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FREE

GOVERNMENT GEARS UP FOR STEEL SUMMIT

BILLY BAMBROUGH

STEEL companies will this week ramp up pressure on the government to come to the industry's defence ahead of an emergency European conference on 15 February.

The conference, called at the behest of the UK and involving executives from Tata Steel and Celsa, will urge the European Commission to take action against cheap steel flooding the market from China and Russia.

The British government has toughened its stance over the last few days with business secretary Sajid Javid co-signing a letter with other steel producing EU states calling for the commission to act.

Anna Soubry, minister for small business, industry and enterprise, is set to deliver a keynote speech at the conference, which takes place a week today. She will urge the commission to address issues and bring in stricter anti-dumping rules.

Trade group UK Steel is in contact

with the government and will this week push for more to be done.

The director of UK Steel, Gareth Stace, told City A.M.: "I was surprised when I saw the letter, but it's a step in the right direction."

"Anna Soubry has the opportunity to do something here, but there won't be any immediate improvements. It could still get worse before it gets better."

A spokesperson for the Department of Business, Innovation and Skills told City A.M.: "This is all part of our ongoing efforts to lobby the commission."

The government's position has raised eyebrows given its increasingly warm relations with Beijing and efforts to bring the economies of the UK and China closer together. The UK is supportive of China's efforts to win market economy status (MES), which would make it harder for tariffs to be levied against the country and could allow Chinese companies to further undercut European producers.

A decision on whether to grant

China MES will be taken by EU leaders in the coming months. The Economic Policy Institute, an American think tank, has claimed that such a decision could lead to the loss of between 1.7m and 3.5m jobs across Europe.

UK Steel has previously called on the government to take action on business rates, energy costs and state aid rules. However, the debate over support for the embattled UK steel industry has split economists, many of whom argue the government should not prop up the steel sector at the expense of the taxpayer.

Mark Littlewood, director general of the Institute of Economic Affairs, said: "In the absence of being competitive, the industry can no longer be sustained."

"The silver lining is that consumers across the EU are benefiting from cheaper prices, whilst competition from China means that EU countries are redeploying their resources to other more profitable sectors."



Amid repeated delays to Heathrow decision, Gatwick has gained backers

Frustrated City bosses back second runway at Gatwick

JULIAN HARRIS

SENIOR business figures are demanding that the government grants Gatwick the right to build another runway, if expansion at Heathrow continues to be thwarted by political and legal obstacles.

The Airports Commission backed a third runway at Heathrow last July describing the west London site as the "clear and unanimous" option.

The government has repeatedly delayed the decision, with no update expected until summer at the earliest. MPs have called for further environmental and economic studies into the impact of a third runway at Heathrow.

"Personally I just don't have a preference, I just want us to get on with this," Iain Anderson, the executive chairman of City

comms giant Cicero, said.

"Both would serve the purpose. I think people are deeply frustrated by the hold-ups."

Hedge fund boss Crispin Odey wrote an open letter over the weekend, first reported by Sky. "The answer to the government's conundrum is actually quite plain: stop fixating on Heathrow and expand Gatwick," it said.

The letter, also seen by City A.M., adds: "Gatwick faces no legal impediment to expansion, whereas Heathrow's expansion has been permanently stalled by noise and air quality issues and will continue to be so in future. The business community wants something to happen and Gatwick is the option that we think can happen, we should get on with it."

© RUNWAY DRAMA ROLLS ON, P3

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WHERE TO STAY

The 88-room **Hotel Savoy** has been designed by Olga Polizzi, and is decked out with parquet flooring, marble and mosaics, making it one of Florence's most contemporary Italian-designed hotels. roccoforte.com/hotel-savoy



WHERE TO GO

Escape the crowds of the **Duomo** and head to the **Boboli Gardens** instead. Sat behind the Pitti Palace, these mid-16th-century Italian gardens boast Renaissance stone statues and beautiful views of the city.



WHERE TO DRINK

Le Volpi e l'Uva is the best wine bar in Florence, tucked away in a side street a stone's throw away from the Ponte Vecchio. The prices are reasonable and it stocks a dizzying array of wines by the bottle and glass. levolpieluva.com



WHERE TO EAT

La Ménagère is in one of Florence's oldest hardware stores and plays with texture, from hot-cold plates to soft-crunchy dishes. Try the suckling pig with roasted apples or cow tongue with liquorice and chicory. lamenagere.it

A PARADISE OF
TWO HALVES

Oliver Pickup discovers the incredible dual Caribbean islands of Saint Kitts and Nevis



With its hazy azure waters lazily lapping the white-sand beaches, and sun seekers pondering which rum-based cocktail to slurp next in the penumbra of a palm tree, the West Indies remains an alluring destination to escape London's dreary winter.

But why stick with one Caribbean island when you can easily fit a couple into the same holiday? After all, it seems rude to only visit St Kitts when its little sister Nevis is just a five minute speedboat ride away.

"Two islands, one paradise", reads the huge sign proudly greeting passengers at Robert L. Bradshaw International Airport, situated towards the northeast of St Kitts' capital, Basseterre. These two islands form one paradise, whose two nuanced flavours combine to offer the discerning traveller a richer cultural experience than the outdated Caribbean picture-postcard stereotype.

Notably, St Kitts (more formally named 'Saint Christopher', after Mr Columbus, the Italian-born explorer who spied the island in 1493), and Nevis is regarded as "the mother colony of the West Indies", being the first English colony in the area, and a gateway to the other resourceful landmasses dotted around.

Since gaining independence from the United Kingdom on September 19, 1983, great effort has been made to instil and nourish local confidence and culture, with the thumb pushed on the reset button.

