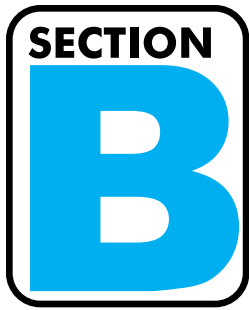




The Bahama Journal

Quo Vadis, Bahamas?



FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 1ST, 2023

New Carnival Cruise Port in Grand Bahama to be named 'Celebration Key'

The Bahamas -- Minister for Grand Bahama, the Hon. Ginger Moxey announced on Monday, August 28, 2023 that the new Grand Bahama Carnival Cruise Port will be called 'Celebration Key.'

Minister Moxey said she received the information from Carnival early Monday morning and was excited about the proposed name.

"I think this is big for the island of Grand Bahama, because remember, the vision for Grand Bahama is for it to become the home of events and entertainment. What an appropriate name -- Celebration Key.

The key can mean it's the key to celebrations. So, we would [like] people to bring their respective celebrations to Grand Bahama Island.

"I think that the name is fitting and ties into the vision we have for the island."

Minister Moxey is excited about the fact that the \$200 million cruise port will go a long way in helping to stimulate the economy of Grand Bahama. With over two million passengers expected to pass through the new cruise port every year, she expects that a cross section of Grand Bahamians will benefit from the new venture.

"That is going to spill over into all segments of our community," she explained. "It will benefit the taxi drivers, tour operators, the straw vendors, food vendors and even will benefit businesses and facilities outside of the cruise port.

"I try to encourage Grand Bahamians to get their business ideas together and be prepared to take advantage of this opportunity.



Minister for Grand Bahama, the Hon. Ginger Moxey

Story Continued from Pg. B2

GB Minister Welcomes Students and Teachers on First Day of School

Minister for Grand Bahama, Ginger Moxey began the new school year with visits to several schools on the island, where she welcomed students and parents and chatted with teachers on Monday, August 28, 2023.

Minister Moxey gave kids "high-fives", thanked parents who dropped off their children and offered some words of encouragement to teachers and students, as they trickled onto school grounds for the start of a new term. Before nine in the morning, Minister Moxey had visited Jack Hayward High School, The Beacon School and Hugh Campbell Primary School.

"This is the first day back in the classroom and I just wanted to be here to cheer the students on," Minister Moxey told the press following her visit at Hugh Campbell Primary school. "I wanted to really encourage the students to focus on their schoolwork and to pay attention to their teachers and the instructions and do well and make us all proud.

Story Continued from Pg. B2

PM Says Abortion is a Choice



Prime Minister Philip Davis

Keile Campbell
Journal Staff Writer

In the aftermath of the revelation concerning the 11-year-old who took an abortion pill after she became pregnant after being raped by her mother's 45-year-old boyfriend, Prime Minister Philip Davis, in response to the question of whether Bahamian laws should be adjusted to consider such circumstances, said the laws on the books are clear cut.

"The laws are on the books, abortion is still a crime, rape is still a crime and carrying very hefty, hefty penalties. I don't know what other mischief that the law does not cover. The laws are on the books. It's heinous, the penalties are stiff, and once the laws are applied, at the moment, I don't see the need for any amendment once the laws are in place. That's why the persons involved were able to be charged," Prime Minister Davis said.

When pressed on if the government considers how the victim would be affected, the prime minister, a veteran lawyer, said it is a medical matter and that ultimately, the response to that situation would be a personal choice for the individual.

"That will be a medical matter for me to consider. For me, where the issue of abortion is a highly emotive one. It's a personal choice, and we leave that to the persons who get impregnated, and I don't want to impose my views on a personal choice. But suffice it to say, I will support a personal choice of anyone in respect of those matters," he said.

Story Cont. Pg. B2



See Full Story on B3

Journalists from The Bahamas join forces to report on migration with a human rights-based approach



The Western Hemisphere Program and the Global Migration Media Academy, both International Organization for Migration (IOM) initiatives, hosted a two-day training for journalists in The Bahamas, August 8 - 9, to promote dialogue, share knowledge about migration data, hone their reporting skills and learn from different experts through practical sessions.
(Photo/IOM Caribbean)

Journalists play a pivotal role in shaping the public understanding of human mobility. Journalists are also faced with the challenge of adapting to evolving phenomena, and an ever-changing and adapting vocabulary around the issue of migration. The ongoing challenges faced by Haitian and Cuban migrants and how the flows of migrants from these countries affect The Bahamas make it vital to ensure accurate and effective communication on migration issues and guarantee the right of access to information to migrants and the public.

In response, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) through its Western Hemisphere Program (WHP) and the Global Migration Media Academy (GMMA) hosted a two-day training for

journalists in The Bahamas (8-9 August) to promote dialogue, share knowledge about migration data, hone their reporting skills and learn from different experts through practical sessions.

The Caribbean migrant story is an evolving 'human story' in which the media plays a crucial role with the power to create and disseminate narratives that shape the lives of migrants and how they are treated," said Nazima Raghubir, one of the trainers and a journalist, and vice president of the Association of Caribbean Media Workers.

Betty Vedrine, a journalist, and participant, expressed: This training is key for media professionals when reporting on issues such as migration,

Story Cont. Pg. B2

WORLD NEWS

Modi says India as G20 host will be inclusive and invites African Union to become permanent members



Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi

NEW DELHI (AP) — Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi said the country's role as the G20 host this year would focus on highlighting the concerns of the developing world, and has proposed the African Union to become permanent members of the forum.

"We have a vision of inclusiveness and with that vision, we have invited the African Union to become permanent members of the G20," Modi said on Sunday as he addressed the Business 20 Summit in New Delhi.

The B20 is an industry event and part of the summit of the 20 leading rich and developing nations, which will be hosted in the Indian capital next month.

Over three days, industry and policy leaders from around the world have discussed themes like building resilient supply chains, digital transformation, debt distress facing developing countries and how to advance on climate change goals. Their recommendations will be shared with the G20 governments, organizers said.

As host of the G20 this year, India has struggled to bridge the differences among member countries over the war in Ukraine.

