TRUMP HAILS CARIBBEAN IMMIGRANTS

Invest in climate resilience, Holness urges int’l community – P3
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Invest in climate resilience – PM tells Int’l community aid is not the answer

EDMOND CAMPBELL
Gleaner Reporter

With CARIBBEAN states facing the brunt of what many believe to be the effects of climate change, Prime Minister Andrew Holness said that pumping aid into countries hit by hurricanes was not necessarily the answer.

In a message to the international community, Holness said: “It is better to invest in climate resilience than to seek to give us aid after the damage is done.”

Addressing party supporters and some members of the diplomatic corps on Sunday, November 26 at the Jamaica Labour Party’s (JLP) 74th annual conference at the National Arena in Kingston, Holness said that the biggest challenge facing the Caribbean at this time is climate change.

Calling attention to the devastating effects caused by at least two hurricanes on the Caribbean this year, Holness argued that in many cases, promises of financial aid to countries hit by natural disasters did not materialise.

“Little Jamaica, little St Lucia, little Dominica, we didn’t cut a climate change. We cannot emit that much carbon to create a footprint on the world’s climate but we are going to be the first to be affected by climate change.”

Caribbean states, said Holness, are on the front lines of what is a clear and present danger. “I want to appeal to the global community, to the international institutions. Hurry up and set a system in place where countries that have made the investment in small island developing states like Jamaica, like St Lucia, like Dominica, so that we can build resilient infrastructure to withstand the impact of hurricanes and for us to recover quickly.”

He said that Jamaica was doing its part to alleviate the effects of climate change. Holness mentioned the preservation of the Cockpit Country by setting out clear boundaries for that extensive watershed area.

The prime minister also projected that by 2030, the country would be increasing its renewable energy supplies from the current 18 per cent to 30 per cent. However, Holness told the conference that he was looking at a more ambitious target of 50 per cent by 2030. “We are preserving the environment while securing your prosperity.”

On the question of fuel for the Jamaica Urban Transit Company (JUTC) buses, he said that the Government would be moving away from the heavy oil currently being used to liquid natural gas.

“Jamaica was doing its part to alleviate the effects of climate change. Holness mentioned the preservation of the Cockpit Country by setting out clear boundaries for that extensive watershed area.”

To cite another example, Holness said that Jamaica was looking at a more ambitious target of 50 per cent by 2030. “We are preserving the environment while securing your prosperity.”

I came because I miss you – Seaga

ERICA VIRTUE
Senior Gleaner Reporter

Former Jamaica Labour Party (JLP) leader and prime minister, Edward Seaga, who had been absent from the party’s annual conference for several years, on Sunday, November 26 told thousands of Labourites that he showed up at this year’s conference, held at Kingston’s National Arena, because he missed them.

“This is the first time in seven years that I have come to confer- ence. I come because of two rea- sons. One, because I miss you, and I don’t want to miss you because I love you,” Seaga told Labourites.

The second reason I am here is because the prime minister called and invited me, and I can’t say no to the prime minister,” he said, again to thunderous and sustained applause.

According to Seaga, he discovered Prime Minister Andrew Holness in Fletchers Land while he worked for a social programme called WOSCH and took him to his office and gave him political tute- lage that has taken him far.

“It turned out that I was right because the pickney was a good one. A very good one. And he has turned out to be an excellent prime minister,” Seaga said.

He also saluted Audley Shaw, calling him a “finance minister” that you can be proud of. Seaga then spoke about what he said was his favourite topic: education.

Education the key

“If you are not educated, you are going to be poor. If you are not educat- ed, you are going to be illiterate. If you are not educated, you can’t function in regular jobs and resort to crime,” he said.

Crime, he said, was not a new problem, stating that “it started from the time when you who are around today were little children and never get proper education”.

A proper education is the key to the future of all Jamaicans, he told the jubilant Labourites.

Also attending the conference was former Prime Minister Bruce Golding, who resigned following the Government’s handling of the damage at the JUTC.”

Photos by Ian Allen/Photographer

Prime Minister Andrew Holness

This, he said, would result in “a cheaper source, a more environmentally friendly source, but more than that, a source that would cut down the cost of fuel that happens at the JUTC.”

Christopher Dodu Bake extradi- tion request during the JLP adminis- tration from 2007-2011. Golding, accompanied by his wife, Lorna, spoke briefly. He said that Holness, who designated his successor after his resignation, was the right man for Jamaica at this time.

“My message to you today is quite simple. Our country today is fortunate to have the right man in the right place at the right time.”

Seaga urges support for NIDS

As debate continues over the mandatory National Identification System (NIDS) recently passed into law, Prime Minister Andrew Seaga told Labourites that the opposition People’s National Party (PNP) was known for not supporting national fingerprint identification.

According to Seaga, in the 1960s when the Government, led by Sir Alexander Bustamante, sought to introduce a national identification system requiring the fingerprint of all voters, the PNP opposed it.

“The PNP told the people. ‘Don’t give any fingerprint. Don’t register.’ And when we pulled up the registration list, it was 30,000 persons short,” said Seaga.

Seaga would later, along with the late Ryan Peralto, pilot fingerprint voter registration under the then Electoral Advisory Committee (EAC). This time, however, it had the backing of the opposition PNP as vote fraud reached intolerable levels in the 1990s.

Now used in several constituencies, electoral officials have technology for fingerprint identification to produce ballots.

According to Seaga, fingerprint is the way of the future.

“If you want to go to the bank in the future, in not the voters card they going to ask you for it. It is the national identification card. And that is the one you going to have to have to change money, to get money to the post office, to go to any government establishment.”

Photo’s by Ian Allen/Photographer

Prime Minister Andrew Holness

For a story or photo to share? Tell us of your achievements, new business initiatives, birthdays, anniversaries, church happenings, issues and problems facing you. Email: overseas@gleanerjm.com

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Former Prime Minister Edward Seaga (left) prepares to embrace Prime Minister Andrew Holness while Carla Seaga (centre) Sala on the Prime Minister’s stage at theJLP 74th annual conference at the National Arena in Kingston.
US president Donald Trump has lauded Caribbean immigrants for strengthening the fabric of the United States of America.

In his message recognising the eight recipients of the 2017 Caribbean American Heritage awards he said “...for generations Americans of many Caribbean backgrounds have strengthened the fabric of our nation, today we are blessed by the valuable contributions of more than 4 million Caribbean Americans. These important members of our society make America more prosperous and more secure and they continue to honour the traditions of their families and culture.”

The US President said the United States applauds those who built bridges of cultural understanding, trade and investment between America and our friends across the Caribbean, “as you gather to celebrate the heritage and achievement of many Caribbean Americans in congratulating this year’s honourees.”

Among those honoured at the 24th annual gala of the Caribbean heritage awards, held at the JW Marriott Hotel in Washington D.C. last Friday were Jamaican scien-
tist, Marcus Garvey Lifetime Achievement Award Professor Henry Lowe, Excellence in the Arts Award Entertainer Shana ‘Etana’ McKenzie-Morris, US Congressman Eliot Engel (D-New York), for political leadership and support for the Caribbean, Guyanese Dr Glendon Archer, the Outstanding Entrepreneurship Award, Dr Clive Callender, the Excellence in Medicine Award, Washington D.C.’s Attorney General, the Haitian-American Karl A. Racine, the Forerunner Award, Trinidad and Tobago-born former Florida lieutenant governor Jennifer Carroll, the Trailblazer Award, BET corporate social responsibility director Nuika Norville, the Vanguard Award, Trinidad and Tobago’s Bevil Wooding, the Excellence in Science and Technology Award; and the late education and leadership development activist Walker A. Williams, the legacy Award.

In presenting Dr Lowe with his award, Jamaica’s ambassador to the United States Audrey Marks lauded the scientist researcher, noting his innovative discoveries, including several bioactive mole-
cules in Jamaica medical plants. The Jamaican envoy made it known that Prof. Lowe also helped to develop the first commercial product from marijuana for treat-
ing glaucoma.

SALUTED ETANA

The ambassador also saluted Etana on her Art Award pointing out that her music and positive message have reached millions.

Tributes for Mico University’s Claude Packer

CARL GILCHRIST
Gleaner Writer

TRIBUTES CONTINUE to pour in for Professor Claude Packer, the first president of the Mico University College, who passed away on Thursday evening, November 23 at his daughter’s home in Florida, United States. He had been ailing for some time.

