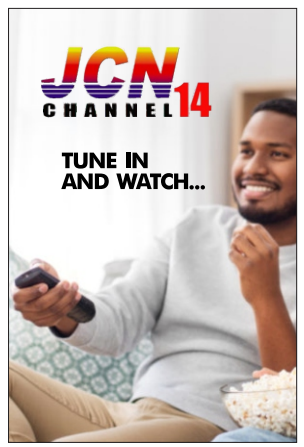




The Bahama Journal

Quo Vadis, Bahamas?



FRIDAY, JUNE 5TH, 2026

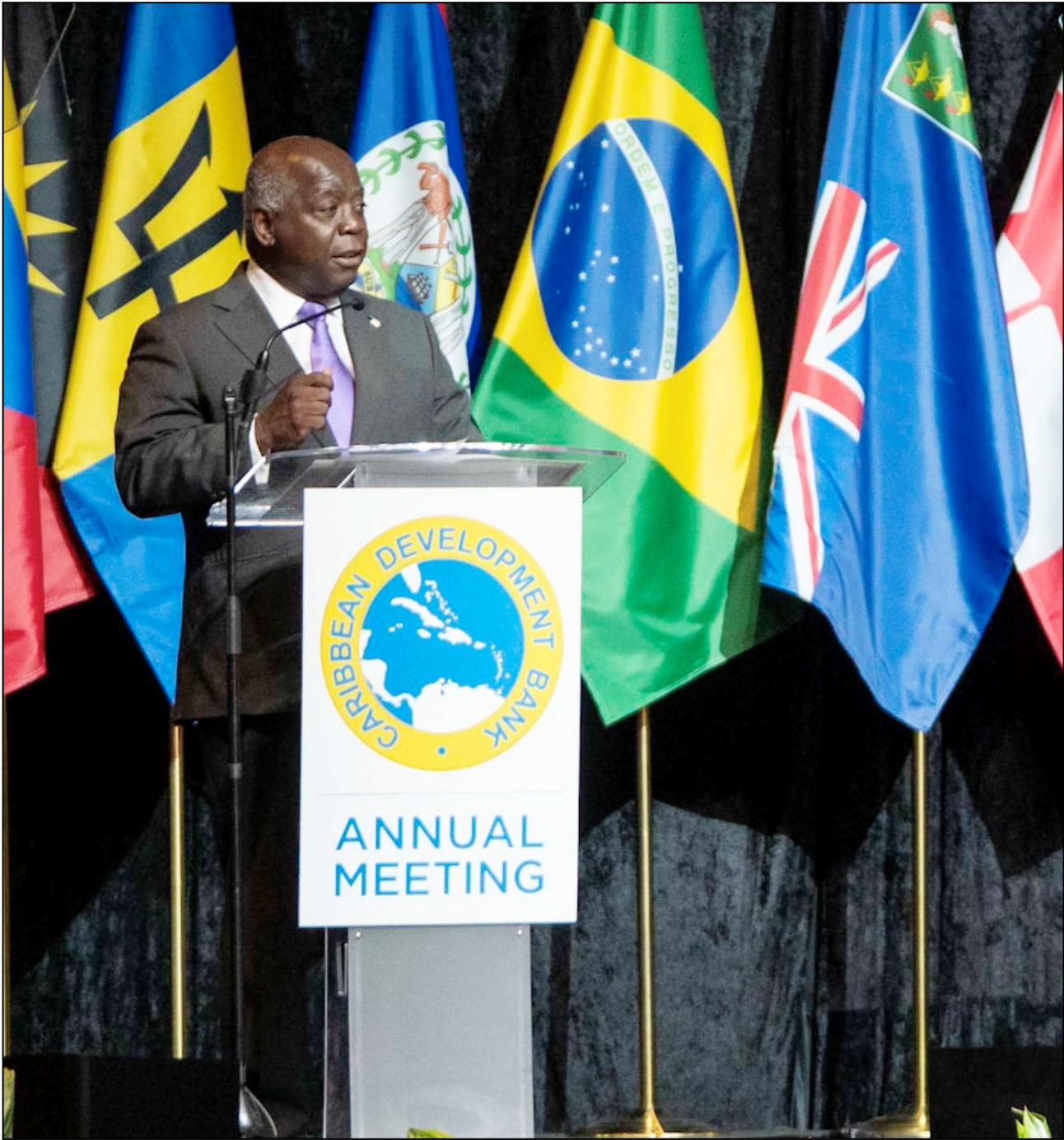
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PM DAVIS: REGION MUST WRITE ITS OWN PATH



BY JULIAN REID
Bahama Journal

Prime Minister Philip Davis asked Governors of the Caribbean Development Bank at the official opening of the bank's 56th annual meeting here in Nassau at the Baha Mar resort this week to consider 'one clear path'. He said, "If we will not write the rules of our own financial future, then we will be left only to discover how to survive within the rules of others."