Instead, India has consistently appealed for the fractured grouping to reach consensus on issues that disproportionately affect developing countries, or the so-called Global South. They include unsustainable debt levels, inflation and the threat of climate change, even if the broader East-West split over Ukraine can't be resolved.

Story Cont. Pg. B5

New Carnival Cruise Port in Grand Bahama to be named 'Celebration Key'

Story Cont. Pg B1

Try to come up with authentic Bahamian products, because I believe that now is the time that Grand Bahama is going to take off and Carnival Cruise Port is a way that the island will grow economically.”

Potential vendors can go on Carnival’s website, where request for proposal is listed. Minister Moxey said that there have been one-on-one meetings with some of the potential vendors. She said that it is important to ensure that Bahamians have every opportunity to be a part of the new cruise port venture.

The proposed date of completion for the new cruise port, which will be located at Sharp Rock in East Grand Bahama, is expected to be in the summer of 2025. Minister Moxey pointed out that a lot of the dredging work has been completed and the landside development expected to happen shortly. Because of this, she said that employment numbers on the island will increase, as the Port begins to hire construction workers, builders, electricians, plumbers.

“There have been many meetings between Carnival, local retailers and [they] will soon begin meetings with food and beverage operators,” said Minister Moxey. “Grand Bahama is headed in the right direction when it comes to the new experiences and new developments that will happen on the island.”

The project is expected to be one of the world’s largest cruise ports, with the capacity to accommodate two of Carnival’s largest ships, the Mardi Gras and Carnival Celebration, which each carries up to 6,000 guests.

CIBC FIRSTCARIBBEAN PLEDGES ITS SUPPORT TO CARIBBEAN INFRASTRUCTURE CONFERENCE AS CO-TITLE SPONSOR

CIBC FirstCaribbean will once more be playing an integral role in the annual Caribbean Infrastructure Forum, CARIF 2023, in Miami next month.

The CIBCF CIB regional bank will be a co-title sponsor, along with KMPG for CARIF 2023, and will be well represented during a number of sessions when the two-day event takes place September 18-19, 2023, at the Ritz Carlton Coconut Grove, Miami.

The conference, now in its seventh year, brings together key public and private sector players and industry leaders focused on the development and expansion of Caribbean infrastructure as an enabler for sustainable economic growth.

The conference is being organized by New Energy Events and will examine such areas as the impact of climate change on Caribbean tourism; building resilient healthcare facilities; meeting the evolving needs of cruise tourism and shipping in the region; and how the Bridgetown Initiative could help mobilize infrastructural development in the Caribbean.

An innovation at this year’s event will be the inaugural presentation of the CARIF Industry Awards that will recognize excellence and innovation in the delivery of Caribbean infrastructure policy, projects, and financings.

Adam Carter, Managing Director, Investment Banking stated, “We are proud to be an integral part in CARIF 2023 as this is aligned to our strategic focus in the region. Over the last 5 years, our Corporate Investment Banking teams have supported our sovereign and private sector clients by arranging and participating in over \$5 billion in transactions for infrastructure in various sectors in the Caribbean.”

Gillian Charles-Gollop, Executive

Minister for Grand Bahama, the Hon. Ginger Moxey



WELCOMING STUDENTS AND PARENTS – Minister for Grand Bahama, Ginger Moxey welcomed students and parents at Hugh Campbell Primary School on Monday, August 28, 2023. Minister Moxey visited a number of schools on Grand Bahama, as students returned to the classroom for the new school year.

“The students, I believe, are going to do very well, this school term. There was the look of a little fear or apprehension in the eyes of some of the kids, but I wanted to encourage them and bring them some comfort and let them know that all will be well. I think that the teachers are excited about the upcoming term.”

In her recent address to the nation on Sunday, August 27, Education Minister, Hon. Glennys Hanna-Martin pointed out that that tens of millions are invested into education each year in the Bahamas. Minister Moxey called that investment an important one not just for the students, but for the parents as well.

She acknowledged that children are the future and education is the key to success. As a result, she noted that it is important to ensure that students and teachers are equipped with the tools that they need to succeed in the classrooms.

“We want to ensure that all of the work that is necessary to get us to the place where we need to be educationally is done. We’re well on the way,” said Minister Moxey.

“The education minister has been focused on having the schools and the classrooms ready for this new term. I’m excited to have the kids back in school and I know that a lot of the parents are excited as well.”

As far as what she’s hoping for in this new term, Minister Moxey said she’s hoping that the national grade point average would improve. She’s also expecting that students at all grade levels would continue to focus on their studies and excel.

“I think that it is extremely critical that we pay attention to our kids. There are a lot of distractions out there that could pull our kids away. There’s a lot on the internet, but we need to get our children refocused on the classroom and their schoolwork.”

PM Says Abortion is a Choice

Story Cont. Pg. 1

Last week, in the wake of Bahamians outraged at the incident involving the 11-year-old, first vice president of the Bahamas Christian Council (BBC) said the BCC would oppose any legislation change on abortion and cited their belief in the "sanctity of life."

Minister of National Security Wayne Munroe said he expects police to investigate the rape of the 11-year-old girl as well as the abortion.

District Superintendent for Grand Bahama, Bimini and the Cays, Ivan Butler, who joined Minister Moxey on the school visits on Monday, said that it was important to let the public know that all of the schools in Grand Bahama, Bimini and the Cays opened successfully on the first day back. He said there were no major problems as teachers and students returned to the classroom.

Butler said that there were some concerns among some members of the public that some schools would not be ready.

“But all of our schools were prepared and were able to welcome students today,” Butler told the media. “Schools will be in for the full day beginning today and teachers are ready to teach.

“We’re very pleased with the complement of teachers we have this year. We realize that there are a few shortages in our specialized, technical areas, but for the most part, the district has a full complement of teachers. We’re still moving one or two teachers around, but for the most part, things are going well.”

Journalists from The Bahamas join forces to report on migration with a human rights-based approach

Story Cont. Pg. 1

as these issues are about disenfranchised persons, who in many cases, are fleeing their homelands for a better way of life. The role of the media, therefore, is one that requires compassionate and fair-minded reporting devoid of unnecessary framing and harmful stereotypes.”

As migration is a salient issue in the



region, IOM seeks to ensure that journalists and other media professionals are well-informed about the complexities of the subject and the necessary human rights-based approach while reporting to produce reliable and safe information for the audience.

