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Ruined Ragged will rise again

By **KHRISNA RUSSELL**
Deputy Chief Reporter
krussell@tribunemedia.net

DAYS after Ragged Island was ravaged by Hurricane Irma and deemed not fit for residents by Prime Minister Dr Hubert Minnis, he announced the government's intention to "transform" it into the first fully "green" island in the region.

The prime minister explained renewable energy and smart technology from solar energy and sustainable water purification systems will be utilised for this effort with the help of residents and descendants of the island.

To further support these efforts, Dr Minnis said the government will seek not only the assistance of Bahamians, but look to international counterparts.

However, he did not reveal a cost to be associated with this undertaking, adding Minister of Finance K Peter Turnquest would offer details at a later date on the price tag of Hurricane Irma's related costs.

On Monday, Dr Minnis urged the remaining 18 residents on the island to evacuate as he warned health and safety conditions there would worsen in

the aftermath of Hurricane Irma.

Rotting animal carcasses and the destruction of all essential services, led Dr Minnis to strongly urge those still on Ragged Island to leave until the small community can be restored.

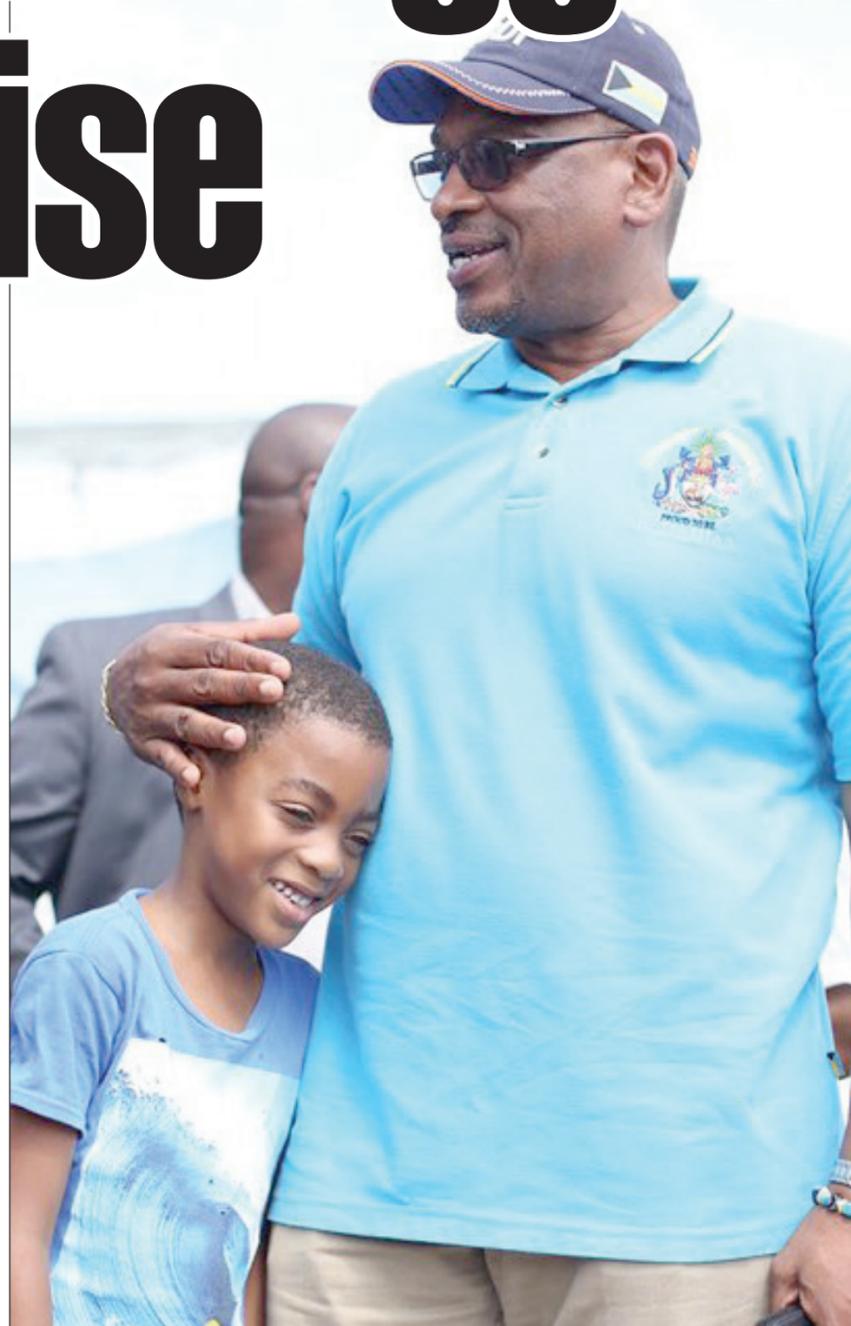
Despite this, residents of the island said Tuesday they were determined to go back home immediately and rebuild despite the decimation left by Irma.

"I assure the wonderful people of Ragged Island that their island will be rebuilt," Dr Minnis told Parliament yesterday during his communication on the government's preparation and restoration in the aftermath of the monster hurricane.

Earlier in his address Dr Minnis said: "Tragically, Hurricane Irma essentially destroyed Ragged Island.

"Most homes are destroyed or severely damaged. Power lines are down. Utilities are non-functioning. Public buildings including the government operated school, the clinic and other public facilities are severely damaged.

"Ragged Island will have to be rebuilt through a compilation of private and public efforts. I am pleased that



PRIME Minister Dr Hubert Minnis greets a youngster during his tour of Inagua yesterday along with officials as the government continued to assess the damage caused by Hurricane Irma.
Photo: **Terrel W. Carey/Tribune Staff**

Ragged Islanders throughout The Bahamas have come forward to offer their assistance for recovery and rebuilding.

"The government will evacuate the remaining residents from Ragged Is-

land, (for) those who want to leave by Thursday of this week. Those who evacuated previously have the opportunity to briefly return in order to retrieve any valuables and other items not destroyed by the hurricane.

"An environmental team will be sent in to dispose and to engage in a major cleanup of Ragged Island. Only then can additional recovery efforts begin."

SEE PAGE THREE

BAHAMAS MUST HAVE INCOME TAX, SAYS IMF

By **NEIL HARTNELL**
Tribune Business Editor
nhartnell@tribunemedia.net

THE International Monetary Fund (IMF) last night demanded that the Government take "decisive fiscal consolidation" measures, including the introduction of a low-rate income tax.

The Fund, in a statement on its Article IV review of The Bahamas, urged the Minnis administration to develop "detailed policy measures" for achieving its targeted reductions in the annual fiscal deficit to 1.1 per cent of GDP in 2019-2020.

It suggested that The Bahamas introduce an income tax to replace revenue that will be lost as the Bahamas reduces import duties to fulfil its trade agreement obligations, and urged the Government to develop a "savings buffer" against natural disasters such as hurricanes.

SEE PAGE 11

FOX HILL STUDENT, 16, SHOT DEAD

By **SANCHESKA DORSETT**
Tribune Staff Reporter
sdorsett@tribunemedia.net

AN 11th grade Government High School student was shot multiple times and killed late Tuesday night while hanging out with persons in the back of his Fox Hill home.

The killing took place shortly before midnight and would have been the 99th for the year according to *The Tribune's* records. However, a high ranking Royal Bahamas Police Force source said some outstanding cases have recently been classified by police as murders, taking the murder count to 101 for the year.

SEE PAGE TEN

BLAZE GUTS CHARTER JET

By **RICARDO WELLS**
Tribune Staff Reporter
rwells@tribunemedia.net

AVIATION authorities confirmed yesterday investigations are continuing, following a fire at the Lynden Pindling International Airport which resulted in the destruction of a Golden Wings Charter Britten-Norman Islander.

Aviation Authority General Manager Milo Butler III, in an interview with *The Tribune* on

SEE PAGE EIGHT

EMBASSY DRIVER PAID \$46K OVERTIME

By **KHRISNA RUSSELL**
Deputy Chief Reporter
krussell@tribunemedia.net

A SERIES of separate audits looking into the operations of Ministry of Foreign Affairs' embassies, consulate general offices and a permanent mission, has pointed to apparent loose protocols where there is "excessive" overtime pay, "exorbitant" spending and thousands in uncollected revenue among other shortfalls.

At the Bahamas Embassy in Washington, DC, the ambassador's chauffeur was paid \$46,883.13 in overtime during a three-year period from 2014 to 2016, while at the Bahamas Consulate General's office in DC, the messenger/driver received overtime amounting to \$21,534.92.

Auditors said at the embassy in DC, officials paid a company \$22,484 for an event, but the entity did not perform the duties which

were agreed upon.

"During our review, we noted that the Embassy of the Bahamas, Washington, DC, executed an agreement for service to be provided by an entity," Auditor General Terrance Bastian said in an audit conducted for the period January 1, 2014 to June 30, 2016. The reports were tabled by House Speaker Halson Moultrie in Parliament yesterday.

SEE PAGE TEN



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INSPECTION BEGINS OF DAMAGE IN INAGUA



SOME of the damage in Inagua caused by Hurricane Irma, above and below. Photos: Terrel W. Carey/Tribune Staff

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PRIME Minister Dr Hubert Minnis, along with his team of ministers and NEMA officials, arriving in Inagua.



