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# The Bahama Journal

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# HALKITIS: GOV'T HANDCUFFED

BY LEAH COOPER  
 Journal Staff Writer

Former Minister of State for Finance Michael Halkitis yesterday said that he thought it was ill-advised for the government to "handcuff themselves" to balancing the budget within three years.

The Minnis-Administration has been deliberate about curbing spending in an effort to reduce the fiscal deficit.

Mr. Halkitis said, "If you come in and say that you want to balance the budget in three years, then you have to make an

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▶ Former Minister of State for Finance, Michael Halkitis

## TWO SHOT, ONE DEAD IN FOX HILL

BY LEAH COOPER  
 Journal Staff Writer

Members of the Fox Hill community and family members watched in shock and horror as one of their very own was killed in a brazen shooting in broad daylight yesterday.

The victim has been identified as Javardo

Thompson, alias Jojo.

Chief Superintendent Solomon Cash was on the scene and told reporters that shortly after 3:30 pm officers were alerted of the incident in the Fox Hill Community Park.

He said, "the officers, once on the scene, saw the lifeless body of a male lying in the street."

"Additionally, there was a second victim that was shot in the leg. He was transported to the Accident and Emergency section of Princess Margaret Hospital where he is undergoing medical attention.", he added.

Mr. Cash also indicated that a mobile unit at

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## PM: Exuma Poised For Economic Rebirth

Prime Minister Dr. Hubert Minnis said The Bahamas and the island of Exuma is poised for an economic rebirth as he announced extensive

plans to improve infrastructure on the island.

Among the plans are a new international airport in George Town, the construction of an Office of

the Prime Minister, much-needed roadworks and repairs to public docks.

The Prime Minister also announced that the moratorium on taxi plates

and rental cars would be lifted exclusively for the island, and government would ensure the neces-

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▶ Prime Minister, the Most Hon. Dr. Hubert Minnis spoke at a town meeting at the Exuma Foundation Resources Center in George Town, Exuma, on Saturday, March 16, 2019. (BIS Photos/Yontalay Bowe)

## Senator Highlights Move to E-Cabinet and E-Government Services

The Minister of State for Grand Bahama, Senator Kwasi Thompson says the government intends to change the way it does business, even at the Cabinet level with a decision and a commitment to move to a paperless Cabinet system.

Mr. Thompson who spoke on behalf of the Hon. Dion Foulkes, Minister of Labour, highlighted the Government's

progress toward digital transformation.

"If all of our persons are using smart phones, the private sector is using smart phones with digital services, the banks are moving forward with online services, insurance companies, other companies are moving forward with

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## NAD NOT AFFECTED BY AIRCRAFT GROUNDING

BY BERTHONY MCDERMOTT  
 Journal Staff Writer

The Nassau Airport Development is not expecting there to be any loss in service to the the Bahamas following the US Federal Aviation Administration's order to ground all MAX aircrafts.

This follows the March 10th crash of an Ethiopian airline which killed all 157 people on

board.

Airlines like Southwest and American Airlines which have services to Nassau both issued a statement expressing their support and compliance to the FAA's order, noting the importance of the safety of their team and passengers.

In a statement on March 14 Southwest said

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ALL THE NEWS YOU NEED TO READ IN THE MORNING

# HALKITIS: GOV'T HANDCUFFED

Continued from / PAGE 1...

attempt to do it.

"If your revenue is down \$185 million for the first half of the year, what that says is that either you have to have a tremendous second half to make up that deficit; or you have to cut spending," he added.

The former PLP MP also said that there is not a lot of discretion in this decision.

He said, "either you're postponing capital works; you're not going to do repairs that are needed, or

you're going to tell the people at the hospital that they're going to have to wait for the second quarter release before they can buy a ventilator.

"You're either going to have to make some painful cuts, or you're going to have to come back and re-adjust your strategy," he said.

The government has also come under fire in recent months for marching to the beat of international agencies like Moody's and the International Monetary Fund.

When asked about his opinion on this matter, he said, "a very successful Bahamian businessman once said, 'You don't manage your business for your auditors.' You listen to what they have to say, but you don't manage your business for them."

He added, "I always kept that in mind when I was dealing with the rating agencies."

Mr. Halkitis said that while Tourism numbers are doing well, times are still challenging for the average Bahamian.

"The cost of living is

high, wages aren't moving, and you have the government and its agencies and even in the central

government, particularly with people who are contracted, they're down-sizing," he said.

Mr. Halkitis was a guest on Radio Love 97's Jones and Company talk show.

# NAD NOT AFFECTED BY AIRCRAFT GROUNDING

Continued from / PAGE 1...

that removed all 34 MAX aircraft from their service; which will remain out of service until the FAA rescinds this order.

The statement also noted that with more than 750 aircraft in their fleet, more than 95 percent of Southwest aircraft are unaffected by this order.

Meantime, American Airlines also said in a statement that they have removed all 24 MAX air-

lines from their fleet.

On average, American operates 85 flights per day on the MAX, out of 6,700 departures throughout the American Airlines system.

