

JA Open to Partnerships on Technology

PRIME MINISTER the Most Hon. Andrew Holness says Jamaica is open to partnering with other countries, including the People's Republic of China, to create and assimilate new technology and innovations in order to meet the country's development targets.

He said this collaborative approach will help the country to tackle longstanding hindrances to sustainable growth.

"We are excited to explore with your country the possibilities of pairing Jamaican minds and aspirations with Chinese experience and know-how in areas such as renewable energy, water, security, agriculture, health care and STEM education to achieve sustainability and resilience in our economy," Prime Minister Holness said.

He was speaking at the second China International Import Exposition, held in Shanghai, China on November 5.

He pointed out that Jamaica boasts one of the most robust public-private partner-



Prime Minister the Most Hon. Andrew Holness (left) shows President of the People's Republic of China, Xi Jinping (2nd right), a sample of the Jamaica Blue Mountain Coffee, at the China International Import Exposition, held in Shanghai on November 5. Others from (2nd left) are Minister of Industry, Commerce, Agriculture and Fisheries, Hon. Audley Shaw and President of Jamaica Promotions Corporation, Diane Edwards.

ship legislative frameworks in the region, which facilitates ease of doing business.

"There are many opportunities for investment in infrastructure, logistics, transport, mining and financial services. Geographically, Jamaica is

the centre of the Caribbean. It is advantageously located in proximity to the major shipping lines in the region and it is the gateway and launch pad into the Caribbean and Latin American Region. Jamaica is open for your

business," Prime Minister Holness said.

Mr. Holness along with other officials, participated in an eight-day official working visit to China. He returned to the island on November 10.

Security Forces Heightening Public Safety during Christmas Season

THE JAMAICA Constabulary Force (JCF) will be heightening safety and security measures over the next eight weeks, in anticipation of increased activities during the Christmas season.

This was announced by Minister of National Security, Hon. Dr. Horace Chang, who said this forms part of the Ministry's overall crime management strategy which will see "a significant ramping up of police presence, particularly in the commercial districts and public spaces."

"This will be accompanied by other strategic, targeted and intelligence-driven security operations to bolster public safety, maintain public order, deter acquisitive and violent crimes, and further disrupt gangs," he said.

The Minister was speaking at a press conference at

Jamaica House on November 7.

Dr. Chang said the security measures are being intensified so that law-abiding Jamaicans can feel safe while going about their business and making preparations for the end of the year.

Meanwhile, Police Commissioner, Major General Antony Anderson, informed that he met with JCF Divisional Commanders and gave them a mandate to, not only focus on town centres, but also gangs, guns and criminal leaders (dons) over the next two months.

In his remarks, Chief of Defence Staff (CDS), Lieutenant General Rocky Meade, said a joint task force has been established to support the JCF in a number of hotspots and police divisions islandwide.



Minister of National Security, Hon. Dr. Horace Chang (centre), emphasises a point during a press conference at Jamaica House on November 7. He is flanked by (from left): Police Commissioner, Major General Antony Anderson; and Chief of Defence Staff, Lieutenant General Rocky Meade.

Ground Broken and Contract Signed for Dr. Kenneth Baugh Health Centre

GROUND WAS broken and the contract signed on November 6 for construction of the Dr. Kenneth Baugh Health Centre in the rural community of Point Hill in West Central St. Catherine.

Approximately \$28 million is being provided by the National Health Fund (NHF) for the project.

The 1,453-square-foot single-storey building will include

a registry for record-keeping, an immunisation area, antenatal and postnatal facility, a lunchroom, dressing room, dental services and a doctor's office.

The Point Hill Health Centre is being demolished to accommodate the new facility, which is in honour of Dr. Baugh, the late former Deputy Prime Minister, Member of Parliament (MP) and medical sur-

geon.

The Type Three health facility has been operating from the Point Hill Community Centre for some time, as the building had become deteriorated.

Ministry of Health and Wellness, Dr. the Hon. Christopher Tufton, in his remarks at the ground breaking, said that the project is a fitting tribute to the late former MP, who was

always concerned about the health and welfare of the residents in the constituency.

