

Unemployment Down

JAMAICA'S UNEMPLOYMENT rate for the month of July 2021 fell by 4.1 percentage points.

The July labour force survey conducted by Statistical Institute of Jamaica (STATIN), indicates that the rate for July was 8.5 per cent compared to the corresponding period last year, which was 12.6 per cent.

Director General, Carol Coy, says data shows that the number of unemployed persons went down by 49,200 or 30.4 per cent to 112,500.

"The number of unemployed males fell by 43.4 per cent. In comparison, the number of unemployed females declined by 17.5 per cent," she informed, while speaking during STATIN's digital quarterly media briefing on October 20.

Ms. Coy further indicated that the unemployment rate



Statistical Institute of Jamaica (STATIN) Director General, Carol Coy, speaking during the agency's digital quarterly media briefing.

for youth, aged 14 to 24, was 23.9 per cent, 6.4 percentage points lower than the 30.3 per cent outturn in July 2020.

The Director General advised that the rate for male youth was 18.4 per cent and 30.8 per cent for females.

Ms. Coy said the employed labour force, correspondingly, increased by 93,400 persons or 8.3 per cent to 1,215,000.

She indicated that the number of males rose by 55,700 or nine per cent to 677,500 persons, while there were 537,500 employed females, an increase of 37,700 or 7.5 per cent.

Ms. Coy advised that the overall size of the labour force increased by 44,200 persons or 3.4 per cent, to 1,327,500.

The number of males rose by 20,700 or 2.9 per cent to 723,200, with the female complement climbing by 23,500, or four per cent, to 604,300.

There was a 5.2 per cent decline in the number of individuals outside the labour force to 767,500. This was 41,800 fewer than the corresponding period in July 2020.

More Tourism Workers Urged to Get Vaccinated Against COVID-19

TOURISM MINISTER, Hon. Edmund Bartlett, is urging more hospitality sector workers, among other Jamaicans, to get vaccinated against the coronavirus (COVID-19).

Speaking during a recent tablet and laptop computer handover ceremony in St. James, Mr. Bartlett noted that approximately 60 per cent of Jamaica's tourism workers have been vaccinated.

He indicated, however, that this figure pales in comparison to the country's source markets, where most of the overall populations are fully vaccinated.

"Canada [for example] is averaging 70 per cent in the country overall and in Ontario, where we have a large pull from, they are now 90 per cent vaccinated," Mr. Bartlett outlined.

He maintained that "these destinations are not going to be comfortable coming to us with low vaccination [numbers], especially among workers; so, it is not a matter of choice, it is a matter of imperative".

Mr. Bartlett said he would be working alongside



Minister of Tourism, Hon. Edmund Bartlett

tour operators, hoteliers, craft vendors, travel agents, transportation operators and other industry frontline workers to increase the overall vaccination numbers.

"We have to take a decision, all of us, as to how we live and how we operate. If the industry is to recover properly, then we all must be healthy; and the sign of healthiness for us is at least that we have the protection against the virus, which is the vaccine," Mr. Bartlett said.

He emphasised that "as Minister, I am going to be relentless in ensuring that the workers get vaccinated".

PM Urges Dialogue on COVID-19 Vaccines in the Workplace

PRIME MINISTER the Most Hon. Andrew Holness is encouraging the heads of businesses to dialogue with workers, to obtain COVID-19 vaccine uptake and buy-in before deciding to embark on a mandatory exercise where hesitancy may arise.

"What we recommend to employers who would seek to do this [mandate vaccinations] is that they go through a very thorough process of engaging their employees, and companies have done that," the Prime Minister said.

Mr. Holness noted that some entities have obtained close to 100 per cent vaccination against the coronavirus (COVID-19) by engaging the workers.

"For some businesses, the risk for outbreak is significant, and they have to put in place measures to incentivise and urge their workers to get vaccinated," he pointed out, while emphasising that employees and employers "have the right



Prime Minister the Most Hon. Andrew Holness (centre) greets persons during a recent COVID-19 vaccination exercise at the Castleton Health Centre in St. Mary.

to sit together and negotiate, as a first strategy".

The Prime Minister noted that while employers have the right to protect their investments, it is the same businesses that provide income for workers.

"So, it is in the interest of both groups that there is some understanding about taking the vaccines," he further stated.

Mr. Holness was speaking during a recent visit to St. Mary

as part of his vaccination mobilisation and public education tours aimed at heightening awareness about the safety and effectiveness of the vaccines and increasing take-up.

Gov't Looking to Boost Indigent Housing Delivery

THE GOVERNMENT is looking to double the number of indigent housing solutions developed during the 2022/23 fiscal year.

This was disclosed by Minister of Local Government and Rural Development, Hon. Desmond McKenzie, who said efforts are being made to exceed the 100 units targeted for 2021/22.

"We are going to be making provisions in the budget for funding to take us into the new financial year that will see us doubling the 100. We are looking to do over 200 in 2022/23," he noted.