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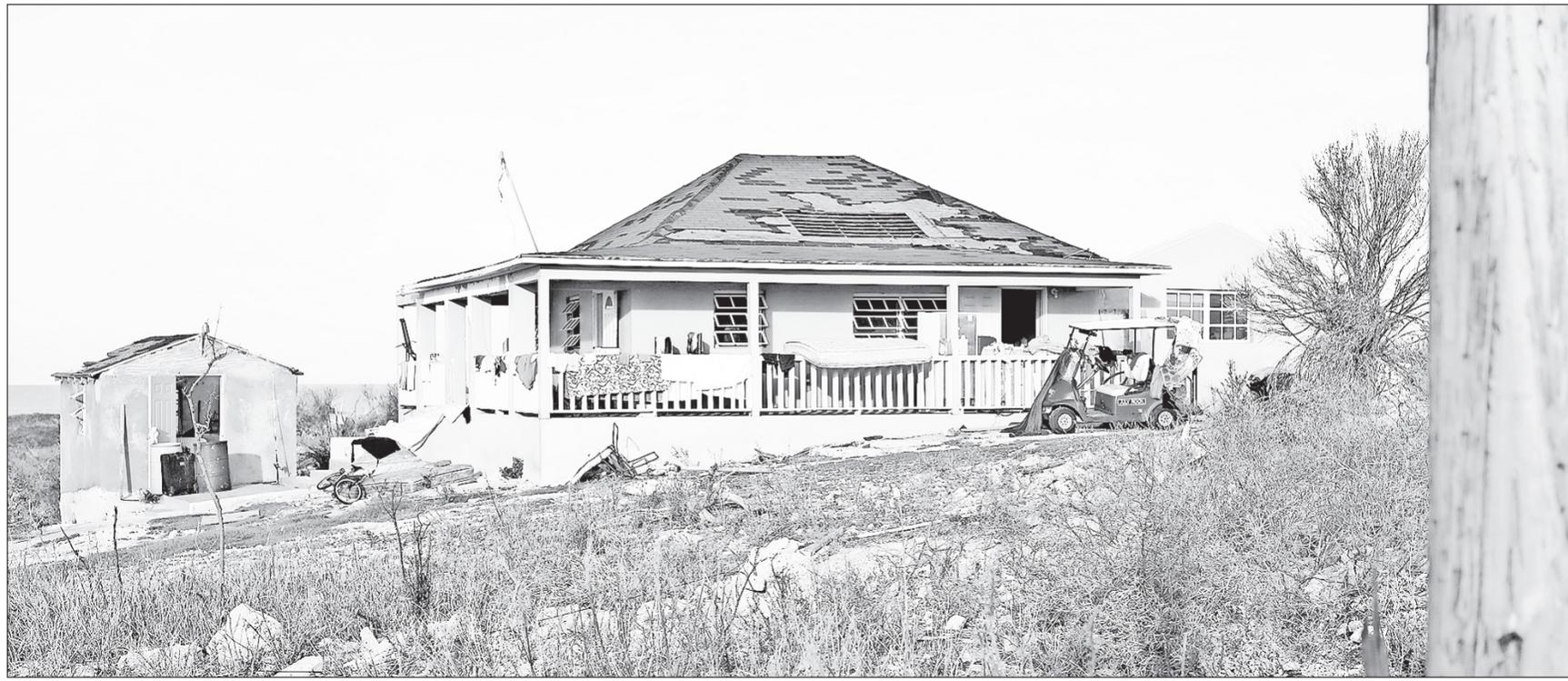
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ONE of the damaged properties in Ragged Island after Hurricane Irma.

Photo: Terrel W. Carey/Tribune Staff

Ruined Ragged will rise again

from page one

“In partnership with the residents of Ragged Island, my government proposes to transform Ragged Island into the first fully green island in the region.

“Utilising renewable energy and smart technologies from solar energy through sustainable water purification systems.

“To do this we seek all Bahamians and international assistance of all friends of Ragged Island and friends of The Bahamas.

“Out of the devastation and destruction, a new Ragged Island will emerge including stronger building codes, improved zoning and strategies to mitigate against climate change and rising sea levels.

“Ragged Island can emerge as a new model for sustainable communities throughout The Bahamas and the region,” Dr Minnis also told parliamentarians yesterday.

The prime minister said as a low lying, small island developing country, The Bahamas must create new mindsets and protocols in this era of “super storms.”

“Toward this end the government will convene a panel of experts to study, advise and report on efforts The Bahamas must take in response to the threat posed by the frequent and more severe hurricanes some of which may be monster storms.”



SHOES piled up to dry on a truck in Ragged Island after Hurricane Irma.

“We must be better prepared for hurricanes which affect the entire archipelago and multiple islands in our island chain.

“Mr Speaker over the past several years it is becoming clearer and clearer to us that in far too many cases buildings in The Bahamas have been and are still being approved for construction that are not up to code.

“We need buildings that can withstand an Irma. We cannot be in the business of saving money over saving lives.

“Unfortunately, there are

also some buildings that are built and owned by the government of The Bahamas that have been found wanting in regard to code standard. In light of the increasing power and frequency of hurricanes, I am therefore asking the Minister of Works (Desmond Bannister) to review our building codes and to ensure that building code enforcement becomes a much greater focus of our administration.

“NEMA’s task in between every hurricane season will be to provide the Cabinet with recommenda-

tions regarding how New Providence and Grand Bahama can survive a direct hit from a hurricane the size and force of Irma with no to little loss of life and with decreasing property damage. That is the kind of resilience we must develop throughout The Bahamas,” Dr Minnis also said.

He said at an appropriate time, NEMA would be instructed to conduct a full scale after action report to look at what systems and protocols worked and which ones either failed or were not up to par.

RAGGED ISLANDERS ON GRAND BAHAMA LAUNCH RELIEF EFFORT FOR THEIR HOME

By DENISE MAYCOCK
Tribune Freeport Reporter
dmaycock@tribunemedia.net

FOLLOWING the massive devastation on Ragged Island, descendant of the community who live in Grand Bahama are organising a hurricane relief effort to get essential items, as well as building materials to those persons on the tiny southern island ravaged by Hurricane Irma.

They plan to send their first shipment, consisting of care packages of food, by Friday.

Elkenny Lockhart, president of the Ragged Island Cultural and Heritage Association (RICHA), said it is important that they assist their fellow Ragged Islanders during “this very tragic times in their lives”.

He compared the destruction to an incident he said occurred 57 years ago when Hurricane Donna hit the island and caused serious damage.

“It was a difficult time back then, and I was about 13 years old,” Mr Lockhart recalled. “We can’t thank God enough for his blessings that there was no loss of life or injuries. We give God thanks for his wonderful mercies that He has kept

us all, particularly our families in Ragged Island.”

Of the 60 to 70 people who lived on Ragged Island, about 18-21 persons stayed behind to ride out the storm while others had been evacuated to New Providence.

Prime Minister Dr Hubert Minnis saw the damage first hand on Monday and said that all remaining residents should have to leave due to the massive destruction and health risks, while the government plans to rebuild the island.

Descendants of Duncan Town gathered for a special meeting in Freeport on Tuesday evening to organise assistance for those residents who are determined to stay and rebuild.

Mr Lockhart said the association’s members have decided to immediately send out care packages of food and toiletries by Friday.

Next week, RICHA plans to send bulk items on pallets on a barge which is scheduled to arrive sometime next week to pick up BTC’s utility poles.

“So, we are also soliciting donations from Ragged Islanders and friends of Ragged Islanders to assist us in helping our family

members get them over this tough and stressful time.

“Our appeal is to everyone out here in the Grand Bahama community to come forth and give us a hand, whether a monetary donation or donation of building supplies,” he said. “Whatever you give will be thankfully received and applied to the efforts to rebuild Duncan Town, Ragged Island.”

Mr Lockhart said that the group is also liaising and working with its sister association in New Providence which will be forming a special rebuild committee.

He said the group has committed to the rebuilding efforts for some five years.

He said he has lots of respect for his cousin Edward

Lockhart who, according to reports, managed to survive all alone on one of the Ragged Island cays he has called home.

“He is in good spirits, but anybody who knows Edward knows that he is always in good spirits. He is 77 years old, and I have a lot of respect for him, and I wish I could do that myself.”

Mr Lockhart is confident that Ragged Island will be rebuilt and become once again the jewel of the south.

“I will spend a lot of time visiting, and hopefully my brothers and I will get our homestead rebuilt so we can share in the beauty of Ragged Island, which has some of the most beautiful beaches in The Bahamas,” he said.

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IT	C	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	8:50	N/A
HOME AGAIN	T	1:10	3:35	N/A	6:15	8:40	10:45
THE HITMAN'S BODYGUARD	C	1:00	3:20	N/A	6:00	8:20	10:40
ANNABELLE CREATION	T	1:05	3:35	N/A	6:05	8:25	10:45
EMOJI MOVIE	A	1:15	3:35	N/A	6:15	N/A	N/A
THE DARK TOWER	T	1:15	3:45	N/A	6:15	N/A	N/A
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Irma's life and demise

WASHINGTON (AP) — Irma, which flattened some Caribbean islands and enveloped nearly all of Florida in its fury, no longer exists. The open Atlantic's most powerful hurricane on record finally sputtered out as an ordinary rain-storm over Ohio and Indiana.

Irma's confirmed death toll is 61 and still rising, 38 in the Caribbean and 23 in the United States. In the US alone, nearly 7 million people were told to evacuate, and 13 million Floridians were left without power in hot steamy weather.

This storm grew so immensely powerful over warmer-than-normal Atlantic water that it devastated the first islands in its path. Its gargantuan size — two Hurricane Andrews could fit inside it — spread so much fear that people all over the Florida peninsula upended their lives to flee.

"This was a large, extremely dangerous catastrophic hurricane," National Hurricane Centre spokesman and meteorologist Dennis Feltgen said Wednesday, when he said the storm was over.

Colorado State University hurricane researcher Phil Klotzbach put it simpler: "Irma was a beast."

Irma generated as much accumulated energy in a dozen days as an entire six-month hurricane season would in an average year, Klotzbach calculated.

Just 30 hours after it became a tropical storm on August 30, Irma was a major Category 3 hurricane. By Sept. 4 it had intensified into a Category 4, with 130 mph winds, and it wasn't near done.

It became a Category 5 storm the next day with top winds of 185 mph, the highest ever recorded in the open Atlantic. Only one storm whirled faster — Hurricane Allen reached 190 mph in 1980 over the normally warm Gulf of Mexico — but Irma held its ferociously high speeds for 37 hours, a new global record for tropical cyclones. It beat Typhoon Haiyan, which also reached 185 mph before killing more than 6,000 people in the Philippines. Irma ultimately spent 78 hours as a Category 5, the longest in 85 years for Atlantic hurricanes.

