

# Firearms Act to Effectively Regulate Gun Ownership

**PRIME MINISTER** the Most Hon. Andrew Holness has reiterated that the new Firearms Act will effectively regulate private gun ownership and make provision for harsher penalties for persons in possession of illegal firearms.

"We are currently undertaking the process of debating the new firearms legislation, the outcome of which is to ensure that there is a far better regulated space for private ownership of firearms. It will be a space where the people



**Prime Minister the Most Hon. Andrew Holness**

who own firearms are technically certified, are determined

fit and proper, meaning they have established a need for the firearm, are responsible, and their track record is good," Mr. Holness said.

He was speaking recently at the opening ceremony for the Master Pistol Tournament at the Jamaica Rifle Association.

The Prime Minister also underscored the need for Jamaicans to unanimously condemn the illegal possession of firearms and take action to report and assist with recovering weapons, through

the 'Get Every Illegal Gun Campaign'.

"Jamaica doesn't have a problem with legal firearms, what we have a problem with are firearms entering the country unregistered and unregulated and falling into the hands of persons whose sole intent is to take the lives of citizens," Mr. Holness stated.

He added that "we have to be definitive in our position against illegal firearms, and we must speak with one voice on the matter."

## JUTC to Expand Fleet



**Minister of Transport and Mining, Hon. Audley Shaw, makes his contribution to the 2022/23 Sectoral Debate in the House of Representatives on April 27.**

THE JAMAICA Urban Transit Company (JUTC) is to expand and diversify its fleet with new buses and alternative fuels.

"The procurement of the 50 new buses, five electric and 45 diesel has received full approval and the award notification has been issued to the supplier. This means all is in place for the delivery of the buses to commence within the financial year," Minister of Transport and Mining, Hon. Audley Shaw said.

**"That's a total of 70 new buses we expect this year for the JUTC. This is by no means enough; however, it is a start."**

He was making his contribution to the 2022/23 Sectoral Debate in the House of Representatives, on April 27.

Mr. Shaw informed that the fleet will also benefit from the addition of a further 20, 12-metre Golden Dragon compressed natural gas (CNG) buses under the expansion of the Natural Gas Project, in partnership with New Fortress Energy Company Limited.

This follows the pilot project which commenced in September 2019.

"That's a total of 70 new buses we expect this year for the JUTC. This is by no means enough; however, it is a start," the Minister said.

In addition to diversifying the fleet with electric and CNG powered buses, the JUTC will commence testing the use of biodiesel with a view of expanding to the full complement of diesel operated units in the fleet.

Mr. Shaw said that the use of a diversified fuelled fleet is an integrated approach being pursued by the Government to enhance the efficiency of the JUTC.

## \$1.4B Increase for PATH Programme in 2022/2023

AN ADDITIONAL \$1.4 billion is to be paid out to the Programme of Advancement Through Health and Education (PATH) beneficiaries in the 2022 /2023 financial year.

This follows a recent Cabinet approval for an increase of 18.26 per cent for the programme.

**"PATH benefits are reviewed every two years to ensure that the purchasing power of the amounts paid is maintained."**

Labour and Social Security Minister, Hon. Karl Samuda, made the announcement in his contribution to the 2022/23 Sectoral Debate in the House of Representatives on April 26.

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ensure that the purchasing power of the amounts paid is maintained," Minister Samuda explained.

During financial year 2021/22, the Government dis-

bursed \$8.3 billion to approximately 140,000 families on PATH.

A further \$1.4 billion was delivered to PATH families under the Social and Economic Recovery and Vaccine Programme for Jamaica (SERVE), to cushion the economic hardship brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Minister Samuda noted, further, that the pandemic accelerated plans within the Ministry for more beneficiary families to collect their payments via electronic payment methods.

"For the 2022/23 financial year, we will be undertaking to continue to increase the number of PATH beneficiaries receiving their benefit payments electronically to 70 per cent," he disclosed. The percentage of beneficiary families paid by electronic methods increased from 14 per cent in the fiscal year 2019/20 to 40 per cent during the current fiscal year.

