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# The Bahama Journal

Quo Vadis, Bahamas?

VOL. 30 - NO. 82

TUESDAY - JANUARY 23RD, 2018

75 CENTS

# PROTEST OVER BANK FEES

BY ONIKE ARCHER

*Journal Staff Writer*

**A**midst the rising bank fees in a stagnant economy, Bahamians are losing patience with current banking policies.

Small in number, Citizens Against Bank Exploitation yesterday held a protest outside The Central Bank of The Bahamas where Bahamians carried placards decrying increasing banking fees as they took their plight to Rawson Square.

"We thought the Central Bank would be the best place, because this is where they govern and regulate these banks."

■ See BANK FEES / page 2...

## Former Police Officer Charged With Rape

BY LICEC BASTIAN

*Journal Staff Writer*

A former police officer was charged in Magistrate's Court yesterday on one count of sexual assault of a female tourist just two weeks after a U. S advisory warning its citizens of visiting The Bahamas.

Appearing before Chief Magistrate Joyanne Ferguson-Pratt, 24-year-old, former police officer, Stephano Kenny Curry, of Joe Farrington Road, was charged with the offense of rape of the 25-year-old female.

It is alleged that on January 14, 2018, Curry had sexual intercourse with the female without her consent. Because of the nature of the offense, he was not required to enter a plea.

■ See WITH RAPE / page 2...

## PM Pitches GB As "Tech Hub" In Texas



► Group Photo With Bahamian Delegation and The Texas Association Of Business CEO's.

BY AMAJAHL KNOWLES

*Journal Staff Writer*

Prime Minister Dr. Hubert Minnis is promoting the potential of Grand Bahama as a Technological Hub for multiple international agencies throughout the world.

The Prime Minister's remarks came during a meeting with Business Executives at the Texas Association of Business in Austin Texas.

The forum was designed to forge a relationship in hopes of bringing more diversification to the Bahamian economy and at the same time to attract foreign investment.

"Grand Bahama is uniquely suited to become an internationally recog-

nized Science, Technology and Innovation hub.

"Grand Bahama and The Bahamas possess modern and superior infrastructure, modern roads, constant and reliable electricity supply of North-American standards, fully digital telecommunications and high quality high-speed internet.

"Bahamians are also among the most technologically savvy people in the Caribbean. Grand Bahama has proven to be an attractive place for manufacturing cutting-edge technology.

"Carnival Corporation has identified Grand Bahama as the ideal location to configure and assemble the Ocean Medallion concierge system.

This interactive technology is expected to change the cruise experience and we are proud to house its development center in the Grand Bahama.

"We invite you consider Grand Bahama as you plan your next start up or the expansion of your international enterprise," Dr. Minnis said.

Last November Grand Bahama hosted its first Technology Summit which according to the Prime Minister played host to some of the finest minds in technology internationally.

The Grand Bahamian economy has struggled in recent years, thanks in large part to several hurricanes and the closure of major resorts on that island.

## Baptist group fights for Social Issues In the Bahamas

BY AMAJAHL KNOWLES

*Journal Staff Writer*

The Bahamas is set to play host as the Progressive National Baptist Convention is in town this week to discuss ways to combat current social issues in the US.

The midwinter board meeting of the PNBC is cur-

rently underway at the Melia Nassau Beach Resort, beginning last night with its MLK Empowerment Award Service.

The address was given by renowned civil rights leader and close friend of the late Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Rev Jesse Jackson who spoke to the Journal of the significance of the con-

ference.

"Dr. King led that struggle to break up a stigma around the world and being one of the founding members of the Progressive National Baptist convention, so it is an honour to be a part of this gathering of ministers.

"We want to be about social change and not just

social service. All that we fought for is currently under attack. The good news is that we are not going to surrender we are fighting back.

"We are aware of what our options are and we are going to fight for the rights of underprivileged people," Rev. Jackson said.

■ See BAPTIST GROUP / page 2...

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## PLANS FOR CENSUS 2020 BEGIN

BY C. JILLIAN GRAY

*Journal Staff Writer*

The wheels were put in motion yesterday for the 2020 census by the Department of Statistics.

A census happens every 10years. At the official launch, the Deputy Prime Minister Peter Turnquest made it clear that much has changed since the last census in 2010.

The changes the Bahamas has gone through, he said, have implications on education, social services, health-care and the upkeep of infrastructure.

One of the key priorities the DPM outlined is to strengthen the Department of statistics in the changing of legislation.

The government's proposed a new statistics bill that will replace the out of date statistics act of 1973.

