New Carnival Cruise Port in Grand Bahama to be named ‘Cocktail Key’

The Bahama — Prime Minister Hubert Minnis and Foreign Minister Armand Maloney announced on Monday, August 28, 2023, that the new Grand Bahama Carnival Cruise Port will be called ‘Cocktail Key.’

Minister Maloney said he received the information from Carnival Cruise early Monday morning and was excited about the proposed name.

“The key can mean it’s the key to celebrations. So, we would [like] people to bring their respective celebrations to Grand Bahama,” he said.

Minnis said that the new port is under construction and will be ready for operations by late 2023. He added that the government is working to make it a world-class facility.

PM Says Abortion is a Choice

Kadee Campbell
Prime Minister Phillips Davis

In the aftermath of the legislation concerning the 15-year-old who took an abortion pill after the baby was preggers for being raped by her mother’s 45-year-old boyfriend, Prime Minister Phillips 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.

“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 historic, 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 considered, how the victim would be affected, the prime minister, a veteran lawyer, said that 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 one, whose issue of abortion is a legally evil one motive. It’s a personal choice, and we believe that the person has to be informed and not have to impose my views on a personal choice. I’m not going to say, I will support a personal choice of anyone in respect of those matters,” he said.

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 local schools and the Infant where she welcomed students and parents and chatted with teachers on Monday, August 28, 2023.

Minister Moxey said these “high-energy” thanked parents who dropped off their children and offered word of encouragement to teachers as they trickled onto school grounds for the start of a new term. Before visiting the morning, Minister Moxey had visited Jack Hayward Primary School, Jack Hayward Primary School and Hugh Campbell Primary School.

“This is the first day back in the classrooms and I just wanted to be here to cheer them on,” Minister Moxey said to the press following for visit at Hugh Campbell Primary School. “I wanted to really encourage the students to focus on their studies and to pay attention to their teachers and the instructions and do well and make us all proud.”

ALASKA AIRLINES, “CLEARED FOR TAKEOFF”

Story Full Story on Pg. 85

ALASKA AIRLINES, “CLEARED FOR TAKEOFF”

Story Full Story on Pg. 85

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

The Western Hemisphere Program and the Global Migration Media Academy, both international (OMM) initiatives, hosted a two-day training for journalists in The Bahamas, August 8-9, 2023, to increase their understanding of the human rights challenges that migrants and refugees face as they seek new lives.

Story Full Story on Pg. 85

NEW DELHI (AP) — Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi said the country’s role as the 2023 host of the G20 year would focus on highlighting the concerns of the developing world, and has proposed the African Union to become permanent members of the Group.

“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 Saturday as he addressed the Business 20 Summit in New Delhi.

The G20 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 the past three days, industry and policy leaders around the world have discussed concerns about 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 more generous outreach to reach consensus on issues that concern all member countries, or the so-called Global South.

They include consumption debt levels, the implications of climate change, and even the broader East-West split over Ukraine’s role, if any, in the discourse.

ALASKA AIRLINES, “CLEARED FOR TAKEOFF”

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Minister for Grand Bahama, the Hon. Ginger Moxey

The students, I believe, are going to do very well, this school term. There was the look of a few scare and 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. Olara Hannah-Martin pointed out that this term, millions are invested into education such as in the Bahamas. Minister Moxey called that investment an impetus to improve in the classrooms, for the students and for the parents as well. She acknowledged that children are the future and education is the key to their 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 ministry has been focusing on having the schools and the classrooms ready for this new term. I’m very pleased to see the students coming back and I know that a lot of the parents are equally pleased.

As for what she’s hoping for in this new term, Minister Moxey said she’d hope that the national grade point average would improve. She’s also expecting that all the teachers and educators would continue to focus on their studies in the classrooms.

PM Says Abortion is a Choice

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

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

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

As journalists from The Bahamas join forces to report on migration with a human rights-based approach, the region seeks to ensure that journalists and other media professionals are well-informed about the complexities of the issue and the necessary human rights-based approach while reporting on this sensitive and sometimes controversial issue. The 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 support 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 Romen, “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 initially promote 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, Alaska Airlines and Alaska Air successfully completed the live integration of their respective booking platforms, enabling passengers to book their flights through Alaska’s native mobile app or Alaska’s website, ensuring a seamless travel experience.

