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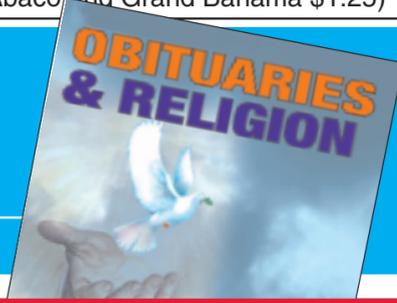
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INSIDE TODAY
CARS! CARS! CARS! LOADS OF JOBS AND HELP WANTED! THE TRIBUNE'S CLASSIFIEDS TRADER

As BTC protesters storm Rawson Square barricades, police issue the order to . . . 'SECURE THE HOUSE'

By NOELLE NICOLLS
 Tribune Staff Reporter
 nnicolls@tribunemedia.net

PROTESTERS clashed with police yesterday in a mass demonstration against the sale of BTC.

The heated demonstration left one woman in hospital and a man in police custody for his alleged involvement in an attempt to assault Tommy Turnquest, Minister of National Security.

Glenn Miller, assistant commissioner of police, said protesters threw ice towards Bank Lane as Mr Turnquest was walking across the road. The man who was arrested is being investigated in connection with the matter. He is a member of the Bahamas Communications and Public Officers Union (BCPOU).

Tribune sources claim the hospitalised woman was beaten by police with a baton during the demonstration. Mr Miller

confirmed the woman "is making some allegations," and they are being looked into.

Police sources said the hundreds of protesters represented "several factions", including unions, political parties and citizen groups, and did not seem to be "centrally organised."

There were also "a lot of onlookers", possible downtown employees, said the police.

At its peak, Mr Miller said the crowd grew to more than 1,000 people.

Progressive Liberal Party (PLP) supporters were dressed visibly in yellow "no turning back" shirts. There was also a large contingent of PLP youth dressed in custom-made designer "unity shirts."

Union leaders were present from most of the member unions of the National Congress of Trade Unions (NCTU) and the Trade Union Congress (TUC).

SEE page 16

'Brave' Davis supporters make strong showing at protest

By NOELLE NICOLLS
 Tribune Staff Reporter
 nnicolls@tribunemedia.net

SUPPORTERS of Philip "Brave" Davis, deputy leader of the Progressive Liberal Party, made a strong showing at yesterday's mass demonstration protesting the government's sale of BTC to Cable and Wireless Communications.

A large contingent of PLP youth arrived at the demonstration together. They brought life-sized "Be Brave" posters to the demonstration and wore custom-made designer "unity shirts."

The shirts were printed with the phrase "Yah ROEH", a Hebrew reference to "a shepherd", according to one protester.

SEE page 13



RAWSON SQUARE CHAOS: Police clash with protesters yesterday outside of Parliament.

• SEE PAGES TWO, THREE AND 16

PLP LEADER DENIES PAYING FOR BTC SALE PROTESTERS

By PAUL G TURNQUEST
 Tribune Staff Reporter
 pturnquest@tribunemedia.net

PLP leader Perry Christie last night denied reports that he paid protesters to converge on Bay Street to demonstrate against the sale of 51 per cent of the Bahamas Telecommunications Company (BTC) to Cable and Wireless.

During the PLP's press conference in response to the mid-term budget communication tabled by Prime Minister Hubert Ingraham, Mr Christie was asked to respond to the reports



REPORTS DENIED:
 Perry Christie

SEE page 13

NEWSPAPER STORY REFUTED BY CABLE AND WIRELESS

By PACO NUNEZ
 Tribune News Editor

CABLE and Wireless Communications has debunked a news story claiming one of its executives is moonlighting as a consultant for the Bahamas' communications regulator.

Contrary to yesterday's headline story in *The Nassau Guardian*, CWC said it has no connection with Marsha Lewis, a consultant to the Utilities Regulation and Competition Authority (URCA).

The international telecoms provider said *The Guardian* seems to have relied on "a professional online network site which was apparently not updated" - as Ms Lewis was formerly with CWC, but left in 2009.

The story had not only claimed Ms Lewis is still with the company, but

SEE page 14

HOPEFUL MID-YEAR BUDGET ADDRESS FROM THE PM

By TANEKA THOMPSON
 Tribune Staff Reporter
 thompson@tribunemedia.net

PRIME Minister Hubert Ingraham gave a hopeful mid-year budget address yesterday, noting that the softened economy has "turned the corner" with expectations that it will grow two per cent this year.

A 13 per cent rise in tourist arrivals in 2010 - an increase of 5.2 million visitors - and an expected 0.5 per cent expansion in the country's real gross domestic product (GDP) last year is evidence that the economy has stabilised. The estimated GDP expansion comes after a "sharp" contraction of 4.3 per cent in 2009.

Government also forecasts that the country's GFS deficit will be lower than first expected due to "several

SEE page 14



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LOCAL NEWS

Police officers did not demonstrate 'requisite amount of sensitivity' in dealing with crash

By NATARIO MCKENZIE
Tribune Staff Reporter
nmckenzie@tribunemedia.net

POLICE Commissioner Ellison Greenslade acknowledged yesterday that police did not demonstrate the "requisite amount of sensitivity" in dealing with a traffic accident involving a police cruiser which left several children seriously injured.

Parents of those children have criticized police for how they addressed the matter.

Commissioner Greenslade told the *Tribune* yesterday: "My understanding is that a marked police vehicle was responding to an emergency. There was an accident. On the back of the truck were a number of kids. One is still in hospital."

"Police did not demonstrate the requisite amount of sensitivity in dealing with

the matter. I am not satisfied that we did due diligence."

Commissioner Greenslade apologised to the families of the children involved in the accident and said police were going to meet with them.

"The police should have stepped up and demonstrated more sensitivity in dealing with that matter," he said. "We don't have an obligation but when people are seriously injured I feel it is the right thing to do."

Initial reports said that around 9.35pm last Friday there was an accident on the corner of Gladstone and Fire Trail Roads involving a 2009 Crown Victoria occupied by police officers and a 2001 Daewoo Labos truck driven by a 37-year-old man with five "people" in the rear.

The Crown Victoria was said to be travelling south on Gladstone Road and the



Police Commissioner Ellison Greenslade

Daewoo Truck north on Gladstone Road when the two vehicles collided.

According to several eyewitnesses, the driver of the truck attempted to turn onto Fire Trail Road when the collision occurred.

While police have come under fire over the accident, eyewitness Laniccina Adderley, who was travelling behind the truck, told the *Tribune* yesterday that driver of the truck made a risky decision when he attempted to turn onto Fire Trail Road with the police cruiser fast approaching.

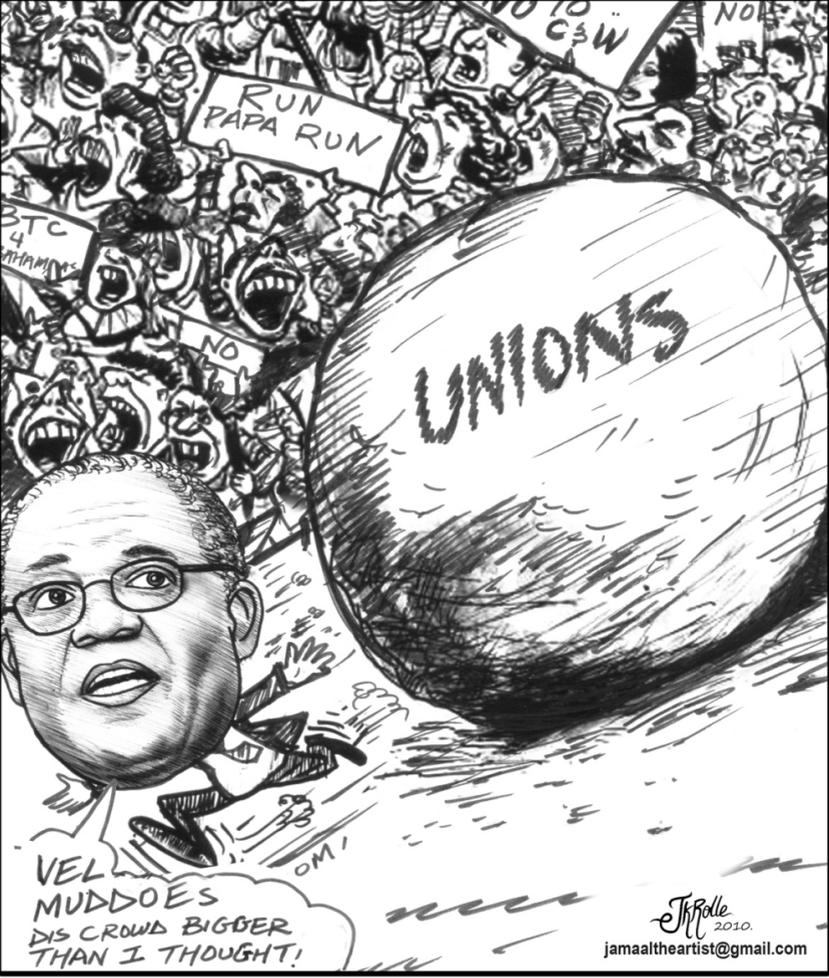
"My husband and I were behind the truck from Carmichael Road. We saw the police car with its lights on and the truck was about to turn."