This space showed the necessity to promote and facilitate access to migration data and resources to cover migration issues in greater depth. This training was key to connect journalists from The Bahamas with their peers around the region and world, creating a community of practice, feedback on approaches and solutions when covering a diversity of human mobility. In follow-up, IOM will seek to continue promoting training spaces with media workers, including editors and other key actors.

This effort responds to the objectives and goals stipulated in the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (17 and 23) and the Sustainable Development Goals (Goal 10.7). The activity was implemented by IOM, generously financed by the U.S. Department of State Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration and with the accompaniment of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

ALASKA AIRLINES, “CLEARED FOR TAKEOFF”

Alaska Airlines experienced two significant milestones this past week, ahead of its proposed historic inaugural nonstop flights from Los Angeles and Seattle to Nassau, this December.

According to Bahamas Director of Aviation, Dr. Kenneth Romer, “We are pleased that The Civil Aviation Authority Bahamas (CAA-B) approved the application for an Air Transport License by Alaska Airlines for commercial air operations to/from The Bahamas, pursuant to Section 15 of the Civil Aviation Act of 2021.”

This approval paves the way for the airline to officially operate and intensify promotions around their new scheduled flights from The West Coast, a major market targeted by The Bahamas Ministry of Tourism, Investments and Aviation and industry stakeholders.

Additionally, last week Bahamasair and Alaska Airlines successfully completed the live integration of their respective booking platforms, enabling

transactions between the airlines through linking reservation inventory through their computer-based networks.

“We are particularly proud of the live integration and the further strengthening of the interline relationship between Bahamasair and Alaska Airlines. It not only marks the progress our national flag carrier is making in terms of its international competitiveness, but interlining with other legacy carriers facilitates a greater ease of travel for international passengers to all the islands of the Bahamas being serviced by Bahamasair”, said Romer.

The airline will serve the popular Nassau/PI leisure destination from both Los Angeles and Seattle, using Boeing 737 aircrafts, beginning December 15, 2023 through April 9, 2024. Service from Los Angeles will operate four times a week, while flights from Seattle will operate three times a week. Alaska will be the only airline operating in both markets.



Bahamas Director of Aviation, Dr. Kenneth Romer,



Three-Year Industrial Agreement Signed Between BANSa and the Bahamas Air Traffic Controllers Union

A three-year \$1.8 million Industrial Agreement was signed between the Bahamas Air Navigation Services Authority (BANSa) and the Bahamas Air Traffic Controllers Union at the Office of the Prime Minister on Monday, August 28, 2023.

“Today’s signing ceremony represents the culmination of more than a year of consistent and sometimes intense negotiations between management and the union,” Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Tourism, Investments and Aviation the Hon. Chester Cooper said during the industrial agreement signing.

“However, I can attest to the fact that both parties would agree that the new industrial agreement affords increased benefits and conditions to union members.”

DPM Cooper said the new three-year agreement, which is effective June 1, 2022, replaces a five-year agreement that was in place since June 2017 and covers the 117 employees who were part of the union’s bargaining unit.

He explained that in addition to providing improved salaries and benefits, the new agreement addresses the following:

- The updating of management and job titles to reflect the new organizational structure that was approved and implemented in July 2022;
- The alignment of job titles to reflect new job responsibilities;
- The improvement of training allowances to encourage and increase in the number of certified employees who can participate in on-the-job training of their colleagues;
- A more efficient procedure that enables the payment of the company’s obligations relating to retirement from the organization.

The DPM also noted that the implementation of the new industrial agreement will also result in moving the compensation levels for the Air Traffic Controllers closer to full alignment with their regional and international counterparts.

He said the 117 members of the union’s bargaining unit will benefit from improved increments and will receive increases as follows:

- Effective June 1, 2022, salary increases of three increments added to base salary;
- Effective June 1, 2023, salary increase of one increment added to base salary and

Effective June 1, 2024, salary increase of two increments added to base salary.

The DPM said, “BANSa’s management and employees remain committed to fulfilling its mission providing air navigation services safely, efficiently and responsibly to the domestic and international flying public.”

The Bahamas Air Traffic Controllers Union President, Hinsey McKenzie thanked his negotiating team and said he hoped that future negotiations will not take as long to complete.



A three-year \$1.8 million Industrial Agreement was signed between the Bahamas Air Navigation Services Authority (BANSa) and The Bahamas Air Traffic Controllers Union at the Office of the Prime Minister on Monday, August 28, 2023. Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Tourism, Investments and Aviation the Hon. Chester Cooper and The Bahamas Air Traffic Controllers Union President, Hinsey McKenzie spoke before the signing. (BIS Photos/Patrick Hanna)

CIBC FIRST CARIBBEAN PLEDGES ITS SUPPORT TO CARIBBEAN INFRASTRUCTURE CONFERENCE AS CO-TITLE SPONSOR

Story Continued From Pg. 2

Director, Corporate Banking Sustainable Finance lead said, “We are looking forward to engaging our regional clients again this year and our team have coordinated with New Energy to deliver an exciting agenda.

The post conference workshop is not to be missed and is being led by an experienced team from both CIBC and KPMG focusing on building greater regional awareness of the innovative sustainable finance mechanisms and partnerships that are available and how they can be leveraged to support sustainable infrastructure development in the region”.

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Prime Minister Davis, optimistic about the economic growth of Grand Bahama

Prime Minister and Minister of Finance the Hon. Philip Davis while on the island of Grand Bahama, recently, expressed optimism about its future economic growth.

Since coming to office in September 2021, the Davis Administration has made it clear that Grand Bahama Island as a whole is a top priority on its agenda.

Prime Minister Davis said that despite having a sluggish economy, Grand Bahama is seeing some incremental growth this year and is expected to see more with the uptick in construction of the Carnival Cruise Port in East Grand Bahama and the new Freeport Hospital.

“The construction of the Carnival Cruise Port and the hospital will add something to the economy. We see it growing and there are other proposals in the mix,” the Prime Minister said.

Ground was broken in May of 2022 for the cruise port that will be able to simultaneously accommodate two of the largest ships in the world and in May of this year, ground was broken on 50 acres of land for the \$210 million Freeport Health Campus to provide primary, tertiary and acute care for residents of Grand Bahama and the northern Bahamas.

