laid a wreath at the war memorial in the Hotel de la Collectivité garden, a customary tradition for a new representative of the State in St. Martin.

-Union Libre, the representative committee for parents and children of the Omer Arrondell School in French Quarter, organised a Christmas Show at the school where all pupils received gifts courtesy of several sponsors and individuals.
SABA
YEAR IN REVIEW
2020

JANUARY
Saba
Comprehensive School (SCS) eliminated the use of small plastic disposable water bottles.

- Scientists from the Netherlands studied the rebilled tropicbird.
- Minister of Primary and Secondary Education and Media Arzé Skob visited Saba schools.
- Much-needed renovation work on the Crispeen Hill community project was completed.
- A 35-year-old man was arrested in connection with mistreatment, attempted murder and manslaughter.

- The joint Court of Justice sentenced a woman (28) to three years, one of which was suspended, on two years’ probation, for having stabbed a man with a boxcutter during a fight in August 2017.
- The Land Registry was in the process of upgrading.
- The water filling station in Windwardsider became operational.

FEBRUARY
- Wingrove Baker was installed as Saba’s Chief Basic Police Care. He is the first Saba-born person to hold this position.

MARCH
- Saba pupils participate in the second edition of the United Nations Children’s Fund’s (UNICEF’s) Child Rights Film Festival Caribbean.
- International Women’s Day was marked by three days of events.
- For the first time since the existence of the Health Insurance Office ZVK, a number of medical referrals from St. Eustatius to Saba took place.
- Fire chiefs met on Saba.
- Saba closed the airport and harbour for visitors and nonessential travel following the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic.
- Dutch Museum Saba closed down.
- Winair reduced its number of flights to Statia in light of the pandemic.
- An alleged sex offender (36) was taken into custody on suspicion of attempted rape and/or sexually assaulting an eight-year-old girl.
- Saba Conservation Foundation (SCF) received a distress call from a small sailing vessel from Florida, drifting on the Saba Bank.

APRIL
- Publication of The Daily Herald was halted due to the lockdown in St. Maarten.
- Governor Jonathan John-son announced that Saba had two confirmed cases of coronavirus. The announcement of a mandatory two-week lockdown caused panic-buying at the supermarkets.
- Saba’s black melanistic iguana was recognised as an endemic species.
- The annual Saba Carnival celebration was cancelled.
- The Dutch government imposed a travel ban to the Caribbean Netherlands.

MAY
- Saba observed Memorial Day, commemorating 75 years of freedom after the end of World War II.
- The stay-at-home measures implemented to curb the outbreak of the coronavirus were lifted May 9, at midnight.
- Churches rang bells and sirens blared for Saba’s essential workers.
- Island Governor Johnson was reappointed for his third term of office.

- After the lockdown and weeks without face-to-face education, SCS adjusted to the “new normal” and the school reopened.
- The Committee for Financial Supervision CFT concluded in its half-year report that the finances of Saba were, once more, in order.

JUNE
- Governor Johnson called for vigilance during the active above-average 2020 hurricane season.

- Saba welcomed Justin Simmons-de Jong as the coordinator for goat control, agriculture and nature.

- The Ministry of Education, Culture and Science distributed laptops among the schools.

- The public entity put in place additional support measures to contribute to the cost of the local private sector, to assist vulnerable groups, and to look at a one-time contribution for apartment owners losing rent.

- Glenn Thodé was appointed as Saba’s CFT representative.
- Saba reopened its borders for leisure travel from low-risk islands.

JULY
- Saba said it would not open its borders to St. Maarten.
- Winair deferred its flights to Saba until further notice.
- The Caribbean Netherlands Pension Fund PCN acquired Breadline Plaza in Windwardside.
- Saba lifted the restrictions on outbound travelling.
- The revived Saba Business Association (SBA) met with the business community.
- The goat control project was launched.

- As cases of COVID-19 were spiking on the islands surrounding Saba, especially in St. Maarten, the Outbreak Management Team decided to upscale to alert level two.
- Saba was placed under tropical storm warning during the passing of Storm Isaias.

AUGUST
- Entrepreneurs called for more support in the coronavirus crisis.
- Former police inspector Rudolphus Sontrom died.
- A central location for quarantine was set up.

- The lockdown as a result of the pandemic, resulted in a delay in the execution of the harbour project.
- A 41-year-old woman was arrested at Fort Bay harbour as she tried to smuggle drugs in cargo.

- The public entity presented the 2019-year report with a deficit of just over US $621,000.
- Businesses adopted a meal plan for students who are living in poverty.

SEPTEMBER
- A project to improve the infrastructure at the solid waste management facility was initiated.
- The inventory of Dutch Museum Saba went on sale.
- The Central Bureau for Statistics (CBS) counted many temporary workers in Saba.

- Saba labelled St. Maarten and Aruba as high-risk countries due to the coronavirus.

- A study centre was set up in Windwardside for students who had to remain on the island and could not return to their universities abroad.

- A 64-year-old man fell down a staircase near a house on This Hill Road in St. John’s and died.

OCTOBER
- Commissioner Rolando Wilson paid homage to the elderly during United Nations International Day of Older Persons. He also established an Advisory Committee on Horticulture.
- COVID-19 testing capacity was set up.
- The film “Rights to Healthy Food” was announced winner of the Children’s Rights Film Festival.

- Three organisations received funding to assist vulnerable, needy persons during the coronavirus crisis.
- Several events were organised for Breast Cancer Awareness Month.
- “Healthy Choices, Happy Kids” promoted healthy eating and physical exercise among school children and parents.

- The Island Council unananimously approved the ordinance to ban single-use plastic.

- Saba’s first-ever Pink Ribbon Cocktail Party was held.
- SBA slammed the island government’s decision to abruptly announce the closure of the harbour’s roll-on, roll-off cargo ramp for repairs.

- Saba Archaeological Center SABARC presented the results of archaeological work at Giles Quarters/Black Rocks, which included ed Amerindian artefacts and two large ship cannons.

NOVEMBER
- A 19-year-old man was arrested for attempted murder and assault with a weapon, and an 18-year-old for assault.
- While in Saba, Knops signed two documents in which he committed to make US $1.5 million in additional financial support available.

- SCS students registered an exceptional performance, scoring a 100 per cent pass rate.
- The local government will be put in charge of implementing the special allowance and teachers will no longer need a work permit.
- The Island Council approved the multi-annual draft budget 2021-2024 with a deficit of more than $3.1 million.
- The Caribbean Netherlands Pension Fund PCN completed the purchase of Scout’s Place.

- One of Saba’s pioneers in electricity, Charles Dexter Johnson marked 35 years of service at Saba Electric Company NV (SEC), formerly GEBE.

DECEMBER
- 45 years of Saba Day were celebrated.

- Saba Fisherman Association opened the new fish market.

- Saba Lions Club recognised Carvin Hayett Simmons for her long-time and dedicated service.

- Different Taste reopened its doors at Chez Bubba for training of vocational students at SCS.

- SEC celebrated 50 years of 24-hour electricity provision.
MAY

- The Stata 2020 Carnival celebrations were cancelled in the interest of public health.
- Memorial Day marked the 75th anniversary of the end of World War II.
- Forty passengers left for the Netherlands on a repatriation flight.
- Utility Company STUCO struggled with water leaks, the annual drought season, and other issues that forced the company to ration the supply of water.
- The Felicia Viola van Zanten assisted living complex was officially opened.
- Eighty employees worked in the St. Eustatius Airport.

JUNE

- The Cherry Tree road project resumed.
- Winnair reduced its number of flights to Statia in light of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The Emergency Ordinance COVID-19 took effect.
- Schools were closed and lockdown was imposed on visitors of the self-quarantine rules in connection with the coronavirus outbreak.
- The emergency powers were needed to the public entity.
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SEPTEMBER

- The newly elected Island Council was sworn in.