"It is being proposed that this new bill will result in the identification of the Department of statistics as the lead Agency for the collection of national statistics to address the uncoordinated and inefficient approach currently in use. The different government agencies are collecting data for their own purposes and we don't have sufficient information sharing," Turnquest said.

He added that this is an important step, as the department's information is critical for decision making.

Mr. Turnquest also assured the public that the information collected will be used in the strictest of confidence and only for statistical data.

"The Department of Statistics is the agency mandated by the government of the Bahamas to conduct census and surveys throughout the Commonwealth of the Bahamas. This act also stipulates that all data collected will be used for statistical purposes only. In essence the information received will not be used to pry into your personal affairs on behalf of any agency and will not be used against you in any manner and will not be disclosed along with information that could identify you to any individual or any entity or agency," Turnquest said.

For those afraid that persons would use the door to door statistics period to impersonate officials and commit crime, the minister laid those concerns to rest.

■ See CENSUS 2020 / page 2...

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# PROTEST OVER BANK FEES

■ Continued from / PAGE 1...

"Our organization Citizens Against Bank Exploitation have been bringing up the whole issue of the way that the banks have been interacting with the Bahamian people," Citizens Against Bank Exploitation organizer Dr. Denotra Archer-Cartwright said.

She said, "We haven't heard a lot from The Central Bank or the government in terms of what they're going to do; in terms of policy and making changes."

Shortly before the protest was due to begin, to Dr. Archer-Cartwright's surprise, Governor of The Central

Bank of The Bahamas, John Rolle invited her and some of the protestors inside the bank to his office where he reportedly tried to discourage them from continuing on with the protest.

Mr. Rolle also tried to justify the reasoning behind the banking fees as they are now.

"We were just in there with Mr. Rolle and he explained how the banks aren't making enough money. Well, adjustments have to be made on both sides," Dr. Archer-Cartwright told The Journal.

She further said in regards to the meeting with Mr. Rolle, "he was showing us different charts of how much

they were making prior to the recession and after the recession and using that as a basis as to how much money the bank should be making.

"Well, the thing about it is, I would not base the money that you made at the peak of the bubble. It should not be what you're using as a contrast.

"For in times of recession, there has to be some balance."

According to Dr. Archer-Cartwright, the banks are using bank fees as a way to make up for the money that they lost with mortgages and loans.

■ See BANK FEES / page 4...

# Baptist Group Fights for Social Issues In the Bahamas

■ Continued from / PAGE 1...

President of the PNBC Rev. James C Perkins reiterated Rev Jackson's position, citing the importance of churches in the early civil rights struggle and the need to act now.

"The PNBC was the spiritual denomination of Dr. King and the uniqueness as Baptists is that we blend spirituality with social justice.

"Our mission is to equip pastors and churches to be effective in ministry and lift our voice on behalf of the voiceless.

"We are here this week because of the political atmosphere that we are in at this present time with this current presidential administration. We are here to develop strategies on how we can continue to lift our voice and protest this administration's setback of

civil rights," Dr. Perkins said.

This year's meeting is the 4th meeting held in The Bahamas as the group has been coming since 1991.

Rev Dr. Timothy Stewart, Pastor of Bethel Baptist Church who also serves as 1st Vice President of the PNBC said he was extremely honoured to have The Bahamas serve as host country for the meeting.

"We are thankful to God for the relationship we have shared with the PNBC since 1991 and we thank God for how we have been able to play a very meaningful and vital role in this great body.

The conference is expected to run until Thursday, with over 1,500 people expected to attend the nightly services at the Melia Nassau Beach Resort.



# PLANS FOR CENSUS 2020 BEGIN

■ Continued from / PAGE 1...

"Between here and the launch, there will be an intensive public relations campaign to make sure that everybody is aware as to what to look for and how to identify legitimate census takers. And also of the kind of information they will be asking for; so that when people come along asking for extraneous information or irrelevant information, they will be able to be alerted right away that something's not right here and be able to call back to the department and verify that this is somebody that is authorized to receive the information," Turnquest said.

The official date for the census to begin is May 4th, 2020.

There was an inter-department competition for the theme of the 2020 statistics and for the second time around, Talmique Jolly Cadot won the coveted prize with the theme "the count depends on you."

# Former Police Officer Charged With Rape

■ Continued from / PAGE 1...

Chief Magistrate Joanne Ferguson-Pratt, remanded Curry to The Bahamas Department of Corrections, but not before advising him that he had a right to apply to the Supreme Court for bail. According to his attorney,

Alex Dorsette, the paper work was already in the process of being filed at the Supreme Court for bail.

