



Miami pitched as FTA capital

Key officials were asked to consider Miami as The Bahamas' choice for the permanent secretariat for the FTA. / See page BR 1



Capt. Rolly Gray the legend sails on

Rolly Gray has been a fixture at the Family Island Regatta in George Town, Exuma from its inception in 1954. / See Weekender 1



Celtics hire Doc Rivers as coach

Doc Rivers is leaving TV to coach the Boston Celtics. He was introduced by head of basketball operations Danny Ainge Thursday. / See page C2

Downtown facelift planned

Study group submits redevelopment plan

By MINDELL SMALL
Guardian Staff Reporter

Bay Street is expected to undergo a major overhaul in the coming years as a preliminary report for a Nassau Harbour and city-centre development plan has been presented to the government.

Prime Minister Perry Christie made the announcement Thursday during a press conference at the Churchill Building.

And although he did not put a dollar value to the project or timeframe for completion, the prime minister said it would cost a lot of money to be repaid over generations. He said it is important that The Bahamas keeps pace with other jurisdictions to continue to be able to attract tourists.

Mr Christie said the gov-

ernment is committed to the transformation of Bay Street, the old city of Nassau and the waterfront into one of the most attractive harbour cities in the hemisphere. He said last year the government charged a broad based committee from members of the private and public sector to respond to the challenge of redeveloping Bay Street and give advice on the approaches that should be taken.

The committee, known as the Nassau Economic Development Commission is co-chaired by prominent businessman Norman Solomon and former parliamentarian George Mackey.

Mr Christie said a number of recommendations have been submitted for the exercise that have pinpointed the most urgent needs while at the same time being

mindful of sustaining economic development in the city.

He said the government through The Hotel Corporation of The Bahamas, is contracting EDAW, one of the world's leading land-based planning and design firms, comprised of over 1,100 professionals in 25 offices worldwide. The company provides a unique blend of landscape architecture, urban design, and environmental and economic planning services worldwide. Its representatives presented a brochure of its work on the city of Beijing, China to the government.

"It has been said that EDAW's collaborative approach to landscape urbanism enriches the solutions they bring to their



Staff photo by Patrick Hanna
BIG PLANS - Prime Minister Perry Christie unveils a major redevelopment plan for downtown Nassau. Looking on is George Mackey (left) of the Nassau Economic Development Commission and Minister of Works Bradley Roberts (centre).

SEE BAY STREET, A2

Lorequin drugs may have been 'miscounted'

By KEVA LIGHTBOURNE
Guardian Staff Reporter

Simple human error and miscount could be blamed



Staff photo by Patrick Hanna
COUNTER SUGGESTION - Police Corporal Michael Thurston is pictured giving evidence to the Drug Commission on Thursday.

for the discrepancy in the number of packages counted at the Defence Force Base, Coral Harbour, which was calculated at 193, and the number counted at the Police Storage House Oakes Field, which added up to 190 packages.

This information coming as the three-man Commission continued its inquiry into the disappearance of drugs after the vessel Lorequin was seized by HMBS Inagua June 20, 1992.

Police Corporal Michael Thurston told the Commission Thursday that there was no other possible explanation for the missing drugs. He said he was satisfied that no drugs went missing during its travel



SOL KERZNER

New status shows Kerzner's 'confidence' in The Bahamas

By KHASHAN POITIER
Guardian Staff Reporter

Multimillionaire hotelier Sol Kerzner's request to become a permanent resident next to the Bahamas Government, was granted permanent resident status, with "his document" expected "to be executed" on Thursday, Mr Peet confirmed in an exclusive interview.

Mr Kerzner, who through

his vast Paradise Island hotel enterprise, is the second largest employer next to the Bahamas Government, was granted permanent resident status, with "his document" expected "to be executed" on Thursday, Mr Peet confirmed in an exclusive interview.

Mr Kerzner "qualifies clearly under the (approval) policy," Mr Peet said, having

invested over \$500,000 in a home and showing that he had the capacity to sustain himself through investments or other legal means.

"With him applying for residency it would not surprise me if he has other investments or by his willingness to invest. The fact that he has applied for and has been

SEE KERZNER, A2



TILE MAGIC

SEE HUMAN ERROR, A2
TODAY'S WEATHER
McDonald's
It's Back! "Chicken"

BTC cable repaired; shipowner faces fine

By TAMARA MCKENZIE
Guardian Staff Reporter

After a ship's anchor severed a Bahamas Telecommunications Company submarine cable last week Tuesday, all interrupted networks are expected to be fully restored as of today.

However, the Bahamian owner of the ship may be fined some \$300,000 to \$400,000, said Charles Rolle, BTC senior manager of cable and construction.

"As far as specific fines or penalties, certainly there is a liability for the damage that we have incurred at this point and now we will

seek redress in that fashion," he said, adding that the insurance and legal arm of BTC would ensure that the owner of the boat which severed the cable pays his fine to cover the damage.

Mr. Rolle said the captain of the ship should have known the location of the cable, as mariners are given maritime maps that point out the location of all BTC submarine cables. The cable, located 100 feet below water, runs from New Providence to Eight Mile Rock, Grand Bahama and into Vero Beach, Florida. The cable failure affected international and domestic toll traffic, mainly in Grand Bahama

and Bimini.
Press tour

Press representatives were on Thursday taken on a tour of the *Tyco Responder*, an international cable ship that arrived on Tuesday from St. Croix to repair the cable. The ship is operated by a cable consortium known as the Association for Maintenance Authorities for Submarine Cables, in which BTC has membership. According to Mr. Rolle, BTC has an agreement with the association, that repairs all "wet plant" or sea damages. "Once we determine that we had a problem in the water, then this company was contacted and they have



GETTING A FIX — The *Tyco Responder*, an international cable ship, arrived on Tuesday from St. Croix to repair the Bahamas Telecommunications Company's submarine cable.

