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VOL. 31 - NO. 30

WEDNESDAY - FEBRUARY 13TH, 2019

75 CENTS

"TRAVESTY OF JUSTICE"

Canadian Tourist Drowns In Eleuthera

BY LICEC BASTIAN
 Journal Staff Writer

A Canadian Cruise Ship passenger drowned in waters at Half Moon Cay on Monday.

Police are now investigating the circumstances surrounding this incident

■ See page 6...

Four Bahamians who have been described as supporters of the Progressive Liberal Party spent last night in the Cells of the Cable Beach Police Station in what one of their Attorneys described as "a deepening of the political witch hunt."

Early yesterday, Police in Grand Bahama arrested 50-year-old Michelle Reckley, 28-year-old Stephanie Collie and 26-year-old Kylon Vincent on charges of fraud and money laundering. In New Providence, officers



▶ Michelle Reckley, Former Deputy Director of Urban Renewal (File photo)

■ See page 4...

Mitchell Chides FNM Government

BY LICEC BASTIAN
 Journal Staff Writer

The Progressive Liberal Party (PLP) is sounding the alarm for justice as PLP Chairman, Fred Mitchell said the party is convinced that the government is on the attack of the party's supporters.

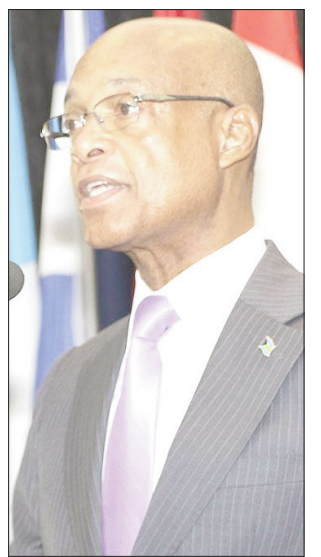
Mr. Mitchell's comments came after the party learned that several former public service workers, who were on



▶ PLP Chairman, Fred Mitchell

■ See page 4...

Schools are safe, says Lloyd



▶ Education Minister, Jeffery Lloyd

BY JAMEELHA MISSICK
 Journal Staff Writer

Education Minister, Jeffery Lloyd, yesterday asserted that school campuses are safe.

This after a 17-year old high school student was

■ See page 6...

Dames Maintains Crime Is Down

BY BERTHONY MCDERMOTT
 Journal Staff Writer

Authorities are trying not to increase the fear index in the wake of

four murders this past weekend.

Now there are repeated reassurances that these incidents are all isolated and that those

involved may have been feuding.

Minister of National Security Marvin Dames

■ See page 4...



▶ Minister of National Security Marvin Dames

GG VISITS MRS. DORIS GOMEZ FOR 100TH BIRTHDAY

▶ Mrs Doris Gomez, who celebrates her 100th birthday, received a visit from Governor General, Her Excellency the Most Hon. Dame Marguerite Pindling who presented her with an arrangement of flowers at her home. Also present to congratulate Mrs. Gomez at her home, among family and friends, were Speaker of the House of Assembly, the Hon. Halson Moultrie, and Pastor Timothy Stuart. (BIS Photos/Letisha Henderson)



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ALL THE NEWS YOU NEED TO READ IN THE MORNING

COMMERCIAL ENTITIES ACT TO BE AMENDED

The Government will table proposed amendments to the Commercial Entities (Substance Requirements) Act when the House of Assembly meets today.

The Commercial Entities (Substance Requirements) Act, 2018 was among a package of legislation passed in December 2018 aimed at implementing measures to ensure compliance with international standards on tax governance and transparency.

Under the Act, commercial entities must prove that they have substantial economic presence in The Bahamas by having income generating activities. They must also show management and control over the

business entity locally. The Commercial Entities (Substance Requirements) (Amendment) Bill, 2019 expands and clarifies various definitions, and substance and reporting requirements under the original legislation.

The Bill also includes proposed changes related to holding companies and resident criteria.

The amendments follow the latest round of high-level discussions between senior government officials and the European Commission, and take into account feedback received from the Commission following an assessment of the legislation.

Government worked closely with key stakeholders in the financial services sector in preparing the amend-

ments to the Commercial Entities (Substance Requirements) Act. International advisors were also consulted.

A meeting was held on Monday, February 11, 2019 with members of the broader financial services industry to outline the proposed amendments and invite feedback.

The Government has also met with the Opposition to discuss the proposed changes.

The amendments reinforce the Government's intent to take all necessary steps to safeguard the financial services sector and maintain the industry's competitive edge, and ensure the removal of The Bahamas from all watch lists in the shortest time frame possible.

Scabies outbreak under control

BY JAMEELHA MISSICK
Journal Staff Writer

All those with symptoms of the highly contagious scabies at the Sybil Strachan Primary school have been treated.

