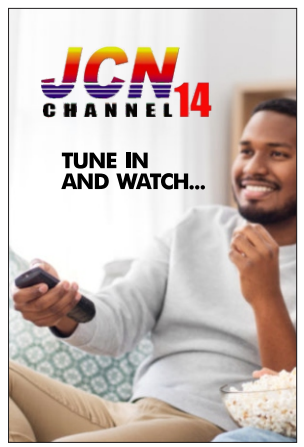




# The Bahama Journal

Quo Vadis, Bahamas?



FRIDAY, JUNE 19TH, 2026

Choose **CASH N'GO** CASHNGOBAHAMAS.COM

- Pay Bills
- Pay Insurance
- Purchase Airline Tickets
- Send Money & More

Download the CASH N'GO Mobile Wallet App Today

# PM HIGHLIGHTS ECONOMIC GAINS

BY CLEMIA NEELY  
Journal Staff Writer

Reduced public debt, increased government revenues, and a continued, steady improvement in global credit ratings represent undeniable evidence of growing international confidence in the Bahamas' economic trajectory, Prime Minister Philip Davis said confidently as he made his contribution to the 2026/2027 budget debate.

Addressing the House of Assembly, he emphasized that his administration's strict adherence to prudent fiscal management had directly led to a tangible, measurable improvement in the country's overall fiscal position.

Mr. Davis also noted with optimism that the national economy has successfully climbed from a state of severe crisis, through a period of fragile recovery, and into robust growth, growing by an estimated 3.8% in 2025, on the heels of a 4.2% the year before. "And this strength does not rest on a single pillar of tourism, it showed up across the board," Davis asserted. "In construction, in financial services, in a sharp rebound in utilities, and in real estate activity, which went up nearly 20%."

Prime Minister Davis went on to say that choosing progress has never just been a campaign slogan, but rather a lived reality, proving that the country is winning, despite what his critics has to say. He emphasized the long-term societal benefits of this economic turnaround. "With more Bahamians returning to work every single year, the more diverse our growth, and the more shockproof our economy becomes," he said.

Davis also drew up sharp contrasts between local stability and broader global turmoil. "We held inflation to just 0.6%, while much of the world wrestled with rising prices," he stated. "And we drove unemployment down from a staggering 17.4% in 2021, to approximately 9.3% by the middle of 2025."

He went on to say, "Confidence is returning. You can see it where the money is flowing. Foreign direct investment is moving across our archipelago like in Inagua, Abaco, Eleuthera, Grand Bahama, and Long Island, fuelling tourism, infrastructure, and construction, and creating jobs island by island."

See Story Cont. Pg. 3



Prime Minister Hon. Philip Davis, KC

# LARODA OUTLINES SECURITY AGENDA

TYNIA BROWN  
Journal Staff Writer

National Security Minister Myles LaRoda has outlined an ambitious plan to strengthen law enforcement, modernize the justice system, and expand rehabilitation efforts as part of the government's 2026/2027 budget.

Contributing to the budget debate in the House of Assembly, LaRoda said the government's crime-fighting strategy is built on a five-pillar approach focused on prevention, detection, prosecution, punishment, and rehabilitation.

Among the key initiatives announced was the establishment of a backlog-reduction court to clear outstanding cases within 24 months. He also revealed plans to expand the specialized firearms court and create a new virtual court complex that will provide appeal, Supreme Court and Magistrate's Court services with Family Island access.

See Story Cont. Pg. 4



National Security Minister Hon. Myles LaRoda

# US EMBASSY: WATERSPORTS IN THE BAHAMAS SHOULD BE AVOIDED



Photographed left to right are Dennis O'Sullivan, RSO US Embassy; Kimberly Furnish, DCM US Embassy; HE Herschel Walker, US Ambassador to The Bahamas; Hon. Leon Lundy, Minister of Transport; Donella Bodie, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Transport; Jerusa Ali, Director General, Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Berne Wright, Acting Port Controller, Ministry of Transport; Betty Kerr, Under Secretary, Ministry of Transport.

BY ALEXANDRIA RECKLEY  
Journal Staff Writer

"Dangerous" is how the US Embassy described the jet ski industry in the Bahamas following a security alert released on Monday, June 15th, 2026; the second such warning within a year.

Ongoing reports of sexual assault and preventable injuries and in one case, a death due to jet ski incidents led to the warning. On Wednesday, June 17th US Ambassador Herschel Walker met with government officials led by Transport Minister Leon Lundy to take immediate action to address the issue.

Also present was Port Department Controller Berne Wright who heads up an inter-agency taskforce to deal with jet ski operations that was established in April 2025.

Discussions about those immediate actions that can be taken to improve visitor safety, structural solutions that should be implemented over time, such as closing communication gaps through clear incident-information sharing and hosting quarterly meetings with external stakeholders from both the private sector and the resident consular corps were addressed.