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Tourism, Investments and Aviation, the Hon. Chester Cooper, while addressing the Grand Bahama Business Outlook conference in March, revealed at the government had entered into an agreement with Aerodrome Limited, a Bahamian company; Manchester Airport Group Limited, an airport management company based in Manchester in the United Kingdom; and London-based BHM Construction International to build, finance, operate, maintain and redevelop the Grand Bahama International Airport.

Phase one, which will consist of the domestic terminal, the US Pre-Clearance terminal, new initial taxiways and aprons, new initial roads and car parks, a flood mitigation system, a flood attenuation basin, renewable energy systems, a sea defense berm and support bridges, air freight cargo facilities, is



GROWING ECONOMY – Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, the Hon. Philip Davis is optimistic about the future growth of Grand Bahama’s economy and gave an update during a press conference at the Ministry for Grand Bahama on Friday, August 18, 2023.

expected to be completed no later than April 2025.

Further demonstrating the Davis Administration’s commitment to keeping the people of Grand Bahama top on its priority, Minister for Grand Bahama, the Hon. Ginger Moxey pointed out during her presentation on the 2023-2024 Budget Debate that her ministry’s \$17-plus million budget represents the highest ever proposed for that Ministry since its establishment in 2021.

Prime Minister Davis noted that what is more important is for the government to right the ship of the Grand Bahama Port Authority (GBPA) and decide how it will ensure that its full potential could be realized without hindrance.

He said that the potential and promise of Freeport has always been lagging and in order for that promise to be fulfilled, there has to be a paradigm shift in the ownership structure.

“It is clear to me that the interest of the owners do not truly align with the interest of the people of Grand Bahama, and the residents in Freeport in particular, and until those align we will have no growth,” he said.

“The growth that’s occurring in the Freeport area is at the instance of the government.”

Prime Minister Davis also pointed out that the government has taken over the role of the GBPA and it is not fair to the Bahamian people for the government to be subsidizing the GBPA for what they should be doing.

While providing an update on the sale of the Grand Lucayan Resort, the Prime Minister revealed that he was advised by his team that there were two potential buyers they are seriously looking at, however, their proposals have not yet reached his desk.

Donation of music instruments to Urban Renewal Commission from the Chinese Embassy



The Embassy of the People's Republic of China donated music instruments to the Urban Renewal Commission, August 24, 2023 at the Chinese Embassy. Pictured from left: Ministry of Social Services and Urban Development Permanent Secretary Joel Lewis; Chinese Ambassador Her Excellency Dai Qingli; Minister of Social Services and Urban Development the Hon. Obie Wilchcombe; Social Services and Urban Development Permanent Secretary Prenell King-Rolle; and Chinese Embassy Deputy Chief of Mission Cui Wei. (BIS Photos/Anthon Thompson)

What's old is new again in novel tour Bahamas Eco-Glide takes guests on a roll & stroll through history, culture



Two businessmen with diverse backgrounds and a mutual vision to broaden the visitor experience by adding more Bahamian history and culture have launched a new tour company. Called Bahamas Eco-Glide Adventures, the outdoor venture takes up to 11 guests at a time on a guided tour of Fort Charlotte, including an inside look at the dungeon and moat, a trip back in time and on to a taste of today's culture with light bites at a restaurant at Fish Fry and a stop at the beach.

Founded by Bahamian real estate legend Mario Carey and 10-year veteran of the electric scooter business, Scott Cartwright, Bahamas Eco-glide Adventures has attracted dozens since its launch on August 1.

“We know that visitors want to experience the real culture and learn more about the history of a place they are visiting,” said Cartwright, managing partner. “When I was scouting locations, I went up to Fort Charlotte where the view over the harbour was amazing. I timed it to see the re-enactment with the canons being fired which was incredible and when I looked around, there were only four people there. I thought, this is a crying shame. This is our history.”

Cartwright, who could see the potential, approached the Antiquities, Monuments and Museums Corporation and immediately won full cooperation of its executive director Dr. Christopher Curry. Together, they mapped out a route that would give the Eco-glide tour guests a special experience. With Carey's network, the tour also won support from Goldwyn, operator of the ultra-luxury condo and resort on West Bay Street opposite the Office of the Prime Minister.

For Carey, the new business is part of an expanding career, identifying gaps in a tourism-driven economy as well as needs in an environment vulnerable to climate change. In the past two years, Carey has urged development of a disaster relief headquarters in New Providence that would serve the entire region on a swift-action basis and he's pleaded for stronger laws and enforcement to end marine resource depletion by foreign vessels. He was one of a handful invited to a think tank for new ideas to boost and broaden the Bahamian economy.

“There are a lot of tours out there, some very information, some a bit dated,” he said. “And I believe everyone means well, but I could see a gap in the market of attractions where you could combine a memorable glimpse into pieces of the best of all aspects—our history, the beach, light bites at Fish Fry, -- for a cultural immersion experience that a cruise passenger could fit into an hour of activity and a hotel guest could take longer.”

Both Carey and Cartwright are convinced that locals will gravitate toward the tour for special events and occasions or just for the experience of it.

“We have a girls' day out on Saturday for all the sales staff from a high-end jewelry store,” said Cartwright, who ran the Segway (Eco-glide) tours on Blue Lagoon Island for a decade. “People enjoyed it so much, even a 98-year-old man has done the tour. Most of us locals haven't visited our forts since we were on a field trip in school and that could have been a long time ago. You appreciate our history even more as an adult.”

The tour starts on Marcus Bethel Way behind Xavier's Lower School and the road traffic inspection station. Riders are equipped with headsets so tour guides, one in front and one at the rear, can be in constant communication and share information about The Bahamas on the ride. There are two tours scheduled daily for cruise guests and others for hotel guests and locals can be scheduled separately.

Regular cost of the one-hour tour starts at \$99.00. Through September, local residents can experience the roll and stroll through history and culture at half-price, including use of the Eco-glide, safety gear, tour headset, admission to

Fort Charlotte, beach stop and 'Lite Bite' lunch and beverage at the Fish Fry.