Curry is expected to return to court on March 1st when the prosecution intends to proceed by Voluntary Bill of Indictment.

# '2020 CENSUS OF POPULATION AND HOUSING'



Acting Prime Minister, the Hon. Peter Turnquest brings remarks at the official launch of the '2020 Census of Population and Housing' at the Department of Statistics, Monday, January 22, 2018. (BIS Photo/Derek Smith)

## GOV'T FINALIZING CRYPTO CURRENCY PROGRAMS

BY AMAJAHL KNOWLES  
*Journal Staff Writer*

Prime Minister Dr. Hubert Minnis revealed yesterday that government is finalizing programs designed to promote cryptocurrency companies.

His comments came during his address to Business Executives at the Texas Association of Business in Austin Texas.

"The Bahamas is currently finalizing programs for blockchain-based solutions, fin-tech and crypto-currency companies and intend to pro-

mote blockchain as a sub-industry within ICT," Dr. Minnis said.

Over the weekend, The Bahamas International Securities Exchange (BISX) revealed they are preparing to "jump in" to initial coin offerings (ICOs) and cryptocurrencies, having already been approached by players in this area.

Keith Davies, the Exchange's chief executive, said that it was already "active in this space" and exploring how these innovations and new technology could be married with traditional capital

market structures and safeguards.

Describing the rise of block chain technology and cryptocurrencies as "disruptive" to traditional systems and ways of thinking, Mr Davies said they "should not be ignored".

Cryptocurrencies such as Bitcoin are a form of digital money which, using the Internet, are designed to provide a secure and anonymous form of payment for numerous types of transactions.

Bitcoin has proven to be volatile as prices were down another 12% in early trading Monday, falling to \$10,686.



### GOVERNMENT NOTICE INVITATION FOR TENDERS

The Government of The Bahamas is inviting tender for the following Contracted Services for the Port Department, Ministry of Transport & Local Government.

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Tenders are to be submitted in triplicate (3) in a sealed envelope marked "Tender for the General Repairs to the Exterior of the Port Administration Building, tower and other ancillary Works, & the General Repairs to the Eastern exterior of the Festival Place Building, addressed to:

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Tenders Board  
Ministry of Finance  
Cecil V. Wallace Whitfield Building  
Cable Beach  
P. O. Box N-3017  
Nassau, The Bahamas  
Telephone No. (242) 372-1530

No later than 5:00 pm on the 29<sup>th</sup> day of January, 2018.

Tenders will be opened at 10:00 am on the 30<sup>th</sup> January, 2018 at the office of the Tender's Board, Ministry of Finance.

**THE GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL TENDERS.**

## Hundreds show up For Construction Job Fair

BY ONIKE ARCHER  
*Journal Staff Writer*

Hundreds of Bahamians showed up on Saturday for the first ever Construction Job Fair which was held at the Kendal G.L. Isaacs National Gymnasium.

The Department of Labour, the Bahamas Contractors' Association (BCA) and other companies such as Cavalier Construction, Bahamas Technical Vocational Institute (BTVI), WEMCO Security and Albany, just to name a few, were among the businesses sharing employment opportunities.

Speaking with the Bahama Journal about the success of the first Construction Job Fair organized by the Ministry of Labour was Tameka Hanna, Vice President of the BCA.

She said, "the job fair has turned out to be very successful. I think that the initial push from the Department of Labour to actually section out the Construction industry has been a very good impact on not only the contractors or construction workers, or persons who have an interest, but also, anyone who is looking for a job showed up here today; all different age groups and categories.

"It's a great push, a good initiative. I understand that they intend to do another (Job Fair) once a month. I am very happy to hear that," Ms. Hanna told the Journal.

Ms. Hanna explained that the BCA in the past has pushed for membership and enrollment and Education for the year of 2017. Ms. Hanna also informed The Journal that BCA will be partnering with BTVI to assist in educating people in the construction industry.

"The persons out there need the experi-

ence and the education and they also need to know they are welcome to come to a job fair such as this.

"We were not an integral part in this initial effort, but I will tell you that the next time this is staged that the Contractors association will be well represented with their individual companies that fall under our feet," Ms. Hanna said.

Although the job fair was primarily for the construction industry, many other businesses also attended, like hotels and church groups.

"Everyone needs a job. Everybody doesn't have the same interests," Ms. Hanna further stated.

As people waited outside Kendal G.L. Isaacs National Gymnasium for an opportunity to register their name with Department of Labour and to see what employment options are, Ernest Forbes decided to share with The Bahama Journal why he attended the job fair.

