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Doctors Increase Demands

BY DEANDRE WILLIAMSON
 Journal Staff Writer

Asking for more than holiday pay, The Bahamas Doctors Union (BDU) increased its demands as it outlined a number of issues deserving attention and hopes to discuss them during today's meeting.

The new demands range from increased health insurance to a request for Crown land

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▶ BDU President Dr. Melisande Bassett

Dr. Sands Calls Dr. Bassett's Comments 'Interesting'

BY LEAH COOPER
 Journal Staff Writer

Minister of Health Dr. Duane Sands yesterday responded to president of the Bahamas Doctors Union Dr. Melisande Bassett's comments, made this past weekend, labeling them as "interesting".

Dr. Bassett expressed to reporters this past Friday that she felt offi-

cially ambushed the union.

However, Dr. Sands insisted that Ministry of Health and the Public Hospitals Authority (PHA) officials were invited to a meeting by Director of Labour John Pinder.

"Furthermore, it is never a bad opportunity to have a conversation to

■ See page 4...

Dr. Sands Says Firing Claims 'False'

BY LEAH COOPER
 Journal Staff Writer

Minister of Health Dr. Duane Sands yesterday refuted reports making rounds on social media indicating that he hinted

to fire some 12,000 Bahamian junior doctors if they do not return to work.

Since last Wednesday, a local daily reported that some 420 doctors withdrew their services in the capital and Grand

Bahama.

Dr. Sands said, "Social media is a wonderful place to make unsubstantiated allegations. I have made no such statement."

The report, featured on

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▶ Dr. Duane Sands

Mitchell Wants Foulkes to Review Pinder's Conduct

BY LEAH COOPER
 Journal Staff Writer

Progressive Liberal Party Chairman Fred Mitchell is calling on Minister of Labour Dion Foulkes to review the unions' complaints about the conduct of Labour Director John Pinder.

Yesterday, Mitchell



▶ Fred Mitchell

PM DISCUSSES ECONOMY WITH UNION LEADERS

BY LEAH COOPER
 Journal Staff Writer

Prime Minister Dr. Hubert Minnis met with union leaders on Saturday and expressed that it "paved the way for discussions to move forward with a factual understanding of the country's economic outlook and the government's fiscal constraints".

This, Dr. Minnis said, includes the need to exercise spending restraint and reach sustainable economic growth targets.

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▶ Prime Minister, the Most Hon. Dr. Hubert A. Minnis and Cabinet Ministers of the Government of The Bahamas attend a high level meeting with the Bahamas Public Sector Services Union (BPSU) at the Paul Farquharson Conference Centre, Saturday, August 24, 2019. (BIS Photos/Yontalay Bowe)



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ALL THE NEWS YOU NEED TO READ IN THE MORNING

Man Shot Dead in Eleuthera

A man was shot dead in Eleuthera on Saturday.

According to police, shortly before 9 p.m., three men were sitting outside a residence in the settlement of James Cistern, when they were

approached by a man, armed with a firearm, who opened fire in their direction injuring one of them, before running away.

The island's medical doctor was called to the scene, where he examined

the injured man and pronounced him dead. No one else was injured during the incident.

Police on the island are investigating the matter.

Man Shot Dead in Abaco

Police in Abaco are investigating the circumstances surrounding the death of a man in Marsh Harbour, Abaco.

According to police, on Saturday shortly after 3 a.m., police in Abaco

responded to a report of gunshots being fired at a home on Breadfruit Street, Marsh Harbour, Abaco.

At the home, police met the lifeless body of a man with multiple gunshot wounds and another man

with a gunshot wound to the leg.

Initial investigations revealed that another man would have entered the home and shots were fired.

Investigations continue.

Issues over Ease of Doing Business to be Addressed

BY BERTHONY MCDERMOTT
Journal Staff Writer

While significant strides have been made to make it easier to do business in The Bahamas, Deputy Prime Minister Peter Turnquest said there is still more work to be done and the Ease of Doing Business Committee is working to address lingering issues.

"So now it's a matter of working through some of the operational issues to see how we can smoothen those out, see how we can move forward with the implementation of our technology solutions to remove some of the human elements that provide some of the sticking points and move ourselves up the ease of doing business ranking," Mr. Turnquest said.

His comments follow those of Compass Point

owner Leigh Rodney, who placed a full-page ad in The Bahama Journal expressing he would close the resort if the government doesn't make it easy to do business in The Bahamas.