“Tourism has changed,” explained Cartwright. “Twenty years ago, visitors were happy to sit on the beach with a margarita, maybe do a little luxury shopping or pick up a souvenir. Today's tourist wants authenticity, history, interaction with the local population, and that's what we want to give them, the real thing through a ride and glide on an electric Eco-glide with the sun on their face, the wind at their back and a whole lot of fun and history along the way.”



Modi says India as G20 host will be inclusive and invites African Union to become permanent members

Story Continued from Pg. 1

A key part of that strategy is bringing the African Union into the G20 fold, analysts say.

"When India assumed the G20 presidency last December, we were acutely conscious that most of the Global South would not be at the table when we meet," said External Affairs Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar. "This mattered very much because the really urgent problems are those faced by them. ... And India, itself so much a part of the Global South, could not stand by and let that happen."

He said the G20 has so far deliberated on rising debt, sustainable development, climate action and food security, among other issues that affect low to middle-income countries. "The core mandate of the G20 is to promote economic growth and development. This cannot advance if the crucial concerns of the Global South are not addressed," Jaishankar added.

The three-day conference in New Delhi was also attended by ministers and policymakers from other G20 countries, including the United Kingdom and India's regional rival, China.

On Friday, China's Vice Commerce Minister Wang Shouwen said trade between the two neighboring countries, whose relations have been strained after deadly border clashes in 2020, was growing fast.

Piyush Goyal, India's minister of commerce and industry, said that joining the bloc would have increased trade between the two Asian giants, but it would have also increased the trade deficit.

"We just can't seem to understand the kind of pricing, the kind of cost at which you are supplying goods. It's a matter that I think all the ministers would like to know. How you can supply goods at less than the raw material costs?"

India's trade deficit with China is the highest of any country, and stood at \$101.28 billion in 2022, according to official data.

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Quo Vadis, Bahamas?

Soldiers in Gabon say they've seized power and appointed the republican guard chief as head of state



FILE - President of Gabon Ali Bongo Ondimba addresses the 77th session of the United Nations General Assembly, Wednesday, Sept. 21, 2022 at U.N. headquarters. (AP Photo/Mary Altaffer, File)

LIBREVILLE, Gabon (AP) — Mutinous soldiers in Gabon announced late Wednesday that the head of the country’s elite republican guard would lead the Central African country, hours after saying they had placed the country’s newly re-elected president under house arrest.

The coup leaders said in an announcement on Gabon’s state TV that Gen. Brice Clotaire Oligui Nguema had been “unanimously” designated president of a transitional committee to lead the country.

Oligui is the cousin of President Ali Bongo Ondimba, who earlier Wednesday had been declared the winner of the country’s presidential election in a victory that appeared to extend his family’s 55-year rule in the oil-rich nation.

In a video apparently from detention in his residence, Bongo called on people to “make noise” to support him. But the crowds who took to the streets of the capital instead celebrated the coup against a dynasty accused of getting rich on the country’s resource wealth while many of its citizens struggle.

“Thank you, army. Finally, we’ve been waiting a long time for this moment,” said Yollande Okomo, standing near soldiers from Gabon’s elite republican guard, one of the units that staged the takeover.

Coup leaders said there would be a curfew from 6 p.m. to 6 a.m. local time but that people would be allowed to move about freely during the day on Thursday.

“The president of the transition insists on the need to maintain calm and serenity in our beautiful country ... At the dawn of a new era, we will guarantee the peace, stability and dignity of our beloved Gabon,” Lt. Col. Ulrich Manfoumbi said on state TV Wednesday.

Bongo, 64, has served two terms since coming to power in 2009 after the death of his father, who ruled the country for 41 years, and there has been widespread discontent with his reign. Another group of mutinous soldiers attempted a coup in 2019 but was quickly overpowered.

The former French colony is a member of OPEC, but its oil wealth is concentrated in the hands of a few — and nearly 40% of Gabonese aged 15 to 24 were out of work in 2020, according to the World Bank. Its oil export revenue was \$6 billion in 2022, according to the U.S. Energy Information Administration, or \$2,720 per capita.

Nine members of the Bongo family, meanwhile, are under investigation in France, and some face preliminary charges of embezzlement, money laundering and other forms of corruption, according to Sherpa, a French NGO dedicated to accountability. Investigators have linked the family to more than \$92 million in properties in France, including two villas in Nice, the group says.

A spokesman for the soldiers who claimed power Wednesday said that Bongo’s “unpredictable, irresponsible governance” risked leading the country into chaos. In a later statement, the coup leaders said people around the president had been arrested for “high betrayal of state institutions, massive embezzlement of public funds (and) international financial embezzlement.”

Some analysts warned that the takeover risked bringing instability and could have more to do with divisions among the ruling elite than efforts to improve the lives of ordinary Gabonese. Celebrating soldiers hoisted the head of the republican guard — who is a relative of Bongo — into the air. It’s unclear if the military intends to name him as their new leader.

The coup came about one month after mutinous soldiers in Niger seized power from the democratically elected government, and is the latest in a series of coups across West and Central Africa in recent years. The impunity those putschists enjoyed may have inspired the soldiers in Gabon, said Maja Bovcon, senior analyst at Verisk Maplecroft, a risk assessment firm.

In weekend elections, Bongo faced an opposition coalition led by Albert Ondo Ossa, an economics professor and former education minister whose surprise nomination came a week before the vote. Every election held in Gabon since the country’s return to a multiparty system in 1990 has ended in violence, and there were fears this one would as well.

The vote was criticized by international observers, but a relative calm prevailed until the early hours of Wednesday, when Bongo was declared the winner. Minutes later, gunfire was heard in the center of the capital, Libreville. Later, a dozen uniformed soldiers appeared on state television and announced that they had seized power.

Soon after, crowds poured into the streets. Shopkeeper Viviane Mbou offered the soldiers juice.

Dutch prosecutors demand 12-year sentence for Pakistani cricketer for call to kill lawmaker Wilders



THE HAGUE, Netherlands (AP) — Dutch prosecutors demanded a 12-year prison sentence Tuesday for a former Pakistani cricketer accused of incitement to murder firebrand anti-Islam lawmaker Geert Wilders.