NOVEMBER

- Island Councilman Nico-laas "Koos" Sneek left the Democratic Party (DP) and declared himself an independent Island Council member.
- State Secretary Knops checked out projects in Sta-tia.
- STUCO completed the installation of its new drinking-water storage tank.
- Statia Day was celebrated amid the COVID-19 pan-demic.
- Golden Rock League of Merit honoured Hilda Berkel, Exman Hook, Althea Merkman and Mary Busby.
- The public entity signed a letter of intent to realign a central building for Mega D. Youth Foundation, Daugh-ters of the King Foundation and A+ Academic and Pro-fessional Training, which is to accommodate at least 300 children.
- The Ministry of Home Af-fairs concluded an agree-ment with Winair for a tem-porary flight connection with Bonaire.

DECEMBER

- Fishermen and farmers marched to the Govern-ment Guesthouse.
- SEHCF held a farewell celebration for Dr. George Odongo.
- Sneek presented his action plan in The Hague, much to the chagrin of the Executive Council and the PLP.
- A second outdoor excur-sion park and first outdoor chess park were inaugurated in Wilhelmina Park.
Anguilla has been luckier than most countries around the world this year as the island has had very few cases of the coronavirus COVID-19. For most of the year, the population has been able to continue normal activities. However, with no tourism, many people have been unemployed and businesses are suffering. Fortunately, with the grant from the United Kingdom (UK), there has been a significant amount of construction for new polyclinics, schools, and extensions to the hospital, and these projects have provided employment for many.

JANUARY
--Anguilla received maps of coastal and underwater landscape completed by the UK Hydrography Office.
--Royal Anguilla Police Force (RAPF) investigated first murder for the year following a shooting incident at Welches Village.
--Law Year opening included a church service at St Mary’s Anglican Church, an opening address from Chief Justice Dame Janice Pereria and addresses from local lawyers.
--HMS Medway replaced RFA Mounts Bay as the patrol ship from the UK for the Caribbean region.
--Twelve new officers for the Royal Anguilla Police Force took their oath and will be trained in Anguilla.
--Anguilla received rave reviews at Caribbean Market-place in The Bahamas that included buyers from all over the world.

FEBRUARY
--Second murder for the year from a shooting incident of a 39 year old in Blowing Point.
--Baroness Sugg announced as the new Minister in the UK for the Overseas Territories.
--A digitalised land survey system was launched, meaning all land and property in Anguilla will be digitalised.
--Two contracts signed for the construction of a new Albena Lake Lodge Comprehensive School with funding from the UK grant following Hurricane Irma.

MARCH
--Anguilla declared winner of the Leeward Islands Debating competition for secondary students.
--Health personnel assisted by Public Health England present plans for COVID-19 quarantine facilities.
--Marigot port in St. Martin closed on March 17, so no ferries to Anguilla.
--On March 20 all Anguilla sea and airports closed, except for emergency situations.
--Anguilla's first two cases of COVID-19 prompts restriction including closure of schools, bars, restaurants, public gatherings and church services.

APRIL
--UK and Canadian citizens given the opportunity to return home with specially organised flights.
--Third case of COVID-19 announced – a male who had recently returned from medical treatment overseas.
--All boats banned from Anguilla waters and a border patrol set up with air and sea patrols funded by the UK government. Twenty-eight special constabularies appointed for patrols.
--RAPF Argus in Anguillian waters to survey the island for possible landing sites if needed. No crew landed.
--The Anguilla United Front Government completed four years in office. New election date not announced.
--Oxygen generating plant installed at the Princess Alexandra Hospital.

MAY
--Extension to the Post Office completed, providing a safe and sheltered area for mail and cargo.
--House of Assembly dissolution on May 30 prior to the General Election set to take place within 6 weeks.
--Unemployed persons able to receive ECS$1,000 from Social Security Board or $800 if not on Social Security.
--Virtual Anguilla Day celebrated with Governor Tim Foy, Premier Victor Banks and Leader of the Opposition Pamlavon Webster making addresses.
--Restrictions relaxed for gatherings but border control still enforced. Fishing allowed to the north of the island.

JUNE
--Repatriation of students and Anguillians abroad for four years because the UK gave money needed. No crew landed.
--A lively Nomination Day for the elections was held with two parties, Anguilla United Front and Anguilla Progressive Movement, naming seven candidates each, plus four island wide candidates. There were also eight independents registered.

AUGUST
--Despite COVID-19 Anguillians enjoyed August Monday with J’Ouvert celebrations and boat races.
--Sonic won the Champion of Champions boat race and Real Deal decl. boat of the Year.
--Ministry of Tourism announced plan to allow tourists staying at villas to enter the island and quarantine in an approved villa.
--RAPF announced there was a reduction in crime for the second consecutive year.
--Naval buoys and marine lanterns installed at Road Bay harbour. Eight red and green lights, funded by the UK Maritime Coastguard Agency, were installed.
--St. Augustine Chorale celebrated 20th Anniversary with concert at St. Augustine Anglican Church.

SEPTEMBER
--New Social Security Board appointed, with Jacqueline Bryan as chair.
--Sudden death of Rev. Wycherley Gumbs shocks nation and region. He was the Superintendent of the Methodist Church in Anguilla and very much involved in the community.
--Government created a new department for Natural Resources to include environment, agriculture, fisheries and marine resources. It is headed by Director Meissa Meade.
--Well-known cyclist, who took their oath and will be trained in Anguilla.

October
--CEO of Starwood critics Anguillians who he said ‘do not want to work because the UK gave money to the island for the unemployed’. He apologised after Premier Ellis Lorenzo Webster wrote to him and explained the situation.
--Oluwakemi Linda Banks and Rev. Wycherley Gumbs awarded the Member of the Order of the British Empire (MBE) in Queen’s honours.
--Anguilla started advertising ‘working from home’ in Anguilla programme to encourage persons to stay for six months to a year.
--A road was named in honour of former Chief Minister, Hubert Hughes.
--The Atlin Naraldo Harrigan building was re-dedicated following a refurbishment and upgrading after damage from Hurricane Irma.
--Work on new jetty at Sandy Ground progressing.

November
--On November 1, Anguilla opened its borders for tourists with regulations such as re-testing and quarantine. The plan is to allow tourists to visit restaurants and diving and golf facilities.
--New Commissioner of Police announced. David Lynch, who is currently Chief of Police in St. Helena, will be in Anguilla from February.
--Premier Ellis Lorenzo Webster and his team en-gage in virtual Joint Ministerial Council meetings with other overseas territories leaders and UK ministers of government.
--New Governor for Anguilla announced. Lawyer Dileeni Daniel-Selvaratnam will take over in January 2021.

December
--Couple charged for violating quarantine restrictions.
--Orealia Kelly Primary School opened new facilities that were funded by the UK Anguilla Programme grant after Hurricane Irma.
--Former elected representative for Sandy Ground and North Hill Estate wrote to Governor Tim Foy, requesting a Commission of Inquiry into Sandy Ground Marina project.
--Premier Ellis Lorenzo Webster announced that he signed a variation to the MOU for sale of CuisinArt for the Overseas Territories including Anguilla, Baroness Sugg.
--A digital packaging and processing system was installed at the Post Office.

2020 YEAR IN REVIEW
ANGUILLA YEAR IN REVIEW

2020 YEAR IN REVIEW
ANGUILLA YEAR IN REVIEW

The new jetty at Sandy Ground funded by the United Kingdom is progressing well.
2020 – a year dominated by the coronavirus pandemic

JAN
14 Australia’s most intense bushfire season on record destroys 24m hectares of land and kills or displaces three billion animals
23 Wuhan and several other Chinese cities are placed under quarantine as a new strain of coronavirus spreads widely
31 The UK formally leaves the European Union

FEB
5 The U.S. Senate votes to acquit President Donald Trump of abuse of power at his impeachment trial
9 South Korea’s Parasite is the first non-English language film to win a Best Picture Oscar
23 Italy, with one of the highest coronavirus rates outside China, imposes a strict lockdown

MAR
11 The WHO recognises the Covid-19 coronavirus outbreak as a pandemic
11 Former movie mogul Harvey Weinstein is jelled for 23 years for sex offences
23 Shares in video conference company Zoom reach record highs as over more countries encourage social distancing

APR
1 Chinese authorities lift the lockdown in Wuhan after 11 weeks
20 Israeli leaders Benjamin Netanyahu and Benny Gantz agree to share power after three indecisive elections