Packer served the education sector for more than 50 years before retiring in 2014. He became princi-
pal of Mico Teachers College in 1995 and was later appointed the first president when the teachers’ college transitioned into the Mico University College in 2009.

“We have lost a giant, a passion-
ate and creative educator who was in thought and action ahead of his time. His service to the Mico will forever be remembered as he has left a lasting legacy from which generations will benefit,” said Dr Asburn Pincock, president of The Mico, who hailed Packer as a visionary leader who set a solid foundation on which to build the future of The Mico.

HIGHER STANDARDS

Dr Peter Phillips, president of the People’s National Party, said: “Professor Packer represented the best of the nation’s educators, and his tremendous contribution to the sector cannot be overstated. He was the creator of several pro-
grammes at Mico and the University of the West Indies that facilitated access for many Jamaicans to tertiary-level educa-
tion.

Phillips continued, “He upheld the higher standards of the teach-
ing profession and pushed his stu-
dents to aspire for better for them-
selves and their own charges. Jamaica is better for the work and commitment of Professor Packer and extends condolences to his family, friends, colleagues, and many students.

Over the years, Packer received several awards for his service to education, including the Governor General’s Achievement Award in 2003 and the Mico Gold Medal for Excellence in 2007.

In 2008, Packer was conferred with the national honour – Commander of the Order of Distinction for Dedicated Service to Education.

He was also known for his brilli-
ance in mathematics and lectured in mathematics in the Faculty of Education at the University of the West Indies. He also lectured at Cornell University and was an external examiner for Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate examinations.

Packer was instrumental in the development of the Caribbean Centre of Excellence in Mathematics, a body that focuses on the teaching of mathematics in schools.

A condolence book is to be opened at the Mico University College.

In her remarks, ICS President Dr Claire Nelson said, “Tonight, we honour those among us who demonstrate that the light of God lives within us through this award, we lift up those who are exemplars of excel-
ence, whose genuine and hard work make real Americans a suc-
cess as an immigrant nation.” CARAH celebrates the achieve-
ments of outstanding individuals of Caribbean descent who have made extraordinary contributions to their fields of expertise.

Just over 300 friends of the Caribbean and the Caribbean Diaspora were in attendance were mesmerised by an amazing per-
formance by the recipient of the Art Award, Etana.
CARICOM hails support for hurricane-ravaged countries at pledging conference

Widespread concern for CARICOM countries severely affected by hurricanes Irma and Maria was evident at the opening of the CARICOM-UN High Level Pledging Conference, at the United Nations Headquarters in New York recently.

Addressing the large gathering, which included UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, international development partners, representatives of governments, the private sector, and the United Nations system, CARICOM Secretary General Ambassador Irwin LaRocque said their presence demonstrated strong interest and deep concern about the situation in the Community. “You were there to see at first-hand the damage inflicted by the hurricanes. You have ensured it stayed in the attention of the international community and today, you are here with us to emphasise your commitment. I thank you so very much, Secretary-General,” LaRocque said.

The CARICOM secretary general said that the magnitude of reconstruction would require significant levels of financing, with the loss and damage to the region estimated at more than US$56 billion. “Our governments need the cooperation of international development partners, the private sector, and civil society. All working together will provide the resources and the expertise needed to achieve our goal of building better to combat the new normal.” Ambassador LaRocque said.

“The task of rebuilding is beyond us. We cannot do it alone. We need your help,” he said, adding that he anticipated that the same collaboration and generosity which marked the relief efforts will continue as the countries go forward to build a resilient Caribbean.

Ministry of Labour to expand Overseas Employment Programme in Canada

More Jamaicans are expected to benefit from the Seasonal Agricultural Workers Programme (SAWP) in Canada, based on the strategic focus of the Ministry of Labour and Social Security to facilitate job creation through the expansion of employment opportunities under its Overseas Employment Programme.

In a recent visit to Canada, Minister of Labour and Social Security Shahine Robinson met with Patricia Hajdu, Canadian minister of employment, workforce development and labour as well as Bill Casey, member of parliament for Nova Scotia. The objective of the visit was to discuss the strengthening and expansion of the programme for the mutual benefit of both countries.

Hajdu highlighted the importance of the programme for Jamaica and Canada in the meeting and expressed support for the programme to continue. In her meeting with Casey, the possibility of developing a training programme for new workers in conjunction with the Dalhousie University was discussed.

The ministry facilitates more than 9,000 Jamaicans in the SAWP annually, which has made a significant impact on the development of the Jamaican economy and has provided economic support for thousands of families since its inception in 1966.

Robinson met with Dr Audia Barnett, director, Inter-American Institute for Co-operation on Agriculture, which is currently conducting research on the transfer of technology to Jamaica through workers who travel on the SAWP.
MOU signed to further boost child protection services

THE MINISTRY of Labour and Social Security and the Child Protection and Family Services Agency (CPFSA) has signed a MOU to boost support for children on Friday November 16.

Five walk-through metal detectors and 180 handheld metal detectors were handed over to the CPFSA’s head office in Kingston.

The MOU envisages the establishment of a referral system that facilitates social interventions for persons who are assessed and determined to be vulnerable.

They include current and former wards of the State, children remanded in government places of safety, pending court decisions, youngsters deemed at risk who have been neglected, abused or maltreated by their families; and those on the Programme of Institutional Enhancement through Health and Education (PATH).

Government seeking Diaspora's support for national bus service

EDUCATION, Youth and Information Minister, Senator Ruel Reid, has called on the Jamaican Diaspora to partner with Government in establishing a national school-bus service.

He said the ministry is looking to acquire 100 school buses over the next five years, and encouraged the Diaspora to match this target.

The Diaspora was addressing members at a reception hosted in his honour by Jamaica’s Ambassador to the United States, Her Excellency Audrey Marks, at the Jamaican Embassy in Washington DC earlier this month.

More schools to receive metal detectors

TO IMPROVE safety and security in the island’s secondary schools, more institutions will soon be equipped with metal detectors.

The schools will be provided with handheld metal detectors as well as walk-through metal-detector scanners.

CSJP partners with NCDA to improve drug-treatment access

THE PARTNERSHIP between the Citizen Security and Justice Programme (CSJP) and the National Council on Drug Abuse (NCDA), through the Specialised Substance Misuse Treatment Programme, has served to improve drug-treatment access for vulnerable youth.

Through the collaboration, youngsters in communities targeted by the CSJP are recommended to the NCDA for treatment if they have been flagged for substance misuse during assessment.

Substance Abuse Officer, NCDA, Kingston, Denise Chin, says a key strength of the programme is its ability to reach persons who would not otherwise access treatment.

ST ANN, PORTLAND

Four UDC attractions cop premier travel awards

FOUR OF Jamaica’s attractions managed by the Urban Development Corporation (UDC) have received certificates of excellence from the world’s largest travel site, TripAdvisor, for 2017, for excellence in hospitality and for continuously meeting the needs of their customers.

TripAdvisor, which boasts the world’s largest travel community, announced that the corporation’s Ocho Rios Bay Beach, Dunn’s River Falls and Park, Green Grotto Caves, and Reach Falls attractions had each been recognised with a 2017 Certificate of Excellence.

The world-famous Dunn’s River Falls and Park in St Ann is receiving the award for the third consecutive year. While Reach Falls, Portland, is being recognised for the second time.

More than 500 youth to benefit from empowerment forum

MORE THAN 500 students benefited from a youth empowerment forum held on Thursday November 23 at the Campus College Auditorium, St Andrew.

The forum, entitled ‘Visions of 2030’, targeted high-school students with a view to discussing discourses on challenges as well as tackling challenges associated with adjusting to high-school life.

It was spearheaded by youth organisations, Called to Lead Jamaica (CALLJA).

ST ANDREW

Trench Town now has an Optimist Club

TRENCH TOWN, the birthplace of reggae superstar Bob Marley and many other music greats, is now the home of a newly commissioned Optimist Club.

Twelve chartered members of the new club were installed by the president of Optimist International, H.N. Nick Prillaman, who was in the island on the weekend of November 10 to attend the Optimist International Caribbean District adult Optimist Stronger Clubs Conference and the Junior Optimist International Youth Summit at the Jamaica Pegasus hotel, New Kingston.