As he addressed the matter, the DPM said, "I think there are some specific issues that relate to that particular entity that I wouldn't want to speak about in detail, but that are kind of unique in a way," Mr. Turnquest explained.

"While they are wrapped up in this ease of doing business thing, they are really negotiating points, maybe with respect to that particular investment.

"So as the chairman of the Ease of Doing Business Committee would have said, we are making significant progress and we believe that it is certainly easier



▶ Deputy Prime Minister Peter Turnquest

today than it was when we came in and we recognize that we still have some ways to go and we're

working very hard on those issues."

The National Ease of Doing Business

Committee was appointed in 2017 by Prime Minister Dr. Hubert Minnis following a World Bank Annual

Report that listed The Bahamas as 119 out of 190 countries where it is easy to do business.

PM DISCUSSES ECONOMY WITH UNION LEADERS

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At the crux of the Bahamas Public Service Union's (BPSU) grievances is a lump sum payment of \$1,200 to assist union members with back-to-school expenses ahead of the upcoming school year.

Members peacefully protested last week at the entrance of the Cabinet office intending to have a conversation with the prime minister, but were unsuccessful.

The prime minister said the government takes the concerns of the unions seriously and this is why it convened this high level meeting – the first of its kind.

Moving forward, the prime minister said these kinds of discussions will be integrated into the budget planning process.

He added that the government wants to learn

from the past and make this kind of citizen dialogue happen in a proactive way.

While union members came in hopes of resolving individual issues, Saturday's meeting, according to Dr. Minnis, was "to facilitate an open and frank discussion about the state of the economy and provide context for the government's position".

The government stressed to the unions the importance of achieving fiscal sustainability to enhance the social and economic benefits that can be maintained over the medium and long term.

It was also stressed that it's imperative The Bahamas return to a more sustainable fiscal path.

He added that expenditure restraint is crucial to

this objective and if not achieved, it will have adverse implications for the entire economy.

The presentation, Dr. Minnis added, also highlighted the significant risks associated with the failure to reduce the country's deficit, including risks to economic growth and downgrades by international ratings agencies.

He also said while the economy is improving and job numbers are trending in the right direction, the country is still in the early stages of recovery.

He cautioned, however, that the country must also be mindful that it is vulnerable to natural disasters and external economic shocks and at all times

"We want to make decisions that are in the best interest of all Bahamians," Dr. Minnis said.

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Airport Runway Ready by November

BY EARYEL BOWLEG
Journal Staff Writer

Minister of Tourism and Aviation Dionisio D'Aguiar confirmed that runway repairs at the Lynden Pindling

International Airport (LPIA) are expected to be finished by Thanksgiving in November.

Last week, D'Aguiar said he is aiming to get the runway done in time to prepare for the busy holi-

days.

"Obviously, as Thanksgiving approaches, we start to get a bit nervous because obviously the load will increase and we would like the runway operating by then," Mr.

D'Aguiar said.

"We would assure that it will be, but weather delays, equipment failures – you know the usual stuff that could possibly bring about a delay come into play. We're optimistic

right now."

The airport is currently operating on a single runway, but D'Aguiar assures the airport has a plan in place in case of any accidents.

"We have in place the

necessary infrastructure and equipment to ensure should an incident happen on the runway when clear it and get back into operation as quickly as possible," he said.

Students Receive Dermal Distributions BTVI Scholarships

BY EARYEL BOWLEG
Journal Staff Writer

Dermal Distributions has provided esthetics scholarships to two students to study at the Bahamas Technical and Vocational Institute (BTVI).

Dereka Bain and Chandira Wright will have their application fees, tuition, uniform, books and tools covered. They will also receive a Dermalogica product kit and mentorship throughout the program.

With this scholarship, Dermal Distributions Chief Executive Officer and President Sarah Beek hopes to raise the quality of estheticians and massage therapists in The Bahamas.

"We have had a successful business within the skin care industry for many years and wanted to give back and help our fellow Bahamians. In time, we are hoping to elevate the level of skin therapists across The Bahamas. Locals and tourists experiencing skin therapy or massage therapy in The Bahamas should experience something that is the highest level - not only compared to the Caribbean, but globally," said Ms. Beek.