MAY
6 The discovery of the first black hole visible to the naked eye is announced
26 Cyclone Amphan forces the evacuation of four million people in eastern India and Bangladesh

JUN
3 An emergency is declared in Siberia after 20,000 tonnes of diesel oil leak into a river inside the Arctic Circle
8 New Zealand lifts almost all coronavirus restrictions after no new cases are reported
15 India and China conduct the fiercest border clashes in the Himalayas for 40 years

JUL
1 Russia’s constitutional referendum clears the way for President Vladimir Putin to run for two more six-year presidential terms
20 The UAE’s Hope probe is one of three missions to Mars launched in July
23 Comet NEOWISE makes its closest approach to Earth

AUG
3 Spain’s former King Juan Carlos I goes into exile after a series of scandals
30 China formally adopts a controversial security law giving Beijing unprecedented powers over Hong Kong

SEP
20 NASA’s OSIRIS-REx probe successfully touches down on the asteroid Bennu to collect samples for analysis
27 Intense fighting erupts between Armenia and Azerbaijan over the disputed Nagorno-Karabakh region, resolved after six weeks by a Russian-brokered peace agreement
29 The global death toll from Covid-19 passes one million. The U.S., Brazil and India account for nearly half of the total

OCT
17 Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern wins a landslide election victory in New Zealand

NOV
3 Former vice president Joe Biden and running mate Kamala Harris win most votes in the U.S. presidential election but Donald Trump alleges fraud and refuses to concede
4 Heavy fighting flares in the Tigray region of northern Ethiopia between the forces of Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed and the former ruling Tigray People’s Liberation Front

DEC
17 China’s Chang’e 5 mission aims to return moon rock samples to Earth
31 Hopes for 2021 are focused on vaccination programmes to bring Covid-19 under control
Among the most haunting images to emerge from the everyday life.

By March and April many countries began to impose lockdowns and social distancing to slow the spread of the highly contagious virus. Structures to separate and protect people sprang up - from transparent screens at supermarket checkpoints to the plastic sheet which allowed 83-year-old Lily Hendricks, a resident at a Belgian nursing home, to hug Marie-Christine Desoer, the home's director.

The effects on the natural world of the shutdown were sometimes astonishing. Birdsong could be heard like never before in towns and wild animals ventured into newly empty cities. At the usually crowded Golden Gate Bridge View Vista Point across from San Francisco, a coyote stood by the roadside.

Even the streets of Manhattan were eerily empty. Ballet dancer Ashlee Montague danced in the middle of Times Square, New York. In Brazil's capital, Brasilia, Catholic priest Jonathan Costa prayed alone at the Santuario Dom Bosco church, among photographs of the faithful, attached to the pews.

Wearing masks to combat the spread of the virus became commonplace worldwide. At Tokyo's Shinagawa train station, crowds of commuters wore face masks, as did prisoners crowded into a cell in El Salvador's Quezaltepeque jail.

In private homes, families learned to live together for 24 hours a day and how to entertain and teach their children. In San Fiorano in northern Italy, school teacher Marzio Tonio, 35, took a picture of his two-year-old daughter Bianca painting his toenails bright red.


Gang members are seen inside a cell at Quezaltepeque jail during a media tour in Quezaltepeque, El Salvador, September 4, 2020.

Doctor Katharina Franz and paramedic Andreas Haniel, of the rescue helicopter “Christoph Giessen”, reanimate a patient during preparations for his transport in the special isolation chamber “IsoArk”, for highly infectious COVID-19 patients, from a clinic, during the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) outbreak in Hanau, Germany, April 16, 2020.

Health care workers stand in the street in counter-protest to hundreds of people who gathered at the State Capitol to demand the stay-at-home order be lifted in Denver, Colorado, U.S. April 19, 2020.

A medical worker collects a sample from a woman at a school which was turned into a centre to conduct tests for COVID-19, during the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) outbreak, in New Delhi, India, June 22, 2020.

The body of a man who died due to complications related to COVID-19, is seen at a crematorium during the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) outbreak, in New Delhi, India, June 4, 2020.

A coyote stands by the roadside as the spread of coronavirus disease (COVID-19) continues, at Golden Gate Bridge View Vista Point across from San Francisco, California, U.S., April 7, 2020.

A drone image shows decommissioned cruise ships being dismantled at Aliaga ship-breaking yard in the Aegean port city of Izmir, western Turkey, October 2, 2020.
COVID

...continued from page 22

Florence Bolton, 85, a COVID-19 patient, lies on her intensive care bed as family members attempt to FaceTime her at Roseland Community Hospital during the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) outbreak, on the South Side of Chicago, Illinois, U.S., December 1, 2020.

Students wear protective face masks as they have their temperature checked before entering a class, after the government allowed the reopening of schools from grade six to eight amid the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, in Peshawar, Pakistan, September 23, 2020.

A general view of treatment blocks at a temporary hospital in the Krylatskoye Ice Palace, where patients suffering from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) are treated, in Moscow, Russia, November 13, 2020.


Catholic priest Jonathan Costa prays among photos of faithful, attached on the church’s benches before a mass, to be live streamed at the Santuario Dom Bosco church, during the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) outbreak, in Brasilia, Brazil, April 9, 2020.

The body of Valnir Mendes da Silva, 62, lays on a sidewalk of Arara community, where he died after residents requested help from the emergency service as he was suffering from breathing problems, during the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) outbreak, in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, May 17, 2020. According to residents, it took about 30 hours to remove the body.

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WASHINGTON—The summer of 2020 saw the United States’ biggest protests for racial justice and civil rights in a generation.

The nation watched in horror as a video showed the death of George Floyd, a Black man gasping for air and calling for his mother as a white police officer knelt on his neck for nearly nine minutes.

Floyd’s death in Minneapolis on May 25 forced a new national reckoning about racial injustice and gave a global profile to the Black Lives Matter movement that has emerged in recent years to protest the deaths of African Americans in police custody.

Despite a worsening COVID-19 pandemic, tens of thousands took to the streets to demand change—first in Minneapolis, and later in New York, Washington, Portland and elsewhere—many of them chanting Floyd’s dying words, “I can’t breathe!” The demonstrations were largely peaceful, but as anger boiled over some protesters clashed with police and stores were looted or set on fire.

Republican President Donald Trump criticized the protests and promised to restore law and order, although opinion polls showed Americans largely supportive of Black Lives Matter.

In June, U.S. Park Police and National Guard troops, clad in riot gear, used pepper spray to clear the area outside the White House of protesters so Trump could walk to St. John’s Church and pose for a photo holding up a Bible. Days later, the capital’s mayor had “Black Lives Matter” emblazoned in giant yellow letters on the street leading to the White House.

Anti-racism demonstrators also marched to show their support in cities overseas including Brussels and London.

Under pressure from the protests, some U.S. police departments banned the use of chokeholds and no-knock warrants. A few school districts, including in Minneapolis and Denver, canceled contracts with police departments. A few cities such as Boston, New York and San Francisco proposed redirecting some of the police budget to other community priorities.

But nationwide reform remains elusive.

There was a renewed focus on the still-unresolved legacy of the Civil War of 1861-65. Monuments to pro-slavery Confederacy figures were taken down or toppled by protesters. NASCAR racing banned the Confederate flag, a symbol of slavery and white supremacy for many Americans.

Businesses pledged more than $1.7 billion for racial and social justice causes and rushed to revamp brands with stereotypical names or images.

Black athletes were at the forefront of the movement. The National Basketball Association (NBA) and Women’s NBA postponed games in solidarity with the demonstrators, followed by Major League Baseball and Major League Soccer.

There were further protests following the Aug. 23 police shooting of another Black man, Jacob Blake, in Kenosha, Wisconsin, and again in September when a grand jury decided not to bring homicide charges against police officers involved in the fatal shooting of Breonna Taylor.

The simmering anger and demands for justice ignited by these deaths and others translated into huge voter turnout by Black Americans in November’s presidential election.

On Jan. 20, Kamala Harris will become the first Black woman, and first Asian American, to serve as U.S. vice president. Black Lives Matter supporters will be looking to her and President-elect Joe Biden to honour their campaign promises of criminal justice reform and economic aid for minority communities.
WASHINGTON — The U.S. presidential election was defined at first by a paralyzing coronavirus pandemic that upended traditional campaigning and then by President Donald Trump’s frenzied but failing efforts to reverse his loss to Democrat Joe Biden.