"I couldn't believe this guy was going to turn," Mrs Adderley said. "I saw the back of the truck break completely off. At that time I just hoped that no one was dead. We even had to swerve off the road to avoid being hit," she said. "It was traumatising because I was in an accident myself," she said.

"My husband was very upset with the driver of the vehicle. We were there for about 15 minutes. I heard a young lady saying 'My leg, my leg.' The two officers there were trying to help her," Mrs Adderley said.



BTC SALE PROTEST



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Kia Soul

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Kia Sportage

The all-new 2011 Sportage received the organization's top honor by earning "Good" ratings - the highest achievable - in frontal, side, rear and rollover impact crash safety tests. Kia Motors' 2011 all-new Sportage compact utility vehicle leads the compact CUV segment for residual value ratings from ALG, the industry benchmark in the US for residual values and a leading provider of data and consulting services to the automotive industry.



Kia Optima

The 2009 Kia Optima midsize sedan was named to top 10 of the "Top 20 Cheapest Cars to Insure" list by Autobytel.com's MyRide. After analyzing every 2009 vehicle insurance quote request generated by insurance marketplace Web site InsWeb.com since January 1, 2009, the median automotive insurance rate for all vehicles was determined, with Optima landing seventh, of the 20 lowest median insurance rates for consumers.



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LOCAL NEWS

PM reveals changes to current govt spending for 2011 fiscal year

By **TANEKA THOMPSON**
Tribune Staff Reporter
tthompson@tribunemedia.net

GOVERNMENT is proposing to allocate an additional \$3.7 million to the Royal Bahamas Police Force this fiscal year to hire 162 new recruits and cadets, Prime Minister Hubert Ingraham said during his mid-year budget address.

The communication, made in Parliament yesterday, revealed a host of other fiscal adjustments government has in mind for the 2010/2011 fiscal year including increases and reductions across several areas.

Changes proposed for recurrent expenditure this fiscal year are:

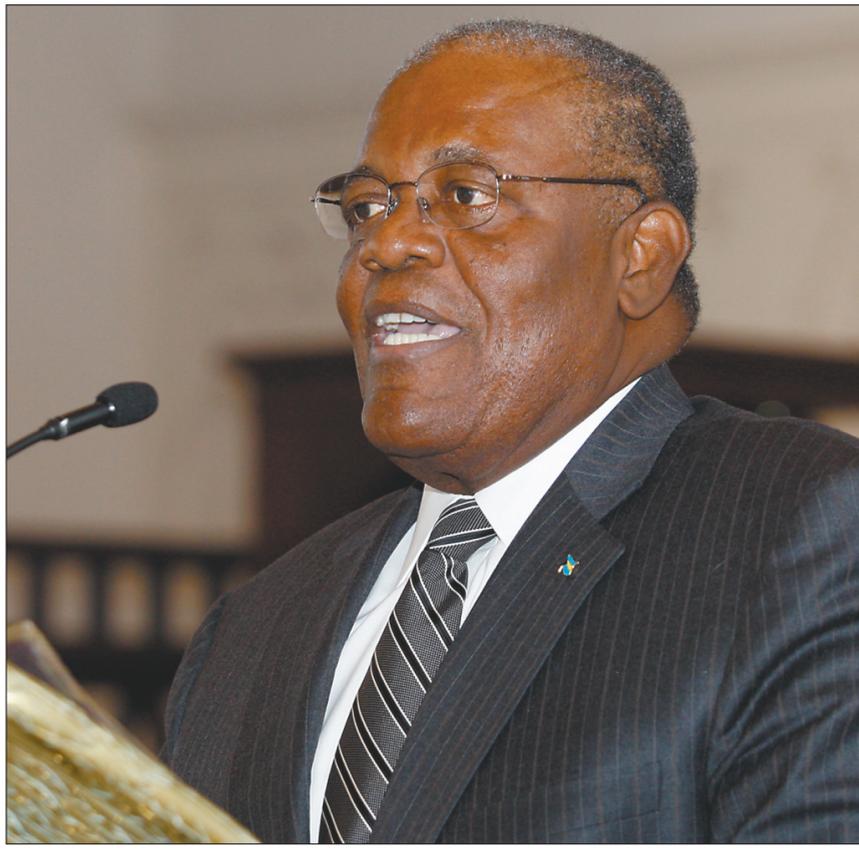
- \$10.1 million for the Department of Finance to defray costs of implementing e-government
- \$18.1 million to the Department of Finance for payments owed to BEC by government entities
- \$3.7 million to the Royal Bahamas Police Force to engage 90 new recruits and 72 cadets (89 customs and immigrations officers have also been retained)
- \$3.8 million to the Department of Social Services to dole out more food and assistance to the needy
- \$4 million to the Public Hospitals Authority for more medicine
- \$2.5 million to Department of Environmental Health Services for ongoing engagement of casual relief workers and roadside and heavy equipment contracts.

Mr Ingraham said these increases will be partially offset by the following budget cuts:

- \$10 million from the Department of Public Service
- \$1 million from the Department of Finance's car insurance plan
- \$0.5 million from the Office of the Prime Minister for investment promotion

He also listed increases in capital expenditure, including:

- \$5.125 million to offset severance packages for employees at the Broadcasting Corporation
- \$8.8 million to Water and Sewage to defray arrears and



CHANGES: Prime Minister Hubert Ingraham said the government is proposing to allocate an additional \$3.7 million to the Royal Bahamas Police Force to hire new recruits and cadets.

future payments to the Consolidated Water Corporation

- \$100,000 to BAIC for road construction in Andros
 - \$28.9 million for the airport gateway project
- This increase in spending will be partially offset by a reduction of \$13 million from the Department of Finance (\$7 million from this figure is due to the fact that government will not purchase the Kelly Building this fiscal period; \$6 million of this amount represents a smaller allocation to the port at Arawak Cay).

Mr Ingraham told Parliament that even with the additional spending, total recurrent and capital expenditure will be contained and remain in line with guidelines established in the 2010/2011 budget.

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LOCAL NEWS

Bahamian women 'need equal rights to transfer citizenship'

GIVING equal rights to Bahamian women to transfer dual citizenship to their children could be the spark for beginning to reverse gender inequality in the Bahamas, a group of local women were told.

"There are some very important, fundamental things we haven't done, and as long as we continue to sit on it, we will continue to remain where we are," said Loretta Butler Turner, Minister of State of Social Services.

"We allowed politics to stop us from allowing women to be able to pass on citizenship to their children, if they are married to a foreign spouse and the baby is had outside of the country.

"But our husbands are allowed to do it. They could marry anyone in the world and that child is Bahamian."