Mr. McKenzie was speaking during a groundbreaking ceremony for the construction of a housing solution on Ashley Road in St. Andrew South West, on October 20.

The initiative forms part of the Ministry's Municipal Social Assistance Pro-

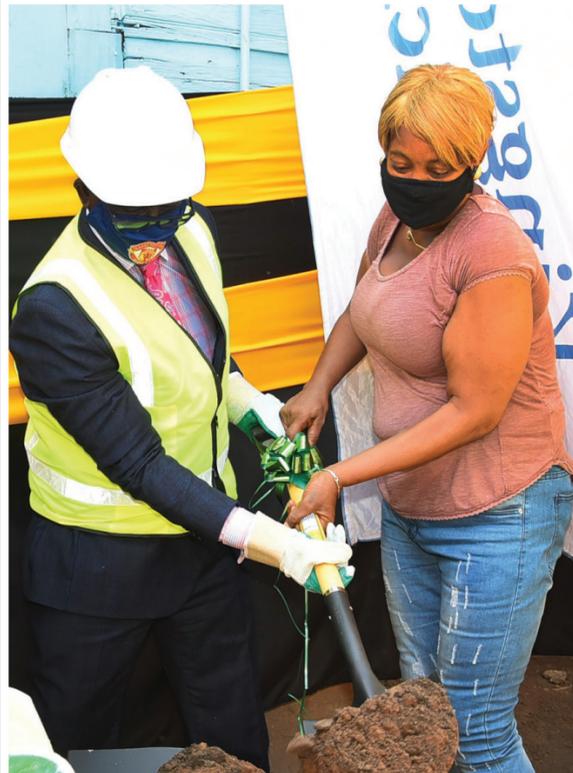
gramme (MSAP) and will be done in partnership with the Kingston and St. Andrew Municipal Corporation (KSAMC).

Mr. McKenzie said the unit will be constructed at a cost of approximately \$2.9 million and is expected to be completed and handed over to the beneficiaries – a family of four – by the end of the year.

"I am hoping that [work] will commence shortly because procurement has to be done by the KSAMC and we are hoping that by Christmas [they] will have a new home," he added.

Recipient, Tashana Mallett, expressed appreciation for the unit, which will be a home for herself, her father and her two sons.

"I feel overwhelmed. It will improve my life a lot, and it will be a joy to have my own [home]," she said.



Minister of Local Government and Rural Development, Hon. Desmond McKenzie (left), is assisted by beneficiary of the Ministry's Municipal Social Assistance Programme (MSAP), Tashana Mallett, in breaking ground for the construction of a house at Ashley Road, in St. Andrew.

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PM Signs Condolence Book for Late General Colin L. Powell



Prime Minister the Most Hon. Andrew Holness signs a condolence book for late former United States (US) Secretary of State, General Colin L. Powell, during a wreath laying ceremony at the US Embassy in St. Andrew on October 21. Observing (from left) are: Police Commissioner, Major General Antony Anderson; Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade, Senator the Hon. Kamina Johnson Smith; and Chargé d' Affaires at the Embassy, John McIntyre. General Powell, who passed away on October 18, was appointed Secretary of State by former US President George W. Bush on January 20, 2001, and served for four years. He was the first African-American appointed to that position.

CSEC, CAPE Results Satisfactory – Education Minister

MINISTER OF Education, Youth and Information, Hon. Fayval Williams, says this year's secondary school external examination results were satisfactory, particularly given the challenges of the corona virus (COVID-19) pandemic.

Students islandwide sat the 2021 Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate (CSEC) and Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Examination (CAPE) in June and July.

Mrs. Williams, who provided a preliminary analysis report at a virtual press conference on October 19, noted

that except for Mathematics, students managed to perform well overall.

For public schools, 38.2 per cent of students had a passing grade for CSEC Mathematics, while the figure was 47.3 per cent in Applied Mathematics for CAPE.

Mrs. Williams noted that the Ministry will "need to make changes in their approach across the education system to help students raise their Mathematics scores".

"I want to commend all the students, who persevered and did their examinations

under very trying and challenging circumstances this year. I also want to encourage those who may not have done as well as they would have liked, to look for opportunities that will contribute to improved performance," the Minister said.

For CSEC, a total of 30,188 students from public schools were registered to sit the examination.

Across the cohort of CSEC students in public and private schools, there were 172,927 subject entries, of which 155,735 or 90 per cent

were sat, while some 5,509 (three per cent) subject entries were deferred.

Of those students who registered and sat the exams, 23,760 or 85.8 per cent received Grades One, Two or Three in at least one subject.

Overall, 33,861 students sat CAPE Unit One, for which 88.3 per cent passed, while 14,841 sat CAPE Unit Two with 90 per cent passing.

Minister Williams said of the total number of students who sat the CAPE examinations, public schools accounted for 48,401.