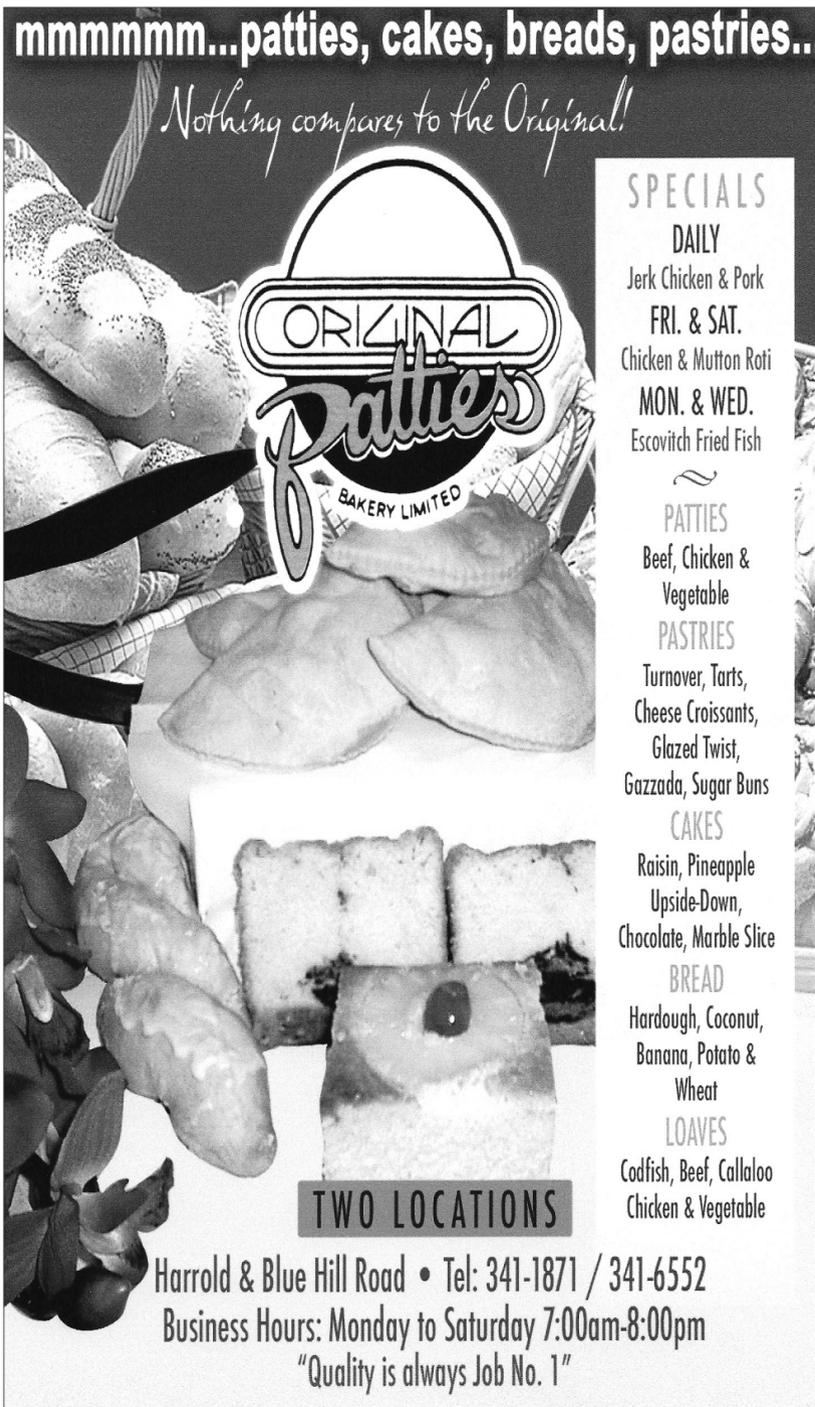
In a statement, Friday NAD's Vice President of Marketing and Communications Jan Knowles said, "we are monitoring the matter closely as international airline partners that have this aircraft type in their fleet have confirmed that

they will be replacing these aircraft with other equipment to service the significant demand for Nassau."

She noted that in January and February of this year, LPIA experienced record passenger numbers with a 20.5 per cent year over year increase in passengers.

NAD is anticipating this growth trend to continue through march and the upcoming Easter season.

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ROAD TRAFFIC DEPARTMENT

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NASSAU, N.P. BAHAMAS

The Public Sitting of the Road Traffic Authority Board Will be held at Thomas A Robinson National Stadium, Off University Drive on the 26<sup>th</sup> March 2019 at 10 am.

The Board will be considering applications for the grant of Self Drive Cars/Scooters, Private Schedule Omnibus Franchises and Variations in accordance with the Road Traffic Act, Chapter 220.

Further, in accordance with the provisions of Road Traffic Act Chapter 220, any person is entitled to object to the grant of any franchise, however a person who would wish to be heard as an objector should within fourteen (14) days of the date of this publication lodge in writing, two (2) copies of his/her objection, setting out therein, all the grounds of his/her objection(s).

The under-mentioned persons or their representatives are required to attend:

SELF DRIVE CARS		
	NAME/ADDRESS	AMOUNT REQUESTING
1.	Schivano L. Saunders Anguilla Ave Nassau Bahamas	2 SD Cars
2.	Kirk A. Bastian Elizabeth Estates Nassau Bahamas	10 SD Cars
3.	Lawar Mcneil Carmichael Road Nassau Bahamas	20 SD Cars
4.	Shanique Missick/Kamal Scott Nassau Village	2 SD Cars
5.	Bryantino Rahming Paradise Island Drive Nassau Bahamas	10 SD Cars
6.	Thomas Forbes Adelaide Road Nassau Bahamas	5 SD Cars
7.	Duran Stubbs Pinewood Gardens Nassau, Bahamas	10 SD Cars
8.	Nerlie Dorvieux Family Street Nassau Bahamas	10 SD Cars
9.	Keisa Cox Farrington Road Nassau Bahamas	6 SD Cars
10.	Calvin Higgs Faith Avenue Nassau Bahamas	5 SD Cars