For instance, on the exact day of independence one of the first things the Kittitian government did was rename the tallest peak on the island, changing Mount Misery – a reference to nearby massacres of Caribs by both the French and English colonial mas-

ters – to the more positive Liamuiga, which translates to "fertile land". It's an apposite title, given that St Kitts' rich soils produce abundant vegetation and tropical crops that make it the envy of other, more arid Caribbean lands.

Fittingly, on the verdant slopes beneath the awesome Mount Liamuiga, a 3,792ft dormant stratovolcano, a pioneering food revolution is beginning to bear fruit. Belle Mont Farm, part of Kittitian Hill, is a high-end, ultra eco-conscious resort which started welcoming visitors in late 2014 and is helping to shift perceptions and alter tourism in the West Indies, by offering farm-to-table cuisine in opulent surrounds.

Any food lover would adore Belle Mont Farm, which is conceptually unique in the Caribbean. With 25 (and counting) different varieties of avocado to forage for in the 400-acre organic farmland, not to mention 125 types of mango, and 65 different variations of banana.

With so many options to choose from, there are plans to label everything grown here with QR barcodes for the curious to scan with their smartphones.

Dishes are changed daily and according to what's ripe. This is determined by Christophe Letard, a veteran of Relais & Châteaux properties, and his sous chef Xavier Castella, formerly of elBulli in Spain, known for many years as the best restaurant in the world. Furthermore, every Sunday there is a lengthy, champagne-fuelled brunch (also attended by well-dressed locals), where you can tuck in to as many of the locally sourced creations you can stomach.

The resort even boasts the world's first edible golf course. Designed by Welsh legend Ian Woosnam, you can't



Clockwise from main: Cockleshell Bay in St. Kitts; the world's first edible golf course at Belle Mont Farm; an ocean view at Montpellier.

quite eat the clubs yet, but pretty much everything else is fair game.

Every tee overlooks the Caribbean Sea and, if you feel peckish, you can reach up to pluck some fruit before wielding your driver. Typically, it's a chemical-free zone, with the greens and fairways weeded by hand once a week.

And there is a beach club, should one wish for a sandcastle fix, though guests are encouraged to kick back and relax in the spacious one-room villas set back from the coast, and wait for the next delicious meal. Here you can indulge in infinity pools and wash in the outdoor, freestanding baths and showers (using body scrub you can make yourself with a little help from the staff in the spa), with the surrounding bamboo shielding you from prying eyes.

"We want guests to lose their inhibitions," says Val Kempadoo, the Trinidad-born entrepreneur whose grand vision has already garnered some \$600 million in investment cap-

The resort even boasts the world's first edible golf course

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NEED TO KNOW

Seven-night TTC trip starts at £4,755pp for two sharing at **Belle Mont Farm** (bellemontfarm.com), including return flights with BA to St Kitts from Gatwick. Valid for travel completed between Jan 5 and Apr 30.

Montpelier Plantation & Beach has Premier Rooms available from \$225 (plus 24% taxes) per night based on two people sharing a room on a B&B basis. Visit montpeliermevis.com

For more info on **St Kitts**, visit stkitstourism.kn

BA flies direct to St Kitts from Gatwick on Saturday and Wednesday. Visit ba.com/st-kitts



where Diana escaped to with princes William and Harry, having announced her separation from Prince Charles.

"If it's good enough for Diana, I expect it's good enough for you," my taxi driver suggest playfully as I'm transported from the speedboat harbour at Oualie Beach to the hotel. Fair enough, I think as we speed past grazing wild donkeys. We reach the harbour easily in 25 minutes, which may have something to do with the fact there are no traffic lights on the whole island.

Soon I was wheeling into the cobblestone entrance of the Relais & Châteaux venue, where a gigantic weeping fig tree shelters the great house at Montpelier, sitting adjacent to the scenic Nevis Mountain, which seems perpetually cloaked in mist.

Here too, food is an essential part of the experience. Chef Stephane Caumont, another Frenchman, serves up hearty fare, including plenty of freshly caught seafood, in three top-notch restaurants.

The jewel in the crown is Mill Privée – supposedly the only eatery of its kind on the planet – where diners can enjoy a candlelit, six-course tasting menu in a charming, dilapidated sugar mill. And it would be remiss of me not to mention Kaddy, the head bartender at Montpelier, who is widely regarded as the best rum-punch maker in the land. His drinks are seriously impressive and dangerously potent, too.

Away from the mega cruise ships which dock daily at Basseterre, Nevis is perhaps more relaxed and less touristy than St Kitts, its big brother. Though given how easy and stress free it is to travel from one to the other, experiencing both of these islands is an absolute must.

ital, with the first sixth being used to erect 84 one-room houses in time for next season. Eventually, his plans will include an artists' village, 10 larger villas, four vast farm houses and six restaurants

"We want Kittitian Hill to be a vehicle for change in the Caribbean. Most resorts in the area have a thin veneer of sustainability, but we are the reverse. This is a different model of tourism. From St Kitts we feel that we can influence future tourism. It's about empowering people, shifting the needle, and creating a sense of local pride."

When completed, it will be some story. While Kittitian Hill is writing its first few chapters, one resort, across the scenic channel from St Kitts in nearby Nevis, is somewhat more established and traditional in its values.

Indeed, Montpelier Plantation & Beach, a refined, hillside hotel is set on a former sugar plantation where, in 1787, British Admiral Lord Horatio Nelson married Fanny Nisbet. More recently – 1993 to be exact – this was



A traditional Barbadian chattel house near Montpelier Plantation & Beach, and two women practice yoga near a nice palm tree



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