The pandemic — and Trump’s handling of it — proved to be a big reason why Trump lost. A major-frenzied but failing efforts to U.S. President Donald Trump speaks, with a flag behind him, during a campaign rally at Cecil Airport in Jacksonville, Florida, U.S., September 24, 2020.

facing crisis. He essentially cancelled in-person events for months, reaching voters virtually instead. In the end, he was rewarded: Biden received more than 80 million votes — the most of any presidential candidate in U.S. history. Biden’s victory was even more unlikely considering how he began the year. After disappointing finishes in the Iowa caucuses and New Hampshire primary, his presidential bid looked cooked. He argued things would turn around as soon as African Americans began voting in large numbers - and he was right.

Powered by the Black vote, Biden blew the field away in South Carolina, causing several rivals to drop out immediately and setting the stage for a stunning run that sewed up the nomination in a matter of weeks. His final challenger, liberal Senator Bernie Sanders, bowed out in April, allowing Biden to turn his focus squarely to Trump with nearly seven months to go.

Meanwhile, the president was struggling to respond to the burgeoning COVID-19 outbreak. After weeks of downplaying the threat, Trump delivered a rare address from the Oval Office that failed to reassure a jittery public. The virus would go on to reshape American life, closing schools, businesses and restaurants, trapping millions at home and becoming the dominant issue of the 2020 election.

With the death toll from the pandemic nearing 50,000 by late April, Trump at one of his briefings spontaneously suggested that injecting disinfectants such as bleach into the human body could eliminate the virus. Health experts quickly warned the public that doing so would be toxic, and Trump later claimed he was being sarcastic.

Trump also became increasingly at odds with a racial justice movement that swept U.S. cities in the wake of the death of George Floyd, a Black man, under the knee of a white Minneapolis police officer. In June, U.S. Park Police and National Guard troops, clad in riot gear, used pepper spray to clear the park outside the White House of protesters so that Trump could walk to a historic church and pose for a photo holding a Bible. But opinion polls showed Americans largely supported peaceful protests for racial justice.

With that as a backdrop, Biden’s decision to make Senator Kamala Harris, a Black woman, his running mate was particularly resonant. In Congress, Harris had worked on police reform efforts since Floyd’s death. Her selection energized the Democratic base, and her personal fundraising network helped Biden raise in an unprecedented flood of donations that eliminated Trump’s cash advantage.

Needing something to turn his fortunes around, Trump came into his first debate with Biden in September looking for a fight. But his belligerence worked against him. He repeatedly interrupted Biden and the moderator to the point where the entire event veered out of control. Polls and focus groups conducted afterward showed swing voters were repulsed by his behaviour.

Still, the election outcome was far from certain. Trump remained popular with many voters, who turned out in droves for his in-person rallies, sporting ‘Make America Great Again’ caps and t-shirts. Safety measures against the spread of the virus were largely ignored, and just as some Americans were casting early ballots - Trump and several aides tested positive for COVID-19.

Even with coronavirus cases spiking anew, Americans voted in record numbers, many mailing in ballots, while others waited in long lines. While the race was too close to call on Election Day, Biden steadily pulled ahead of Trump in several critical battleground states and ended up with a resounding win.

Biden amassed 306 electoral votes - exceeding the necessary 270 - compared to 232 for Trump in the state-by-state Electoral College that determines the presidency, while also winning the national popular vote by more than 7 million votes. Harris made history as the first woman to be elected vice president.

Trump, however, would not concede and for weeks since the election has falsely claimed that widespread fraud cost him a second White House term. His legal team - including former New York mayor Rudy Giuliani - filed lawsuits in several states contesting the election results. None of the efforts have been successful.

When the Electoral College meets on Dec. 14 to cast its votes, Biden’s victory will be official. While Trump seems intent on refusing to concede, the expectation remains that he will leave office on Jan. 20, when Biden will be sworn in as the nation’s 46th president.
Record number of journalists jailed in 2020

The number of journalists jailed globally hit a new high in 2020 as governments cracked down on coverage of Covid-19 or political unrest, according to the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ).

**WORLD’S WORST JAILERS**

*Number of journalists in prison, 2020*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Journalists in Prison</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>47</td>
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<td>Turkey</td>
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<td>Russia</td>
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<td>Cameroon</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **19%** Journalists held without charge
- **67%** Detained on anti-state charges

There are 274 journalists in jail in 2020, with remainder held here:

- Algeria (2), Azerbaijan (4), Bahrain (6), Bangladesh (6), Burundi (4), Cambodia (2), Ethiopia (7), India (4), Iraq (3), Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory (3), Jordan (1), Kazakhstan (1), Mali (2), Morocco (4), Myanmar (1), Nepal (1), Philippines (1), Rwanda (5), South Sudan (2), Syria (4), Tajikistan (1) and Uganda (1)

Sources: Reuters, CPJ  *Data as of Dec 1, 2020  Picture: Jimmy Chan (Pexels)  © GRAPHIC NEWS
People carry signs against a gang rape that occurred along a highway and to condemn those behind it. Football players from the Golden Girls Football Centre, Somalia’s first female soccer club, prepare to attend their training session at the Al-Nurem indoor fitness centre in Magadishu, Somalia in this file photo. Somalia’s breakaway region of Somaliland said earlier in December that it had ‘severed last vestige of female fumigation’ as it felt foul of Islamic values, sparking outrage among women’s rights groups.

Domestic Violence
Long swept under the carpet, domestic violence made headlines in 2020 as lockdowns left women trapped at home with abusive partners.

The United Nations warned the crisis could lead to a 25% rise in domestic abuse, describing it as a “shadow pandemic”. Horrified by the surge in violence, U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres called for a “ceasefire at home”. Helplines in some places saw a five-fold rise in calls but lockdowns made it harder for services to reach victims. Some countries converted hotels and holiday lets into refuge spaces and set up initiatives to encourage victims to seek help during trips to the supermarket or pharmacy.

Genital Mutilation
The United Nations has predicted 2 million more girls than previously predicted could undergo FGM in the next decade as COVID-19 disrupts efforts to end the practice. Increased rates of cutting have been reported across East and West Africa with lockdowns seen as an opportunity to carry out FGM underground.

Hardship has fuelled the rise in some cases because parents think they can get better “bride prices” if daughters are cut, campaigners say. In Somalia, circumcisioners have gone door-to-door offering to cut girls stuck at home.

Campaigners in Kenya, which has vowed to end FGM by 2022, have reported mass cuttings in the Kuria community, with girls paraded through town centres and showered with gifts.

In Egypt, global media reported that a man was arrested for allegedly getting a doctor to cut his three daughters after conning them into thinking they were going to receive COVID vaccinations.

Abortion
Poland imposed a near-total ban on terminations in October, leading to massive street protests. In the United States, abortion rights groups fear the appointment of religious conservative Amy Coney Barrett to the Supreme Court could jeopardise a landmark 1973 ruling which legalised abortion nationwide.

In Malawi, powerful religious groups are strongly resisting a bill to ease restrictions on abortion.

Child Marriage
The number of women dying in pregnancy and childbirth has fallen by more than a third since 2000, but health experts say the pandemic could erode gains as women lose access to contraception and reproductive health care.

Revenge Porn
Women have reported a rise in “revenge porn” – online posts of intimate images, usually by abusive partners or ex-partners – during lockdowns. One victim said its cases had doubled in April. In France, an activist started a campaign called #stopfisha to help victims report abuse after noticing an increase in photos and videos of naked girls on social media, tagged with their names.

In Morocco a social media campaign has demanded hundreds of “revenge porn” victims to fight back against a phenomenon that has driven some to consider suicide.

While many victims are targeted by vengeful former partners, others are singled out by strangers who hack their social media accounts to steal photos and information. Digital sex abuse has also become a feature of domestic abuse with partners using authentic explicit images as a way to exercise control.
2020: The year in science

SEARCHING FOR ANOTHER EARTH

OCTOBER: Using data from NASA’s retired Kepler space telescope, astronomers calculate that there could be as many as 500 million potentially habitable planets orbiting stars similar to our Sun.