On February 17, the Bureau of Women's Affairs attracted 50 women to its monthly forum with non-governmental women's organisations and interested women to meet at the Rehabilitative and Welfare Services conference room on Thompson Boulevard.

"There are some things that are very controversial that nobody wants to talk



CONCERNED COMMUNITY ACTIVISTS of the Bureau of Women's Affairs discuss solutions for adding weight to the social imbalance evident throughout the country.

about. There are controversial things that divide us," said Mrs Turner.

Legislation

"For example, what happened with the legislation with regards to rape and marriage? Do you know how many women we have talked to who don't even agree with us on this, but yet they want to be a part of women's empowerment? They just don't get it," she said.

Concerned community

activists discussed solutions for adding weight to the social imbalance evident throughout the country, unconsciously created by cultural gender conditioning in early childhood development.

"We have got to make sure we have a more equitable society, rather than get all caught up with who is going to do this election or that election," said Mrs Turner.

"We have bigger pictures to look at. We have a bigger fight on our hands."



MINISTER OF STATE for Social Development Loretta Butler-Turner.



DR SANDRA DEAN PATTERSON, Director of the Crisis Centre.



ERIN GREENE, Community activist.



SENATOR Jacinta Higgs.



WENDY REJAN, Political Officer US Embassy.



GWEN KNOWLES, chairman of the Women's Bureau.

Extending freedom to women to make legal decisions without a man's consent, such as transferring citizenship, land and inheritances, would indicate an evolution of national maturity as well as an increase in emotional security among Bahamian men.

Equality

"I am not a feminist, but I do believe in equality. I am happily married. I have a wonderful husband and two biological children and one adopted child. I am very happy in my own skin and thank God I have a husband who truly understands and appreciates me", said Mrs Turner.

"He is also a very grounded, very self-assured man, so he doesn't mind. Communication is key."

Creating laws that recognise women's empowerment needs would elevate the individual worth of Bahamian women, who represent 51 per cent of

the population. It would also give disabled women more rights and protection under the law, she said.

"If we are 51 per cent of the population, why are we not making up 51 per cent of the House of Parliament? We are the majority and I'm not saying that everyone is going to be interested in politics but you are going to have daughters, granddaughters, and you will have sons as well, but let us encourage them," said Mrs Turner.

"One of the things we are very good at is discouraging each other. We have to make sure our women are not just promoted, but they are profitable. They could go into banks without someone asking you, 'Oh where's your husband?' Why do we have to have concurrence over our lives with another male?"

Minister Turner and the bureau's chairman encouraged women to work together to resolve the issues that divide women and place them at a disadvantage to men.

"Are we positioning ourselves to be leaders and not followers?"

"Are we truly getting to the point, ladies, where we are going to support each other or are we going to continue to pull each other down because of our differences," said Mrs Turner.

Generation

"There's so much more that binds us together than what separates us. Why is it that we continue to allow the boys to say 'It's still a man's world'? What are we doing to make the next generation greater?"

Gwen Knowles, Women's Bureau chairman, said: "We've been having these discussions about what we can have to bring us together.

"All of the groups here are doing fantastic things in the community, but we need one thing to bring us to work under one umbrella, so we can break out and still have the same goal."

A Tribute to Mrs. LaRita Boren

An Angel to Many Bahamian Students



The Taylor University Bahamas Alumni are saddened by the loss of Mrs. LaRita Boren who died on Thursday, February 10 2011, in Indianapolis, Indiana.

Mrs. LaRita Boren and her husband Leland Boren were instrumental in the recruitment and support of numerous Bahamian students who attended Taylor

University for over 25 years. Mrs. LaRita Boren was a member of the Board of Directors for Lyford Cay Foundation which is instrumental in providing a college education for over 2,000 Bahamians in the United States and Canada. She is our hero, our model of service and our example of transformational leadership.

The Taylor University Alumni Association with its many parents, friends and prayer partners honor this woman of substance who was an angel to many Bahamians who attended Taylor University. Leland and LaRita Boren together were God's hands extended in the earth as they went to great lengths to assist Bahamian students in achieving a quality education. Many of whom serve in various capacities in the Bahamian society. Academic journeys cannot be chronicled without a mention of Mr. and Mrs. Leland and LaRita Boren. Their contributions are on going to Bahamian students currently at Taylor University.

Mrs. LaRita Boren's giving heart was the hands of God extended in the earth as she opened herself, her family, her home and her resources to those Bahamian students in need and made this her ministry. Many Bahamian students were recipients of her giving and today stand tall in this community making positive contributions.

While we will miss her presence, we know that to be absent in this body is to be present with the Lord and we are assured that she has a stellar reward in heaven.



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Tue, March 1: Professional's Night (British Colonial Hilton)
 7:30 - 9:30 p.m. Can The Bible Be Trusted?

Sun, March 6: Grace Community Church
 9:30 - 10:30 a.m. The Question of Right & Wrong
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LOCAL NEWS

Bahamian women 'need to think about power they hold'

By NOELLE NICOLLS
Tribune Staff Reporter
nnicolls@tribunemedia.net

BAHAMIAN women need to start "paying attention" to the power they have as a collective body, Atlanta-based Bahamian Consul General Katherine Smith said at a gathering of women at the American Ambassador's residence.

"Women make up more than 53 per cent of the voting population in the Bahamas. We need to stop and think about the power we hold," said Mrs Smith, while responding to questions about the state of women's rights in the Bahamas and globally, and the responsibility of women elders for "passing the baton" to the younger generation.

Mrs Smith returned home last week to launch a \$150,000 scholarship for a Bahamian grade 12 student to attend Spelman College, the oldest historically black college for women.

US Ambassador Nicole Avant hosted a dinner with Mrs Smith, along with Spelman president Dr Beverly Tatum, Spelman vice president for enrolment management Arlene Cash, and a host of leading Bahamian women.

Ambassador Avant, a Spelman graduate, said: "Every generation has a responsibility to hand the baton". She recalled her mother taking her to the voting booth as a child and driving home the message that "people who came before me sacrificed so I could enjoy the rights I have today".

To pass the baton, she said, the present generation of women elders must "share the truth". Self discovery and knowing who you are, she said, are key factors.

"It is not true that women can do everything at one time and do it well. It is not true. You have to take time to take care of yourself. Our mental and spiritual health as women are equally as important," said Ambassador Avant.

Mrs Tatum said the Ambassador's message is similar to the one she delivered to Spelman freshmen last year, and is relevant to all women today - "personal sustainability".

"We need to tend to our physical, emotional and spiritual health. This is the first

generation to have a shorter life expectancy than the preceding generation. We see this because of our health habits and life style choices. We are responsible for re-establishing a sense of personal sustainability amongst our women," said Mrs Tatum.

She said self discovery is a key part of the journey, particularly because standard education about the heritage and legacy of black women and African people usually "begins and ends with slavery".

Dr Tatum said it is an empowering experience for Spelman freshmen to sit the mandatory first year course, Africans in the Diaspora and the World, which teaches about the contribution and experience of Africans before and after slavery, including a look at their many cultural contributions.

"It gives them information they never had access to before. Also, being in a community of powerful women is significant. Most of them come from an environment where they are one in a handful of talented powerful black women. You are often isolated and people lead you to believe you are exceptional. At Spelman you are one of many; it expands your understanding of self," said Dr Tatum.

In 2005 Spelman students launched a successful attack against the way black women were portrayed in music videos.

The raunchy late night show 'BET Uncut' felt the brunt of the students' ire.

BET cancelled the show after a six year run. Dr Tatum said: "That is because Spelman students lobbied not just the network, but Viacom, the parent company."

She said they wrote letters, called radio shows, and conducted widespread advocacy.

There are currently no Bahamian students enrolled at Spelman, but there are Bahamian graduates, notably Dr Sonya Wisdom, director of graduate programmes at the College of the Bahamas.

Dr Tatum said the college has a "long tradition of students from the Caribbean". The ninth president was Jamaican-born Dr Albert Manley, brother of former Jamaican Prime Minister Michael Manley. He was the first African president of the



AMBASSADOR AVANT and Dr. Tatum.

