

PM Calls for Faith and Love



PRIME MINISTER the Most Hon. Andrew Holness is urging Jamaicans to renew their faith in God in his Christmas Day Message.

He noted that as Christians “we believe in the immaculate conception and birth; the life examples and teachings, and the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ to be the fundamental pillars of our faith.”

“We must love God and believe in Him, and we must love one another as we love ourselves. Simple, yet profound guidance that the solution to our problems rests with our spirituality and humanity,” Mr. Holness stated.



Prime Minister the Most Hon. Andrew Holness

The Prime Minister pointed out that the story of Jesus’ birth does not seek to offer a scientific explanation of the solutions to the country’s problems, rather it is a story

of faith, that God manifested in man and that man can know God and have a personal relationship with God.

“So against the backdrop of our own personal struggles and worries about paying our mortgage, our personal safety with the high levels of violence in our society, the stress brought on by traffic and indiscipline on our roads, or the threat of disease and illness, let us take some time this season to reflect on the hope that Jesus’ birth has given to the world,” Mr. Holness said.

He also acknowledged and thanked those who stand guard in this festive season to keep Jamaicans safe.

“We believe in the immaculate conception and birth; the life examples and teachings, and the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ to be the fundamental pillars of our faith.”

“I wish to specially acknowledge and thank the men and women of the Jamaica Constabulary Force and Jamaica Defence Force who are now deployed to keep the peace in various communities across Jamaica. It is a difficult task, however, we cannot give up,” he stated.

2019 Another Successful Year for Tourism

TOURISM MINISTER, Hon. Edmund Bartlett, says that 2019 was another successful year for tourism with the sector poised to generate record numbers in arrivals and earnings.

“In 2018, we welcomed 4.3 million visitors, which earned us US\$3.3 billion and this year we are well on our way to surpassing this record achievement,” he tells **JIS News**.

“Jamaica is poised to generate some US\$3.7 billion in tourism earnings for 2019 and total arrivals are looking equally promising,” he adds.

Mr. Bartlett says that the Ministry is already gearing up for 2020 and beyond, where the growth trend is expected to continue.

He notes that cruise shipping over the next three years should regain the momentum from 2018. He points to the inaugural visit of the Symphony of the Seas – the world’s largest cruise ship – in May 2020, as a signal that “happy days will be here again”.

Minister Bartlett, notes that the sector consistently demonstrates a high level of



Tourism Minister, Hon. Edmund Bartlett

profitability and dependability, directly employing over 117,000 Jamaicans, while generating indirect jobs for another 250,000 persons.

“Between accommodations, food and beverage services, travel services, recreation and entertainment, and transportation, tourism generates nearly 9.2 per cent of the nation’s Gross Domestic Product (GDP),” he says.

“Leading local and global hotel brands continue to show great interest in Jamaica, with Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in the tourism sector projected at US\$470 million for 2019,” he adds.

Prime Minister Holness Donates \$1M to the Bustamante Hospital for Children



Prime Minister the Most Hon. Andrew Holness (right) presents a cheque to a representative of the Bustamante Hospital for Children during a visit to the facility on December 22. The donation was made through his Positive Jamaica Foundation. The funds will be used to assist with the purchase of monitors.

250 Roadways Rehabilitated Under National Farm Road Programme

MINISTER WITHOUT Portfolio in the Ministry of Industry, Commerce, Agriculture and Fisheries, Hon. J.C. Hutchinson, says that 250 roads islandwide have been improved under the Government’s National Farm Road Programme.



Minister without Portfolio in the Ministry of Industry, Commerce, Agriculture and Fisheries, Hon. J.C. Hutchinson (centre), cuts the ribbon to open the rehabilitated Marl Road community roadway, in Balaclava, St. Elizabeth, recently. Sharing the moment are Chief Executive Officer of the Rural Agricultural Development Authority (RADA), Peter Thompson (right), and Member of Parliament for North East St. Elizabeth, Evon Redman. The road was repaired as part of the Ministry’s National Farm Road Programme.

and the economic viability of agricultural activities within rural Jamaica.

