

Excitement as participants rehearse for today's swearing-in of Holness

BY TANESHA MUNDLE Observer staff reporter mundlet@jamaicaobserver.com



Members of the Jamaica Defence Force get chairs ready on the lawn of King's House for today's swearing-in ceremony.

THERE was an air of excitement and anticipation as participants in the swearing-in ceremony for Andrew

Holness as prime minister of Jamaica ran through their roles on the eve of the ceremony to ensure a smooth flow today.

Preparations at King's House were on in earnest yesterday as members of the Jamaica Defence Force worked alongside the stage crew to put the finishing touches on the stage on which Holness will be sworn in as prime minister for the second time.

Audio technicians also went through the paces as members of the military band and performers, including gospel artiste Chevelle Franklyn; soprano Ana Strachan; and saxophonist and flautist Nicholas Laraque rehearsed their pieces.

Warrant Officer Albert Shaun Hird, bandmaster of the Jamaica Military Band, said that the band was "fully ready".

“We have been preparing from last year when the date for the election was expected to be announced. These musical items are played once in every four years, so the band has to be prepared,” he said.

Stand-in representatives for dignitaries such as Holness and his wife Juliet, Governor General Sir Patrick Allen and Lady Allen, outgoing Prime Minister Portia Simpson Miller, and Chief Justice Zaila McCalla also rehearsed the arrangements.

Shaneka Carey, a member of Generation 2000, the young professional affiliate of the Jamaica Labour Party, who will be taking part in the ceremony along with two other members as ushers, told the Jamaica Observer that they were ecstatic to be taking part in the occasion and to witness the swearing-in of Holness as prime minister.

“We are excited, we have a young prime minister and we know that the next five years will be prosperous for Jamaicans and Jamaica,” Carey said.

Equally excited was Kareem Anderson, court protocol officer, who represented the chief justice and the president of the Court of Appeal.

“I am a ceremonial person, I enjoy these events; just invite me to a ceremony,” he said. “I am looking forward to the parade. It has a wow effect and I like to see Jamaicans gathered at King’s House celebrating a Jamaican moment.”

Members of the Seaview Gardens Band, who could not hide their excitement, were spotted rehearsing their dance moves to a favourite of Holness, Nesbeth’s hit song, *My Dream*.

When asked how they were feeling, one member of the trio, Milton Segree, said: “The feeling is great. We are a bit nervous, but we are very excited and ready to go.”

Head of the Traffic and Highway Division Senior Superintendent of Police Calvin Allen, who led a group of officers who will be escorting the “very, very important people”, said that the officers were ready and raring to go.

Hearing Into Appleton Injunction Case Pushed Back

The Gleaner

The hearing into the challenge to the injunction which has halted operations at the Appleton Estates in St Elizabeth failed to get underway in the Court of Appeal today.

The matter could not proceed because of the late serving of certain documents.

The start of the hearing has been pushed back to tomorrow.

Last month, the court granted an expedited hearing to J. Wray & Nephew, which operates Appleton, after it argued that the injunction was negatively impacting the Estates and its workers.

The company further argued that Appleton produces 22 per cent of the national target for the export of sugar and the closure of the factory will be disastrous for the entire sugar industry.

The injunction was granted to fish producer, Algix Jamaica Limited, by the Supreme Court in January as part of a lawsuit filed against J. Wray & Nephew.

The order bars Appleton Estates from discharging effluent that does not meet trade standards into two rivers in the parish pending the resolution of the lawsuit.

Algix has argued that effluent from Appleton Estates was entering its fish farm and that this has affected its business.

The company is seeking compensation from J. Wray & Nephew.

Hearing Into Appleton Estates Injunction For Court Today

The Gleaner

The hearing into the challenge to the injunction which has halted operations at the Appleton Estates in St Elizabeth is expected to begin today in the Court of Appeal.

Last month, the court granted J. Wray & Nephew, which operates Appleton, an expedited hearing after it argued that the injunction is negatively impacting the Estates.

J. Wray & Nephew also contended that its inability to operate Appleton Estates has had a negative economic impact on its hundreds of employees, cane cutters and haulage contractors.