The suspect, identified by Wilders as Khalid Latif, is accused of offering a bounty of some 21,000 euros (\$23,000) to anybody who killed Wilders.

Latif did not appear in the high-security courtroom near Amsterdam’s Schiphol Airport for the trial. He is believed to be in Pakistan.

Prosecutors did not name Latif, but said in a statement that a video posted online in 2018 showed a famous Pakistan cricketer offering the money for killing Wilders. The lawmaker has lived under round-the-clock protection for years because of repeated threats to his life sparked by his fierce criticism of Islam.

The threat came after Wilders said he would organize a competition of cartoons of the Prophet Muhammad. Many

Muslims consider any depictions of Muhammad to be blasphemous. Ultimately, the contest did not go ahead, but the plan sparked outrage in the Muslim world.

“The video message was extra toxic because it was issued during a period in which there was a lot of hatred and anger towards Geert Wilders,” the Public Prosecution Service in The Hague said in its written statement.

The prosecution office said that killing Wilders would not just have “caused unbearable pain to his loved ones. It would also have been an attack on the rule of law itself.”

Wilders said in court that a conviction would send a “powerful signal to all other others who issue threats: we won’t accept it.” And in comments he addressed directly to Latif, he added: “As long as I’m living and breathing, you won’t stop me. Your call to kill me and pay money for it is abject and will not silence me.”

An international warrant has been issued for Latif’s arrest. Dutch prosecutors said they had been trying to contact him since 2018, first as a witness and then to answer the charges. However, they said they hadn’t received any reply from the Pakistani authorities.

In 2017, Latif, 37, was banned for five years from all forms of cricket for his role in a match-fixing scandal in the Pakistan Super League.

Tuesday’s case comes at a time when parts of the Muslim world have been angered by a series of Quran burnings in Sweden. Swedish police have allowed the demonstrations, citing freedom of speech, but have filed preliminary hate speech charges against a refugee from Iraq who has carried out a series of such desecrations.



Haitian judge interviews Colombian suspects for the first time since the president was assassinated

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti (AP) — A judge in Haiti is for the first time interrogating some of the 18 Colombian suspects arrested more than two years ago and accused of being part of a mercenary squad that assassinated President Jovenel Moïse, a judicial official said Wednesday.

The former Colombian soldiers earlier had refused to talk when questioned by a judge who previously had been assigned to the case, magistrate Bernard Saint-Vil, who appoints judges in the case, told The Associated Press.

The first two suspects were transported on Monday and Tuesday from Haiti’s main penitentiary in downtown Port-au-Prince to a government office in nearby Petion-Ville where they were undergoing interrogations by Judge Walther Wesser Voltaire, the magistrate said.

The 18 Colombians are among more than 40 suspects including elite Haitian police officers who were arrested in Haiti after Moïse was fatally shot in July 2021 in his private residence. The investigation in Haiti has moved very slowly, in part

due to a high turnover of judges overseeing the case and because gang violence has disrupted court proceedings in the capital and beyond.

On Wednesday, the U.S. embassy in Haiti urged all U.S. citizens to leave the Caribbean country as soon as possible, “given the current security situation and infrastructure challenges.”

Voltaire is the fifth judge to oversee the investigation, with previous judges stepping down for various reasons. One judge said his family pressured him not to take the case because they feared he

would be killed.

Meanwhile, authorities in the U.S. have filed charges against 11 suspects extradited over the past couple of years.

U.S. prosecutors have described a broad conspiracy among parties both in Haiti and South Florida who aimed to benefit from lucrative contracts under a successor to Moïse, after he was either kidnapped or killed.

A Haitian-Chilean businessman in June became the first suspect to be convicted and sentenced in the case, with 10 others in Florida awaiting trial.

In Haiti, it’s unclear what, if anything the two Colombian suspects told Voltaire this week. The hearings are held behind closed doors, and the judge has said he would not discuss the case publicly because the investigation is ongoing.

An attorney for the suspects who is based in Miami did not return messages for comment.

The suspects in Haiti are languishing in the country’s main penitentiary, with only a handful of hearings taking place so far. A trial has yet to be scheduled.

Russia earns less from oil and spends more on war. So far, sanctions are working like a slow poison

The Russian ruble’s wobble in value has exposed a crack in President Vladimir Putin’s fortress economy, a vulnerability quickly plastered over by the Kremlin’s economic team in a move that allowed the currency to regain its footing, at least for now.

Yet the patch — an emergency interest rate increase — cannot hide the dilemma at the heart of the Russian economy: how to fund the military while not undermining the national currency and overheating the economy with corrosive and politically embarrassing inflation.

Life in Moscow presents a facade of normality despite sweeping sanctions tied to the war in Ukraine and the departure of hundreds of name-brand Western companies.

Outdoor seating at restaurants and bars on the popular Bolshaya Nikitskaya street were packed on a recent evening with well-dressed residents enjoying balmy August weather. Loud music from DJs boomed from a nearby courtyard eatery. Malls haven’t changed at first glance, but where Zara and H&M once stood, shoppers find new clothing brands Maag and Vilet.

A portrait of Wagner Group’s chief Yevgeny Prigozhin, who died last week in a plane crash two months after launching his brief rebellion, lies on flowers on the grave at the Porokhovskoye cemetery in St. Petersburg, Russia, on Wednesday, Aug. 30, 2023. (AP Photo/Dmitri Lovetsky)

Kremlin says ‘deliberate wrongdoing’ is a possible cause of the plane crash that killed Wagner chief

This image made from a social media and and provided by Ostorozhno Novosti shows smoke billowing over the city and a large blaze in Pskov,

Russia, on Aug. 29, 2023. Russian officials accused Ukraine of targeting six Russian regions early Wednesday in what appeared to be the biggest drone attack on Russian soil since Moscow sent troops into Ukraine 18 months ago. (Ostorozhno Novosti via AP)

Ukrainian drones strike deep in Russian territory, Moscow says, while a barrage in Kyiv kills 2 And doughnut seller Krunchy Dream could easily be mistaken for the Krispy Kreme that once stood in its place in Evropeisky mall, even the branding is similar. In the absence of Apple Pay, banks provide stickers with a chip that enables mobile payment.

