

Youth Empowerment Spurring Fall in Unemployment

PRIME MINISTER the Most Hon. Andrew Holness is attributing the fall in youth unemployment to critical empowerment programmes being implemented by the Government for young people.

Key among these, he says, are the Housing, Opportunity, Production and Employment (HOPE) Programme, which targets persons aged 18 to 24, who are not employed or enrolled in a school or programme of training, and the Jamaica National Service Corps (JNSC) which provides educational and job opportunities for young people.

He was delivering the opening presentation in the debate on amendment to the Human Employment and Resource Training Act (2019) in the House of Representatives on October 29.



Prime Minister the Most Hon. Andrew Holness addressing the House of Representatives on October 29.

The Statistical Institute of Jamaica (STATIN) reports that the unemployment rate for

youth, aged 14 to 24, fell by two percentage points to 20.2 per cent as at July 2019, relative to the corresponding period last year.

The rate for male youth was 16.8 per cent compared to 17.3 per cent in July 2018, while the outturn for females was 24.5 per cent, some 3.8 per cent lower than last year's corresponding figure.

Overall unemployment, as at July, held firm at a

record low of 7.8 per cent, as was the case in the April. The outturn was 0.6 percentage points lower than the figure for July 2018.

Noting that he was "particularly pleased that youth unemployment has fallen significantly", Mr. Holness said "it is gratifying when you see the various statistics and metrics go in the right direction".

Partnership Forged With 10 Radiology Service Providers

MINISTER OF Health and Wellness, Dr. the Hon. Christopher Tufton, says patients at public hospitals can now access services provided by 10 approved diagnostic radiology entities, where these are not available at the institutions to which they have been admitted.

The service providers are Apex Radiology, Danhope Radiology, Dynamic Imaging Services, Erin Radiology, Imaging and Intervention Associates, Kris Radiology, North Coast Imaging, Radiology West, St. Jago Ultrasound and X-ray, and the University Hospital of the West Indies (UHWI).

Dr. Tufton said the services that can be accessed include computed tomography (CT) and magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) scans, ultrasounds, endoscopy, fluoroscopy, mammography and X-rays.

He further advised that framework agreements faci-

litating this arrangement, which were signed on September 25, came into effect on Monday, October 7.

The arrangement will facilitate patient referrals to contracted service providers, where hospitals do not have the capacity to undertake the requisite tests.

The Minister made the announcement while addressing the House of Representatives on October 29.

Dr. Tufton further indicated that the arrangement will facilitate patient referrals to contracted service providers, where hospitals do not have the capacity to undertake the requisite tests, based on the recommendation of the attending physicians.

Gov't Strengthening Response to Transnational Crime

THE GOVERNMENT has signed a new bilateral security cooperation agreement with the United States (US) that will assist in the fight against transnational crime.

This was disclosed by Minister of National Security, Hon. Dr. Horace Chang, during the sitting of the House of Representatives on October 29.

He indicated that the agreement is expected to "provide a strong basis for increased cooperation and operationalising all arrangements in fighting transnational criminal activities out of Jamaica".

Dr. Chang informed that a similar agreement with Canada should be concluded in short order,



National Security Minister, Hon. Dr. Horace Chang

adding that "we will operate under a different protocol with the United Kingdom, which is also being finalised".

Amendments to Public Bodies Regulations to be Tabled by November 30

MINISTER OF Finance and the Public Service, Dr. the Hon. Nigel Clarke, says proposed amendments to regulations intended to bolster the governance framework for public bodies will be tabled in Parliament by the end of November.

He advised that the Government is in the "final stages" of work to develop the amended regulations, while addressing the 44th Meeting of the Standing Committee of Caribbean Statisticians (SCCS) at the Jamaica Pegasus Hotel in New Kingston on October 28.

Dr. Clarke reiterated that the amendments aim to ensure, among other things, that a minimum of one-third

of the board of public bodies is carried over from one political administration to the next, in the event of a change in the country's leadership.

Additionally, Dr. Clarke said the regulations will ensure that Board appointees meet minimum predetermined criteria.

"By that, everyone who is appointed to a public Board will come from a pool of persons whose qualifications have been verified. So [those would be] persons who have gone through some amount of diligence," he noted.

Dr. Clarke said in so doing, "Jamaica will simply be replicating what happens elsewhere in the world".



Minister of Finance and the Public Service, Dr. the Hon. Nigel Clarke

Draft Science, Technology and Innovation Policy to be Tabled Soon

MINISTER OF Science, Energy and Technology, Hon. Fayval Williams, says the draft Science, Technology and Innovation Policy will be tabled shortly in Parliament as a Green Paper.

"It envisions that science, technology and innovation will be leveraged to unleash the creative potential of our people, catalyse economic development and sustainable prosperity, thereby contributing to social transformation and create a culture of entrepreneurship and innovation in our society and economy," she said.

The Minister was speaking during the Jamaica Computer Society's (JCS) BizTech Conference, at the Jamaica Conference Centre in downtown Kingston on October 30,

Mrs. Williams said that as the Fourth Industrial Revolution beckons, it is imperative that the society be fuelled by science, tech-



Minister of Science, Energy and Technology, Hon. Fayval Williams (left), in discussion with Jamaica Computer Society President, Dr. Sean Thorpe, during the BizTech Conference on October 30.

nology and innovation in order to be competitive on the global stage.

"With the growing skills gap in the area of technology and innovation widening on the global scene, our people have a tremendous oppor-

tunity to fill those gaps. But we have to become innovators instead of mere consumers of technology," she said.

The Minister reiterated that "the Government is on an ICT transformation

process to improve services to citizens and businesses in Jamaica, and support the public sector's transformation by allowing for an improved governance framework for all of government's operations".

Hundreds Benefit from Visiting US Navy Hospital Ship



Minister of Health and Wellness, Dr. the Hon. Christopher Tufton (left), interacts with little Cimanda Tucker, while she waited with family members to see doctors from the United States (US) Navy Hospital Ship USNS Comfort (T-AH 20) at Sabina Park in Kingston, on October 28. Young Cimanda and her family were among the hundreds of Jamaicans benefitting from a wide range of healthcare services administered by members of the Medical Mission, who were in Jamaica from October 28 to November 1.