All the affected teachers were counselled and

offered the opportunity to be treated as well, according to Health Minister, Dr. Duane Sands, who updated the media yesterday.

Updating the Media yesterday, the Minister said, "now, we have to follow up in the homes of all of the persons of the

cases to deal with the contacts and to make sure this is wiped out," Dr. Sands said.

"As a matter of fact, once people are treated they can go back to school the following day," he said.

Scabies is spread by direct contact.



MINISTRY OF NATIONAL SECURITY

UNITED STATES COAST GUARD (USCG) ACADEMY 4 YEAR MILITARY DEGREE PROGRAM

The Bahamian Government in collaboration with the United States Embassy (Nassau) invites all qualified persons who are interested in applying for a four-year degree scholarship at the United States Coast Guard Academy in Connecticut, United States, to submit their applications to the Royal Bahamas Defence Force Headquarters, Coral Harbour Base by 31st January, 2019.

To qualify, applicants must:

- Be a Bahamian citizen
- Be between the ages of 17-22 years old
- Be unmarried and with no dependents
- Be willing to serve in the Royal Bahamas Defence Force for a minimum of five years on completion.
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- Mechanical Engineering
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Deadline for submission of application is 31st January, 2019.

Deadline for registration for SAT examination is 8th February, 2019 for the 9th March, 2019 test date (results from March test are only accepted if results from previous test are received by 1st March, 2019).

Students may register at:

<https://collegereadiness.collegeboard.org/sat/register/international>

The USCGA code number for the SAT exam is 5807.

Deadline for ACT registration is 11th January, 2019 for 8th February, 2019 test date.

Students can register at <https://www.act.org/content/act/en/products-and-services/the-act-non-us.html>

The USCGA code number for the ACT exam is 0600.

Applicants can make application to sit the SAT/ACT at local SAT Centers in New Providence as follows: Aquinas College, St. Andrew's School, St. Anne's School, The University of The Bahamas, Government High School and Queen's College.

For further information, please contact the Royal Bahamas Defence Force Human Resource Officer, Lieutenant Commander Michael Hanna at telephone 362-3705 or 362-3711 or via email at michaelhanna@rbdf.gov.bs or visit the website www.rbdf.gov.bs

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Campbell: Ensuring Equal Access for Community of Persons with Disabilities is a Priority

Minister of Social Services and Urban Development, the Hon. Frankie A. Campbell, told residents of Inagua that ensuring equal access for the community of persons with disabilities in The Bahamas is a major priority for his ministry.

"Our message is one of inclusion," Minister Campbell said. "My dream as the Minister of Social Services and Urban Development is two-fold: that we would develop, as individuals, a more caring society; a more empathetic and sympathetic society where we are concerned about other persons, and secondly, that we as a people, would not focus so much on our disabilities, but more on our abilities."

"It is important that we sensitize each other as to the importance of there being no impediments to buildings, businesses and parking spaces; that there are proper ramps; proper railings for our brothers and sisters living with disabilities to hold onto. That there is a need for our brothers and sisters to have access to all of the things persons not living with disabilities enjoy. It is the right thing to do."



► Officials from the Department of Social Services, the Department of Gender and Family Affairs, Urban Renewal Commission and the National Commission for Persons with Disabilities comprised Minister of Social Services and Urban Development, the Hon. Frankie A. Campbell's delegation to Inagua. Pictured from left are: Ms. Maria Kelley, Executive Secretary, Secretariat of the National Commission for Persons with Disabilities; Dr. Jacintha Higgs, Director of the Department of Gender and Family Affairs; Minister Campbell; Mrs. Lillian Quant-Forbes, Director, Department of Social Services, and Ms. Sheryl Knowles, Programme and Special Projects Coordinator, Urban Renewal Commission. (BIS Photo/Matt Maura)

Addressing a Community Meeting held at the St. Philip's Anglican Church Community Centre in Matthew Town, Inagua, on Saturday, February 9, Minister Campbell said no human being is exempt from the possibility of living with a disability, the various forms of which include, speech or language impairment; visual disability, including blindness; hearing or communi-

cation disability; mental or behavioural disability; intellectual disability, including Autism, Down syndrome and Cerebral palsy and physical or locomotion disability.

Executive Secretary of the Secretariat of the National Commission for Persons with Disability, Ms. Maria Kelley, was a member of the Minister's delegation to Inagua. Ms. Kelley used the opportunity to begin the process

of developing a database of persons with disabilities.

(The Secretariat is assisted by a Board, consisting of 15 members comprising representatives from government ministries, civil society, the trade congress, the community of persons with disabilities and other non-governmental organizations - NGOs).

Ms. Kelley said the National Commission for

Persons with Disabilities' (enacted into law in 2014) mandate is to ensure that "we have inclusion throughout The Commonwealth of The Bahamas".