NHF Chief Executive Officer, Everton Anderson, for his part, said the project "is another sign of development for the health sector and a further step in improving the infrastructure for the delivery of health services throughout Jamaica, as we raise the level of care provided in



Minister of Health and Wellness, Dr. the Hon. Christopher Tufton (centre), participates in the breaking of ground for construction of the Dr. Kenneth Baugh Health Centre in Point Hill, St. Catherine, on November 6. Others (from left) are Dr. Baugh's son, Gregory; Chief Executive Officer, National Health Fund (NHF), Everton Anderson; Minister of National Security, Hon. Dr. Horace Chang; and Contractor, Harrington Costley.

Three Institutions to Be Upgraded Under Sagcor Adopt-A-School Programme

ANOTHER THREE early childhood institutions will, this year, benefit from renovation and upgrades amounting to \$15 million under Sagcor Foundation's Adopt-A-School programme.

The schools are Petersville Early Childhood Institution in Westmoreland, Prime Time Early Childhood Institution in Clarendon and St. Peter Claver Primary and Infant School in St. Andrew.

The announcement was made during the official launch of this year's programme at Hope Gardens in St. Andrew on November 5.

The institutions were selected following a detailed nomination and assessment process and through the recommendation of the Early Childhood Commission (ECC).



Chairperson of the Early Childhood Commission (ECC), Trisha Williams-Singh (centre), engages with Arianna Temple (left) and Kimarney Allen of St. Peter Claver Primary and Infant School, during the launch of Sagcor Foundation's 2019/2020 Adopt-A-School programme at Hope Gardens on November 5.

Chairperson of the ECC, Trisha Williams-Singh, praised Sagcor Foundation for assisting

early childhood institutions "in building that solid foundation that is required to transform this country", through the programme implemented in 2017.

She noted that the initiative has enabled institutions to achieve the 12 operational standards set by the ECC, noting that more than 200 schools have been certified with the Foundation's assistance.

"Your work has positively impacted hundreds of children, their families, practitioners and their communities," she said.

The renovations to be undertaken at the selected schools include expansion of classroom space, addition of sick-bays as well as roofing, lighting, bathroom, kitchen and play area upgrades.

Ginger House Swing Bridge Replaced



Minister of Local Government and Community Development, Hon. Desmond McKenzie (left), and Member of Parliament for Eastern Portland, Ann-Marie Vaz (second left), in discussion following the official opening of a \$7.1 million swing bridge in the community of Ginger House, Portland, on November 6.

IMF Lauds Government's Commitment

THE INTERNATIONAL Monetary Fund (IMF) has praised the Government's commitment to sustained fiscal and monetary policy discipline, following the conclusion of Jamaica's 36-month US\$1.65 billion precautionary Stand-By Arrangement (SBA) on November 10.

Deputy Managing Director, Tao Zhang, says this is evident in the Administration's decision to maintain the Economic Programme Oversight Committee (EPOC), to continue monitoring macroeconomic targets and reform commitments.

In a statement on November 4, following the IMF Executive Board's completion of Jamaica's sixth and

final review under the SBA, Mr. Zhang said maintaining EPOC "will support public accountability until the Fiscal Council becomes fully operational".

Additionally, he said proposed amendments to the Bank of Jamaica (BOJ) Act will improve the Central Bank's governance and independence, allowing for greater focus on the institution's price stability mandate.

"These reforms, together with a well-functioning public bodies' governance framework and a natural disaster financing policy, will help institutionalise the gains under the Fund-supported programmes," the Deputy IMF Chief added.

While acknowledging that these engagements, piloted through Jamaica's Economic Reform Programme (ERP), were implemented with "considerable sacrifices by the Jamaican people", he said the resulting out-turns have been significant.

"They have institutionalised fiscal discipline and led to substantial reduction in public debt, which is now on track to meet the legislated target of 60 per cent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) by March 2026. The unemployment rate is at an all-time low, and international reserves are comfortable," Mr. Zhang reiterated.