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 (The DPM) on Wednesday, August 31, 2023.

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

"However, I am confident in the fact that both parties would agree that the new industrial agreement reflects 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 are 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 alignment 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 in-house and out-of-house 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 2023 through April 2024.

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

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, Mervyn McKnight thanked his negotiating team and said he hoped that future negotiations will not take as long to complete.
Prime Minister Davis, optimistic about the economic growth of Grand Bahama

Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and the Hon. Philip Davis, during his visit to the Grand Bahama and the Freeport Port Authority, expressed optimism about the economic growth of Grand Bahama. He said that the government had invested a significant amount of money in the airport, the Freeport Port Authority, and other infrastructure projects to support the economic growth of the island.

"The government is committed to transforming Grand Bahama into a bustling economic hub," Davis said. "We are investing in infrastructure projects to attract more businesses and tourists to the island, and we are confident that Grand Bahama will continue to grow and thrive."
What's old is new again in novel tour Bahamas Eco-Glide takes guests on a roll & stroll through history, culture

Two businesses with diverse backgrounds and a mutual vision to broaden the scope of our planet’s landscapes. The Ama- more Bahamian history and culture have launched a new tour company, called Bahamas Eco-Glide Adventures, the outdoor venture taking up to 11 guests at a time on a guided tour of Fort Charlotte, including an inside look at the dungeon and tower, a trip back in time and on to a taste of today’s culture with light bites at a sunset Fish Fry and a stop at the beach. Founded by Bahamian real estate legend Mario Casey and 15-year veteran of the electric scooter business, Scott Carter, 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 about the history of a place they are visiting," said Carter, managing partner. "When I was scouting locations, I went up to Fort Charlotte where the view over the harbor was amazing. I timed it to see the sun's incandescence with the cotton being white 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."

Carter, who could see the potential, approached the Antiquity, Monuments and Memorials Corporation and immediately were full cooperation of its executive director Dr. Christopher Carey. 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 Government, operator of the site, Lighthouse and resort on West Bay Street supports the Office of the Prime Minister. For Carey, the new business is part of an expanding campaign, identifying gaps in a sustainable-driven economy as well as needs in an environment vulnerable to climate change. In the past two years, Carey and his associates have managed the development of a disaster relief headquarters in New Providence that would serve the entire region on a multi-action basis and he's pleased 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 interesting, some a bit bland," he said. "And I believe everyone of means the highest possible mark. Where you could combine a motorized vehicle into a gaze of points and committee for stronger laws and enforcement to end marine resource depletion by foreign vessels. You were one of a handful invited to a think tank for new ideas to boost and broaden the Bahamian economy."

"The tour starts at Marcus Beach Way behind Xavier's Lower School and the scuba-trip intermission station. Riders are equipped with handsets as tour guides, one in front and one at the rear, that 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. Separate 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 'Lime Bite' lunch and beverage at the Fish Fry."

"Tourism has changed," explained Carter. "Twenty years ago, visitors were happy to sit on the beach with a magazine, maybe a little hula shop or pick up a souvenir. Today's tourists want 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 Glsde with the sun on their face, the wind in 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

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

"When India assumed the G20 presidency last December, we actively conceived that most of the Global South would not be at the table when we met," said External Affairs Minister Subrahmanyan Chandhakar. "This is how the much because the really urgent problems are those faced by them. And India, itself to reach the heart of the Global South, could not stand by and let that happen."

He said G20 has so far been committed to rising debt, sustainable development, climate action and food security, among other issues that affect small- income countries. "A woodland of the G20 is to promote economic growth and development. This cannot advance unless the crucial concerns of the Global South are addressed," Chandhakar 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 neighbouring countries. On Friday, China's Vice Commerce Minister Wang Shuwen 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 new material costs?"

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

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The Bahama Journal | Friday, September 1st, 2023

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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

LIBREVILLE, Gabon (AP) — Military soldiers in Gabon announced late Wednesday that the head of the country’s elite republic guard would lead the Central African country, hours after they said the country’s newly re-elected president had been detained.