She said as such, the Commission will be working to facilitate compliance with the laws pertaining to equal access for persons with disabilities. A former Deputy Director with the Department of Social

Services, Ms. Kelley said developing the database is one of the key functions of the Commission in order to facilitate "a proper registry of all persons living with disabilities so that we are able to assist them and ensure inclusion for all."

(Ms. Kelley's presence spoke to the Commission's mandate to ensure that there is inclusion for persons with disabilities throughout The Commonwealth of The Bahamas.)

"This is a society of inclusion. We want all persons to feel included in all that we do here in The Commonwealth of The Bahamas - no exceptions. Which means that we want to ensure that not only persons with disabilities are aware of the services that we provide to them, but we also want persons who do not live with disabilities to know that there is inclusion," Ms. Kelley said.

"The Commission's role is to ensure that there is equal access to health, education, employment and every other service that is available to those persons not living with a disability."

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“TRAVESTY OF JUSTICE”

Continued from / PAGE 1...

arrested a 58-year-old Architect, Christopher Symonette in connection with the matter. They were supposed to be arraigned before Chief Magistrate Joyann Ferguson in the Magistrates Court late in the afternoon, but prosecution's documents in the

matter were not ready. The accused are to return to Court on Nassau Street at noon today.

Attorney Damien Gomez, QC told the Journal, “We weren't able to start. There is no witness list. To start off with, they don't know who their accuser is. We have four people whose only offence is that they

are PLP supporters.”

Mr. Gomez who is representing Reckley, Collie and Vincent said, “the whole matter is a travesty of justice. This is malicious and pure evil.”

Symonette is represented by Queen's Counsels Anthony McKinney and Wayne Munroe.

Mrs. Reckley is a for-

mer Deputy Director of The Urban Renewal Programme in Freeport, Grand Bahama and is the wife of Assistant Commissioner of Police Clarence Reckley who is stationed in Nassau.

It is understood that when the senior Policeman learnt that his wife was arrested in Freeport, he travelled

there, only to be told that she was sent to Nassau to be arraigned.

The Journal learned that when Attorney Carlson Shurland sought to see his client, Mrs. Reckley who was in custody in Freeport, he was told to have a seat. After a long wait, the accused was whisked through a back door. Later, when

the lawyer inquired as to why it was taking so long to see his client, he was reportedly informed that she was sent to Nassau.

A number of supporters and family members of the accused were present in court, including former Prime Minister Perry Christie and his wife Mrs. Bernadette Christie.

Mitchell Chides FNM Government

Continued from / PAGE 1...

contract, were to be hauled before the courts on fraud and money laun-

dering charges.

In a press release, Mr. Mitchell said, "the Party officials learned with chagrin that the FNM gov-

ernment has arrested a number of individuals who worked out of Freeport in the public service on contract and

who are supporters of the PLP.

"This is a great shame and disgrace and an injustice. It is again slave shaming.

"The idea is to parade the individuals through the streets of Freeport, its airport and in Nassau to frighten those who support the PLP and intimidate those who wish to turn to the PLP.

"It is an entirely politically driven persecution," Mr. Mitchell said.

When, the PLP Senator spoke with this Journal, he lamented that the government's attack on its political opponents is a direct result of egg on its face following what he called a botched case against Former PLP MP, Frank Smith.

Two weeks ago, the former Public Hospitals Authority chairman was acquitted of all 15 charges of bribery and extortion, brought against him back in 2016.

"We're very concerned, because after 20

months of this administration being in power, they moved again. The FNM has moved again to what appears to us to go against their political opponents for political purposes and we want to be sure that our supporters are on guard against this.

"What of course is happening is there's a tide which has turned against the Free National Movement and it appears to us that what's happening is a direct result of this botched Frank Smith case and they are now engaging once again in victors justice by sending their prosecutorial dogs out against PLP supporters," Mr. Mitchell said.

He further chided the government adding that, "The former prime minister, Hubert Ingraham, who is one of them, once said that scores are settled at 6pm on election day. So, what is happening by this FNM administration in both an unusual and extraordinary measure.

"They ought to know what the Bible says that 'when you sow to the wind you reap a whirlwind'," Mr. Mitchell said.

Considering that several of the accused are from Grand Bahama, Mr. Mitchell further questioned why they had to be brought to Nassau for arraignment.

"We are advised that they [were] to be brought to Nassau to be charged in the courts here which of course is another egregious issue because they live in Grand Bahama.

"Why would you do that? why would you do that, unless you are trying to inflict pain and punishment, not by the trial itself, but by parading them through the streets of Freeport, the airport and here in Nassau," Mr. Mitchell said.

In the press release, Mr. Mitchell accused the government of being an insensitive government with ice water running through its veins.