Unlike many who attended, Mr. Forbes is employed.

"I'm seeking better employment. A lot of people don't have the knowledge that jobs are available and it is good to come out to these to see what your options are.

"What I really want to do is put my name out there and really see what my options are," Mr. Forbes expressed.

A recent graduate the University of The Bahamas (UB) also stated that first and foremost, she attended the job fair with hopes in trying to get a job.

"I am a college graduate and it's hard for graduates to find employment in this country," the young lady said.

She studied architecture and is presently completing another degree, a Bachelors of Science in Quantity Surveying at UB.

## YOUNG MEN SENTENCED FOR STEALING IN GB

BY LICEC BASTIAN  
*Journal Staff Writer*

Two young men were charged, and one subsequently sentenced to The Bahamas Department of Corrections for shop breaking and stealing in Grand Bahama.

Arraigned yesterday before Deputy Chief Magistrate Debby Ferguson in Magistrate Court 1, 24-year-old Jovan Opell Nixon of Holmes Rock was charged with one count of stealing, and one count of shop breaking. Nixon was also charged with one count of possession of instrument for burglary.

He pleaded guilty to those charges and was sentenced to three years at the Bahamas Department of Corrections.

Following that arraignment and sentencing, Nixon

was then arraigned before Magistrate Charlton Smith in Magistrate Court 2 on the same kind of charges of stealing, shop breaking and stealing from a shop.

He pleaded guilty and was sentenced to three years at the Bahamas Department of Corrections in that court.

Nixon was further charged, again in another court, appearing before Magistrate Renkin Johnson in Magistrate Court 3, where he was again arraigned on similar charges. He pleaded not guilty and was remanded to the Bahamas Department

of Corrections until April 16th and 17th when he returns for trial.

On a separate matter, 32-year-old Cody Rahming age of Jones Town, Eight Mile Rock, was arraigned before Magistrate Renkin Johnson on the charge of stealing from a shop.

He pleaded guilty; however, his matter was adjourned to January 23rd for sentencing.

According to police reports out of Northern Bahamas, these are incidents were reported to police in the Central and Bonded areas.

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► Debris being piled onto a heavy duty truck for transport to the public dump as part of the Over-the-Hill Clean-Up and Bulk Waste removal Campaign which got underway Friday, January 19, 2018 in the Bain and Grants Town Community. (BIS Photo/Derek Smith)

## Estimated 13,000 cubic yards of debris removed during first two days of cleanup campaign

BY MATT MAURA  
Bahamas Information Services

Preliminary estimates indicate that more than 13,000 cubic yards of debris was removed from the Bain and Grants Town community during the first two days of the Over-the-Hill Clean-up and Bulk Waste Removal Campaign.

The campaign began on Friday and ramped up its operation on Saturday. Some of the

work had to be completed on Sunday.

Officials from the Economic Development and Planning Unit of the Office of the Prime Minister, the Department of Environmental Health Services and The Bahamas Public Parks and Public Beaches Authority – who combined their resources and assets to make the campaign happen -- say the figure equates to the size of six full-length football fields.

■ See ESTIMATED 13,000 CUBIC YARDS / page 7...

**GOT NEWS?**  
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## PROTEST OVER BANK FEES

■ Continued from / PAGE 2...

When they (the banks) gave the loans, they gave them at very high interest rates; much higher than other districts and other areas, where these banks are operating. So, when the bubble popped, they made less money," Dr. Archer-Cartwright pointed out.

Based on the charts Mr. Rolle showed Dr. Archer-Cartwright, when the banks adjusted for said loss, they are back to where they balanced out at two percent overall and five percent on their returns.

"Is it that they are not making enough money, or is it that they are trying to make the money they made when the economy was good?" Dr. Archer-Cartwright questioned.

She explained that the reason behind the protest was to bring awareness to such banking practices.

"We're here today really, to bring more awareness to get Bahamian people involved to know that there are people advocating for changes in the banking and financial sector."

Dr. Archer-Cartwright is striving toward a better financial sector which she

hopes will be more inclusive of Bahamians, that has more competition and openness to different types of banking institutions inside The Bahamas.

"We should have options to be able to go outside of the normal framework that we're seeing today."

"We had a small protest in the past. We just want them to know that we are not going to let go of the situation, but we're going to keep involved."

"We want to hear what the government has to say in response to what Bahamians have been complaining about for the past few months."

"We want to see changes that are going to reflect that Bahamians are going to be put center and in the forefront when laws and policies are being made. We also want more accountability from the banks," Dr. Archer-Cartwright expressed.