The coup leaders said in an announcement on Gabon’s state TV that Gen. Bruno Consorcio Ologhe N’gouema had been “unanimously” designated president of a transitional committee to lead the country.

Ologhe 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 15-year rule of the oil-rich country.

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 chanted the coup against a dynasty accused of getting rich on the country’s resource wealth while many of its citizens struggle.

“Thank you, my family. We’ve been waiting a long time for this moment,” said Yvinda Ondimba, standing near soldiers from Gabon’s elite republic guard, one of the units that raised 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 Tuesday.

“The president of the transition will insist 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 all Beloved Gabon,”” Lt. Col. Unihi Menfomba 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 43 years, and has been under widespread discontent with his reign. Another group of military soldiers attempted a coup in 2019 but was quickly overpowered.

The former French colony is a member of the 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 Financial Administration, or $2.7 billion 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 Le Monde, a French newspaper dedicated to accountability. Investigators have found the family to have more than $30 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 “attempted coup d’etat against the government” forced the country into chaos. In a feature statement, the coup leaders said people around the president had been arrested for “high treason” by 2:00 p.m. and were expected to be handovered to the court and face criminal charges.

Some analysts warned that the takeover raised bringing instability and could leave more to do with divisions among the ruling elite than efforts to improve the lives of ordinary Gabonese. Celebrating soldiers honed the head of the republic guard — who is a relative of Bongo — onto the air. It’s unclear if the military intends to return him as its leader.

The coup came about one month after notorious soldiers in Niger seized power from the democratically elected government, and is the latest in a series of coup attempts in West and Central Africa in recent years. The impunity these patrimonial encyclopedias may have inspired the soldiers in Gabon, and Bongo, Rovert, senior analyst at Verisk Maplecroft, a risk assessment firm.

In weekend elections, Bongo faced an opposition coalition led by Albert Ondoa Orna, an economic 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, General 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. Shopkeepers Viviane Mboala 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 former anti-Islam lawmaker Geert Wilders.

The suspect, identified by Wilders as Khalid Latif, is accused of offering a bounty of some 2,000 euros ($2,300) to anyone who killed Wilders.

Latif did not oppose 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 Pakistani 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 force 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 irreparable pain to his loved ones. It would have also been an attack on the rule of law itself."

Wilders said in court that a conviction would send a "powerful signal to all other persons who issue threats: we won’t accept.”

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 deter me.”

An international warrant has been issued for Latif’s arrest. Dutch prosecutors said they were 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, 27, 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

The Russian ruble’s wobble in value has exposed a crack in President Vladimir Putin’s fortiss economy, a vulnerability quickly harnessed 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 overthrowing the economy with counterfeit 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 eating 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 boosted from a nearby courtyard café. Malls haven’t changed at first glance, but where Zara and H&M once stood, shoppers find new clothing brands Maga and Vilga.

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 Pirogovskoye cemetery in St. Petersburg, Russia, on Wednesday, Aug. 30, 2023. (AP Photo/Dmitri Lovetsky)

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

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

In Haiti, it’s unclear what, if anything, the two Colombian suspects told Voiturie 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.
Kim says North Korea must be ready against US-led invasion plots, while US, allies start new drills

SIHOU, South Korea (AP) — North Korean leader Kim Jong Un called for the military to be constantly ready for combat to thwart its rival's plans 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 navies off the Korean Peninsulas have been made untouchable "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 frequent" naval drills with its allies and deploying strategic assets in waters around the Korean Peninsula.

"The prevailing situation requires our navy to take all its efforts into rendering 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 Koreans, U.S. and Japanese leaders. Spokesman Lim Soo-suk told reporters that North Korea must immediately stop acts that raise tensions with "reckless threats and provocation."

In Washington, D.C., Cho Hyun-jong, South Korea's ambassador to the United States, said South Korea, U.S. and Japanese efforts to improve relations would not be derailed by Kim's rhetoric.

"The continued provocations 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 Tomi Keli, Japan's ambassador to the U.S., and Kurt Campbell, a top adviser to Biden on Indo-Pacific affairs.