Those who refuse to write the rules will, in the end, become tenants, subjected to a state of perennial survival. There is no easier path. We simply wait for the house to repair itself."

The prime minister who is in the first few weeks of his second consecutive term in office, said that Africa had to make a similar choice. "Africa did not knock louder."

Africa built its own door." He added that they founded the African Export-Import Bank, Afreximbank, an institution to finance African trade on African terms." They did not wait for permission. They began the work themselves."

Prime Minister Davis pointed out that this year, Afreximbank raised its commitment to our region from three billion United States dollars to five. More than seven hundred and fifty million has already reached the Caribbean.

He highlighted that a pipeline of more than two billion is still to follow. They are building a trade centre in Bridgetown and they have turned their attention to "something that should get the attention of everyone in this room."

PM Davis said the creation of a Caribbean Export-Import Bank would be an institution that could finally be our own.

"We should be clear about what this means. It was not charity passing down from north to south. It was solidarity rising from south to south. It was one part of the global majority saying to another. We have built our own house. Now we will help you build yours." "Africa did not wait. The only question that remains this morning is whether we will."

Days earlier the prime minister gave remarks at the Afreximbank Roadshow 2026.

Prime Minister Hon. Philip Davis, KC

See Story Cont. Pg. 3

SPELLING BEE COMPETITORS CALL ON BAHAMAS AMBASSADOR

Caerwyn Turnquest, a student of Kings College Nassau, and Felix Wells, a student of N.G.M. Major High School, Long Island, competitors at the 101st Scripps National Spelling Bee, made a courtesy visit to H. E. Wendall Jones, Bahamas Ambassador to the United States at the Bahamas Embassy in Washington, D.C. on 28th May 2026.

DISASTER RISK MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY UPDATE ON 2026 HURRICANE SEASON

As the Atlantic Hurricane Season 2026 opened, June 1, the Disaster Risk Management (DRM) Authority held a press conference at its National Operations Centre, Gladstone Road, addressed by Prime Minister the Hon. Philip Davis, Minister of State in the Office of the Prime Minister McKell Bonaby, and Managing Director of the Disaster Risk Management Authority Aarone Sargent.

The press conference addressed the continued risks and possibilities ahead, preparedness and initiatives in place to combat, maintain and survive inclement weather conditions.

Prime Minister Davis expressed gratitude for the meeting itself, noting that throughout the off-season he kept monthly meetings with The DRM team to ensure that "we are not waiting until a storm is on the horizon to prepare".

Newly appointed Minister of State McKell Bonaby spoke to his appreciation for what the DRM has been actively doing, echoing the Prime Minister's mentions of the numerous meetings held towards preparing for this season and his own dedication towards continuing and strengthening efforts moving forward.

DRM Authority Managing Director Aarone Sargent spoke confidently and reassuringly that precautions, evacuation measures and safety are all always a significant part of the strategic planning for the hurricane season possibilities. He too expressed the value of the concurrent meetings of minds held throughout the off-season that played a major part in being able to address the 2026 Atlantic Hurricane Season, prepared.

Disaster Risk Management Authority Managing Director, Aarone Sargent.

See Story Cont. Pg. 2

HALKITIS URGES LEADERS TO LOOK WITHIN TO SOLVE REGIONAL CHALLENGES



Minister of Finance Michael Halkitis

BY GERRINO J. SAUNDERS
Journal News Editor

While speaking at the opening of the Board of Governors for Caribbean Development Banks 56th annual meeting at the Baha Mar Resort The Minister of Finance Michael Halkitis noted that the meeting was taking place at a time when “uncertainty” has become the defining condition of the global landscape.

He noted that around the world, nations are grappling with economic volatility, geopolitical tensions, technological disruption, climate emergencies, food insecurity, rising debt burdens, and widening inequality.

“For the Caribbean,” he said, “These challenges are not abstract headlines. They are lived experiences.”

He said, “We know what it means to rebuild after hurricanes devastate entire communities. We know what it means to confront rising costs while protecting vulnerable families. And yet, despite these realities, the Caribbean continues to stand with resilience, creativity, courage, and hope.”

He said the story of the Caribbean has always been a story of resilience. However, he said today resilience alone is no longer enough. He said the future demands strategy.