More than 70 farmers in the Marl Road community and 80 farmers from Castleton are set to benefit from rehabilitation of the roadways.

Farmers in the nearby communities rear livestock and produce cocoa, cash crops and yams.

The farm road programme, which is implemented by RADA, has allowed for increased market access to farmers, agro-processors and marketing entrepreneurs.

It has also stimulated growth in domestic crop and livestock production, and improvement in household

“We have spent over \$1.8 billion on roughly 250 roads throughout the length and breadth of this island.”

He was speaking at the official opening of the rehabilitated roadways in the Marl Road and Castleton communities, in Balaclava, St. Elizabeth, recently.

“We have spent over \$1.8 billion on roughly 250 roads throughout the length and breadth of this island,” the Minister said.

“I want to congratulate all the persons from the Rural Agricultural Development Authority (RADA) who have made this possible. We have done our best to see if we can help the farmers in the various communities,” Mr. Hutchinson said.

He further noted that since implementation of the programme, “we have assisted 15,934 farmers across the island”.

The programme forms part of the Government’s initiative to improve farm roads

Mandatory E-Filing of Individual Income Tax Returns January 2

COME JANUARY 2, 2020, persons filing individual income tax returns will be required to do so online as Tax Administration Jamaica (TAJ) implements the next phase of its mandatory e-filing of taxes.

Chief Corporate Communications Officer at Tax Administration Jamaica (TAJ), Meris Haughton, made the disclosure in a recent interview with **JIS News**.

“What we are trying to do is to make it easier for persons. They do not have to come into office, as they can do it from the comfort of their homes,” she said.

She noted that the category of taxpayers required to file individual returns online include employed individuals who have additional sources of income from a business, as well as self-employed persons.

They must use the S04 form, which incorporates statutory deductions such as National Housing Trust (NHT) and National Insurance Scheme (NIS).



Chief Corporate Communications Officer at Tax Administration Jamaica (TAJ), Meris Haughton.

In addition to these persons, directors and pensioners who file an IT05 return, claiming a refund will also be required to file their returns online.

Ms. Haughton said that although the process is just being made mandatory, approximately 42 per cent of individual income tax payers have already chosen to file their returns online.

The TAJ has been introducing mandatory e-filing of income tax returns on a phased basis over the past two years.

Gov’t to Name New Nursery for Miss World

THE GOVERNMENT will be constructing a new nursery at the Women’s Centre of Jamaica Foundation (WCJF) in St. Thomas, which will be named in honour of Miss World 2019, Toni-Ann Singh.

Minister of Culture, Gender, Entertainment and Sport, the Hon. Olivia Grange, made the announcement on December 22, during a tour and motivational session with the adolescent mothers at the facility.

The tour was part of the four-day homecoming celebrations organised by the Government in honour of Miss Singh.

“We will build out a new nursery and it will be called the Toni-Ann Singh Nursery.



Miss World 2019, Toni-Ann Singh (centre), cradles a baby in the nursery at the Women’s Centre of Jamaica Foundation (WCJF) in St. Thomas, during a tour of the facility and motivational session with the adolescent mothers recently. Looking on are Minister of Culture, Gender, Entertainment and Sport, the Hon. Olivia Grange (right); and Centre Manager, Barbara Dunn-Glover.

We will make a more detailed announcement, but we just want to say to you that it will be done and it will

be done soonest,” Minister Grange said.

Centre Manager, Barbara Dunn-Glover, expressed her

delight at the Minister’s announcement. “That’s my dream” she said.

Meanwhile, Ms. Singh has been named Ambassador-at-large for Jamaica. This was announced by Prime Minister the Most Hon. Andrew Holness on December 23, during a courtesy call at the Office of the Prime Minister.

She was presented with a Diplomatic Passport, which enables her to travel the world with the blessing of the country.

Miss Singh, 23, who hails from Bath St. Thomas, won the Miss World competition from a field of more than 100 women representing their countries.