The Optimist Club is an international organisation of volunteers who focus on improving the well-being of children and youth.

The Trench Town club will become part of the activities observed as the Year of Optimists in service to Children.
UK door is open for business for Jamaicans to access

WHILE LAUDING the Government for taking steps to declare that no mining will be permitted in the Cockpit country, Diana McCaulay, chief executive officer of the Jamaica Environment Trust (JET), said that there are still concerns regarding some of the untapped areas that were not included in Prime Minister Andrew Holness’ announcement last week.

McCaulay pointed specifically to the Nasaa Mountain’s area, noting that there were serious issues of mining when considering the past and future in the area. She added that there is a part of the Cockpit Country as it is presently understood where there is no surface water that is going to interrupt those underground flows, it could have been so successful here. People connecting the dots is what the issue is.”

Ahmad said that the newspaper hours after hosting some of his business partners and members of the Government at a forum dubbed Jamaica Going Global UK Partners and You at the Hilton Rose Hall Resort and Spa in the tourism capital.

SET UP FULL BANKING FACILITIES

Ahmad raised the issue of freight, stating that the Jamaican government is no more different when it comes to freight, and that it is cheaper to freight things from faraway places than from Jamaica.

The high commissioner told The Gleaner during a recent interview in his office in 86-03 Henderson Avenue Hollis Queens, state of New York, that the new UK and Jamaica relationship is going to have the effect of expanding services that are different.

TO: Jorge (George) Brathwaite

Being the persons interested as creditors, legatees, distributees or otherwise in the estate of Eva Williams, deceased who at the time of her death was a resident of 186-03 Henderson Avenue Hollis 11423 in the county of Queens, state of New York, Upon the petition of Eva Saunders Administrator CTA residing at 217 Winburg Condos 312 St Thomas Virgin Islands, Mailing address PO Box 305422, Veteran Drive, St Thomas VI 00803.

PM Holness declares no mining in Cockpit

WHILE LAUDING the Government for taking steps to declare that no mining will be permitted in the Cockpit country, Diana McCaulay, chief executive officer of the Jamaica Environment Trust (JET), said that there are still concerns regarding some boundaries that were not included in Prime Minister Andrew Holness’ announcement last week.

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Here’s another forum for you to share your views with Jamaica and the rest of the world. Send your 150-word comment on any topic to:
The Gleaner Company Ltd., P.O. Box 40, 7 North Street, Kingston; fax to 1-876-922-6223 or email: overseas@gleanerjm.com.

Summary – November 20-24

**MONDAY**

**Mr Holness’ CARICOM agenda**

IN TRYING to understand the reason for the Government’s failure to publish the Golding review task force report on CARICOM a year after it was handed in, the editorial said while Prime Minister Andrew Holness has declared that Jamaica is at the CARICOM table, had given snapshots of the direction he wants to take regarding the regional body, he has, thus far, not offered a large strategic vision for the region.

The editorial said we expect that some of that would be shaped by the findings of the Golding report, in which all Jamaicans have a stake, adding that why we can’t understand the delay in its publication so that there can be serious debate of what it offers.

**TUESDAY**

**Postpone NIDS passage**

THE EDITORIAL called on the Government to postpone the passage of the controversial National Identification System (NIDS) legislation which returned from the Senate with some 168 amendments after 100 were made in the Lower House.

Pointing out that the fundamental reason for the haste is that the Inter-American Development Bank is best, an interim arrangement while a law has to be in place in time for the December meetings of the IDB board for the loan to be approved if it is to fall within the 2018 Budget/funding cycle, the editorial said protecting constitutional rights and securing the people’s trust are worth more than losing one’s place in a funding cycle. That opportunity won’t be gone forever.

**WEDNESDAY**

**Lester Spaulding’s big vision**

THE EDITORIAL paid tribute to Lester Spaulding, late chairman of the JUROJOURNAL Communications Group. None would have had a more profound impact than him, particularly to the business end of the media in the English-speaking Caribbean.

Citing the merger of RJR and The Gleaner, the editorial said in ambition and scope, it largely defined the man. For while many observers have analysed this merger in business and financial terms, to him, it was also something else of equal importance: an avenue for securing the survival of a free and independent media in Jamaica.

**THURSDAY**

**Talk turkey on wage negotiations**

OUR VIEW is that this Government needs to take a big embracing approach, linking the wage negotiations and public-sector reform, even if it ends with a small, more productive public sector, as the kernel of the editorial’s position on the Government’s approach to current public sector wage negotiations.

It is said that while supporting the Government’s call for wage restraint, there, however, seemed to be a disconnect between wage talks and the administration’s public-sector reform agenda, aimed in part at lowering the public-sector wage bill to nine per cent of gross domestic product (GDP). These issues have to be addressed as a cohesive whole, rather than as disparate issues.

**FRIDAY**

**Seek more than EPA Light**

The editorial welcomed news that the current trade pact between England and CARIFORUM would be the same after England’s withdrawal from the European Union. It however advised Jamaica to be wary about locking themselves into any deal that merely slavishly mimics the trade aspects of the EPA, without more, including strengthening weaknesses in the current pact, and incorporating some of the unique features related thereto.

Foreign Minister Ms Kamina Johnson Smith should view the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA), as at best, an interim arrangement while a long-term deal is fashioned, it said

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**LETTERS**

**Accountability from gov’t a must**

**THE EDITOR, Sir:**

I WAS pleased to hear the cruel but kind comments International Monetary Fund chief Christine Lagarde made on her recent visit to Jamaica with regards to trimming the public sector as part of the plans for reform to make the State more efficient in its service to the general public.

Lagarde had made it quite clear that the public-sector wage bill was a heavy burden on the country’s growth and by reducing all areas of the public sector, the Government must be held responsible for any savings they make.

Over the years, Jamaica has seen administration after administration throwing money towards the public sector, accounting for just salaries alone, with not much scope to improve the sector itself.

We need reforming. I do hope that the present government listens this time around.

WESELY THOMAS

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**Too much Americanisation**

**THE EDITOR, Sir:**

WHILE I applaud Jamaican businessmen Adam Stewart and Ian Dear for investing in their homeland via their slated Starbucks rollout of stores, I don’t share the same view that Americanisation is the thing for Jamaica.

Why, like other locally created and owned cafés and restaurants, couldn’t these two brilliant businessmen have introduced a new café to Jamaica, with the goal of becoming as good as or better than Starbucks?

In that regard, I applaud Jamaican business icons Vincent Chang, Jackie Chin, Thalia Lyn, Adrian Foreman, the Sharpe brothers, and Mrs. Clarke for investing in and introducing Taste!, Juici Patties, Island Grill, Mother’s, Café Blue, and Devon House I-Scream to Jamaica’s fast-food landscape. These fast-food giants have all become highly successful.

The more locally created and Jamaican-owned businesses and brands that exist, the stronger Brand Jamaica will become.

PATRICK A. GALLIMORE

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**Jamaican reggae artistes overpriced**

**THE EDITOR, Sir:**

AS A booking agent, I have been noticing a trend that I think needs to be addressed. A lot of, if not all, Jamaican reggae and dancehall artistes seem to be pricing themselves out of the market. I do bookings for a few events in Europe. Because I know that most reggae/dancehall acts look to that region for work, I always try to seek out Jamaican talent (both established and emerging) to try to get them on my books. Sadly, their requirements have got so out of hand that I find myself hiring mostly UK and African entertainers.

Reggae and dancehall music is now being produced all over the world. Therefore, the industry is more competitive. Investors and promoters are no longer just looking to Jamaica for their acts.

Granted, Jamaica is still considered the home/leader in the reggae/dancehall field, but artistes must realise that if their fees and entourage are too burdensome, promoters will look elsewhere.

Expecting a promoter to hire and pay you $2,000 and up, plus fly you, your manager and someone else, when you have no hit and, therefore, cannot bring out the crowd, is ridiculous.

I hope I have not offended anyone with this article, but I am currently in the process of booking for two upcoming events in that territory, and the requests I am getting are so far gone that I have to write this.

