

Jamaicans Will Feel Benefits of Economic Recovery - PM

JAMAICANS WILL feel the benefits of the Government's sound management of the economy and strong recovery from COVID-19, says Prime Minister the Most Hon. Andrew Holness.

"I guarantee that within a year or two, we will start to feel the economic effect of the recovery on the individual household. As a Government, we are making sure that we maintain the economic pathways that will deliver success and at the same time, take on the many social challenges that will improve quality of life," he noted.

"Great things are happening in the country. There is a lag effect. Companies will probably feel it before consumers, but the benefit will not just trickle down; the benefit will flow through the economy so that everyone can genuinely and truly feel the effect of good economic management and good governance of the



Prime Minister the Most Hon. Andrew Holness (left) is given an overview of the operations of the new Red Stripe Cellars Expansion for Beer Production (CERS) project by Packaging Manager, Domestic and Exports, Sheldon Sharpe, during the official launch on March 28 at the plant's Spanish Town Road location, Kingston.

country," Prime Minister Holness assured.

He was addressing the official launch of the Red Stripe Cellars Expansion for Beer Production (CERS) project on March 28 at the plant's Spanish Town Road location in Kingston.

Jamaica's economy is estimated to have expanded by 3.4 per cent in the fourth quarter of 2022, signaling the country's recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Mr. Holness noted that key to ensuring that the gains flow

to Jamaicans is maintaining the programme of fiscal prudence to secure continued investment and economic growth; keeping taxes low; and getting inflation to targeted levels and ensuring that this remains stable and predictable.

Secretariat Established to Support Constitutional Reform Committee

A SECRETARIAT, managed by the Ministry of Legal and Constitutional Affairs, has been established to provide technical guidance and support to the Constitutional Reform Committee (CRC).

The officers of the Secretariat are drawn from the Ministry and include the Permanent Secretary, Director of Legal Reform, Chief Parliamentary Counsel and a Senior Constitutional Reform Officer.

The Secretariat also includes representatives from the Ministry of Justice, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade, and the Attorney General's Chambers.

They will be assisted with steno writers from the Office of the Services Commission (OSC).

Prime Minister the Most Hon. Andrew Holness recently announced the names of the members of the CRC, which

will play a key role in ensuring Jamaica's smooth transition to a Republic.

The Committee will be chaired by Minister of Legal and Constitutional Affairs, Hon. Marlene Malahoo Forte, with Ambassador Rocky Meade as co-chair.

Speaking in the House of Representatives on March 28, Minister Malahoo Forte reminded members that the purpose of the Committee is to assist in providing expert guidance and oversight to the Government and people of Jamaica during the constitutional reform process.

"The Committee is required to help guide the constitutional reform process throughout all phases of the work including during the referendum process...to culminate in the crafting of a modern, new constitution of Jamaica," she stated.

JCF Gets Equipment to Strengthen Cybersecurity Capabilities

THE CAPACITY of the Jamaica Constabulary Force (JCF) to fight cybercrime has been bolstered by the provision of technology equipment valued at \$30 million to the Communication, Forensics and Cybercrime Division (CFCD).

The items, which include desktop computers, laptops, monitors, smart television, hard drives, printers, scanners, among other necessities, were provided under the PRO-CYBER project, which involves collaboration between the CFCD and the Cyber Intelligence and Incident Response Branch (CIIB), under the Ministry of National Security.

Project PRO-CYBER is a multi-year effort, providing strategic resources to the CFCD, to increase the department's investigative capacity.

Speaking at the handover ceremony held at the Office of



Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of National Security, Hon. Dr. Horace Chang (left), looks on as Commissioner of Police, Major General Anthony Anderson, outlines features of technology devices handed over to the Communication, Forensics and Cybercrime Division of the Jamaica Constabulary Force (JCF), during a ceremony held on March 29 at the Office of the Commissioner of Police, St. Andrew.

the Commissioner of Police and Deputy Prime Minister, on March 29, portfolio Minister Hon. Dr. Horace Chang, said

the high dependence on technology, has generated new opportunities for cyberattacks, to the detriment of organisations across all industries.