He said, “The question before us is not whether uncertainty exists. It does. The real question is whether we will allow uncertainty to define us—or whether we will define the future ourselves. And I believe wholeheartedly that the Caribbean possesses the talent, the intellect, the resources, and the determination to shape a future that is resilient, inclusive, sustainable, and prosperous. But to achieve this future, we must confront several urgent realities.”

Continuing Halkitis said, “First, we must recognize that climate change remains the single greatest existential threat to our region. Second, we must strengthen regional unity and cooperation. The Caribbean has always been stronger when we act together. Third, we must place young people at the centre of regional development.

Across the Caribbean, young people are already leading change. They are launching businesses, driving technological innovation, advocating for climate justice, building creative industries, and reimagining what Caribbean leadership can look like. Yet too many young people still face unemployment, migration pressures, limited access to financing, and unequal educational opportunities.”

Story Cont. Pg. 3

DISASTER RISK MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY UPDATE ON 2026 HURRICANE SEASON

Story Cont. Pg. 1

Weather is currently being tracked and watched; and the public is reminded to listen and follow guidelines and advisories given by the DRM Authority for their safety.

The Met Office forecasts a below-average Atlantic Hurricane season due to the

effects of El Nino increasing upper-level wind shear which can disturb hurricane formation. Heat waves are also expected. Warm sea temperatures, nevertheless, propel hurricane formation, therefore communities are advised to remain vigilant.

NIB REBOUNDED FROM NEAR CRISIS

BY MAKEIRA TUCKER
Bahama Journal Staff Writer



Dr. Tami Francis, Director, NIB

Last year there were concerns that the National Insurance Board, the nation’s premiere social security net was in jeopardy of collapse following years of an imbalance between payouts and contributions and questionable decisions made by executives and previous governing administrations.

On Wednesday Dr. Tami Francis, Director announced that NIB is no longer in crisis as she held a press conference at NIB’s Baillou Hill Road headquarters where she attributed the turnaround on changes made to its operations including a more aggressive approach to collecting contributions.

She said, “At the moment our performance is actually much better than predicted.

While we may still have a slight difference in our contribution income versus our benefit expenditure, what we would have expected or predicted, we are doing a lot better than expected. Now, that does not mean we are to rest on our laurels. An increase of this nature would not be something that will ultimately save the fund, and as I said earlier, we’ll have to work along with other measures as we work towards reform, so this is not the overall savior of the fund.”

If the turnaround is sustained the revelation could mean yet another feather in the cap for the Davis administration. Since winning the May 12 th general election there has been a new minister appointed to oversee operations at NIB as Pia Glover-Rolle who is also the Minister for Labour and the Public Service takes over from Myles Laroda who has moved on to become the Minister of National Security.

During his contribution to the 2025-2026 budget debate the former Minister of Immigration and National Insurance Alfred Sears while addressing the sustainability of NIB revealed that at the time NIB had a projected deficit of approximately \$32 million.

He outlined efforts to close that fiscal gap which included a new compliance and recovery initiative that involved monthly sweeps in what was described as “high risk red zones” on New Providence considered to be areas with historically low compliance rates.

Additionally, he explained that teams of redeployed inspectors were given the task to “close compliance gaps, recover outstanding contributions and register unreported businesses.”

Before that in July 2024 the government took steps to see an increase in contributions by raising the rate from 9.8 percent to 10.3 percent, with possible plans to introduce further increases by employers and employees.

Story Cont. Pg. 4



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PM DAVIS: REGION MUST WRITE ITS OWN PATH

Story Cont. from Pg. 1

“One of the key priorities for The Bahamas moving forward is the creation of even more pathways to opportunity for local entrepreneurs, especially small business owners,” he said.

The prime minister pointed out that economic growth must translate into broader economic participation, ensuring that more Bahamians have the chance to build businesses, create jobs, and share in the country’s progress.

“We have made some progress in this area, but



continuing to strengthen access to capital through institutions such as the Afreximbank is an important part of our ongoing efforts.”

He continued, “Our plans for an Afro-Caribbean Marketplace and Logistics Centre in the heart of Grand Bahama represent just an initial step toward our pursuit of fruitful enterprise and meaningful, two-way exchange between The Bahamas and Africa.”

Prime Minister Davis stressed that the Roadshow represents yet another important step toward strengthening this emerging partnership.



HALKITIS URGES LEADERS TO LOOK WITHIN TO SOLVE REGIONAL CHALLENGES

Story Cont. from Pg. 2

Halkitis argued that the future Caribbean economy will be powered not only by natural resources but by human creativity, digital innovation, and knowledge-based industries which leads to another critical point: technology and innovation.