PUBLIC NOTICE MINISTRY OF PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT OF PHYSICAL PLANNING

The public is hereby notified that an application for Site Plan Approval SPA/8/2018 on behalf of A.A.H Development is presently being reviewed by The Department of Physical Planning for presentation to the Town Planning Committee.

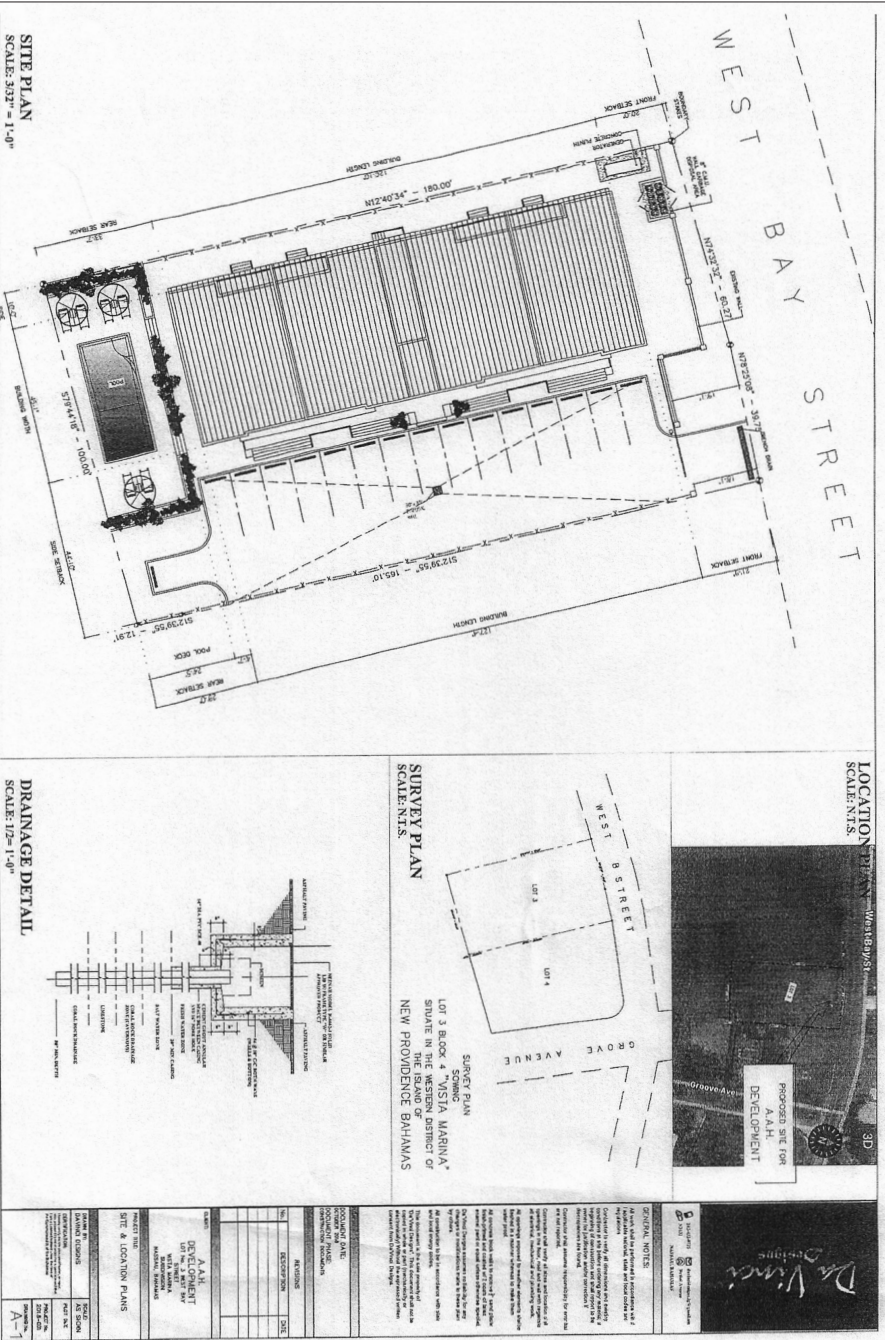
A public meeting will be held on March 4, 2019 at 7pm at The Department of Physical Planning's Hearing Room located on JFK Drive and Bethel Avenue.

The applicant is requesting a formal rezoning of lot #3, block #4 of the Vista Marina Subdivision. The property is located on West Bay Street, one lot west of Grove Avenue. The site is approximately 18,000sq.ft (100' x 180'). Six apartment units with accompanying leasing office and laundry facilities existed on the site until its recent demolition. Even though these units have existed for nearly 30 years, the applicant wishes a current and formal rezoning of the property in order to redevelop the site for the same use and density.

