

Unions Urged to Work with Gov't to Resolve Issues

PRIME MINISTER the Most Hon. Andrew Holness is imploring unions representing public-sector employees to work with the Government, as the Administration moves to restructure the compensation system to make it more equitable.

The Prime Minister noted that while vigorous discussions are anticipated during the reclassification exercise, negotiations can be undertaken amicably.

"There is no need for any type of action that will dislocate the State, dislocate the growth resurgence, the recovery which is under way. It is not logical; it doesn't make sense for us to kick over our own pail of milk. I urge reason," he said.

Mr. Holness was speaking at the installation ceremony for the new Custos Rotulorum for St. Andrew, the Hon. Ian Forbes, at the Hope Royal Botanical Gardens in St. Andrew on May 12.

Reiterating the pronouncement by Finance and the



Prime Minister the Most Hon. Andrew Holness addresses a ceremony for the installation for the new Custos Rotulorum for St. Andrew, the Hon. Ian Forbes (right), held at the Hope Royal Botanical Gardens in St. Andrew on May 12.

Public Service Minister, Dr. the Hon. Nigel Clarke, during the 2022/23 Budget Debate, Mr. Holness reminded that the Government, during the restructuring process, will not undertake adjustments that will make any one group "worse off".

"The objective is still to ensure that labour... in the public service gets their fair share of the prosperity that the country is and will be experiencing in the future.

"This is the Government looking on and acknowledging

that these adjustments would be necessary for the efficiency of the operation of the State, because the way it is now, it is quite confusing in some instances, unfair in many, and absolutely inefficient," he noted.

30,000 Parents/Guardians Redeem Vouchers for Devices

A TOTAL of 30,000 parents/guardians have redeemed vouchers valued at \$20,000 to acquire devices for their children through the 'Own Your Own Device' initiative (OYOD).

Minister of Science, Energy and Technology, Hon. Daryl Vaz, made the announcement during his 2022/23 Sectoral Debate in the House of Representatives, on May 10.

The initiative is a partnership between the Ministry of Science, Energy and Technology and the Ministry of Education and Youth.

Mr. Vaz informed that approximately 34,000 vouchers, valued at \$20,000 each, have been issued.

He added that his Ministry is happy to partner with the Education Ministry for Phase Two of the OYOD initiative.

The initiative has been implemented by the Government to assist with the purchase of tablets or laptops for students who are in need but are not on the Programme of Advancement Through Health and Education (PATH).

Minister Vaz noted that several other programmes were introduced by the



Minister of Science, Energy and Technology, Hon. Daryl Vaz, makes his contribution to the 2022/23 Sectoral Debate in the House of Representatives on May 10.

Government to increase access to technological devices for students.

Turning to the Tablets/Laptops in Schools programme, he said approximately 16,800 tablets have been distributed to more than 90 schools.

He said the remaining 8,200 tablets will be distributed during the first quarter of the 2022/2023 financial year.

During the 2021/22 period, the Government procured the targeted 25,000 tablets for PATH students in grades eight and nine.

Jamaica Preparing for Shift to Electric Vehicles – PM

THE GOVERNMENT is making preparations for the transformation of the automotive industry, which will see the mainstreaming of electric vehicles in the local market.

It is projected that the global industry will transition from combustion engines to electric vehicle technology within the next 10 years, as technology drives the evolution of the sector.

Prime Minister the Most Hon. Andrew Holness said that the Administration is "moving very quickly to put in place the regulatory and legislative environment" to support the development.

This includes facilitating the installation of the necessary infrastructure to accommodate the new technology.

"We are existing in an age where we are fortunate to see the transition of technology.



Prime Minister the Most Hon. Andrew Holness cuts the ribbon to officially launch Magna Motors Dealership Limited's new state-of-the-art facility and seventh anniversary celebrations, at the entity's Oxford Road address, St. Andrew, on May 12. Looking on is Chief Executive Officer, Magna Motors Dealership (Jamaica), Erick Gutierrez.

"The fact that we are existing at a time when these high technologies are widely avail-

able means that Jamaica can leap-frog. With the old infrastructure that we have, we can

easily and very quickly put in new infrastructure," Mr. Holness said.

He stated that the Government is also looking at providing fiscal incentives to encourage the market to move in this direction.

