

Banks Increasing Loans For Productive Sector – PM

PRIME MINISTER the Most Hon. Andrew Holness says Jamaica's economic climate is so positive that banks are increasing their lending to productive enterprises.

Delivering the keynote address at the official opening of the GWest Medical Centre in Fairview, Montego Bay, on November 2, Mr. Holness said that it is indeed a good sign for the country's economic future, and that the Government sees it as a strong vote of confidence for the policies that are in place.

"The data is showing that loans for productive enterprises are increasing, not just for consumption, but for productive enterprises. That is a very good sign for growth," the Prime Minister noted.

Mr. Holness said he is very pleased that the National Commercial Bank



Prime Minister the Most Hon. Andrew Holness (2nd left) about to cut the ribbon to officially open the GWest Medical Centre in Fairview, Montego Bay, on November 2. Others (from left) are: Directors of GWest, Denise Crichton-Samuels and Elva Richards and His Worship, the Mayor of Montego Bay, Homer Davis.

(NCB) and its Capital Market venture saw it fit to finance a company like GWest to realise its dream of building a one-stop-shop medical facility in Montego Bay.

"It is a very good look for our economy when the banks are willing to finance companies like GWest. We certainly need these kinds of investments

to keep our economy growing," he reassured.

"It is also a vote of confidence in the economic direction that banks are now willing to look at investments and calculate the risk and absorb them in their portfolio and actually lend," he added.

The GWest Centre is housed in a modern multi-purpose commercial complex and provides a wide range of high quality medical services.

Major Infrastructure Works for Denham Town

THE GOVERNMENT will be undertaking major infrastructure works in Denham Town, where the second Zone of Special Operations (ZOSO) is in effect.

Prime Minister the Most Hon. Andrew Holness made the announcement in Parliament on October 31, where he informed that a social intervention committee has been gazetted to steer a series of initiatives in the community.

He said the infrastructure works will include road rehabilitation and upgrading of water supply and sewage systems.

In terms of road rehabilitation, the Prime Minister informed that this will involve the full paving of approximately 2,609 square metres of roadway.

Some of the communities to benefit include Greenwich Street, Albert Street, Milk Land, King Street, Water Street, Wellington Street, Bond Street, Blunt Street, Oxford Street, and Charles Street.

As it relates to water, he said the works are aimed at upgrading the supply and distribution pipelines within West Kingston, while the sewerage project will focus on the cleaning of existing sewer pipes on Chestnut Street and Pink Lanes and the installation of service laterals to lots.

Mr. Holness informed that Denham Town is already benefiting from infrastructure and social interventions under the Jamaica Social Investment Fund (JSIF)-implemented Integrated Community Development Programme (ICDP).

Thus far, a project to have 931 metres of zinc fence removed and substituted with concrete walls is 90 per cent complete.

In addition, a solid waste infrastructure project has been completed, which focused on the construction and placement of enclosures equipped with drums and skips for waste collection and recycling, and environmental wardens are in place.

Hundreds From Around the World to Attend Tourism Conference in MoBay

WORLD LEADERS from the tourism industry, governments, donors, and international development and finance organisations have confirmed attendance at the Global Conference on 'Jobs and Inclusive Growth: Partnerships for Sustainable Tourism'.

To be held from November 27 to 29 at the Montego Bay Convention Centre in St. James, the conference is being hosted by the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), and will include representatives from World Bank Group and Inter-American Development Bank.

More than 300 participants from 60 countries have already registered for the conference.

Over the three days, the participants will be identifying successful models and initiatives that will contribute to sustainable tourism development globally.

Giving details of the agenda at a JIS 'Think



Minister of Tourism, Hon. Edmund Bartlett, speaking at a JIS 'Think Tank' on November 1.

Tank' on November 1, Minister of Tourism, Hon. Edmund Bartlett, said the conference is intended to foster a forum for governments, investors, donors and development organisations to exchange development and investment opportunities; share proven best practices for developing public private partnerships (PPP) in tourism; and work with governments to prepare innovative tourism PPP investment opportunities that prioritise sustainability, economic

inclusion and poverty alleviation.