Irma's entire path, from its birth off Africa to its death over the Ohio Valley, stayed within the cone of the probable track forecast by the National Hurricane Centre.

Irma claimed its first victim when it was still far off, sending a "monster wave" to drown a teen-aged surfer in Barbados. Then it hit the Leeward Islands in full fury, sweeping a 2-year-old boy to his death after tearing the roof from his home.

Irma bullied through much of the Car-

ibbean — Antigua, St Martin, St Barts, Anguilla, the US and British Virgin Islands, Turks and Caicos, The Bahamas. It narrowly skirted Puerto Rico, Haiti and the Dominican Republic. It turned lush tropical playgrounds into blasted-out landscapes, littered with splintered lumber, crumpled sheet metal and shattered lives. In St Martin, 15 people were killed.

Irma was still a Category 5 when it raked Cuba's coast, the first hurricane that size to hit the storm-prone island since 1924. At least 10 people died there, despite massive evacuations. And by moving briefly over land, it may have spared Florida a tougher punch.

More importantly, the system slowed, delaying its turn north and steering its centre over Florida's west coast, which is less populated and less densely developed than the east. It also allowed dry air and high winds from the southwest to flow into Irma, taking a bite out of the storm and even tearing the southwest eyewall apart for a while.

Irma was more vulnerable, but by no means weak. A Category 4 storm with 130 winds when it slammed into Cudjoe Key, it tied for history's seventh strongest hurricane to make US landfall, based on its central pressure. With Harvey's swamping of Texas, this is the first year two Category 4 storms hit the United States.

The Keys were devastated. Federal officials estimated that a quarter of the homes were destroyed, and hardly any escaped damage. Roofs seemed peeled off by can-openers; power poles were nowhere to be seen.

Irma was back over water as it closed in on mainland Florida, weakening still but spreading much wider — to more than 400 miles in girth — whipping the entire peninsula with winds of 39 mph or more. It pushed its highest storm surge, 10 feet, onto Florida's southwestern coast, while causing some of its worst flooding in northeast Florida, Georgia and South Carolina, far from Irma's centre.

Irma's second US landfall was on Marco Island, near where Wilma hit in 2005. By then, Irma was a still-major Category 3, with 115 mph winds, but weakening fast. The worst of its fury somehow missed the Tampa Bay area, where homes were not nearly as flooded as those in faraway Jacksonville. Irma then sloshed through Georgia and Alabama as a tropical storm, blowing down tall trees and power lines, before dissipating Tuesday over Tennessee and Ohio.

This article is by Seth Borenstein of the Associated Press

PUSHIN' DA ENVELOPE
 By Jamaal Rolle

jrolle@tribunemedia.net

THE FAMILY ISLANDS NEED YOUR HELP



Restore the death penalty

EDITOR, *The Tribune*.

LETTERS
 letters@tribunemedia.net

THE recent murder of an eight-month-old infant has horrified and incensed many of us. But I wonder if we as a nation are sufficiently horrified and incensed to ensure that all convicted murderers receive the just and fitting punishment for their crime, which is swift execution by the state.

From the looks of things, it does not appear so. Therefore, the carnage will continue because we continue to send the message to murderers that they can take the life of others and the state will spare theirs.

Recently, while speaking about our nation's excessively high crime rate, the Minister of National Security, the Hon Marvin Dames, said, "We are proponents of the death penalty, our leader talked about it during the campaign trail and we have not changed our position on that. We will do what we promised we will do." I pray that those words will be put into action very soon, but I wonder what else needs to happen before they are.

I'm eagerly waiting to see

if, when, and how Prime Minister Minnis and his government will seek to enforce the death penalty. And if they do anything short of giving Bahamian voters the opportunity to amend the constitution in such a way to ensure that convicted murderers are swiftly executed by the state, I and others will know they are not serious and are merely engaging in BTNA (ie, big talk, no action).

The reality is that as long as we have a so-called system of justice where people can take a person's life and then be rewarded by having theirs spared (by being sentenced to prison), we will continue to match and break our record rates of murder, year after year.

Yes, even when convicted murderers are given a sentence of life in prison, it is more like a reward, because the just and proper sentence for murder is death. And what is worse is that some convicted murderers

are given less than life sentences.

No doubt, some will chide me for calling for capital punishment. But the reality is that even though it has been more than seventeen years since the Bahamian state has executed a convicted murderer, we still have capital punishment. It's just not in the state's hands; it's in private hands. And we will continue to have an ever-increasing murder rate and the continuation of privatised capital punishment if the government refuses to do its job and carry out state-sanctioned capital punishment.

To be clear, I do not support the death penalty as a reaction to our high rate of murder (even though I firmly believe that swift and consistent execution of convicted murderers will reduce our high rate of murder). I support the death penalty because it is the only just and fitting punishment for the crime of murder.

PASTOR CEDRIC MOSS
 Nassau,

Define success at Baha Mar

EDITOR, *The Tribune*.

IN an article posted in the Tribune by journalist, Neil Hartnell, dated August 30th, 2017, Neil recounts a report issued by liquidators of the Baha Mar resort.

In the report, Bahamian accountant Ed Rahming comes to a baffling conclusion stating that the current outcome of the Baha Mar resort was a "success" and implies that this was the best possible outcome given the circumstances. Is he serious?

He goes on to qualify his conclusion by stating that CCA did not have to provide the \$101m that was used to partially cover out-

standing debts to contractors and employees of the resort.

I find this to be most disingenuous, or downright ignorant as anyone that has been following this story is quite aware that there was a better deal on the table from the original developer, Sarkis Izmirlian, who not only offered to cover all debts in totality, but to complete the resort with Bahamian labour.

It is shameful to me, that individuals we deem professionals would opt to spin a story for what I can only assume for personal reasons despite glaring facts and truth.

The only "success" so far in regards to the Baha Mar resort has been the ousting of a world class investor from a project he was begged to do by the former Prime Minister, buffeted left right and centre by greedy politicians, and discarded by foreign economic colonisers.

Ed Rahming ought to apologise to the collective intelligence of this country, and in a better world that shell of a hotel would be placed back into the hands of those who know what to do with it.

SHEEP RUNNER
 Nassau,
 August 30, 2017.

Did we learn from Irma?

EDITOR, *The Tribune*.

THE two tracking systems - the US/GFS and the European equivalent are two essential tools to know precisely where a storm is travelling - the potential wind field (speed of the winds) - when it will arrive at any island, etc.

We at home on our cell-laptops-computers have access to these sophisticated

programmes.

Were we not to have installed by March-April, 2017 the initial Doppler radar unit at LPIA?

Is it working? When will it be working? Why is it not working now some five-months late to be operational as the Director of Met then advised. It is late so have the supplier been fined for late delivery?

I recall the next unit was

to be installed in Abaco - I disagree it should be either Mayaguana or Long Island as most storms come into The Bahamas from the Atlantic in that direction.

Can the Minister of Transport advise the status of this programme and explain why there are delays?

W THOMPSON
 Nassau,
 September 11, 2017.



SOME of the damage caused by Hurricane Irma in Inagua, as seen during yesterday's tour by Prime Minister Dr Hubert Minnis.

Photos: Terrel W. Carey/Tribune Staff

Damage in Inagua - but no residents displaced by storm

By RASHAD ROLLE
Tribune Staff Reporter
rrolle@tribunemedia.net

ACCOMPANIED by a senior government delegation, returning residents of Inagua yesterday found an island that had withstood Hurricane Irma's blows, the hurricane only downing several lamp poles and causing roof damage to some structures.

None of the more than 900 residents of the island will be displaced because of the damage. And according to MICAL MP Miriam Emmanuel, efforts to restore electricity to the entire island will begin today when a team from Bahamas Power & Light (BPL) is expected to arrive, although residents in the northern part of the island were said to have had their electricity restored already.

The Morton Salt facility sustained significant roof damage to its mechanic shops where it repairs mobile equipment. There was concern on social media over the weekend about the condition of the facility.

However, officials there weren't alarmed, saying salt

production would resume as soon as possible with minimal disruption—good news, they said, for the company's 145 full-time employees and the island whose economy depends on it.

"Hurricane Irma cannot destroy the unstoppable spirit of Inagua and Morton Bahamas," Jean-Baptiste Dromer, senior director of mining and manufacturing at the company, said.

Officials couldn't say how much repairing the damage will cost because assessments of the facility are continuing.

"We are taking all serious steps to meet our customer needs," said Mr Dromer.

Prime Minister Dr Hubert Minnis said: "I've been assured by the executives that they will be working aggressively to get it back functioning at 100 per cent capacity but at the meantime the staff has not been compromised so that is good news for The Bahamas."

On the state of the island generally, he said: "The homes sustained minimal damage and the community has worked together to do what's necessary."



JEAN BAPTISTE DROMER, senior director of Morton Salt Bahamas.

The government delegation, which included Dr Minnis and a number of Cabinet ministers and other senior officials, also visited Mayaguana yesterday evening.

That island sustained minimal damage from Irma. Some residents of MICAL evacuated their communities ahead of Irma's landfall.

The delegation will today visit Bimini and Grand Bahama to continue its assessments.



PRIME Minister Dr Hubert Minnis was shown the RBDF base on Inagua.



PRIME Minister Dr Hubert Minnis pictured during his visit to Inagua.

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\$2.8m cost of renewing catastrophic insurance

By AVA TURNQUEST
Tribune Chief Reporter
aturnquest@tribunemedia.net

THE Minnis administration paid a \$2.8m premium to the Caribbean Catastrophe Risk Insurance Facility to renew its tropical cyclone policy, *The Tribune* has learned.

While the former policy had an annual \$900,000 premium, *The Tribune* was told that the cost has since increased.

The country's policy was

reportedly dropped by the former Christie administration after the country was denied a claim made following the passage of Hurricane Joaquin in 2015.

However, Prime Minister Dr Hubert Minnis has since claimed the former administration's action resulted in the Bahamas losing out on a \$32m insurance payout in the aftermath of Hurricane Matthew, a category three/four storm, last year.