BAHAMIAN Consul General Katherine Smith, Dr. Tatum, Ambassador Avant and Arlene Cash (Spelman).

college, serving from 1953 to 1977. The first black female president did not come until 1987.

Dr Tatum said that was a "critical time" given what was going on in the United States. The 1954 landmark decision of the US Supreme Court in the case of Brown v the Board of Education ended legal segregation in schools.

"It was a critical time, especially for historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs), because some of the natural candidates for those schools were now being recruited by white institutions. With the increase in competition, some of the HBCUs floundered. The fact that Spelman didn't flounder was largely because of Dr Manley's leadership," said Dr Tatum.

Spelman has a reputation for producing black female leaders.

It has the highest graduation rate of all HBCUs, with 80 per cent of its students graduating in six years or less.

That rate is also higher than the national average, said Dr Tatum.

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LOCAL NEWS

'We the People' to create Police Athletic League to keep youths off the streets



ED FIELDS, chairman of 'We the People'

THE Royal Bahamas Police Force and several local sports leaders affirmed their commitment yesterday to 'We the People's' plan for a Police Athletic League

geared towards keeping young inner city children active and off the streets. Ed Fields, chairman of the non-partisan, non-profit organisation said the Police

Athletic League initiative, which has been highly successful in New York, was brought to the organisation's attention by one of its members.

"The PAL is the biggest non-profit organisation in New York. Some 55,000 children have benefited and been impacted by this organisation.

"We often talk about crime and the solution to crime in the Bahamas and its our perspective that we often target the wrong people for the problem. What we try to do is cut down on the demand. It is one thing for an organisation to buy bulletproof vests to protect our police but what we want to do is create an environment where bulletproof vests aren't needed. We could create an environment where the police department and the community can come together through sports," Mr Fields said at a press conference yesterday.

He said it is hoped the initiative can be implemented by summer or early fall and will involve children between the ages of 5 and 16.

Mr Fields noted that the initiative would demand that children essentially "pay to play" - or commit to community service and after school classes in order to participate.

Police Commissioner Ellison Greenslade said: "We are totally excited about this new initiative. This is an initiative that will allow us to positively engage our young people and to give them opportunities from growth and development. The ben-

efits of the programme have been clear for many years now in the international arena.

"This is precisely the type of initiative that we have been talking about for a very long time - people working together all across the Bahamas and understanding that all Bahamians must make a contribution in making this country to a safer place to live to visit to work and to play."

President of the Bahamas Football Association Anton Sealy said: "We look at crime like any other terminal illness and we feel as if we can work on prevention and if we get to the kids at an earlier age we can prevent some of the things that we read about and see every day. We have the financial resources to see it through.

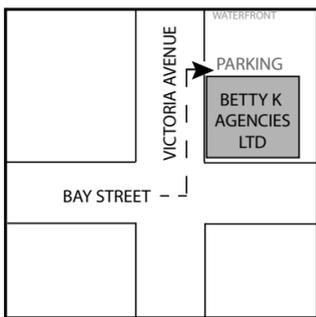
We have had on staff for the past year a director to oversee the programme from the BFA standpoint so we are set, we're ready and we're excited to see this through."

Lawrence Hepburn, president of the Bahamas Basketball Association, said: "With this programme we are using all of our resources and helping our youth in collaboration with the Royal Bahamas Police Force. The BBF is pleased to be a part of this initiative. I see this as an initiative for transforming lives, building persons. I see sports as a tool, a vehicle of changing lives. We can use this programme to reach into the inner cities and help to reach those who feel as is they have been disenfranchised by society and help their lives in a positive manner."

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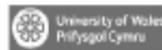
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LOCAL NEWS



SOME OF THE Haitian migrants which were apprehended by the Harbour Patrol Unit on Tuesday evening. They were later turned over to Immigration authorities for further processing.

Photo/RBDF Petty Officer Jonathan Rolle

Two groups of Haitian migrants apprehended

By MEGAN REYNOLDS
Tribune Staff Reporter
mreynolds@tribunemedia.net

DEFENCE Force officers apprehended two groups of Haitian migrants within the space of a few hours on Tuesday evening when a routine boarding in Nassau harbour was followed by a major apprehension in Exuma.

Sources told *The Tribune* the raid of the first vessel directed the Royal Bahamas Defence Force (RBDF) to the second raid in the Exuma Cays later that evening.

Leading seaman Vance McPhee, coxswain on the RBDF craft P-38, was on routine patrol in Nassau Harbour when he stopped and boarded a 29ft pleasure vessel and found 11 people, thought to be Haitian and

lacking proper documentation, on board.

The apprehension brought the total number of illegal migrants captured this year to 124 including 109 Haitians and 15 Cubans, according to the RBDF.

But just hours later a Defence Force plane led by Lieutenant Commander Marcus Evans spotted a sailboat near Coakley Cay, Exuma, and officers apprehended 109 men, 32 women and five children on board.

The migrants apprehended in Nassau have been turned over to the Immigration authorities for processing, while the group apprehended in Exuma is expected to be brought into Nassau last night or today.

An RBDF spokeswoman said she could not comment

on how officers discovered the second group of migrants in Exuma except that they had been seen from the air by a RBDF

plane. Despite sources' claims, the spokeswoman declined to say if the two apprehensions were connected.

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LOCAL NEWS

Service Times for Christ Church Cathedral Anglican/Episcopal Church George Street Nassau, Bahamas

Sunday, February 27th, 2011 Eighth Sunday After Epiphany ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Parish's Annual General Meeting will be held on Sunday, February 27th, 2011, from 11:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon. Vestry Elections will take place at each service. The Schedule of Services is as follows:

7:30 a.m. Holy Communion with Sermon

9:00 a.m. Sung Holy Eucharist with Sermon

11:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon:
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

6:00 p.m. Solemn Evensong,
Sermon & Benediction

Senator challenges human resources professionals to make a difference

SENATOR Michael Pintard told human resource professionals to encourage everyone should have a "passion for work".

The senator said passion creates energy and helps optimise productivity and creativity in the workplace.

Speaking at the Bahamas Human Resources Development Association's (BHRDA) recent installation ceremony, Mr Pintard delivered the message that human resources professionals should tell workers to be "Fired up, ready to go".

"At a time when government agreements are being challenged and Bahamians are competing globally for jobs and at a time when so many are unemployed in our country, who better to chart the course than an HR professional?" Mr Pintard asked.

He challenged the HR Association to make a difference on the national stage, and called on the organisation to ensure that its members are exposed to best practices in areas that are useful to them.

A professional HR body has an obligation to act as an advocate and commentator on important issues, Mr Pintard said.

He said the association can make a difference by:

- Challenging policy makers whose decisions impact workers
- Sending a strong message to all Bahamians that training and re-tooling is critical to re-enter the job market
- Ensuring the Association takes on fiduciary responsibility – similar to the role of compliance officers, so as to



MR PINTARD DELIVERS THE CHARGE: 'Fired up, ready to go'



HR PROFESSIONALS, family members and friends who came out to support the new executive team.

protect the organisation's assets

- Lending a voice to national issues in order to effect change
- Working closely with the country's high schools and the College of the Bahamas to establish workforce readiness programmes to prepare students for the workplace
- Inviting CEOs to BHRDA's meetings so that they understand and develop an appreciation for what the profession is all about

Mr Pintard went on to encourage HR professionals to have an impact on the organisation as individuals, by living its core values and leading by example. He also call on the Association's members to challenge general managers and CEOs more, as too many HR professionals "aid and abet wrongdoing".

At the same time, he said, they must negotiate tensions fairly so employees do not view the workplace as a "them against us" arena.

Senator Pintard left his audience with some harsh realities to ponder – chief among them that the world has changed and there is no turning back.

"The corporate world today is no longer the one we knew some 20 years ago. For example, tenure in organisations is quite fleeting. Many people are now awaking to the knowledge that tenure is not assured. We are seeing the last days of people



ANNETTE CASH (president) accepts the call to serve on behalf of her new executive team

working for an organisation for 30 years," he said.