The Prime Minister was speaking at the official launch of Magna Motors Dealership Limited's (Hyundai) new state-of-the-art new facility and seventh anniversary celebrations on May 12 at the entity's Oxford Road address, St. Andrew.

Noting that Magna Motors now holds 11.5 per cent share of the Jamaican automobile market, the Prime Minister congratulated the company for its successes and expressed confidence in its ability to lead the way in the new direction of the industry.

New Jail Management System for Correctional Services

THE DEPARTMENT of Correctional Services (DCS) will benefit from the implementation of an electronic Jail Management System under the Ministry of National Security's Security Strengthening Project (SSP).

The system, valued at over \$117 million, will eliminate the paper-based Jail Management System used by DCS.

In a release from the Ministry, Permanent Secretary, Courtney Williams, said the implementation of the digital system was timely, as the Government sought to build sustainable partnerships to leverage technological tools and apply strategic data-driven measures to build trust with citizens and bolster crime prevention.

"Like many other agencies, the DCS is challenged with its current records management system. The processes are manual and

paper-based and staff members spend copious amounts of time manually completing forms to capture inmate information," he said.

He noted that this process was cumbersome and open to human error causing inaccuracy of the data captured.

The jail management solution, contracted to Synergy International Systems, is expected to improve data integrity and reports while providing seamless integration among the DCS, the Jamaica Constabulary Force, the courts, and other Ministry of National Security portfolio agencies.

For his part, Chief Executive Officer of Synergy International Systems Inc. Dr. Ashot Hovanesian said his team looked forward to assisting the Government with strengthening its capacity in the correctional facilities across the island.

100th Licence for the Handling of Cannabis Issued



Minister of Industry, Investment and Commerce, Senator the Hon. Aubyn Hill (left), presents the 100th licence for the Medicinal and Therapeutic Handling of Cannabis in Jamaica, to Board Director of Seven-10 Limited, Hyacinth Symes, at a ceremony hosted by the Cannabis Licensing Authority, at the Courtyard by Marriott Hotel, in Kingston, on May 11. Sharing the moment (from 2nd left) are Board Director of Seven-10 Limited's parent company, Pure Jamaican, Robert Wright, and Board Director at Seven-10, Brian Wright.

Government Spends \$5.3B on Road Maintenance and Repairs

DURING THE last fiscal year, the Government spent approximately \$5.3 billion on road maintenance and repairs.

Speaking in the 2022/23 Sectoral Debate in the House of Representatives on May 11, Minister without Portfolio in the

Ministry of Economic Growth and Job Creation, Hon. Everaldo Warmington, said another \$637 million was expended on flood mitigation works.

He pointed out that these projects have impacted the communities in which they have been implemented.

Some of the projects and sums expended were Benson Fording, Kingston, \$11 million; Leas Flat, Red Hills, St. Andrew, \$7 million; Parl Road (Coopers Hill), St. Andrew, \$10 million; Bartons Gully, St. Catherine, \$21 million; Vanity Fair to Tavern Hill – Seaford (Guys Hill), St. Catherine, \$34 million; Hotmix patching, St. Thomas Eastern, \$20 million;

Hotmix patching, St. Thomas Western, \$20 million; Williamsfield to Cumberland, Manchester, \$19 million; Mandeville to Rudds Corner, Manchester, \$19 million; James Hill to Kellits, Clarendon, \$27 million; and Freetown to Four Paths, Clarendon, \$20 million.

"We expect to continue and, to date, there are 128 projects from both sides of the House that we hope to have instituted this year – large and small," he noted.

Mr. Warmington added that the Government is focused on realising economic growth and development through several large-scale construction projects.



Minister without Portfolio in the Ministry of Economic Growth and Job Creation, with responsibility for Works, Hon. Everaldo Warmington, makes his contribution to the 2022/23 Sectoral Debate in the House of Representatives on May 11. At left is Minister without Portfolio in the Office of the Prime Minister, Hon. Floyd Green.



Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of National Security, Courtney Williams (right), and Chief Executive Officer at Synergy International Systems, Dr. Ashot Hovanesian, shake hands, after signing a contract for a new electronic jail management system on May 11, at the Ministry's Conference Room in Kingston.

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