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75 CENTS

ECONOMIC GROWTH NOT FELT

Says Chamber CEO

BY BERTHONY McDERMOTT
 Journal Staff Writer

The Bahamas Chamber of Commerce Chief Executive Officer Jeffrey Beckles says more must be done to ensure all sectors benefit from the economy's growth as the small and medium sized businesses are not feeling it.

He said that if not sustained, that 2.6 per cent growth the economy is experiencing will decline, specifically in the tourism industry.



▶ The Bahamas Chamber of Commerce Chief Executive Officer, Jeffrey Beckles

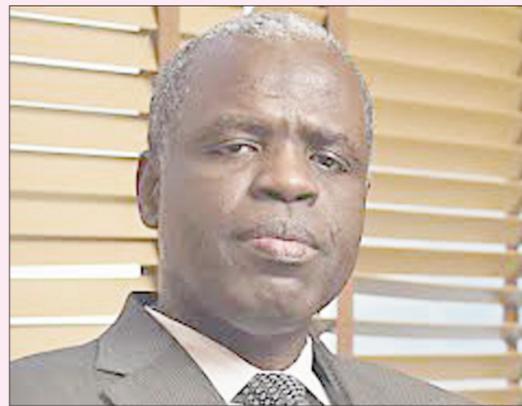
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ECONOMY STRENGTHENING, SAYS CB GOVERNOR

BY LEAH COOPER
 Journal Staff Writer

Central Bank Governor John Rolle indicated that the economy is strong due to developing countries picking up steam.

Mr. Rolle explained at his quarterly media briefing yesterday that although there is more uncertainty about the



▶ Central Bank Governor, John Rolle

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CB INTRODUCING DIGITAL CURRENCY

BY LEAH COOPER
 Journal Staff Writer

The country is well on its way to implementing its own digital currency, according to Central Bank Governor John

Rolle at yesterday's quarterly media address.

The Governor said that the Central Bank expects that at some point over the course of the year to begin the pilot.

It has been expressed in the past that Exuma

would be the ideal sized business community for such an experiment.

Before all of this is done, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) also suggested in its

■ See page 2...

ROLLE PROMOTED TO ACTING DEPUTY COMMISSIONER



▶ Acting Deputy Commissioner of Police, Mr. Paul A. Rolle

The Commissioner of Police Anthony Ferguson has announced the promotion of Assistant Commissioner of Police Paul Rolle to the position of Acting Deputy Commissioner of Police.

A press release states that the appointment was made in accordance with the provision of Article 119(1) of the Constitution and on the recommendation of the Prime

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ATTEMPTED ROBBERY ENDS IN DROWNING

BY LISA KNOWLES
 Journal Staff Writer

An attempt to evade police ended in drowning yesterday for one of the three suspects behind a break-in in the Sea Breeze area in New Providence. Police Liason

Officer Superintendent Shanta Knowles told reporters on the scene that after 10:00 am, they responded to reports of the incident that took place on Bay Lilly Drive.

Police responded to a

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2019 MISS WORLD BAHAMAS CONTESTANTS CALLS ON THE GOVERNOR GENERAL



▶ Contestants of the 2019 Miss World Bahamas pageant paid a courtesy call on Governor General, Her Excellency the Most Hon. Dame Marguerite Pindling at Government House on Wednesday. They were accompanied by Miss Bahamas Organization Vice-President Jerome Sawyer. (BIS Photo/Letisha Henderson)




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ALL THE NEWS YOU NEED TO READ IN THE MORNING

Church Leaders Bash Carnival

BY BERTHONY MCDERMOTT
Journal Staff Writer

The Bahamas Christian Council is not budging on its stance that Bahamas Junkanoo Carnival challenges the country's moral, ethical, cultural traditions and practices, particularly those enshrined in the constitution promoting the Bahamas as a country of Christian values.

Council President, Apostle Delton Fernander referring to the Road Fever Parade, said there has been a mixture of men and women flaunting near naked bodies, engaging in sexual contact, with event participants using an open flow of alcohol. "It's a ticking time bomb waiting to explode into a dangerous series of circumstances," he said.

Outspoken Kingdom Life Senior Pastor Cedric Moss, who has strongly

objected to Carnival from the beginning five years ago, adamantly agrees.

"If I'm out of touch, if I'm wrong and if the overwhelming majority of Bahamians believe that what takes place in carnival is standard decency and that's okay and should be allowed, then it should be allowed.

"The government has to be right on that basis to give out those permits and put the police there to guide them as they do the stuff they do, that's the way it should be in a democracy.

"What I'm saying to you is that does not represent a democracy, that represents the bankrupted bad idea from the Christie led PLP administration that they placed on the Bahamian people, that the current administration, doesn't have the courage to stop," he said.

What's the difference between what happens during carnival and Junkanoo? Pastor Moss insists he has long stopped attending Junkanoo parades because of the same level of vulgarity.

