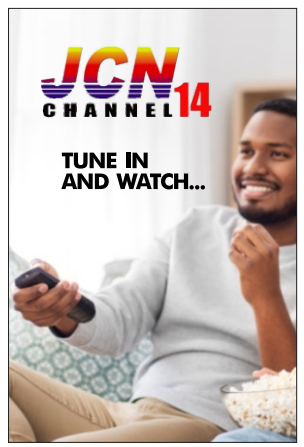




The Bahama Journal

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HAPPY INDEPENDENCE FROM JONES COMMUNICATIONS NETWORK

LNG GROUND BREAKING ANNOUNCED

BY: MAKEIRA TUCKER
Journal Staff Writer

The Minister of Energy, Utilities and Aviation, Hon. Jobeth Coleby-Davis addressed the widespread power outages in New Providence and the stability of the country's energy system during a press conference at the Office of the Prime Minister Thursday morning.

As part of the government's long-term plans to address energy challenges across the country, Coleby-Davis announced the groundbreaking ceremony for The Bahamas' first Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) terminal and apologized for poor communication during the recent nationwide power outage emergency.

The contract signing for the LNG terminal happened earlier this year as the government aims to lower the cost of energy and provide a cleaner alternative for diesel.

Coleby Davis stated that "On Monday we will embark on a major milestone in our energy transition, the groundbreaking ceremony for New Providence Liquefied Natural Gas LNG Terminal. LNG is natural gas that is a liquid form so it can be transported safely to The Bahamas."

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HAPPY 53RD INDEPENDENCE BAHAMAS
Bahama Journal photos JUSTIN KEMP

BAHAMAS STANDS STRONG WITH CARICOM

BY GERRINO J. SAUNDERS
Bahama Journal News Editor

The mission for Prime Minister Philip Davis at this weeks' 51 st Regular Meeting of the Conference of Heads of government of The Caribbean (CARICOM) in Saint Lucia was to "advance the interests of the Bahamian people and to ensure that our country's voice is heard on the matters that affect our homes, our borders, our economy, and our future."

Under the leadership of the new Chairman Philip J. Pierre the Prime Minister of Saint Lucia the meeting gave the regional leaders an opportunity to address the issue that matter most to the people of the Caribbean which include climate change, climate finance, regional security, Haiti, Cuba, economic resilience, and the future direction of CARICOM.

Though some may try there is no denying that small island states like many of the CARICOM states face severe threats from global warming, including rising sea levels, extreme weather, ecosystem damage and economic shocks.

As it relates to climate change Mr. Davis said while speaking to CARIOM he made the case that small island states need finance that matches the reality they face.

He said, "We cannot continue to carry the cost of stronger storms, rising seas, and repeated recovery on financing terms designed for countries that do not face our level of risk. The Bahamas will continue to press for fairer access to climate finance, stronger disaster-risk protection, and practical tools that help countries recover faster when crisis comes."

Prime Minister Davis also reminded his colleagues on The Bahamas' role as a partner in the Sustainable Markets Initiative which focuses on private capital mobilization that seeks to bring governments, development banks, and private financial institutions together to carry what he described as "real projects, with real financing" that can help countries like those in CARICOM build resilience and protect their people.

Mr. Davis reminded that ahead of the Conference of the Parties (COP) annual United Nations climate summit he supported a stronger CARICOM approach to climate negotiations.

He said, "The Caribbean must be clear about its own priorities. We value the platforms through which small island states work together, but Caribbean concerns must be placed clearly and firmly on the table."

As it relates to crime and violence in the region Chairman Pierre during his opening address lamented that fact that across the region societies are confronting violent crimes, illicit firearms, trafficking, organized criminal networks, cybercrime, gun activity, drug trafficking and delays within our criminal justice system.

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Prime Minister of The Bahamas, Hon Philip Davis, KC at the 51st Regular Meeting of the Conference of Heads of Government of CARICOM

After fifty-three years of Independence, The Bahamas has made tremendous strides, while many opportunities remain. Today, as we embark on a new year of nationhood, Bahamians continue to show their pride and gratitude for the country they call home. This small nation of more than 700 Islands and Cays has produced change-makers who have made an impact around the world. Small but mighty, The Bahamas continues to lead the charge for Caribbean success across many industries, often overcoming challenges that go unseen. Throughout its history, The Bahamas has embraced change while remaining rooted in its traditions. It honours its people, its heritage, and its future through a strong sense of national pride and its milestone Independence celebrations. On July 10, 1973, The Bahamas became a free and sovereign nation, bringing to an end 325 years of British rule.

Today, while remaining a member of the Commonwealth of Nations, Bahamians proudly celebrate July 10 as Independence Day. This year's Independence celebration follows the Progressive Liberal Party's resounding electoral victory and historic second consecutive term in office, under the theme Continued Progress.

Over the last decade, The Bahamas has earned recognition from international organizations, including the World Health Organization, for its commitment to national development, resilience, and outstanding achievements. Prime Minister Philip Davis has commended Bahamians for their dedication to building a stronger nation and has expressed pride in leading the country during this significant period.

