

Research on islands' travelling heritage

LEIDEN--The travelling heritage of Aruba, Bonaire and Curaçao will be the topic for a research project of Professor of Colonial and Post-colonial History Gert Oostindie, doctoral student Joeri Arion and heritage expert Valika Smeulders. The people of the islands will have an active role in the project.

The project Travelling Caribbean Heritage has materialised thanks to a subsidy of the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research NWO. The Universities of Aruba and Curaçao will be involved, as will local heritage organisations.

The research team, together with residents of

the islands, will look at how documentation of and reflection on heritage can contribute to the developing of inclusive communities. It concerns heritage in the broadest sense, such as buildings, history, music, dance and literature.

Oostindie, who is also Director of the Royal Netherlands Institute of Southeast Asian and Caribbean Studies KITLV, said that the few studies that were done on the islands in the past were mainly about the people, and did not include them. That is why the researchers will work closely with people residing on the islands, but also with those from the Dutch Caribbean who live in the Netherlands.

Heritage expert Smeulders will research how Dutch Caribbean people experience their culture in the Netherlands. "They cherish their immaterial heritage such as their cuisine, the language, the parties and dances. For them, that represents who they are," she said.

The issue of identity and who defines that identity is often the source of discussions on the islands, said doctoral student Arion. The centuries-old migration to and from the islands has had a strong influence on the culture of the local population. Also playing a role are the post-colonial status, the formation of a nation and tourism.

"This project does not only focus on the scientific aspects, but also includes social issues and the developing of local know-how," said Oostindie.

The identity of the islands' residents cannot be defined easily. The many changes in the relation with the Netherlands make the issue even more complex, stated Arion. The intensive migration between the Dutch Caribbean islands to the Netherlands plays an important role – people can feel at home 'here' and 'there,' or not at all.

The many Spanish-speaking migrants from the Caribbean who took up residency on the islands also have an influence on the language and culture, added Smeulders. Making matters even more complex are the many differences between the islands where it concerns heritage.

Aruba's airport to be expanded

ARUBA--A four-year, US \$200 million plan to increase capacity at the Queen Beatrix International Airport in Aruba was given the go-ahead by the Aruba Airport Authority (AAA).

The airport will work with US authorities to improve passenger preclearance through the American border checks in the Aruba airport, while also making the facility more sustainable in the process.

AAA awarded the design and development contract to Netherlands Airport Consultants NACO, the chosen company said in a statement. The firm from The Hague is a subsidiary of Dutch engineering group Royal HaskoningDHV.

The "Gateway 2030" project calls for creating a larger check-in area, implementing a more efficient baggage-handling system and improving security screening. This should reduce waiting times and improve service even when the airport is at its busiest, NACO stated.

Five more gates will be added to the site including three where an aircraft is connected by jet-way, and two where passengers are transported to the terminal building by bus. Restaurant and amenity selections will also be increased, and more retail space will be developed at the airport.

Solar panels will also be installed in the renovation, while lighting and air conditioning will be automatically adjusted based on the number of people at the airport. "A solar study will determine the build-up of facades and roofs to avoid solar gain while maximizing day light for a pleasant passenger experience," the company said.

This is the first project to expand capacity at the airport in 17 years. Some 2.6 million passengers use "Aeropuerto Reina Beatrix" annually, which has stretched the airport to its limit.

Gateway 2030 will begin construction next year. The price tag equals roughly two-thirds of the airport authority's budgeted investments through 2020.



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The Rhuggenaath Cabinet in session.

FIRST MEETING...

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12" headed by MFK-leader Gerrit Schotte tried to stop snap elections called by the outgoing Koeiman Cabinet after the latter lost its majority support in Parliament, but the Kingdom Council of Ministers in The Hague placed the island under higher supervision and put Governor Lucille George-Wout in charge of the electoral process.

PAR won with six seats, followed by MAN and MFK with five each. The former teamed up with newcomer PIN (one seat) for a majority of 12 seats in the 21-seat legislature.

MFK is now in the opposition with KdNT (two seats), PS and MP (one each).



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