These Earth-like planets are in the “goldilocks” or habitable zone, where they can support liquid water.

The nearest so-called exoplanet is GJ 357d which orbits a star around 31 light years away, in the constellation Hydra.

Kepler-186f: Artist’s concept of first Earth-sized planet to be discovered.

RACE FOR A CORONAVIRUS VACCINE

JANUARY: Since Chinese health authorities shared the full sequence of the novel coronavirus genome, pharmaceutical companies have smashed the record for the time between identifying a virus and creating a vaccine.

Pfizer/BioNTech’s vaccine is the fastest to go from concept to regulatory approval, taking just 11 months to follow the steps that generally span ten years.

BIRD SONGS BECOME SEXIER

OCTOBER: With noise of traffic and construction reduced during the lockdown, birds in cities adapt to the new soundscape by increasing their song complexity and doubling their communication distance.

Research published in the journal Science finds that male sparrows changed their song to have a broader vocal range and softer notes. Higher-performance songs are more attractive to female birds.

AI SOLVES THE PROTEIN-FOLDING PROBLEM

NOVEMBER: Google’s DeepMind has created an artificial intelligence (AI) programme called AlphaFold that can solve a 50-year-old grand challenge in biology – the protein-folding problem – in a matter of days.

The ability to accurately predict the unique 3D shapes of proteins from their amino acid sequences would be a huge boon to life sciences.

For example, antibody proteins are Y-shaped with unique hooks to latch onto viruses and bacteria.

THREE MISSIONS AIM FOR MARS

JULY: NASA’s life-hunting Mars Perseverance rover is due to land on the Red Planet on February 18, 2021.

Perseverance – the centrepiece of NASA’s $2.7 billion Mars 2020 mission – will hunt for signs of ancient life in the Jezero Crater, which harboured a lake and river delta billions of years ago.

Rock samples will be left on planet’s surface for return to Earth by a future mission.

Two other missions will arrive at the Red Planet in February – the United Arab Emirates’ Hope orbiter and China’s Tianwen-1 mission. They will join the six orbiters and two landers already on the surface.

AUGUST: Elon Musk’s Neuralink reveals that a monkey has been able to control a computer with its brain.

Neuralink intends to implant sensors inside the motor and sensory areas of a human brain.

The implant will sit flush inside the skull. Electrical threads about 1/20th the thickness of hair extend into the brain to pick up electrical signals.

The device will connect wirelessly to a behind-the-ear receiver allowing people to communicate with machines.

Human trials could start in 2021.


Pictures: Getty Images, NASA, Neuralink

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TESLA’S RISE MADE 2020 THE YEAR THE US AUTO INDUSTRY WENT ELECTRIC

DETOUR—Tesla Inc and Wall Street made 2020 the year that the U.S. auto industry decided to go electric. Tesla’s market capitalization surged above $600 billion, making the once wobbly startup founded by billionaire Elon Musk worth more than the five top-selling global vehicle making groups combined. The exclamation point came on Friday when Tesla rose to a record high in frantic trading ahead of the stock’s much anticipated entrance into the benchmark S&P 500 index.

For 2021, all signs point toward the industry accelerating its shift toward electrification, a turning point as historically momentous as the launch of Ford Motor Co’s moving assembly line for the Model T or General Motors’ 2009 bankruptcy.

Tesla’s ascent came the same year that activist hedge funds and other investors ratcheted up pressure on corporations to fight climate change. Evidence is growing that more investors have concluded the century-long dominance of internal combustion engines – “ICE” in industry slang – is headed toward a close within a decade.

From London to Beijing to California, political leaders also embraced plans to start phasing out internal combustion engine-only vehicles as early as 2030. Pressure to cut greenhouse gas emissions undermines the logic for significant new investments in ICE engines. Thousands of manufacturing jobs are currently tied to internal combustion in the United States, Britain, Germany, France, Japan and other countries.

Other powerful forces also shook the auto industry’s status quo this year. The COVID-19 pandemic stripped away the sales and profits that incumbent automakers had counted on to fund methodical transitions to electric vehicles. China’s rapid recovery from the pandemic exerted an even more powerful gravitational pull on industry investment.

Will Consumers Plug In?

This was the year GM Chief Executive Mary Barra and other top industry executives began to echo Tesla’s Musk, saying electric vehicles began to echo Tesla’s in the United States remain large, petroleum-burning pickup trucks. Demand for these vehicles powered a recovery for Detroit automakers after the pandemic forced factories to shut down in the spring.

The best electric vehicle and battery makers could field models that match internal combustion upfront cost as soon as 2023, brokerage Bernstein wrote in a report. “ICE game over with BEV ~ 2030,” Bernstein’s auto analysts wrote, using the industry’s acronyms for internal combustion engine and Battery Electric Vehicle.

The shift toward electric vehicles is speeding a parallel transformation of vehicles into largely digital machines that get much of their value from software that powers rich visual displays and features such as automated driving systems. Across the industry, century-old manufacturers such as Daimler AG are scrambling to hire programmers and artificial intelligence experts.

The capability of software to manage autonomous driving systems, electric-vehicle flows from batteries and data streaming to and from vehicles is replacing horsepower as a measure of automotive engineering achievement.

Tesla’s use of smartphone-style over-the-air software upgrades was once a unique feature of the Silicon Valley brand. In 2020, the best-selling model in the United States, the Ford F-150 pickup, was redesigned to offer Tesla’s use of smartphone-style over-the-air software upgrades as standard.

The capability of software to manage autonomous driving systems, electric vehicle, and battery makers could have built had output stayed at 2019 levels.

“Only the most agile with a Darwinian spirit will survive,” said Carlos Tavares, the Peugeot SA chief who will lead the combined Peugeot and Fiat Chrysler when that merger is completed.

The pandemic also elevated the importance of China to the industry’s future. That country’s swift recovery amplified the gravitational pull of its huge market on automotive investment, despite anti-China rhetoric from U.S. and European politicians.

China’s drive to reduce dependence on petroleum is compelling automakers to shift investment toward battery electric and hybrid vehicles, and re-center design and engineering activities to Chinese cities from traditional hubs in Nagoya, Wolfsburg and Detroit. Tesla said it will establish a design and research center in China.

Daimler AG Chief Executive Ola Kallenius put it bluntly in October. “We need to look at our production footprint and where it makes sense, shift our production,” he said during a video call. “Last year we sold around 700,000 passenger cars in China. The next biggest market is the U.S. with between 320,000 and 330,000 cars.”
ROME/LONDON—From wildfires in California and locust attacks in Ethiopia to job losses caused by pandemic lockdowns in Italy and Myanmar, climate change and COVID-19 disrupted food production and tipped millions more people into hunger in 2020.

Now there are fears the situation could worsen next year as both the coronavirus crisis and wild weather exacerbate fragile conditions linked to conflicts and poverty in many parts of the globe, aid officials told the Thomson Reuters Foundation.

“Even before COVID-19 hit, 135 million people were marching towards the brink of starvation. This could double to 270 million in the next few short months,” warned David Beasley, head of the U.N. World Food Programme (WFP), in emailed comments.

In April, Beasley, whose Rome-based organisation was awarded the 2020 Nobel Peace Prize, told the U.N. Security Council that the world was facing “a hunger pandemic” and “multiple famines of biblical proportions”. “Those warnings are backed up by even stronger evidence today,” he told the Thomson Reuters Foundation, noting that Burkina Faso, Nigeria, South Sudan and Yemen faced famine, and the full impact of COVID-19 had yet to be felt in many places.

At the same time, the coronavirus crisis has shown how faster international action and better cooperation in areas like science and technology could help tackle the problem, he added.

Farmers and poor urban residents have so far borne the brunt of the pandemic, meaning inequality between and within countries could deepen further in 2021, said Ismahane Elouafi, chief scientist at the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). Cut off from markets and with a plunge in customer demand, farmers struggled to sell their produce while informal workers in urban areas, living hand to mouth, found themselves jobless as lockdowns were imposed, she said.

As a result, millions of people — from Texas and Geneva to Bangkok and Accra — were forced to rely on food handouts for the first time. Meanwhile, more than 50 million people in East and Central Africa require emergency food aid and those numbers are set to rise as the region braces for a harsh drought linked to the La Nina climate pattern, as well as more locust swarms, Oxfam said.

