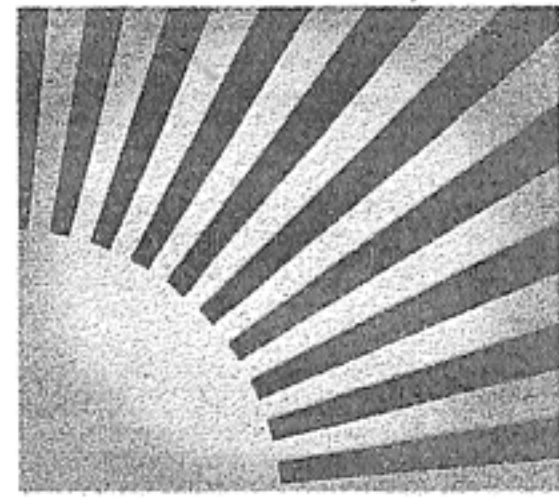




Only one survives
Libyan jet crash

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Economy in a trap

Think tank: Fiscal crisis imperils gov't plans to balance budget by '13

LOCAL PAGE 5



UPR students take protest outside gates

Dozens of University of Puerto Rico students, who have been striking at the Río Piedras campus for nearly four weeks, took their protest to Ponce de León Avenue on Wednesday. An assembly will take place today to decide whether to end the stalemate with the UPR's administration.

LOCAL PAGE 4

Daily Sun/Mauricio Pascual

De la Torre: 'We do not have a plan B'

BY JUAN A. HERNÁNDEZ
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University of Puerto Rico President José R. De la Torre said Wednesday he is totally confident the student strike that has kept the Río Piedras campus shut since April 21 will end today after the student general assembly decides in favor of lifting the strike.

"We are hoping that the waters will recede [today] and this situation can be solved. We do not have a plan B because we hope that the strike will end [today]," De la Torre said.

The UPR president was asked whether his announcement was an attempt to influence or intimidate the student assembly into favoring the end of the strike, he denied his intention was such.

"This is not an ultimatum. It is not my style to send out ultimatums to anyone. This responds to my interest in reporting on the University's current state of affairs prior to an assembly that may affect the future of this strike," he said.

Río Piedras Campus General Student Council President Gabriel Laborde called Tuesday for a general student as-



Daily Sun/Mauricio Pascual

A group of UPR striking students take their protest to the Golden Mile in Hato Rey on Wednesday.

sembly on his own after the council he presides ordered him to coordinate the assembly with the Student Negotiating Committee. Laborde admitted Tuesday that he didn't know if the council would approve of his method, but said nevertheless, "I'm going forward on this."

After permission to use the Roberto Clemente Coliseum

was denied by the San Juan municipal government Tuesday afternoon, Laborde announced Wednesday that the assembly would take place at the Puerto Rico Convention Center and that "security will be provided so no student may feel intimidated." Laborde did not specify how, or who would pay for the use of the convention center.

De la Torre had initially denied any knowledge about the cost of renting the convention center to hold the student assembly, but Río Piedras Chancellor Ana R. Guadalupe later admitted the cost of renting the facility would be covered by the Río Piedras campus and the Office of the President of the UPR [De la Torre's]. She did not specify how much it would cost to hold the student assembly there.

Questioned about the possibility that the Police could be present at the convention center, Guadalupe said "security will be provided by University Police, with the assistance of the center's private security service."

De la Torre admitted there is a possibility that even if Río Piedras ends its strike today, some other UPR campuses could continue with their own strikes. As of today, 10 of the 11 UPR campuses across the island are on indefinite strike. While the Medical Sciences Campus remains open, some students there have expressed support for the general student strike.

Puig warns lawmakers to behave

BY EVA LLORENS VELEZ
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Treasury Secretary Juan Carlos Puig warned the House Treasury Committee Wednesday that he will not tolerate any acts of disrespect against him when the time comes for him to defend the proposed legalization of some 40,000 video lottery machines to garner an estimated \$200 million in revenues needed for the government's operations next fiscal year.