Some banks have stipulated a \$500 minimum deposit in order to open a savings account, which is pretty steep for many Bahamians.

Citizens Against Bank Exploitation plans to continue to educate the masses about the Banking Industry with hopes of better banking practices in the future.

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# STRIVING FOR THE IMPOSSIBLE

The 2018 series salutes fashion mogul Peter Nygård's Golden Jubilee detailing his rags to riches story and incredible business success over these past fifty years. The Clifton Review will take an inside look at how he did it.

Fashion mogul Peter Nygård once said, "One thing about striving for the impossible is that you have very little competition."

No one believes that success is easy. If it were, everyone would be experiencing lots of success in their lives. It makes sense that what it takes is going after impossible goals and committing to the efforts to make it happen.

In looking back at how Nygård achieved 50 years of business success in this series, we've discovered some interesting anecdotes. Hilkka Nygård, Peter Nygård's mother, had an interesting reaction to an interview with Peter Nygård and a goal of making a million dollars. Hilkka Nygård could not imagine aiming to make such a large amount of money as one million dollars.

In a 1969 (Manitoba) Tribune Business Profile article, Peter Nygård was asked if he wanted to be a millionaire. He told the reporter that everyday, he just thought about doing a better job the next day.

The reporter, George Froehlich, insisted that Peter must be thinking of trying to make a million dollars at some point. Nygård acquiesced and said, "Yes, I suppose." The reporter had his headline. "Young EXEC shooting for millionaire status".

Despite the fact that Nygård was pressured to answer that question, Hilkka was embarrassed when the article came out. Hilkka thought her son aspiring to be a millionaire was an impossible and overly optimistic dream. She 'couldn't imagine what he was thinking to say such a thing'.

The article opened with, "Peter Nygård hopes to be a millionaire by the time he is 30. And anyone who knows the 28-year-old women's fashion executive would have to say his chances are pretty good."

The reporter was right. In 1968 when Nygård took over Jacob Fashions Ltd., it had 100 employees and was doing 800 thousand a year in sales. Two years later, Nygård had more than doubled the sales.

Ten years in, by the age of thirty-six, Nygård had already expanded into the United States. He had 700 employees and was making twenty-five million dollars in sales. He then set his sights on a goal of making 100 million in sales by 1987.

By 1985, not only had Nygård reached

## THE CLIFTON REVIEW

By P. J. Malone

**The Clifton Review** is a bi-weekly column that examines the question of the Clifton project along with the evolution of the war between two billionaires, the links to unsavory characters, the use of the courts for personal agendas, the involvement of the Government opposition party (the FNM), and the attacks on the Government of The Bahamas.

100 million in sales; he had surpassed it. He had made 140 million in sales and had 1500 employees and became Canada's largest apparel company. In 1993, he was up to 200 million in sales.

At Nygård's 35 Anniversary mark, he had exceeded 500 million in sales, and in 2007, the sales total was 850 million dollars with twelve thousand employees.

Hilkka Nygård needed not fear her son reaching for the impossible goal of one million dollars by the age of thirty. She and Peter's father Eeli had built the very foundation within their son that made such a goal possible. And given all of the positive values they instilled in him, he remained humble and grateful for all he has ever achieved.

In the "Sunday Life" section of the Winnipeg Free Press in a 1993 article, Peter Nygård was asked the question, "Are you surprised by your success?" He responded with the following:

*Yeah, that's a question that goes through my mind many times. How is it that it happens to some people and not to other people, and what's the difference? Where are those crossroads? What's that little extra that you do? What's the break in life you get? When I walk through my business and the places that I have, I say, my God, are you ever a lucky guy. Am I ever lucky that I was born in Finland instead of Estonia, that I was born on the right side of the Iron Curtain, and that I was lucky enough to come to Canada, the land of opportunity, and to be able to put all my energy to work and be repaid and rewarded for it. To come from being a poor boy of nothing to this, it's a constant reminder. It's shocking.*

So what did he do to make it all happen? We'll examine that next.

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## EDITORIAL

# THE RIGHT DIRECTION

Hear ye--- "...Marital rape in the context of a subsisting marriage will now be criminalized as aggravated spousal sexual abuse..." As news-delivered by Senator The Hon. Carl W. Bethel, Attorney-General, Commonwealth of The Bahamas.

Take note as follows:-- As for the Carmichael Road Detention Centre, Mr. Bethel acknowledged that conditions at the facility, while improving, were still not up to standard. He referred to the construction of additional buildings, and ongoing efforts to establish a full-time medical facility.