MARIA JACKSON

mariajackson27@yahoo.co

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**Summary – November 20-24**

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**THE EDITORIAL**
Rene Livingstone reads a poem dedicated to the memory of her mother, Kathleen ‘Kay’ Livingstone, who founded the Congress of Black Women of Canada during the unveiling plaque ceremony, held November 5 at the Bedford Parkette, in Toronto. Looking on are Marco Mendicino, MP for Eglinton-Lawrence and Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice & Attorney General of Canada, and Celina Caesar-Chavannes, MP for Whitby and Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Development.

Island Records founder, entrepreneur and philanthropist Chris Blackwell (center) displays a bottle of the new Blackwell Rum at its Washington, DC, launch. Sharing in the launch are (from left) Marika Kessler; Bob Blair; Jamaica’s ambassador to the United States, Audrey Marks; and Dery McKissack.

From left: Trevor Massey of the Wolmer’s Alumni Association, Toronto with singers, Belinda Brady and Keith Lynn. Both singers performed at the Wolmer’s Luncheon Concert at Pearson Convention Centre in Brampton, Ontario on November 19, 2017.

What’s your view? What stories would you like to read? What issues would you like us to focus on? Email: overseas@gleanerjm.com

Producers and Presenter of The Taste the Islands Experience, Calibe Thompson (third right) joined by members of Jamaica Embassy staff and others at The Taste the Islands Experience at the Embassy of the Republic of Haiti in Washington, DC.
Coconut sector needs $2b investment

THK JAMAICAN Government is about to spin off the commercial operations of the Coconut Industry Board, leaving only the regulatory arm under the control of the State.

But the reform programme is being subsumed by the fight over the ownership of the 163.42 million Seprod shares held by the Coconut Industry Board, which is now headed to court.

Coconut Board chairman Christopher Gentles is questioning the wisdom of that move, saying a legal fight serves no one’s interest, except for lawyers, at a time when the focus should be on locating financing for commercial investments in the sector, to the tune of $382 billion.

“I do not believe that it serves the coconut farmers, the coconut industry or Jamaica well for this matter to be tied up in the courts,” said Gentles.

“This is a critical juncture in the life cycle of the coconut industry, where we may be missing the ship. The real value of the asset, of which an investment of $382.02 billion could serve to attract to lay the foundation to attract another $382 billion in investments both locally and overseas. I think potential investors may well turn off by such a turn of events,” he said.

Requests for comment from the Ministry of Industry, Commerce & Agriculture, MICAf, were unanswered.

Initially, the Jamaican government had signalled plans to divest 122.5 million of the 163.42 million Seprod shares, but got pushback from private interests. At today’s market prices, those 122.5 million shares are worth $382.9 billion.

However, Gentles told The Gleaner that the parties have been negotiating a settlement of $381.5 billion in talks that have been ongoing since May.

That price would be around $2.9 billion carrying value placed on the Seprod stock at the end of the Coconut Board’s 2016 financial year. The market value of the 163.42 million shares is substantially higher at around $5.2 billion.

The talks derailed in the past week, apparently because the Coconut Board has been trying to negotiate a smaller settlement than the $381.5 billion.

“We have had extensive negotiations and we have had extensive movements by both parties in the matter. I believe with a little flexibility on behalf of the minister and the coconut growers we could have had a breakthrough,” Gentles said.

Gentles said the Coconut Board and the growers it represents ultimately believe that all the holdings should stay put to finance new market development and other interests by the industry.

“The unpacking of the commercial arm has been spun off. We have said the approved board’s alliance with the agriculture ministry over the years, in which they collected permits on behalf of the state and benefited from grants, the government was entitled to some of the agency’s resources,” Gentles said.

TEH ISSUE

“The issue is what proportion the government would request, and the quid pro quo and the commitment of the Government of Jamaica, that would allow the coconut growers the autonomy to invest in the Coconut Industry Development Project,” he said.

Over the commodity board’s history, he said, it was the growers who sacrificed returns from the agency in periods of disaster, while the Coconut Board itself has been the one taking the risk with Seprod and over that company’s history.

Last year, for example, Seprod – which is a publicly traded company – paid out a big dividend to shareholders after disposing of equity investments that resulted in a large capital gain. However, the Coconut Industry Board opted to reinvest its share of the dividend in Seprod in November in the form of a loan worth $862.89 million.

“It wanted the money to remain as working capital” at a time when Seprod was reinvesting heavily in its dairy operations, factories, and new products, Gentles said.

The loan pays interest quarterly at an annual rate of three per cent.

“The coconut growers have been extremely frugal and have nurtured this investment in Seprod for 45 years. There have been periods of hurricanes, when a payout could have been made to growers, which was forgone in order to develop this resource,” Gentles said.

“We have to recognise that the country and Jamaica would benefit for 30 years to come from a significant investment in the coconut industry today in nurseries, farms and factories. But if we fritter away resources fighting fires, then we will fail to invest in our future,”

Gentles said.

“Today, Musson Jamaica Limited is the largest shareholder in Seprod with a 45.27 per cent stake, followed by the Coconut Board with 31.65 per cent. The list of top 10 owners is rounded out by pension funds and other institutional investors.

New Day assessing mining impact of Cockpit Country boundary decision

NEW DAY Aluminium LLC is not sure yet how its bauxite-mining operations will be impacted by the decision of the prime minister on the Cockpit Country boundary and the precise decision of the Jamaica board and participate in the governance of the operation.

The official noted that because the agreements are pending, the Jamaican Government knew very little about the business in which it has a 51 per cent interest. He was also hoping the boundary decision would open up new lands up for mining.

The Cockpit is mostly in the parish of Trelawny, but it also borders on St James, St Elizabeth and St Ann.

Noranda had previously initiated preparation for mining near Stewart Town in Trelawny – including extension of haul roads and prep of mine equipment – which has begun within Cockpit Country borders south of Stewart Town – activities which started the year before the Jamaica Government Trust agreement.

The project is comprised of 5.2 million tonnes of bauxite, but has the capacity to further increase output to 5.5 million tonnes.

The company has an initial 25-year renewable lease with the Government of Jamaica and is expected to invest $2.02 billion in the operation over five years.

A.C.
December ground-breaking for combined heat and power plant at Jamalco

NEW FORTRESS Energy (NFE) will officially break ground for the new combined heat and power plant at Jamalco’s Haile Hall, Clarendon, refinery on Thursday 1.

Wesley Edens, founder and chairman of NFE, made the announcement last Friday, ending weeks of speculation about when the work would begin.

Cabinet approved the Jamalco-proposed project for the establishment of the plant in June 2016 and NFE was engaged to build and operate the cogeneration facility of the port.

According to Edens, NFE's development of this new facility at the Jamalco plant will involve the employment of more than 400 workers during construction.

The major components of the project include a 200-ton steam and cogeneration terminal (SRTHT) in the marine environment of Portland Bight; the installation of a pipeline from the Rocky Point fossil-fueled power station; the construction of the new gas-fired power station, and the construction of an electricity distribution network to deliver power to the national grid.

In announcing the development, Edens expressed confidence that the project will create and retain hundreds of new jobs in the region.

Edens also expressed optimism about future partnerships with the Jamaican manufacturing sector and cited the success of the arrangements with the Jamaica Public Service Company and agreements with Red Stripe, the University of the West Indies, and Jamaica Urban Transit Company.

The new plant at Jamalco is projected for completion in 2016 and NFE was engaged to build and operate the cogeneration facility of the port.

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Canadian jazz icons to be celebrated for their legacy

NEIL ARMSTRONG
Freelance Editor

TORONTO: Two Canadian jazz icons will be honoured at a special concert to mark Canada's 150th birthday and the 50th anniversary of the Living Arts Centre in Mississauga, Ontario, in December. Oscar Peterson and Oliver Jones: A Celebration will bring several musicians together on one stage to pay tribute to two legendary jazz pianist Monty Alexander; JUNO and Emmy Award winner D.D. Jackson; Montreal Jazz Festival grand jazz award winner Robi Botos; Marc Cary; and several others at the Living Arts Centre on December 9. Peterson died in 2007 at the age of 82. Jones is 83, and retired in 2016.

"It's really about the legacy. It's a Canadian story that I don't think is told quite often enough," says Frank Francis of Caliban Arts Theatre and the artistic director of the event. Speaking from his home in New York, Alexander says he is delighted to have been invited to honour Peterson and Jones, "two incredible pianists, with Oscar Peterson being a total icon of history in music".