The matter was again raised in the Lower House

yesterday when Dr Minnis reiterated that the former administration cancelled the policy as he gave a status update on the passage of Hurricane Irma.

In his later contribution, Official Opposition Leader Phillip "Brave" Davis questioned the cost of the premium and its benefits, and whether the passage of Hurricane Irma had triggered any of those benefits.

He maintained that the former administration made the decision after

"prudent consideration" and advice from experts.

Mr Davis began his contribution by expressing the opposition's satisfaction with the government's conduct before, during, and after the storm's passage as led by Dr Minnis.

He shared in the commendation of efforts undertaken by the various ministries, and applauded Dr Minnis for involving the opposition side in those efforts.

Mr Davis indicated that

his side stood ready to continue their assistance and collaboration in returning the country to a state of normalcy.

Rising on a point of order, Dr Minnis said he planned to table evidence of the policy cancellation next week.

He added: "We are a government of transparency, you will get your answers."

CCRIF announced on Tuesday that it would make a total of US\$29.6 million to six Caribbean governments

affected by Hurricane Irma under their TC policies, with The Bahamas and Haiti receiving payments as a result of a new feature.

The new feature, Aggregate Deductible Cover (ADC), was introduced in this policy year as a means to help members when modelled losses do not trigger a payout despite observed losses on the ground, the statement explained.

According to CCRIF, the Bahamas will receive US\$234,000.

MAJOR HOTELS OFFER SUPPORT TO PEOPLE AFFECTED BY IRMA



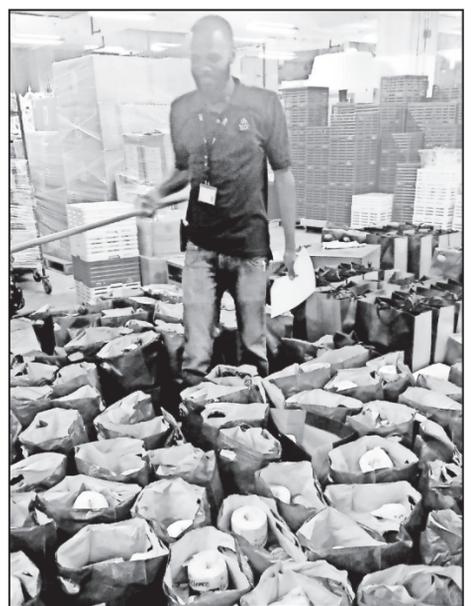
BOTH Atlantis and Baha Mar have been rallying to the aid of those affected by Hurricane Irma. Residents forced to take shelter, above, were treated to a hot meal from Atlantis staff, while, below, Baha Mar staff and associates prepared care packages for those living in shelters in New Providence.

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SCOTIABANK is donating \$500,000 to charitable organisations assisting with the rescue and relief efforts in the many Caribbean countries impacted by Hurricane Irma.

"Our thoughts continue to be with the people of the affected regions as they demonstrate strength and resilience following the devastation," the bank said in a press release.

"The Canadian Red Cross will receive \$250,000 of Scotiabank's donation, with the remainder being directed to initiatives supporting young people in the affected communities. Red Cross societies are already active, mobilising volunteers to the possible affected areas and relaying public

awareness messages. Relief supplies are on standby in Panama and the Dominican Republic to ensure an immediate response. The Canadian Red Cross has a presence in the area and is coordinating with the International Federation of the Red Cross and supporting the mobilization of regional Red Cross teams."

Brian Porter, president and chief executive officer, said: "The devastation caused in the countries impacted by Hurricane Irma is heartbreaking. Scotiabank has been part of the affected communities for decades. We are committed to the region, and will support our customers and employees during these challenging times."



PRIME Minister Dr Hubert Minnis speaks with the media after his return to Lynden Pindling International Airport yesterday after visiting the Family Islands. Photos: Terrel W. Carey/Tribune Staff

Change of mind for govt over mandatory evacuation

By **KHRISNA RUSSELL**
Deputy Chief Reporter
kvrilg@tribunemedia.net

DESPITE assurances legislation to establish mandatory evacuation procedures would be tabled this week, Prime Minister Dr Hubert Minnis told Parliament yesterday the government has decided against this and will instead undertake public consultations on the proposed bill.

The legislation, Dr Minnis said, will also be circulated to the Official Opposition.

As he wrapped up his summation of the government's preparation and work in the aftermath of Hurricane Irma and how the country fared during this storm, Dr Minnis said: "I know that we had promised to bring an evacuation bill to Parliament at this time.

"(But) after a lengthy discussion last night, we decided that such a bill should be circulated to the public and the opposition in keeping with transparency and accountability, after which we will bring such a bill here to this Parliament."

On Sunday, Dr Minnis told reporters it was his intention to table the bill when the House resumed following its summer recess. Yesterday was Parliament's first meeting after this break.

At the time, he said: "I've spoken to the attorney general and they are drafting it. I think it's essential we have mandatory evacuation. Not only that but we must now have a manual

for evacuation so we have guidelines; guidelines for category one, for category two which may not require evacuations.

"A requirement may be category four or five; that's things that have to be discussed. We've learned quite a bit from this procedure therefore our manual will tell us exactly how individuals are dispatched, how people are collected, how facilities are set up, etc."

Ahead of the category five storm making landfall last week, 365 people were voluntarily evacuated from Bimini, 40 out of Ragged Island, 163 from Mayaguana, 106 from Crooked Island and 318 people from Acklins.

Scores of others remained on their respective islands and were at risk of serious harm or death, particularly those who stayed in Ragged Island, which was decimated as a result of Hurricane Irma. Despite damage to homes and infrastructure, there were no deaths or serious injuries.

Official Opposition Leader Philip "Brave" Davis said on Sunday he supports legislating mandatory evacuation procedures, but added that it was unnecessary to evacuate Bahamians from danger zones ahead of Hurricanes Joaquin and Matthew when the Progressive Liberal Party was in power, as the Minnis administration did prior to Irma's arrival.

In 2015, Hurricane Joaquin in particular devastated some of the same southern islands from which people were evacuat-

ed before Irma, with many residents complaining two years ago that they were unprepared for the storm.

That year, former Prime Minister Perry Christie said the Office of the Attorney General had drafted an order empowering the director of the National Emergency Management Agency to declare a state of emergency and instruct mandatory evacuations. The idea resurfaced in 2016 after some residents in southern New Providence resisted calls to evacuate flood zones, prompting officials to perform emergency rescues once Matthew hit.

"Joaquin and Matthew were not as dangerous as this hurricane," Mr Davis told reporters Sunday.

"What one has to look at in each category is the estimate of what kinds of dam-

age may happen. In category one certain damage may be sustained; in category two or four (other kinds) of damage may be sustained so it depends on the category and the level that's coming. No doubt the decision to evacuate (this time around) was not made by the prime minister alone. That information would've been gathered from the technical people. No such recommendation was made from the technical experts with respect to Joaquin and Matthew. Had it been made the decision would've been supported."

During mandatory evacuation procedures, law enforcement officers will be empowered to physically remove people, Mr Davis said. People could also be expected to be charged with an offence.



CAPTAIN Stephen Russell inspecting the NEMA warehouse on the RBDF base in Mathew Town yesterday.

180-DAY EXIGENCY ORDER ISSUED ON RELIEF GOODS

AN Exigency Order has been put into effect for 180 days to allow for the duty-free import of goods for hurricane relief.

The goods covered in the order include: building materials; electrical and plumbing fixtures and materials; household furniture, furnishing and appliances and generators. Bottled water is also included in the order however it will only be covered under the Exigency Order for 60 days.

Persons looking to take advantage of the order must have their applications/claims certified by the director of the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA).

The Exigency Order also allows for the waiver of departure tax for non-commercial flights bringing

in relief goods and customs processing fees on imports.

The order applies to the following islands: Acklins, North and South Bimini, Crooked Island, Grand Bahama, Great and Little Inagua, Long Cay, Mayaguana, Ragged Island and South Andros. This waiver will be in effect for three months.

Minister of Finance K Peter Turnquest also announced that customs duty and value added tax exemption will be granted on donations to registered charities on acquisition by individuals whose loss by Hurricane Irma has been verified by NEMA.

All other authorised donations will be deemed a gift to the government and will be received and distributed by NEMA.

The Exigency Order took effect on September 11.



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There are many beauty products available, now more than ever. However, "bear in mind" that what is good for one skin type and condition is not necessarily good for another's condition. We have the tendency to believe "Oh, I do not need a professional skin care treatment, skin care regimen nor a consultation" but when we begin to see that our complexions is not as flawless as it once was, our elasticity is not as firm, our pores have become enlarged and our skin tone is not as even whereby we notice dark circles, patches and spots. Our response is "Where did that come from? It seems overnight!" All of these conditions and disorders of our beauty's complexion can be avoided by having a skin care treatment regimen. Maintenance, Preservation and Prevention eliminates all of these conditions.

A Treatment should not ever be a "Head-Count" nor "In & Out". The Treatment Experience Rejuvenates "The Total You":-Mind, Soul and Body!



FIREFIGHTERS standing by to tackle the blaze yesterday as a Golden Wings Charter airplane goes up in flames at Lynden Pindling International Airport, in this image taken from video.

Blaze guts charter jet

from page one

Wednesday afternoon, said authorities received information earlier in the day of a fire at the Golden Wings' maintenance bay, to which response units were dispatched.

He said while particulars were not confirmed up to the time of the interview, he understood that the fire occurred during "routine maintenance" and was addressed "virtually immediately".

Mr Butler added: "The fire was extinguished using foam - no injuries or fatalities were reported on the ground."

Videos of the incident were circulated on social media Wednesday, with some speculation over whether responding fire, crash and rescue units were properly equipped to battle the blaze, which eventually destroyed both the plane and the maintenance bay.

In the footage, a fire tender could be seen in attendance but two firemen are seen close to the burning aircraft for several minutes doing nothing. A witness can be heard saying "they can't get no pressure" indicating why they were not attempting to put the fire out. The firemen also seemed oblivious to the danger of

an explosion from the fuel tanks in the burning aircraft.

