Grenada’s new state-of-the-art track and field stadium, funded by the People’s Republic of China and built by Grenadian and Chinese workers, is nearing completion.

The stadium, part of an original deal between a previous Keith Mitchell Government and the PRC, was brought back on the table after the Mitchell administration returned to Government over two years ago.

Workmen are at the finishing stage and the stadium, to be officially opened later this year, will be the venue for next year’s CARIFTA Games.

The stadium which is expected to host the prestigious games next year is seen as a major boost for track and field in Grenada and officials are already talking about attracting top world athletes including Jamaica’s Usain Bolt and Grenada’s Kirani James.

Construction is about to begin on Grenada’s newest hotel, the Silver Sands Hotel, on Grenada’s world famous Grand Anse Beach.

Scores of workers and contractors are expected to find employment on the site as the first phase of work begins.

This activity will further reduce the country’s unemployment which has fallen from 40% to 29% in the past two years.
Garraway Minister of State with responsibility for Information

We are happy to make a copy of our newsletter available to you. Please refer to the Director's Editorial for a detailed overview on been highlighting the progress made in restoring fiscal order. Oliver Joseph as well as the International Monetary Fund have manifestations of a fiscal carnival needed to be corrected. Late and non-payments to a range of regional and international administrations was embroiled in an escalating financial turn-around in the economy, a reduction in unemployment, an ambitious drive to reduce expenditure and a robust effort to attract foreign direct investment as well as boost small business. The mid-term report reflects significant progress in government since the return of the Keith Mitchell administration more than two years ago. There has been movement on many fronts ranging from a drop in unemployment to record growth in tourists arrivals as figures from the Barbados based Caribbean Tourism Organization would confirm. Indeed tourism has been a stand out sector with new airlines and cruise ships making their debut and returning and more expansion in the fast growing yachting sector. But from the get go, one of the areas given major attention was the need to put the fiscal house in order as the previous administration was embroiled in an escalating financial nightmare. Late and non-payments to a range of regional and international bodies as well as the late paying of public servants salaries were manifestations of a fiscal carnival needed to be corrected. Both Prime Minister Dr. Keith Mitchell and Foreign Trade Minister Oliver Joseph as well as the International Monetary Fund have been highlighting the progress made in restoring fiscal order. Please refer to the Director's Editorial for a detailed overview on Progress in Government. We are happy to make a copy of our newsletter available to you.

Minister’s Welcome

Welcome to this edition of our newsletter, The GIS Review. In this third edition we will focus on the achievements of the administration approaching this mid-term stage. We have endeavoured to cover Government in action through our many articles and pictures. However we hope you appreciate that space would not allow us to be as comprehensive as we would like to be.

New York based airline JetBlue has been cleared for landing in Grenada following Government’s signing of a contract with the airline’s operators. Tourism Minister Yolande Bain-Horsford broke the welcome news after the carrier had fixed June 11 2015, as the date to commence flights from John F. Kennedy International Airport (JFK) to Grenada’s Maurice Bishop International Airport. “We finally signed the contract with JetBlue coming here two weeks ago, we also have JetBlue and we have the Grenada part of it, so that is signed sealed and delivered and I think we are out for a good start in June”, said Bain-Horsford.

“It’s a joint venture. We have Sandals paying a portion, and also have JetBlue and we have the Grenada part of it, so that is signed sealed and delivered and I think we are out for a good start in June”. JetBlue’s twice weekly service will be on Thursdays and Sundays to Grenada, the airline’s 90th destination and its 32nd destination in the Caribbean and Latin America.

The airline will serve the route with its spacious 150-seat Airbus A320 aircraft featuring the most legroom in coach, free first-run movies on flights to/from Grenada, and unlimited free snacks and soft drinks. The people who have problems coming in they now have an opportunity,” said Horsford. “Although we have American airlines coming in but it’s coming in from Miami, JetBlue is coming straight from New York so it’s a great thing for us. We are looking forward to this starting off in June”. In preparation for JetBlue’s inaugural flight to St. George’s, the tourism minister met with top officials of the airports authority.

Grenada’s tourism industry has seen record growth last year, outstripping countries in the region in arrivals with the forecast for more gains in 2015. “Grenada has seen remarkable growth in tourism thanks to a fresh marketing approach, an extraordinary new Sandals Resort and a very resilient and committed tourism sector. Combine that with all the magnificent facets of our tr-island state and we have a winning formula,” said the Hon. Alexandra Ottway-Noel, former tourism minister and now Minister of Implementation, Government of Grenada.

“JetBlue is known to offer quality service and high standards, and is the perfect addition to our family. We are indeed very pleased to welcome the inaugural flight on June 11th to Pure Grenada, the Spice of the Caribbean”.

New Road Network Connects Grand Bacolet and Munich

A new road under construction in the eastern part of the island, linking Grand Bacolet to Munich is nearing completion. Workmen are on the verge of finishing the paving work on the road which passes through Mama Cannes.