While playing in the New York in the 1960s, Alexander went to a club to see Peterson, "the master pianist and one of the greatest". He says this is an opportunity to remind people of what they have here in Canada. Westracy, an American jazz trombonist who has been living in Canada for eight years and has been the holder of the Chair since it was created, lauded the musicians and outlined his role in the tribute event.

"These are guys who are conceptual musicians so my idea became more of a research idea. Get the raw materials ready for them, get the scores ready for them, Oscar's scores - and allow them to interpret those movements in a way that they normally handle their music."

He is the creator of an outreach program called the Oscar Peterson Jazz Mobile - a traveling unit that goes around to area schools that don't have the resources and expose them to live jazz concerts. He says this is an opportunity to remind people of what they have here in Canada. Westracy, an American jazz trombonist who has been living in Canada for eight years and has been the holder of the Chair since it was created, lauded the musicians and outlined his role in the tribute event.

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INFLUENCED BY PATTERSON

Francis says the musicians "are all, sort of, students of Peterson."

"They're all, sort of, been inspired and influenced by him one way or another," said Francis, noting that Dave Young, bassist, who played with Peterson and Jones will also be on the bill. He said Jones was closely related to Peterson because they were both child prodigies and went to the same church in Montreal. Their families were relatively close, he said, and Jones was kind of Peterson's little brother.

"But he is a giant, and I think while he's here he would be retired but while he's here we should actually also acknowledge him. He doesn't necessarily need to play but he needs to know that he's remembered."

Jones will be presented with the Living Arts Centre Lifetime Achievement Award. Francis describes it as a mini-festival with four acts - “So, you're in for a treat. Everyone will tell their story a little bit differently so it won't be the same right across. Everyone will have their moment to say what they want to say. I think that's important.”

He said one of the things that is inspiring about this story is that typically when people think of jazz, they think of African Americans, but here are two incredible African Canadian men “who are actually coming out of the Caribbean and sort of make their way onto the scene the way that they have.”

“It’s really to speak to the African Canadian impact on this country as we celebrate Canada’s 150th,” says Francis. Natalie Liu, CEO of the Living Arts Centre, says the event represents “the finest assembling of jazz talent ever on the main stage at the Living Arts Centre.”

Meanwhile, Kelly Peterson, Oscar’s widow, is looking forward to the celebration of both men.

“It is wonderful to have them honoured together. Oliver has always been an encouraging voice for younger artists. He’s been very proud of the young black musicians, but here are two incredible African Canadian men who are actually coming out of the Caribbean and sort of make their way onto the scene the way that they have.”

COJO Scholarship gala to honour Grace, others

JAMAICA GRACE KENNEDY and Company Ltd and three individuals are to be honoured at the 2017 Children of Jamaica (COJO) Scholarship Gala and Awards dinner at the Hilton Hotel JFK Airport on Saturday, December 2. GraceKennedy will receive an award for corporate service, while awards for contributions to COJO and community development will be presented to Kaye Chong, Dennis Burrell and Dr. Fitzcaut Grant, MD.

Gary Williams, chairman of COJO, a 501(c)(3) non-profit organisation headquartered in New York, said: “Each year we put the spotlight on some of the people who are going the extra mile to help build and strengthen our communities. All of these companies and individuals have made sterling contributions in support of COJO’s work, helping us to achieve our vision for a better existence for scores of Jamaicans.”

KEY TO A BETTER FUTURE

Noting that the proceeds of the annual scholarship gala help to fund scholarships to tertiary institutions in Jamaica for former wards of children’s homes, Williams said “many of these children can leave their disadvantage past behind, as a degree from an accredited univer-
Ja’s Davina Bennett places third in Miss Universe 2017

JAMICAR DAVINA Bennett was placed third in a field of 92 contestants, the highest ever in the Miss Universe pageant. Bennett was able to do pageantry, was more of a walk on the runway and come off type of girl, but I decided that it was time for a change. ‘I started the foundation before Miss Universe. I needed a platform to have everyone of these persons who need my support. That was my main motivation going in, and what can I say? I’m the winner today,’ she said after Miss Universe Jamaica 2017. This year, Cambodia, Laos and Nepal competed at the Miss Universe final for the first time ever. It was also the largest number of competing countries.

Black high-school students organise conference to shift negative stereotypes

Neil Armstrong
Freelance Editor

TORONTO

SEVERAL BLACK secondary school students from fifteen schools in the Toronto District School Board recently gathered at Downsview Secondary School in North York for the second annual Black Brilliance Conference. The student-led conference is committed to shifting the negative perception people have of black youth through student advocacy, education and encouraging black youth to use their voices for change. Approximately 150 students met on November 21 to share their experiences in student-run workshops that covered topics such as hair, micro-aggressions, police brutality, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and shame. The keynote speaker, d’bi.young anitafrika, a celebrated African-Jamaican dubpoet, said she had to show up for young, brilliant black people.

“I didn’t think I could do pageantry. I was always afraid of speaking. I was more of a walk on the runway and come off type of girl, but I decided that it was time for a change. ‘I started the foundation before Miss Universe. I needed a platform to have everyone of these persons who need my support. That was my main motivation going in, and what can I say? I’m the winner today,’ she said after Miss Universe Jamaica 2017. This year, Cambodia, Laos and Nepal competed at the Miss Universe final for the first time ever. It was also the largest number of competing countries.

The keynote speaker, d’bi.young anitafrika, a celebrated African-Jamaican dubpoet, said she had to show up for young, brilliant black people.

“The incredible thing about black brilliance and black excellence is, I feel that it is intrinsic to us. It takes black brilliance and black excellence to not only survive but to thrive internally, spiritually, and yes, we’re facing enormous challenges because of the historic scenarios that we have experienced as a people. For us to be where we are right now you can imagine the kind of internal resilience and perseverance and strength. We have to acknowledge that,’ she said.

Students from the following schools participated in the conference: Emerald, CW Jeffreys, Westview, Northview, Lawrence Park, Runnymede, Humberide, Central Tech, North Albion, George Harvey, Marc Garneau, Oakwood, Richvich, and Lakeshore.

I didn’t think I could do pageantry. I was always afraid of speaking. I was more of a walk on the runway and come off type of girl, but I decided that it was time for a change.}

Treasure especially, like, I felt so lucky and so grateful that I needed to share some of the experiences that I observed in Boston here. She said at Harvard the students held workshops where they talked about things that applied to her as a black woman. “So because of that, I’m just, like, we need this, because as I see in my school or in my community, too many people who are like me, too many people my age are just not motivated. They don’t know their purpose. They don’t know what they can do, despite their colour or their gender or their orientation or anything else. Aninwande saw Black Brilliance as being a platform for students, especially in the TDSB, form marginalized people to speak about their issues “especially in an education system that doesn’t really educate people upon other diasporas and histories.” She said Downsview Secondary gave her a place to grow and a place to express herself and although Black Brilliance is student-led it could not happen without the help of the administrators and the adults involved.

Morgan, who was able to do a Master’s in Education at Harvard through crowd-funding in 2016, has graduated and just completed a fellowship there and is based in the conference. It’s incredible, it’s humbling to watch it just play out in the way that it is because I think we often underestimate what our students have the potential to do. I think the only goal was to kind of show them a new world, not realizing that you’re actually a torchbearer. And when you’re handing the torch over to them,” said Morgan.

She said the students took that and ran, and when she saw that she realized how much more she should have done with them on that visit to Harvard. “It’s changing me at my core because education is something I’ve always valued but I always felt like I’ve been denied for a number of reasons. I’ve always had to prove my worth to some teacher,” Morgan said, noting she had to do so on the day of the high school conference too.

Morgan took ten years to gain a Bachelor of Arts in equity and diversity studies at Ryerson University, which she attended while supporting herself and working in various jobs. When she was accepted into Harvard, she turned to crowd-funding to help pay her tuition and living expenses. This resulted in donations amounting to $95,000.

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HAVING LAST month let go 40 older employees with the shuttering of four dozen rooms as part of a major upgrading project, Half Moon hotel in Montego Bay says it will be hiring anew when the build-out is completed next October.

"With the opening of 57 new accommodations in 2018, two new restaurants and three bars, more employment opportunities will become available," Erma Clarke, Director of Human Resources, told Gleaner Business.