Reflecting on the meaning of Independence, Davis said, "Our freedom and sovereignty had to be fought for. Now we have our own fights to change the status quo, to take on injustice, to make sure opportunity, security and dignity reach all Bahamians". The Prime Minister reaffirmed his government's commitment to advancing the nation by creating greater opportunities, empowering communities, and preserving the legacy of those who fought for freedom. As The Bahamas marks another Independence anniversary, the occasion serves not only as a celebration of the country's sovereignty, but also as a reflection on how far the nation has come and a renewed

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THE 'ONE LIFE, TOO MANY' ROAD SAFETY CAMPAIGN LAUNCHED



Minister of Transport Hon. Leon Lundy

BY CLEMIA NEELY
Journal Staff Writer

The Ministry of Transport, in collaboration with the Road Traffic Department and the Royal Bahamas Police Force on Wednesday launched a renewed and much needed road safety campaign. The campaign entitled "One Life, Too Many" highlights the importance of making safer choice on our roads.

This comes after the high number of recent traffic fatalities that have claimed the lives of many Bahamians all over the country.

As of July 5th, there are 36 traffic fatalities on record for the year, compared to 38 for the same period in 2025. In total, there were 65 traffic deaths recorded in 2025, and 66 traffic deaths recorded in 2024.

The government has come up with this road safety campaign in an

attempt to minimize the number of traffic deaths in 2026. Minister of Transport Leon Lundy said that road safety does not belong to any particular party, it belongs to every driver, passenger, pedestrian, and family in this country.

He said, "Education and enforcement will move together because neither alone can save lives. The Royal Bahamas Police Force remains fully engaged on our roads and the Road Traffic Department will work alongside police traffic units to strengthen compliance.

"The goal always is prevention. Every ticket that never has to be written becomes a win. Every driver that made a better choice is a victory. Every life served and saved is a success," he said.

Assistant Commission of the Royal Bahamas Police Force Mareno Hinds

said motorists will begin to see an increased number of road checks and speed checks in

New Providence, Grand Bahama, and all other Family Islands so that we can eliminate the vices that plague us on our streets.

He explained, "Most times when there is a minor accident, or a fender bender as we call them, if speed isn't present, most times people are not injured or fatally harmed. So, we want our road users to slow down. Speed is really the enemy. And then if you were to delve deeper into our societal ills, then you would find that driver distraction or driving without due care and attention is also a factor. And this may be the most unpopular statement that is made today, but the cell phone is the biggest enemy. It is our nemesis."

Story Cont. Pg. 4

BAHAMAS STANDS STRONG WITH CARICOM

Story Cont. Pg. 1

He said, "These are not isolated national problems; they are regional challenges with region consequences including economic viability and social stability."

While speaking on security, Prime Minister Davis also reminded colleagues that The Bahamas is a frontline maritime state whose geography is a "blessing", but it also places The Bahamas along routes used by traffickers and criminal networks.

He said, "We must continue to strengthen intelligence sharing, maritime cooperation, border security, financial investigations, cyber readiness, and joint training across the region. The security of The Bahamas is tied to the security of the Caribbean. No country can meet these threats alone."

Haiti and the effects of its economic and social instability continues to be a major concern for CARICOM countries. Haiti is currently facing a serious humanitarian crisis largely due to ongoing escalating gang violence, which has forced more than 1.5 million people out of their homes including an estimated 30,000 people who fled their home in the capital Port-au-Prince in recent times.

Meanwhile, it is reported that the gang suppression force supported by the United Nations has killed approximately 1,343 suspected gang members, and has regained control of parts of the capital. However, citizens have reportedly said they do not feel this impact of the successes in their daily lives.

On Haiti, Prime Minister Davis said, "I reaffirmed that the stability of Haiti remains central to the stability of our region. The Haitian people deserve peace, security, and the opportunity to rebuild their institutions."

Continuing he said, "The Bahamas will continue to support responsible regional and international efforts that help restore order, provide humanitarian relief, and respect Haitian sovereignty."

It was reported this week that Haiti's government and the Provisional Electoral Council (CEP) have agreed on a \$120 million budget to finance the country's long-delayed general elections, ending months of negotiations over the cost of organizing the first national vote in a decade. However, there is still not firm timeline as to when those elections will be held.

Meanwhile, scattered protests broke out across Havana on Tuesday evening, with residents banging pots, honking horns and shouting "turn on the lights" as millions of Cubans remained without power amid a six-month-long U.S. fuel blockade.

According to Mr. Davis The Bahamas supports continued dialogue, respect for sovereignty, and practical cooperation with Cuba in areas such as health, education, disaster response, and technical assistance. He said, "We remain concerned about the hardship facing ordinary Cuban people and support efforts that ease that burden."

Additionally Prime Minister Davis reported on The Bahamas' engagement with CARICOM's Associate Members and Overseas Territories.

He said, "We support their fuller participation in the work of the Community, including the membership pathways being pursued by Bermuda, the Turks and Caicos Islands, and the British Virgin Islands.

CARICOM is stronger when every part of the Caribbean family has a meaningful place at the table."

In conclusion he said, "I leave Saint Lucia clear about the work ahead. Our region faces serious challenges, but we also have the ability to act together with discipline and purpose. The Bahamas will continue to protect our people, advance our national interest, and work with our Caribbean partners to build a safer, stronger, and more resilient region.

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LNG GROUND BREAKING ANNOUNCED

Story Cont. from Pg. 1

Once it arrives it is converted back into gas and used to generate electricity.” She explained that much of the current systems rely on harsh fuels to operate, whereas LNG would produce less emissions, require lower maintenance and reduces the costs of energy in The Bahamas.