See Story Cont. Pg. 2

# AMBASSADOR OF THE REPUBLIC OF MALTA CALLS ON BAHAMAS AMBASSADOR



On the occasion of the exit from his post in the United States, the Ambassador of the Republic of Malta His Excellency Dr. Godfrey C. Xuereb paid a courtesy call on the Ambassador of The Bahamas His Excellency Wendall K. Jones on Friday, 12th June, 2026. The two Diplomats spoke on matters of mutual interest between The Bahamas and Malta and the warm friendship that they both developed in Washington, DC over the last four years. Ambassador Jones presented Mr. Xuereb a book published on the 50th anniversary of Bahamian Independence.

# PINTARD: FNM ACCEPTS ELECTION RESULTS, BUDGET PROJECTIONS UNREALISTIC

GERRINO J. SAUNDERS  
Bahama Journal News Editor

The Government of The Bahamas' 2026/2027 fiscal budget "in many ways is bogus" said Leader of the Opposition Michael Pintard as he made his contribution to the debate in the House of Assembly.

He said, "It is a budget with fantastical financial projections that are not grounded in reality. This budget represents the Progressive Liberal Party administration continuing to extract from the people of The Bahamas far too many taxes despite the hardships that many of our people face in affording housing, food, fuel and general living."

Mr. Pintard was also critical of the government, accusing them of collecting massive amounts or revenue from taxes but not properly allocating the funds in a way the majority of Bahamians can feel it.

"This government projects that it will collect approximately \$4.4 billion between July 1st 2026 and June 30th 2027; \$1.6 billion of that will come from VAT alone," he said. "Bahamians are caving in under the weight of rising prices in this country, and rather than give back some of that money to them to pay their bills in more meaningful tax relief, this government wants to boast about having a \$75 million surplus this year, and \$223 million next fiscal year."

"Mind you the government owes all kinds of vendors, people and companies who are desperately seeking to be paid. All that money owed but they want to speak of phantom surpluses. We know there are a few tricks that one can play with books to accomplish that. Their surpluses projections are bogus. A cheap magician's trick that lands nowhere close to relief to the people who desperately need the relief," said Pintard.

Following the results of the general election where the FNM won just eight of the 41 seats Mr. Pintard said there are "no sour grapes, no crying over spilled milk."



FNM Leader, Michael Pintard

He said the FNM "accepts fully" that the PLP is the governing party by a large margin.

However, he said, "While we remain the Opposition we recognize that we echo the dreams and aspirations of tens of thousands of Bahamians who do not believe that the fortunes will improve over the next five years under this administration. And so, we aren't crying hiding or shying away from the job we are mandated to do as the opposition to make life better for the Bahamian people."

"So, we return to the job; and we want to be clear, we are not the official agreeers, we are not the official cooperators or compliers, we are not the official complementors or comforters, we are the opposition and oppose we will when necessary. We will oppose were we see corruption, irregularities, mismanagement, inaccuracies and ineffectiveness. It is this roll that should compel the government to do better, to do more, to do right; and if you don't we stan ready to take your place whenever the people agree for us to do so," said Pintard.

Mr. Pintard warned the government not to spend time trying to silence the Opposition.

Story Cont. Pg. 4

# US EMBASSY: WATERSPORTS IN THE BAHAMAS SHOULD BE AVOIDED

Story Cont. Pg. 1

Minister Lundy told attendees that under his leadership that he saw a decrease stating "Though one incident is one too many, reported incidents of sexual assault involving jet ski operators have decreased in recent years. Under my tenure I have zero tolerance for abuse."

US Ambassador Herschel Walker in a video release said, We've lost an American life to a preventable accident. Too many of our visitors have been hospitalized with serious injuries.

The ambassador called for the government to respond. He said, I am calling on the Government of The Bahamas to activate this task force, enforce existing regulations, and take the concrete steps needed to bring real accountability to this industry.

Walker advised that due to their concerns, U.S. government employees working in The Bahamas are prohibited from renting or using jet skis on New Providence and Paradise Island.

But he did acknowledge The Bahamas' to address the embassy's concerns over the years.

He stated The jet ski task force that was established last year is a meaningful first step, and we are grateful for it — but a task force that does not meet cannot protect lives.

The meeting hosted on Wednesday created a pathway forward resulting in the enforcement of measures already in force including stricter licensing requirements for all water sports operators, mandatory ID badges, random spot checks, and the deployment of beach marshals to high traffic tourist areas.

Compliance with weather and marine safety protocols is a condition of licensing and will also be enforced. The Government is also advancing the introduction of body cameras and GPS tracking for operators as further accountability tools. "Any operator found to be unlicensed, uninsured, operating unsafe equipment, disregarding weather conditions, or engaging in any form of harassment or assault will have their license revoked and will face prosecution." The policy dictates that there will be no exceptions.