Staff Photo by Donald Knowlton

responded," he said, adding that that as of yesterday (Thursday) the cable has been reconnected and a series of tests had to be carried out to have all services fully restored.

Mr. Rolle also advised that when The Bahamas2 cable was completely severed,

BTC was initially notified by the Port Authority, who said the captain of the ship described hitting "something" in the water.

Deep sea divers

BTC staff and personnel from Bahamas Divers had to dive to the bottom of the seabed to locate the fibre

optic cables and bring them to surface. The *Tyco Responder* upon arrival, was then able to transport the cables on board the ship where tests were run in "splicing room" to locate any additional damages.

Kerzner

From AI
granted permanent residence shows his confidence in The Bahamas," Mr. Peet said.

Mr. Kerzner also owns resorts in Mexico, Dubai, the United States, South Africa and Mauritius, with plans to establish a hotel in Morocco.

His investment of large sums of money in a Bahamas-based home, is expected to attract more international investors interested in permanent resi-

deny.

Later this year, Phase III of the Atlantis Development project is slated to begin with the construction of a 1,200-room resort adjacent to the existing resort. With completion set for 2006, it will bring Kerzner International's total investment to \$1.7 billion since the resort opened in 1994.

His workforce of 6,000 is then expected to increase to 10,000.

Airport upgrade

During his initial announcement of the Phase III project, Mr. Kerzner expressed concerns over the state of the

Nassau International Airport, which he described as "the worst airport in the world," that could dissuade visitors.

Since then the Ministry of Transport and Aviation announced major plans to upgrade the airport, with a private company overseeing a \$200 million upgrade.

In addition to the opening of luxury resorts in Exuma and Eleuthera, the Government has announced plans for investment projects in Grand Bahama, San Salvador, Andros, and New Providence.

Downtown

From AI
clients. They will work closely with Bahamian professions in this exercise," he said.

Mr. Christie indicated that in addition to the redevelopment, EDAW promises to enhance the attractiveness of the Island of New Providence and other islands in The Bahamas.

He said it is his hope that as the government takes steps in the transformation of the downtown area, everyone, both stakeholders and the public at large would work to ensure that the success of the exercise is vital to the country's sus-

tained economic growth.

Additionally, the government retained the services of EDAW to complete planning for infrastructure development on Eleuthera. A Bahamian team will assist the company in that venture also.

Catering to the development of human resources, the firm has offered its corporate goodwill to The Bahamas in the form of the prestigious EDAW Summer Student Programme; a component of the redevelopment exercise. The EDAW Summer Student Programme is a collaborative effort between EDAW's professional staff and 20 of the world's brightest minds; students from six coun-

tries and 16 universities worldwide.

The Prime Minister said he is particularly pleased to know that there will be two Bahamian participants involved in the programme this year. Both students will also be provided paid internships in two of EDAW's U.S. offices.

They are Jared Anthony Davis, a graduate student in the Architecture Programme at Georgia Institute of Technology and Ms. Kimberly Stuart, a senior at the University of Nebraska who is expected to graduate in December with a Major in Geography and a Minor in Environmental Studies and Sociology.

Human error

From AI
from the Coral Harbour Base to the Police Storage House, Oakes Field.

Officer Thurston said the drugs were under heavy security and once placed in the back trunk of a car, the trunk was properly closed and secured.

The officer rode in a convoy that took the packages of cocaine to ISD.

"I was satisfied in my mind that what that convoy consisted of and the way in which it was conducted, that it was impossible for any of that stuff, drugs, kilos to be missing out of the back trunk. The back trunk was closed, we were inside the vehicle, the Defence Force at the rear of the vehicle; we had a number of other vehicles escorting us. We went straight to the drug house along with the Defence Force officers," he said.

He pointed out that at no time did the convoy stop.

Evidence given to the Commission showed that the convoy took 20-30 minutes to reach its destination. The Commission heard that the route taken was up Carmichael Road, over Gladstone Road to the Strike Force Base.

When further questioned, Officer Thurston said he was not surprised to hear about the discrepancy.

"I was not surprised because when it comes to large sums of money and large sums of drugs being seized, in counting, sometimes that happens. That is why I was saying I was not surprised," he said.

However, Officer Thurston said the senior police officer (Dt. Sgt. 848 William Major), whom he had accompanied to the Defence Force Base to collect was reluctant to sign a receipt from the Defence Force because an official count was usually done at the Police Storage House.

This evoked a harsh response from Commission president Justice Stanley Moore.

He said: "This nonsense about official and unofficial count must stop. Every count is official. The Defence Force is an arm of the government of this country. The Defence Force takes into custody serious material like drugs and any defence force officer who did not get a proper receipt upon handing over the drugs to the police would have been negligent and delinquent. And the drugs therefore passed into the custody of the police who were responsible for delivering it safely to the drug house."

Officer Thurston told Commissioner he was absolutely correct.

"When I refer to official count, I mean the one carried out at the Drug Enforcement Unit. I am referring to what was placed on the official document at the Drug Enforcement Unit. I am in a way referring to the official count of the Defence Force. They have their official records and we have our official records," Officer Thurston said.

"When I refer to official count, I am referring to the official count that makes up the record that is placed on the official file of the Drug Enforcement Unit," he said.

After being pressed by the Commission's president, Thurston agreed that since the drug count was 193 packages at the Defence Force Base and three less at the drug storage house — the police would be the prime suspect since they were in the vehicle with the drugs.

Also giving evidence on Thursday, Dt. Sgt. 848 Roger Major told the Commission that 190 packages were counted at the Defence Force Base and not 193. He said he signed a receipt with 190 packages and could not give an explanation as to why the receipt now says 193.

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