

Government Relentless in Tackling Crime

PRIME MINISTER the Most Hon. Andrew Holness says the Government will continue to be relentless in its efforts to control crime and will use all appropriate measures available.



Prime Minister the Most Hon. Andrew Holness addresses a press conference at the Office of the Prime Minister on December 28.

“We are serious about showing the criminals that we are in charge of this country, and they are not at will to take lives.”

“We will use the States of Public Emergency (SOEs) when necessary. Criminals and criminal masterminds should take no comfort that the time for declaration is short. We are and we will continue to use all lawful powers within our means to control crime and to save lives,” Prime Minister Holness said.

He was addressing a press conference held at the Office of the Prime Minister on

December 28, where he announced that SOEs have been declared in eight parishes, to curtail increased criminal activities and bolster public safety.

The parishes are St. Ann, Clarendon, St. Catherine, Kingston, St. Andrew, St. James, Westmoreland, and Hanover.

Prime Minister Holness further informed that the Gov-

ernment will continue to advance the legislative agenda, which will address crime.

“We continue to work on the Enhanced Security Measures Bill. We have already declared our intention to increase the penalty for murder. Already, in Parliament, there is a new Bail Act; other measures to come include changes to the Finger Prints Act and other legislative

measures. We are serious about showing the criminals that we are in charge of this country, and they are not at will to take lives,” he pointed out.

Mr. Holness maintained that the duty of any Government is to save lives, noting that “I am confident in the view that our measures in this season have resulted in many Jamaicans being safer”.

70 Persons Charged Under New Firearms Law

A TOTAL of 70 persons have been charged under the new Firearms (Prohibition, Restriction and Regulation) Act.

This was disclosed by Commissioner of Police, Major General Antony Anderson, during a press conference at the Office of the Prime Minister in St. Andrew, on December 28, where States of Public Emergency were declared in several parishes islandwide by Prime Minister, the Most Hon. Andrew Holness.

Of the figure, 63 men and seven women were charged between November 1 and December 20.

The Commissioner pointed out that the majority of those

charged fall in the 16 to 30 age group.

“I look forward to the impact that the new sentencing provisions will have,” he said.

The legislation establishes a dual regime, distinguishing between prohibited weapons or unregulated firearms and activities connected thereto, and firearms that are duly authorised or registered.

It also outlines the objectives that speak to establishing a framework that prohibits firearms and ammunition that are illicitly traded and which regards possession of those prohibited firearms and ammunition as the foundation



Commissioner of Police, Major General Antony Anderson

on which other heinous and violent crimes are committed.

Breaches of the new Firearms (Prohibition, Restriction and Regulation) Act, 2022, which is now in effect, will result in penalties ranging from 15 years to life imprisonment.

Health Ministry Monitoring COVID-19 Surge in China

THE MINISTRY of Health and Wellness is closely monitoring and gathering data on the COVID-19 situation in China and other parts of the world.

According to a release from the Ministry, this is being done through its International Health Regulations Unit and the National Epidemiology Branch.

“There are particular circumstances in China that ... led to an increase in their numbers. We are also well aware of the changes in climate and the increase in travelling and crowding at this time, which will cause an uptick in viral illnesses, including COVID-19,” Chief Medical Officer (CMO), Dr. Jacqueline Bisasor-McKenzie said.

“We continue to urge Jamaicans to practise the infection prevention and control measures to safeguard against these illnesses by washing hands frequently, wearing a mask, avoiding crowds and getting vaccinated,” she added.

Dr. Bisasor-McKenzie noted that in the coming



Chief Medical Officer (CMO), Dr. Jacqueline Bisasor-McKenzie

days, the Ministry will update the country on this and other public health matters.

She further reminded the public that COVID-19 vaccines are available at health centres across the island.

“Persons, who have not been vaccinated, should go and get vaccinated and persons who have not received their booster should go and do so at this time,” she stated.

The increase in cases across China follows the rollback of that nation's strict anti-virus measures.

DBJ Extends IGNITE IV Application Deadline

MICRO AND small enterprises (MSEs) now have up to Friday, January 6, 2023, to submit applications for the Development Bank of Jamaica (DBJ) Innovation Grant for New Ideas to Entrepreneurship (IGNITE IV).

“The decision to extend the deadline was set against the background of the numerous requests received from entrepreneurs and small business owners requesting an extension,” Boosting Innovation, Growth and Entrepreneurship Ecosystem (BIGEE) Programme Manager, Christopher Brown said, in a DBJ release.

IGNITE is a grant-funding programme offered by the DBJ to MSEs to scale and grow their businesses.

The DBJ is looking for novel and innovative business ideas in the areas of Tourism and Creatives; Agriculture and Manufacturing; Technology – Software and Information and Communications Technology (ICT); Climate Change, and Gender.

Registered Jamaican businesses can access up to \$7 million under the programme and are encouraged to apply for an IGNITE grant by aligning with one of the seven Business Service Intermediaries (BSI) that the DBJ has working on the programme.



Programme Manager, Boosting Innovation, Growth and Entrepreneurship Ecosystem (BIGEE), Development Bank of Jamaica (DBJ), Christopher Brown

The BSIs are Jamaica Business Development Corporation, Sister's Ink Jamaica, Technology Innovation Centre, Caribbean Climate Innovation Centre, Jamaica Manufacturers and Exporters Association, Kingston Creative, and TBR Lab.

IGNITE is part of the DBJ's BIGEE programme, which is funded through a loan agreement between the Government of Jamaica and the Inter-American Development Bank.

The direct outcome of BIGEE is to build out and ensure Jamaica has a robust and sustained entrepreneurship ecosystem.

Education Ministry Gets Nebulisers



Minister of Education and Youth, Hon. Fayval Williams (left), receives 40 compressor nebulisers from businessman, Gul Mansukhani, during a recent handover of the machines at the Ministry's National Heroes Circle offices in Kingston.

Health Insurance for Cultural and Entertainment Practitioners

MEMBERS OF the local entertainment and cultural industries will soon have a dedicated health insurance scheme.

Minister of Culture, Gender, Entertainment and Sport, Hon. Olivia Grange, made the disclosure at the Rebel Salute media launch held recently at the ROK Hotel, downtown Kingston.

She said that local actuarial consulting firm, Eckler

Limited, has been engaged to assist in the tender process.

The Culture Minister said the establishment of the scheme will provide critical assistance to practitioners who have made significant contributions to the development of brand Jamaica.

“Wherever you go in the world they speak about our music, and I felt it was important that as part of our



Minister of Culture, Gender, Entertainment and Sport, Hon. Olivia Grange

“I felt it was important that as part of our Jamaica 60 legacy... we ensure that we introduce insurance coverage for our artists.”

Jamaica 60 legacy... we ensure that we introduce insurance coverage for our artists, our writers, our cultural practitioners, to ensure that

they benefit from what they have provided to this country,” she said.

Minister Grange noted that some veterans of the cultural and entertainment fraternities, who have reached an advanced stage of life, are in need of this kind of assistance.

“If they are very ill or they pass, there is always an issue about dealing with the funeral; there is always an

issue about dealing with the health insurance or health coverage, and I thought it was about time,” she said.

Minister Grange said the insurance coverage is a way of giving back to a community whose talents in promoting Jamaican culture on the international stage have been inestimable.

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