

Extended Dutch support package also for Caribbean Netherlands

THE HAGUE--The extended economic support package that the Dutch government presented on Wednesday for the Netherlands also counts for entrepreneurs affected by the coronavirus COVID-19 pandemic in Bonaire, St. Eustatius and Saba.

"The point of departure remains that for the Caribbean Netherlands, a similar approach is selected as for the Netherlands, taking the local situation into consideration. The decision

to postpone decreasing the generic regulations for the Netherlands is entirely applied to the Caribbean Netherlands," it was stated in a letter to the Second Chamber of the Dutch Parliament on Wednesday.

The conversion to the Caribbean Netherlands of the extra input for the Qredits financing will be further worked out. As for the financial support for Dutch municipalities, a similar approach will be applied for the Caribbean public enti-

ties.

The subsidy percentage in the temporary subsidy regulation on wage costs and loss of revenue in the Caribbean Netherlands will remain the same as in the NOW regulation in the Netherlands, which is 80 per cent. The Dutch government will make an additional one million euros available for this.

Additional means will also be allocated for the Caribbean Netherlands in the form of additional island-specific policy to cover necessary costs. The three public entities will keep receiving one million euros in the first quarter of 2021 for additional island-specific policy. An assessment will be made for the second and following quarters of next year.

A potential group for support from these additional means are the dismissed employees who will lose their subsidy per January 1, 2021. The decision-taking as to the execution of this regulation will be left up to the public entities.

The subsidy regulation on compensation of fixed costs to assist entrepreneurs in paying their monthly fixed costs remains in effect. In the fourth quarter of 2020, the subsidy percentage was increased from 50 per cent to 75 per cent. This has to do with the fact that the islands are more dependent on tourism and that businesses have limited possibilities to generate alternative income.

The letter was signed by Ministers Eric Wiebes of Economic Affairs and Climate Policy, Wopke Hoekstra of Finance, Wouter Koolmees of Social Affairs and Labour, and by State Secretaries Mona Keijzer of Economic Affairs and Climate Policy, Hans Vijlbrief of Finance, Fiscal Affairs and the Tax Department, and Bas van 't Wout of Social Affairs and Labour.

2 arrested for trying to enter country with fake documents

AIRPORT--The Alpha Team arrested two men in late November for trying to enter St. Maarten via Princess Juliana International Airport (PJIA) with fake travel documents.

The first incident took place on Tuesday, November 24, when a man M.H.D. tried to pass through the Immigration checkpoint with a fake passport. Immigration officers realised the document was fraudulent and arrested D.

After being interrogated by members of the Alpha team, D. was put on a flight to his country of origin. Authorities have not disclosed what that country was. The

fake passport was confiscated.

The next day the Alpha team arrested a man F.W. for trying to enter the country with a fake visa. The false document was confiscated by the authorities. The Alpha Team interrogated the suspect and later took him to the Philipsburg police station. He is being held pending deportation.

The Alpha Team is a joint multidisciplinary unit comprising the St. Maarten Police Force KPSM, Customs, Immigration, the Dutch Caribbean Coast Guard (DCCG) and the Royal Dutch Marechaussee KMar.

BOND TO AVERT AUCTION

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work on a solution with its creditors.

In a statement on Wednesday, Pasangrahan management thanked Van Lier and Rutte for their "hard work" on behalf of Pasangrahan through the Court of First Instance.

Pasangrahan also thanked Member of Parliament (MP) Christophe Emmanuel and the community of St. Maarten for their "show of support during this struggle."

The guest house owners called Emmanuel their "hero" for his public support for the property. "I am very happy to hear that this vital monument was saved. I would have liked it to have been government, but again we failed to show up for our people. All you need is to find the conviction and courage to stand for what is right and stand for what is important in

your country for your people. I am happy for Pasangrahan," the MP said.

According to management, one group of interested investors was rumoured to be planning a bid for the monumental building as it allegedly wanted to construct a "casino village" in Philipsburg, while another group reportedly also wanted to place a bid.

The monument and its hotel rooms were severely damaged in the 2017 hurricanes and have still not recovered. These factors, coupled with a pending court case for damages claims from the hurricanes and the impact of the global economic downturn caused by the coronavirus COVID-19 pandemic, put the guesthouse in a financial predicament of being auctioned by Development Bank Netherlands Antilles OBNA.



The recipients of the 2020 Governor's Youth Award for Excellence.

Four youngsters honoured with Governor's excellence awards

BELAIR--Four teenagers were awarded the Governor's Youth Award for Excellence in a ceremony at Belair Community Center on Tuesday evening, having been chosen for their outstanding contributions in environmental protection, academics and the arts.

Sara Bharwani won the award in the category of environmental protection. As the founder of the Breathe Better Air initiative, she is a known local champion of environmental sustainability and has used expos and fairs to promote her activism.

Bharwani can also boast some recent major success, as she has helped advocate for legislation banning single-use plastics, which was subsequently passed by Parliament on November 3.

Nigel Alexander Adriana won an award for academics. A naturally gifted student, Adriana has excelled at both primary and secondary school. He was one of the top pupils in the Foundation-Based Education (FBE) Exit Examinations in May 2014, coming jointly first in English and being tied for fourth overall out of 617 pupils.

He placed on the 2019 merit list for the Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate (CSEC) examinations, coming eighth in social studies and being one of only three St. Maarten students to achieve a merit list nod. This list comprises the top 10 students in ev-

ery subject from among 122,813 candidates who sat the regional examination in May/June that year.

Riya Baharani Khemchandani of Learning Unlimited (LU) Preparatory School took home the other award for academics, while dancer Ray-Angel Clarence Antrobus Boasman was awarded for his contribution to the arts.

The Governor's Youth Award for Excellence recognises youth between 13 and 19 years of age who have demonstrated excellence in academics, sport, arts, environmental protection or community service. The recipients were selected by a panel of judges headed by Oldine Bryson-Pantophlet.

"Coming to a recommendation and selecting the winners for the categories had its challenges, because all the finalists were deserving," said Governor Eugene Holiday in a speech given during the official ceremony.

"To all the nominees, whether you receive the award or not, I wish to re-

mind you that excellence is a mindset of continued improvement at whatever you do, because improvement is the key to your growth and the progress of our community and our country," he said.

No awards were handed out for sport or community service because no one was nominated for those categories.

"My reason for introducing the Governor's Youth Award for Excellence is based on my belief that excellence drives durable progress. The future progress of St. Maarten therefore calls for us to invest in cultivating a mindset of excellence among our young people, and in doing so, create a strong foundation for the building of St. Maarten's future," said Holiday.

Prime Minister Silveria Jacobs and Minister of Education, Culture, Youth and Sport (ECYS) Rodolphe Samuel – both of whom attended the ceremony – congratulated the winners, as well as their family and friends.



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