Preliminary plans for the proposed development are available for viewing at The Department of Physical Planning, located in the Aventura Plaza on John F. Kennedy Drive, during working hours of 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Interested persons and organizations are invited to review the information on file and provide written comments prior to the meeting. Comments should be directed to the Acting Director of Physical Planning within twenty-one (21) days of the date of this notice. Submissions can be made via P.O Box N-1611, Nassau Bahamas or fax (242) 328-3206. Further inquiries can be made to the Acting Director via Tel. (242) 322-7550/1/1 OR (242) 328- 3202 or CHARLESZONICLE@BAHAMAS.GOV.BS

Signed
Charles B. Zonicle
Acting Director of Physical Planning



Dames Maintains Crime Is Down

Continued from / PAGE 1...

says, "the shootings last Friday would have all been cleared, persons would have been arraigned just yesterday in connection with those.

"Police are already following leads in connection with these matters. These matters in a sense are matters that are isolated to individuals who may have had conflict for whatever reason."

"We are looking at making a full determination, the police that is, as to how these matters would have occurred."

"We're confident in our strategy and we feel that our strategy is in fact

working," said Minister Dames.

Mr. Dames stressed that reducing crime is not just the responsibility of law enforcement agencies.

"We introduced the ministry's advisory team on crime lead by Dr. David Allen and we will be working very closely with communities and carry out evidence based work to determine what are some of the additional measures that we need to employ.

"This more than a police issue and sometimes I think we get too cornered, too restricted and say as what is the police doing?"

"The police are doing

their job. They just sent three guys to court for a matter that occurred a week ago," he said.

The country's latest homicides happened just hours apart on Sunday.

The first took place at 9am on Washington Street and Balfour Avenue. The second took place on Miami Street and Robinson Road. The last took place around 9pm Sunday night at Potter's Cay dock.

The Minister also stressed that when compared to last year, the number of homicides are down.

In January 2018 there were 12 murders, and so far for 2019 there are 10 murders.

GOT NEWS?
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WARNING SHOT



By Jerry Hutchinson

Public Disclosure: The Million-Dollar Elephant in the Room By Jerry Hutchinson

PUBLIC DISCLOSURE: An Act to make provision for the public disclosure of the assets, income and liabilities of persons in public life and for matters incidental thereto or connected therewith. [Assent 7th October 1976] [Commencement 3rd January 1977].

The law regarding Public Disclosure is clear; Public Disclosure is required: "In the case of a person appointed a Senator or elected a Member of Parliament, as the case may be, at any time after the 31st day of December 1977, within three months from the date of such appointment or election, as the case may be, in respect of his assets, income and liabilities as at the previous 31st day of December". Section 4 (2) (A) Public Disclosure Act, 1977. and (B) and thereafter on the 31st day of December, in each year that he is a Senator or Member of Parliament, in respect of his assets, income and liabilities as at the 31st day of December in each year, so, however, that a declaration required to be furnished on the 31st day of December in any year shall be deemed to comply with the requirement of this subsection if it is furnished before the 1st day of March next following that date.

Whatever its current status, the original intention of the Act was a serious one. The Public Disclosure Commissions duties were intended to be in the public interest. Indeed, the Act states that; "The Commission shall consist of three members appointed by the Governor-General, upon the recommendation of the Prime Minister after consultation with the Leader of the Opposition". Yet, there has not been a public disclosure declaration published in the Gazette as required by law in sometime. If public officials had assumed office and not been aware of these disclosure requirements then, they should have been apprised of them. However, as the Public Disclosure Act (PDA) has careened around the country like a hand grenade this is highly unlikely. What is more likely is that public officials have decided that the PDA is a joke and they have no intention to comply with it. On 3 November, 2017 the Tribune reported:

"CITIZENS for a Better Bahamas (CBB) yesterday slammed the government for failing to meet its campaign promises on enforcement of the Public Disclosure Act.

In a press statement the advocacy group called on citizens to reject "implausible" and "unreasonable" excuses and demand the full enforcement of the critical anti-corruption law.

Lemarque Campbell, Citizens for a Better Bahamas' chairman and Transparency International's country representative, said: "Civil society can't remain silent on this issue. You have countries such as the UK where the assets, incomes, liabilities and campaign contributions for government officials are automatically posted and updated online for the public to view. Yet we can't even get the foundation right - by having the Public Disclosure Commission meet in a timely manner".

It is fair then to conclude that no public official has any immediate plans to disclose to the Bahamian citizens their assets and liabilities. What should be troubling to Bahamians is that this clear breach of the law has existed for many years and no amount of public criticism has had any effect on these non-compliers. Indeed, the Houses of Parliament has been the scene of many heated clashes in which members were accused of non-compliance. An example was reported in Bahamas News on Wednesday 19th, October 2011.