He said, “Artificial intelligence, digital finance, renewable technologies, and global connectivity are rapidly transforming the world economy. If the Caribbean fails to adapt, we risk being left behind. But if we embrace innovation strategically, we can position ourselves competitively in a changing global environment.”

The Finance Minister said the Caribbean also faces serious economic vulnerabilities that demand strategic solutions.

He lamented, “Many of our economies remain heavily dependent on tourism, imports, and external markets. Global disruptions—from pandemics to supply chain crises to geopolitical conflict—have shown us the danger of overdependence.

Economic diversification is therefore no longer a luxury; it is a necessity.

Story Cont. on Pg.4

SPELLING BEE COORDINATORS CALL ON AMBASSADOR JONES



Mrs. D’Metria Smith, Spelling Bee Coordinator, and Mrs. Vanessa James Rolle, Coordinator of the Curriculum Enrichment and Enhancement Section from the Bahamas Ministry of Education, Science and Technology and H. E. Wendall K. Jones, Bahamas Ambassador to the United States on the occasion of their attendance at the 101st SCRIPPS National Spelling Bee Competition.

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THE BAHAMAS ADVANCES REGIONAL TOURISM LEADERSHIP AT CTO CARIBBEAN WEEK 2026

Minister of Tourism, the Honourable Glenys Hanna Martin, is leading The Bahamas' participation in Caribbean Week in New York (CWNY) 2026, the Caribbean Tourism Organization's (CTO) premier annual forum for regional tourism engagement.

Held June 1-5 at the Inter-Continental New York Times Square under the theme

"One Caribbean: Infinite Experiences," Caribbean Week brings together tourism leaders, industry executives, investors, media representatives and stakeholders from across the region to discuss the opportunities, challenges and innovations shaping the future of Caribbean tourism.

Joining the Minister are Director General Latia Duncombe and senior government officials, who will participate in a series of high-level meetings, media engagements and strategic industry discussions throughout the week.

Minister Hanna Martin and Director General Duncombe will also serve as featured speakers, contributing to conversations on tourism leadership, sustainable destination development, connectivity, workforce readiness, innovation and strategies to increase the economic impact of tourism throughout the Caribbean.

"Tourism continues to be one of the most important economic pillars across the Caribbean, supporting jobs, businesses and communities throughout our region," said Minister Hanna Martin. "Caribbean Week provides an important opportunity for leaders to engage in meaningful discussions on the issues

shaping our future, from resilience and sustainability to connectivity and workforce development.

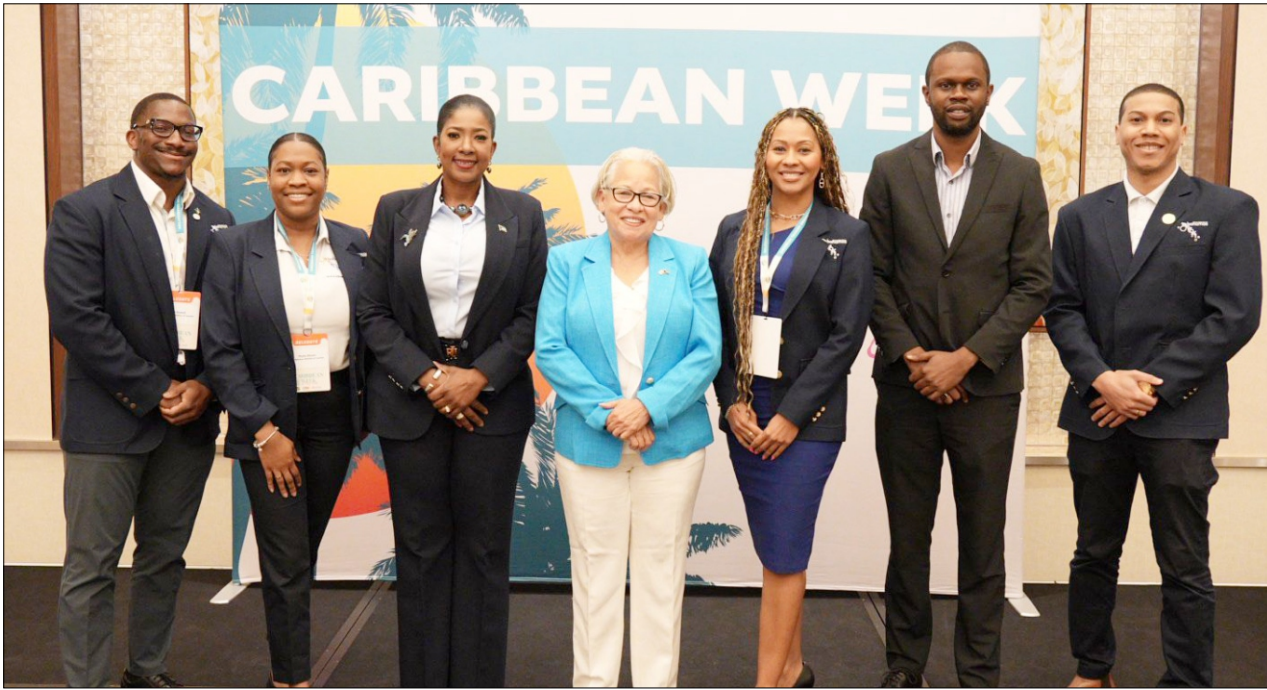
"The Caribbean's greatest strength has always been its ability to compete globally while advancing collectively. As one of the region's leading tourism destinations, The Bahamas recognizes