Photo (Jet Ski Taskforce): Senior Lieutenant Adrien Stubbs; Chief Petty Officer Osworth Smith, Harbour Patrol Unit; Inspector of Police Domenico Boyd, Tourism Police, Tidal Wave Jet Ski Operations Joint Task Force; FSO M'Kyle Rigby; Devon Burrows, Manager of Visitor Safety and Security, Ministry of Tourism; Petty Officer Eric Rolle, Port Security, Port Department; Senior Commander Berne Wright, Acting Port Controller; Craig Curtis, Senior Deputy Port Controller; Foreign Affairs Director General Jerusa Ali; Dale Roye, Assistant Port Controller; and Lonna Bethel, Assistant Port Controller.

**Cleaner Country. Brighter Future.**

**Bahamas Waste** is proud to sponsor **Operation Love Your Country 2026.**

We're committed to helping keep our islands clean, safe, and beautiful for today, tomorrow, and for generations to come.

**BAHAMAS WASTE**

- Reliable waste collection for commercial or residential properties.
- Waste compactors & containers.
- Portable toilet services & rentals.
- Medical Waste Treatment and Disposal.

Gladstone Road North, P.O. Box N-4827, Nassau Bahamas

Tel (242) 361-6841 | Fax (242) 361-6842 | [www.bahamaswaste.com](http://www.bahamaswaste.com)



Prime Minister Hon. Philip Davis, KC

# PM HIGHLIGHTS ECONOMIC GAINS

Story Cont. from Pg. 1

This investment strategy, he argued, ensures the benefits of economic growth are felt far beyond the country's capital.

Turning his attention to the financial sector, Davis pointed to systematic banking metrics as proof of a deeper structural recovery. "Our external resources remain strong. Private credit is rising, and bad loans are falling," he explained. "These are the signs not of an

economy that merely looks better, but of one that is fundamentally stronger."

The Prime Minister concluded his address by saying that these achievements clearly demonstrate that the country is on an undeniable path of sustained progress.

Reaffirming his administration's unwavering commitment to strengthening the economy, he said that he will continue to maintain this momentum by continually improving the daily lives, financial security, and future opportunities of all Bahamians.

## PLP ESTABLISHING FAIR MODERN SUSTAINABLE REVENUE SYSTEM

BY GERRINO J. SAUNDERS  
Bahama Journal News Editor

The Government of The Bahamas is undertaking a series of measures designed to strengthen revenue administration, improve revenue generation, improve compliance and ensure the long-term stability of public finances. As he led debate following the second reading of the Bills that make up the 2026/2027 fiscal budget, the Minister of Finance Michael Halkitis revealed that the government intends to tap into a revenue stream that has been undervalued for far too long.

During this second consecutive term by the Davis administration, it is anticipated sea bed leases will help to generate a significant amount of revenue. He said the revenue reforms are guided by a simple principle, and that is that "systems must be

fair, efficient, and capable of supporting the national development priorities of today and tomorrow."

Halkitis said, "We are introducing measures to strengthen tax administration and protect the integrity of our revenue base. A point has been raised about seabed leases, and I think it is important to provide some context. For many years, most seabed leases have been granted for only nominal amounts, sometimes as little as one dollar per year. What we are implementing is the establishment of a proper regime for the valuation and leasing of seabed areas."

"To put that into perspective, if a rate of \$100 per acre were applied, it would represent a significant increase over the nominal fees that have traditionally been charged. The key point, however, is that this is not an issue that

can be attributed to any one administration. This has been the practice for more than 50 years."

Halkitis said for decades, little or no meaningful value has been placed on the use of the seabed and what the government is seeking to do now is correct that long-standing situation by ensuring that seabed leases are subject to a fair and transparent framework that reflects their true value.

In yet another category the Finance Minister made it clear that the government will introduce a new property tax classification for foreign owned properties, creating a clear distinction between Bahamian and foreign ownership.

He explained, "Foreign property owners who do not satisfy residency requirements will be subject to the commercial rate, ensuring a fair and equitable

treatment of property taxation."

Furthermore, he said, "Concerns were raised that the government is attempting to introduce changes to permanent residency through the back door. This claim is false. The provision simply recognizes that circumstances may arise that prevent an individual from proceeding to citizenship. In such cases, the individual may revert to residency status upon payment of a \$500 administrative fee."

Mr. Halkitis said, this fee is consistent with the amount that would ordinarily be payable when applying for permanent residency and "is not a hidden pathway to permanent residency, but rather an administrative charge associated with transferring from the citizenship track back to residency status."



Minister of Finance Hon. Michael Halkitis

Additional revenue improvement measures Halkitis spoke of include: enhancing compliance under the Domestic Minimum Top-Up Tax regime through the introduction of mandatory filings, quarterly payments, and modernized electronic payment requirements.

Also, to improve value added tax collection and reduce revenue leakage,

government contract withholding will increase from 40 percent to 100 percent, while VAT liabilities will arise within 30 days rather than the current 180-day period and additional amendments will strengthen enforcement mechanisms, close existing loopholes, and ensure the fair valuation of high value property and business transactions.