Coleby-Davis said, “As LNG is introduced into our generation fleet consumers are expected to benefit up to \$100 million in annual fuel savings. Those savings are expected to flow directly through the fuel components of your electricity bills. At the same time LNG helps BPL reduce its dependence on expensive temporary rental generation, allowing more resources to be invested in strengthening the electricity system itself.

The Minister noted that LNG is only one part of the strategy and the future of energy in The Bahamas is built on balance.

Meanwhile, while addressing the nationwide power outage that took place on Sunday July 5th she said, “This past Sunday thousands of Bahamian families, businesses and visitors experienced power interruptions that disrupted daily living. For every person who was affected I want to begin by offering my sincere apology.”

Coleby-Davis acknowledges that electricity is an essential service for everyday life. She said that the public deserves more than an apology and that clear communication from the government is necessary moving forward.

“While no government can prevent a lightning strike, we are responsible for how we prepare, how we respond, how we communicate, and how we continuously improve our electricity system. That responsibility is one I take seriously, and it is a commitment shared by the government, the board, management and every employee of Bahamas Power and Light,” Coleby-Davis added.

The minister also commended the efforts of BPL workers who remained on duty for more than 16 hours under difficult and demanding circumstances to rectify the power outage issue.

She said, “They worked through the day and into the night, not because they were asked to but because they understood that every minute without electricity affected thousands of Bahamians. To those employees and their families, I offer my sincere thanks.”

BPL: ISLAND-WIDE BLACKOUT LEADS TO INTERNET OUTRAGE

BY GERRINO J. SAUNDERS Bahama Journal News Editor

A storm on this past Sunday, left hundreds of Bahamian residents without electricity for hours after a lightning strike at the Blue Hills Power Station on New Providence. This triggered an island-wide blackout that began shortly after 10 a.m., leaving homes, businesses, and essential services without power during one of the hottest periods of the day.

Immediately following the incident, Bahamas Power and Light (BPL) responded by informing the public through its Facebook page that crews were actively working to restore service.

Following confirmation of the cause, several local news outlets published photos and videos showing smoke billowing from the station after the explosion. The damage resulted in a widespread outage that lasted more than 12 hours in some parts of New

Providence.

BPL said its initial assessment revealed that a lightning strike caused an explosion at the Blue Hills Power Station, creating a major disruption to the electrical network and interrupting power supply to multiple communities across the island. The company assured residents that emergency response teams were working to isolate the damaged equipment while safely restoring electricity to consumers as quickly as possible.

BPL Chief Executive Officer Toni Seymour extended a sincere apology to customers for the prolonged outage and the inconvenience it caused to homes, businesses, healthcare facilities, and everyday life. During a public address, she provided a detailed explanation of the incident, the challenges faced by emergency crews, and the extensive restoration efforts undertaken to safely return

power to residents across New Providence.

When the explosion occurred, it caused damage to the bus bar, which is where the energy is transferred before it is exported. We were not able to send any power from the Blue Hills Power Station until that portion of the bus bar could be isolated, the switchgear secured, and inspections completed. Of course, we expect our teams to work as quickly as they can to restore supply, but we also have to ensure their safety. That is our priority, Seymour said.

Seymour explained that although restoring electricity was urgent, worker safety remained a concern. She said emergency crews could not immediately begin repairs until engineers determined that the area surrounding the damaged equipment was safe to enter. Once it was deemed safe for the teams to go in and conduct their inspections to determine exactly what happened and

assess the extent of the damage, then we were able to begin our repairs, she said.

She further explained that repairs involving major transmission equipment are significantly more complex than routine outages affecting individual communities. Unlike localized power failures, this restoration required crews to isolate damaged equipment, conduct extensive safety checks, and gradually restore electricity through-out the network to prevent additional damage.

Seymour added that once a portion of the damaged bus bar was successfully returned to service, BPL was able to begin exporting electricity from the Blue Hills Power Station into surrounding communities. Restoration continued throughout the afternoon and evening until power was returned to most customers across New Providence.

As residents waited for

power to be restored, many turned to social media to express their disappointment and frustration. While some sought updates regarding estimated restoration times, others questioned when the country’s electrical grid would become more dependable. The overwhelming public response reflected growing frustration over recurring power interruptions that residents say have affected various parts of New Providence long before Sunday’s severe weather.

Many residents argued that the country’s electrical infrastructure has become increasingly unreliable and no longer meets the growing daily electricity demands of homes and businesses.

Numerous social media users shared personal experiences describing food spoilage, interrupted work schedules, cancelled appointments, and concerns for vulnerable family

members who depend on electricity for medical equipment or cooling during the summer heat.

In a Facebook post shared on Monday, one resident summarized many of the concerns being expressed across social media. It was about newborn babies in homes without fans or air conditioning. It was about our elderly. It was about people dependent on oxygen, dialysis, and other life-sustaining medical equipment, businesses forced to close, employees who lost wages, restaurants and grocery stores facing spoiled inventory, people working from home without internet or power, and thousands of Bahamians left wondering when relief would come.

The post was written by Gillian Gia Curry-Williams, whose comments reflected the concerns of hundreds of other Bahamians expressing similar frustrations online.

Story Cont. on Pg. 4

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BPL: ISLAND-WIDE BLACKOUT LEADS TO INTERNET OUTRAGE

Story Cont. from Pg. 7

Within an hour, the post received an overwhelming amount of engagement from residents who agreed with her message and called for greater accountability from both BPL and government officials. Many commenters also expressed hope that the Minister of Energy would publicly address the crisis and provide assurances that similar outages could be prevented in the future.