The bill, currently, does not have enough legislative support for passage. In October the Senate passed a resolution rejecting the legalization of video lottery machines to resolve the island's fiscal problems. Minority lawmakers contend Puig still needs to address concerns about the bill's impact on revenues for the University of Puerto Rico, tourism and the general fund.

"I will talk about the bill as long as the discussion is held in a professional manner and taking into account my person and my position," Puig said. "I will not tolerate disrespect."

The proposed video lottery bill, at press time, had not been filed yet at the Legislature. Committee Chairman Antonio Silva said that while Tuesday was the last day to file bills for consideration in the current session, the Legislature can authorize the consideration of bills submitted after the deadline.

Silva said he did not understand the opposition to a "game" that already exists and is unregulated. He noted there are an estimated 100,000 video lottery machines currently operating in Puerto Rico and that the bill will reduce this to 40,000. "I have even seen them in pharmacies," he said.

Popular Democratic Party Rep. Luis Vega Ramos told the Daily Sun that he will pressure Puig into answering questions on how the video lottery bill will affect the tourism industry, which relies on casinos, and the UPR, which receives a chunk of the revenues from slot machines operating in casinos.

He said the UPR's budgetary formula could get at least \$27 million less once the video lottery machine system is put in place.

He also expressed concerns that Puig has not shown any evidence to support his contention that the video lottery bill will yield \$220 million and that it will take at least a year to implement.

Puig also said he plans to intensify efforts to reduce tax evasion. Besides placing liens on properties belonging to tax delinquents, he said he will embargo movable property, such as cars and equipment, to guarantee the payment of debts. The agency also began reporting tax delinquents to credit bureaus, he said.

Regarding the agency's budget, Puig said he has no intention of canceling any contracts with advertising agencies. A budget report shows that Treasury gave a \$600,000 contract to Ballori and Farré for advertising services.



Daily Sun/César Silva

Treasury Secretary Juan Carlos Puig, center, will defend the proposed legalization of video lottery machines.

Public workers stage protest in Capitol

BY EVA LLORENS VELEZ
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Although Capitol staffers were on the lookout, public workers entered the Capitol Wednesday, contending they were going to make some visits and to everyone's surprise began a protest at the rotunda area where they displayed placards against Law 7, the Fiscal Emergency Law.

The workers, all of whom were given layoff notices effective May 28, were stripped of their placards immediately. Capitol officials said no one is allowed to protest in the area of the rotunda.

Ana Maria Rigau, who works in the Special Communities Office in Ponce, said the displaced workers were from her office, the Institute of Puerto Rican Culture, and the Administration for the Training of Future Businessmen and Workers, known as AAFET in Spanish. "Some received layoff notices while the others will be left in agencies without resources and staff to provide services," she said.

The workers were supported by the UTIER, the Puerto Rico Electrical and Irrigation Workers Union, and PROSOL-UTIER.

The employees were originally given layoff notices in November, but a court ruled that the agencies violated their due process, as established by Law 7, so they were able to temporarily stay in their jobs. The agencies started the dismissal process against them all over again.

Still, the workers vowed to continue the fight to keep their jobs even though the government is consolidating the two commissions in charge of handling complaints from public and unionized workers, as well as those laid off as a result of Law 7. "They are doing that to hurt the workers. The two entities have 27,000 cases and it will take them eight years to go over them," said Luis Pedraza Leduc, coordinator of PROSOL-UTIER.

Vidal González, who works for AAFET, said he was hired at the entity because of efforts made by the Vocational Rehabilitation Administration, as he suffers a speech problem that made it difficult for him to land a job. While he is protected by anti-discrimination laws, he alleged government officials refused to hear his dismissal case because of dispositions contained in Law 7 that prevent agencies from taking complaints from workers who are disabled. "I was good enough for them to get federal funds through the [American Disabilities Act] law, but now I am not," he said.

Enma Alejandro Clausell, who works for the IPRC, said she was laid off even though she has worked at the entity more than 13 years, the cutoff number of years for workers to be exempted from the dispositions of Law 7. She complained that the Fiscal and Economic Reconstruction Board only recognized 12 years of service for her, rather than the full 13 years.

Pedraza Leduc told the Daily Sun the workers would meet with the heads of the legislative chambers to discuss their cases.