Key economic gauges are also in normal ranges. Unemployment is low, economic growth is better than many had expected and inflation is moderate by Russian standards — at 4% in July — though hard on those with limited incomes.

People in Moscow — where criticism of the military can bring jail time and some only provided their first names — expressed a mix of unease and resignation.

Retiree Vladimir Cheremesyev, 68, recalled that the troubles after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 were delayed by several years.

“I think that although I am a pensioner, and there is not much income, I don’t feel much yet,” Cheremesyev said, “but there is anxiety — sometimes my blood pressure rises.”

Others noted how prices constantly changed.

Yuliana, a 38-year-old entrepreneur, was more concerned: “Our condition has deteriorated sharply, it’s no good. ... It won’t end today or tomorrow, and not the day after tomorrow. I think more than one generation will pay for this story.”

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Kim says North Korea must be ready against US-led invasion plots, while US, allies start new drills

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — North Korean leader Kim Jong Un called for the military to be constantly ready for combat to thwart its rivals' plots to invade, state media said Tuesday, as the U.S., South Korea and Japan held a trilateral naval exercise to deal with North Korea's evolving nuclear threats.

Kim said in a speech marking the country's Navy Day on Monday that the waters off the Korean Peninsula have been made unstable "with the danger of a nuclear war" because of U.S.-led hostilities, according to the official Korean Central News Agency. He accused the U.S. of conducting "more frantic" naval drills with its allies and deploying strategic assets in waters around the Korean Peninsula.

"The prevailing situation requires our navy to put all its efforts into rounding off the war readiness to maintain the constant combat alertness and get prepared to break the enemy's will for war in contingency," Kim said.

South Korea's Foreign Ministry expressed deep regret over Kim's use of "very rude language" to slander the South Korean, U.S. and Japanese leaders. Spokesperson Lim Soosuk told reporters that North Korea must immediately stop acts that raise tensions with "reckless threats and provocation."

In Washington, D.C., Cho Hyundong, South Korea's ambassador to the United States, said South Korean, U.S. and Japanese efforts to improve relations would not be deterred by Kim's rhetoric. "The continued provocation and continued violation of multiple critical U.N. security resolutions by North Korea will only strengthen the trilateral security cooperation," Cho said.

He made the comments Tuesday in an appearance at the Center for Strategic and International Studies with Tomita Koji, Japan's ambassador to the U.S., and Kurt Campbell, a top adviser to Biden on Indo-Pacific affairs.

Tuesday's South Korean-U.S.-Japanese drills in international waters off South Korea's southern Jeju island involved naval destroyers from the three countries. The training was aimed at mastering procedures for detecting, tracking and sharing information about incoming North Korean missiles, South Korea's navy said in a statement.

The U.S. and South Korean militaries began the 11-day bilateral drills on Aug. 21. The annual Ulchi Freedom Shield training is normally a computer-simulated command post exercise, but it included field exercises this year.

North Korea typically responds to U.S.-South Korean military drills with its own missile tests.

Since the beginning of 2022, North

Korea has carried out more than 100 weapons tests, many of them involving nuclear-capable missiles designed to strike the U.S., South Korea and Japan.

Many experts say North Korea ultimately wants to use its boosted military capabilities to wrest greater concessions from the U.S.

North Korea's testing spree has caused the U.S. and South Korea to expand their drills, resume trilateral training involving Japan and enhance "regular visibility" of U.S. strategic assets to the Korean Peninsula.

Earlier this month, the leaders of the U.S., South Korea and Japan held their

first-ever stand-alone trilateral summit at Camp David. During the meeting, they announced they intend to put into operation by year's end the sharing of real-time missile warning data on North Korea and hold annual trilateral exercises.

Kim has been pushing hard to expand his nuclear arsenal and introduce a slew of sophisticated weapons systems.

During his Navy Day speech, Kim said that military units of each service would be given new weaponry in line with the government's decision to expand the operation of tactical nuclear weapons.

He said the navy would become "a component of the state nuclear deterrence carrying out the strategic duty."

This suggests North Korea would deploy new nuclear-capable missiles to its navy and other military services.

South Korean officials say Kim hasn't anointed her as his heir. They believe Kim likely attempts to use his daughter's public appearance as a way to show his people that one of his children would one day inherit his power in what would be the country's third hereditary power transfer.



Britain's foreign secretary will visit China in an attempt to shore up ties and reduce tensions



TAIPEI, Taiwan (AP) — Britain's top diplomat, James Cleverly, is set to visit China on Wednesday, as the two countries attempt to shore up frayed ties. It will be the first trip by a U.K. foreign secretary to China in more than five years. Both countries confirmed the long-awaited trip on Tuesday.

"The two sides will have in-depth communication on Sino-British relations and international and regional issues of common concern," Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin said. "We hope the British side will work with us to uphold the spirit of mutual respect, deepen exchanges, enhance mutual understanding and promote the stable development of Sino-British relations."

Cleverly's visit is an attempt to stabilize China-Britain ties, which have sunk to their lowest level in decades. Cleverly has said he would raise issues such as Xinjiang and Hong Kong with the Chinese government. He is expected to stress that Chinese influence comes with responsibility on the global stage-including helping end Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

"That responsibility means China fulfilling its international commitments and obligations," he said.

Britain's governing Conservative party is split over how tough a line to take with Beijing. Critics had accused former Prime Minister Boris Johnson — a self-declared "Sinophile" — of prioritizing trade ties and not taking Chinese threats to national security seriously enough.

Current Prime Minister Rishi Sunak is aiming to pursue a nuanced, non-confrontational approach. He has described China as a growing "systemic challenge" to Britain's values and interests, but he has also stressed the need to maintain a relationship with the Asian superpower.

Conservative lawmaker and former party leader Iain Duncan Smith, an outspoken critic of the Chinese Communist Party, said Cleverly's visit was the latest demonstration of "Project Kowtow."

"The problem with our position right now is it smells terribly of appeasement," he said. "It's like we want more business, therefore we don't want to upset the Chinese too much."

Duncan Smith was one of five British members of Parliament critical of Beijing who were sanctioned by China in 2021.

Cleverly said he will request that Beijing lift the sanctions. Besides highlighting human rights and security concerns, Cleverly is also expected to explore potential areas of cooperation with China, such as climate change and trade.