These are steps in the right direction.

Thus today, we give thanks to the current administration as they do what is right which reminds that: Doing o the right thing as regards much needed reforms pertinent to our commitment to right and justice for all people in the Bahamas is what should have been done a long time ago.

In truth, then, as crooked paths are made straight, we marvel at the other side of this coin and wonder why 'WE' have taken so long to know and do the right set of things

And thus we also note as referenced by Minister Bethel: "The Bahamas is pleased to announce that the Immigration (Detention Centre) Regulations, 2018 has been drafted and human rights issues are enshrined in these regulations. The regulations clearly identify the welfare, privileges and duties of detainees, including, but not limited to, clothing, food, education and religion. The regulations also provide for the right of the detainees to outside communication which includes access to legal representation. "Once the regulations are approved they will be tabled in Parliament and thereby enacted into law."

And thus, this word to the wise: "Amendments to the Immigration Act are being finalized which will on the one hand increase penalties for persons who harbour or employ undocumented workers, but which, on the other hand, will also provide clear legal remedies to the undocumented migrant, by limiting the time-frames in which they may be administratively detained by an immigration officer pending deportation, requiring judicial oversight thereafter, and mandating that - upon any claim to some constitutional entitlement - the matter must be referred forthwith to a magistrate (planned to be stationed in a

courtroom in the Detention Centre) who shall, if it is shown that there is a case which could be made, refer the matter to a Supreme Court judge."

This is the way to go!

Evidently: It's always a good thing when commonsense and decency are allowed to prevail!

And thus, we wish to state our full and proper respect for what is coming this way as the current administration concedes that things must change – and for the better – as regards the treatment doled out to women, children and to undocumented migrants.

So we declare as we express our deepest and most fervent support for the Government's [intended] legislative response to United Nations –based suggestions concerning issues pertinent to the human rights of undocumented migrants and [of course – rights due women].

This is especially important in a context where women and men should – on principle – be afforded equality under the law.

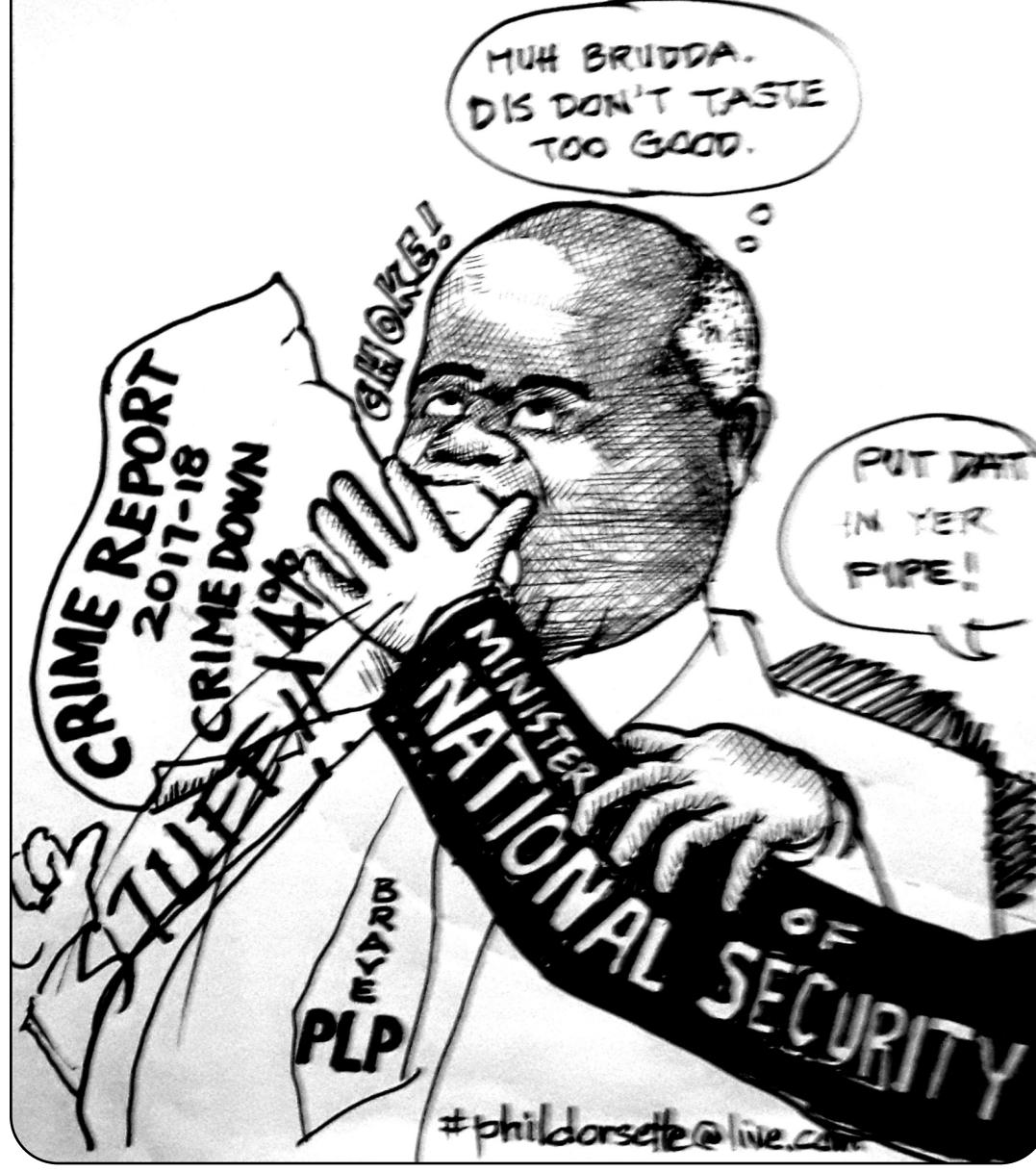
And thus it follows that, there should be next to no debate whether whilst in a so-called 'marriage' one so-called partner should be given carte blanche to bruise, batter and/or otherwise inflict the nastiest of injurious hurts on either mother or child.