11	Kimely Bain P.O. Box SB 50629 Hope Gardens Nassau Bahamas	5 SD CARS
12	Alextine Daxon Stapledon Gardens FH14083 Nassau Bahamas	5 SD Cars
13	Sidney Mckenzie Sidmac Car Rentals Ltd., P.O. Box N-1603 Nassau Bahamas	10 SD Cars
14	Frank Burrows Sir Lynden Pindling Estates Nassau Bahamas	5 SD Cars
15	Annette Thomas-Longley Winton Meadows III Nassau Bahamas	5 SD Cars
16	Valentino Farquharson Prince Charles Nassau Bahamas	3 SD Cars
17	Bertram Sears Wellington Lane Nassau Bahamas	10 SD Cars
18	Alexander Johnson Claridge Road Nassau Bahamas	3 SD CARS
19	Fred Rahming Hope Garden Nassau Bahamas	5 SD Cars
20	Glenda Roker Pride Estates Nassau Bahamas	5 SD CARS
21	Marvin Comarcho Jr. Fox Hill Road Nassau Bahamas	10 SD Cars
22	Lerone Hanna Marathon Road Nassau Bahamas	5 SD Cars
23	Cyril Greenslade/Gloria Greenslade Carmichael Road Nassau Bahamas	20 SD Cars
24	Olevia B. Anderson Pride Estates Nassau Bahamas	5 SD Cars
25	Santino Evans Shrimp and Hamster Street Nassau Bahamas	5 SD CARS
26	Dirk Simmons & Stephen Sweeting Skyline Lakes Nassau Bahamas	30 SD Cars
27	Miranda Adderley Harmony Hill Road Nassau Bahamas	10 SD CARS
28	Marvin Comarcho Sr. Oakes Field Nassau Bahamas	12 SD Cars
29	Michael Jeudi Minni Street Nassau Bahamas	15 SD Cars
30	Eric Whitely Jr. Dunmoe Drive Nassau Bahamas	20 SD CARS
31	Shanique Bodie Silver Pine Close Nassau Bahamas	10 SD Cars
32	Sypron Brice Flamingo Gardens	15 SD Cars

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# PM: Exuma Poised For Economic Rebirth

Continued from / PAGE 1...

sary resources would be provided to staff the island's public health clinic.

Prime Minister Minnis said the new facilities and improved infrastructure will allow the island's residents to take full advantage of the increase in visitor arrivals being experienced throughout The Bahamas in record numbers, and new economic opportunities.

"We must prepare you for what is coming," the Prime Minister told residents attending a Town Hall meeting on the island on Saturday held at the Exuma Foundation Resource Center.

"As all of these planes come in, your airport will become obsolete. You must have a new and improved airport. If Exuma is receiving a new airport, it also means there must be additional employment to run such facilities. What it also means is if our tourist numbers are increasing and our airport is being expanded you must have

additional tax and self-drive cars available."

The Prime Minister met with residents of Exuma to provide an update on the Mid-Year Budget Statement and the recent 30th Inter-Sessional CARICOM Heads of Government meeting in St. Kitts and Nevis.

He encouraged the island's residents to take advantage of increased opportunities for entrepreneurship through programs offered by the Small Business Development Center, which is providing up to \$20,000 in grants, and support, for Bahamians looking for capital to start small businesses.

The Prime Minister also told residents who are leasing Crown Land that they may soon have the opportunity to become landowners.

Outstanding applications for residents leasing Crown Land will be processed in the coming weeks, particularly for Family Island residents, said the Prime Minister.

Prime Minister Minnis said the Government's



Prime Minister, the Most Hon. Dr. Hubert Minnis spoke at a town meeting at the Exuma Foundation Resources Center in George Town, Exuma, on Saturday, March 16, 2019. (BIS Photos/Yontalay Bowe)

ambitious affordable housing program will also provide additional land ownership opportunities for Family Island residents.

The Government is in the process of developing subdivisions in New Providence and the Family Islands, featuring lots - complete with infrastructure - for sale at less than \$30,000.

"The Family Islands have been ignored for too

long. Exuma is not represented by the FNM but we are still one Bahamas and we will not discriminate against any constituency or island as long as I am here," said Prime Minister Minnis.

The Town Hall meetings are part of Prime Minister Minnis' commitment to provide regular updates to Family Island communities throughout the country.



Continued from / PAGE 2



33	Nassau Bahamas Deborah Mortimer Soldier Road Nassau Bahamas	3 SD Cars
34	Denard Dean Big Pond Nassau Bahamas	15 SD Cars
35	Laramie Woodside Mackey Street Nassau Bahamas	3 SD Cars
36	Kevin Duncombe # Dignity Gardens Nassau Bahamas	10 SD Cars
37	Julie Johnson Jubilee Gardens Nassau Bahamas	10 SD Cars
38	Samatha Bain Sugar Apple Street Nassau Bahamas	15 SD Cars
39	Marisa Darling Chippingham Nassau Bahamas	10 SD Cars
40	Edward Johnson St Vincent Road Nassau Bahamas	10 SD Cars
41	Jewel Sands Prince Charles Drive Nassau Bahamas	35 Plates
42	Anthony Duvalier Garden View Estate Nassau Bahamas	20 SD Cars
43	Lelia J. Beneby Sanford Drive Nassau Bahamas	5 SD Cars
44	Kevin Duncombe Dignity Gardens Nassau Bahamas	10 SD Cars
45	Monique Taylor Fox Hill Nassau Bahamas	20 SD Cars
46	Curtis Gray and Dana Munnings Coral Heights East Nassau Bahamas	5 SD Cars
47	Aniska P. Johnson Carmichael Road Nassau Bahamas	4 SD Cars
48	Tomico Horton Big Pond Nassau Bahamas	2 SD Cars
49	Tamara Francis Windsor Fields Nassau Bahamas	15 SD Cars
50	Christo D. Edgecombe Lancaster Road Nassau Bahamas	5 SD Cars
51	Stanley Forbes Montague Nassau Bahamas	3 SD Cars
52	Carlisa Armbrster & Colin Mckenzie Teal Street Nassau Bahamas	15 SD Cars
53	Rudolph V.D. Bowe Love Beach Estates Nassau Bahamas	4 SD Cars
54	Keithian D. Gray Claridge Road P.O. Box CR-56173	5 SD Cars