"A tit-for-tat over the disclosure of their finances caused a heated exchange in Parliament between members of the governing party and Bran McCartney, the self-imposed leader of the DNA. McCartney started the row by accusing Prime Minister Hubert Ingraham of violating the law by not complying with public disclosure laws. The Public Disclosure Act requires that members of parliament publicly disclose theirs, and their immediate families, assets, interests and income. Violation of the law is supposed to be an offence punishable by a \$10,000 fine, up to two years in jail or both, and additionally the member can have his property forfeited to the Crown. The law has been rarely, if ever enforced".

When asked by a reporter last year if he had complied with the Act, Mr Ingraham said he had not and that he was "too busy" to do so. Since then, Ingraham has allegedly made the appropriate disclosures. He told a newspaper earlier this year that he has since complied and has submitted the required information to the public disclosure committee. Mr McCartney did not withdraw his statements and the MPs for the government dropped the matter. But not before Mr Ingraham warned all MPs to get up-to-date with the Public Disclosure Commission. "All members are now on notice that they ought to do their disclosure for 2009 and 2010," the Prime Minister said".

Some of the reasons given by MPs for their non-compliance are so implausible and far-

etched that only an idiot would believe them. Indeed, comedy writers would find a rich treasure trove of comic material if they read the excuses given. Their excuses range from fear of extortion, kidnapping, robbery and burglary, all real risks experienced daily by the local population. In fact, they use every excuse except perhaps, that the dog ate their disclosure forms! No matter how strange and esoteric their excuses the reality is more mundane.

They don't wish their employers, the people, to know how they are progressing monetarily. Maybe they fear that the interest in their affairs springs from the public's interest in the more salacious details of their declarations and has nothing to do with their obligations under the PDA; and some will avoid complying with the PDA at all costs. In the absence of persuasive evidence to the contrary, I must reluctantly make a causal link between this lack of transparency and disclosure in our public life especially public accounting, and the recent findings by Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index which indicates that the Bahamas is at its lowest rankings ever. These numbers came from an opinion survey of Bahamians who were asked a wide range of questions on corrupt interactions with public officials. The responders for better or worse, have drawn their own conclusions in the absence of information to the contrary. It is safe to assume that important international agencies are probably doing the same. But, be advised, there are consequences for non-disclosure. Under 13(1) of the PDA which recites:

"Any person who (a) fails without reasonable cause, to furnish to the Commission a declaration which he is required to furnish in accordance with the provisions of this Act; (b) knowingly makes any false statement in such declaration; (c) fails without reasonable cause to give such information or explanation as the Commission may require under section 6 or 7; (d) after a summary of a declaration has been published, shall be guilty of an offence and shall on conviction on information, be liable to a fine not exceeding ten thousand dollars or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding two years, or to both such fine and imprisonment, and where the offence involves the deliberate non-disclosure of the property of a Senator or Member of Parliament, the court shall, in addition to the imposition of a fine or term of imprisonment or both (i) if the property involved is situate within The Bahamas (ii) declare that it be forfeited to the Government; (iii) if the property involved is situate outside The Bahamas, order that an amount equivalent to the value of such property (the value to be assessed as directed by the court), be paid by the Senator or Member of Parliament to the Government".

As I have previously stated, no public official has ever been found liable under this section. Either it does not apply or, no one gives a damn whether it applies or not; only time will tell. However, if public officials choose to submit a "dodgy" declaration or, a complaint is made about the contents of the declaration we have an App for that. Section 8(1) provides:

"Where (a) any person fails to furnish the Commission with a declaration which he is required to furnish in accordance with this Act; or (b) the Commission examines a declaration and any related information or documents, or conducts an enquiry into any such declaration or into a complaint made in respect of any summary of a declaration and is not satisfied with any aspect thereof, the Commission shall report the matter (setting out such details and particulars as the Commission in its discretion thinks fit) to the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition".

What is abundantly clear is that the provisions of the Public Disclosure Act 1977 are being wilfully ignored by many persons in public life with no consequences. If the Act is not intended to be complied with then, just repeal it. However, if it remains in force then compliance must be demanded. It seems to me that there is a spirit of non-compliance and opaqueness loose in the land which must be arrested. If are public officials refuse to obey the rules then, why expect it from our citizens. Sadly, disregard for the rules have been weaponized by politicians who flaunt the rules of practice and tradition themselves but punish others, (usually opponents) who do the same thing innocently.

So, if you are in public life, to declare or not to declare, that's a \$million question!

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E D I T O R I A L

Risks of civil war in Venezuela

The latest troubling events in Venezuela are the most recent episode in a political crisis that has been festering since the death of Hugo Chávez six years ago. Following President Nicolás Maduro's inauguration for a disputed second term in January, the speaker of the opposition-dominated parliament, Juan Guaidó, declared himself "interim president" of the country. Guaidó was immediately recognised by the US, Canada and a group of Latin American conservative governments, who called upon the Venezuelan military to rise up against Maduro. The UK, France, Spain, Germany and other European countries recognised Guaidó after Maduro refused their demand to call fresh elections.

