

JCF to Boost Capacity

THE COMPLEMENT of the Jamaica Constabulary Force (JCF) should be boosted to 14,092 following the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) by the National Security Ministry, the JCF and the Mona Campus of the University of the West Indies (UWI) to have more officers trained.

Under the MOU, the UWI will facilitate the training of JCF recruits with an intake of 300 every six months over three years. A section of the campus has also been designated to house the recruits.

Addressing stakeholders at the signing ceremony on the UWI's campus on August 17, National Security Minister, Hon. Robert Montague, said the training spaces provided by UWI are in addition to others being established.

"We will have 700 between Harman Barracks and the National Police College (of Jamaica) in Twickenham Park when



National Security Minister, Hon. Robert Montague (seated centre), signs a Memorandum of Understanding on August 17 for the Mona Campus of the University of the West Indies (UWI) to train Jamaica Constabulary Force (JCF) recruits, at the University's campus. Others (from left) are UWI Campus Registrar, Camille Bell Hutchinson; Pro Vice Chancellor and Principal of UWI, Professor Archibald McDonald, and Deputy Police Commissioner, Clifford Blake.

repairs are completed. With the university coming on board with 300 spaces, we're up to 1,000. Next year we are proposing to train two batches for the one year...we will be able to train 2,000," he said.

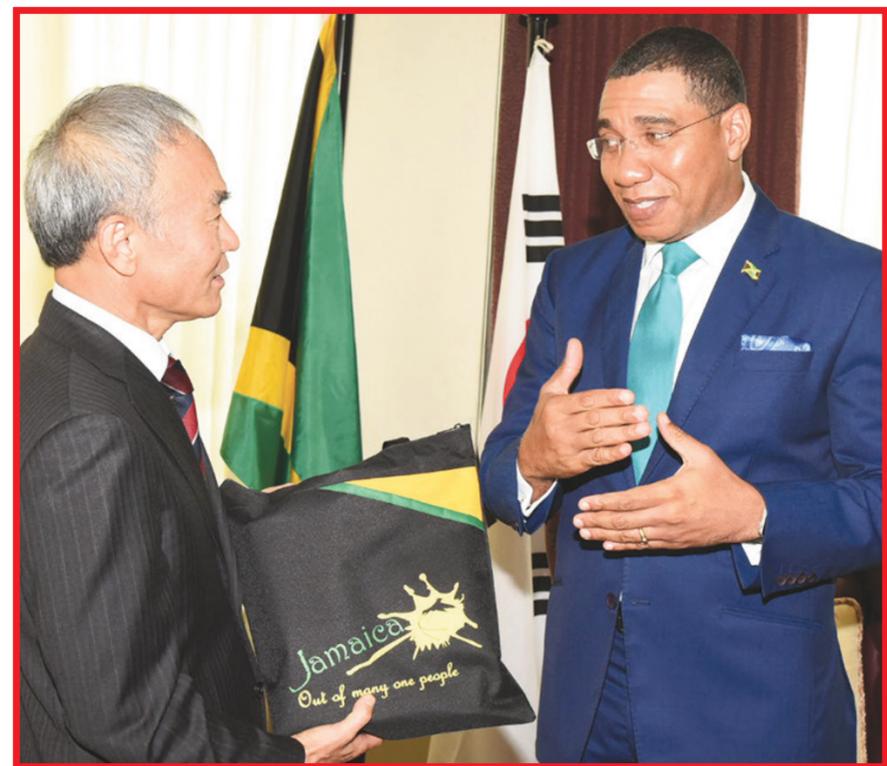
Additionally, Mr. Montague noted that discussions are being held with China Harbour Engineering Company for donations of three of its prefabricated buildings

along a section of the North South Highway.

These he said, will be used to house additional trainees at Harman Barracks and at the National Police College.

Mr. Montague estimates that with all these initiatives, within two to three years the JCF will have its established complement of police officers.

PM Meets With South Korean Chargé D'Affaires



Prime Minister the Most Hon. Andrew Holness (right) engages in conversation with Chargé D'Affaires of the Republic of South Korea, Lee Young Gyu, during a courtesy call at the Office of the Prime Minister recently. They discussed the advancement of bilateral relations between both countries.

Employment at All-Time High

MORE JAMAICANS are now employed than at any other period in the country's history.

Data from the Statistical Institute of Jamaica (STATIN) show that the number of persons securing employment peaked at a historic 1,204,800 in April 2017, which was 35,800 more than the 1,169,000 persons employed in April 2016.

The out-turn bettered the employment level of 1,187,000 in July 2016, when the country recorded the lowest unemployment figures in five years and the highest employment level for a single month since October 2008, when 1,174,500 persons had jobs.

Senior Technical Advisor at the Planning Institute of Jamaica (PIOJ), Rochelle Whyte, spoke to the continued improvement in the labour market outcomes, at a recent

forum hosted by the Ministry of Finance and the Public Service at the Knutsford Court Hotel in New Kingston.

