

The Sovereignty of Jamaica is Foremost - PM

PRIME MINISTER the Most Hon. Andrew Holness has declared that the sovereignty of Jamaica is foremost as the Government enters relations with bilateral partners.

Speaking at the official handing over ceremony for the Jamaica China Goodwill Infant Schools 1 and 2, in Olympic Gardens on October 31, the Prime Minister explained that the country's pre-eminence is critical, and will be preserved and protected, especially as the relationship between Jamaica and its international partners deepens.

In specific reference to the Government's infrastructure development in partnership with the Government of China, Mr. Holness noted that there has been much fear mongering.

"The Government of Jamaica has been very strategic, and the sovereignty of Jamaica is always foremost in my mind. So when we engage, we engage with that as a non-negotiable part



Prime Minister the Most Hon. Andrew Holness (3rd left) observes as Education, Youth and Information Minister, Senator the Hon. Ruel Reid (left), explains information displayed on the computer screen during a tour of the Jamaica-China Goodwill Infant School in West Central St. Andrew on October 31. Others (from 2nd left) are Principal of the school, Suelyn Ward-Brown; Chinese Ambassador to Jamaica, His Excellency Tian Qi; and Member of Parliament for St. Thomas Eastern, where another institution is located, Dr. Fenton Ferguson.

of the partnership," said Prime Minister Holness.

He stated that the infrastructure projects undertaken with the assistance of the Chinese Government or companies, are investments, and all have been beneficial to the economy.

"What we must ensure as we have always done, is that if we borrow, we borrow smartly. We seek to get the best rates and we make a commitment as we have made with other countries and other multi-lateral institutions,

as it is in our constitution that we must repay our loans," Prime Minister Holness said.

A second Jamaica-China Goodwill Infant School has been opened in Eastern St. Thomas.

Unemployment Falls to Record Low of 8.4 Per Cent

THE COUNTRY'S unemployment rate has fallen to a new record low of 8.4 per cent, according to the Statistical Institute of Jamaica [STATIN] Labour Force Survey for July 2018. This out-turn is 1.3 per cent lower than the 9.7 per cent recorded for the April 2018 survey. It is also 2.9 percentage points lower than the rate of 11.3 per cent for July 2017.

STATIN said the decline is mainly attributable to an increase in the number of persons employed and a simultaneous reduction in the number of persons in the labour force.

The Institute noted that the July 2018 out-turn reflects a fall in the rate for males, down 2.2 percentage points to 5.8 per cent, and females, down 3.8 per-

centage points to 11.4 per cent.

Additionally, STATIN said the unemployment rate among youth aged 14 to 24 decreased by 5.3 per cent to 22.2 per cent, relative to the 27.5 per cent out-turn recorded in July 2017.

Meanwhile, STATIN said the overall number of employed individuals rose to 1,226,400 as at July 2018, representing an increase of 12,800 persons.

A breakdown of the figures shows that the number of males employed increased by 5,900 to 681,800, while female employment rose by 6,900 to 544,600.

STATIN advised that the total labour force stood at 1,338,200 persons, a decrease of 2.2 per cent in July 2018, compared to the corresponding period last year.

Brown's Hall Community to Get Health Centre

WITHIN THE next three months, residents of Brown's Hall and surrounding communities in St. Catherine will have a \$25 million health centre close to their homes.

The facility is being built through collaboration involving Kemteck Development and Construction Limited and Omni Industries Limited, which are providing the funds; the National Health Fund (NHF), which did the design work; and the Ministry of Health.

Speaking at a ceremony to break ground for the project on October 31, portfolio Minister, Dr. the Hon. Christopher Tufton, said development of the health centre represents a "true partnership".