The island-wide outage also followed another major power interruption on Cat Island during the Labour Day holiday celebrations, where residents and visitors reported missing planned festivities because of widespread electrical failures. For many Bahamians, the two significant outages occurring within a short period have intensified concerns about the reliability of the country's power infrastructure.

On Tuesday, Minister of Energy, Utilities and Aviation Jobeth Coleby-Davis addressed the nation, outlining her immediate priorities following the blackout and emphasizing the government's commitment to restoring electricity safely and efficiently. My immediate priority was to ensure that every available resource was directed toward restoring power safely and as quickly as possible, the minister said. Coleby-Davis acknowledged that residents expected timely communication during emergencies of this magnitude and admitted that public updates are an essential part of disaster response.

I also recognize that, during an event of this scale, restoration must be matched by clear and consistent communication. When residents are without electricity, public information becomes part of the response. She explained that she had made it clear to BPL that consumers should receive regular updates throughout the restoration process so residents would remain informed about progress and expected restoration times.

The minister also acknowledged the concerns being raised by Bahamians regarding the country's aging electricity infrastructure. The public has raised fair

questions. Bahamians want to know why this incident had such a wide impact. They want to know why the system remains vulnerable. They want to know what work is being done to strengthen the grid. They want to know when they will experience greater reliability in their homes and businesses. She said those questions deserve clear and transparent answers, adding that government officials understand the public's frustration and share their desire for a stronger and more dependable energy system.

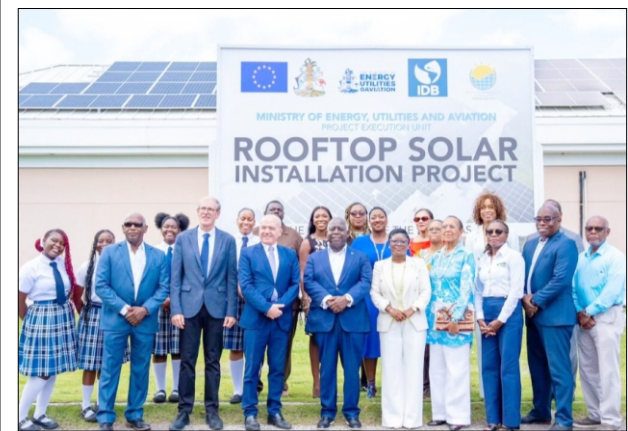
Her press statement outlined several initiatives currently underway to improve electricity generation, strengthen transmission systems, enhance grid stability, increase renewable energy integration, and improve the long-term resilience of the country's electrical infrastructure.

According to the minister, these improvements are intended to reduce the likelihood of widespread outages like the July 5th incident while creating a more reliable energy system for future generations.

Coleby-Davis also announced that she would provide a more detailed national update later in the week. On Thursday at 11 a.m. at the Office of the Prime Minister, I will provide a more comprehensive update on the work underway to strengthen the energy sector, improve reliability, support grid resilience, and move The Bahamas toward a more stable and affordable electricity system.

Although electricity has since been restored across New Providence, the island-wide blackout has renewed public debate about the reliability of the country's electrical infrastructure. Residents continue to question whether sufficient investments are being made to modernize the power grid and prevent similar incidents in the future. At the same time, many acknowledged BPL's consistent use of its social media platforms to provide updates throughout the emergency, while maintaining that long-term improvements not just emergency responses will ultimately determine whether public confidence in the nation's electricity system can be restored.

UB SOLAR PANELS INSTALLATION



Commissioning Ceremony for Rooftop Solar Panel Network at UB's Oakes Field Campus

MAKEIRA TUCKER
Journal Staff Writer

The University of The Bahamas commissioned new rooftop solar photovoltaic systems last week at UB, C.I. Gibson, C.H. Reeves, and the Carmichael Road Post Office and Library, marking a major step towards cleaner energy and stronger public infrastructure across New Providence.

Along with the completion of the Blue Hill Battery Energy System and Energy Minister Jobeth Coleby-Davis believes that these tools will help Bahamians take the lead in the new energy push.

Earlier this year the government set a goal for 30% of the country to use solar energy by 2030.

Prime Minister Brave Davis, who was in attendance, noted that, "Today as we stand before a sun that has warmed these islands for years, we acknowledged that the same sun is the very engine of our future."

The initiative was completed under the Reconstruction with Resilience in Energy Sector in The Bahamas program, also known as RRESB. "Energy is foundational to national development, it determines how effectively we educate our children, how reliably we deliver healthcare and how competitive our businesses can be," said Prime Minister Davis.

Mr. Davis stated that programs like RRESB are important because they reflect the government's commitment to strengthening systems that affect everyday living by making them more sustainable and energy secure in The Bahamas. He added, "We understand that energy security to be a matter of necessity." He continued, "We know better than most that the old ways of generating power reliant on volatile oil and fragile centralized grids are no longer enough to guarantee our future or our safety."

"As Prime Minister I see these investments as investments in our future that will serve our country for many years to come, while reflecting a broader shift when it comes to how we think about development," he explained. These solar panels will result in a better learning environment for students and workers.

Minister Coleby-Davis, who acknowledge these advancements as possibly strengthening the energy program at the UB stating that, "My expectation is now that UB will be

building out their energy programme at the University to have many of our citizens and others to coming to be qualified energy experts, energy professionals and I can have more person walking around with an energy policy degree here in The Bahamas."