"They call Junkanoo a family event, it's not a family event. I checked out on Junkanoo when I saw a woman gyrating on the face of a man on Bay Street, that was more than 20 years ago.

"So the same applies to that, the thing is this; we have to come to a sensible place of determining how we live in shared space."

"You cannot do what you want in shared space; do what you want in your private space, so it doesn't affect others in public space," he said.

Apostle Fernander argues that if some of the behaviour that occurs during Road Fever were

to take place in any other arena, persons would be arrested.

"We've got to make a stand that either we enforce the laws or we do not enforce the laws.

"By next year we are going to have a real conversation about where vulgarity can happen and that if you can be arrested for it in another place, then we can't have it on our streets and the populace gets to decide what takes place and we need to have that conversation," Apostle Fernander said.

The Council is pushing for social stakeholders to take a serious look at the staging of Bahamas Carnival to determine if this is the kind of event Bahamians wish to allow, if Road Fever is in line with laws regarding public nudity and if it is beneficial to the health and well-being.

CB INTRODUCING DIGITAL CURRENCY

Continued from / PAGE 1...

recent mission that the country update its current digital system in preparation for such a move.

Mr. Rolle said, "what you should take from the IMF's commentary as well is that they are pointing out a lot of the technology and related issues that are coming into play in any event in modern, digital financial systems."

He added, "one of those would be the technology risks, and those risks exists whether as a Central Bank or as an individual financial entity. All of those risks exist today because we clear checks electronically, we clear all of our large payments electronically. So, we have a real-time payment system and we have a retail payment system.

"In all of those cases, we have to manage the risk and in those risks, are escalating in terms of the kinds of threats. So, we do know that our posture around those have to be very proactive," said Mr. Rolle.

The Central Bank's initial expectation was to introduce the pilot to the family island in less than three years.

This follows its announcement last year

that it was looking for a qualified company to produce the technology housing the currency.

Governor Rolle adds that the digital currency also brings to the forefront a lot of concerns surrounding the abuse of the financial services sector like money laundering and the financing of terrorism.

He said, "from our point of view, we know that having the identity infrastructure is super critical, and that is very important.

"Having the right identity infrastructure, in our view will also help the average individuals establish relationships easier with financial institutions because we do not intend that a central bank digital currency is going to be the alternative to the bank. It should complement what your bank provides and make it easier for you to obtain more of those transactional type services from the bank," he added.

The CENTRAL BANK announced that it was eyeing the creation of a digital currency in January of last year.

The country has since hosted a number of blockchain conferences in an effort to network with industry professionals and educate the masses.



ROAD TRAFFIC DEPARTMENT PUBLIC NOTICE

The Road Traffic Department would like to remind all Franchise Holders - Private Schedule, Public Schedule, Private Charter, SD Cars, SD Scooters, Taxi and Livery. To present registration documents for the annual Licensing and inspection documents for the annual inspection and registration for **MAY 2019/2020**.

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All Franchise Holders with fleet of five (5) or more vehicles are to submit their packages to Road Traffic Department, Franchise Unit, Section 3, Eastern Side of the National Stadium. All Packages will be processed on first come first serve basis.

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ECONOMIC GROWTH

Continued from / PAGE 1...

"These increases that we are talking about, how are they penetrating to the average Bahamian? How are they affecting the restaurants?"

"How are they affecting the Straw Markets? How are they effecting ground transportation and other areas?"

"How are people really feeling the effect of this growth we have been talk-

ing about so lavishly in the public spaces? Because if they aren't feeling it, then you're just simply talking about a number and if they aren't feeling it, then we really have to ask ourselves the question, are we really growing or is it just the fact that more people are coming?" he asked.

To address this concern, Mr. Beckles said the country need to have apolitical conversations in

hopes of fostering growth. "Until we begin by habit to have apolitical conversations, we are not going to grow; we're not going to advance.

"It's that simple; because for 50 or 60 years everything that we're done in this country has been wrapped in political polarization and look where it's gotten us.

"So, I say that to say that our conversation today needs to be apoliti-

cal; why? because when the Bahamas' name is called, it is not your individual name, it's all of us regardless of who the administration is its all of us.

"So, if the Bahamas is viewed as not being ready, that's all of us. It doesn't matter how I voted, we're viewed as not ready," Mr. Beckles said.

Another major concern he said is that successive

governments have failed to invest in the domestic economy.

He added that they have continuously borrowed too much money.

"The government of The Bahamas, successive, has warned Bahamians to stop spending money and to save and that if you don't have any money for a rainy day, then you will have a problem.

"Then we turn right around and accept gov-

ernment's conduct in spending money any way they want and say nothing about it; or when we do we call the radio station, we go on Facebook and we run out without realizing that the people we are talking about, are the people that actually work for us," he said.

Mr. Beckles is calling for more to be invested in the domestic economy in hopes of sustaining economic growth.