Mr Pintard's speech was just one of many events organised by the association.

In February, the Association will partner with the Bahamas Psychology Association and focus on the topic "What did you do that for? – Analyzing negative social behaviour in the workplace."

Every CEO, general manager, line manager, and supervisor who is struggling with negative employee behaviour and wanting to learn how to address

it should attend, the Association said. The Bahamas Human Resources Development Association is a national, non-profit organisation and an affiliate of the Society for Human Resources Management (SHRM). BHRDA's main objective is to provide a forum for human resources professionals to enhance their knowledge and skills in the area of HR and to provide technical assistance and support to its members. Meetings are held on the third Wednesday of each month.

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- Ability to coordinate project information from a number of sources to populate databases, create reports and produce manual files.
- Working knowledge of Microsoft Office suite. Experience utilizing databases for data entry and report production preferred.
- Strong administrative skills including attention to detail and numerical ability. Ability to plan, administer and record results of work-team meetings and activities.

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PLP leader denies paying for BTC sale protesters

FROM page one

that many of the protesters in Rawson Square appeared to be "hired" by the party to be present at the demonstration.

"From my point of view, I paid no one," Mr Christie remarked.

Pointing to other members of his party who were standing behind him, the PLP leader said there were other Members of Parliament the media could speak to on the matter — all of whom collectively denied the allegations.

However, a government minister who spoke on condition of anonymity, informed *The Tribune* yesterday that constituents of his were notified of the protest from nearly a week ago when "initial monetary offers" were being bandied about.

According to the source, persons were offered anywhere between \$30 and \$50 plus alcoholic beverages to take part.

However, Mr Christie maintains the protest seen yesterday was a "legitimate" one.

"This is a legitimate protest. I think it is going to expand.

"I think you are hearing dissent in a country and listen, the PLP committed itself in the last term to the privatization of BTC.

"Since that time, we have listened to people and have gone through a self-examination of our own policies and commitments, and we have resolutely determined that we must do more to ensure the maximum involvement of Bahamians in the economy of the Bahamas, and that when it comes to BTC to make every possible effort to ensure that justice is done to Bahamians and the Commonwealth of the Bahamas," he said.

PHILIP 'BRAVE' DAVIS SUPPORTERS MAKE STRONG SHOWING AT PROTEST

FROM page one

Another protester said he did not know the translation for the text written on the shirt, but he knew it had to do with the BTC protest.

He said he was given a shirt that morning, and the group was taken to the protest together.

A *Tribune* source at the Post Office said he saw buses near the parking lot off-loading people for the demonstration. One PLP supporter said: "The district arranged for us to come on the bus."

Mr Davis said he was "encouraged and warmed" that supporters used his face as a "symbol." He said the party did not "facilitate people with buses", but Members of Parliament did "encourage people who felt that this deal stinks to join the unions."

One police officer was overheard indicating to a fellow officer that one of the young men in the group was "out on bail for murder."



HAWAII GOV. Neil Abercrombie signs the Hawaii Civil Unions bill into law at a ceremony held at Washington Place Wednesday, Feb. 23, 2011 in Honolulu. (AP)

Hawaii's governor signs civil unions into law

HONOLULU
Associated Press

HAWAII Gov. Neil Abercrombie signed same-sex civil unions into law Wednesday, calling it "a triumph for everyone" that gay and lesbian couples will have the same state rights as married partners.

Civil unions in the Rainbow State would start Jan. 1, 2012, making Hawaii the seventh state to permit civil unions or similar legal recognitions for gay couples. Five other states and the District of Columbia allow same-sex marriage.

"This bill represents equal rights for everyone in Hawaii, everyone who comes here. This is to me the essence of the aloha spirit," Abercrombie said at a signing ceremony. "With its signing, I want to say 'welcome' to the world, come to paradise."

A crowd of exuberant supporters yelled, cheered and applauded as the Democrat inscribed his signature on the legislation, making it the first law he's enacted since he was elected in November. The bill passed the state Legislature last week.

"We're contributing to society, and we deserve the same rights as everyone else. It's been a long, long time coming," said Van Law of Honolulu, who wore a rainbow lei and watched the bill's signing.

The new law follows nearly 20 years of court fights, protest rallies and passionate public debate in a state that has long been a gay rights battleground.

Just seven months ago, former Republican Gov. Linda Lingle vetoed a similar bill because she said it was same-sex marriage by another name.

But civil unions have been heading toward passage since Abercrombie defeated two gubernatorial candidates who opposed them, and only one state legislator who supported them lost re-election.

Hawaii, already known as one of the nation's premier locations for destination weddings and honeymoons, could see an influx of gay and lesbian visitors hoping

to have their partnerships solemnized on sandy, windswept beaches, according to tourism businesses.

"It's overwhelming," said Tamby Young, who has pushed for civil unions with her partner for more than two years. "All the families here can now feel like it doesn't matter what kind of family you have."

Arguments over civil unions and gay marriage have long divided the state, which nearly became the first in the nation to legalize gay marriage in 1993 because of a state Supreme Court ruling.

But voters overwhelmingly passed the nation's first "defense of marriage" constitutional amendment five years later, which resulted in a law banning gay marriage but leaving the door open for civil unions.

Since then, 29 other states also have enacted defense of marriage amendments.

Opponents of civil unions say the partnerships could lead to same-sex marriage, likely through a court challenge based on the argument that gay couples aren't truly being treated equally unless they're allowed to marry.

State Sen. Mike Gabbard, a leader in the movement against same-sex marriage in the 1990s, called the bill's signing "a sad day for the people of Hawaii."

"The people of Hawaii made it clear that they're against civil unions and same-sex marriage, and the politicians have basically said 'To hell with you,'" said Gabbard, a Democrat.

The signing coincided with Hawaii-born President Barack Obama's order Wednesday for his administration to stop defending a federal law banning recognition of gay marriage, and a vote in the Maryland Senate to legalize gay marriage. Illinois legalized civil unions last month.

"It's a fantastic day," said Tony Wagner of the Washington-based Human Rights Campaign, who attended the signing.

"It's been a good couple of months thus far since the elections. We're going to keep fighting for equality day in and day out."

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Friday, February 25th, 2011.

LOCAL NEWS

NEWSPAPER STORY REFUTED BY CABLE AND WIRELESS

FROM page one

also that this "revelation" is likely to throw "the integrity of URCA's consideration of the deal into question and create a new round of controversy over the already contentious privatisation issue" – a reference to the international telecoms provider's bid to buy 51 per cent of BTC from the government, which is still awaiting URCA approval.

The story goes on to explain that the allegations came as a result of a probe the paper had carried out "over the last several days."

It said the source of the claims about Ms Lewis' connection with CWC was her LinkedIn profile, which identified her as "the executive vice president of Cable and Wireless Barbados."

However, yesterday afternoon, Ms Lewis' profile on the business social networking site listed "executive vice president, human resources at LIME Caribbean (Cable and Wireless)" as part of her "past" experience.

The "current" section of her profile identifies Ms Lewis as the owner and managing director of LCI Inc and "HR consultant advisor to URCA, Bahamas." It mentions nothing about Cable and Wireless, but it is not clear when the site was last updated.

In its statement, CWC said Ms Lewis left the company to start her own business.

The *Nassau Guardian* story did not say if a response to the allegations was ever sought from either URCA or CWC.

The *Tribune* was unable to reach URCA officials for comment before press time last night.

PLP: mid-year budget is an admission of FNM's 'colossal failure'

By PAUL G TURNQUEST
Tribune Staff Reporter
pturnquest@tribunemedia.net

THE Progressive Liberal Party hit out at the mid-year budget statement tabled in the House of Assembly by Prime Minister Hubert Ingraham yesterday as an admission of his administration's "colossal failure" in office.

According to PLP leader Perry Christie, the Bahamian people were looking for a prescription for jobs and hope, but were given only a recitation of the Central Bank's quarterly reports – a "recitation of despair."