The minister explained that "This solar rooftop is a monument to our resilience, a classroom for our students and a declaration to the world that The Bahamas is not just a victim of climate change but a leader in the global solution." She stated that for decades the country has been energy captive being dependent on expensive imported fuels which did not guarantee The Bahamas' security and safety.

"Today's commissioning, a few days before our 53rd anniversary of national independence, represents a pivotal step in our energy transformation and a continuation of our drive towards energy independence," Coleby-Davis said. She continued, "We are moving away from the vulnerability of the past and towards the sovereignty of the future." This transformation will result in lower costs for businesses and residences and more stable electricity in homes. "We can not ask the world to reduce its carbon foot if we are not willing to step forward and reduce our own; as we gather here it is important to bear in mind that progress of this magnitude is rarely a solitary journey, it requires a shared vision and a hand extended in partnership," Coleby-Davis added.

The minister also spoke about some more educational benefits, stating that, "Education and renewable energy are two sides of the same coin. Both are about empowerment: education gives a young person the power to control their own destiny; renewable energy gives a nation the tools to control its own power."

She added, "When our students look up at the solar arrays we want them to see more than a utility. We want them to see a live in laboratory." "We want our students to study the fluctuations in the grid, we want them to measure the carbon we are keeping out the atmosphere, and we want them to calculate the thousands of dollars saved that could perhaps be reinvested into our important development initiatives and progress."



MONTGOMERY SHANTYTOWN DEMOLITION

MAKEIRA TUCKER
Journal Staff Writer

The Ministry of Works, through the Unregulated Communities Action Task Force (UCATF), continues to demolishing communities by people who are not abiding by the law. This time it happened in a place of Cowpen Road called the Montgomery town in New Providence where 200 people were living illegally.

However, this time residents resisted. They physically attacked the authorities, who were law enforcement officers. Noone had major injuries.

Sixty four of 67 structures were torn down after months of warnings to residents.

Head of the Unregulated Communities Action Task Force, Superintendent Stephen Carey, explained that three buildings had not been destroyed because their validity had to be verified.

Officials say the operation will continue over the coming days as crews remove the remaining structures, while authorities determine whether th status of the three buildings that had permits was genuine,

The demolition marked the latest phase of the Davis administration's crackdown on unregulated communities, coming nearly a year after officials said about 200 residents in the area were served eviction notices and given 28 days to vacate the area.

Although the task force has observed that Bahamians

have lived in a number of shantytowns that have been demolished, the uncontrolled settlements are primarily connected to Haitian immigration.

Minister of Works and Family Island Affairs Clay Sweeting assured that the demolition exercises are not intended to target any ethnic group. He said that the demolitions are part of a larger goal to secure public safety and public health, as unregulated structures do not follow proper building code.

In the days leading up to the demolition, Long Island MP Dr. Andre Rollins informed Parliament that the planned demolition of the shanty community off Cowpen Road had been postponed. However, the explanation he provided was removed from the House record due to opposition from members of the ruling party.

Clay Sweeting, a member of the Unregulated Communities Action Task Force, did not rise in the House of Assembly to dispute the claim that the demolition had been cancelled. He explained later that officials do not publicly announce demolition dates because of security reasons.

"You have social services, you have the police, you have immigration, you have all of these different security agencies that are involved in this process, so we'll ensure that we continue with that aggressive approach."

Now some people were taken into custody after they attacked law enforcement.

THE 'ONE LIFE, TOO MANY' ROAD SAFETY CAMPAIGN LAUNCHED

Story Cont. from Pg. 2

Dennis Stirrup, a representative from the Road Traffic Department, shared that one of the key pillars the entire road traffic system is safety. And therefore, they strongly endorse this initiative, and they are proud to be a part of this national campaign.

"The Road Traffic Department is responsible for the regulating of the

traffic management system throughout The Bahamas. We are also responsible for the management and the registration of all vehicles and driver's licenses." He went on to say, "Thus, with the inspection of vehicles that are placed on the streets, we are there to ensure that they are at a particular standard."

In the months residents will see and hear this campaign in schools and

churches, on the airwaves, in workplaces, and wherever Bahamians gather, with young people repeating slogans such as "Friends don't let friends drive drunk." "The night was only good if everyone makes it home alive," and "You can replay the status, but you cannot replay your life."

Minister Lundy reminded us that although the word is shared, so is the responsibility.

He said, "Only you can slow down, only you can put the phone away, and only you can hand the keys to a sober friend."

He concluded by advising that motorists should drive as if someone you love is traveling in the other car, because someone's loved one is always in the other car.





GRAND CULTURAL FESTIVAL CELEBRATES GRAND BAHAMA'S IDENTITY, UNITY AND DOWNTOWN REVIVAL

Minister for Grand Bahama, the Hon. Ginger Moxey, welcomed residents, visitors and members of the Bahamian diaspora to the Grand Cultural Festival in Downtown Freeport on July 4, 2026, describing the event as a celebration of culture, identity and the continued revitalisation of the city's commercial centre.

The festival formed part of the WelComing Home initiative, launched by Minister Moxey in 2022 as a campaign encouraging Grand Bahamians living abroad to return home and reconnect with the island.

Now in its third year, the initiative continues to unite residents, returning Bahamians and visitors through culture, entertainment and community engagement.

During her address, Minister Moxey reflected on the transformation taking place in Downtown Freeport following more than two decades of decline.

"This is the rebirth and nurturing of our commercial centre, Downtown Freeport, after 20 years," she said.