both the responsibility and opportunity that come with leadership. We remain committed to advancing initiatives that promote sustainable growth, strengthen regional competitiveness and ensure that the benefits of tourism are felt by the people and communities that depend on it."

The Bahamas will host the Caribbean Media Awards Luncheon on June 2.

Sponsored by The Islands of The Bahamas, the event recognizes excellence in travel journalism and brings together editors, writers, broadcasters and communications professionals from key source markets.

Caribbean Week provides an important platform for The Bahamas to strengthen regional partnerships, engage industry stakeholders and contribute to conversations shaping the future of Caribbean tourism.



Minister of Tourism, the Honourable Glenys Hanna Martin, is leading The Bahamas' participation in Caribbean Week in New York (CWNY) 2026, the Caribbean Tourism Organization's (CTO) premier annual forum for regional tourism engagement.



NIB REBOUNDED FROM NEAR CRISIS

Story Cont. from Pg. 2

Wednesday's press conference also revealed that NIB's statutory biennial adjustments with several key changes, including the implementation of a 1.5 percent increase in pensions and grants, and the increase in the insurable wage ceiling from \$810 to \$830 per week beginning July 1st. As a result, the monthly insurable wage ceiling will increase from \$3,510 to \$3,597.

Meanwhile, a pensioner receiving the minimum retirement pension of approximately \$364 per month will now receive around \$369. The maternity grant will increase from \$560 to \$570, and lastly, the funeral

benefit will increase from \$2,060 to \$2,100 for pensioners."

According to Dr. Francis the changes were made to help beneficiaries keep up with inflation and allow workers to protect a higher portion of their income for future benefit and pension calculations.

The adjustments fall under the National Insurance Act framework governing mandatory biennial reviews. In July 2010 the National Insurance legislation was amended to establish a statutory biennial adjustment process for pensions, grants, and the insurable wage ceiling. Prior to that amendment changes of this nature required separate legislative action.

HALKITIS URGES LEADERS TO LOOK WITHIN TO SOLVE REGIONAL CHALLENGES

Story Cont. from Pg. 7

"We must strengthen agriculture and food production. We must support small and medium-sized enterprises. We must deepen regional trade. We must invest in manufacturing, logistics, renewable energy, financial services, and the creative economy.

"We must also advocate for fairer access to global financing systems that recognize the unique vulnerabilities of Small Island Developing States. Caribbean institutions and international leaders continue to call for reforms to global financial systems that better account for vulnerability, resilience, and sustainable development needs."

Mr. Halkitis said The Caribbean deserves development systems that are fair, equitable, and responsive to our circumstances. However, he said, "Even as we advocate globally, we must also act regionally. We must strengthen governance, transparency, and institutional capacity. Strong institutions create investor confidence. Strong institutions improve service delivery. Strong institutions help societies withstand crises and maintain stability during uncertain times."

Halkitis said the Caribbean has never lacked brilliance, what is needed now is confidence to believe that Caribbean solutions can solve Caribbean challenges.

MURDER RATE DOWN BUT STILL TOO HIGH

BY GERRINO J. SAUNDERS
Bahama Journal News Editor

A wife hears gunshots outside her Tropical Gardens home, and looks out the window only to find that the target was her husband. This was the tragic scene that unfolded shortly after midnight on Tuesday June 2nd marking the nation's 29th murder for the year according to Baham Journal records.

The victim has been identified as a 45-year-old male named Chino, a body work mechanic who operates at a location in the Chippingham community.