55	Nassau Bahamas Cindy Kelly Wulff Road P.O. Box N-1333 Nassau Bahamas	5 SD CARS
56	Wellington Richards Cowpen Road Nassau Bahamas	6 SD CARS
57	Julian Rolle Stapleton Gardens Nassau Bahamas	5 SD CARS
58	Laverna Baker Skyline Lakes Nassau Bahamas	10 SD CARS
59	Jerome Johnson Minnie Street Nassau Bahamas	10 SD Cars
60	Nathaniel Ferguson Jr. Collins Avenue Nassau Bahamas	15 SD Cars
61	Burshall Lebron Bain Yamacraw Hill Road Nassau, Bahamas	15 SD Cars
62	Dwight R. Longley Sandilands Village Nassau Bahamas	15 SD Cars
63	Dexter Kerr Jr. West Bay Street Nassau Bahamas	20 SD Cars
64	Carvison and Philippa Pratt Sea breeze Lane Nassau Bahamas	5 SD Cars
65	Henry Bain Opulent Drive Nassau Bahamas	30 SD Cars
66	Bancroft Thompson Jr. Malcolm Road Nassau, Bahamas	5 SD Cars
67	Sherrell McSweeney/Harvey Johnson Oakes Field Nassau Bahamas	10 SD Cars
68	William Mccartney Mount Royal Avenue Nassau, Bahamas	12 SD Cars
69	Giovanni Thompson Yamacraw Shores Nassau Bahamas	5 SD Cars
70	Brian Newbold Pinewood Gardens Nassau Bahamas	2 SD Cars
71	Javon Saunders Montague Villas Nassau Bahamas	10 SD Cars
72	Sherese Hamilton Winton Estate Nassau Bahamas	10 SD Cars
73	Hesley Walkine West Bay Street Nassau Bahamas	10 SD Cars
74	Wayde Seymour Marathon Estates Nassau Bahamas	5 SD Cars
75	Newell Bullard Graham Drive Nassau Bahamas	6 SD Cars
76	Coolie Johnson-McDonald Nassau Village Nassau Bahamas	2 SD Cars

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# TWO SHOT, ONE DEAD IN FOX HILL

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the time witnessed the shooting.

He said that those officers chased the perpetrators through several streets in the Fox Hill District before making an escape.

He said, "those persons were able to allude the officers in the Blueberry Hill area near a church."

He added, "both suspects ran from those officers into the bushy areas, one dropping an instrument which was retrieved by the police."

He advised that this investigation is still in its early stages, and the motive at this time is unknown to police officers.

For community members that may feel some degree of fear following this recent homicide, Mr.

Cash said that officers are committed to securing citizens of The Bahamas.

He said, "from time to time you may have isolated incidents, but what I want the members of the public to understand is that some perpetrators and suspects are relentless in

carrying out acts of criminality.

"It's difficult, when their minds are made up to carry out these acts, to prevent them; but we will remain focused in our strategies to remain in these communities where we would like to minimize

these events from happening," he added.

Police are appealing to members of the public or anyone in the immediate area that may have witnessed the incident to feel free to contact police with any information.

# Senator Highlights Move to E-Cabinet and E-Government Services

Continued from / PAGE 1...

online services but the government is still far beyond, then that is a major problem for the country," said Senator Thompson.

He announced that in two to three weeks, the Government will execute a \$30 million loan with Inter-American Development Bank, which will transform E-government services.

"The Cabinet is the highest decision making body that we have in the country. If we can make decisions more effectively and efficiently then that means that those decisions can be executed more effectively and efficiently. It has to start from the top down.

"The Government has made a commitment that we will be paperless when it comes to the Cabinet and we will institute a program called E-Cabinet where decisions will be made online securely with all of the proper cyber security. It can be done online where Ministers are able to view online, make decisions and communicate with each other online and paperless," he stated.

Senator Thompson also noted the Government's plan to adopt Estonia's model of E-Government services.

"If a government agency has a piece of information about you no other government agency should be able to ask for that same piece

of information. That one simple concept, if we would begin to move towards that one principle, how powerful that change for this Government would be.

"One Government office will ask you to go to another Government office to get the Government's information to give to another Government office - imagine if they spoke to each other. We should be moving towards a concept of the Government working for you instead of you working for the Government. What we are doing now is we are working for the Government.

"Digitally what should be happening is the same Government office should be digitally

requesting that information from another Government office and digitally providing that information to them," said the Senator.

The Ministry of Labour (MOL) officially celebrated World Consumer Rights Day last Friday with a special ceremony and exhibition in Freeport, Grand Bahama, Friday.

The ceremony was held at the Harold DeGregory Complex and brought to a climax World Consumer Rights Week which was recognized with various activities in New Providence and the major Family Islands. The theme for the week was "Trusted Smart Products".

The MOL including the Consumer Protection

Commission (CPC), the Bahamas Bureau of Standards and Quality and Consumer Affairs Unit (Price Control) in conjunction with various stakeholders hosted the event.

Ricardo Deveaux, First Assistant Secretary, CPC, led a small delegation to Grand Bahama to participate in the activities. Among the group was Mabelle Carroll, Communications and Operations Manager; Patrick Ingraham and Carmen Kemp, Commissioners. Students representing seven schools in Grand Bahama, government officials, employees of the MOL and representatives of the various stakeholders were also

present.

Reno Smith, Chief Price Inspector, said MOL ended a successful 2019 Consumer Rights Week. Activities included a Junkanoo Rushout by the Platinum Knights Junkanoo Group and an exhibition which featured the Northern Bahamas Utility Company showcasing various smart products including a smart Nissan SmartCar and solar panels.