The Minister also paid tribute to Bahamians returning home from abroad, visitors experiencing the island's culture and residents who continue to preserve Grand Bahama's traditions.

"To our visitors sharing in this moment, welcome and to our locals who fuel our culture every single day, thank you. You are the heartbeat of Grand Bahama," Minister Moxey continued.

Held as The Bahamas prepares to celebrate its 53rd Independence Anniversary, the week-long celebration highlights national pride, unity and the collective effort to build a stronger Grand Bahama.

"This is the reclamation of our identity. Together, we are engineering a stronger, more resilient Grand Bahama from the ground up. Let us claim exactly who we are. Let us dance. Let us celebrate. Welcome to the Grand Cultural Festival," she said.

Downtown Freeport came alive with live performances by Avvy, Wilfred Solomon, Shine 242, Rycon Bahamas, Mama D, North Wing Band and Sharade Taylor as patrons enjoyed Bahamian cuisine, music and an atmosphere filled with national pride.



Pathway To Peace Founder and Facilitator, Mrs. Patrice Ellis

Minister Moxey noted that while the evening featured outstanding entertainment, the festival represented much more than a musical showcase.

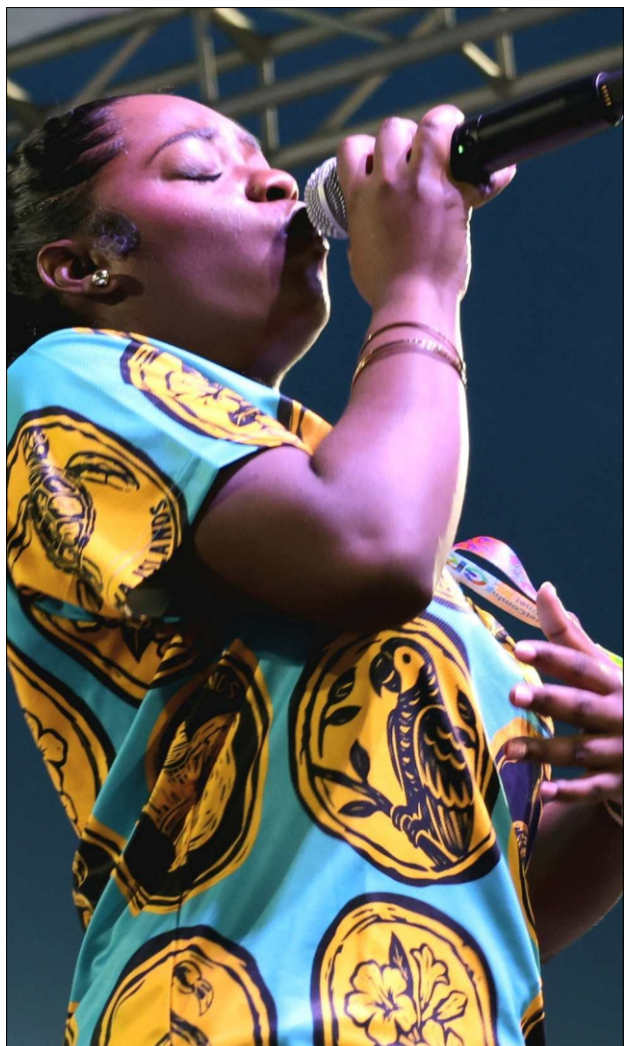
"This festival does more than celebrate. It confirms a permanent truth that Grand Bahama stands as the undisputed home of events and entertainment," she said.

Emphasising the broader vision behind the initiative, the Minister said the festival serves as a catalyst for economic renewal by connecting the island's rich cultural heritage with future opportunities.

"By anchoring our rich heritage in the present, we unlock a future of robust economic growth and self-determination for our people. This is the definitive blueprint for our cultural and economic revival," she added.

The evening also featured performances by finalists in the 2026 National Song Competition. Eden Munroe captured the national title as the overall winner and walked away with \$5,000; Gina "GG" Martin earned second place with \$3,000; Larry Bodie Jr., also known as Rycon Bahamas, secured third place with \$2,000 and Tony Lowe placed fourth with \$1,000

The Grand Cultural Festival forms part of ongoing efforts to position Grand Bahama as a premier destination for cultural tourism, entertainment and community-driven economic development while celebrating the island's rich heritage and creative talent.



NEW YORK STATE ASSEMBLY SPEAKER PAYS A COURTESY CALL ON THE PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE



Speaker of the New York State Assembly, the Hon. Carl Edward Heastie, and delegation, paid a courtesy call on the President of the Senate, the Hon. LaShell Adderley, July 8, 2026 in the Senate chambers, Downtown, Nassau. Speaker Heastie is the 100th Speaker of the New York State Assembly and the first African American to lead the chamber's 150 members from across New York State. (BIS Photo/Kemuel Stubbs)



RBC ROYAL BANK KICKS OFF 2026 GRADUATE AND SUMMER INTERNSHIP PROGRAMMES

RBC Royal Bank announced the commencement of its annual internship programmes, exemplifying the bank's ongoing commitment to nurturing young talent and building future leaders. This year, 22 university students are participating in the three-month summer internship programme.

Meanwhile, nine graduates will spend one year working at RBC, gaining invaluable experience to bridge the gap between academic knowledge and practical workplace skills. Incoming Interns are spread across Aruba, The Bahamas, Barbados, Cayman Islands, Curaçao and Trinidad and Tobago.