The victim's wife told police that he had left the home around 8:30pm that evening. It appears on his return home he was followed and confronted by unknown individuals who shot him multiple times about the body. The Nissan Note vehicle he was driving also had gunshot damage.

The incident left residents in the normally peaceful west New Providence community shaken.

Giving residents of the area reassurance Chief Superintendent of Police Sheria King, Police Press Liaison Officer said, "For residents of this community and to the general public, one homicide is too many for us. However, we're taking this matter serious as we take every single homicide seriously."

"For the residents of Tropical Garden we have not seen any of these incidents previously in this area, and we want to assure them that the police will continue to canvass the area, we do our walkabouts, we will continue with community service within the western district. And so I would say to the residents of Tropical Gardens the police is going to investigate this matter thoroughly and will find those individuals who are responsible."

The Tropical Gardens murder followed the death of a 68-year-old man from Grand Bahama who died in hospital on Thursday May 28th after being stabbed by a 65 year old male on Friday May 22nd while on Weddel Avenue in Freeport.

Before that on Thursday May 28th a 23-year-old male who has since been identified as Aljaron Stubbs was shot multiple times by gunmen who ambushed him as he and his girlfriend pulled up to his home in the Elizabeth Estates community in his silver Suzuki Wagon. Stubbs who died on the scene was wearing an ankle monitor and was on bail for several serious crimes including murder and attempted murder.

He was also accused of plotting to kill a police sergeant.

The 30-year-old female riding with him received gunshot injuries to her back and was taken to hospital for medical attention and last reported in stable condition.

For the same period in 2025 there were already 34 murders, after two men were shot on Sugar Apple Street in Pinewood Gardens during a drive by shooting on Sunday June 1st. One of the men a 30-year-old died in hospital, while the 2nd victim a 28year old survived his injuries.

Last year there were 83 murders down from 120 in 2024 a 31 percent reduction.

While it is unclear how many attempted murders there are on record so far this year, there were 38 recorded in 2025 up from 31 in 2024 a 23 percent increase.

Despite the reduction in murders the government says the level of crime is still too high. The measurable success thus far in the fight against crime is attributed to various crime-fighting measures including community policing and intervention programs like the government Five Pillar Crime Policy which aims to address prevention, policing, prosecution, punishment and rehabilitation along with its Clear, Hold and Build initiative to regain control of inner-city communities.



MINISTER BOWLEG LAUDS CARIBBEAN DEVELOPMENT BANK'S YOUTH FIRE FORUM



During the Opening Ceremony of the Caribbean Development Bank's Youth Fire Forum, Minister of Youth and Sports the Hon. Mario Bowleg lauded the event, especially because it brought together regional youth stakeholders.

"As I stand here today, it is a great source of pride for me to see so many of the Caribbean's best, whether you are a Youth Leader, and Innovator, a Policymaker, a Development Partner, or a Regional Stakeholder, we are excited to have you gather over the next two days under the theme, 'Forging the Caribbean's Future: Strategic Solutions for Uncertain Times,'" he said at Baha Mar Convention Centre, on June 1, 2026.

Among those present at the ceremony were Caribbean Development Bank President Daniel Best; Ministry of Youth and Sports Permanent Secretary Montez Williams; Head of the Ministry's Youth Division Mrs. Sandena Neely and other members of her division; and representatives of the Future Leaders Network (FLN) Ms. Asha-Gaye Cowell and Kiran Halkitis.

Minister Bowleg pointed out that if one took a brief look at the word "forge", generally it meant to create, to shape, or to move forward steadily.

"At a deeper look, the word 'forge' has three distinct definitions depending on context and I will zero in on one of those contexts for our purpose today; and that is this definition: 'to create or progress, meaning to build something through sustained effort or to move forward steadily and powerfully – forging ahead'," he said. When innovators such as yourselves gather in Forums like these, the anticipated result is forward progress or as your theme says 'Forging the Caribbean's Future'."

He added: "My colleagues and I, here in The Bahamas and across the entire region, are working tirelessly to ensure that we do our part to make pathways for you young leaders. And this is exactly why rooms and spaces like this Youth Fire Forum are so critical: because it allows us all to sit around the table as co-creators forging the future as we discuss strategic solutions in uncertain times.

Minister Bowleg stated that he encouraged all participants, as they sat with their peers, "to have healthy discourse about diversity, to have challenging conversations about climate change, to deepen the digital skills across the region and to chart a course that catapults the Caribbean forward."