"We were happy to be able to assist in educating the consumers here in the northern Bahamas. In Bimini and Abaco we visited the schools to educate them more on consumer rights and trusted smart products for 2019," said Mr. Smith.

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77	Bernard Bodie Sunset Park Nassau, Bahamas	15 SD Cars
78	Richena Bain Garden Hills Nassau Bahamas	10 SD Cars
79	Marlon Wood Yamacraw Beach Nassau Bahamas	10 SD Cars
80	Theotis Taylor Golden Gates Nassau Bahamas	15 SD Cars
81	Shantelle Seymour Marshall Road Nassau Bahamas	8 SD Cars
82	Treca Whymns & Dion Thompson Pine Cone Ave Nassau Bahamas	15 SD Cars
83	Joydawn Roberts Prince Charles Drive Nassau Bahamas	10 SD Cars
84	Basil Moss Jubilee Gardens Nassau Bahamas	15 SD Cars
85	Darcia Carey Pinewood Gardens Nassau Bahamas	3 SD Cars
86	Lenny Rolle Sunset Meadows Nassau Bahamas	SD Cars 3
87	Amber Johnson Cowpen Road Nassau Bahamas	SD Cars 15
88	Karen Moss-Timothy Tower Heights Nassau Bahamas	SD Cars 2
89	Kemico Sands Nassau East South Nassau Bahamas	SD Cars 2
90	Dario Campbell Fire Trail Road Nassau Bahamas	SD Cars 3
91	Jared Forbes Emmanuel Drive Nassau Bahamas	15 SD Cars
92	Berkley Newton Fire Trail Road Nassau Bahamas	15 SD Cars
93	Aaliyah Rahming Marshall Road Nassau Bahamas	2 SD Cars
94	Dania Ferguson High vista Nassau Bahamas	3 SD Cars
95	Jem Roberts Sea Breeze Estates Nassau Bahamas	10 SD Cars
96	Don Delancy Joe Farrington Road Nassau Bahamas	3 SD Cars
97	Karen Belle Flamingo Gardens Nassau Bahamas	3 SD Cars
98	Arnette Baker Pinewood Gardens Nassau Bahamas	10 SD Cars



99	Amber Johnson Cowpen Road West Nassau Bahamas	15 SD Cars
101	Daniel Stubbs Fleming Street Nassau Bahamas	10 SD Cars
102	Edward Demeritte Mermaid Blvd Nassau Bahamas	13 SD Cars

### SELF DRIVE SCOOTERS

	NAME/ADDRESS	AMOUNT REQUESTING
1	Rino King Country Club Estates Nassau Bahamas	25 SD Scooter
2	Erica Chea Poets Drive Nassau Bahamas	30 SD Scooter

### PRIVATE SCHEDULE OMNIBUS

	NAME/ADDRESS	AMOUNT REQUESTING
1	Kristin Archer Garden Hills Nassau Bahamas	1 Private Schedule Plates
2	Gregory Munnings Clifton Heritage Authority Nassau Bahamas	3 Private Schedule Plates
3	Henry Forbes South Beach Nassau Bahamas	4 Private Schedule Plates
4	Gerald Gabriel Joe Farrington Road Nassau Bahamas	1 Private Schedule Plates
5	Barrett Smith Coral Harbour Nassau Bahamas	2 Private Schedule Plates
6	Danny Gibson West Bay Street Nassau Bahamas	5 Private Schedule Plates
7	Nicole Matecki Sweeting Lane Nassau Bahamas	3 Private Schedule Plates
8	Daniel Moss Mark Ave, Buttonwood Nassau Bahamas	3 Private Schedule Plates
9	Shavane Turnquest Big Flower Invst. Ltd. Cable Beach Nassau Bahamas	3 Private Schedule Plates
10	Elroy Knowles Bel Air Estate Nassau Bahamas	2 Private Schedule Plates
11	Joseph Wemyss Honeysuckle LN Nassau Bahamas	5 Private Schedule Plates
12	Tamara Francis Winsor Field Road Nassau Bahamas	3 Private Schedule Plates

Continues on / page 6...

# WARNING SHOT



By Jerry Hutchinson

## Dismissive Behaviour Towards the United States – Again!

“If history teaches anything, it teaches that self-delusion in the face of unpleasant facts is folly”

Ronald Reagan

Democratic nations have a moral obligation to protect their citizens. Sometimes this is achieved through diplomacy and moral suasion. In other cases, harsh sanctions, public shaming or war is the only solution. We are not yet at stage where the United States feel that we require heavier a hand but, we are certainly at the naming and shaming stage; moral suasion appears not to have worked. In any event, the dismissive and abrasive behaviour of our public officials towards our major source of tourism after the issuance of travel advisory's is troubling and dangerous.

America, like Canada and other nations have a moral obligation to warn its citizens of potential danger in places that they visit. For our officials to dismiss warnings of crimes and other criminal behaviour in the Bahamas especially Nassau, without it appears researching the complaints shows a level of immaturity and self-absorption which is becoming a hallmark of our country. Canada also issued an updated travel advisory on 28 February 2019. Canada's warning reads, "Exercise a high degree of caution in The Bahamas due to high rates of crime, especially in Freeport and Nassau." Cruise Radio.net

Each travel advisory is met with a series of frantic, ill-advised and self-serving press statements which totally ignores the subject of the advisory and focuses on some supposed slight by the issuing country. How dare they make statements and assumptions on crime in the Bahamas? The most recent statements by our officials are real doozies.

Like this one reported in the Tribune on 26th February, 2019.