He said that the heads of the two companies - Sylvester Tulloch of Kemteck and Von White of Omni - who are from Brown's Hall, did not hesitate to partner with



Minister of Health, Dr. the Hon. Christopher Tufton (third right), breaks ground for the \$25 million Brown's Hall Health Centre in St. Catherine on October 31. Others (from left) are Deputy Mayor of Spanish Town and Councillor for the Ginger Ridge Division, Ralston Wilson; Project Manager at the National Health Fund (NHF), Orette Clarke; Sales and Marketing Manager at Omni Industries Limited, Vincent Clarke; Chairman and Managing Director at Kemteck Development and Construction Limited, Sylvester Tulloch; and Senior Public Health Nurse at the South East Regional Health Authority (SERHA), Marlene Stephenson.

the Ministry to establish the facility.

Dr. Tufton said that the health centre will assist the

Ministry's efforts to get citizens to take responsibility for their own health, by getting regular health checks and taking steps to prevent lifestyle-related illnesses.

"We have to get back to basics and use the community-based approach and sell the message of how we should live, how we should treat with ourselves in order to avoid diseases," he said.



Workmen rehabilitate sections of Half Way Tree Road.

Contracts Signed for Tablets in Schools Project

A NEW phase of the Tablets in Schools Project is slated to get under way soon, following the signing of two contracts totalling US\$30 million.

Of the sum, US\$16 million has been awarded to GeoTech Vision Limited, while US\$14 million goes to Innovative Corporate Solutions Limited for the supply and delivery of tablet carts and services.

The contracts were signed on October 30 at the Terra Nova All-Suite Hotel in St. Andrew by Minister of Education, Youth and Information, Senator the Hon. Ruel Reid; Chief Executive Officer (CEO), GeoTechVision, Valerie Grant; CEO, Innovative Corporate Solutions, Neil Abrahams; Principal Financial Officer, Ministry of Science and Technology, Richard Fonseca; and Acting CEO, e-Learning Jamaica Company Limited, Izett McCalla.

The Ministry of Education, Youth and Information is collaborating with e-Learning Jamaica Company Limited and the Universal Service Fund to implement the project in selected public educational institutions over the next 11 years. A total of 1,106 institutions will benefit over the period.

In his address, Senator Reid said the Government will continue to provide students, teachers and other stakeholders with the necessary facilities to access technology.

"We cannot advance and take our place among the leading nations of the world if we do not continue to increase access to technology," he said.

The Minister said this new phase of the programme will be more effective, especially since it will give the nation's teachers addi-

tional help to administer several aspects of the National Standards Curriculum.

New safeguards have been installed on the devices to prevent access to inappropriate content.

Reintegration Policy for Teen Mothers Reaffirmed

THE MINISTRIES of Culture, Gender, Entertainment and Sport, and Education, Youth and Information, have reaffirmed their commitment to the national policy for the Reintegration of School-Age Mothers into the formal school system.

Gender Minister, Hon. Olivia Grange, and State Minister for Education, Hon. Floyd Green, signed documents signalling continued support for the policy during a Women's Centre of Jamaica Foundation (WCJF) stakeholders' forum on November 1 at the Jamaica Conference Centre, in downtown Kingston.

The policy, which was accepted by Cabinet in 2013, ensures the right of



Minister of Culture, Gender, Entertainment and Sport Hon. Olivia Grange

adolescent mothers to return to secondary school following the birth of their babies, and facilitates smooth reintegration. It has since been subjected to at least two evaluations.

Ms. Grange pointed out that prior to the policy, it was the remit of the WCJF to negotiate space within the schools for the teen mothers, adding that quite often, the process was time-consuming and tedious.

"Thankfully, there is now a policy which facilitates a collaborative process between the WCJF and the regional offices of the Education Ministry," she said, noting that over the past five years, 2,002 girls have been reintegrated into the formal system.

Ms. Grange said that the Ministry is committed to providing the WCJF with the resources needed to deliver on its mandate to have the girls complete their secondary education.

JCCF Receives New Vehicle



National Security Minister, Hon. Dr. Horace Chang (left), cuts a ribbon to mark the symbolic presentation of a new vehicle to the Jamaica Combined Cadet Force (JCCF). Looking on are Permanent Secretary in the Ministry, Dianne McIntosh (centre), and JCCF Commandant, Colonel Errol Johnson. The presentation was made at the JCCF's Headquarters, Up Park Camp, St. Andrew, on October 31.



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