STATIN data also showed that the unemployment rate fell by a further 1.5 per cent in April 2017 to 12.2 per cent relative to April 2016.

This translated into a reduction in the number of persons who were unemployed from 184,900 in April 2016 to 166,700 in April 2017.

Mrs. Whyte is attributing the positive labour market trends to the ongoing implementation of economic reform measures by the Government.

She cited, among other things, business environment reforms; implementation of strategic investment projects; development of new industries; and a general improvement in Jamaica's overall macro-economic stability.

April to June Quarter Records 4.4% Inflation

GOVERNOR OF the Bank of Jamaica (BOJ), Brian Wynter, says the country recorded an inflation rate of 4.4 per cent for the April to June 2017 quarter.

Speaking at the Bank's quarterly press briefing, at its headquarters in downtown Kingston, on August 16, Mr. Wynter noted that the out-turn for June was slightly above the 4.1 per cent recorded at March 2017.



Bank of Jamaica (BOJ) Governor, Brian Wynter

"The rate is on track to fall within the Bank's target range of four per cent to six per cent for the 2017/18 financial year," he pointed out.

Mr. Wynter said that the uptick in inflation is in line with what had been previously announced and partly reflected the impact on agricultural food prices of the flood rains in May 2017.

Turning to lending rates, Mr. Wynter informed that new loan rates have

declined over the past year and are expected to fall even lower.

The BOJ's Survey of Credit Conditions shows that rates on new loans offered to businesses fell by more than 2.5 percentage points over the year to March 2017.

However, the BOJ Governor indicated that interest rates on bank loans in Jamaica, "while falling, are nonetheless still too high."

Services in Child Protection Sector Being Streamlined

THE GOVERNMENT is streamlining services within the child protection sector, with the launch of the Child Case Management System, incorporating the Social and Health Management software.

Developed by Canadian company, Avocette, the software allows child protection officers to upload and track cases of children who are registered in the child protection system.

The software will enable users to digitally track, update and evaluate client information.

It will also facilitate real-time information sharing among key child protection agencies, including the family and children's courts; the Office of the Children's Registry (OCR); and the Centre for the Investigation of Sexual Offences and Child Abuse.

State Minister in the Ministry of Education, Youth and Information, Hon. Floyd Green, who brought greetings at the launch held on August 16 at the CDA's downtown Kingston headquarters, said the software will greatly enhance the CDA's ability to track the needs of each child in the system and effectively monitor and manage cases.

"To put it in context, we get about 13,000 child

abuse reports each year. That means we are treating with about 1,200 reports of child abuse cases each month. Can you then imagine the difficulty our childcare officers had when all these cases were paper and files? This will help us to rid ourselves of that system and the inefficiency that is inherent in that kind of (paper-based) system," he added.

Human Rights Will be Protected in Zones of Special Operations

NATIONAL SECURITY Advisor, Major General Antony Anderson, says the protection of human rights will be guaranteed in the Zones of Special Operations (ZOSO).

Speaking in a Jamaica Information Service 'Issues and Answers' interview recently, Mr. Anderson informed that human rights training for the security forces is a requirement under the Law Reform (Zones of Special Operations) (Special Security and Community Development Measures) Act.

"The law requires selection of the commanders on the ground and there is a requirement in the law for them to receive human rights training. The joint forces have received training, and that is ongoing to prepare people to operate within the zones," he said.

Mr. Anderson assured that the philosophy undergirding the Act "is not to target communities but to



Major General Antony Anderson

target criminals holding communities to ransom."

"The idea is to go in and leave the criminals with the least opportunity to carry out what they want to do, and provide as much protection to the population there," he said.

The law gives the Prime Minister power to declare an area a Zone of Special Operations in order to tackle increased

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crime and volatility in a community. The zone can only be established after the Police Commissioner and the Chief of Defence Staff make a request for such a declaration in writing.



State Minister for Education, Youth and Information, Hon. Floyd Green (right), in conversation with Chief Executive Officer for the Child Development Agency, Rosalee Gage-Grey, at a press conference held at the Agency's offices on August 16.

Maths Coaches and Specialists to Attend Training Workshop

SOME 120 mathematics coaches and specialists assigned to the Ministry of Education, Youth and Information will participate in a training workshop from August 21 to 24, hosted by Book Merchant Limited at Shortwood Teachers' College, in Kingston.

They will join 800 primary and early childhood maths teachers who will be exposed to best practices in mathematics at the workshop, dubbed: 'Amazing Math Powers... PRIMED for Success'.

National Mathematics Coordinator at the Ministry,

Dr. Tamika Benjamin, told **JIS News** that the Ministry fully supports the programme, which is certified by the Jamaica Teaching Council. She lauded the consistent effort of Book Merchant Limited to support the work of the Ministry.

At the end of the training, the participants will receive joint certification from the Jamaica Teaching Council and Shortwood Teachers' College.