Since Guaidó's declaration, the Trump administration has imposed new sanctions on Maduro's government, seized billions-worth of Venezuelan oil-related assets on US soil, and started making barely veiled threats of military intervention. Few would disagree that the country is in a disastrous economic and social situation, but before other governments take similar actions that could exacerbate Venezuela's political polarisation and end up provoking a bloody civil war, we should first understand how it reached this state of crisis.

After its oil industry began to take off in the early 20th century, Venezuela's rapid development was characterised by profound social inequalities. But under Chávez, who was elected in 1999, this deep social polarisation led to the gradual emergence of "Chavismo" – a large and organised movement that championed social justice for the dispossessed through far-reaching reforms.

Chávez was a charismatic and divisive figure, revered by most of the poor but hated by almost all in the urban middle classes, social elites and traditional political parties. Still, his energetic leadership helped to achieve political stability, despite fierce opposition from his adversaries at home and abroad, especially in the US.

In April 2013, when Maduro was elected president – a month after his mentor's untimely death – Venezuela inherited the polarised politics of the Chávez era, but without Chávez's leadership as a stabilising factor.

Falsely presented as a "fresh face", Guaidó first came to prominence in 2007, as a member of a generation of students who led protests against Chávez's socialism, despite his landslide presidential victory in 2006. Guaidó is part of an opposition that never stopped challenging Chávez's popular legitimacy even in his heyday, and who naturally doubled down as soon as the less assertive Maduro took office. The challenges to Maduro's legitimacy began the moment he was elected. His presidential opponent, Henrique Capriles, labelled the 2013 election a fraud (without providing any supporting evidence). Capriles called on his followers to ventilate their "anger" in the streets, a move resulting in the killing of a number of Chavistas. In January 2014 Guaidó's political party, Voluntad Popular, launched a nationwide insurrectionary movement aimed at forcing Maduro out of office. This was only nine months into Maduro's term, and long before the country faced any serious economic or social problems. In fact, in early 2014 oil prices were at record highs, and Venezuelans were still enjoying their highest levels of income ever, in terms of GDP per capita.

Yet when Venezuela's economic challenges came, Maduro's ineffective policies made things worse. In 2013, the government's strategy of using oil revenues to boost public investment and income redistribution was facing serious challenges.

Venezuela failed to increase oil production in order to fund the expansion of social rights. Its economy required swift reform, something Maduro showed no interest in undertaking.

And then oil prices collapsed in June 2014, leaving an ill-prepared country frozen in inaction. Living standards started to deteriorate, and while a Maduro-led Chavismo remained a large and organised political force, it lost its dominance. Maduro suffered a humiliating defeat in the December 2015 legislative elections, which allowed an opposition coalition to seize a potentially devastating two-thirds supermajority in the national assembly.

From that moment on, the political confrontation became institutional, as the legislature focused primarily on ousting the president, while the executive and pro-government judiciary tried to dismantle the assembly's powers. In parallel with an unprecedented decline in living standards, there were periods of failed political dialogue and deadly violence. The government dealt in an increasingly authoritarian way with an increasingly undemocratic opposition, deepening mistrust and resentment between both camps. The absence of a political agreement made the May 2018 presidential election perfectly legal but politically ineffectual, as major opposition parties refused to participate.

The shift to the right of major countries in Latin America, and Donald Trump's election, also played a fundamental role in deepening Venezuela's political polarisation. The US and its allies started treating Venezuela's Chavismo as a criminal rather than a political organisation, and Venezuela's government as an enemy rather than an adversary. Sanctions were imposed and, in August 2017, the country was virtually banned from international capital markets, accelerating the decline of its oil industry. Yet this confrontational approach failed to deliver on its objectives, as it emboldened Maduro in his claim of being subject to imperialist aggression, and discentivised rather than promoted the emergence of challengers to Maduro within Chavismo, especially among the military.

The recent move by Guaidó to anoint himself "interim president" could bring about catastrophic consequences for Venezuela. Unless the international community is willing to risk a needless war on the American continent, it must urgently create conditions for a national dialogue aimed at reaching a political agreement. This means acknowledging that both the status quo and the endorsement of Guaidó's claims are unsatisfactory from a democratic point of view, and do not guarantee the country's peace and stability.

The idea that Maduro has managed to remain in office during the past six years solely through corruption and the use of force is a gross misrepresentation. It ignores that, beyond the president, the Chavismo social movement counts millions of supporters, primarily from lower-income communities, and is strongly embedded within the Venezuelan military.

The holding of new general elections to resolve the current dispute can only be the result of an internal agreement that the international community can help to facilitate. An initiative by Mexico and Uruguay to host an international conference this week, along with the decision of the EU to head a contact group of European and Latin American countries, should be strongly supported. Venezuelans have a right to coexist, and they should be allowed to resolve their problems in a democratic, peaceful and sovereign manner.