“The tough assignments of base course work and drain construction have already been completed, Project Coordinator Kelvin Burke says the road will be completed in days. “We are at the finishing stage of the project. We hope to complete all paving work and instruction of the road by the required status,” said Burke.

The long awaited Grand Bacolet to Munich road has long been in the making and residents have been applauding its construction. It runs for more than a kilometer, at an estimated cost of 2 million dollars under the CCC project.

Chief Technical officer Winston Gabriel says the road bears major significance. “It links the eastern main road and the road at Munich, St. Andrew’s,” said Gabriel.

“It is very important in the event that it may have traffic problems on diversions along the main road; this road is a very good access route for people straight into St. Andrew. Despite the challenges of cost, road work remains a top priority of the Keith Mitchell government.”

Delta Airlines Will Fly to Grenada this Summer

Delta Airline has announced that it will be starting a new weekly service between Atlanta and Grenada this summer.

The United States based airline says the new service will be operated on Saturdays starting June 6 and ending August 15, 2015.

News of the new service was first announced during debate on the 2015 budget by former Tourism Minister Alexandra Ottway Noel.

Delta says it’s using the new Saturday service from Atlanta to Grenada to decide if the flight will return for the winter 2015 peak period.

The announcement will be good news for thousands of Caribbean nationals and Grenadadians alike who reside in Atlanta and have been seeking easier access to the region.

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The Keith Mitchell led Government delivered on its promise when it gave 38 families the keys to homes under the low income Chinese housing programme at Mt. Rush, St. George’s.

The hand over came months after the People’s Republic of China presented the Master Key to government officials.

Minister for Housing, Hon. Delma Thomas encouraged the recipients to care for the units, and to above all, create a clean and safe environment.

“The hand over came months after the People’s Republic of China presented the Master Key to government officials. We want to appeal to the families getting units here today and those who will get in future, to cherish and care for it and its surroundings, keep this as a place that is clean and safe, a good environment to raise children,” she admonished.

Minister Thomas said her Government had been engaging in efforts to provide housing for its people since the passage of Hurricane Ivan, and she is overjoyed to see those efforts come into fruition.

“The Keith Mitchell led Government delivered on its promise when it gave 38 families the keys to homes under the low income Chinese housing programme at Mt. Rush, St. George’s.”

He said Government’s perseverance was the key ingredient in making this day possible.

“It’s a fine thing that the People’s Republic would have done, and we recognise them for that,” he said. But that didn’t come by chance, it came simply because you have a government that has the capacity to negotiate and get those benefits, and for that we must salute and be grateful.”

Honor. Tobias Clement, Parliamentary Representative for St. George’s North East said he is happy to see this moment finally arrive and thanked the Government and People of the People’s Republic of China for their contribution to enhancing the lives of Grenadians.

The Grenada government says it is aiming to have a National Health Insurance Scheme fully up and running early next year.

Health Minister Nikolas Steele announced on Tuesday that a multi-sectoral task force is also being set up to implement the scheme. An Advisory Committee headed by trade union leader and senator, Chester Humphrey, has also recommended the setting up of a secretariat to spearhead the process.

“The committee has also recommended a possible start date for a National Health Insurance and that is at the end of first quarter next year.” Minister Steele said.

“That is dependent on being able to find the appropriate sources of finance between now and then and the progress that is made but the most optimistic date for them will be the end of first quarter.”

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The advisory committee, which began its work more than a year ago, has kicked off talks with the National Insurance Scheme, the body targeted to manage the National Health Insurance Scheme.

“The most significant action taken from the report is that dialogue has begun between the committee members and the National Insurance Scheme’s board of directors to explore the possibility as is recommended by the committee for the National Insurance Scheme to be the manager of the National Health Insurance,” the Health Minister said.

“It was felt that they have the skills set to manage a National Health Insurance Scheme,” the Health Minister said.

The first building is under construction as workers pick-up the pace at the Clarke’s Court Bay Boatyard and Marina project.

Nearly a hundred local workers are on site of the multimillion dollar project expected to be a major boost to the island’s expanding yachting sector.

Implementation Minister Alexandra Otheway Noel says she is pleased with the amount of work accomplished after a recent visit to the site.

Officials say yachting is among the fastest growing sub-sector in Grenada’s growing tourism industry.

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Grenada need not fear that falling world oil prices will result in the threat to the PetroCaribe programme.

In fact, the Venezuelan government has assured Grenada and other PetroCaribe member states that once it holds the reins of the programme, it will continue.

The arrangements are of great importance to all of you the people of Grenada and a lot of concerns have been expressed," said Minister for Economic Development Hon. Oliver Joseph.

"So on the sixth of March, the president of Venezuela called a meeting of all the member states of PetroCaribe ...to give us the assurance that the programme will continue. The concern was that with falling oil prices that programme will be under threat.

Oil under the PetroCaribe deal constitutes only 5 percent of Venezuelan’s oil export.

Senator Joseph also has reported positive development regarding Grenada’s arrangement with ALBA.