However, Aviation Authority officials insisted that adequate resources were in place to prevent a more "dire ordeal".

Sam Clark, of the Fire, Crash and Rescue Unit dispelled the notion that units were ill-equipped, insisting the preparedness of responders "ended a serious situation before it got out of hand".

Full reports on the blaze are expected to be concluded in the coming days, with Bahamas Civil Aviation Authority (BCAA) personnel confirming the release of the re-

port by the end of the week.

Meanwhile, owner and operator of Golden Wings Charters, Cameron Roach, yesterday said the charter service was going through the internal process of determining what caused the "unexpected" fire.

He told *The Tribune* the plane was in for its scheduled maintenance when the fuel tank ignited without warning.

"We are looking into it and expect to have some clear answers soon. The insurers and manufacturers are expected in town to aid us in this regard, so we would be able to say more at that point," Mr Roach stated.



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THREE IN COURT OVER THEFT AT GAS STATION DURING IRMA

By NICO SCAVELLA
Tribune Staff Reporter
nscavella@tribunemedia.net

TWO men and a minor were charged in Magistrate's Court yesterday accused of breaking into and stealing from Esso's Blue Hill Road and Tonique Williams-Darling service station while New Providence was under a hurricane watch.

Leonardo Collie, 24, of Market Street, Dieunovile Henriquez, 28, of Minnie Street, and a 17-year-old boy stood before Magistrate Ambrose Armbrister facing one count each of shopbreaking, stealing, and receiving in connection with the September 9 incident.

It is alleged that the trio broke into the Esso service station on the day in question, and subsequently stole 13 packs of wine-flavoured

Black and Mild cigars worth \$5.81 each and six packs of Grabba Leaves (tobacco) worth \$6.05 each.

It is also alleged that the three dishonestly received the same.

All three defendants pleaded not guilty to all of the charges, and subsequently elected to have the matter heard in the Magistrate's Court.

The case was subsequently adjourned to October 23. The three accused were remanded to the Bahamas Department of Correctional Services (BDCS). They have a right to apply to the Supreme Court for bail.

New Providence was braced for possible hurricane force winds and tropical storm conditions late Friday, September 8 and early Saturday, September 9 as Irma barreled over parts of the country.

SUSPECT ACCUSED OVER CHILD PORNOGRAPHY

By NICO SCAVELLA
Tribune Staff Reporter
nscavella@tribunemedia.net

THE trial of a man facing a dozen child pornography charges will start before the chief magistrate on November 6 and 7.

On those dates, Sharran Burrows, 41, of Pinewood Gardens, will be tried in connection with 12 counts of possession of child pornography. The charges are brought under Section 16(A) (2)(b) of the Sexual

Offences Act.

It is alleged that between April 2015 and April 2017, he had in his possession lewd images of a female under the age of 18, or depicted as being under 18, performing sexual acts. The images were allegedly on a mobile phone.

Burrows previously elected to stand trial in the Magistrate's Court and pleaded not guilty to all 12 charges when he appeared before Chief Magistrate Joyann Ferguson-Pratt in July.

SUSPECTED MARIJUANA FOUND

By DENISE MAYCOCK
Tribune Freeport Reporter
dmaycock@tribunemedia.net

GRAND Bahama police discovered suspected marijuana in an unfinished building in the Freeport area on Tuesday, police reported.

According to reports, shortly after 1am, Drug Enforcement Unit officers

acting on information went to an area in Royal Bahamia Estates where they found three clear plastic bags, containing a quantity of suspected marijuana, in a building under construction.

Assistant Superintendent Terecita Pinder said no arrest was made in the matter and police are continuing to investigate.

Trio to face murder plot trial next month

By NICO SCAVELLA
Tribune Staff Reporter
nscavella@tribunemedia.net

AN October 2 date has been set for the commencement of the Supreme Court trial of three men allegedly involved in a murder plot that was carried out in June last year, *The Tribune* understands.

The matter involving

Daran Neely, Jahmaro Edgecombe and Sean Brown, set to open before Senior Justice Stephen Isaacs, was delisted by that judge after encountering – on two consecutive occasions – issues with the empanelling of the jury.

At the time, the court had only managed to impanel some 28 jury members, not nearly enough given the

number of accused men on trial.

Both Neely and Edgecombe are charged with murder and conspiracy to commit murder while Brown is charged with accessory after the fact.

It is alleged that Neely, on June 16, at New Providence, being concerned with others, plotted to murder Kenyari Lightbourne.

On June 21, Lightbourne was shot multiple times while walking through his neighbourhood of Woods Alley, off Market Street. He died at the scene of the shooting.

Neely is represented by Geoffrey Farquharson and Jomo Campbell, Edgecombe is represented by Ian Cargill and Brown is represented by Nathan Smith.



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EMBASSY DRIVER PAID \$46K OVERTIME

from page one

"The event was scheduled to take place on August 3, 2013. Retainer fees in the amount \$22,484 was paid.

"The entity did not perform the duties as agreed; hence a demand letter was raised in 2013 seeking a refund.

"At the time of the review, the matter was unresolved and remained outstanding."

Mr Bastian recommended the Ministry of Foreign Affairs refer the matter to the Office of the Attorney General in order to pursue legal options.

The audit further noted the approval of \$68,6000 to pay educational allowance to an officer.

While at the time of the review, the cheque had already been issued to the officer, Mr Bastian said receipts confirming payment of school fees were not provided.

It also noted a security deposit for a residential rental for an officer of \$3,800 had not been returned, despite the officer executing a new lease on a residence in the amount of \$4,250 monthly.

And at the Permanent

Mission to the United Nations in New York, over a period of two year - July 2014 to June 2015 and July 2015 to June 2016 - a total of \$28,291.34 was spent to accommodate the hosting of diplomatic and promotional events, including receptions to colleges and universities attended by Bahamians.

Auditors also had challenges confirming whether long distance phone calls at this permanent mission were official or private.

They made the same observation regarding telephone calls for phones attached to the Bahamas Consulate General's Office in New York, those at the embassies in Port-au-Prince, Haiti and in Havana, Cuba.

A review of loan files at the Haitian embassy revealed a request was made for a loan without the ambassador's approval. Mr Bastian said loans were also granted without letters of request and/or approval.

He recommended the loan files be updated with request letters and approvals from the ambassador and the file be maintained showing payment of loans.

When the auditor reviewed the Bahamas Embassy in Beijing, China

for the period January 1, 2014 to May 31, 2016, it was found there remained an outstanding balance of \$29,700.20.

"It is recommended that deliberate steps be taken to collect all outstanding amounts due to the embassy (in) Beijing, China as a high level of receivables have the potential to negatively impact the operational cash flow."

The audit also notes: "During our scrutiny we noted that a total of US \$10,920 was expended by the embassy for storage of furniture and insurance fees. We were told that a contract did not exist and amounts were disbursed every six months. The amounts spent were too exorbitant and can lead to a drain of the operational funds."

Mr Bastian recommended arrangements be made for storage of furniture be reviewed. He further recommended management seek to have the furniture sold or disposed of.

He highlighted additional wastage by the embassy in China, saying \$624.95 was spent on the purchase and set up of accounting software, but it was not accessible to Embassy staff.



AUDITOR General Terrance Bastian.

DISHONOURD CHEQUES AND OUTSTANDING BILLS AMONG PROBLEMS AT REGISTRAR GENERAL DEPT

By AVA TURNQUEST
Tribune Chief Reporter
aturnquest@tribunemedia.net

AN audit of the revenue and expenditure accounts of the Registrar General's Department has revealed nearly \$400,000 worth of dishonoured cheques, outstanding utility bills and a register cluttered with hundreds of delinquent IBCs (international business

companies).

The audit report also pointed to a hefty overtime bill of \$162,305.55 for the period of April 2015 to July 2016, which was paid to staff who worked beyond the 40-hour week to process payments, letters of good standing, preparation for the e-service launch, and update files.

The audit recommended that management seriously

consider whether it was feasible to continue footing the overtime bill or introduce a shift system to accommodate excess workload.

Inadequate staffing and storage space to secure files featured high among concerns itemised in the report, which stressed that every effort be made to properly secure highly sensitive records, company files, deeds and other records.

The audit examination was conducted for the period of July 1, 2014, and June 30, 2016 by interviews, observations and examinations of the accounting documents.

The report stated that during the examination period, dishonoured cheques totaled \$69,993; however, a listing provided by the department indicated an accumulated total of \$392,976.49 up to July 31, 2016.

It was recommended that several measures be taken to mitigate or minimise the number of dishonoured cheques: instruct cashiers to scrutinise cheques for common oversights; obtain and secure an identifying departmental stamp and stamp each cheque for deposit; accept certified cheques or cash only when settling dishonoured cheques, and once settled, to forward information expeditiously so that entries can be cleared.

An outstanding electricity bill for September 2016 amounted to \$13,457.98, according to the report, which also outlined outstanding fees owed to Dell security of \$13,975. The report noted that the inability to maintain current vendor accounts could lead to overpayment or incorrect payments.

As for the delinquent IBCs, there were 2,228 delinquent accounts with outstanding company fees. A ten per cent fee is levied on delinquent accounts during the months of April to October; however, a 50 per cent fee is charged from November to December.

At the time of review, the report stated that it could not be determined the amount of monies owed by these companies, and it was

recommended that a section be formed to focus on delinquent accounts.

Staffing shortages were said to be the reason for the accumulation of \$12,150 in stale-dated cheques, according to the report, which noted the untimely processing of company registration fee payments.

"Highly sensitive records were not adequately stored, due to shortage of storage space," the report read.

"Companies' files were stored in cabinets that were not fire proof."

It continued: "Deeds and other records are stored on top of filing cabinets or wherever space can be found. The deeds contained irreplaceable records going for decades."

The audit report was submitted to the Attorney General's Office in July, and requested a response on whether action had been taken or proposed on each of its recommendations by September 11.

It was not clear up to press time whether a response was given.

While a large number of companies routinely left cheques with the cashier to be processed, the audit report noted that a cheque register was not consistently maintained and cheques were kept in an unlocked filing cabinet.