"Tourism Minister Dionisio D'Aguiar says he expects some level of "push back" from local officials to a recent US travel advisory, as he expressed dismay over the alert's timing yesterday. Addressing the warning outside of Cabinet, Mr D'Aguiar said local officials believed US Embassy personnel would regard decreases in local crime as a step in the right direction. The Freeport MP, in noting his overall shock at issuance of the alert, said the use of exaggerated verbiage and the alignment of the Bahamas with countries like Mexico and Jamaica did give even more cause for concern".

Wow! The last time I checked the US was not only the worlds only superpower but also a friend, ally and the source of our economic success. So, precisely what form the threatened "push back" will take is unclear; but remember words have consequences! As to the timing of the advisory, warnings are issued when they are issued. If the timing of the release is inopportune, then so be it; nations will protect their citizens as they feel fit. The US will certainly not be bullied like the cruise lines. Another unfortunate statement by the Minister was this one.

"I mean to lump us in the same category as Mexico and Jamaica; to us seems a little harsh and we thought a lot of the verbiage in the advisory was an exaggeration," he added. Precisely what is meant by this assertion eludes me. Crime is crime wherever it occurs; crime proliferates in areas where there are "soft targets" such as naïve, vulnerable tourists and citizens. Unfortunately, tourists from many nations have been victims of assaults and worse in the Bahamas. The proximity of the Bahamas to the US makes it the destination of choice. For example, it is English speaking, has good communications, relatively short flight times, familiar foods and a historical US consular presence.

Not to put too fine a point on it, I really don't give a damn about another country's crime; I don't live there. I am more concerned with crime in the Bahamas and how we can mitigate its malign effects on visitors, our citizens, and by extension protect our "golden goose". It should be readily apparent that the Bahamas tourist related crime rate would mirror that of other popular tourist destinations. So, there is nothing sinister here; we just happen to have the same crime problems as Jamaica and Mexico and, travel advisories are historically issued around the US Spring Break period which is taking place now.

Then, perhaps under the influence of multiple microphones and television lights the Minister doubled down and made this utterance.

"The Ministry of National Security is looking to see exactly how many foreign visitors experienced some sort of crime activity or crime incident. We feel that it is negligible, so we are going to push back a little bit. We are now dialoguing with the US Embassy and we are going to push back," he said.

We think that even though there may be areas, pockets of crime; really the effect on foreign visitors to a country is so negligible that it doesn't warrant the very strong language that they said in that crime advisory. So, conversations will continue."

Some thoughts here. We are complaining that tourists are assaulted but the numbers are negligible; what is the basis for this assertion? I would have thought that dialogue with the Embassy would have been the first option preferably before making statements to the media. But, that's just me, my logical mind and

sense of process. This sense of process leads me to my next statement. Shouldn't Bahamian diplomats who are versed in these matters been allowed to discuss the US security concerns with their counterparts?

Putting these aside lets drill down on other parts of the Ministers statements. Bahamians know and by extension visitors to our shores are aware that sexual assaults and robberies are of enormous and ongoing concern for US authorities. Recent reporting in the Nassau Guardian of December 20,2018 revealed that there were 55 rapes as at 18 December 2018, an increase of 12%. We know from international research that sexual assaults and rapes are underreported by victims. There are possibly hundreds of victims in our society and beyond who have not reported crime especially sexual assaults. Victims who urgently require our support and help and who if untreated may fall into despondency, shame, lack of self-esteem, depression and who may self-harm. These victims most likely include citizens of foreign countries as well given the millions of tourists who visit the Bahamas each year.

These statistics align with those of the Women's Crisis Centre which on Thursday 28th February 2019 stated: "The Bahamas has an "epidemic" of sexual violence, according to Director Sandra Dean-Patterson who made the remark as the organisation plans to launch a campaign, #SilentNoMore, to destigmatise sexual abuse and encourage victims to share their stories".

The reality is that unless a crime is reported to and recorded by police there was statistically no crime committed. Indeed, police crime statistics are so suspect that many countries conduct independent crime surveys to confirm or refute them. The most notable is the British Crime Survey. We have no way of knowing what victims of crime in the Bahamas report when they return home. But their families and friends and US authorities do. As former US Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld once said, "We Don't Know What We Don't Know". It is however certain, that many of these are reported to consular officials located in the country in which their citizens were victimized; so, we must be careful with our words.

In the event, stating that the impact of crime on visitors is negligible is a hope not grounded on facts. Nothing positive will come from engaging in a public war of words with the US each time a travel advisory is issued. There is just too much that we don't know but, foreign law enforcement might. As an example, how do local hotels deal with crime reports especially allegations of sexual assault? Do they as a matter of business practice offer to refund the guests vacation expenses and, do they treat the report with the concern and compassion it deserves? How many victims of crime have left the Bahamas after making a report to private security; return home thinking that it would be forwarded to police and never hear from it again? How many properties, seeking to protect their brand give guests reports on crime short shrift? These are some of the matters unknown to local authorities which may be driving the increasingly strident travel advisories from the US and Canada.

Travel advisories will continue to be the bane of our existence until we correct the problem. Officials must accept that there are unacceptable levels of crime in the Bahamas whose many victims includes tourists; there is no getting around this fact. The United States have a solemn and moral obligation to ensure the health and safety of their citizens at home and abroad; just as we have one to ours. So, why pillory them if they take their obligations more seriously than we do?