With 2020 on track to be one of the hottest years on record, African farmers have already seen a surge in tough climate conditions as well as crop-destroying pests, said Agnes Kalibata, U.N. special envoy for the 2021 Food Systems Summit. “The double whammy of extreme weather and COVID-19 has brought the shortcomings of our global food system into sharp relief,” said Kalibata, a former Rwandan agriculture minister.

‘Harbinger’ Of Climate Crisis

Two recent U.N. reports warned that the coronavirus pandemic could cause a spike in extreme poverty. One in 33 people will require humanitarian aid to meet basic needs such as food and water in 2021, a rise of 40% from this year, said one.

Another said a billion people could be pushed into destitution by 2030. COVID-19 is “a harbinger” of what the climate crisis will bring, said Saleemul Huq, director of the International Centre for Climate Change and Development in Bangladesh.

“(The virus) hits us in a matter of days and months. Hopefully, it’ll be over in a year or two, if everything goes well with the vaccine — but the climate change problem is going to linger for much, much longer,” he said.

“One of the principal impacts is likely to be on food production, in all the continents of the world, on agriculture, on fisheries, on livestock,” he added.

Climate action has often focused on cutting planet-heating emissions from energy and transport, but transforming food systems is also crucial to keep global warming to manageable levels, said a recent study led by the University of Oxford. Even if fossil-fuel emissions were eliminated immediately, food production could still push temperatures beyond 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial times.

Such changes are needed to help feed a rising global population, the study said, highlighting the links between agriculture, animal products and zoonotic diseases, be said. These shifts, together with high-profile summits scheduled next year on the intertwined issues of food, health, nature and climate, offer the opportunity to radically change how food is produced and consumed, experts said.

“We have an opportunity to make it right,” as thinking converges around the gatherings, said FAO’s Elouafi.

U.N. envoy Kalibata hopes the food systems summit will yield ambitious goals and clarity on what countries, communities and businesses must do differently over the next decade, as well as more financing to help realise those aims.

Solutions already exist to make food systems sustainable and environmentally friendly, such as seaweed-based cattle feed to reduce methane emissions and plant-based diets, said Jessica Fanzo, professor of global food policy and ethics at Johns Hopkins University. But political will is needed to push those to the forefront, she added.

As with climate change, the lowest goal in the Paris climate pact, it warned. But changing the incredibly complex and increasingly global web of food systems is a big challenge, not least because there are no substitutes for food, said lead author Michael Clark. Making it should be something the production of food more sustainable will require a focus on how it is grown, what is being consumed and ways to reduce loss and waste, he said.

Opportunity For Change

Pandemic-induced lockdowns have fostered changing attitudes in rich countries towards food waste and meat consumption, both of which fuel greenhouse gas emissions. Meanwhile, there is growing recognition among experts that a narrow focus on crop productivity has come at the expense of the environment, equity and nutrition, said James Lomax, a food systems expert with the U.N. Environment Programme.

Many in the food industry have started to grasp this too, even before COVID-19 disrupted supply chains, cut into earnings and highlighted the links between agriculture, animal products and zoonotic diseases, he said. These shifts, together with high-profile summits scheduled next year on the intertwined issues of food, health, nature and climate, offer the opportunity to radically change how food is produced and consumed, experts said.

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Sporting highlights in disrupted year

INTERNATIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

Soccer
Jun 25 Liverpool end 30-year wait to reclaim English Premier League trophy

Aug 2 Real Madrid, Juventus, Bayern Munich and PSG win Europe’s top league titles

Aug 23 Bayern conquer Europe, overcoming PSG to claim sixth Champions League crown

Nov 25 Argentine soccer icon Diego Maradona (left) – who lifted 1986 World Cup – dies aged 60

Tennis
Feb 2 Novak Djokovic wins record eighth Australian Open title

Sep 12 Naomi Osaka triumphs at U.S. Open – new face mask for each match highlights victims of racism and police brutality

Oct 10 Iga Swiatek, 19 (right), ranked 54th, becomes lowest-ranked woman to take title at Roland Garros

Oct 11 Rafael Nadal equals Roger Federer’s record of 20 Grand Slam titles with 13th victory in Paris

American sport
Feb 2 Kansas City Chiefs end 50-year wait to win Super Bowl

Oct 11 Los Angeles Lakers beat Miami Heat to equal Boston Celtics for most NBA titles – 17

Oct 27 LA Dodgers win first baseball World Series since 1988

Motorsport
Jan 17 Carlos Sainz (above) wins third Dakar Rally, aged 57

Aug 23 Japanese driver Takuma Sato conquers gruelling Indy500

Oct 25 British driver Lewis Hamilton (below) wins 92nd F1 race – passing record of Michael Schumacher – and goes on to win 7th Championship

Nov 15 Joan Mir secures maiden MotoGP title, racing for Suzuki

Cricket
Mar 8 Australia cruise to victory against India in Women’s T20 World Cup Final

Nov 10 Mumbai Indians beat Delhi in IPL final

2021: Tokyo Olympics and UEFA Euro 2020, both delayed by pandemic, set to go ahead

2020 YEAR IN REVIEW

2020 YEAR IN REVIEW

Picture: Getty Images © GRAPHIC NEWS
SPORT SHOWS ITS RESILIENCE IN TIMES OF TROUBLE

LONDON—When Yoshiro Mori, president of the Tokyo Olympics organizing committee, claimed defiantly in February that the greatest show on earth would go ahead in spite of a looming pandemic few realized what wishful thinking that was. Weeks later, with the novel coronavirus engulfing the planet, the mighty Olympic juggernaut was stopped in its tracks and the sporting calendar disintegrated.

In many ways the announcement on March 24 that the Games were postponed until 2021 came as a relief for the thousands of athletes left in limbo as Tokyo organizers and the International Olympic Committee (IOC) held out for a medical miracle. It was the first time a modern Olympic Games had been delayed in its 124-year history.

The cancellation of a two-week sporting jamboree, albeit one originally costing $12.6 billion, pales into insignificance compared to the toll of COVID-19 on lives and livelihoods. The year is ending with vaccines offering hope of containing the virus but more than 1.5 million people have died from the virus and economies around the world are in turmoil.

A bunch of sports men and women forced to put their gold-medal dreams on hold appears trivial by comparison, yet the crisis has emphasized sport’s benefit to society and not just because of its estimated $755 billion annual value. The Olympic Games, for all its faults, doping scandals and mind-boggling budgets remains, on the whole, a showcase for the human spirit, inspiring the world’s youth.

Sport’s stirring response to the Black Lives Matter protest also displayed its power to advance social justice. By the time the Olympics succumbed to the inevitable delay an eagerly-awaited sporting year was already unravelling.

Domino Effect
A week before the Games were postponed, the European Championship soccer tournament, second only to the World Cup in size, was rescheduled until 2021 as UEFA accepted the futility of staging an event across 12 cities during a pandemic.

“The thought of celebrating a pan-European festival of football in empty stadions, with deserted fan zones, while the continent sits at home in isolation, is a joyless one,” said Aleksander Ceferin, head of the sport’s European governing body.

Every major domestic soccer league ground to a halt while iconic events fell like dominoes. For the first time since World War II there was no Wimbledon tennis championships. The revamped Fed Cup and Davis Cup finals both hit the dust, while city marathons from London to Boston.

Golf’s Ryder Cup and British Open were canceled, while the Masters was shunted to a spectacularly August in Autumn, long after the azaleas had bloomed. The Formula One season stalled on the grid in Australia where cricket’s T20 World Cup was postponed until 2021.

The NBA and NHL seasons were both suspended for more than four months, while MLB clubs cancelled more than 1,500 games, resulting in the shortest regular season on record.

The list of disruptions was endless and the financial implications enormous.

Sporting Memories
Yet out of the chaos, federations, event organizers and athletes displayed ingenuity and resolve to still provide incredible sporting memories in the darkest of years.

Spanish tennis player Rafa Nadal produced an extraordinary display to thrash Novak Djokovic and win a jaw-dropping 13th French Open title after a gloomy and cold fortnight in Paris at a delayed tournament in October. He dethroned Nadal level with Roger Federer on 20 Grand Slams.

