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A landmark reborn



As of Friday, December 8, 2023

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Photo Gallery

Photos: Dante Carrer



By LEANDRA ROLLE

Tribune Staff Reporter

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THE iconic Elbow Reef Lighthouse in Hope Town, Abaco, was officially re-opened yesterday after months of renovation following Hurricane Dorian.

A ceremony to mark the completion of the Elbow Reef Lighthouse Restoration project was held on the island yesterday.

A grant from the US Ambassadors Fund for Cultural Preservation (AFCP) worth over \$472,000 made the project possible. This was the most significant investment the US Embassy has ever made in the country.

US Embassy Chargé d'Affaires Usha Pitts reflected on the lighthouse's various roles over the years, from serving as a guide for ship captains to becoming a symbol of hope for the Abaco people.

"We don't know what role it would play in our lives in the future, but we do know that it was built by the British, its restoration was funded by the Americans, but now and forever it will belong to the Bahamian people," she said.

Central and South Abaco MP John Pinder added: "It is something that shows more than just light. It is a reflection of what we are here in Abaco — resilience. This lighthouse has withstood storm after storm and centuries of obstacles."

He also thanked those who contributed toward preserving the historic landmark.

Heather Forde-Prosa, development director of The Elbow Reef Lighthouse Society, the body that oversaw the restoration project, said her organisation wants to work on a maintenance programme for the lighthouse, gain additional financial support, and prepare the next generation of people who want to preserve the lighthouse.

We have received help from the minister of tourism, and we have received help from the port department. What we need to do is beef up these budgets because it can be a can of worms," she told reporters.

"You can start on a project, and it becomes something you couldn't imagine having required the amount of funds and money to make it right, so we are looking for some kind of budget that's specified for taking care of this."

Jackson Blatch, assistant lighthouse keeper, agreed that more funding is needed, saying workers are underpaid.

This is my second year as a keeper, and I realise that it isn't cutting it as a keeper," he said. "You have to have a second job to support yourself and your family. The work that is involved in being a keeper, you should be able to survive just off of just having a job as keeper because the shift rotates."

"The first watch starts from six to twelve. The second watch is from twelve to six the next morning, so imagine having to do that and then having to have a second job to be able to support yourself and your family."

Constructed in 1863, the iconic red-and-white Elbow Reef Lighthouse is the last of its kind in the world.

• For more, see today's WEEKEND section.

RBDF RECRUITING DROP OVER HAITI

Candidates choose other services amid deployment plans

By EARYEL BOWLEG
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ROYAL Bahamas Defence Force Commodore Raymond King said plans to send officers to Haiti has hampered the RBDF's recruitment efforts, with some potential recruits choosing to join other law enforcement organisations.

"What we've realised, particularly with this recruitment exercise that

is pending, we would have lost a number of candidates who decided to move to the other armed forces because when the conversation comes now to being deployed to Haiti, it's a reality check for a number of persons in terms of I want to make the ultimate sacrifice in joining the Royal Bahamas Defence Force," he said during an Office of the Prime Minister press briefing yesterday.

SEE PAGE FIVE

MIGRATION DOWN OVERALL - BUT RISE IN THOSE HEADED TO THE US

By EARYEL BOWLEG
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ROYAL Bahamas Defence Force (RBDF) Commodore Raymond King said the northern Bahamas has seen a 90 per cent increase in migration to the United States.

However, he said migration from Haiti to The Bahamas has significantly declined, with no reported

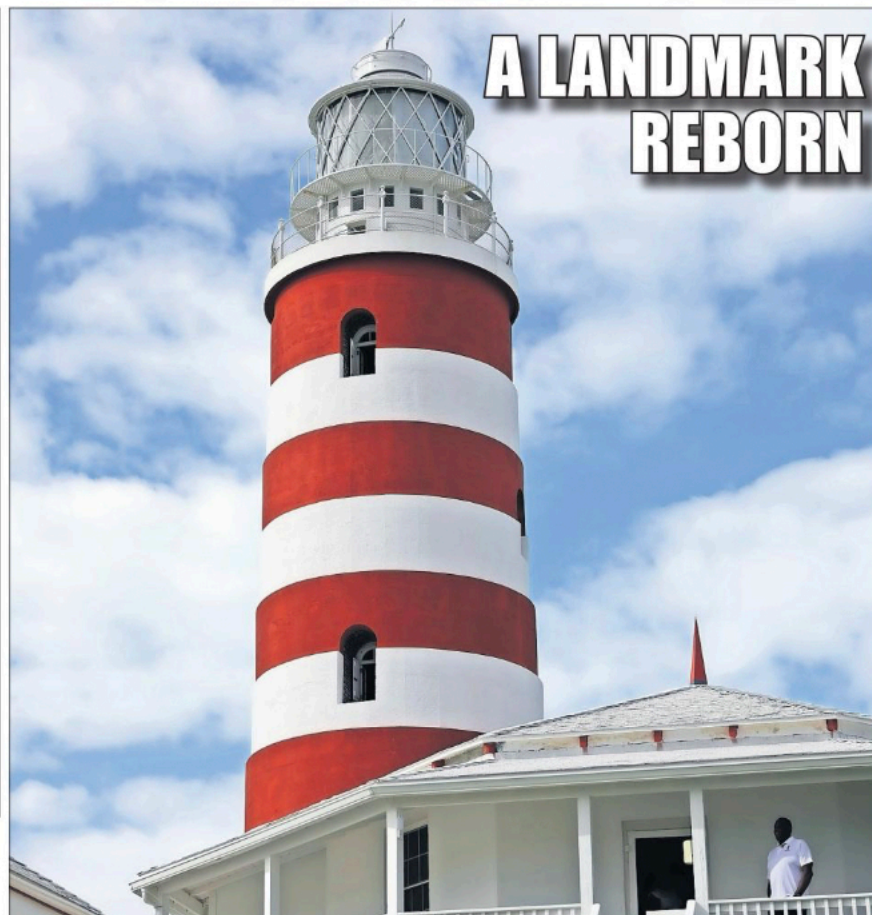
or detected migrant landings in 2023.

He gave statistics during a briefing at the Office of the Prime Minister yesterday.

He said February had the highest number of apprehensions of migrants, saying 563 were apprehended.

"As it relates to The Bahamas, we encounter Haitians, Cubans, Jamaicans, Dominicans, Chinese

SEE PAGE FIVE



A LANDMARK REBORN

THE ELBOW Reef Lighthouse was officially reopened yesterday - with diplomats from the US, China and the UK all in attendance for the ceremony. See PAGE THREE for the full story - plus today's WEEKEND for more photographs. Photo: Dante Carrer

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