The hotel, which is part of the Sandals Royal Plantation group, had 197 rooms and suites and 31 villas on a 400-acre property. The majority of the existing accommodations have been taken out of service and replaced, according to the hotel, with 57 rooms and suites, suggesting a net gain of 13 rooms. All rooms will now have an ocean view.

Forty-four of the existing accommodations are being converted into 57 new rooms and suites, with 13 rooms being added. This phase of the project also includes new restaurants and facilities.

This project is part of a US$75 million redevelopment under way. The first phase, in 2015, involved the refurbishing of the hotel's iconic Sugar Mill Restaurant, the upgrading of the hotel's golf course, the opening of a cafe and the modernizing of back-of-the-house facilities. Most of this work was completed in June.

"Our investment demonstrates the ongoing commitment to our guests and Loyalty Club members, and also our staff and the people of Jamaica," said Half Moon's chairman, Guy Steuart III.

Clarke, the HR director, stressing that the reduction of the hotel's room count was temporary, indicated that it nonetheless meant less demand for staff and that the situation was sensitively handled.

"As a result of this, the opportunity for retirement was extended to staff members over the retirement age and just over 40 redundancies were made from a staff of over 900 people," she said.

CANADIAN CUSTOMERS of JN Bank can pay their mortgage online, through JN Money’s website, at www.jnmoneytransfer.com, as the remittance company continues to establish innovative online facilities to maintain its customers’ connection with relatives and friends; as well as, businesses in Jamaica.

This new service follows last year’s launch of JN Money’s website, which allows customers living in Canada, the United Kingdom (UK) and the United States of America to send funds to their loved ones in Jamaica anywhere at any time, for fees as low as $1 or £1.

"When we launched that service, a part of our strategic outlook was to implement a platform that would allow our customers to conduct their transactions at any time or anywhere, hassle free," stated Horace Hines, Acting General Manager, Money Services, owners and operators of the JN Money brand.

Customers can now send remittances to Jamaica from their home, while travelling, or at work. Customers can send funds for cash pick-up, pay bills, send funds to savings accounts held at financial institutions (excluding JN Bank) as well as pay their JN Mortgage via our website," he stated, adding that, “This service will enable customers to be up to date with their payments and, also avoid the hassle of joining a line, or having to use other means to make their payments.

However due to Canadian laws, JN Money customers in Canada are not allowed to send to JN Bank Savings Accounts.

To pay their mortgages, customers can simply visit jnmoneytransfer.com to sign up and register for the service.

Hines indicated that Canada is home to many Jamaicans who have retained their investment ties to Jamaica, particularly in the area of home ownership.

According to data from Statistics Canada, some 250,000 Jamaicans live in that country. Many have investments in Jamaica, which include home ownership. And, by providing them with an accessible and seamless option to make their mortgage payments via our website, JN Money sets the pace for further investment in Jamaica,” Hines related.

Between January and April of this year, Jamaicans in Canada sent home approximately 9.4 percent of the total amount of remittances to Jamaica, according to data from the Bank of Jamaica.
Japan's immigration dilemma

Have a story or photo to share? Tell us of your achievements, new business initiatives, birthdays, anniversaries, church happenings, issues and problems facing you. Email: overseas@gleanerjm.com

GLENDA ANDERSON
Gleaner Reporter

TOKYO, Japan: ALTHOUGH WIDELY regarded as a word and tested issue globally, Japan could well pull on immigration as a possible answer in its search for solutions to help care for its ageing population.

While it supports the idea of immigration as a human rights matter, Tokyo has been wary of accepting refugees due to security fears, and has been a tad cautious of receiving those persons leaving their country of origin simply for economic gain.

Time and circumstances it seems, however, are nudging Japan closer to a clearer, more precise decision on and structure for immigration.

Its present aches though would be how to encourage the right kind of migrant to come to Japan. Addressing a media briefing and program orientation for journalists with this year’s Association for Cooperation and the Foreign Press Centre of Japan (APIC-FPCJ) Pacific-Caribbean Journalist Program, on Tuesday, October 17 in Tokyo, FFJU President Kyotetsu Akasaka made clear that economic migrant was important in Japan and said the country was looking to, “encourage economic migrants,” with a plan to go deep on its implementation.

“With Japan now having big cities like Osaka and Tokyo economic zones where they can come to work for a number of years,” he said Tokyo, Japan’s largest city and Osaka its third largest, could see a further swell in their current population, and a spike in the number of foreigners well past its current 2.5 million - and growing.

It would provide a steady stream of health professionals, a growing need to provide care for Japan’s elderly.

“With there being encouraging persons in the healthcare industries, nurses and other healthcare professionals, domestic, and especially those caring for the aged (to come to Japan).

“Gradually the doors would be open for them,” he says. But it is also the flipside of a discussion on Japan’s ageing population, and how it came to be.

Akasaka concedes that Japan’s current strategies on increasing birth rate among younger couples have not been enough, and that given the urgency of the current ageing trend, the government needs to do more.

While measures have included “encouraging persons to get married and have babies,” more effort can be put into improving the conditions for working mothers, especially with the provision of daycare.

Filing and financial concerns

Dear Mrs Walker-Huntington,

My husband filed an I-130 petition which was approved. We are now at the interview stage. However, we have a concern regarding affidavit info for our joint sponsor. My husband (a green-card holder) had submitted an affidavit of support Tokyo time and circumstances it seems, however, are nudging Japan closer to a clearer, more precise decision on and structure for immigration.

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United States into consideration, should I try and get a different joint sponsor? - CL

Dear CL,

The majority of beneficiaries of green card petitions must demonstrate to the US government that they will not become a public charge upon the government of the United States and are required to submit an approved affidavit of support (AOS). The US government has guidelines to indicate the minimum yearly income that a petitioner needs to qualify as a financial sponsor.

If the petitioner does not meet the minimum income for the members of the household, a joint sponsor can be added to the petition. The joint sponsor must have sufficient income for his/her family plus the intended immigrants. The income requirements for active-duty members of the US Military is less than non-military. The poverty guidelines for 2016 are issued by US Citizenship & Immigration Services and can be found at www.uscis.gov

For each application, you are required to submit the most recent income tax returns and proof of income. This is so even in cases where a previous year’s income tax return may have been submitted and accepted. Each year in the US, persons are required to file income tax returns by April 15.

There are a few exceptions to the AOS requirement, for example, for persons who will automatically become US citizens upon arrival to the US. If the active military joint sponsor does not meet the 2016 guidelines, then you would be best served by seeking a different joint sponsor.

Dahlia A. Walker-Huntington is a Jamaican-American attorney who practises immigration law in the United States, and family, criminal, international and personal injury law in Florida. She is a mediator, arbitrator and special magistrate in Broward County, Florida. info@walkerhuntington.com

United Kingdom

What is deportation?

Dear Mr Bassie,

What is meant by deportation and administrative removal with respect to United Kingdom immigration, and how do they work? - PP

Dear PP,

Sections of the United Kingdom Immigration Act 1971 regulate administrative removal; deportation is regulated by sections of the United Kingdom Immigration and Asylum Act 1999. A deportation order authorises the detention, pending removal, of the person named in it. It also prohibits the person named from entering the United Kingdom given before the order was made or while it remains in force. Deportation is normally used for the more serious cases, where the secretary of state deems the person’s deportation to be conducive to the public good, or where a court recommends deportation in the case of a person over the age of 17 who has been convicted with an offence punishable with imprisonment.

The immigration rules set out the considerations to be applied in considering whether deportation is the appropriate course of action. It also states that while each case will be considered on its merits, when a person is liable to deportation, the presumption shall be that the public interest requires deportation. It further goes on to make it clear that it will only be in exceptional circumstances that the public interest in favour of deportation will be outweighed by other relevant factors.

Administrative Removal

The immigration rules also cover administrative removal. The circumstances in which a person becomes liable to administrative removal are: failure to comply with conditions of leave to enter or remain or overstaying; obtaining leave to remain by deception, being the spouse, civil partner, or child under 18 of a person in respect of whom removal directions have been given.

All relevant factors are to be considered before a decision to remove is given – age, length of residence, strength of connections with the UK, personal history, domestic circumstances, previous criminal record, compassionate circumstances, and any representations received on the person’s behalf. After notice of a decision has been issued, the person may be detained or made the subject of a restriction order, requiring reporting to the police pending removal. An order for removal, unlike a deportation order, does not prohibit re-entry.