And thus, our deepest sympathies to any and all men and women who whilst [apparently] decent, good and true 'Christians' continue to do their utmost to keep things the way they are.

Truth is: Most of these people are completely off the mark when they suggest that somehow or the other, the United Nations is meddling in matters deemed none of their business!

This is the absurd part of the matter at hand as witnessed by so-called religious who base much of what they think they know about the rights of women and children on rules, laws and routines which, since they are rooted in ancient notions as regards both slavery and patriarchy, are quoted as if they apply or should apply in a time where the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is the secular basis upon which the world's nations and peoples rest and agree as to how human beings should be respected, afforded dignity and thereby, making life as commodious for all the people.

## SHUT-EYE





# Director General Jibrilu Highlights Goals For Tourism

The Ministry of Tourism and Aviation is looking to place emphasis on product development in 2018, according to Director General of Tourism Joy Jibrilu.

While speaking at the Bahamas Business Outlook 2018 under the theme "Creating a World-Class Bahamas" Ms. Jibrilu said improvements to the Bahamian tourism product is vital.

"For example, you may have heard that plans are on the drawing board for a public-private partnership for the revival of the Port of Nassau and its further development as a cruise destination," she said.

The director general said a significant hurdle to the growth of air travel has been the physical operation of Family Island airports.

Therefore, the government has pledged \$160 million to the revitalization of the most high trafficked airports like Abaco, Exuma, San Salvador, Eleuthera and South Bimini.

Additionally, smaller airports will also be revitalized for greater air traffic and

business development.

Mrs. Jibrilu said despite numerous challenges, The Islands Of The Bahamas continues to benefit from existing and new airline partners.

She mentioned The Bahamas' newest airline partner Condor and Bahamasair's newest route from Nassau to Houston.

She added that the ministry stands ready with Bahamasair to explore other untapped US markets.

"Legacy carriers like American Airlines and Delta are benefiting from positive load factors to our major Family Islands with direct flights from cities like Atlanta, Newark and Charlotte hitherto unheard of," Ms. Jibrilu said.

The director general also touted robust marketing campaigns for the Islands of The Bahamas.

"Therefore, the ministry continues to collaborate with the promotion boards to further advertise and promote The Bahamas," she said.

"These initiatives are augmented by Baha Mar resort marketing efforts of a \$25 million global ad campaign



► Director General of Tourism Joy Jibrilu

to drive demand in its core markets as well as Atlantis' relaunch of a global marketing campaign focused on the authentic Bahamian."

Ms. Jibrilu noted that

tourism accounted for 28.6 percent of the country's GDP and accounted for 53,000 jobs in 2016.

In addition, The Bahamas received inflows of \$552

million placing it third among all Caribbean recipients after the Dominican Republic and Jamaica.

She added this figure will be expanded thanks to more capital works.