Both programmes are designed to provide the interns with hands-on learning opportunities, mentorship from industry leaders in the Caribbean and a chance to make a real impact. The interns will work across departments including, retail, risk, legal, finance, operations, technology, products and investments, gaining a holistic understanding of how RBC operates and contributes to the financial sector.

What sets RBC's internship programme apart is that in addition to structured learning, the graduate interns will have monthly meetings with their assigned mentors where they will discuss topics such as personal develop-

ment, networking and new skills and capabilities that will build a foundation for new graduates in an evolving work environment.

"Co-mentoring the 2025 graduate interns was a privilege. I thought I'd be teaching them, but they taught me too. Watching them grow from quiet participants to colleagues is the best proof that mentorship works. Their success is their own, but I am proud I got a small part in it," said Keisha Leacock an operations manager.

"Our internship programmes are about opening doors," said Gretchen Camacho-Mohammed, Head, Human Resources, RBC Caribbean. "We are giving young professionals real work, real mentors and real responsibilities; not just filing tasks. That's how we build the leaders the Caribbean needs."

"Both our university and graduate interns bring fresh perspectives and an eagerness to learn. By providing a platform that combines mentorship, real world experience and personal development, we empower our young talents to access invaluable opportunities and chart their path to success," she added.

This impact was evident in the experience of Kalon Byron, who completed the 2025 graduate internship programme and now holds a full-time position as a Senior

Cash Operations and Trading Officer. "This internship allowed me to widen my horizon to see different aspects of the bank that I didn't even know

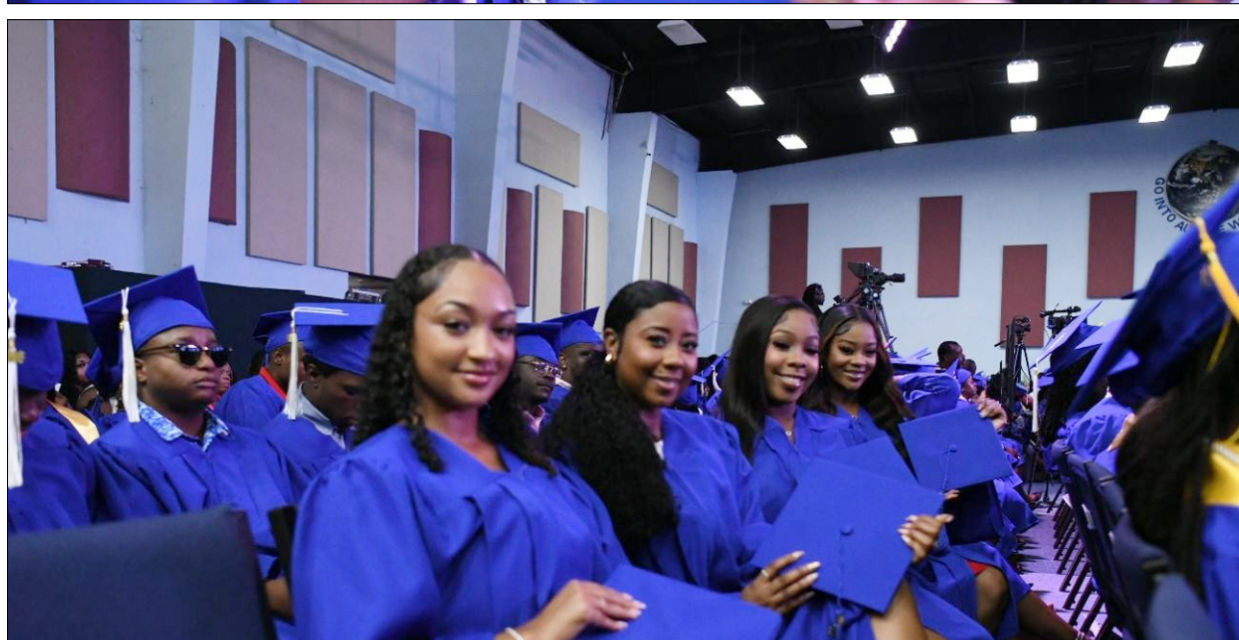
News Release existed. It was truly a well-designed programme and the structure allowed me to thrive, feel supported and have a meaningful work experience," Byron said.

Reflecting on the programme's success, Camacho-Mohammed noted: "As we embark on the third year of this programme, we encourage our interns to be curious, take initiative, build genuine relationships and stay open. What we have learned is that this approach works and it is how emerging talent becomes tomorrow's leaders. Notably, we had a 100% retention rate of our 2025 graduate interns, with all finding full-time positions within RBC," she added.

Interns will also have opportunities to participate in one of the five established Employee Resource Groups at the Bank – Women's, Men's, NextGen, ICare, and Pride. These voluntary employee-led groups foster a sense of belonging and inclusion in the workplace and are organised around shared identities, interests, backgrounds or causes. "They provide a great opportunity to learn, network and grow," explained Camacho-Mohammed.

BTVI GRADUATES

BTVI Graduates Told Their Technical & Vocational Training is Needed in The Bahamas Today



Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, Sen. the Hon. Keenan Johnson said it has been too long that a university degree has been celebrated while the value of technical and vocational education is overlooked.

"I strongly believe that thinking is now in the past. Today's economy demands something different," the Parliamentary Secretary said during The Bahamas Technical and Vocational's (BTVI) 2026 New Providence Commencement Exercise held under the theme, "From Knowledge to Nation Building" at Bahamas Faith Ministries International on Tuesday, July 7, 2026.