COMFORT SUITES PARADISE ISLAND

Enjoy

A BAHAMIAN FEAST AT

*Crusoe's* RESTAURANT

LUNCH: 12:00 PM - 4:00 PM | DINNER: 5:30 PM - 9:00 PM

Conchy Conch Fritters, Freshly Made Conch Salad  
Mouthwatering Steamed or Fried Snapper or Grouper,  
both served with peas n' grits or peas n' rice, coleslaw, and plantain.  
Signature Guava Bread Pudding  
Regular Menu also available

JOIN US FOR KARAOKE Hosted by our Comfort Champion Reggie!

ASK ABOUT OUR

## SUITE SUMMER SALE

ALL THE PERKS OF COMFORT SUITES  
ALL THE PLAY OF ATLANTIS

- Free access to all Atlantis facilities including AQUAVENTURE Waterpark
- 4th night FREE plus fees with minimum 3 paid nights
- Free daily full American buffet breakfast
- Kids Stay, Play & Eat Free.





ESCAPE TO PARADISE FOR **SIR. RANDOL FAWKES** Labour Day

**Comfort SUITES**  
PARADISE ISLAND, BAHAMAS  
Comforting Days & Suite Nights

34 YEARS ANNIVERSARY  
A LEGACY OF 34 YEARS - UNFORGETTABLE STAYS

sales@comfordsuitespi.com  
(242) 605-6300/363-3180/363-3661/363-3680/363-5536 or  
US Toll Free 1-888-638-0504 / 1-877-494-8770 / 1-877-520-5078  
or Canadian Toll Free (888) 281-0437

Comfort Suites Local Residents Page *Crusoe's* RESTAURANT  
WhatsApp us for further information at 55-SUITE (242-557-8483)

# BOWLEG: EXPANSION AND EMPOWERMENT FOR YOUTH

TYNIA BROWN  
Journal Staff Writer

“Contrary to what some may say, most young people in today’s generation are not stupid and lazy; in fact, a many are hungry for opportunities, personal growth and are seeking to become nation builders,” according to Minister of Youth and Sports, Mario Bowleg who was speaking about the ‘Expansion of Youth Opportunities’ during his budget contribution.

He stated “They remain our greatest assets and supporting them is crucial for the success of our communities and nation at large.”

Minister Bowleg outlined several initiatives aimed at expanding opportunities for young people through increased funding, legislative reforms, and enhanced access to entrepreneurial resources, revealing the ministry’s decisions to allocate \$300,000 for the BE-Inspired program during the current fiscal year.

The program, launched to support young Bahamian entrepreneurs between the ages of 18 and 35, providing entrepreneurial training, mentorship, and access to micro-funding. Minister Bowleg stated: “The BE-Inspired Program received a surplus of more than one million dollars that impacted scores of young Bahamian entrepreneurs.”

The minister also noted that the programme has evolved through partnerships with the Small Business Development Centre and the Bahamas Chamber of Commerce. “These partnerships have increased visibility, support and mentorship for our young entrepreneurs, leaving them inspired and impacted at a national level,” he said. The additional funding will help expand the Division of Youth’s Expo and Networking Mixer, which will showcase businesses, encourage innovation, and inspire new ideas that align with global business practices beginning in July.

The initiative will travel throughout the Family Islands and connect young people to investment opportunities and government services. “Quick and easy access through our sister agencies, including the Department of Inland Revenue and the National Insurance Board, will be at their fingertips,” he said.

Minister Bowleg also announced that the Ministry’s virtual platforms and digital technology services will be rolled out in phases, beginning in Long Island, Abaco, Exuma, Eleuthera, Grand Bahama, Cat Island, Andros, and Bimini.

Simultaneously, he emphasized the importance of legislative reforms through the National Youth

Commission Act, which works alongside the Bahamas National Youth Policy 2025–2035 and represents a significant step toward professionalizing the youth sector.

According to Bowleg a key feature of the Act is the establishment of an official register of youth organizations and a National Youth Worker Register to ensure that individuals and organizations working with youth meet established standards and operate within a framework of accountability.

He said, “This legislation brings all youth-serving entities under one umbrella of compliance to better safeguard and support our nation’s youth. Outlining procedures for registration, renewal, suspension, cancellation, reinstatement, and appeals while ensuring public transparency and, noting that \$100,000 has been allocated to support its implementation.”

While discussing youth leadership development, the minister pointed out that in 2024 the Davis administration made history with the establishment of the first-ever National Youth Assembly, comprising both a Youth House of Assembly and Youth Senate serving a two-year term.

Applications are now open for the next cohort of the National Youth Parliament, Minister Bowleg highlighted how the Government’s continued investment in training, advocacy, diplomacy, and leadership development, enables the Bahamas to have representation at both the national and international levels, participating in United Nations, Commonwealth, CARICOM, and other regional and global engagements.



Minister of Youth and Sports, Hon. Mario Bowleg

# RBPF SEE’S MOST SIGNIFICANT MODERNIZATION



National Security Minister Hon. Myles LaRoda with the Top Brass of the R.B.P.F.