Dermal Distributions is the exclusive distributor of Dermalogica, Bio-Therapeutic, Revitlash, Jane Iredale and Intrinsics in the Caribbean.

Beek, professional skin therapist for 19 years, will

mentor the recipients throughout the program which will include additional training outside of the classroom.

Chief Financial Officer Raymond Simpson expressed how significant the mentoring aspect of the scholarship is to the company.

Mr. Simpson said while giving the students products and a scholarship are great, he believes the main focus is mentoring them so that they are prepared for industry.

Meanwhile, BTVI Associate Vice President of Fund Development Alicia Thompson expressed how this donation further solidifies BTVI's reputation with the industry.

Ms. Thompson acknowledged that Dermalogica is widely known for its quality skin-care products and with BTVI's reputation for delivering quality education, it came as no surprise when Dermalogica decided to invest in the institution's students.

"This investment confirms the level of confidence that industry has in our ability to train our students as we prepare them for the world of work. It shows that they have been watching us, that they have seen our graduates at work and they are comfortable endorsing our program," she explained.

Ms. Thompson noted that initially, only one scholarship was promised.



► Dermal Distributions Chief Executive Officer and President, Sarah Beek; BTVI Associate Vice President of Fund Development, Alicia Thompson; Scholarship recipients, Dereka Bain and Chandira Wright; Dermal Distributions Chief Financial Officer, Raymond Simpson and BTVI President, Dr. Robert W. Robertson.

However, after meeting with the applicants and hearing about their career goals and how a BTVI education will help them to achieve those goals, the company realized how difficult it was to select only one recipient and awarded two instead.

Ms. Beek said upon completion of the program, opportunity for employment for recipients may become available at Dermalogica or Dermalogica account locations.

Stop Disney Displays Global Opposition to Lighthouse Point Project

The Stop Disney - Last Chance for Lighthouse Point campaign has brought a mobile billboard to The Walt Disney Company's D23 event this weekend in Anaheim, CA, to draw attention to the growing global opposition to Disney's current plans to develop a massive cruise ship port at Lighthouse Point (LHP) on the island of Eleuthera in The Bahamas.

Lighthouse Point is a unique untouched natural site treasured by generations of Bahamians and people around the world. The seas around the point are so rich with marine life, including endangered coral reefs, that they have been officially proposed as a Marine Protected Area. However, on March 7, 2019 the Government of the Bahamas signed a Heads of Agreement (HoA) with Disney Cruise Lines Island Development, Ltd (DCL), granting them permission

to develop a cruise ship port at the site.

The Stop Disney - Last Chance campaign has provided a platform for thousands of people across the world to share their concerns about Disney's current development plan. The stopdisney.com petition has attracted nearly 75,000 supporters in just 5 weeks. The petition calls upon Disney to cooperate with Bahamian groups on a win-win solution, including locating their port to a more suitable site and pursuing a sustainable alternative to preserve the point and provide greater benefits to local communities in South Eleuthera.

The D23 event brings together Disney fans from across the country to celebrate the company. Disney has stated their commitment to "ensuring a world where wildlife thrives and nature is treasured and protected". The Last Chance for

Lighthouse Point mobile billboard calls attention to the contradiction between that promise and Disney's current plans to develop a cruise ship port, including a half-mile-long-pier, in an untouched natural environment and proposed Marine Protected Area.

Many supporters of the Stop Disney Last Chance campaign have indicated that they are long-standing Disney fans, but they have been shocked to learn that Disney Cruise Lines is planning to develop a cruise port and pier in such a special place surrounded by seas containing endangered coral reefs and rich marine life. Bahamian environmental groups remain eager to cooperate with Disney on a win-win alternative.

Casuarina McKinney-Lambert, Executive Director, Bahamas Reef

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Englerston Back to School Drive



► On Saturday, hundreds of students in the Englerston community received school supplies during the 'Back to School Backpack Drive'. The event was hosted by Senator Jamal Moss on Englerston Park. (Photos/Jamal Moss)

Increase Demands

Continued from / PAGE 1...

for the construction of a BDU office.

The increased demands follow last week's junior doctors' strike where doctors withdrew their services from the Princess Margaret Hospital and stood outside demanding their holiday pay, while leaving only emergency staff on the job.

Today's meeting is expected to be held with representatives from the Public Hospitals Authority (PHA), Director of Labour John Pinder, a government negotiator, BDU members and members of the Trade Union Congress.