Tuesday's South Korea-U.S.-Japan drills in international waters off South Korea's southeastern islands involved naval destroyers from the three countries.

The training was aimed at mastering procedures for damaging, tracking and sharing information about incoming North Korean missiles, South Korea's Ministry of National Defense said in a statement.

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

North Korea typically responds to U.S.-South Korea military drills with its own exercises.

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 win 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 viability" 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 trilateral summit at Camp David. During the meeting, they announced they would put into operation by year's end the sharing of 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 the 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 named it at his own. They believe Kim likely attempts to make 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.S. foreign secretary to China in more than five years. Both countries confirmed the long-awaited trip on Tuesday.

"The sides will have in-depth communications on Sino-British relations and international and regional issues of common concern," Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin said. "We hope the British side will work with us to uphold the spirit of mutual respect, deeper 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 seen their fair share of headlines. 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 in international championships 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 — who declared "Sinophobe" of prioritizing trade ties and not taking Chinese threats to national security seriously enough. Current Prime Minister Rishi Sunak is aiming to pursue a more balanced, 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.

Irish Foreign Minister 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 Karori."

"The problem with our position right now is that it's almost imperceptible," 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 arranged at short notice following communications 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 last state visit to the UK's Chief Executive said Cleverly must ensure that the 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.

**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 now appeared to be moored in Houston.

The remarks by Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Nasser Kanani mark the latest twist in the saga of the oil tanker Stena Rajan, which had become mired in the wider tensions between the U.S. and the Islamic Republic. That even as Tehran and Washington grew closer toward a trade deal, which, if implemented, would mean 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 saying sanctions since 2019 to curb the Iranian crude oil trade.

Speaking to journalists Monday, Kanani 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 for America's interest in Iran since the 1979 U.S. Embassy hostage crisis.

Kanani's comments also acknowledged the oil was Iranian.

"The subject of the seizure of an Iranian oil tanker by the U.S. is a completely unproductive action," Kanani 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 Stena Rajan began in February 2022, when the group United Against Nuclear Iran said it suspected the tanker carried oil from Iran's Kharq Island, its main oil distribution terminus in the Persian 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 cargo's likely has been seized by American officials, though there were no public court documents Monday involving the oil.

On Aug. 26, the Stena Rajan began transiting the oil to the tanker MR Ephesus, ship-tracking data analyzed by The Associated Press showed. On Monday, data showed the MR Ephesus moored in Houston at a major oil terminal, likely preparing to discharge the cargo it carried from the Stena Rajan.

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

Iran's 2021 nuclear deal with world powers saw it rejoin the ability to sell oil openly on the international market. But in 2021, then-President Donald Trump initially withdrew from the accord and re-imposed American sanctions. That alarmed the shore on much of Iran's lucrative crude oil trade, a major engine for its economy and government. It also began a cat-and-mouse hunt for Iranian oil cargo as well as networks of evading sanctions attributed to Iran since then.

The delay in offloading the Stena 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 on fire, a tactic often used by drug cartels in the state to block roads and enforce extortions demands. Prosecutors said three men and three youths aged 16 and 17 were arrested in the attack.

A Defense Department statement said the soldiers and National Guard members were deployed over the weekend. It said they were ordered to prevent cartel 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 the "peace and tranquility" had been restored in the region and called the weekend violence acts of "propaganda and publicity."

Like in the cities affected by the violence — Apatzingán, Buenavista and Uruapan — anything but normal. Lime growers and farmers in the township of Bucerías complained in recent weeks of widespread drug cartel extortion, and in Apatzingan most basic goods cost almost double their normal price because the cartels take a slice of most purchases.

That kind of mass threats and extortion of time growers sparked an uprising by civilian vigilante groups a decade ago. One time 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 week. 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 recall the darkest days of Mexico's 2006-2012 drug war.

Back then, the Family Michoacana and later the Knights Templar cartel turned down packing houses, imposed crop prices, demanded protection money and even told growers on which day they could harvest their crop.

That sparked an armed uprising in 2013 and 2014 by savvy 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 disbanded or been infiltrated by drug gangs.

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