BY CLEMIA NEELY  
Journal Staff Writer

Effective policing in the 21st century is not simply a matter of presence but a matter of precision, this according to the Minister of National Security, Myles LaRoda who reiterated what was said during the Speech from the Throne that the government will continue to build on the measured success of its five-pillar crime strategy.

Speaking during the 2026/2027 budget debate LaRoda said during this budget period the police force has achieved the most significant modernization of its operation and technological capabilities in its history.

He shared, “Technology investments will include expansion of the CCTV network at a cost of \$4,125,000. Purchasing security and communication equipment at a cost of \$1,250,000. Investing in police and prison equipment, forensic, parole software, Bahamas Department of Correctional Services (BDOCS) management, and canines at a cost of \$4,900,000.”

Investments will also be made in intelligence and forensics including modernizing the Automated Fingerprint Identification System (AFIS) digital forensics platform for fingerprint identification, according to LaRoda.

He went on to say, “Maintenance of the Marco Alert System at a cost of \$610,746.

Maintenance of the electronic monitoring system at a cost of \$4,361,729.

Integration of the Surveillance and Community Integration Platform, which includes CCTV, body cams, drone, and shot spotter at a cost of \$1,100,000.”

Minister LaRoda shared that Maritime security, led by the defence force, is responsible for patrolling 100,000 square miles of our economic zones across 700 islands and cays. In the upcoming fiscal year, the Ministry of National Security will continue to advance the radar installations in Eleuthera, Abaco, and Ragged Island, thereby expanding maritime surveillance.

Under crime prevention, LaRoda said that the most cost effective investment in public safety is preventing crime from occurring in the first place. One of the prevention strategies include ‘HYPE’ – Help Young People Exceed. It is a joint initiative with the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health and Wellness, and Social Services. It is the Ministry of National Security’s flagship early intervention program, targeting at risk youth.

“In this new fiscal year, my Ministry will allocate \$160,000 to continue guiding our youth towards productive adulthood through effective steps of prevention and early intervention,” LaRoda said. “Community centers will be allocated \$700,000 to continue serving as physical hubs for delivering social intervention programs such as soft skills in at-risk communities.”

Another prevention strategy includes the ‘Grow Your Child’ programs, which allow incarcerated parents to bond with their children to disrupt intergenerational crime. LaRoda also made mention of the first ever 28 bed female juvenile facility to be completed this budgetary period, which will ensure that juveniles are no longer housed with adult offenders.

“Defence Force Rangers program will be allocated \$300,000 to continue focusing on leadership development and the core principles of military structure, discipline, and mentorship to redirect at-risk youth. The National Youth Guard from ages 18-25 will be allocated \$1,525,000 to train young people between the ages to strengthen national disaster responses during emergencies and improve national resilience,” he said.

As the government continues to invest in crime prevention and youth development initiatives, Minister LaRoda emphasized that reducing crime requires early detection, community engagement, and addressing the social determinants of crime.

LaRoda concluded by saying that these pillars do not operate in sequence, they operate simultaneously. The men and women of the Royal Bahamas Police Force, Royal Bahamas Defence Force, and the Bahamas Department of Correctional Services are the human embodiment of all five pillars.

# LARODA OUTLINES SECURITY AGENDA



National Security Minister Hon. Myles LaRoda

Story Cont. from Pg. 1

LaRoda said the ministry will invest \$1.54 million to advance the court modernization initiative, arguing that swift and certain punishment remains one of the most effective deterrents to crime, noting that justice delayed undermines public confidence in the judicial system.

He also highlighted a series of legislative reforms designed to strengthen prosecutions, including updates to firearms legislation, the Proceeds of Crime Act, the Smuggling of Migrants legislation and amendments to road traffic laws.

Turning to the correctional system, LaRoda also announced continued investments in rehabilitation and

prison infrastructure. He pointed to the Conditional Release of Offenders Bill 2026, which would replace automatic sentence reductions with a structured parole system that includes curfews, education requirements, employment conditions and drug abstinence measures.

LaRoda said a new 820-bed high-medium security facility under construction will replace the country’s 74-year-old maximum security unit. The facility will include a supermax unit, classrooms, a chapel, mental health services and a medical clinic. He also noted that a \$2.5 million medical facility is nearing completion.

LaRoda emphasized that rehabilitation remains critical to long-term public safety.

Punishment without rehabilitation is simply deferred crime, he said, adding that offenders who are not equipped to reintegrate successfully often return to communities as ongoing public safety concerns.

LaRoda also highlighted achievements under the Progressive Liberal Party administration, including a 31 percent reduction in murders, a 43 percent decrease in house breakings, the seizure of 276 illegal firearms and the recruitment of 787 police officers since 2021.

He said the Royal Bahamas Defence Force is expected to reach a complement of 2,000 personnel following the addition of 104 new marines, while the government’s Blueprint for Progress commits to recruiting at least 100 frontline police officers annually.

LaRoda concluded by thanking members of the Royal Bahamas Police Force, Royal Bahamas Defence Force and Bahamas Department of Correctional Services for their service, pledging continued investment in national security and public safety initiatives.