That a delayed Tour de France reached Paris without a major COVID-19 outbreak was a triumph in itself. Yet it provided one of the most astonishing finishes ever as Slovenian Primoz Roglic saw the yellow jersey slip from his grasp a couple of kilometres from glory with compatriot Tadej Pogacar winning an epic race.

Europe’s soccer leagues resumed behind closed doors with Liverpool claiming their first English title for 30 years, while the business end of the Champions League from the quarter-final stage was condensed into 11 days in Portugal with Bayern Munich beating Paris Saint-Germain in the showpiece match.

England won the longest Six Nations rugby championship ever staged -- nine months after an opening-day defeat by France.

The Super Bowl, played in front of 62,000 fans just over a month before a pandemic was declared, witnessed a fairytaile finish as the Kansas City Chiefs clawed back a 10-point deficit heading into the fourth quarter to beat the San Francisco 49ers and claim their first title for 50 years.

The LA Lakers captured a record-equalling 17th NBA Championship by beating Miami Heat after the season resumed in July in a fan-less Disney World bubble while the Dodgers snapped a 32-year title drought in the MLB.

The year was book-ended by the death of two sporting icons -- NBA great Kobe Bryant who was killed in a helicopter crash in January, and Argentine soccer maestro Diego Maradona who passed away aged 60 in November.

Kobe Bryant shirts are set on seats inside the Staples Center in advance of the Los Angeles Lakers game against the Portland Trail Blazers. Former Lakers star Kobe Bryant was killed in a helicopter crash days before. (Sandy Hooper-USA TODAY Sports via Reuters)

Houston Astros right fielder Kyle Tucker (30) reaches in to tag the stands but is unable to catch a game tying three run home run hit by Oakland Athletics third baseman Chad Pinder (not pictured) during the seventh inning in game three of the 2020 ALDS at Dodger Stadium, (Robert Hanashiro-USA TODAY Sports via Reuters)

Kobe Bryant who was killed in a helicopter crash in January, and Argentine soccer maestro Diego Maradona who passed away aged 60 in November.

After so much heartache there is hope that 2021 will restore a semblance of normalcy and that, in the words of the IOC and Tokyo organizers on that somber day in March, the Olympic flame will become a light at the end of the tunnel.
ATHLETES BRING FIGHT FOR EQUALITY INTO SPORTING ARENA IN 2020

TORONTO—A big part of sport's appeal is that when you buy a ticket or turn on the television for a few hours it provides a respite from the turmoil engulfing the outside world.

But in 2020, from the soccer pitches of the English Premier League to the U.S. Open tennis hardcourts, there was no ignoring the fight for racial equality as athletes rushed to the front lines of what became a global movement. Black Lives Matter was stenciled onto NFL fields and NBA courts. Athletes raised fists and took the knee.

“We Race as One” was the message Formula One sent wanted heard over the roar of screaming engines as mighty Mercedes, with the enthusiastic backing of F1’s only Black driver Lewis Hamilton, changed their famous Silver Arrows livery to black to show their commitment to greater diversity.

There were moments of silence at PGA golf tournaments and outrage at a NASCAR Cup race when what appeared to be a noose was found hanging in the garage of Bubba Wallace, the only African-American driver in the Series.

A summer of protest in the United States triggered by the May death of George Floyd while in Minneapolis police custody followed by the shooting of another unarmed Black man Jacob Blake in Kenosha, Wisconsin were the sparks that ignited a global movement uniting athletes around the world.

Racial Injustice
Athlete activists are not a new breed but sport and protest have been a polarizing volatile mix. When Tommie Smith and John Carlos climbed onto the podium at the 1968 Mexico Olympics shoeless with black gloved fists raised in protest after winning gold and silver in the 200-metres, they returned home to the U.S. to face shame and death threats.

Almost 50 years later it was Colin Kaepernick in the cross-hairs, the former San Francisco 49ers quarterback the target of hate for his kneeling protests in 2016 that have become a symbol of the fight against racial injustice and police brutality. U.S. President Donald Trump labelled such protests as unpatriotic and those doing them “sons of bitches.”

Fox News host Laura Ingraham told the NBA’s biggest name and most prominent activist, Los Angeles Lakers LeBron James, to quit sticking his nose into politics and “shut up and dribble.”

Athletes found their voice not as individuals in 2020 but as a group pushing a common cause and changing forever the dynamic between them, team owners and fans. A year earlier athletes had protested under threat of punishment and re-prisals but this year they did so, in most cases, with the blessing of their leagues and governing bodies.

FIFA, world soccer’s governing body, had long frowned on such displays but in June president Gianni Infantino said players protesting the death of George Floyd on the pitch “deserve an applause not punishment.”

NFL commissioner Roger Goodell went further by saying the league made a mistake not listening to players and encouraged them “all to speak out and peacefully protest.”

Sporting Protests
After months of rising tension brought on by the Floyd death, the coalescing of the athlete movement came in August following the Blake shooting.

The NBA’s Wisconsin-based Milwaukee Bucks started boycotts when they refused to take the court for their playoff game and other teams followed suit in an unprecedented show of athlete solidarity. The protests spilled over into Major League Baseball, Major League Soccer, the Women’s NBA and tennis as Japan’s three-times Grand Slam champion Naomi Osaka pulled out of a tournament after reaching the semi-finals.

The next week at the U.S. Open Osaka used the sport’s biggest stage to put a global spotlight on racial injustice by wearing a different face mask for each of her seven matches with the name of a Black American victim of police brutality.

“It has been more than 50 years since athletes like Muhammad Ali, John Carlos and Tommie Smith and the Original 9 of women’s tennis all stood up and used their sport, their voices and their actions to change humanity,” said tennis pioneer and women’s rights trailblazer Billie Jean King. “The baton has been passed and Naomi has accepted it.

As the year draws to a close, athletes have put words into action, forcing leagues to join them with almost every sport introducing diversity programs. While some have paid lip service others have put their money where their mouth is with NBA great Michael Jordan pledging $100 million over the next 10 years to organisations dedicated to racial equality. “We have been beaten down (as African Americans) for so many years,” Jordan, principal owner of the Charlotte Hornets, told the Charlotte Observer. “It sucks your soul. You can’t accept it anymore. This is a tipping point. We need to make a stand.

“We’ve got to be better as a society regarding race.”
The Daily Herald's 2020 MVP of the year is hereby awarded to coronavirus COVID-19 – but in this case, MVP stands for Most Viral Perpetrator.

If COVID was a pitcher he would have pitched months of shut-out ball.

As a football keeper he would have a clean sheet.

As a basketball forward, he drove to the rim, not caring who he fouled and slammed dunked over and over again.

As a baseball batter he would have been unstoppable, hitting nothing but boundaries.

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LOCAL SPORTS Continued from page 34

SXM, earned three medals at a CrossFit Competition in Guadeloupe. Sophia Broere returned home with a second-place finish in the Intermediate Division. Suzianne Duzong-Davis placed third in the RX division, and Vasco Dal placed third in the 40+ Masters category. Other team members placed as well. Team leader Alan Schet took fourth place in the Elite division, and Sandy Oforinga earned a fifth-place finish in the RX division.

By mid-March St. Maarten had its first confirmed case of COVID-19. Quarantines and lockdowns quickly followed. Slowly a few exercise and yoga classes went online using Zoom. Determined athletes found ways to stay in shape with isolated workouts at home or solitary early morning runs along the mostly deserted roadways.

JUNE

By mid-June The St. Maarten Sports and Olympic Federation (SMSOF) released Sports Training Protocol for COVID-19. All sports organisations were encouraged to safely restart sports on the Island by June 15. Among the first to reappear were the sailors. St. Maarten Yacht Club organised a dinghy race — social distancing being a bit easier in the single seat boats. A total of 19 teams sailed in several classes.