What we are seeing being played out here in real time is driven by a fundamental misunderstanding of the United States and its people. Many Bahamians, including this writer attended university in the US. Alas, some did not learn much outside of the contours of their courses. They are informed by reality shows and the like which, are entertainment although part of American culture but, not really grounded in reality. I submit that it is not until you are associated and train with American icons like, Col. Jeff Cooper, Dr Richard Kobetz, G. Gordon Liddy, etc; spend weeks in their presence, engage in conversations, share MRE, s and hardship with other trainees in the field, that you truly begin to understand American culture. Consequently, Bahamians misunderstand and therefore underestimate just how tenacious Americans are. Unlike British Caribbean colonies, which got so-called freedom for the asking, Americans fought for their rights and freedoms. If they feel that their rights have been abridged or that their citizens are being victimized, the US will react and strongly. They are relentless; they will not stop until satisfaction is obtained and matters resolved. So, if we believe that bluster, ill-considered remarks and voluntarism ignorantism will dissuade the US State Department from issuing travel advisories on the Bahamas, we are wasting our time.

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Quo Vadis, Bahamas?

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E D I T O R I A L

## FIXING THE JUDICIARY

With the ongoing scathing criticism of the administration of justice in the Bahamian Judiciary, as well as a serious backlog of cases, the new Chief Justice to be appointed has a difficult road ahead.

Whoever is gets the appointment can take a page out of the book of the Chief Justice of Jamaica who has himself committed to implementing measures to improvements that he says will make Jamaica's judicial system the best in the region and among the best in the world.

Among these, Chief Justice Bryan Sykes says, are steps to ensure the delivery of outstanding judgments in the Supreme Court by the end of this year.

"I am making it my mandate for us to have excellent courts," Justice Sykes said in a televised national address recently, identifying those pillars as trial and hearing date certainty; efficiency; and a culture of service among staff and judges.

"My vision is for our judiciary to be the best in the Caribbean region in three years and among the best in the world in six years beginning March 1, 2019. To support this vision, I give my commitment to put in place measures so that by December 31, 2019 all outstanding judgments in the Supreme Court will be delivered. As of 2020 a judgment should be delivered within 90 days, and in exceptional cases 180 days, following completion of the case," he added.

"Courts will start on time and trial time productively utilized. All stakeholders – judges, court staff, witnesses, jurors, attorneys at law, police officers and others, despite the many challenges they face, must resolve to come to court to assist in the administration of justice," he added.

Justice Sykes further indicated that the Court of Appeal's case disposal rate should also increase.

Among the other commitments he made was the issuance of a decree absolute in divorce matters within 16 weeks, once the documents are submitted error-free, while advising that by December 31, 2019, "there will be no outstanding divorces".

In relation to matters of probate and letters of administration intended to establish the validity of wills and dealing with the estates of persons who have died without leaving a will, Justice Sykes indicated that once all relevant documents are submitted error-free, the Supreme Court's staff will ensure these are settled within 12 weeks.

Meanwhile, the Jamaican Chief Justice advised that ongoing training is being facilitated for court staff to improve their basic customer service and stress management skills.

This, he pointed out, is in keeping with the judicial system's Customer Service Charter, which articulates that court staff will be courteous, respectful and prompt.

"Research has shown that the perception of court users is influenced by how they are treated and not only by the outcome of their cases. This [training] will continue as we aim for First World standards," he added.

Mr. Sykes, who took up the post of Chief Justice last year, contended that Jamaica's attainment of developed country status by 2030 requires a judiciary that "remains strong and maintains its integrity", and he paid tribute to his predecessors and other judges for their role in this regard.

He sought to assure that "the judiciary that I lead will ensure that Jamaica is the place of choice to live, work, raise families, do business and retire in peace and safety."

The new Chief Justice in the Bahamas must insist on the independence of the judiciary to ensure that the judiciary has control of its own budget. In addition, it is important for the Bail Act to be amended to restore the power to Magistrates to grant bail to accused persons in all cases except murder. Currently, justice is being denied many accused persons as they prefer to plead guilty to offenses even when they are innocent, to avoid being remanded to prison.

Far too many Bahamians have been denied justice by a system that is clearly broken. The Chief Justice of Jamaica is dead right.

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**NO BETTER READING**

# Prime Minister Opens the 47th Annual Scientific Conference

Prime Minister, the Most Hon. Dr. Hubert Minnis delivered remarks at the 47th Annual Scientific Conference Medical Association of the Bahamas & Bahamas Dental Association. The two-day event was held at the Baha Mar Convention Centre.

"It is always good to be with former colleagues, especially at events such as this.

"During the conference there will be a rich and dynamic exchange of ideas and information which may help to improve health care practices, save lives, and enhance the quality of health for Bahamians and residents," said the Prime Minister.

He said as a member of the profession and as a member of the Medical Association, he fondly remembered these types of conferences and the role they played in informing him and other health care professionals of developments in medicine.

"I am advised that with both dental and medical tracts you will have over 45 lectures over the next two days. You will hear from over 30 local speakers and over 20 international speakers from individuals ...expert in their fields," said Dr. Minnis. "As health care practitioners it is vital that you remain current in medical advances, including in technology, pharmaceuticals, surgical breakthroughs, health care delivery and other areas."

He said the enhanced utilization of communications and information technology and information sharing are vital in improving the quality of health care and well-being of Bahamians and residents.

"For example, we are on the cusp of a revolution where tele-health technologies are poised to enhance the delivery of primary care services, national emergency medical services and radiology services to Bahamians and residents throughout

our archipelago," he said.

He noted that as on previous occasions, in terms of public health, the Government would continue to focus extensively on the prevention and treatment of chronic non-communicable diseases (NCD) like diabetes and hypertension.

"We must do more to combat these diseases, which rob us of general health and too many lives," he said. "Along with climate change, the explosive incidence of NCD's represent two of the greatest threats to national development."

He noted that as a matter of urgency, healthcare professionals must more aggressively address sugary drinks and the role they play in obesity, especially childhood and adolescent obesity.

"Let me also reiterate that an important component in how we deliver health care is our progress in implementing a National Electronic Medical Records System.