It further suggested management implement such a register to record the collection of company cheques, and that a safe or fire-proof filing cabinet be obtained to secure the cheques.

As for payroll, it was recommended that management initiate efforts to recover funds after it was revealed a terminated employee was overpaid by \$503.26.

It also noted that several

employees have been allowed to exceed the 75 per cent limit on salary deductions. The report underscored that net take home pay for employees should not fall below 25 per cent of gross salary unless approval was obtained by the relevant authority.

The report raised concerns over the storage of birth certificates and marriage licences, recommending that all documents be copied onto a hard drive and duplicates secured in a fire proof cabinet.

There were 4,313 new births registered in the 2014/2015 period, and 4,022 new births during the 2015/2016 period.

As for marriages, there were 3,890 new licenses in 2014/2015, and 3,663 the following year period.

However, the report noted that internal controls have been strengthened: "the official Registrar General seals which authenticates documents are properly secured; employees change their passwords every three months; and voids are being approved by the accounts supervisor."

It further noted that controls had been implemented to mitigate fraudulent activities as it related to search cards.

"Birth verification letters are now requested through the Department of Public Health for Family Island clients," the report read.

"Clients in Nassau can ascertain search cards once they collect a confirmation letter to confirm that the child was born at a medical facility in The Bahamas, accompanied with one other supporting document."

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Key Accountabilities for this role:

- At least 5 years of real estate experience.
- Strong construction management knowledge and experience.
- Demonstrated expertise in project management for real estate projects.
- Strong facilities management knowledge.
- Engineering or architectural background would be considered an asset.
- A Bachelor's degree in a related field.

Functional Competencies:

- In-depth knowledge of construction and design, facilities management, leasing/purchasing procedures.
- Working knowledge of software relating to spreadsheets, project management, cost/budget reporting, construction scheduling and building design.
- Ability to write reports and/or correspondence.
- Forward thinking and innovative skills.
- Strong communication and writing skills.
- Strong negotiating and networking skills.
- Strong human relations/ people management skills are essential.
- Strong organizational ability.
- Availability to travel.

Qualified candidates should submit C.V. via email to:

hrbahamas@scotiabank.com on or before September 22, 2017.

Please note: Only candidates short-listed will be contacted.



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FOX HILL STUDENT, 16, SHOT DEAD

from page one

Police said they received reports that gunshots were heard in the Brice Street area off Fox Hill Road around 11.30pm. When officers arrived on the scene, they found the lifeless body of a male lying on the ground with multiple gunshot wounds.

"When we got there, there was a young chap with apparent gunshot wounds about the body and at this time we do not know the motive," said Chief Superintendent Solomon Cash, officer-in-charge of the Central Detective Unit.

"The only thing we can say is that relatives heard

the shots to the rear of their house. When the gunshots stopped, they looked outside and saw one of their relatives was shot. We are still investigating to determine what happened and why this young man was the subject of that homicide."

Police have not officially identified the victim but *The Tribune* understands he is 16-year-old Jeffery Wright, of Brice Street.

Meanwhile, police are still on the hunt for the person responsible for an early morning shooting on Friday that left one man dead and another man in hospital.

The shooting took place shortly after 7am off South Street.

According to police, two men were standing in front of an abandoned house near Hospital Lane, when a man armed with a handgun approached them and fired several shots at them before fleeing the area on foot in an unknown direction.

One of the men died on the scene, the other was taken to hospital where he remains in serious, but stable condition. Police have not identified the deceased victim, but *The Tribune* understands he is Delano Frazer.

Anyone with information on any of these homicides is asked to contact police at 911 or 919, the Central Detective Unit at 502-9991 or Crime Stoppers anonymously at 328-TIPS.

BAHAMAS MUST HAVE INCOME TAX, SAYS IMF

from page one

To bring the public finances under control, the IMF called for the Government to impose “a permanent ceiling” on its annual fiscal deficits and “a cap” on its fixed-cost spending that includes wages and rents.

The Fund’s statement said the Government’s direct debt, as a percentage of Bahamian economic output or GDP, had increased by 28 percentage points in just six years as a result of persistent deficits.

“Sharp increases in public debt call for decisive fiscal consolidation efforts to ensure that debt remains sustainable and external buffers are strengthened,” the IMF said. “The sharp increase in the deficit in fiscal year 2017 to 5.7 per cent of GDP pushed central government debt to an estimated 73 per cent of GDP (up from 45 per cent of GDP in fiscal year 2011).”

Many Bahamians are likely to go pale at the mere mention of ‘income tax’, but the IMF called for its introduction on the basis that it will be a fairer tax linked to a person’s ability to pay.

“Over the medium term, introducing a low-rate income tax as import duties are further reduced should make the tax system more progressive and help protect infrastructure and social spending,” it argued.

However, the IMF frowned at the National Health Insurance (NHI) programme left behind by the former Christie administration, describing expanded coverage as “not affordable without new revenues (taxes) to fund it”.

Backing the Minnis administration’s plan to introduce Fiscal Responsibility legislation, it added: “This legislation should include as key elements a simple fiscal rule with a permanent ceiling on the deficit and a cap on current expenditure growth, consistent with a downward trajectory for the public debt-to-GDP ratio; the requirement to incorporate into the Budget process medium-term fiscal projections with their underlying assumptions; an assessment of relevant fiscal risks, particularly those associated with natural disasters, and mitigating policies; exceptional circumstances clauses, triggered only after significant negative shocks.”

The IMF said the Government’s fiscal targets would achieve the desired consolidation, but warned they could only be achieved “by reversing the sharp increases in the wage bill” resulting from the former Christie administration’s pre-election spending binge.

It added that public corporations and state-owned enterprises (SOEs) needed to be restructured to improve their efficiency, while fees for their services needed to allow full cost recovery.

“The new administration has pledged a strong commitment to restore fiscal sustainability,” the IMF said. “Its first Budget envisages a reduction in the deficit to 3.5 per cent of GDP in fiscal year 2018, and sets deficit targets of 2.3 per cent and 1.1 per cent of GDP for the two subsequent fiscal years.

“However, detailed policy measures to meet these targets still need to be developed..... If properly designed and implemented, these initiatives should support fiscal consolidation and strengthen fiscal discipline, accountability, and transparency over the medium term.”

The IMF also called for Bahamian civil servants to start contributing towards their own pensions, with benefits matching contributions, in a bid to tackle the unfunded \$1.5 billion public pension liability.

In a nod to The Baha-

mas’ vulnerability to hurricanes, the IMF also urged the Government to build-in Budget savings to provide “an additional buffer against the fall-out from natural disasters”.

“Incentivising the use of private natural disaster insurance, including through targeted subsidies to improve affordability for low-income households, and making sure that building regulation, land use and zoning guidelines are adequate and reviewed and updated frequently, would enhance economic resilience and reduce fiscal contingent liabilities,” the IMF said.

It added that energy reforms were vital to reducing power costs, and improving reliability. “Moving ahead with the planned issuance of the rate reduction bond by the electricity company is a critical step in this direction,” the IMF said, referring to the financing mechanism both governments have been reluctant to initiate.

The Fund also called for improvements in The Bahamas’ ‘ease of doing business’ and the creation of a Credit Bureau - recommendations that have frequently been made by the private sector.

The “credibility” of The Bahamas’ one:one exchange rate with the US dollar will be enhanced by reducing the Central Bank’s holdings of government bonds, the IMF added, while also calling for an “intensified” effort by commercial banks to restructure their delinquent loans.

“Commercial banks remain liquid and well-capitalised but reluctant to lend in an environment of low growth,” the IMF said. “As of March 2017, the average capital adequacy ratio stood at 27.8 per cent, well above the regulatory requirement of 17 per cent, and liquid assets represented 25.6 per cent of total assets.....

“Despite ample capital and liquidity for the sector as a whole, the stock of commercial bank credit to the private sector has remained flat.”

The Bahamian economy remained in recession during 2016, contracting by 0.25 per cent due to the impact of Hurricane Matthew.

“Real GDP growth is projected to pick up to 1.75 per cent in 2017 and 2.5 per cent in 2018, and to stabilise at around 1.5 per cent over the medium term,” the IMF said. “The baseline scenario is predicated on an expected acceleration in US growth in 2017, the phased opening of Baha Mar, and related construction activity.”

However, it added that The Bahamas faced numerous “downside risks”, with the current account and external reserves “weaker than suggested by fundamentals and desirable policy settings”.

“Over the medium term, the current account deficit is projected to narrow to 7.1 per cent of GDP but would still be above the level consistent with fundamentals and desirable policy settings,” the Fund said.

“At an estimated 2.4 months of next year’s imports of goods and services, reserve coverage remains below traditional adequacy benchmarks.”

Summing up, the IMF said: “The Bahamas has been struggling with a stagnant economy since 2012. Natural disasters, interruptions in the completion of the mega resort Baha Mar, and eroding competitiveness have resulted in declining real GDP and income relative to other Caribbean economies.

“Weak economic activity, compounded with high fiscal deficits, have led to a sharp increase in the public debt burden, and has complicated the resolution of banks’ high levels of non-performing loans (NPLs).”



STYROFOAM in Bimini, as seen in a picture posted to social media.

Styrofoam tide swamps beaches in Bimini

By RICARDO WELLS
Tribune Staff Reporter
rwells@tribunemedia.net

LONG-STANDING tensions between Resorts World Bimini and the residents on that island were brought to the fore this week after mounds of Styrofoam were seen floating in the ocean, suspected to be part of damage Hurricane Irma brought to the luxury hotel’s floating docks.

Irate residents are now demanding the government step in.

Videos and photos of the huge mounds of Styrofoam floating atop open waters have been circulated across social media sites this week, most with users urging the immediate restoration of the often-debated, critical marine habitat.

Denver Stuart, a life-long resident of Bimini, interviewed by *The Tribune* on Wednesday, insisted things on the island were set to go from bad to worse following Hurricane Irma.