The immigration rules which are considered above set out the requirements to be followed by immigration officers in relation to decisions on deportation and administrative removal and will also be the basis of an immigration judge's decision in appeal. Orders of either category may be made against failed asylum seekers; the choice will depend on the circumstances of the case. Persons faced with the prospect of such orders, who have noxious claims to asylum, will often do so to stave off the order. It sometimes happens that failed asylum seeker takes this point submit fresh claims and such claims will be accepted only if they are significantly different from material that has previously been considered and create a realistic prospect of success.

As in the case of other appeals, the act provides for applications to the appropriate court. The immigration rules state that any representations received in the case of a senior immigration judge of the tribunal itself.

John S. Bassie is a barrister/attorney-at-law who practises law in Jamaica. He is a justice of the peace, a Supreme Court-appointed mediator, a fellow of the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators, a chartered arbitrator and a member of the Immigration Law Practitioners Association (UK). Email: lawbassie@yahoo.com

2017-IMMIGRATION-17
‘Savannah’ targets diaspora

- Producers target video-on-demand platform

KIMBERLEY SMALL
Gleaner Writer

ON MONRK locally produced pilot has premiered on national television. On the heels of giving airtime to the grassroots, stoically comical Losing Patience, TJi recently showed Savannah. Shot over three days between the lush greens of Portland and the Kingston cityscape by a crew of 23 persons, D.S.E. Jamaica produced an introduction of a love story, exploring long-distance relationships and compounding pressures like economic instability.

“Telling a love story with Portland as the backdrop isn’t new. In fact, it hasn’t been done enough,” director Kush Asher of D.S.E. said. With a desire to feed the Jamaican diaspora and the world with stories that reflect the honesty and diversity of the Jamaican experience, Asher hopes to attract enough support to extend the pilot into a complete seven episodes.

While production funding is hard to come by, the Savannah production team decided not to approach potential advertisers and investors. Also, they chose to forgo the short-film approach, in an attempt to demonstrate proof-of-concept that a series production is possible, however improbable it has appeared in the past. “We have the physical capacity we have the foundation to build. The endgame is video on demand (VOD) and we’re not going to be romantic to say Netflix or Amazon Fire. The aim is owning our content. I didn’t want it to look like a Hollywood feature,” Asher said.

Savannah was written by Donisha Prendergast, who also plays the lead role. Joel Young Sang and zBek complete the main cast. “We wanted to tell a simple story about young people exploring ideas of love, independence and life outside of what they know. In Jamaica, sometimes that means dealing with situations that arise as a ripple effect of an unstable economy. We have six more scripts already prepared for this series,” Prendergast explained.

SEEKING PARTNERS
The pilot’s producer, Stacy-Ann Sutherland, told The Gleaner the crew is currently seeking partners, because producing the first 23 minutes of this story cost an estimated US$10,000, with an additional US$2,000 for promotional costs. The crew recruited interns in the Breastwork community, where the story is set. Even while creating those short-term jobs, Sutherland said, “it was difficult, in the sense that there are not many resources in Jamaica. We had to ask persons to work at half their rate and for free.”

In 2014, Asher was commissioned to direct five made-for-TV movies for MNET Nairobi, Kenya. Asher recognised that foreigners’ familiarity with Jamaican culture is firstly tied to entertainment, particularly music. “They only know the music. As a filmmaker, I grew up doing music videos and shows like Mission Catwalk and NCB’s Capital Quest. Now, I want to document stories that can outlive us,” he said.

The director’s aim has become the content creation through film as a means of introducing diversified perspectives of Jamaican culture and establishing a presence in the VOD arena. “There are young people who spend a lot of time on Netflix and other video-on-demand platforms and we want to see ourselves there, too. The endgame is to do episodic television,” he said.

Although the pilot was also aired on HYPE TV, with an intention to show on CVM TV, the team plans to skip broadcasters altogether in the long term.

“Three million people in Jamaica can’t pay for production. I need the diaspora to buy into Savannah. We’re telling the story for them, to show that we’re not gangsta and gunmen and that not everybody live in a politically affiliated garri-sen,” Asher said.

Full use of the Portland scenery in the making of Savannah.

Donisha Prendergast (left) and Joel Young Sang in Savannah.

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JTB’s Donnie Dawson competes in Grace Jerk fest’s Celebrity Quick Fire Challenge

Todd Tongen, Local 10 ABC News Anchor with the coveted Dutch pot trophy, Chef Max Hardy, Owner of River Bistro Detroit, and Donnie Dawson, Jamaica’s Acting Director of Tourism.

FORT LAUDERDALE, FL: Donnie Dawson, Jamaica’s Acting Director of Tourism, participated in the 16th Annual Grace Jamaican Jerk Festival’s Celebrity Quickfire Challenge at Markham Park in Fort Lauderdale. Mr. Dawson competed against Todd Tongen, Local 10 ABC News anchor at the Publix Culinary Pavilion hosted by “Taste of the Island’s” Chef Irie Spice. The participants were given 30 minutes to create a dish from ingredients including turkey, eggplant, fennel, and of course jerk seasoning. Judges Chef Max Hardy, Owner of River Bistro Detroit; Chef Andre Powless, Food Network’s two-time “Chopped” champion; and Chef Ronnie Vincent, Executive Sous Chef, Joe’s Stone Crab Miami chose Todd Tongen as the winner of the coveted Dutch pot trophy.

The annual Grace Jamaican Jerk Festival presented in association with Publix, is the biggest Caribbean food festival in the U.S. It is dedicated to highlighting the best in Jamaican culture and cuisine through entertaining and educational experiences for patrons including live performances, cultural activities, culinary tastings, and chefs’ competitions.

Todd Tongen, Local 10 ABC News Anchor, Donnie Dawson, Jamaica’s Acting Director of Tourism, along with host Chef Irie Spice, Taste the Island Show, PBS, and judges Chef Andre Powless, Food Network’s two-time “Chopped” champion and Chef Ronnie Vincent, Executive Sous Chef, Joe’s Stone Crab Miami.

EVENTS LISTINGS

CANADA

Summer Mentorship Program gives high school students of Indigenous or African ancestry a chance to explore health sciences at the University of Toronto over four weeks in July. Applications open now. Uoft.me/smp

NEW YORK

Summer Mentorship Program gives high school students of Indigenous or African ancestry a chance to explore health sciences at the University of Toronto over four weeks in July.
ACKNOWLEDGED AS one of the giants of Jamaican theatre, Scottish-born Douglas Bennett (July 23, 1919 – October 30, 2017), was remembered by family and friends in a thanksgiving service at the University Chapel, Mona, on Friday, November 17. Not surprisingly, music played a large part in the service for the man who was both a practising musician and music administrator.

Bennett was an award-winning bass-baritone, trained at the (then) Jamaica School of Music. He chaired the Jamaica Musical Theatre Company (JMTC) from 1981 to 2015, founded its junior arm, the Jamaica Junior Theatre (JJT), in 1984, and was producer and musical director of all but the last few of its musicals.

Speaking to The Gleaner earlier this year, Bennett said, “The best thing I have ever done is the founding of the Junior Theatre … We have trained between 500 and 600 youngsters over the years.”

As JMTC chairman John Waite pointed out in his tribute, among the children Bennett trained were his own (with his wife, Christina, who predeceased him), Anna, Katrina, Fiona, and Donald. They all appeared in Bennett’s production of Carousel at the Little Theatre in 1970. The children, and others trained by Bennett, paid tribute to him in word or song.

Waite also stated, “his day job was in insurance,” and said Bennett had been a president of Mutual Life. He also excelled on the badminton court in both Trinidad (where he and his wife first lived after leaving Scotland) and Jamaica. Waite mentioned Bennett’s many honours and awards – the Musgrave Medal, CD (Order of Distinction in the rank of Commander), LISSM (Licentiate of the Royal Schools of Music), and FTCL (Fellow of Trinity College, London).

“Doug was a performer, teacher, mentor, and generous friend,” said Waite, adding that the JMTC now manages the JMTC Doug and Christina Bennett Scholarship Fund, tenable at the Edna Manley College of the Visual and Performing Arts. Under Bennett’s leadership, the JMTC and JJT donated millions of dollars for scholarships and to numerous charities.

The giving continued even into the thanksgiving service.

