

PM Expresses Confidence in Acting Chief Justice

PRIME MINISTER the Most Hon. Andrew Holness has expressed confidence that Justice Bryan Sykes, who has been appointed to act as Chief Justice, will effectively carry out his role in the public's interest.

He said Justice Sykes was appointed based on his "extraordinary legal insights, clarity and erudition," adding that his "discipline, structure, efficiency and timeliness recommend him highly to this office."

"The public wants to see an efficient and timely justice system and, above all else, that was my primary consideration."

He noted that the Government "looked carefully in selecting someone who we thought is not just erudite in his judgements, but someone who will focus as well on the efficiency of the system."

Timely justice outcomes and strengthening of the rule of law are objectives of the medium-term goal for the develop-



Prime Minister the Most Hon. Andrew Holness (centre) offers words of support to the Hon. Mr. Justice Bryan Sykes, as he enters his new post as Acting Chief Justice of Jamaica. At left is retired Chief Justice, the Hon. Mrs. Justice Zaila McCalla. Mr. Sykes was sworn in by Governor-General, His Excellency the Most Hon. Sir Patrick Allen, during a ceremony at King's House on February 1.

ment of Jamaica, recently approved by Cabinet.

"The public wants to see an efficient and timely justice system and, above all else, that was my primary consideration. So, I am confident that Justice Sykes will act in the role of Chief Justice and very soon will fully assume the role of Chief Justice," Mr. Holness said.

Mr. Sykes was sworn in by Governor-General, His Excellency the Most Hon. Sir Patrick Allen, during a

ceremony at King's House on February 1. He replaces the Hon. Mrs. Justice Zaila McCalla, who has retired.

Country's Rating Upgraded from Stable to Positive

MINISTER OF Finance and the Public Service, Hon. Audley Shaw, has welcomed Fitch Ratings agency's revision of Jamaica's economy from "stable" to "positive", which he says is a result of macro-economic improvements.

He said these include further reduction in unemployment to a 10-year low at 10.3 per cent; stabilisation of the Jamaican dollar, which revalued to \$125.50 against the US dollar; growth in the tourism and business process outsourcing industries; and a construction industry that is "literally booming."

The Minister was speaking at the signing ceremony for €9.17 million (US\$10 million) in grant funding under the European Union-Caribbean

Investment Facility (EU-CIF) for the Government's Energy Management and Efficiency Project, at the Ministry, in Kingston on February 1.

Additionally, Mr. Shaw said the debt to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) ratio is poised for further reduction and is expected to close the 2017/18 fiscal year below 105 per cent.

"We are moving in a very aggressive way to deal with all the fundamental issues that collectively militate against business and consumer confidence and investments (and by extension, growth). We have to make sure that we do the necessary things to make our country more appropriately aligned with global standards," the Minister said.

Provide Information to Security Forces – PM

PRIME MINISTER the Most Hon. Andrew Holness is urging citizens to continue providing critical information to the security forces, which will assist them in removing criminals and weapons from the streets, particularly in St. James where the State of Public Emergency is under way.

The Prime Minister was speaking in the House of Representatives on January 30.

He noted that the security forces have been operating in a commendable way and encouraged them to continue to respect the rights of the people and protect the confidentiality of information given.

"People are seeing that the Government is serious, the Opposition is serious



Prime Minister the Most Hon. Andrew Holness emphasises a point while addressing the House of Representatives on January 30.

about crime. There is an evolving consensus that we must tackle this thing; I think that we are on to a good thing if we can maintain the posture against the criminals," he said.

In the meantime, the Prime Minister said the State of Emergency will

target persons involved in the importation of guns, drugs and other major crimes.

"The strategy can't be simply to focus on the street-level criminals... the -facilitators of lottery scamming, illegal importation of weapons, extortion, unaccustomed goods, drugs and murders, those crimes will be specifically targeted, and we have mobilised all law-enforcement agencies to deal with that," he said.

The Lower House, on January 30 approved the Emergency Powers (Continuance) Resolution 2018, which will extend the State of Public Emergency in the parish of St. James until May 2, 2018.

The State of Public Emergency was declared on January 18.

NIDS Will Address Problems of Undocumented Youth

CHIEF TECHNICAL Director in the Office of the Prime Minister, Jacqueline Lynch-Stewart, has reiterated the call for Jamaicans to support the National Identification System (NIDS), noting that it will address the major issues the nation faces with undocumented youth.

"We have a large number of young persons who have no identification (ID). Not having an ID puts you at a disadvantage. It stops you from having opportunities," she noted.

"This national ID is going to address that type of challenge that we now have within our country," Mrs. Lynch-Stewart added.

She was speaking at a NIDS town hall meeting held on January 30 at the Undercroft of the University of the West Indies (UWI), Mona, where concerns from youth regarding the new system were addressed.

Mrs. Lynch-Stewart told the young people that NIDS will assist them to be easily identified and processed when they engage with members of the security force.

She said it will also address the problems faced by many older Jamaicans, who are at a disadvantage in accessing critical services, including healthcare, because they never received an ID.

NIDS is intended to provide a comprehensive and secure structure to enable the capture and storage of identity information for all Jamaicans, where each citizen will be provided with a randomised nine-digit National Identification Number (NIN), which they will have for life.

The roll-out of NIDS is slated to begin with a pilot project in January 2019, focusing on civil servants.



Chief Technical Director in the Office of the Prime Minister, Jacqueline Lynch-Stewart

Gov't Working to Take Profit Out of Crime

FINANCE AND the Public Service Minister, Audley Shaw, says the Government is undertaking measures to combat acquisitive crimes, where the offender derives material gain from the criminal activity.

The measures include revisions to the Companies Act to incorporate the retention of beneficial ownership information; the designation of certain professions as reporting entities under the Terrorism Prevention Act; passage of the National Identification System Act; and the development of a system for capturing statistics related to trial matters.

"We will also see, in short order, the Micro Credit Bill and amendments to the Companies Act and Trust Act as additional steps by the Government to improve our fight against crimes and those who profit from it; to improve transparency and to be able to cope in the environment (of) increased de-risking arrangements by financial institutions," Mr. Shaw added.

He was speaking on January 31 at the opening ceremony for the Financial Investigations Division's (FID) conference at the

Jamaica Pegasus Hotel in New Kingston

Mr. Shaw noted that most career criminals who are "in the business of making money" are adaptive, flexible and "ready to switch to more lucrative forms of crime", citing the lotto scamming racket as an example.

He said it is important that measures are "aggressively" taken that will lead to the profits of these illicit activities being taken away from criminals, and that this is done expeditiously.



Finance and the Public Service Minister, Hon. Audley Shaw (right), converses with Chief Technical Director, Financial Investigations Division (FID), Robin Sykes, at the opening ceremony of the FID's two-day conference held at the Jamaica Pegasus Hotel on January 31.

St. James High School Gets New Classrooms



Minister of Education, Youth and Information, Senator the Hon. Ruel Reid (3rd left), is assisted by Principal of the Mt. Alvernia High School, Stacey Reynolds (2nd left), to cut the ribbon to mark the official opening of a new block of classrooms at the St. James High School on January 30. Sharing the moment are Director of Region Four, Dr. Michelle Pinnock (left); Principal of the school, Joseph Williams (right); Chairman of the school board, Reverend Alton Thelwell (2nd right); and students of the institution.