"This revolutionary

platform will digitally link public clinics and hospitals so that it will not matter where a patient is seen, the patient's information and medical record can be instantly accessed," said the Prime Minister.

He said this represents an opportunity to harness the digital age technology for the benefit of Bahamians and residents. He said that the technology would enhance the delivery of care in hospitals and clinics, improving transitional care between facilities and services, while expanding avenues for medical research.

The aim and objectives of the [Medical] Association are:

- To encourage and support a high standard of medical practice, ethics and conduct;
- To improve the professional competence of its members; to foster better relationships among its members;
- And to protect all their interests, and to



► Prime Minister, the Most Hon. Dr. Hubert Minnis brought remarks at the 47th Annual Scientific Conference of the Medical Association of The Bahamas & The Bahamas Dental Association at the Baha Mar Convention Centre, Wednesday, March 14, 2019. The conference is being held from March 13 - 16, under the theme, "Pursuing Your Passion". (BIS Photo/Yontalay Bowe)

exert influence on behalf of and for the benefit of the people of The Bahamas in all matters related to health

The Prime Minister

commended the Associations for these objectives and wished them fruitful sessions and discussions over the next two days.

## Conchman Helps Young GB Athletes Get A Fast Start

Continued from / PAGE 4



VARIATION		
1	Carlean Moss Marshall Road Nassau Bahamas	Request Public Schedule Omnibus Routes Change
2	Johnathan Woodside East Street South Nassau Bahamas	Request Public Schedule Omnibus Route Change
3	Oscar Saunders Soldier Road Nassau Bahamas	Request Public Schedule Omnibus Route Change
4	Doris Gibson Dowdeswell & Deveaux Street Nassau Bahamas	Request Public Schedule Omnibus transfer
5	Margarette Thompson-Bain Sunset Park Nassau Bahamas	Request Public Schedule Omnibus Transfer
6	Basil Woodside Garden Hills Nassau Bahamas	Request Public schedule Omnibus Route Change
7	Clarence Higgs Prince Higgs Nassau Bahamas	Request Company name change
8	Shandy Higgs Blue Hill Road Nassau Bahamad	Variation of Tour and Self Drive Plates
9	Joseph Bridgewater Coral Height East Nassau Bahamas	Request Tour Plate Transfer
10	Raymond Johnson Southwind Gardens Nassau Bahamas	Request Public Schedule Omnibus Routes Change
11	Rudolph Taylor Sr. Ritz Lane Nassau Bahamas	Request Public schedule Omnibus Route Change
12	Saspress Rolle Palm Beach Street Nassau Bahamas	Request Public schedule Omnibus Routes Change
13	George, Keva and Ricardo Hamilton Malcolm Allotment Nassau Bahamas	Request Self Drive Company Name Change
14	Happy Tour Ltd Nassau Bahamas	Request Company name change
15	Ali Zubair Nassau Bahamas	Request Public Schedule Omnibus Transfer
16	Craig Knowles Hunt and Ramsay Street Nassau Bahamas	Request Public Schedule Omnibus Route Change
17	James Lewis Big Lou Bus Service Nassau Bahamas	Request Public Schedule Omnibus Routes Change
18	Otto Gibbs Winton Meadows Nassau Bahamas	Request Public Schedule Omnibus Transfer
19	Aaron Woodside Venice Bay Blvd Nassau Bahamas	Request Public Schedule Omnibus Routes Change
20	Nassau Transport Company Ltd. Davis Street Nassau Bahamas	Request Self Drive Cars Transfer

END



► The Grand Bahama Amateur Athletic Association (GBAAA) was the recipient of a donation from the GBPA Conchman Triathlon Committee. GBAAA is one of the recipients of proceeds raised at the 2018 Triathlon held last November. Chairman of the GBPA Conchman Triathlon Christopher Baker is pictured presenting a cheque to committee member Ravanno Ferguson. Also pictured are Donna Idol, Committee Member (on the left) and Godfrey Waugh, Committee Member and Pharez Cooper, President of the GBAAA (on the right). Also pictured are members of Fast Track Management Training programme.

As part of their mandate to support organizations that focus on Youth and Sports, the GBPA Conchman Triathlon began their donations with the Grand Bahama Amateur Athletic Association (GBAAA). The GBAAA uses all its donations to help purchase track and field equipment as well as cover the athletes' travel expenses to Nassau and other islands for competitions.

Chairman of the Conchman Committee, Christopher Baker, said "We are very pleased to be able to assist the Grand Bahama Amateur Athletic Association. The funds were used to purchase new starting blocks, a high jump bar and other equipment. Many of these young athletes also participate in the Conchman Triathlon, so it's great

to give back to them."

Committee member Ravanno Ferguson, accepted the donation on behalf on the GBAAA. "We appreciate the financial contribution given to the GBAAA by the Conchman Committee. The much-needed funds have been used to purchase equipment for the Sporting Complex," he said. "In the past, we've had to borrow equipment from Nassau, but now we have our own, and we were able to use it at the recent High School Championships." The Conchman Committee unanimously agreed that it was important for the athletes to have the proper equipment to train for competitions. Donna Idol, Conchman Committee member noted that "We were pleased to see the new equipment being used at the recent

Grand Bahama High School Championships and the Fletcher Lewis Invitational. The GBAAA volunteers provide great support to Conchman Triathlon every year, and we are thankful for their assistance and pleased to help them."

The GBPA Conchman IronKids Competition is a mini version of the full triathlon. The event is held in November, during the Conchman Triathlon, and many GBAAA distance runners use the competition to prepare for race season. The IronKids is open to young athletes up to twelve years old, and the Secondary School Challenge is open to all high schools on the island. Registration for the 2019 IronKids, Secondary School Challenge, and Conchman Triathlon is now open.