ECONOMY STRENGTHENING

Continued from / PAGE 1...

speed in which these countries would grow over the next next few years, the support for tourism has been maintained and linked mostly to healthy confidence in U.S. households.

He said, "In this regard, the available information points to continued growth in the Bahamian economy due to the first quarter of 2019, with tourism providing the strongest support, and foreign investment continuing to drive construction

activity."

While Mr. Rolle admits the economy is indeed strengthening, he accepted that there is room for improvement.

He said, "when we see, for example a 20-something per cent jump in estimated revenue from the tourism sector, that's happening because we just had the huge amount of rooms added.

"Also, there's a take-off in terms of people interested in vacation rental. To continuously see that kind of growth would mean that someone

is continuously adding large amounts of capacity, and you're attracting the airlift and port facility to keep up with the traffic volumes," he added.

Mr. Rolle said, "based upon how the infrastructure is set today, everything that we look at says that once you've gotten over this adjustment, your growth rate is now averaging slightly below the two per cent range. By most measures, that's not considered a satisfactory projection for The Bahamas."

The Central Bank

Governor added that the long and medium term focus is to ensure that one and a half per cent improves, which calls for added focus on investments or productive ways to generate good revenue growth.

A nine-month fiscal performance snapshot indicated that the government has collected a little over 55 per cent of its budgeted revenue from the increase of Value Added Tax (VAT).

On that topic, Mr. Rolle indicated that he is not concerned how the

economy adjusted in the very near term when the government makes adjustments in its policies.

"What is more important is what the adjustments means for the economy 3, 5, and 10 years out. That's a part of this," he said.

He added, "when you increase the taxes, there's going to be some adjustments in demand. However, if it is being carried in the context where other forces and momentum are propelling the economy higher, those

will dominate eventually."

He said that the Central Bank also expects that improved health in the public's finances are going to have its own set of benefits and rewards.

The Governor added that there are some painful measures, given some of the difficult stakes that exist.

In all of those cases, he said, there may be a slight initial adjustment giving a mixed message. However, he said, one must focus on the long-term measures.



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ATTEMPTED ROBBERY ENDS IN DROWNING

Continued from / PAGE 1...

call after receiving reports that a home was broken into. Upon the officer's arrival, they saw three men running from the home. Two of them were captured and taken into custody, a third jumped into the canal just at the rear of the house.

"The officers noticed that he was swimming in the canal towards Golf Course Boulevard. Therefore a patrol unit was sent to the other side of the community.

"Officers noticed as he was swimming, he appeared to have been in distress, they rendered assistance to him by jumping into the water, brought him to shore and began to perform CPR, until an

ambulance arrived; but he was pronounced dead upon its arrival," said the officer.

Superintendent Shanta Knowles also noted that because of the watchful eyes of the residents in the Sea Breeze community, the Police were alerted as quickly as they were able to capture two of the men. When asked if officers were on patrol in the area, she responded that it was a quick response by Police Officers.

The incident has prompted officials to issue some safety measures heading into the long summer months. After school closes and children are on summer holidays for a few months, they are admonishing parents to ensure that

their children are involved in positive activities, so that they do not become involved in crime and are not victims

of crime.

"Homeowners are encouraged to take every precaution to secure their homes when they are not

there and we encourage installing surveillance cameras, security screens, and we encourage the proper use of locks, so

that their values can be protected when they are away from home."

The matter is under active investigations.

ROLLE PROMOTED

Continued from / PAGE 1...

Minister, after consultation with the leader of the Opposition, Governor General of the Commonwealth of The Bahamas, Her Excellency the Most Honorable Dame Marguerite Pindling.

The appointment with took effect from 1st April,

2019.

Recently, a number of senior officers of the Police Force were retired, including former Deputy Commissioner Emrick Seymour.

Mr. Rolle has spent a number of years at head of the the Criminal Detection Unit of the Force.

THE BAHAMA BRASS BAND HONOURS THE GOVERNOR GENERAL



► The Bahama Brass Band gave a performance in Honour of Her Excellency the Most Hon. Dame Marguerite Pindling, Governor General, at Government House on Wednesday evening, May 1, 2019. During the programme, Director of Bahama Brass Band, David G. Beneby, Sr., presented Dame Marguerite (pictured) with CD's of band musical performances. The Bahama Brass Band is an historical institution -- known as 'the Big Jumper Church Band' of the Church of God of Prophecy, it came about as the result of a need for musical ministry in the oldest Pentecostal denomination in The Bahamas, in 1925. Since its inception, over 300 members have served and continued the musical tradition, ministering throughout The Bahamas and internationally. (BIS Photo/Patrick Hanna)



THE PORT DEPARTMENT, MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT & LOCAL GOVERNMENT

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Tenders will be opened at 10:00 am on the 4th of June 2019 at the office of the Tender's Board, Ministry of Finance.

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



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