# PINTARD: FNM ACCEPTS ELECTION RESULTS, BUDGET PROJECTIONS UNREALISTIC

Story Cont. from Pg. 2

Continuing his critique of the Davis administration performance Mr. Pintard said, “Nassau is dirty. Our energy platform is failing us. Our hospital is in the worst shape it has ever been in

its history, according to the professionals who work in it.”

“Our roads are deplorable. Our schools still can’t get what they need to do their jobs properly, and now there is just more of the same, more excessive

travel, more spending on con-sultancies for which results seem nonexistent, more spending on Beaches and Parks with little to show, more PPP commitments with obligations that seem a mystery,” said Pintard.

Mr. Pintard also reiterated the Opposition concerns about the transfer of \$700 million in borrowed funds to the National Investment Fund (NIF), citing a lack of transparency regarding the fund.

In response the Minister of Finance Michael Halkitis has said the transfer to the NIF was done legally through the use of a borrowing resolution.

The budget has to be passed before July 1st when the new fiscal year begins.

**GOT NEWS? CALL OUR OFFICE AT 356-7254**

**ISSUES OF TODAY**  
MONDAY - FRIDAY  
11:30AM - 1PM  
WITH **KHRISTIAN JONES** LLB(HONS)

# LIGHTBOURNE ADDRESSES STIRRUP CAY CASE

MAKEIRA TUCKER  
Journal Staff Writer

The Norwegian Cruise Line facility at Great Stirrup Cay was ordered to pay approximately \$840,000 in environmental penalties after an investigation by the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources discovered numerous environmental infractions dating back to the Covid-19 era. This information was released last week to the public by the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources, Zane Lightbourne.

The disclosure of this type of information is rare. A few years ago the former Attorney General Ryan Pinder refused to reveal how much Sun Oil was fined after spilling 35,000 gallons of diesel into the waters off Great Exuma.

Lightbourne said the Great Stirrup Cay infractions included breaches related to environmental consultant requirements, other development-related violations and a burning complaint from a whistleblower that triggered the ministry's investigation. The whistleblower, Dylland Moxey was a former Stirrup Cay employee who brought attention to the environmental violations via social media earlier this year and claimed he later faced retaliation for doing so.

While attending the 2026 Disability Icon Awards Ceremony Lightbourne addressed why the government decided to reveal this information to the public stating that, "This was not confidential information in this particular case, each case is different and has its reasons and nuances and cause for these determinations to be made when they are made confidential."

Lightbourne expressed that it is important for Bahamians to know that when they bring serious allegations to the government's attention about the things they view as irregular or illegal activity the government is responsive and accountable to the people.

He also addressed protecting future whistleblowers like Moxey stating that something like this is so impactful and the government wants them to know that they are appreciated and that their work does not fall on deaf ears. Lightbourne believes the government is doing their job bringing people to justice who intend to damage our environment.



Minister of Environment and Natural Resources, Hon. Zane Lightbourne

## BPL GIVES TOUR ON UPCOMING PROJECT

BY CLEMIA NEELY  
Journal Staff Writer

Following the recent string of power outages, the Minister of Energy, Utilities and Aviation Jobeth Coleby-Davis explained that the outages were due to a number of upgrades taking place and foundational work that remains ongoing. She said the project is about 95% complete, but there are still a number of things that they have to do to provide the reliability that they have been discussing.

"So our project timeline had us slated to be completed by the end of May.

Unfortunately, the incident that occurred with the Pike employee had us delayed by eight weeks. Because of that, we are now having to complete our upgrades in a time period that also has extreme heat. So what we're seeing is some of our circuits has to be offline for the upgrades to be completed," she said.

"Because of that, we have many of our areas operating where they would normally be with two circuits, they're operating under one circuit. That can work if it's in a natural environment, but we have extreme heat which we would usually see August-September, we're seeing some of that on our system May-June."

Executive Chairman of Bahamas Power and Light (BPL), Christina Alston, said that the making of this sophisticated, world-class substation is a historic event. She also explained a bit about how this project will positively affect the Bahamian people.

"If you travel through North America, you would see exactly the same type of substation all over Florida, Georgia, the Carolinas. And the reason these particular types of substations are built is to split up the transmission lines so that we can divert power where it needs to go."

She went on to say, "Right now we're seeing overloads on the system. Well those overloads that you're seeing on the system are a result of us trying to get this particular substation up and running and commissioned."

According to Alston, this is going to be a standard and monumental substation, meaning that there is only need for one to power the island. She explains that it is more than just the substation being built, but there is also the termination of old lines, the building of new lines, and a lot of underground work that is also being built.

She said, "As you can see, it takes up a lot space. We will have several of the most important lines, the transmission lines that serve this particular island will come through this particular substation. What that does for us is if there is an anomaly, a lightning, a weather event, what will happen is the switches at this substation will open up and it will redirect power flow."

"And when we talk about reliability, that is what you want for this system to do. So we're breaking up several transmission lines so that we can redirect power flow to make sure that we keep the reliability on the island up and running."