"This is the bright future the Caribbean is waiting on and I am honored to stand alongside each of you on this journey," he said. "I wish you all a great Forum and best wishes for a rewarding time together."

Minister of Youth and Sports the Hon. Mario Bowleg takes part in the Opening Ceremony of the Caribbean Development Bank's Youth Fire Forum, on June 1, 2026 at Baha Mar Resort Convention Centre. Among those present at the ceremony were Caribbean Development Bank President Daniel Best; Ministry of Youth and Sports Permanent Secretary Montez Williams; Head of the Ministry's Youth Division Mrs. Sandena Neely and other members of her division; and representatives of the Future Leaders Network (FLN) Ms. Asha-Gaye Cowell and Kiran Halkitis. (BIS Photos/Eric Rose)



FNM PUSH CONVENTION TO 2027; NO NATIONALITY ACT DURING BUDGET

TYNIA BROWN
Journal Staff Writer

Many political pundits assumed that following their defeat at the polls on May 12 th the Free National Movement (FNM) would soon go to convention to determine if Michael Pintard should remain the party's leader.

After an FNM Central Council meeting on Tuesday night (June 2nd), the party decided to forgo a convention this year as is required by the party's constitution.

Instead, the party will hold its convention sometime in 2027. The last FNM convention was in June 2024.

Instead of the convention, the FNM plans to gather later this summer to conduct what they describe as a post mortem to zero in on the reasons for their failures in the election, where they secured just eight of the 41 seats, with the third-party Coalition of Independents out-performing some of their candidates.

The decision to delay the convention

is reportedly not sitting well with some members of the FNM. Just days after the election, former Deputy Prime Minister Desmond Bannister called for Mr. Pintard to step down. When asked about this Mr. Pintard chuckled and said he had no comment.

Meanwhile, there are reports that FNM National Chairman Dr Duane Sands will not seek to be re-elected as Chairman when the FNM holds its next convention.

Dr. Sands lost his bid to win the Bamboo Town constituency in the May 12 th elections, beaten by the Progressive liberal Party's Patricia Deveaux who was recently returned as Speaker of the House of Assembly.

Meanwhile, the Davis administration is actively amending The Bahamas Nationality Act. The proposed 2026 legislative changes will empower the Minister of Immigration to grant a certificate of permanent residence (for a \$500 fee) to individuals who were



Free National movement

entitled to apply for citizenship but had their applications refused.

According to the Opposition the government will try to implement the new legislation during the budget debate which the FNM does not support.

Late Wednesday Dr. Andre Rollins the FNM member of Parliament for Long Island released a statement in which he laid out the oppositions position on the issue.

He said, "In 2023 FNM leader Michael Pintard urged the government to establish a select committee on immigra-

tion to transparently address numerous concerns pertaining to the country's worsening immigration crisis."

Dr Rollins said, "Instead of trying to introduce this significant legislation by stealth and burying it in the budget debate which can create dangerous loopholes for future exploitation, the FNM is strongly advising the government to address the new legislation in isolation at the level of a select committee where they can be comprehensively fleshed out to avoid any undesirable or unintentional consequences."

PM DONATES WHEELCHAIR ACCESSIBLE BUS



BY CLEMIA NEELY
Journal Staff Writer

In an effort to ensure accessibility for all, the Government graciously provided the students of Stapledon School with a wheelchair-accessible bus on Monday. This donation is said to enhance mobility and provide support to the students and families served by the school. Prime Minister Philip Davis recalled that while having breakfast with the students some months ago, the principal mentioned that the school is not mobile enough. He heard their requests, and now, he has delivered.

"I'm of the belief that no child should be left behind. Their circumstance should not deprive them of any of the resources, facility and or any opportunity that they and their talent could help them. I strongly believe that, and that's why today we are here," said Prime Minister Davis.

Minister of Innovation and National Development and MP for Fort Charlotte Sebastian Bastian, said that they are not just here to donate a bus, but to create opportunity, and cement the fact that education should not be limited by mobility.

He continued, "Sometimes we forget the importance the Stapledon School plays in our country. Even though Stapledon is located in the constituency of Fort Charlotte, the impact of this school stretches far beyond the boundary lines of this constituency because these students are from all over New Providence."

The principal of Stapledon School, Amanda Moncur, wished to thank the Prime Minister, as well as Minister Bastian, for listening when they spoke up, and allowing the students to be transported with dignity and pride. She shared how this donation will significantly impact the students of her school.

"We have another little vehicle here that we use, but Janelle, for example, she has to come out of a chair and then climb onto that little grey van over there. But now with this vehicle, she can be wheeled right up onto that ramp. She does not even have to come out of the chair if she does not want to. She can remain seated in the chair."