"It was a waste of time, a public relations sham like so much of what this government does by sleight of hand. We again say that their projections on the budget and the economy are shamefully inaccurate. There is a shortfall in the revenues as compared to revenues of a year ago of \$50 million. If it were not for the one time payments and taxes, the situation would be even worse."

"What is more alarming is that there is a revenue shortfall as compared to the budget forecasts of more than \$84 million. We want to remind the Bahamian people that this FNM government projected revenue increases for this fiscal year of almost \$200 million. Clearly because of the financial mismanagement of the Bahamas by this failed government, these revenue forecasts will be very difficult to meet."

Mr Christie said the PLP warned the government at the time of the Budget communication that their forecasts were unrealistic and unachievable and would only cause a worsening fiscal situation for the Bahamas.

"We were right during the Budget communication, and we warn that again, the economic forecasts in the Mid-Term Budget are illusory. But to make matters even worse, acknowledging the revenues are shrinking, this FNM government proposes to make adjustments to the budget forecasts to increase expenditures. This government needs to get serious about the responsible management of the financial

affairs of the Bahamas.

"And for that the prime minister needs to thank the PLP for leaving in place the plans for Baha Mar and other projects from which the country is clearly benefitting. The clearly neglected issue by the prime minister is that of employment for Bahamians. Bahamians throughout the country continue to lose their jobs, there is no clear method or forecast for any increased employment for Bahamians.

"This government thought it advisable to tax the Bahamian people at their highest rates ever during the Budget, threatening any job creation in the private sector, yet articulating no clear plan to encourage the creation of employment opportunities to the ever growing number of unemployed Bahamians.

"The PLP says that the theme of this address by the prime minister should have been jobs, jobs, jobs. The prime minister should go back to the drawing board as his financial management of the country is a proven failure," he said.

Hopeful mid-year budget address from the PM

FROM page one



PRIME MINISTER Hubert Ingraham outside of the House yesterday.

one-off revenue items" not incorporated into earlier predictions. Subsequently government debt is expected to come in below 49.2 per cent of GDP as estimated in the 2010/2011 budget address. Public debt stood at 48.7 per cent of GDP at the end of last year.

Mr Ingraham also noted positive turns in government's revenue collection for the first six months of the fiscal year.

"Revenue collections for the July to December, 2010 period amounted to \$584.1 million. Relative to the corresponding period of fiscal year 2009/2010, revenues were down by some \$50 million, though the out-turn last year was bolstered by one-off revenue receipts of \$84 million.

"Excluding those one time receipts, revenues for the first six months of the current fiscal period were \$34 million, or six per cent, higher than the previous period last fiscal year," he said.

For the first half of the fiscal year, import and export duties – at \$207.5 million – rose by \$1.8 million; excise tax rose by \$9.5 million to \$97.5 million; stamp tax fell by \$1.3 million coming in at \$68.8 million; while tourism tax rose by \$17.7 million to \$55.6 million.

On the tourism front, the nation's chief noted a whopping 16.5 per cent rise in cruise ship passengers and a modest 3.4 per cent rise in air arrivals last year.

"In tourism, total visitor arrivals in 2010 rose by 13 per cent to 5.2 million. The high value-added air component, which accounted for 25 per cent of the total, registered a modest rise of 3.4 per cent to 1.3 million.

"Sea arrivals, 75 per cent of total visitors, rose by a robust 16.5 per cent to 4 million, aided by a combination of increased port calls from major cruise lines and high-

er capacity ships," said Mr Ingraham.

The Free National Movement leader said his administration has put in place "key structural reforms designed to enhance the domestic business environment" and allow the country to gain maximum advantage from the modest economic recovery.

"There are clear indications that the economy has turned the corner and that, despite the risks that are present, we can look forward to better days ahead," Mr Ingraham told the House of Assembly.

"In light of global developments, expectations are that the recovery in the domestic economy will gain momentum in 2011.

"Our current view is that the economy will grow to the order of two per cent this year. This will be supported by further improvements in the key tourist markets."

The upgrades to the Lynden Pindling International Airport; public work projects such as the construction of the port at Arawak Cay; work at Baha Mar, Albany and Kerzner International and stalled projects will create jobs in the construction sector, said Mr Ingraham.

While domestic business and employment conditions are expected to improve, he added.

Despite a better outlook ahead, Mr Ingraham said government has to monitor uprising in the Middle East and pressure on world food prices – issues that will have repercussions for local gasoline, electricity and food costs.

"As necessary, the government, the private sector and consumers will need to implement appropriate conservation measures to minimise the impacts," he said.

• SEE PAGE SEVEN

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LOCAL NEWS

Protesters urge govt to reverse BTC decision

‘Secure the House’
FROM page one

Some union members were identifiable by their T-shirts, as well as members of the National Development Party (NDP) and Worker's Party coalition.

Spokespersons for the various groups said the objective was to stage a peaceful demonstration; however some protesters were in a "militant" mood. Sporadic confrontations broke out whenever protesters stormed the police barricades.

A major push by protesters challenged the strength of the police, causing officers to shout commands to "secure the entrance to the House."

The metal barricades that stretched across Parliament Square to the south were elevated in the air as protesters and police pushed against each other. A protester threw a filled water bottle in the direction of the police in Parliament Square. It is unclear whether a young boy who was on the front line at the time of the confrontation was trampled.

Police officers used batons in their attempts to gain control. Protesters lost shoes, hats, sun glasses, and in at least one instance, a hair weave.

During the demonstration, Prime Minister Hubert Ingraham was present in the House of Assembly.

He left after tabling the mid-term budget report. Protesters jeered him as he left the House.

Tourism officials said Bay Street was a ghost town. Motorists faced long delays as traffic was diverted away from the area.

A security guard working at a Parliament Square business said the demonstration was "hurting us."

By NOELLE NICOLLS
Tribune Staff Reporter
nnicolls@tribunemedia.net

PROTESTERS gathered in Rawson Square said they would not be moved and urged the government to reverse its decision to sell BTC to Cable and Wireless Communications.

Bernard Evans, president of the Bahamas Communications and Public Officers Union (BCPOU), said the government has made absolutely no overtures to negotiate or compromise, and it is beginning to look more and more like they had a "pre-planned agenda."

"When you look at all connections between Cable and Wireless, BTC and the Utilities Regulation and Competition Authority (URCA), it seems like they were planning this a long time ago. Julian Francis said it is only a coincidence that Sadaat and Lewis worked at CWC. Seems to be too much of a coincidence," said Mr Evans.

Usman Saadat, URCA chief executive officer (CEO), is a former CEO of CWC St Lucia. Marsha Lewis, URCA consultant, despite reports in *The Nassau Guardian*, is also no longer connected to CWC, according to the company (see story, Page 1).

Last month, members of the Progressive Liberal Party (PLP) raised questions about the hiring of former CWC employee Howard Mason for the position of chief information officer (CIO) at BTC.

Mr Evans said the objective of the unions and the BTC opposition is still the same. They want the government to reverse its decision on the sale.

"There is something that is fishy about this deal; something



SCENES FROM yesterday's protest in Rawson Square. At the demonstration, union leaders were joined by individuals from civil society, including talk show host Steve McKinney and Dr Elwood Donaldson, former parliamentarian.

Tim Clarke/Tribune staff

stinks to the high heavens. It is not just a union issue, it is a Bahamian issue. The more we fight is the more the public is going to come out. They need to have a referendum on this and a commission of inquiry," said Mr Evans.

"This is the voice of the people. They say we are the minority. It is 23 of them making decisions for 350,000 of us. Something is wrong with their math. Add it up," he said.

At the demonstration, union leaders were joined by individuals from civil society, including talk show host Steve McKinney and Dr Elwood Donaldson, former parliamentarian.

"Our objective was to let the prime minister know the people say 'no'. We hope they have gotten the point. We will be back if necessary," said Dr Donaldson.

"We want to send a message to Ingraham that Bahamian

people do not wish to have CWC purchase BTC. It is a simple message. He must reverse the process. It is not complete. Even in chemistry processes can be aborted. The passion of the people was on display today. In fact, I am surprised the passion did not go farther," he said.