"It is pertinent that the Government keep abreast of the dangers associated with cyberspace and proactively position itself to deal with the emergence of new and existing cybercrimes," Dr. Chang said.

To date, the Ministry has been able to support CFCD by identifying training and development needs and opportunities and procuring one of three software licensing tools valued at \$2 million.

For financial year 2023/24, the Ministry is expected to continue its partnership with the CFCD through the renovation of workspace and the provision of training opportunities.

St. Thomas Onion Farmers Receiving Buyers for Massive Yield



Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries, Hon. Parnell Charles Jr. (right), cuts sprouted onion tops, under the supervision of female farmers in St. Thomas on March 29.

ONION FARMERS in St. Thomas, who have already produced two thirds of the national yield, will be receiving market support for their massive production.

Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries, Hon. Parnell Charles Jr., met with the farmers on March 29, where he informed that buyers are stepping forward to purchase the onions.

"We listened to the farmers, we engaged them, we understood the concerns that they are having in terms of producing and looking not just for market, but for market at a price that they consider the reasonable price. We have brought to the table, persons who have expressed a desire to take up most, if not all of what the farmers have to sell," Mr. Charles Jr. said.

He noted that the Ministry has also identified the need for storage and has opened its Christiana, Manchester, facility to accept some of the onions, in addition to facilities in St. Ann and Clarendon.

"When we produce exceptional amounts, what we need is the capacity to be able to dry and keep that for a prolonged period and that's where we are stepping in to give maximum support to our farmers and to the purveyors," he pointed out.

Immediately following the meeting, Fresh and Direct, an organisation under the Potato and Onion Producers Association (POPA) purchased 20,000 pounds of onions from two Llandewey farmers, which were loaded onto trucks.

Animal Therapy to Aid Recovery of Patients at Bustamante Hospital

PAEDIATRIC PATIENTS at the Bustamante Hospital for Children can now interact with animals for comfort and to reduce their stress and anxiety as they undergo treatment at the facility.

The intervention is being provided under the Animal-Assisted Recovery Care (AARC) Pilot Project, which was officially launched at the facility on March 28 by the South East Regional Health Authority (SERHA).

Minister of Health and Wellness, Dr. the Hon. Christopher Tufton, first announced the intervention in Parliament in November 2022.

Addressing the launch ceremony, Dr. Tufton noted that animal-assisted support is globally recognised as having various benefits for both patients and providers while providing a 'One Health Approach' to health-care delivery.

"This One Health Approach...recognises the inter-connection between the health of humans and the environment and the multiple benefits, including the positive psychosocial development that can come from humans interacting and bonding with animals for health," he pointed out.



Minister of Health and Wellness, Dr. the Hon. Christopher Tufton (left), and trainer and curator at the Hope Zoo, Joseph Brown, interact with golden retriever "Dr. Teddy Barks", at the official launch of the Animal-Assisted Recovery and Care Pilot Project at the Bustamante Hospital for Children on March 28.

"...animal-assisted support is globally recognised as having various benefits for both patients and providers".

Minister Tufton said that the AARC project is the first of its kind in Jamaica and the pilot will evaluate the effectiveness of the intervention in the hospital setting.

Several animals are being used including the main project animal, a golden retriever named "Dr. Teddy

Barks", who is cared for and maintained by the Hope Zoo.

The programme will run for 18 months through funding from the National Health Fund (NHF) and will be handled under the SERHA Projects portfolio.

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Board of Supervision Awards 48 High-Performing Students



Minister of Local Government and Rural Development, Hon. Desmond McKenzie (left), presents Board of Supervision Awards and Recognition Top Achiever in the 2022 Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Examination (CAPE), Chelsia Reynolds, with a financial grant and a plaque. The presentation was made during an awards ceremony, on March 29, at the Spanish Court Hotel. A total of 48 students were recognised at the event.