C.E.O. of Bahamas Grid Company, Dareo McKenzie, explained that the main reason for the power outages is the result of them trying to get this substation up and running.

"The station that you see behind us, Big Pond, is one of three of the substations that we have on New Providence. We also have another station located on Blue Hill Road. We also have one at Clifton Pier."

"And just as Madam Chairwoman said, the purpose for these stations is to improve reliability. You improve reliability by improving the way how we can operate and control and divert load on the system. That is the role that these substations play."

The total amount invested in this project is roughly \$130 million. Details as to exactly when this project will be completed have not yet been released.

## NEW HIGHWAY CONNECTION COMING

BY GERRINO J. SAUNDERS  
Bahama Journal News Editor

Traversing the streets of the capital during work and school rush hour periods as well as other busy periods like the Christmas holidays can be a vexing nightmare but based on comments by Hon. Clay Sweeting the Minister Public Works and Family Island Affairs the government believes it has figured out how to reduce this type of traffic congestion, including the development of a new highway that will make it easier to travel from eastern New Providence to the west side of the island.

During his recent contribution to the 2026/2027 Budget debate Sweeting said studies of the transportation challenges on New Providence have revealed a number of significant facts. He said, "One of the most important findings is that new Providence has reached a point where isolated road projects alone will not solve congestion challenges. Instead we must adopt a coordinated approach that improves key transportation corridors, addresses bottle necks, enhances safety and introduces a smarter traffic management system."

Continuing he said the strategy they have come up with identifies 12 "priority" transportation corridors for improvement including the Gladstone Road corridor, the Milo Butler Highway, East Street, Mackey Street, Carmichael Road, and the north coast corridor which serves much of the island's economic activity.

He said, "At the center of this plan is the creation of a new east-west transportation spine connecting Fire Trail Road and Soldier Road extending transportation links towards western New Providence. This initiative will relieve pressure on existing corridors, support future developments and improve connectivity across the island."

In addition to ongoing road works across New Providence Sweeting said over the next six to 12 months massive road works will continue on many of the existing corridors.

He said the Ministry of Works has completed a 20-year comprehensive transportation development strategy for New Providence.

Sweeting said the government understands that transportation infrastructure is about more than paving roads and that it should be non-political but data driven.

He said, "We have identified 12 major highway improvement schemes and identifying short medium and long term solutions to improve mobility, connectivity and traffic flow throughout the island. Additionally, more than 60 road junction improvement opportunities have been identified with 10 priority junctions designed within the last year and five already implemented.

"To further improve transportation efficiency the ministry is advancing a series of smart transportation initiatives including the upgrading of seven remaining legacy traffic signals throughout New Providence, and their integration into the traffic management center as part of the government's smart city Nassau initiative."

Sweeting said the government believes these improvements will strengthen traffic flow, enhance emergency response coordination and improve road safety for motorists and pedestrians.

Additionally, he said plans are also in the works to improve traffic flow, parking and pedestrian areas in down town Nassau.





# ISSUES OF TODAY

**MONDAY - FRIDAY  
11:30AM - 1PM**

**WITH KRISTIAN JONES LLB(HONS)**

# EDUCATION MINISTER : APPROACHING SYSTEM CHALLENGES WITH FOCUS TO GARNER DAY-ONE READINESS FOR NEW SCHOOL YEAR

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Education, Science and Technology the Hon. Chester Cooper said in preparation for the new academic year, the Ministry's immediate focus is ensuring every school is ready to welcome students and teachers on the first day, with repairs and critical infrastructure addressed.

"However, we must move beyond a cycle of emergency repairs every summer. We are placing renewed emphasis on building internal maintenance capacity," the DPM said during his Contribution to the 2026/2027 Budget Debate in the House of Assembly on Tuesday, June 16, 2026.

He said, "Our objective is to establish systems, personnel, and processes that

allow for preventative and ongoing maintenance throughout the school year."

The DPM explained that schools should not have to wait until June and then July for budget drawdowns to fix what breaks for September. "Stronger internal maintenance capacity and process is how we end that cycle."

He said a second and equally pressing challenge is the shortage of teachers within the public education system.

The DPM said current internal estimates indicate a shortfall of roughly 300 educators across various disciplines and islands.

"This challenge is not unique to The Bahamas, as education systems around the world continue to compete for

qualified teachers. This is compounded by geopolitical pressures. Nevertheless, we are taking decisive action.

"I have asked Parliamentary Secretary Keenan Johnson, who is leading an urgent and coordinated effort with the Ministry, the Department of Public Service, teacher-training institutions, and other stakeholders to identify and fill many of these vacancies before the start of the new school year."

He said, "Our goal is simple: every classroom should have a qualified teacher, and every student should have access to the quality education they deserve. We are approaching these challenges with focus to ensure the education system is ready to deliver for Bahamian students from day one."