He told *The Tribune*: “This has been a problem for days now. I’ve seen it

since Sunday. As soon as you get out on the water, you see the pieces of foam just floating around. This is not good because the birds are eating it, the fish are eating it and even the turtles are eating the Styrofoam.”

Mr Stuart said the people of Bimini have long been an environmentally conscious society that treat their surroundings as an extension of their homes.

“They’re supposed to lay-out a silk curtain to catch it from day one, but they didn’t,” Mr Stuart claimed. “Now, it’s floating everywhere and it’s causing a big issue. This is an important marine area.”

In July, residents protested RAV Bahamas/OPAC and its partner the Genting Group, which have invested heavily in the island, mainly through Resorts World Bimini, for their alleged inaction in protecting the island’s marine ecosystem.

In a letter from Bimini residents to Prime Minister Dr Hubert Minnis, residents complained that nothing has been done to

protect Bimini’s marine habitats.

“The resort has created an influx of visitors to the island, but at the expense of the people,” the letter noted. “The number of visitors to Bimini is greater than the island can handle sustainably, creating negative impact on the local natural resource.

“The vacuous promises laid out in the mitigation measures dating back to phase one of this development are still unfulfilled.”

The residents said they want clarification on how much Crown land Gerardo Capo has received and what would be the legal implications for his development of land on the North Bimini Marine Reserve and the East Wells area if a marine protected area (MPA) is approved.

Mr Stuart yesterday indicated that if the ordeal isn’t addressed soon, things could again take a turn for the worse as residents will not “sit back and allow all this foolishness to take place”.

Resorts World Bimini

(RWB) released a statement in response to questions from *The Tribune* on the concerns yesterday.

The hotel did not specifically address the floating Styrofoam, but noted that it was aware of the issue.

“The island of Bimini was hit by Hurricane Irma with widespread damage across the island, including the marina located at Resorts World Bimini. After evacuating our employees early to allow locals the ability to evacuate during the latter part of the week, Resorts World offered space in the Hilton hotel for refuge during the storm for all those that chose to stay,” the hotel said.

“Damage assessments and cleanup efforts were mobilised as soon as the island became accessible and are ongoing as additional team members are being asked to return and assist. An announcement will be made when resort operations are able to resume.”

Attempts to contact Environment Minister Romauld Ferreira were also unsuccessful Wednesday.

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STUDENT volunteers at a previous coastal clean-up.

Cleaning the coast after the storm

IN the wake of Hurricane Irma, volunteers throughout the country are preparing to take part in the Ocean Conservancy's 32nd anniversary of International Coastal Cleanup on Saturday, September 16.

Volunteers from all over the world have gathered every year along coastlines and waterways to partici-

pate in the International Coastal Cleanup (ICC).

Many walk, others set out on boats and thousands more don scuba gear to seek trash below the water's surface.

Last year, 791,336 people from 91 countries picked up more than 18 million pounds of trash along 25,188 miles of coastline.

This year celebrates 32 years of volunteerism for a healthier ocean.

As such, it makes a powerful statement about global concern for the environment and empowers local communities to do something about pollution.

"Hurricane Irma will make this clean up even more important as there will

be more debris in her wake. The Bahamas has participated for many years in the Ocean Conservancy's ICC and we will again this year to make difference to our marine environment," said Annette Dempsey, director of education for Dolphin Encounters on Blue Lagoon Island and co-ordinator of ICC in New Providence.

"This year, we return to South Beach (poolside) from 8am to 10am and encourage members of the public to join us. The South Beach area is filled with mangroves that are critical to our marine life."

There will be free bus transportation available every 30 minutes starting at 7.30am from the Marathon

Mall and Southwest Plaza. Volunteers are advised to please wear closed in shoes, sunscreen and gardening gloves.

Email Annette Dempsey at education@dolphinencounters.com for more information or to volunteer. To learn more about International Coastal Cleanup, visit www.oceanconservancy.org

Career Opportunity

Scotiabank (Bahamas) Limited

is seeking the services of a

Relationship Manager, Bahamas Trust & Wealth – Caribbean North District

Position Summary:

The Relationship Manager is responsible for the development of all aspects of the Human Resources strategy that supports the International Wealth strategy. He/she will contribute to the building of a skilled and motivated workforce committed to and capable of delivering on business strategies as well as to develop, implement and manage the Trust and Wealth specific and all-Bank Human Resource programs, policies and initiatives. The incumbent will also be responsible for creating, coordinating effective employee communications including development of protocols to support communication of the Group strategies, initiatives including change management. He/she will be required to develop a comprehensive Leadership Resource Plan that establishes and maintains bench strength for key jobs within the Group, promotes cross-functional moves and leadership capability in support of future proofing the business through talent management and succession planning. He/she will be responsible for ensuring competitive compensation analysis is in line with business objectives and effectively recommending any required changes. He/She will also support the business in the management of local, district or regional reward and recognition programs and benefits programs.

Key Accountabilities for this role:

- Have at least 5 years of Human Resource Management experience.
- Possess Strong oral and written communications and presentation skills.
- Possess strong Strategic thinking and Business Partner RM skills
- Possess strong executing and delivery skills
- Possess strong diagnostic skills and proven ability to evaluate options/alternatives.
- Proven ability to foster and develop a strong team environment.
- Strong ability to be proactive with ability to anticipate and overcome obstacles through Perseverance and creative thinking.
- Possess a high degree of influencing skills in order to drive change initiatives.
- Strong Ability to write reports and/or correspondence.
- Be forward thinking with strong innovative skills.
- Possess strong negotiating and networking skills.
- Possess strong organizational skills

Educational Requirements:

- A Bachelor's degree in Human Resource Management.

Qualified candidates should submit C.V. via email to:

hrbahamas@scotiabank.com on or before September 22, 2017.

Please note: Only candidates short-listed will be contacted.



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TRASH collected at a previous coastal clean-up.



EDUCATORS take part in the recent Character Day Training Workshop.

Building character to build the future

EDUCATORS came together to attend workshops on several Bahamian islands to participate in the country's second Character Day Training Workshop.

The event took place on New Providence, Abaco and Grand Bahama and was geared toward informing educators about the importance of the development and improvement of character for not only themselves, but also their students.

Character Day is an international project introduced four years ago by a San Francisco-based film studio, Let It Ripple. The PACE Foundation, Bahamas AIDS Foundation, Lyford Cay Foundations' FOCUS, Sandals Foundation, Commonwealth Bank and the FTBL Charitable Foundation all partnered to kick off this year's event.

Sonia Brown, the woman at the core of Character Day in the Bahamas, explained just how and why she intro-

duced the initiative.

"When we became aware of Character Day, we thought, 'Well why don't we bring this to everybody in the Bahamas if we can, specifically focusing on students who are in school because we have a captive audience,'" Ms Brown said.

The workshop's co-ordinator, Charlene Carey, reminded the audience of their roles to bring out the best in their students.

"You have students that are sitting in your classrooms, that are sitting in your groups, that have these talents that they are sitting on and we need to give them opportunities to shine," she said.

On the second day of the seminar, Dr Niambi Hall-Campbell, one of the event's board members and an educator herself, reminded the teachers that Character Day is not only about molding students, but also serves as a way to reflect on themselves with self-care and mindful

moments through taking deep breaths.

"If we can just start to take just 60 seconds to centre ourselves and connect to the life force of our own breaths, it will really enhance us," she said.

Over the course of the seminar, educators took part in a number of activities including a speed-networking exercise that gave everyone the opportunity to become acquainted and connected. At the close of the workshops, teachers did not walk away empty handed. They received Character Day bags filled with wristbands, folders, a bag of treats and t-shirts.

On September 13, the Bahamas will celebrate Character Day along with over 109 countries around the world. During that time, participating organisations and persons will highlight the importance of core character strengths: resilience, grit, empathy, courage and kindness.



SONIA Brown speaks at a recent Character Day Training Workshop for educators.

A DYNAMIC LANDSCAPING COMPANY HAS A VACANCY FOR AN ACCOUNTANT

Summary

Individual participates in the preparation of monthly accounts, account payments, receivables, and monthly profit and loss statements. Also includes maintenance of balance sheets, subsidiary ledgers and leading financial projects. Prepares journal entries, monthly closing and accounting analysis and supports management in carrying out responsibilities in the accounts department.

Essential Duties

The essential duties and responsibilities are listed below.

- Prepare financial statements and reports including Profit & Loss statement and Balance Sheet
- Record financial transactions and maintain accurate financial records
- Ensure accurate and appropriate recording and analysis of income and expenses
- Input financial data into ledger accounts and reconcile monthly
- Prepare monthly management reports and provide analysis and recommendations to management
- Compile, enter, and post monthly adjusting journal entries
- Compute VAT taxes owed and prepare VAT tax returns, ensuring compliance with payment, reporting and other tax requirements
- Review and resolve accounting discrepancies and irregularities
- Prepare and analyze budget, and assist other staff with preparation of budgets
- Prepare comparative reports of budgeted-to-actual costs
- Manage accounts payables; review invoices for accuracy and ensure that bills are paid on time
- Manage accounts receivables and ensure bills and statements are sent out to customers on a timely basis and early follow-up carried out on delinquent accounts
- Provide information to auditors and external accountant(s) to enable annual audit and creation of financial statements
- Advise staff regarding financial reporting and accounting policies
- Oversee, supervise and train direct reports and ensure that work is carried out on a timely basis
- Participates in annual performance evaluations of direct reports
- Review payroll and ensure that salaried workers are paid on time
- Conduct reconciliation of bank account(s) and credit card statement(s)
- Implement internal controls to ensure financial security
- Maintain paper and electronic filing systems
- Responsible for wire transfer transactions
- Ensure the security of financial information by completing QuickBooks backups
- Make best-practices recommendations to management on financial matters
- Make recommendations to improve the financial position including reducing costs and increasing revenue and profit and identifying investment opportunities
- Responsible for keeping Management informed about financial legal requirements

Qualifications/Skills

- Bachelor's degree in Accounting
- 5+ Years of Experience
- Proficiency in use of Accounting software e.g. QuickBooks
- Attention to detail and accuracy in accounting procedures
- Knowledge of Microsoft Office (Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Excel, Outlook)
- Ability to devise solutions to complex problems
- Industry certifications (CMP, CMT, CLT, FCLC)
- Strong communication, planning and organizational skills
- Ability to work independently and in team settings

Benefits are commensurate with Job Experience. Please send Resume to hnrassau@gmail.com. Deadline – Friday September 29, 2017.