His trip was aimed at strengthening channels of communication and protecting British interests, Britain's Foreign Office said. He will meet with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi and Vice President Han Zheng, it added.

Cleverly was initially scheduled to travel to Beijing in July, but his trip was postponed, and his then-counterpart, Qin Gang, was later replaced with veteran diplomat Wang Yi.

Sacha Deshmukh, Amnesty International U.K.'s chief executive, said Cleverly "must ensure that human rights issues provide the tone and substance to everything he does while in China."

"The foreign secretary must go well beyond promises to 'raise' human rights issues behind closed doors," he said.

Iran summons Swiss diplomat over US seizure of Iranian crude oil that's now at port in Houston



TEHRAN, Iran (AP) — Iran has summoned a Swiss diplomat over the apparent U.S. seizure of Iranian crude oil from a ship that sat for months off Texas, an official said Monday, as the oil said Monday, as the oil now appeared to be moored in Houston.

The remarks by Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Nasser Kanaani mark the latest twist in the saga of the oil once aboard the tanker Suez Rajan, which had become mired in the wider tensions between the U.S. and the Islamic Republic. That's even as Tehran and Washington work toward a trade of billions of dollars in frozen Iranian assets in South Korea for the release of five Iranian-Americans held in Tehran.

Iran has been trying to evade sanctions and continue selling its oil abroad, while the U.S. and its allies have been seizing cargoes since 2019 after the country's nuclear deal allowing the trade collapsed.

Speaking to journalists Monday, Kanaani said Tehran had summoned the chargé d'affaires of the Swiss Embassy in Iran to express a "strong objection" over the U.S. seizing the oil. Switzerland has looked out for America's interests in Iran since the 1979 U.S. Embassy hostage crisis.

Kanaani's comments also acknowledged the oil was Iranian.

"The subject of the seizure of an Iranian oil consignment by the U.S. ... is a completely unproductive action," Kanaani said. He said the U.S. government was on the one hand expressing interest in direct talks to pave the way for a renewed nuclear deal and on the other was imposing new sanctions and seizing oil.

The U.S. State Department did not immediately respond to a request for comment. The saga over the Suez Rajan began in February 2022, when the group United Against Nuclear Iran said 'it suspected the tanker carried oil from Irans Khargh Island, its main oil distribution terminal in the Puersian Gulf.

For months, the ship sat in the South China Sea off the northeast coast of Singapore before suddenly sailing for the Gulf of Mexico without explanation. Analysts believe the vessel's cargo likely has been seized by American officials, though there still were no public court documents Monday involving the oil.

On Aug. 20, the Suez Rajan began transferring its oil to the tanker MR Euphrates, ship-tracking data analyzed by The Associated Press showed. On Monday, data showed the MR Euphrates moored in Houston at a major oil terminal, likely preparing to discharge the crude it carried from the Suez Rajan.

The Los Angeles-based private equity firm Oaktree Capital Management had owned the Suez Rajan until late May, when it was taken over the Greek-based firm Empire Navigation. The MR Euphrates also is owned by Empire, which did not respond to a request for comment Monday.

Iran's 2015 nuclear deal with world powers saw it regain the ability to sell oil openly on the international market. But in 2018, then-President Donald Trump unilaterally withdrew from the accord and re-imposed American sanctions. That slammed the door on much of Iran's lucrative crude oil trade, a major engine for its economy and its government. It also began a cat-and-mouse hunt for Iranian oil cargo — as well as series of escalating attacks attributed to Iran since 2019.

The delay in offloading the Suez Rajan's cargo had become a political issue as well for the Biden administration as the ship had sat for months in the Gulf of Mexico, possibly due to companies being worried about the threat from Iran.



Mexico sends 1,200 more troops to Michoacan state after weekend of cartel violence

MEXICO CITY (AP) — The Mexican government said Monday it sent 1,200 more troops to the cartel-dominated western state of Michoacan after a weekend of violence.

State prosecutors said three convenience stores and five trucks and cars had been set afire, a tactic often used by drug cartels in the state to block roads and enforce extortion demands. Prosecutors said three men and three youths aged 16 and 17 were arrested in the attacks.

A Defense Department statement said the soldiers and National Guard members were deployed over the weekend. It said they were ordered to prevent cartels from blocking any more roads, "so that people can go about their business normally."

Soldiers are stationed in every Mexican state, but the army did not say how many already were in Michoacan before the weekend deployment.

President Andrés Manuel López Obrador said that "peace and tranquility" had been restored to the region and called the weekend violence acts of "propaganda and publicity."

Life in the cities affected by the violence — Apatzingan, Buenavista and Uruapan — is anything but normal.

Lime growers and farmers in the township of Buenavista complained in recent weeks of widespread drug cartel

extortion, and in Apatzingan most basic goods cost almost double their normal price because the cartels takes a slice of most purchases.

That kind of mass threats and extortion of lime growers sparked an uprising by civilian vigilante groups a decade ago. One lime grower, who spoke on condition of remaining anonymous for security reasons, said last week that the local drug cartel had increased the price of protection payments fivefold in the space of a weeks. The Michoacan state government said Wednesday that it had launched a criminal investigation into the extortion shakedowns. The situation threatens the supply of fresh limes, a mainstay of Mexican cuisine, and recalls the darkest days of Mexico's 2006-2012 drug war.

Back then, the Familia Michoacana and later the Knights Templar cartels burned down packing houses. imposed crop prices, demanded protection money and even told growers on which days they could harvest their crop.

That sparked an armed uprising in 2013 and 2014 by angry farmers. That vigilante movement largely kicked out the old cartels, only to see them replaced by others.

By then, most of the vigilante groups had either disarmed or been infiltrated by drug gangs.



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Miss Universe Bahamas pays a courtesy call at MOTIA



Miss Universe Bahamas 2023-2024, Melissa Ingraham, paid a courtesy call at the Ministry of Tourism, Investments and Aviation (MOTIA), August 25, 2023. Pictured with Ms. Ingraham are, at left, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Tourism, Investments & Aviation, the Hon. Chester Cooper and Permanent Secretary of MOTIA Reginald Saunders. (BIS Photo/Kemuel Stubbs)

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