"Despite the suggestion that our travel economy could be expanded just by increasing hotel occupancy levels, approvals of capital projects have in fact kicked off another cycle of hotel inventory growth on Exuma, Bimini, Eleuthera, San Salvador and New Providence by well known international hotel brands that boost local employment such as Grand Hyatt, SLS at Baha Mar and the planned opening of Rosewood," the director general said.

"Together, they join Melia, Hilton, Marriot and Holiday Inn Express, which are currently operating in New Providence and other islands. Properties on Paradise Island are also benefiting from the adoption of upscale brands like the all-inclusive adult only Warrick brand, RIU and the Four Seasons, which was contracted for the management of the Ocean Club. These

brands continually go under extensive refurbishments to reinvigorate their product as they continuously seek to attract and retain guests."

Ms. Jibrilu said The Islands of The Bahamas must determine what success should look like in the tourism industry.

"We must focus on seeking solutions to the problems that undermine our performance and militate what our strengths are – beauty, creativity, friendliness and industry experience," she said.

Director General Jibrilu said ultimately, The Bahamas has the potential to be a world-class destination that can rival any tourism destination in the world.

"However, we need to further develop our product quality and better showcase its uniqueness, further develop our human resources and improve our service levels; invest in our Bahamian entrepreneurs and enterprises and apply high standards across the board and employ problem solving and deliberate strategies to achieve these goals," she said.

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# Estimated 13,000 cubic yards of debris removed during first two days of cleanup campaign



► Prime Minister, Dr. the Hon. Hubert A. Minnis (second right) tours the cleanup area on Saturday accompanied by (from left) Joshua Sears, Senior Policy Advisor, Office of the Prime Minister; Travis Robinson, member of Parliament, Bain and Grants Town; Melanie McKenzie, Director, Department of Environmental Health Services and at far right, Shanandon Cartwright, Chairman, The Bahamas Public Parks and Public Beaches Authority. (BIS Photo/Peter Ramsay)

■ Continued from / PAGE 4...

"So far everyone has done an excellent job in making Phase One of this initiative a success," Dr. Nicola Virgill-Rolle, Director of the Economic Development and Planning Unit of the Office of the Prime Minister said.

"Want to thank everybody who have been out here working – DEHS, Beaches and Parks Authority, all of the workers from the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) who have really been executing a tremendous work in executing the first phase of this cleanup."

"The cooperation from residents has been outstanding. Community cooperation/effort has been amazing. The residents got notification of this exercise well ahead of time, there was good communication around it, and so residents were well-prepared, they put their waste out as instructed and our facilitators were able to come by with the trucks and manual labour to take the debris out."

Dr. Rolle praised the partnership between the three government agencies/departments. The bulk waste removal and management of the heavy equipment used was done through the Department of Environmental Health Services while employees of

The Bahamas Public Beaches and Public Parks Authority took care of the manual work.

"The work over this first phase entailed cleaning down lots, bulk waste removal such as the removal of stoves, refrigerators, etcetera," Dr. Virgill-Rolle said. "We have also been removing derelict vehicles as well. Where persons have given permission to remove vehicles, they have been taken out of area as well."

Mr. Kemi Jones, Project Manager for the Over-the-Hill Community Development Partnership Initiative of which the Clean-up and Bulk Waste Removal Campaign is but one pillar,

said the focus of Phase One of the Clean-up focused on the areas north of Meadow Street, and north of Ross and Gibbs Corners. Officials will focus on the areas next weekend going back to areas south of Meadow Street and Ross and Gibbs Corners, as far south as Wulff Road and Poinciana Drive the weekend of January 26-28 during Phase Two.

"It's a massive area, but we are working hard and doing our best to impact as many lives as possible and get it done correctly," Mr. Jones said. "One of the six pillars of the Over-the-Hill Community Development Partnership Initiative talks

about rejuvenation, so this cleanup effort is focusing specifically on getting the trash, bulk waste and derelict vehicles out of the area and then once we have done that, in February residents will witness the launch of our painting programme where we are actually trying to put a new face on the entire community.

Mr. Jones said empowering residents is another key component of the Initiative.

"Some of the educational initiatives we have planned for the month of February involve training persons in the communities as to how they can take lessons learnt from these cleanup initiatives and turn them into businesses – how to become a landscaper; how to use their trucks and turn it into a commercial enterprise, teaching them how to become entrepreneurs.

"In talking to the residents, many of them have very good intentions and many of them want to see the area cleaned and to remain clean, but they just needed a jumpstart, that injection. You would be surprised how an injection of capital can lead to further things, such as taking the funds they earned today and buying a lawnmower with which they can start their own landscaping business for example," Mr. Jones added.

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