Dr Donaldson cautioned the government not provoke the people to anger. He thanked the supporters for their passion on behalf of Mr McKinney, the unions and the Committee to Save BTC.

Demonstrators held signs reading: "Selling 51 per cent cash cow business like BTC to foreigners is pure donkey-nomics." Another read: "For years the government has dipped its hands in the BTC cookie jar to pay bills. I wonder if they think C&W would do the same to save their neck."



Tribune Trivia

Yesterday's Question

What is the name of the chairman of the Export-Import Bank of China?

Yesterday's Answer

Li Ruogu

Yesterday's Winners

Penny Sirra	3pts
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Terecita Cunningham	1pt

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INTERNATIONAL NEWS

NZ earthquake toll at 75 dead, 300 missing

CHRISTCHURCH, New Zealand
Associated Press

THE SISTER and brother sat huddled Wednesday on sodden grass, staring at the smoldering remains of an office tower that collapsed with their mother inside.

They hadn't heard from Donna Manning since a powerful earthquake tore through one of New Zealand's largest cities a day earlier, killing at least 75 people and leaving some 300 missing in the rubble. Still, there was hope.

"My mum is superwoman, she'd do anything," Manning's 18-year-old daughter Lizzy said, tears streaming down her face.

Just then, a police officer approached and knelt before Lizzy and her 15-year-old brother Kent in the rain. "I have some horrible news..." the officer began.

The teens' faces crumpled, and their father wrapped them in an embrace as the officer gently broke the news that their mother was presumed dead along with everyone else trapped inside the building.

It was a dark moment that was repeated many times over Wednesday as rescuers searched for any signs of life in the twisted rubble of Christchurch. Prime Minister John Key declared the quake a national disaster and analysts estimated its cost at up to \$12 billion.

Hundreds of troops, police and emergency workers raced against time and aftershocks that threatened to collapse more buildings. They picked gingerly through the ruins, poking heat-seeking cameras into gaps between tumbles of bricks and sending sniffer dogs over concrete slabs.

Teams rushed in from Australia, the United States, Britain and Japan and elsewhere in Asia, along with a military field hospital and workers to help repair power, water and phone lines that were damaged in all corners of the city of

some 350,000 people.

The news was grim at the Canterbury Television building, a seven-story concrete-and-glass structure that housed the regional TV network where Manning had worked as a morning anchorwoman. An English language school used by young visitors from Japan and South Korea was also located there.

The heavy concrete floors piled atop one another Wednesday, its central stairwell tower still standing, but leaning precariously.

"We don't believe this site is now survivable," police operations commander Inspector Dave Lawry told reporters. He said rescuers were shifting to sites that were less dangerous and where there was more hope for survivors.

Canterbury TV chairman Nick Smith said 15 of his employees were still missing inside the collapsed building. Also among the missing were 10 Japanese language students from a group of at least 23 students and teachers who were believed in the building, said Teppei Asano, a Japanese official monitoring the situation.

Not far away, cheers erupted Wednesday as rescuers pulled a woman from another crumpled office tower. Ann Bodkin was reunited with her husband after a painstaking rescue from the twisted metal and concrete remains of the Pyne Gould Guinness building. Giant sunbeams burst through the city's gray, drizzly weather as she emerged.

"They got Ann out of the building, and God turned on the lights," Christchurch Mayor Bob Parker said.

Police superintendent Russell Gibson said early Thursday that the last survivor had been pulled out at 2 p.m. Wednesday, and no one had been found trapped in the rubble since.

Gibson said the operation had become one of body recovery, though he rejected suggestions that rescuers were abandoning hope of finding

anyone alive.

"Yes, we are still looking for survivors," he said on National Radio. "There are pockets within a number of these buildings and, provided people haven't been crushed, there is no reason to suggest we will not continue to get survivors out of there."

He said the search continued in the Canterbury Television building, but "the signs don't look good. There has been a fire in there ... We will continue to pull that building apart, piece by piece, until we are satisfied" there are no more survivors.

Many sections of the city lay in ruins, and police announced a nighttime curfew in a cordoned-off area of downtown to keep people away from dangerous buildings and to prevent crime.

Six people had been arrested since the quake for burglary and theft, said police Superintendent Dave Cliff, announcing that anyone on the streets after 6:30 p.m. without a valid reason could be arrested.



OFFICIALS SURVEY the damage from Tuesday's earthquake in Lyttelton, on the outskirts of Christchurch, New Zealand, Thursday, Feb. 24, 2011. Tuesday's magnitude-6.3 temblor caused extensive damage, and killed dozens of people in the city. (AP)

One of the city's tallest buildings, the 27-floor Hotel Grand Chancellor, was showing signs of buckling and was in imminent danger of collapse, Fire Service commander Mike Hall said. Authorities emptied the building and evacuated a two-block radius.

Parker said 120 people were rescued overnight Tuesday, while more bodies were also recovered. About 300 people were still unaccounted for, but this did not mean they were all still trapped, he said.

Key, the prime minister, said early Wednesday that the death toll stood at 75 and was expected to rise. The figure had not been updated by nightfall.

The true toll in life and treasure was still unknown, but the earthquake already was shap-

ing as one of the country's worst disasters.

JP Morgan analyst Michael Huttner conservatively estimated the insurance losses at \$12 billion. That would be the most from a natural disaster since Hurricane Ike hit Texas and Louisiana in 2008, costing insurers \$19 billion, according to the Insurance Information Institute.

Key said the New Zealand economy could withstand the impact of the quake, the second to strike Christchurch since September.

"Christchurch's economic activity will be much less for a while," he told TV One. "The government will be doing everything it can to economically get Christchurch back on its feet."

Rescuers who rushed into buildings immediately after the quake found horrific scenes.

A construction manager described using sledgehammers and chain saws to cut into the Pyne Gould Guinness building from the roof, hacking downward through layers of sand-washed offices and finding bodies crushed and pulverized under concrete slabs.

One trapped man died after talking awhile with rescuers, Fred Haering said.

Another had a leg pinned under concrete, and a doctor administered medicine to deaden the pain. A firefighter asked Haering for a hacksaw. Haering handed it over and averted his eyes as the man's leg was sawed off, saving him from certain death.

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(a) CRYSTAL QUARTZ LIMITED is in voluntary dissolution under the provisions of Section 137 (4) of the International Business Companies Act 2000.

(b) The dissolution of the said company commenced on the 23rd February 2011 when the Articles of Dissolution were submitted to and registered by the Registrar General.

(c) The Liquidator of the said company is Mr Paul Evans of Helvetia Court, South Esplanade, St Peter Port, Guernsey.

Dated this 24th day of February A. D. 2011

Peter Leppard
Liquidator

NOTICE

MESSIE LIMITED

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(b) The dissolution of the said company commenced on the 23rd February, 2011 when the Articles of Dissolution were submitted to and registered by the Registrar General.

(c) The Liquidator of the said company is Peter Leppard of c/o 1 Raffles Link #05-02 Singapore 039393.

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Peter Leppard
Liquidator



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INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Clampdown in Libyan capital as protests close in

BENGHAZI, Libya
Associated Press

MILITIAMEN loyal to Moammar Gadhafi clamped down in Tripoli Wednesday, but cracks in his regime spread elsewhere across the nation, as the protest-fueled rebellion controlling much of eastern Libya claimed new gains closer to the capital. Two pilots let their warplane crash in the desert, parachuting to safety, rather than bomb an opposition-held city.

The opposition said it had taken over Misrata, which would be the largest city in the western half in the country to fall into its hands. Clashes broke out over the past two days in the town of Sabratha, about 50 miles west of the capital, where the army and militiamen were trying to put down protesters who overwhelmed security headquarters and government buildings, a news website close to the government reported.

Two air force pilots parachuted from their Russian-made Sukhoi fighter jet and let it crash, rather than carry out orders to bomb opposition-held Benghazi, Libya's second largest city, the website Qureyna reported, citing an unidentified officer in the air force control room.