"So it’s a very small percentage and therefore the programme will continue and that was reiterated by the president, so we have no need to fear in Grenada as long as the current government is in Venezuela,” said Joseph.

"We are very happy because in our budget a lot of the resources from social programmes come from PetroCaribe funds. We will continue to get funding from ALBA.

More Doctors At Princess Alice Hospital

Residents of St. Andrews and the staff of the Princess Alice Hospital in Mirabeau have praised a decision by Health Minister Nicholas Steele to increase the number of doctors serving the facility.

Jawan Williams, the Permanent Secretary with responsibility for community health services and hospital operations at the Ministry of Health, says the decision is in line with the Ministry’s mandate to provide 24hr health services and hospital operations – doctors serving the facility.

He was addressing a ceremony at the Princess Alice Hospital in celebration of its 65th year of operation.

"This is very clear in the Ministry’s mandate and it has manifested itself at the beginning of this year when the Minister for Health took the decision to improve the medical doctors quota serving the facility”, the PS told a large gathering at the thanksgiving and award ceremony on Wednesday at the Hospital.

He added that historically there was one doctor and then it was increased to two for a very long period.

Meanwhile although there are other minor challenges that are currently being addressed at the St. Andrews based Hospital, the Ministry of Health has already completed the first phase of the project known as the Princess Alice Hospital Diagnostic Services Project.

That project will see the return of diagnostic services including X-ray and Ultrasound services as well as some level of laboratory services at the Princess Alice Hospital.

That project is co-funded and executed by the Ministry of Health, the Roland and Nadia Benjamin Foundation and GRENLIEC.

Work has already been completed on the new building where these services will be provided.

GRENADA AND EXIM BANK REACH AGREEMENT

The Government of Grenada announced that it has concluded a comprehensive agreement to restructure its US$36.6 million (EC$98.8 million) indebtedness to the Export-Import Bank (EXIM) of Taiwan.

This landmark Agreement, which rediscovers the principal outstanding on the loan by 50%, resolves Grenada’s decade-long dispute with EXIM and puts an end to the legal proceedings in the New York Courts.

Under the Terms of the Agreement, the post-haircut balance on the loan will be repayable over 15 years—including a grace period of three and a half years—at an interest rate of 7%.

The Agreement also includes a ‘hurricane clause’, which will allow Grenada to defer payments for a predetermined period should a natural disaster compromise the Government’s ability to service debt in a timely manner in the future.

Commenting on the development, Grenada’s Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Dr. The Right Hon. Keith Mitchell, said: "We are very pleased that with this new arrangement we have now been able to work out much more manageable terms to honour our debts with EXIM bank.”

More from Carriacou

Carriacou Cleared For Chinese Low Income Housing Project

In the year 2005, Grenada made a wise decision to re-establish diplomatic relations with the People’s Republic of China.

In that negotiation, the People’s Republic of China had agreed to give Grenada two(2) thousand houses for low income persons amongst many other supports.

Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Labor, Legal Affairs, Carriacou and Petite Martinique Affairs and Local Government, Hon. Elvin Nimrod, led a delegation to the proposed low income housing site at Dumbys on the sister-isle of Carriacou.

Members of the delegation included Chinese Ambassador for Grenada, H.E. Ou Boqian and a feasibility studying group from China, Parliamentary Secretary for Carriacou and Petite Martinique Affairs, Sen. Hon. Norland Cox, and other technical workers in the Ministry of works and Grenada Housing Authority.

Chinese Ambassador for Grenada, H.E. Ou Boqian said that her feasibility team is extremely satisfied thus far with the proposed site for construction of the houses, and should see the beginning of construction very soon.

H.E. Ou Boqian commended Hon. Elvin Nimrod for his dedication and hard work for the people of Carriacou and Petite Martinique.

Minister Nimrod thanked the People’s Republic of China for keeping their promise in ensuring that Carriacou gets its fair share of the low income housing pie.

IMF SAYS GRENADE OUTPERFORMS TARGETS

No Fear From Falling Oil Prices

The IMF says Grenada is outperforming its targets.

The two year old Keith Mitchell government is being applauded for turning around a sluggish economy and outperforming targets set out in a three-year structural adjustment programme.

The IMF is predicting economic growth of 2 per cent this year compared to the 1.1 per cent projected at an earlier review.

“...So many other people have been complimenting us because the international institutions are seeing Grenada as a model for what they believe ...that small economies that have been experiencing deficit problem... how can they move to correct it and set a path for sustained economic development,” Dr. Mitchell pointed out.

After four years in decline the Grenada economy rebounded in 2013 growing by 3.1 percent and 2.6 percent in 2014.

P.S -Finance Timothy Antoine and IMF Team Brief the Local Media

In 2014, the IMF’s programme in Grenada was successful in making adjustments to the country’s economy. The IMF team was well received in Grenada as they conducted their mission at the time. They have been in Grenada for two weeks, reviewing the country’s economic progress. They met with various stakeholders, including the Prime Minister, to discuss the progress and challenges of the programme.