# HOLMES ROCK JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL 2026 GRADUATES COMMENDED DURING HISTORIC CEREMONY



Minister of Foreign Affairs and Immigration, the Hon. Frederick Mitchell

On what was the first Prize Giving Ceremony for the Holmes Rock Junior High School (HRJHS) since opening its doors in September 2025, the Class of 2026 was celebrated on June 15, 2026 at the Eight Mile Rock High School Gymnasium as trailblazers on such an historic occasion.

Minister of Foreign Affairs and Immigration, the Hon. Frederick Mitchell, Member of Parliament for West Grand Bahama, the Hon. Kingsley Smith, Deputy Director of Education Michelle Bowleg, District Superintendent of Education Maneica Pratt, loved ones and friends were among the well-wishers present to witness the momentous event.

The HRJHS Rockets hosted the special ceremony under the theme: 'From Launch to Legacy, Destined for Greatness.'

The 59 ninth graders were reminded that they are leaving behind a legacy as they will forever live the annals as the first graduates of this brand new public school.

While bringing remarks, Minister Mitchell told the Class of 2026 that they should be proud of their accomplishment, their settlement and remember their mission as they transition to high school.

Ensuring the first cohort of HRJHS graduates that they were built for high altitude execution, Mr. Smith encouraged the graduates that their choices carry a specific gravity.

"You are defining what is possible for Holmes Junior High. The intellectual, economic and cultural future of West Grand Bahama will be shaped by the caliber of your execution," he said.

The graduates were also treated to a special congratulatory video presentation from the Minister of Education, Science and Technology the Hon. Chester Cooper before hearing from keynote speaker Rev. Dr. Adrian Bethel, who motivated the rocketeers to aim their rocket, fuel up with their studies and clear their launchpad by removing negative influences.

Principal Loressa Balfour-Thompson listed off a number of academic and athletic achievements the school has in its first year of existence, including its second place finish in the Science, Engineering, Communication, Mathematics and Enrichment (SECME) Bottle Rocket competition.

# SOCIAL SERVICES MINISTER VISITS GRAND BAHAMA



Minister of Social Services, Senator the Hon. Barbara Cartwright

Minister of Social Services, Senator the Hon. Barbara Cartwright made her first visit to Grand Bahama, June 16, 2026 since assuming her new portfolio.

During her two-day visit, Minister Cartwright and her delegation, including Minister of State in the Ministry of Social Services, the Hon. Bacchus Rolle; Permanent Secretary Phedra Rahming-Turnquest; Administrative Cadet Whitney Hanna-Williams; and Assistant Director of Social Services/Grand Bahama Jodie Burrows -- met with senior officers and members of staff at the Department of Social Services, and board members of the Grand Bahama Children's Home.

They also visited the Columbus Houses for Boys and Girls and the Grand Bahama Resilience Center before heading to Eight Mile Rock where they were given tours of the Social Services office in the Obadiah H. Wilchcombe Complex, and the Pine Forest Temporary Shelter.



## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

# FIXING A BROKEN LEGAL SYSTEM

Dear Editor,

It was always my considered position that the Hon. Senator Wayne Munroe, KC, MP, is one of the best and most talented Counsel at The Bar in recent times. I place him in the ranks of the late Eugene Dupuch; Sir Kendal GL Isaacs; Sir Cecil Wallace-Whitfield and the late great legal mind, the Hon. John Henry Bostwick, KC.

The Hon. Attorney General has all of their legal skills and more. In addition he has considerable experience in civil and criminal litigation. He will serve the nation well as our distinguished Attorney General. We should also see a vast reduction in the number of cases that litigants feel obliged to take to The Judicial Committee of The Privy Council.

That route, while often necessary, is too expensive and takes far too long for determination for the average litigant. Bahamian and UK based counsel have to be consulted and retained. Some individuals have actually died while awaiting justice. Many of these case taken to the Privy Council, could be easily resolved by good faith negotiations. This would greatly reduce costs and, in actuality, save taxpayers dollars.

I welcome the learned Attorney-General's public announcement that this compassionate Davis Administration WILL comply with the recent Judgment of

The Privy Council relative to a deceased female who was adjudicated to have been sexually assaulted, et al, by a senior officer while at The Detention Centre or otherwise imprisoned years ago.

Now, she received 'justice' posthumously. A 'failure' of justice and the legal system. Bahamians have had their land acquired by successive administrations over the years and many of them have yet to be compensated as required by The Acquisition Act and regulations thereunder.

This brand new and gong ho AG will, I am sure address these simple issues and more during his tenure. In closing, there are scores of medical malpractice claims against The Public Hospital Authority, under all administrations, where ordinary Bahamians were 'jacked right up' while receiving medical care or recovering at our public health care facilities.

Some have even died. Where they or their families would have filed litigation in our Supreme Court, that, again, is often too expensive and takes far too long. I implore the Hon. Senator Wayne Munroe, KC, MP to wipe away the tear from every eye, legally. To God then, in all things, be the glory.

Ortland H. Bodie, Jr.  
Business Consultant & Talk Show Host