He said, "The modern Bahamas needs skilled people. People who know how to solve problems. People who know how to build, repair, innovate and create."

"That is why institutions like BTVI are so important. You are entering a world where practical knowledge is becoming more valuable every day."

The Parliamentary Secretary said technology will continue to reshape the workplace; artificial intelligence is transforming industries; entire professions continue to evolve. "But there will always be a need for skilled professionals who combine technical expertise with critical thinking, creativity and integrity. Those qualities cannot be replaced."

He encouraged the graduates to never underestimate the value of what they learnt. "The certificate you received today is important but the skills behind it are even more valuable."

The Parliamentary Secretary said, "They create opportunity and independence and they will build this country. That is why the government remains committed to strengthening technical and vocational education throughout The Bahamas."

U.S. Ambassador to The Bahamas, His Excellency Hershel Walker said, "I stand before individuals who not only have the ability to shape this country but also shape the world."

"You are going to build great buildings, fix machines, become business leaders, make people beautiful, invent cutting-edge technologies and much much more."

He added, "Do not listen to anyone who says that this is the beginning of the rest of your life because this is only a chapter."

The Ambassador also told the graduates not to be afraid of failure because it is a part of life. "We learn much more from failure than we do from success."

However, he admonished them not to dwell on their failures but to dwell on their successes. "I want you to keep pushing and never give up."

Assistant General Manager, Human Resources, Water & Sewerage, Pastor and Motivational Speaker Kendyce Moss-Moultrie said, "Our nation faces challenges that require your hands and hearts: strengthening infrastructure, advancing technology, expanding renewable energy, and fostering entrepreneurship."

"These are not abstract goals; they are the very areas where your training positions you to lead. You are builders of industries, innovators of solutions, and stewards of excellence."

The Pastor told the graduates, "What you do with what you have is entirely up to you to make a mark on the world around you. The future of work is challenged by the ones who refuse to embrace it and place their stamp on it."

"The world around you has changed and will continue to do so, with your impact and impression. The mindset required to be noticed in the world is to contribute to the resolution of the growing and shifting needs of your generation."

"Keeping up with daily changes and planning for future support to remain responsive is critical." Today is not an end, it is a commencement which means that it must begin.

He said individuals are often told to begin with the end in mind, but that is often difficult because that comes with anxiety and uncertainty for the future that is unknown.

"The difference that you are making today is going to propel you to be the answer to the future. The answer to every need lies in the faith that you have cultivated to be the difference and to make a difference."

The Pastor said, "One day you will be such a success, that people will forget where you started because they will not see you as the person that struggled, but as the person that overcame every obstacle and defied the odds."



PROGRESS BEING MADE ON \$8.4MIL CLINIC ON CAT ISLAND

BY CLEMIA NEELY
Journal Staff Writer

Just four months since construction began and it is out of the ground with some parts already having a roof, but there is still a long way to go before the completion of the \$8.4 million state of the art clinic in Stephenson, Cat Island.

To see the progress first hand the Minister of Health and Wellness Dr. Michael Darville led a delegation that included the Minister of State Owen Wells and representatives from the Inter-American Development Bank on a recent visit of the construction site. The project is part of a broader \$40 million loan programme financed by the IDB. The clinic is expected to be completed by June 2027. Dr. Darville said, The government recognizes that investors seeking opportunities in the Family Islands also require access to quality healthcare facilities, modern airports and supporting infrastructure. These investments work together to create stronger, more resilient communities while encouraging sustainable economic growth.

The new clinic on a two acres site will be used as a model for public clinics throughout the Family Island with state-of-the-art features that include a morgue, medical waste management building, Emergency Medical Services (EMS) building that will greatly improve the level of healthcare services available to residents and visitors to the island that includes minor surgical procedures and dental services.

According to the Health Minister Cat Island was chosen for the first new prototype clinic because of its strategic importance, including its deep-water access, the need for continued economic and community development, and its proximity to surrounding settlements and resources.

He noted that 52 government clinics have already undergone repairs and upgrades, while plans are underway to construct nine new clinics across the country.

The delegation also visited the recently constructed 3,300 square foot community



Minister of Health and Wellness Dr. Hon. Michael Darville

clinic in Old Bight, which was officially opened by Prime Minister Philip Davis in March of this year.

Meanwhile, in the capital ground was broken for the new Coconut Grove Advanced Health Centre on Baillou Hill Road in April of 2025. The Coconut Grove Clinic is expected to relieve much of the pressure placed on the Princess Margaret Hospital.

While the opening date has not yet been confirmed in early May this year Dr. Darville said he was pleased with the progress being made.

Also, in April this year the government broke ground on the \$267 million 200 bed national specialty hospital on the New Providence Highway as well as work continues on the \$210 million Freeport Health Campus.

Joining Minister Darville on the site visits in Cat Island were: Minister of State in the Ministry of Health and Wellness Owen Wells; Director of Public Health, Dr. Philip Swann; Project Manager, Donald Demeritte; and Contractor Ephraim Finley. And from the IDB Chief of Health, Nutrition and Population, Javier Guzman Cruz; Health and Social Protection Specialist, Ana Bernal Stuart; Sector Specialist, Livia Minoja; and Chief of Operations, Steven Collins.

HAPPY 53RD INDEPENDENCE BAHAMAS

Bahama Journal photos
JUSTIN KEMP





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