Only those candidates short-listed will be contacted.



PARTICIPANTS at the recent Character Day Training Workshop engage in speed networking.

MYANMAR LEADER SKIPS UN MEETING

COX'S BAZAR, Bangladesh (AP) — Facing global condemnation for weeks of violence that has driven minority Rohingya to flee — a crisis UN officials have described as “ethnic cleansing” — Myanmar's leader, Aung San Suu Kyi, pulled out of this month's UN General Assembly meetings.

The president's office said Wednesday that Suu Kyi would miss the assembly's ministerial session, from Sept 19-25, to address domestic security issues.

The UN Security Council condemned the violence that has driven some 380,000 ethnic Rohingya Muslims to flee to safety in neighboring Bangladesh. UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres told reporters that ethnic cleansing was taking place against Rohingya in Myanmar's Rakhine state.

The term “ethnic cleansing” is defined as an effort to rid an area of an unwanted ethnic group.

DACA DEAL DONE, SAY DEMOCRATS

WASHINGTON (AP) — The top House and Senate Democrats said Wednesday they had reached agreement with President Donald Trump to protect thousands of younger immigrants from deportation and fund some border security enhancements — not including Trump's long-sought border wall.

The agreement, the latest instance of Trump ditching his own party to make common cause with the opposition, was announced by Senate Democratic Leader Chuck Schumer and House Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi following a White House dinner that Republican lawmakers weren't invited to attend. It would enshrine protections for the nearly 800,000 immigrants brought illegally to this country as kids who had benefited from former President Barack Obama's Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, or DACA, program, which provided temporary work permits and shielded recipients from deportation.

Trump ended the programme earlier this month and gave Congress six months to come up with a legislative fix before the statuses of the so-called “Dreamers” begin to expire.



POLICE and rescue personnel work at an Islamic religious school cordoned off after a fire on the outskirts of Kuala Lumpur yesterday.

Photo: AP

School blaze kills 24

KUALA LUMPUR, Malaysia
Associated Press

A FIRE killed 24 people, mostly teenagers, trapped behind barred windows and a blocked exit in an Islamic school dormitory on the outskirts of Malaysia's capital early Thursday, officials said.

Firefighters rushed to the scene after receiving a distress call at 5.41 a.m. and took an hour to put out the blaze, which started on the top floor of the three-story building, Kuala Lumpur police chief Amar Singh said. He said there were at least 24 charred bodies, 22 of them boys between 13 and 17, and two teachers.

Singh said 14 other students and four teachers were rescued, with six of them hospitalised in critical condition.

“We believe (they died of) suffocation...the bodies were totally burnt,” he said.

The fire broke out near the door of the boys' dormitory, trapping the victims as it was the only entrance and the windows are grilled, fire department senior official Abu Obaidat Mohamad Saithalimat said.

He said the cause was believed to be an electrical short-circuit.

Another fire department official Soiman Jahid said firefighters heard shouts for help when they arrived at the school. He said they found 13 bodies huddled in a pile on the right corner of the dorm, another eight on the left corner of the dorm and one in the middle near the staircase.

Soiman said initial investigations showed the school had just submitted an application to the city council for building safety approval but couldn't give further details.

A fire department official who declined to be named because he wasn't authorised to give a state-

ment said the bodies were piled on top of each other, indicating a possible stampede as people tried to flee the fire. The official had earlier said 25 bodies were found, but the more recent tally of dead and injured matches the number of people thought to have resided there.

Singh said police were still finalising the details and investigating the cause.

Local media showed pictures of blackened bunk beds frames in the burned dormitory. A resident, Nurhayati Abdul Halim, told local media that she saw the boys crying and screaming for help when the fire broke.

“I saw their little hands out of the grilled windows; crying for help...I heard their screams and cries but I could not do anything. The fire was too strong for me to do anything,” she said, adding that the school had been operating in the area for the past year.

The Darul Quran Ittifaqiyah is a private Islamic center, known as a “tahfiz” school, for Muslim children, mainly boys, to study and memorise the Quran. Many such schools are exempt from state inspections.

The Star newspaper said there were 519 tahfiz schools registered nationwide as of April, but many more are believed to be unregistered.

The newspaper said the fire department had recorded 211 fires in such private Islamic centers since 2015. In August, 16 people fled a fire at a tahfiz school in northern Kedah state. Another tahfiz school was destroyed by a fire in May but no one was hurt.

The worst fire disaster occurred in 1989 when 27 female students at a private Islamic school in Kedah state died when fire gutted the school and eight wooden hostels.

STUDENT KILLED TRYING TO STOP HIGH SCHOOL MASS SHOOTER

ROCKFORD, WASHINGTON
Associated Press

A STUDENT who opened fire in a hallway at a Washington state high school killed a classmate who confronted him Wednesday and wounded three others before being stopped by a custodian, authorities said.

The suspect, who a classmate described as being ob-

essed with previous school shootings, was taken into custody. The wounded victims were seriously injured but expected to survive, officials said.

The shooter brought two weapons to Freeman High School in Rockford, south of Spokane, but the first one he tried to fire jammed, Spokane County Sheriff Ozzie Knezovich told reporters.

“He went to his next weapon,” Knezovich said. “A student walked up to him, engaged him, and that student was shot. That student did not survive.”

The sheriff said the shooter fired more rounds down the hallway, striking the other students, before a school custodian approached the shooter and ordered him to surrender, Knezovich said.

Knezovich called it a courageous act that prevented further bloodshed.

The sheriff said a deputy who works as a school resource officer arrived shortly thereafter and took the shooter into custody.

Elisa Vigil, a 14-year-old freshman, told The Associated Press that she saw one male student shot in the head who janitors covered with a cloth and another female student wounded in the back.

Michael Harper, a 15-year-old sophomore,

said the suspect had brought notes in the beginning of the school year, saying he was going to do “something stupid” and might get killed or jailed. Some students alerted counselors, the teen told AP, but it wasn't clear what school officials did in response.

A call to the school was not immediately returned.

Harper said the shooter had many friends and was not bullied, calling him “nice and funny and weird” and a huge fan of the TV show “Breaking Bad”.

MINISTRY OF LABOUR
THE PRICE CONTROL ACT, 1971
CHAPTER 339
GN 1944
THE PRICE CONTROL (GASOLINE & DIESEL OIL)
(AMENDMENT) () REGULATIONS, 2011

The public is advised that prices as shown in the Schedule for **ULTRA LOW SULPHUR DIESEL OIL (ULSD)** sold by **RUBIS Bahamas Limited** will become effective on **Friday, September 15, 2017.**

SCHEDULE

PLACE	ARTICLE	MAXIMUM WHOLESALE SELLING PRICE PER U.S. GALLON		MAXIMUM RETAIL SELLING PRICE PER U.S. GALLON (VAT Inclusive)
		MAXIMUM SUPPLIERS' PRICE \$	MAXIMUM DISTRIBUTORS' PRICE \$	
PART A				
NEW PROVIDENCE				
RUBIS Bahamas Ltd.	ULSD	3.44	3.44	3.81
PART C				
GRAND BAHAMA (NOT FREEPORT)				
RUBIS Bahamas Ltd.	ULSD	3.31	3.48	3.85
PART D				
ABACO, ANDROS ELEUTHERA				
RUBIS Bahamas Ltd.	ULSD	3.45	3.62	3.99
PART E				
ALL OTHER FAMILY ISLANDS				
RUBIS Bahamas Ltd.	ULSD	3.46	3.62	4.00

PERMANENT SECRETARY

NASSAU PAWN & GB TRADING POST

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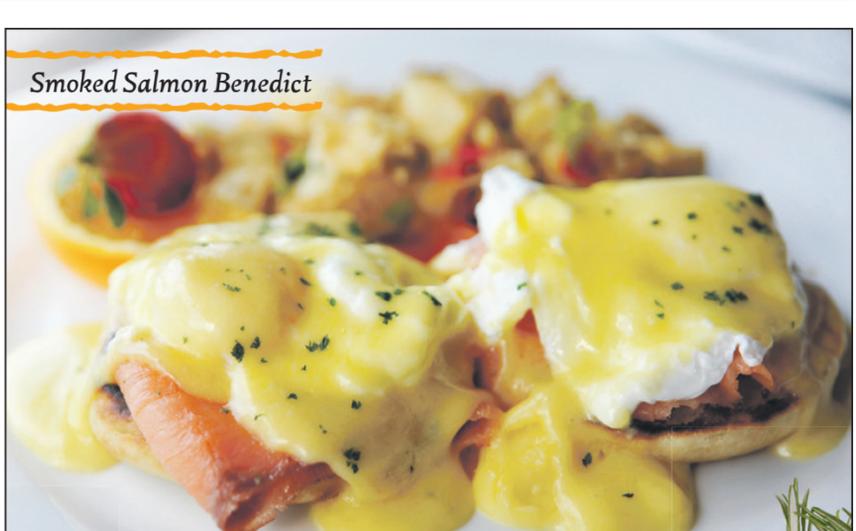
BTVI TEAM VISITS LABOUR MINISTER

THE president of the Bahamas Technical and Vocational Institute (BTVI), Dr Robert Robinson and the senior executive team recently paid a courtesy call on Minister of Labour Senator Dion Foulkes.

Senator Foulkes, Dr Robinson and executives discussed various training programmes being offered by BTVI and courses being considered for BTVI students in New Providence and Grand Bahama.

Pictured from left are Shavonne Symonette, administration officer in the Ministry of Labour; Alicia Thompson, associate vice president of fund development at BTVI; Mr Foulkes; Dr Robinson; Raquel Bethel, dean of students at BTVI; Alexander Darville, dean of construction at BTVI and Morgan Graham, assistant director of labour, Ministry of Labour.

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