This bus will be used to pick up their students, take them to various sporting events, and other community and social events that the school has planned. Prime Minister Davis highlighted that the Government will continue to provide resources and assistance to ensure that our young people with disabilities are looked after and are not forgotten.



LETTER TO THE EDITOR

The Johnson-Jones Connection

Dear Editor:

Livingston B. Johnson and Wendall K. Jones! These two Bahamian emissaries have a compelling link in the history of their country, The Commonwealth of The Bahamas.

On November 9, 1973, Johnson received the official endorsement of United States President Richard Nixon, to be the ambassadorial representative of his country, in charge of the Embassy and Permanent Mission to the Organization of the American States, in Washington, DC. On March 18, 2022, the Johnson-Jones connection was cemented with the formal announcement of the latter occupying the high seat in Washington, DC.

One, Johnson, pioneered the way for those who followed, to interact with other world ambassadors, acting in the interest of their countries.

The other, Jones, assisted by his diligent Embassy staff members, was the architect of a structural transformation of the Bahamian Embassy in Washington, DC, that was simply impressive and mesmerizing.

The refurbishment of the Bahamian Chancery on 220 Massachusetts Avenue, of course with the full support of the Office of Prime Minister Philip Edward "Brave" Davis and

Foreign Minister Frederick Mitchell, received rave reviews. The positive comments were overwhelming as foreign diplomats and their associates joined the late Ambassador Johnson's wife and other family members on the occasion of the unveiling of the plaque in his honour. It was an auspicious event that heralded a brighter, more exciting and dignified leadership in diplomacy for The Commonwealth of The Bahamas, spearheaded from the principal mission headquarters in the United States.

Ambassador Jones, as versatile an individual as can be found, also provided over a score of his personal paintings to be on display, enhancing the aesthetic outlook for those in attendance.

I was pleased to be on hand, proud of our Ambassador and the country we love and serve.

The guests, those fortunate to cross the threshold at 2220 Massachusetts Avenue for the special ceremony, no doubt understood quite well why we say: It's better in The Bahamas.

Sincerely,
FREDERICK STURRUP JP

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

FNM CHASING STRAWS

Dear Editor:

It has been almost traditional in Bahamian politics, especially during electoral campaigns and in the aftermath, for assorted parties and defeated individuals to cry foul or worse. The cycle is now repeating itself. Over in the great constituency of Saint Barnabas, the opposition forces, such as they would have been, were badly mashed up by the dominant PLP and its brilliant standard bearer, the Hon. Michael Halkitis (PLP-St. Barnabas).

While any administration operates as a team, it is crystal clear to me that Minister Halkitis is one of the principal Architects of the resurgent Bahamian economic boom. Under his leadership within his then portfolio of Minister of Economic Affairs, our economic ship of state was steered away from potentially dangerous financial reefs and shoals.

Under his tenure the national economy grew by 3.8% over the last fiscal period. Unemployment is less than 10% and trending downward even as you read this. In fact, our economy is the best in the region and far surpasses many larger nations. We really need to start giving credit where it is due regardless of politics.

So the FNM was unable to defeat the PLP at the recent elections so that party seems determined to undermine this second consecutive Davis administration by any and all means necessary. It has asserted that the PLP has potentially 'corrupt' members, inclusive of Cabinet Ministers without a single iota of factual evidence!!

They have questioned Minister Halkitis's role in the private sector as a Certified Financial Consultant. He was, while out of office, listed on corporate documents as an officer and director of a company believed to be beneficially owned by a Bahamian who now finds himself in the custody of the USA Justice Department.

The nexus which the FNM and their legally ignorant allies seek to find to tie Minister Halkitis to that person is totally absent. Then there is the curious case where a chartered aircraft had to ditch at sea while conveying registered voters in the West End Constituency from Abaco to Grand Bahama.

That same individual who is now in the USA allegedly had an envelope with cash. They alleged that that envelope was destined for the now current PLP Member of Parliament for West End. Again, there is no criminal or legal nexus. All of these antics are mere distractions and should be totally ignored unless and until there is evidence to the contrary.

In short, no one in the PLP administration of the House of Assembly needs to resign, at this time. I suggest that the FNM instead of chasing after straws, focus on the matter involving a capture boat, now in USA's custody along with a declared and acknowledged 'business partner' of former FNM candidate for Mount Moriah. To God then, in all things, be the glory.

Sincerely,
Ortland H. Bodie, Jr.