According to the list of new demands, the BDU wants a timeline and agreement on one of its

non-monetary compensation options as proposed in its communique on March 7, 2019.

The non-monetary compensation options include an increase in the current health insurance benefits of junior doctors so that it would be on par with police and immigration officers.

Other non-monetary compensation options call for the construction of a paid parking facility on the hospital grounds for public use and tax exemptions.

"The profits are to be shared equally between the Government of the Bahamas and the BDU, after construction costs are met. The profits from the venture will be paid out equally to all BDU members in perpetuity,"

the BDU's list of demands noted.

"As in practice in Jamaica, give doctors duty free exemptions on one vehicle every three years. Grant exemption from real property tax. Crown land for the construction of the BDU office."

The BDU also wants its one and two year contracts to be null and void and no longer issued in the future.

The doctors are also calling for intern housing allowance and on premises hospital housing to be reinstated.

In addition, they want to remove the stipulation that doctors are required to swipe in prior to receiving holiday pay.

"Further, we request that the existing method for

Dr. Sands Says Firing Claims 'False'

Continued from / PAGE 1...

a popular Facebook page, indicated that Dr. Sands had Prime Minister Dr. Hubert Minnis' full support on the move.

It went on to say that the health minister would replace these junior doctors with Filipino doctors for a lower price point.

This follows an alleged screenshot of Dr. Sands sharing an article from American political journalism company Politico on Facebook.

The article, written on August 5, 2008, commemorated the day former U.S. President Ronald Reagan fired 11,000 striking air traffic controllers.

reimbursement be used, i.e. the Holiday Claim Form," the list explained, adding that "the petition that the BDU become the dentists' sole bargaining agent be honoured."

The BDU also indicated that it accepts the proposed pay out of approximately \$5 million covering the period of June, 2014 to

October, 2018 to be paid to junior doctors in two installments, the first at the end of August, 2019 and the second in December, 2019.

"A third payment is to be made for the year 2018 at a date to be determined," the BDU explained.

The doctors are also requesting that parity in

salaries between the Department of Public Health physicians and PHA physicians be rectified.

"Doctors who have not received the pay package or allowances during our last IA be regularized and receive back pay," the BDU list of demands explained.

Dr. Sands Calls Bassett's

Continued from / PAGE 1...

bring resolution in the interest of the people of The Bahamas," Dr. Sands said.

"We are not enemies. We're on the same team. Now, we may have a different view as to how to get to the end point that we're going to get to. So, to use a word like 'ambushed,' it speaks to a context of antagonism. I think it's an unfortunate choice of words."

He added that health officials have continued

to meet every day and he continued negotiations with the union's attorney.

Also in an interview, Pinder told The Bahama Journal, "I might have made an error in not advising the president that they were coming to the meeting, but I cannot resolve her matter without both sides."

"If the PHA or the Ministry of Health owes her members some funds, only way I can resolve it is to get both sides to agree to the payments so that we can move for-

ward from there," he added.

Pinder further expressed that he thought it was wise to meet as early as Friday of last week to have both sides agree to a settlement so that doctors can head back to work.

There is a meeting scheduled this morning at 10 a.m. at the Department of Labour to determine the way forward.

Outstanding holiday pay is at the crux of the union's grievances.

Pinder's Conduct

Continued from / PAGE 1...

expressed concerns regarding comments on Mr. Pinder's conduct in a series of trade disputes.

In a statement, Mitchell said he wants Foulkes to assure the public and union leaders that there will be no reoccurrence of Mr. Pinder's conduct in the future and the office's functions will be discharged without "fear or favor".

Mr. Mitchell further revealed that representa-

tives of the Bahamas Public Services Union (BPSU) and the Bahamas Doctors Union (BDU) labelled Mr. Pinder's conduct as "an honest and disinterested broker" in the trade disputes before his department.

"The director of labour is a statutory position and is meant to be politically and otherwise neutral in the discharge of his or her duties," he said.

"All parties need to feel sure that when they come before the

Department of Labour, they can implicitly trust the office and its processes."

Mitchell's call follows comments made by BDU President Dr. Melisande Basset last Friday, indicating that both the Public Hospitals Authority and Ministry of Health officials "ambushed" the union at a meeting with the director of labour.

Both Minister of Health Dr. Duane Sands and Mr. Pinder have since refuted such comments.

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