One of the pilots — identified by the report as Ali Omar Gadhafi — was from Gadhafi's tribe, the Gadhadhfa, said Farag al-Maghrabi, a local res-

ident who saw the pilots and the wreckage in a deserted area outside the key oil port of Brega.

International outrage mounted after Gadhafi went on state TV Tuesday and in a fist-pounding speech called on his supporters to take to the streets to hunt down protesters. His retaliation has already been the harshest of any regime confronting anti-government protests sweeping the Middle East.

Civilians

The U.N.'s top human rights official said a no-fly zone could be imposed over Libya to protect civilians from attacks by government aircraft. U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay said Wednesday if unconfirmed reports of aerial attacks against civilians turned out to be true, "I think there's an immediate need for that level of protection."

The United States and the European Union vowed Wednesday to consider sanctions against Libya for Moammar Gadhafi's fierce crackdown on protesters, with the EU calling the attacks possible "crimes against humanity."

"The continuing brutal and bloody repression against the Libyan civilian population is revolting," French President Nicolas Sarkozy said in a statement Wednesday, raising the possibility of cutting off all eco-

nomie and business ties between the EU and Libya. "The international community cannot remain a spectator to these massive violations of human rights."

In Washington, White House spokesman Jay Carney also condemned the attacks.

"The violence is abhorrent, it is completely unacceptable and the bloodshed must stop," Carney said.

Italy's Foreign Minister Franco Frattini said estimates of some 1,000 people killed in the violence in Libya were "credible," although he stressed information about casualties was incomplete. The New York-based Human Rights Watch has put the death toll at nearly 300, according to a partial count.

In Tripoli, militiamen and Gadhafi supporters were roaming main streets, firing weapons in the air from time to time as they chanted "long live Gadhafi" and waved green flags. In many neighborhoods, residents had set up watch groups to keep them out, barricading their streets with concrete blocks, metal and rocks and searching those trying to enter, said a Tripoli activist. Many were passing out fliers announcing a march by protesters on Tripoli on Friday, urging residents to take refuge in mosques in case violence erupts.

Gadhafi's residence at Tripoli's Aziziya Gates was guarded by loyalists, waving



RESIDENTS GATHER near the courthouse, as a flag of Libya's monarchy prior to Moammar Gadhafi's reign flies above, in Benghazi, Libya, Wednesday, Feb. 23, 2011. Militiamen loyal to Moammar Gadhafi clamped down in Tripoli Wednesday, but cracks in his regime spread elsewhere across the nation, as the protest-fueled rebellion controlling much of eastern Libya claimed new gains closer to the capital. (AP)

his picture and chanting slogans, along with a line of armed militiamen in vehicles, some masked, he said. The radio station building downtown was also heavily fortified.

"Mercenaries are everywhere with weapons. You can't open a window or door. Snipers hunt people," said another resident, who said she had spent the last night in her home awake hearing gunfire outside.

"We are under siege, at the mercy of a man who is not a Muslim."

But below the surface, protesters were organizing, said the activist. At night, they fan out and spray-paint anti-Gadhafi graffiti or set fires near police stations, chanting "the people want the ouster of the regime," before running at the approach of militiamen, he said.

A group of 60 intellectuals, judges, doctors and journalists linked to the protesters drew up a list of demands for the post-Gadhafi era, calling for a national assembly formed of representatives from each region to draw up a transitional government and write a constitution, the activist said.

Libya's upheaval, just over a week old, has shattered the hold of Gadhafi's regime across much of the country. Protesters claim to hold towns and cities along nearly the entire eastern half of the 1,000-mile Mediterranean coastline, from the Egyptian border. In parts, they have set up their own jury-rigged self-administrations.

At the Egyptian border, guards had fled, and local tribal elders have formed local committees to take their place. "Welcome to the new Libya," a graffiti spray-painted at the crossing proclaimed. Fawzy Ignashy, a former soldier, now in civilian clothes at the border, said that early in the protests, some commanders ordered troops to fire on protesters, but then tribal leaders stepped in and ordered them to stop.

"They did because they were from here. So the officers fled," he said.

A defense committee of local residents was even guarding one of Gadhafi's once highly secretive anti-aircraft missile bases outside the city of Tobruk.

"This is the first time I've seen missiles like these up close," admitted Abdelsalam al-Gedani, one of the guards, dressed in an overcoat and carrying a Kalashnikov automatic rifle.

"There is now an operating room for the militaries of all the liberated cities and they are trying to convince the others to join them," said Lt. Col.

Omar Hamza, an army officer who had allied with the protesters. "They are trying to help the people in Tripoli to capture Gadhafi."

Protesters have claimed control all the way to the city of Ajdabiya, about 480 miles (800 kilometers) east of Tripoli, encroaching on the key oil fields around the Gulf of Sidra.

That has left Gadhafi's power centered around Tripoli, in the far west and parts of the country's center.

But that appeared to be weakening in parts.

Protesters in Libya's third-largest city Misrata were claiming victory after several days of fighting with Gadhafi loyalists in the city, about 120 miles (200 kilometers) east of Tripoli.

Celebration

Residents were honking horns in celebration and raising the pre-Gadhafi flags of the Libyan monarchy, said Faraj al-Misrati, a local doctor. He said six people had been killed and 200 wounded in clashes that began Feb. 18 and eventually drove out pro-Gadhafi militiamen.

Residents had formed committees to clean the streets, protect the city and treat the injured, he said. "The solidarity among the people here is amazing, even the disabled are helping out."

An audio statement posted on the Internet was reportedly from armed forces officers in Misrata proclaiming "our total support" for the protesters.

New videos posted by Libya's opposition on Facebook also showed scores of anti-government protesters raising the flag from the pre-Gadhafi monarchy on a building in Zawiya, 30 miles (50 kilometers) west of Tripoli. Another showed protesters lining up cement blocks and setting fires ablaze to fortify positions on a square inside the capital.

The footage couldn't be independently confirmed.

Further west, armed forces deployed in Sabratha, a town famed for nearby ancient Roman ruins, in a bid to regain control after protesters burned government buildings and police stations, the Qureyna news website reported. It said clashes had erupted between soldiers and residents in the past nights and that residents were also reporting an influx of pro-Gadhafi militias that have led heaviest crackdown on protesters.

The opposition also claimed

control in Zwara, about 30 miles (50 kilometers) from the Tunisian border in the west, after local army units sided with the protesters and police fled.

"The situation here is very secure, the people here have organized security committees, and there are people who have joined us from the army," said a 25-year-old unemployed university graduate in Zwara. "This man (Gadhafi) has reached the point that he's saying he will bring armies from African (to fight protesters). That means he is isolated," he said.

The division of the country — and defection of some army units to the protesters — raises the possibility the opposition could try an assault on the capital. On the Internet, there were calls by protesters for all policemen, armed forces and youth to march to Tripoli on Friday.

In his speech Tuesday night, Gadhafi defiantly vowed to fight to his "last drop of blood" and roared at supporters to strike back against Libyan protesters to defend his embattled regime.

"You men and women who love Gadhafi ... get out of your homes and fill the streets," Gadhafi said. "Leave your homes and attack them in their lairs."

Gadhafi appears to have lost the support of several tribes and his own diplomats, including Libya's ambassador in Washington, Ali Adjali, and deputy U.N. Ambassador Ibrahim Dabbashi.

The Libyan Embassy in Austria also condemned the use of "excessive violence against peaceful demonstrators" and said in a statement Wednesday that it was representing the Libyan people.

International alarm has risen over the crisis, and is sending oil prices soaring and European and other countries scrambling to get their citizens out of the North African nation.

On Wednesday, oil prices hit \$100 per barrel for the first time since 2008.

Libya is the world's 15th largest exporter of crude, accounting for 2 percent of global daily output. Traders are worried the revolt could threaten Libya's oil production and spread to other countries in the region.

The U.N. Security Council held an emergency meeting Tuesday that ended with a statement condemning the crackdown, expressing "grave concern" and calling for an

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