Officiating minister, Rev Dr Ralph Hoyte, who in his eulogy called Bennett “a remarkable man”, announced that the family wanted the offering collected at the service to go towards the further education of young people.
When history and culture build the future

GLENDRA ANDERSON
Gleaner Reporter

MATUMASHIMA, Japan: KIKYO AMANO operates Ungai, a Japanese restaurant just meters from the Matsushima Bay coastline, inside the gardens of the famous Zen Buddhist temple Zuiganji. The restaurant, which she started 30 years ago, specializes in original/traditional Japanese cuisine - Washolto, and has welcomed hundreds of local and foreign guests over the years.

Here guests are given a culinary tour and served traditional Japanese food by their kimono-wearing host. As it sits near the bay, fresh seafood and items local to the area are part of the menu, which is crafted to reflect each season’s catch or particular item. The menu is inspired by the vegetarian dishes eaten by Zen monks and priests.

But the venture is significant in that it is part of a rebirth of local industry for the area, which was struck in March 2011 by a monster earthquake measuring 8.9. The worst in Japan’s recorded history, it triggered a massive tsunami afterwards with waves recorded as high as 30 metres. It is also marks a renewed focus by Japanese authorities on culture as an important asset in the country’s efforts at rebuilding.

In Matsushima, some operations were so devastated that even now, some six years after the quake and tsunami, business is yet to get close to pre-tsunami figures.

Amano, herself, experienced significant damage and lost members of her original staff who died in the disaster. She was forced to close the business but reopened one year later.

Next month, the Zuiganji temple, a recognized cultural and historic landmark dating back to R82AD, is set to host a special ceremony following major restorative work, which started in 2008, and to repair damage to the 900-year-old structure from the tsunami. The massive renovations are also part of the life of the temple complex, which goes through this process about once a century.

MUSEUM OPENED

The temple itself, which sees 1500 to 2000 visitors per day, recently opened a museum displaying original artefacts, paintings, statues and images to allow even more persons to experience its rich cultural history.

Today it enjoys a curiosity - the huge black waves generated by the tsunami never entered the temple grounds.

Amano says she and her staff who were in the restaurant at the time survived the tsunami by running to the hills behind the temple. “It was about 2:00 pm and several of the customers had just left when we felt the earthquake and ran for the hills. The gardens were saved as the waters stopped right in front of the temple gate,” she says.

A wooden/concrete tablet marks the spot of the waters height at 1m for visitors on entry.

A Zuiganji monk, Keiun Inatomi, who led a tour for visiting foreign journalists, hosted under the 2017 Pacific-Caribbean Journalists’ Program, confirmed her wonder.

“Right after the tsunami we had no source of knowing the scale of the damage but after looking back now, the temple is about 5000 meters from the coastline, so yes today I think it is a miracle to the gods,” he said.

It is a part of the lore of historic Zuiganji that is expected to further increase the temple’s appeal to Japanese and international visitors.

In Kyoto, Michi Ogawa operates WAK Japan - Women’s Association of Kyoto, a business that specializes in introducing tourists to Japanese culture. Among its offerings is host a traditional tea ceremony in which tourists may participate. Guests may also choose to learn to wear the kimono - the national dress of Japan. They are allowed to choose the pattern of the silk robe and are dressed by local women, including having their hair done.

The workers are all women ranging in age from 28 to 82 years, including ‘tea masters’ – women experts in the special art of the ceremony, or the tea making itself.

The ventures, in their own way are all based on hope that Japanese culture, packaged well, can help in restoring their communities and lives.

“I believe a stable job is important to make people happy,” Ogawa says. “I am hoping that a kind of business like ours promoting culture would operate around Japan but it seems like we are the only one,” she adds.

Not ignorant of the importance of authenticity, the Zuiganji temple is strictly monitoring its restorative work so as not to lose its standing as a national heritage site.

Amano sees hope though in the fact that the government has recognized culture as an important asset and is working to support local businesses like hers.

“Today the Japanese cuisine is designated an intangible cultural asset and I am really happy to see this,” she says.

Have a story or photo to share? Tell us of your achievements, new business initiatives, birthdays, anniversaries, church happenings, issues and problems facing you. Email: overseas@gleanerjm.com
Mackison Eyes US Collegiate System

ROBERT BAILEY
Gleaner Reporter

KINGSTON COLLEGE’S (KC) prolific goal scorer Rashawn Mackison has now set his sights on the United States collegiate circuit following his outstanding performance in this year’s ISSA-FLOW football competitions.

The 18-year-old Mackison ended his high-school career with a bang on Saturday when he netted a hat-trick in KC’s 3-0 victory over St Elizabeth Technical High School in the final of the ISSA-FLOW Super Cup at Sabina Park.

The victory gave the Purples their first hold on the trophy – joining the likes of Jamaica College, St George’s College, and Wolmer’s Boys as winners of the trophy – since its inception four years ago.

GREAT FEELING

Mackison’s exploits on Saturday earned him the Golden Boot award, as he ended the competition with six goals.

“It is a great feeling to be the leading goal scorer in this competition, because before I took the pitch today, I knew that I would have scored three goals as I said, ‘I need to win this leading goal scorer award,’” Mackison said.

“It is an emotional feeling leaving the college, but I just have to move on. KC taught me a lot about life,” he said.

The skillful striker was also the top scorer in this year’s Manning Cup competition, with 25 goals.

However, despite his efforts, KC failed to reach the final of that tournament after they were beaten 2-1 by St Andrew Technical in the semi-final last Wednesday at the National Stadium.

KC were also dethroned of their Walker Cup Knockout title when they were beaten 2-1 in the final by rivals Jamaica College earlier this month.

Mackison said it was somewhat of a disappointing season for him this year but that he is now focussed on earning an overseas scholarship.

“It was not a great season because I wanted to win the Manning Cup, but, unfortunately, it didn’t happen,” Mackison said.

“I am looking in the college direction because I always believe in myself, and winning this award will get me that extra push to go overseas and do well,” he said.

HAVING FAILED to secure a trophy in the past two seasons, Omar ‘Rambo’ Wedderburn, head coach of St Elizabeth Technical High School (STETHS), said that he will be taking time away from the sport going into next year.

Wedderburn, who was one of the favourites to win this year’s ISSA-FLOW daCosta Cup title, were knocked out of the semi-final stages of that competition along with the Ben Francis Cup.

The latest defeat was a 3-0 drubbing at the hands of Kingston College (KC) on Saturday in the final of the ISSA-FLOW Super Cup competition at Sabina Park.

“I am very disappointed because, like I said in previous interviews, I feel like a crashed car heading into a wall,” said Wedderburn.

“Right now, I have to take time and reflect, and look back at the season and see where I went wrong as the coach.

“Because being a coach, you have to look and accept where you went wrong.”

He added that he was very disappointed that STETHS were not able to come away with at least one of the four trophies that were up for grabs this season.

WALKING BACKWARDS

“This just feels like I am walking backwards and I am a person that likes to go forward in life, and to lose out on one year and then a second year, I don’t know if it’s a trend that is going to follow you. That is where you have to draw the line and think about what you are going to do,” Wedderburn said.

He added that his players failed to carry out instructions and this led to their heavy defeat against KC on Saturday.

“I don’t think this team had what it takes to win a title because of the goals that were scored against us this season. If you look at the goals in this game, the players are not following the instructions that we give them. So I don’t think they have any championship quality in them,” Wedderburn said.
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JAMAICA HAS QUALIFIED FOR THE CONCACAF WOMEN'S UNDER-20 CHAMPIONSHIP

The young Reggae Girlz advanced after they clipped Haiti 1-0 last Friday to register their second win in the four-team qualifiers.

Adidas Telstar football, which will be used at the 2018 FIFA World Cup.

KC WIN FLOW SUPER CUP

Kingston College (KC) players celebrate with the ISSA/Flow Super Cup trophy after a 3-0 win over St Elizabeth Technical High School in the final at Sabina Park, Kingston. Tournament top scorer Rashawn Mackison scored all three goals for KC.

FOLLOWING THEIR disappointing defeat in the semi-finals of the Manning Cup favourites Kingston College ended their season on a high note on Saturday night, November 25 when they won the ISSA/Flow Super Cup by defeating St Elizabeth Technical High School (STETHS) by 3-0, at Sabina Park.

Please see WIN, 22