"The conference will provide an opportunity for us to look at social inclusion, employment and poverty reduction strategies that have been employed with success by the various entities," Mr. Bartlett said.

He added that Jamaica's hosting of this global event will enable the country "to position itself as a global tourism centre for international ideas exchange and thinking on tourism matters."

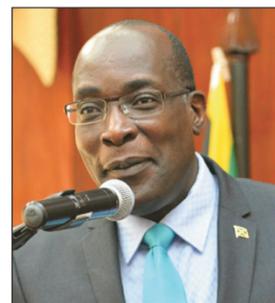
Town Hall Meetings to be Held About PEP

BEGINNING NOVEMBER 13, the Government will convene town hall meetings across the island in preparation for the roll-out of the Primary Exit Profile (PEP) in 2019.

Scheduled to run until January 21 next year, the meetings will serve to heighten public awareness of the initiative, which is a new assessment of students at the primary level that will replace the Grade Six Achievement Test (GSAT).

This was noted by Minister of Education, Youth and Information, Senator the Hon. Ruel Reid, at a post-Cabinet media briefing at Jamaica House on November 1.

He pointed out that this is one of several pre-administrative activities to



Minister of Education, Youth and Information, Senator the Hon. Ruel Reid

prepare students, teachers and parents, to allow for a smooth implementation of the programme.

Senator Reid told JIS News that the venues for the meetings are currently being finalised and that further details will be provided shortly.

PEP, which will consist of three key components

– a Performance Task, an Ability Test and a Curriculum-based Test – is designed to provide a profile of the student's academic level, the student's strengths and weaknesses, and his or her readiness for Grade Seven.

The Minister explained that leading up to the implementation period, teachers of the targeted cohort are also scheduled to be trained in assessing the 21st century learner, interpreting and scoring rubric, and administering the performance task.

Other preparation activities include cognitive labs and small-scale trials, and national pilots of Performance Tasks for Grades Four and Five.

Elevators at Three Hospitals to be Replaced

WITHIN THE next six months, three of the island's hospitals should have new elevators, following the signing of contracts valued at \$44.9 million for the replacement of the lifts.

The hospitals are Kingston Public and National Chest in Kingston, and Spanish Town in St. Catherine.

Malfunctioning elevators at the facilities have hampered surgeries and the movement of patients.

The scope of works, which includes removing old components from existing elevator shafts and installing new mechanisms, is expected to significantly impact the quality of care

the hospitals are able to provide.

Portfolio Minister, Dr. the Hon. Christopher Tufton, who signed the contracts at the Spanish Town Hospital on November 1, said the replacement of the elevators will provide critical logistics support to the hospitals.

He noted that the improvements are in keeping with the Government's efforts to upgrade the island's health sector. "Public health is fundamental to economic growth and development," he said.

Dr. Tufton said that regular maintenance will ensure that the elevators perform efficiently. The elevator replacements are being funded by grants from the National Health Fund (NHF).

The works will be undertaken by Jamaica Electrical and Mechanical Engineers Limited.



Minister of Health, Dr. the Hon. Christopher Tufton (right), speaks with Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Spanish Town Hospital, Dwayne Francis (left); and CEO, National Health Fund, Everton Anderson. Occasion was a contract-signing ceremony held at the Spanish Town Hospital on November 1.

Volunteer Competition Launched



Minister of State in the Ministry of Education, Youth and Information, Hon. Floyd Green (2nd right), gives a smile of encouragement to a student at the Regent Street Seventh-day Adventist Early Childhood Development Centre, Daquan Brown, as he completes a colouring activity. Occasion was the launch of a volunteer project competition geared towards assisting early childhood institutions to meet the 12 required standards for Early Childhood Commission certification at the Regent Street Centre on November 2. Others (from left) are: student, Natalia Newlands; Principal, Hyacinth Scarlett; and Corporate Communication Manager, Jamaica Civil Aviation Authority, Ava Marie Ingram.