## SEACOP Agreement to Strengthen Border Security

THE NATION'S border security will be strengthened in the fight against illicit trafficking through training in maritime security, mentoring and the provision of critical equipment under the renewed Seaport Cooperation Project (SEACOP) agreement.

The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), which was signed by the Government and the European Union on April 26, marks the fifth and final phase of the SEACOP project which commenced in 2017.

The agreement is a continuation of a long-standing collaboration in the fight against drug trafficking in the region. This phase is being led by Expertise France and the International Ibero-American Foundation for Administration and Public Policies with funding from the European Union.

In a release from the Ministry of National Security, Permanent Secretary, Courtney Williams, said the signing was a key aspect in building consensus among stakeholders and agencies critical to enhancing border security.

He said the MOU will be an amalgamation of efforts of the Jamaica Defence Force, the Jamaica Constabulary Force, the Jamaica Customs Agency, the Ministry of National Security, Expertise France and the SEACOP Project Team.

The signing ceremony, which was held at the Security Ministry's offices in Kingston, was witnessed by Ambassador to the European Union, Her Excellency Marianne Van Steen; Chief of Defence Staff, Rear Admiral Antonette Wemyss-Gorman; Commissioner of Police,



**Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of National Security, Courtney Williams (right), shares a light moment with (from left), Police Commissioner, Major General Antony Anderson and Ambassador of the European Union, H.E. Marianne Van Steen. The occasion was the signing ceremony for a Memorandum of Understanding between the European Union and the Ministry on April 26.**

Major General Antony Anderson; Jamaica Customs Agency, and Director of Intelligence at the Kalisha Powell.

## ISSA Foundation Donates Wipes



**Acting Director of Donor and Partnership Management, National Education Trust, Shirley Moncrieffe (left), and National Mathematics Coordinator in the Ministry of Education and Youth (MOEY), Dr. Tameika Benjamin, observe as student from the Oracabessa Primary School in St. Mary, Shidean Davis, opens a pack of FDA-approved antiseptic wipes, which was donated by the ISSA Trust Foundation. Her school, and others across the island, will benefit from a donation of one million packs from the ISSA Trust Foundation as part of the MOEY's efforts to support the ongoing COVID-19 relief efforts. Looking on (from second right) are Chairman, ISSA Trust Foundation, Paul Issa and Oracabessa Primary School Guidance Counsellor, Alex Carruthers.**

## Sitting of CSEC and CAPE Exams Postponed

THE DATE for the sitting of the Caribbean Advanced Education Certificate (CAPE) and Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate (CSEC) has been put back until Monday, May 23, 2022.

This will provide candidates with additional time to prepare for the examinations.

This announcement was made by Chief Executive Officer and Registrar of the Caribbean Examinations Council (CXC), Dr. Wayne Wesley, during a virtual press briefing on April 27.

The Council also extended the due date for School-Based Assessments (SBAs) was also extended by two weeks by the Council.

**"After careful deliberation and consideration of all the pertinent issues, the Council agreed that the revised strategy for the 2022 regional examinations will provide candidates with additional time to prepare."**

On that note, Dr. Wesley said the local registrar

should declare a specific date for local submissions.

Following the three-week extension, the results for the examinations are projected to be released by late August or early September.

"After careful deliberation, and consideration of all the pertinent issues, the Council agreed that the revised strategy for the 2022 regional examinations will provide candidates with additional time to prepare," Dr. Wesley said.

Currently, 25,429 students are registered for CAPE exams, while 105,078 are registered to sit CSEC exams regionally.

Dr. Wesley noted that students are still allowed to defer from sitting an exam, up to a day before the test is written.

The Council's Hardship Policy will continue to be implemented when marking examination papers, in light of the setbacks posed to the education sector by the COVID-19 pandemic.

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