On land, the King Yen Taekwondo School started outdoor training at Emilio Wilson Park where it was easy to social distance. “People are going stir crazy,” said Grandmaster Theo Liu. “The children and adults both need physical activity to stay healthy.” While all sports suffered, the athletes of King Yen may have felt COVID a bit harsher than most, for 2020 may have felt COVID a bit like most, for 2020 might have felt COVID a bit harsher than usual. Fort Yvon Springer, Anne Marie Bouille and Laurent Mesguich took top honours in the St. Maarten Golf Association Summer Scramble at the Mullet Bay Golf Course. Organised by the St. Maarten Golf Association (SMGA), the Scramble drew 15 teams of four golfers to the course on Saturday, June 29.

Many individual athletes and sports teams just practiced during the summer months.

OCTOBER

The St. Maarten Football Federation got the ball rolling in October with actual competitions featuring their School senior members. C&D Connection won the opening match. Romario Hutchinson netted three goals as he led C&D to a six-to-one victory over Reggie Lions. Due to the pandemic, no spectators were permitted.

Swimmers returned to the pool by the end of October for the annual Guardian Group Invitational Swim meet. Fourteen new Carib Swim Team records were set as the Swim Team hosted the two-day invitational.

NOVEMBER

In the fall, a total of 22 motorsports enthusiasts participated in the St. Maarten Automotive Federation's competition at the government parking lot on Pond Island. The two-day-long Drift and Drag expo and demo saw Joseph Woods taking honours with the Best Drag Performance, and Joel Toney earning the Best Drifting Performance Trophy.

St. Maarten National Basketball Association returned to the court to train in November as well. To help get athletes excited about the game again, they brought in guest coach Shabazz Muhammad, the North Carolina-based Head Coach of the NC Lakers Youth Basketball AAU Basketball Circuit. The coach led a series of Youth Skills and Development sessions at John Cooper Jose Lake Ballpark.

Rain fell on the 33rd Around the Island Relay Race. French side SXtreme Running Club won the relay one minute ahead of rivals Intergeneration Runners, and three minutes ahead of SXM Tri Academie. SXtreme’s Julien Chaboeuf brought the baton home to the Raoul Illidge Stadium in 2:18:18. Some 47 teams took part in the relay this year — an increase of nine teams, despite the rain.

Also in November, St. Martin athlete Florencia Hunt travelled to Syracuse, New York to compete in the New York State National Bodybuilding Championship. Hunt won the Figure Pro category and overall honours at the Organization of Competitive Bodybuilders (OCB)-sanctioned event.

DECEMBER

By December, two adults and 18 youth athletes have passed their quarter examinations to earn a new belt at the King Yen Taekwondo School held in the Helmich Snijders Hillsid Christian School gym.

Flames United SC were crowned with top honours at the SXM Unity Champions League after defeating C&D Connection FC four to zero at Raoul Illidge Sport Complex on December 13. The SXM Unity Champions League was put together in collaboration with the President of the Saint Martin Football Association (SMFA), and the President of the Sint Maarten Football Federation SXMFF. The League began on December 7, 2019. The football organisations of both sides of the island organised a friendly youth game for the girls.

The sports community looks forward to the repair of the Melford Hazel Sport Center. While the facility is officially closed due to COVID, work has begun to repair the roof and the pavilion, both of which were badly damaged by Hurricane Irma in 2017.

It is too early to tell what 2021 will bring to the Friendly Island. But one can hope that with vaccines becoming available, COVID will be shown a red card, the match official will check the video assistant referee, and determine there was unsportsmanlike conduct and COVID will be tossed off the pitch, deposed, and asked never to return to the island.

Swimmers returned to the pool by the end of October for the annual Guardian Group Invitational Swim meet. Fourteen new Carib Swim Team records were set.

Fifty-seven teams entered a wet and rainy 33rd Around the Island Relay Race. French side SXtreme Running Club won.

A total of 22 motorsports participated in the two-day-long Drift and Drag expo and demo, organised by the St. Maarten Automotive Federation, in November.

With many sports ready to resume, work began in December on repairing the roof of the Melford Hazel Sport Center, and the court picnic pavilion that had been damaged in 2017 by Hurricane Irma.
Reduced cinema capacity means that Hollywood studios are sitting on a backlog of blockbusters for release in 2021. Warner Bros., one of Hollywood’s biggest studios, plans to release all 17 of its movies next year in cinemas and on HBO Max at the same time.

1. The Last Duel. Directed by Ridley Scott, starring Matt Damon, Ben Affleck, Adam Driver, Jodie Comer. A true story of knights and maidens in which King Charles VI (Affleck) declares that Knight Jean de Carrouges (Damon) settle his dispute with his squire Jacques Le Gris (Driver) by challenging him to a duel. Released by 20th Century Studios from January 8

2. Black Widow. Directed by Cate Shortland, starring Scarlett Johansson, Florence Pugh, David Harbour, Rachel Weisz. Marvel’s prequel focusing on Johansson’s Natasha Romanoff in her quests between Captain America: Civil War and Avengers: Infinity War. Released by Marvel Studios from May 7

3. Dune. Directed by Denis Villeneuve, starring Timothée Chalamet, Josh Brolin, Rebecca Ferguson. Adaptation of Frank Herbert’s sprawling sci-fi epic about the son of a noble family entrusted with the protection of the most valuable asset and most vital element in the galaxy. Released by Warner Bros. from October 1 with a simultaneous release on HBO Max

4. Top Gun: Maverick. Directed by Joseph Kosinski, starring Tom Cruise, Jennifer Connelly, Jon Hamm, Val Kilmer, Jay Ellis, Miles Teller. We’ve had to wait 31 years for a Top Gun sequel. It will again feature Cruise riding motorcycles, playing volleyball and flying jets like a madman. Released by Paramount Pictures from July 2

5. The Matrix 4. Directed by Lana Wachowsk, starring Keanu Reeves, Carrie-Anne Moss, Jada Pinkett Smith, Lambert Wilson. Neo (Reeves) and Trinity (Moss) return to the world of The Matrix -- the digital world Wachowski helped create way back in 1999. Released by Warner Bros. from December 22 with a simultaneous release on HBO Max

6. Mission: Impossible 7. Directed by Christopher McQuarrie, starring Tom Cruise, Vanessa Kirby, Rebecca Ferguson, Hayley Atwell. Ethan Hunt (Cruise) is back in action for the seventh instalment of the franchise that showcased his willingness to engage in death-defying stunts. McQuarrie returns as writer and director. Released by Paramount Pictures from November 19

7. Cruella. Directed by Alex Timbers and Craig Gillespie, starring Emma Stone, Joel Fry, Kirby Howell-Baptiste, Paul Walter Hauser, Emma Thompson. Disney’s prequel to the classic with Cruella De Vil (Stone) becoming obsessed with Dalmatian fur. Released by Walt Disney Pictures from May 28


9. West Side Story. Directed by Steven Spielberg, starring Rita Moreno, Ansel Elgort, Rachel Zegler. Spielberg’s new adaptation of the famous Broadway musical of the same name. Tony (Elgort) and Maria (Zegler), two teens in 1950s New York City belong to rival gangs. They fall in love and must deal with the consequenc


11. The King’s Man. Directed by Matthew Vaughn, starring Harris Dickinson, Ralph Fiennes, Aaron Taylor-Johnson, Gemma Arterton, Matthew Goode. Another prequel, set in the early 1900s, shows how a group of ex-soldiers formed the spy agency to stand against a cabal plotting a war to wipe out millions. Released by 20th Century Studios from February 12

12. Peter Rabbit 2: The Runaway. Directed by Will Gluck, starring James Corden, Rose Byrne, Domhnall Gleeson, David Oyelowo. A sequel based on the work of Beatrix Potter sees the rabbit going to the big city, where he meets shady characters and ends up creating chaos. Released by Columbia Pictures from January 15

13. No Time To Die. Directed by Cary Joji Fukunaga, starring Daniel Craig, Ralph Fiennes, Rami Malek, Naomie Harris, Lea Seydoux, Ben Whishaw, Rory Kin. The 25th James Bond film, with Craig returning for his fifth and possibly final turn as 007. Bond comes out of retirement when his old CIA friend Felix Leiter persuades him to perform one last mission. Released by Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer from April 2

Images: 20th Century Studios, Columbia Pictures, Marvel Studios, Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, Disney Pictures, Walt Disney Pictures, Warner Bros. © GRAPHIC NEWS