Canadian Tourist Drowns In Eleuthera

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that occurred shortly before 3pm.

Police could not say what led to the man drowning. According to reports, he was discovered unresponsive, floating in waters at Half Moon Cay.

The tourist was

removed from the water and CPR rendered. The victim was transported to the local clinic on Eleuthera, where he was pronounced dead. Investigations are ongoing.

Police are also investigating a stabbing incident at a Government school in Western New Providence

which left a juvenile male with injuries, and another male in custody.

According to police, shortly after 11:00am, Monday, an altercation occurred between two male students, on the premises of a Senior Government School in the western district of New Providence, which esca-

lated, resulting in one of the students being stabbed about the body.

The injured student was transported to hospital, where he is detained in stable condition. Police have taken into custody, a 17 year old student of the school in connection with this incident. Investigations are ongoing.

ing.

A drug bust at the Lynden Pindling International Airport (LPIA) on Monday left one man in police custody.

Shortly before 4:00pm, Drug Enforcement Unit Officers acting on information, while at the domestic section of the LPIA, conducted a search

of a man who had arrived on a flight from Andros, and recovered from his luggage 11.6 pounds of suspected marijuana.

The man was taken into custody and is expected to be formally charged before a Magistrate Court this week. The drugs is valued of \$11,600.



PUBLIC NOTICE

MINISTRY OF PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT OF PHYSICAL PLANNING

The public is hereby notified that an application for Site Plan Approval SPA/1/2019 on behalf of Mylor Caribbean Development Ltd. and "The View Love Beach" is presently being reviewed by The Department of Physical Planning for presentation to the Town Planning Committee.

A public meeting will be held on March 13, 2019 at 7pm at The Department of Physical Planning's Hearing Room located on JFK Drive and Bethel Avenue.

The applicants propose a resort development on 7.44 acres of property (Lots 11, 11a, 12, 12a, 13, 13a, 14, and 14a) in the Love Beach Subdivision. These properties are for multi-family development.

The proposal is a mix of condominium buildings, time share units, a hotel and restaurant. The buildings on the site comprise the following:

- 4 4-storey buildings along the roadside each containing 16 residential units;
- A 4-storey hotel building consisting of 40 guestrooms;
- A 4-storey restaurant facility with bar/lounge;
- Two 4-storey time share buildings;
- 10 over-water bungalows;
- 3 single-storey service buildings

Preliminary plans for the proposed development are available for viewing at The Department of Physical Planning, located in the Aventura Plaza on John F. Kennedy Drive, during working hours of 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Interested persons and organizations are invited to review the information on file and provide written comments prior to the meeting. Comments should be directed to the Acting Director of Physical Planning within twenty-one (21) days of the date of this notice. Submissions can be made via P.O Box N-1611, Nassau Bahamas or fax (242) 328-3206. Further inquiries can be made to the Acting Director via Tel. (242) 322-7550/1/1 OR (242) 328- 3202 or CHARLESZONICLE@BAHAMAS.GOV.BS

Signed
Charles B. Zonicle
Acting Director of Physical Planning

Schools are safe, says Lloyd

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taken into custody in connection with Monday's school stabbing at C.C.Sweeting Senior High School that left another in hospital.

According to police, the incident unfolded around 11:00am when the teens got into an altercation on the school's grounds, leading to one of them being stabbed about the body.

"The school has been dealing with that along with the police and the

parents and the student has been receiving medical treatment. The matter is now under active investigation," Minister Lloyd said.

"I am awaiting a report so that we can determine what actions need to be taken," he added.

"I want to emphasize that our schools are safe for our students and our teachers. I want to emphasize that wherever incidence of violence or threats of violence occur, those are immediately addressed, confronted

and resolved; so that again, we provide the safest environment for those who need to be on the campus."

The injured student was taken to hospital, where he's listed in stable condition.

This is the latest incident of school violence in recent days.

Last month, a CV Bethel science teacher was attacked by a student.

This was followed up by a similar incident at CH Reeves Junior High.



NOTICE

The Utilities Regulation and Competition Authority (URCA) was established on 1 August 2009, as a corporate body, under the Utilities Regulation and Competition Authority Act, 2009.

As the independent regulator, URCA's regulatory remit of the Electronic Communications Sector (ECS) covers radio and television broadcasting, radio spectrum, internet and data, pay-TV and voice telephony; and oversight of Electricity (ES) Sector which includes entities or persons who generate, transmit, distribute or supply electricity throughout The Bahamas.

URCA wishes to advise that a Request for Proposals (RFP) for the provision of Internal Audit Services has been uploaded to our website at www.urcabahamas.bs.

Interested parties should submit responses to the RFP by 4:00 pm on 28 February 2019.

GOT NEWS?
call The Bahama
TIP LINE at 356-7254