

PM Provides Comprehensive Update on Cornwall Regional

PRIME MINISTER the Most Honourable Andrew Holness has reaffirmed the Government's stance to rescope the budget for the restoration of the Cornwall Regional Hospital (CRH) in Montego Bay, St. James, to \$14.1 billion.

He was addressing journalists following a tour of the Type A facility recently.

A total of \$5 billion was originally programmed for the rehabilitation work, which commenced in 2019 and was slated to be executed in multiple phases.

Mr. Holness indicated that there are several issues that only became apparent as the project progressed.

"When you actually start to strip the building and you begin to see all the cracks, the concrete that is crumbling, all the steel that is rotting, all the issues, what you initially budgeted may not be what the final cost is. That, obviously,



Prime Minister the Most Hon. Andrew Holness (second left), and Minister of Health and Wellness, Dr. the Hon. Christopher Tufton (left), inspect works being carried out under the Cornwall Regional Hospital (CRH) rehabilitation project, during a tour of the institution recently. Looking on are Minister of State in the Office of the Prime Minister, Hon. Homer Davis (second right), and CRH Project Manager, Vivian Gordon (right).

was the case here, both in terms of the resources and time," he explained.

The Prime Minister also noted that the hospital's rehabilitation requires further specialised skills and talents, which have been brought in to complete the reconstruction

process that has entered phase three.

This aspect entails internal works relating to constructing operating theatres, offices, wards, sockets, medical oxygen installation, piping, and electrical features, among other inputs.

"What we are going to have at the end of the process, is a first world hospital that can compete with hospitals anywhere," Mr. Holness stated.

The completion date for Cornwall Regional Hospital's rehabilitation is March 2025.

Major Crimes Down 22 Per Cent

THE POLICE are reporting a 22 per cent decline in major crimes at the end of March 2023, when compared to the corresponding period last year.

Addressing a virtual press conference on April 4, Commissioner of Police, Major General Antony Anderson, informed that murders were down by 21 per cent; shootings, 13 per cent; rapes, 47 per cent; robberies, 32 per cent and break-ins, 11 per cent.

He said the Jamaica Constabulary Force (JCF) will continue to partner with key agencies as well as provide the requisite support to enable its members to carry out their duties efficiently.



Police Commissioner, Major General Antony Anderson

It is not lost on us that the support from the Jamaica Defence Force (JDF) and other key partners has been integral in achieving these results. We expect to continue to impact crime and violence while we remain committed to all of the other community support activities," he said.

Major General Anderson urged Jamaicans to continue working with the police and provide information to rid their communities of criminals.

"The strategy of our commanders and their teams to be closer to their communities and build relationships is working," he said.

"As we continue to resource the Force, implement our policing plan, and work closer with the communities, we have no doubt that people will begin to feel safe".

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A Total of US\$140 Million for Sangster International Airport Upgrade

Significant upgrading and modernisation works are set to take place at the Sangster International Airport with an investment of US\$70 million from the Government and an additional US\$70 million from the operators, MBI Airports Limited.

Prime Minister the Most Hon. Andrew Holness made the announcement after touring the ongoing runway

extension and civil infrastructure project, being undertaken at the facility.

Mr. Holness told journalists that the airport's current physical infrastructure and mechanisms are "outdated".

As such, he said this "great investment" in the airport is intended to update the facilities and improve the capacity of its services for locals and foreigners.

Approximately 70 per cent of visitors to Jamaica come through the Sangster airport.

Prime Minister Holness said renditions for the airport's upgrade and design have already been made, noting that they depict a "world class" feel.

"This is what I would call a strategic nation building investment. This US\$140 million in total will transform the experience here. It will make Jamaica more attractive and make Jamaica more competitive with other countries in the region, which have also invested heavily in improving their infrastructure," he said.

Mr. Holness further indicated that these new and existing investments in the airport, bode well for Jamaica's tourism product.



Prime Minister the Most Hon. Andrew Holness (second left) outlines several major projects programmed for the Sangster International Airport in Montego Bay, St. James, during a tour of the facility recently. Looking on are (from left): Minister of Legal and Constitutional Affairs, Hon. Marlene Malahoo Forte, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of National Security, the Hon. Dr. Horace Chang, and other government officials.

Renovated Block Opens at Rio Cobre Juvenile Centre

RENOVATION OF Block B at the Rio Cobre Juvenile Correctional Centre in Spanish Town, which was undertaken at a cost of \$34.3 million, has provided an improved environment to support the rehabilitation of juvenile offenders.

The project, which got under way in July 2022 and was

completed in March 2023, included replacement of the timber-framed roof with raised slab, electrical and plumbing works.

Among the other works completed are refurbishing of bathrooms, installation of grillework for the watch stations on the dorms, fabrica-

tion and installation of grille doors and windows, and establishment of security check points.

Addressing the official opening of the renovated Block on April 4, Minister of State in the Ministry of National Security, Hon. Zavia Mayne, said that the work undertaken is critical to reforming young offenders and helping them to successfully reintegrate into society.

"We have made the necessary investments to ensure that the conditions under which we are housing them are not only safe, but they are also humane," he noted.

"The Government, in making this investment, is sending a clear signal as to how we intend to restore and maintain our correctional facilities," he added.

Block B has capacity for 96 wards with 32 in the high-security section and 64 in the medium-security unit.



Minister of State in the Ministry of National Security, Hon. Zavia Mayne (right), tours the newly renovated Block B at the Rio Cobre Juvenile Correctional Centre during the official opening of the facility in Spanish Town, St. Catherine, on April 4. Also present are Superintendent of the Correctional Centre, Maulette White (centre), and Commissioner of Corrections, Lieutenant Colonel (Retd.), Gary Rowe.

PM and Deputy PM Get First E-Passports Issued in Jamaica



Chief Executive Officer, Passport, Immigration and Citizenship Agency (PICA), Andrew Wynter (left), presents Prime Minister the Most Hon. Andrew Holness (centre), with an E-Passport during a courtesy call at the Office of the Prime Minister on April 3. Looking on is Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of National Security, the Hon. Dr. Horace Chang, who also received his E-passport. The implementation of the E-passport is part of steps to safeguard the identity of Jamaicans and the Jamaican travel document.

Inflation Decreasing

DATA FROM the Statistical Institute of Jamaica (STATIN) shows that the inflation rate, which peaked at 11.8 per cent in April 2022, fell to 7.8 per cent in February 2023.

Speaking during a Jamaica Information Service (JIS) 'Think Tank' on April 5, Bank of Jamaica (BOJ) Senior Deputy Governor, Dr. Wayne Robinson, said this has resulted from the BOJ's monetary policy actions, as well as lower imported commodity prices.

Dr. Robinson indicated that "we actually responded very swiftly, early and decisively to the increase... that we've been seeing... which was actually spurred by rising inflation globally".

"As a result of our policy actions, along with the fact that we have been seeing a



Bank of Jamaica (BOJ) Senior Deputy Governor, Dr. Wayne Robinson

lowering of the prices of some international commodities over the past 10 months... we have been seeing a general reduction in the rate of inflation," he said.

Despite the decrease, the BOJ has indicated that 7.8 per cent is still too high.

The central bank said utilisation of its monetary policy is crucial in controlling inflation.

The policy relates to the broad set of actions or tools that the bank has at its disposal to manage inflation.

These have included raising the policy interest rate which the BOJ pays on the current account balances of deposit-taking institutions (DTIs); reducing the volume of Jamaican dollar liquidity in the banking system; and making stronger intervention to sell US dollars in the foreign exchange market.

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