The company further argued that Appleton produces 22 per cent of the national target for the export of sugar and the closure of the factory will be disastrous for the entire sugar industry.

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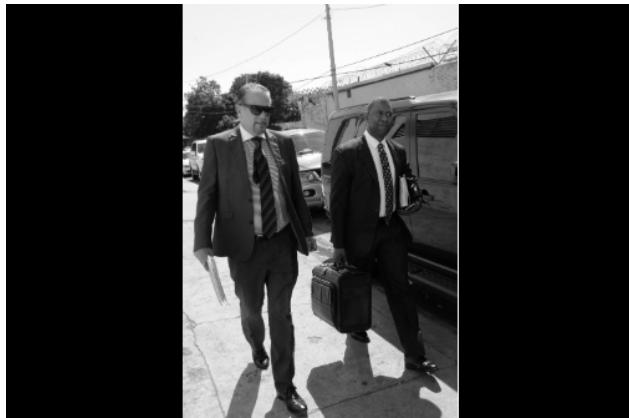
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Magisterial recount for St Mary SE ballots begins

The Observer



Attorneys representing the Jamaica Labour Party Tom Tavares Finson (left) and Hugh Wildman as they arrive for the magisterial recount today. (Photos: Joseph Wellington)

KINGSTON, Jamaica — The magisterial recount of ballots cast in St Mary South East in the February 25 general election began this morning at the Corporate Area Resident Magistrate's Court in Kingston.

The process is being observed by political representatives and legal teams for both the Jamaica Labour Party (JLP) and People's National Party (PNP).

A preliminary count of the ballots last Thursday gave the JLP's Dr Winston Dunn the win, by 127 votes, over the PNP's Dr Winston Green. That count showed Dr Dunn polling 7,311 votes to 7,184 for Dr Green.

However, a recount days later reversed the results in favour of Dr Green by nine votes, pushing Dr Dunn to seek the magisterial recount.

Both teams expressed confidence that the tide will turn in their favour.

"I am confident that when the recount is ended, I will emerge the winner," Dr Green told OBSERVER Online on his arrival at the court.

Meanwhile Tom Tavares-Finson, one of the attorneys for the JLP, said that he was hopeful for a favourable result for his client.

“The JLP has put together a formidable team of legal talents and we are hopeful to see a change in the results,” said Finson.

Late Tuesday, the Electoral Commission of Jamaica declared JLP winner in the general election, after the party secured 32 seats to the PNP’s 31.

Kimmo Matthews

Man attempts to smuggle cocaine in son's laptop

The Observer



A music producer was slapped with a two-year prison sentence and fined \$650,000 after he confessed to hiding eight ounces of cocaine in the laptop of his 10-year-old son, who was about to leave the island for the United States. Noel Hunter, 31, of Clarendon told police that

he was given US\$1,000 to smuggle the cocaine and promised another US\$4,000 on delivery. Hunters' son was recently held at the Norman Manley International Airport with the laptop containing the contraband.

The court heard that, during the investigation, Gunter and his wife were questioned and Gunter told the police that he was the one who had placed the cocaine inside the laptop and that he was paid to do so and promised additional funds after the cocaine was delivered.

Last Wednesday when the case was mentioned, Gunter pleaded guilty to drugs charges before Senior Magistrate Judith Pusey.

But before he was sentenced his attorney, Dacia Logan, told the magistrate that this was his first offence and begged for mercy while pointing out that he was the father of three children and was expecting a fourth child.

“He is remorseful, he is very sorry for what he did,” Logan said.

The magistrate, before handing down the sentence said: “What is interesting is that he was going to saddle up his 10-year-old son with half-pound of cocaine to carry out of the island.”

Hunter was then given a 24-month mandatory sentence and ordered to pay \$150,000 or serve six months in prison for possession of cocaine, \$200,000 or six months for dealing in cocaine, and \$300,000 or six months for taking steps to export cocaine.

If the fines are not paid, Hunter will spend a further six months in prison as the sentences will run concurrently, but consecutive to the mandatory prison sentence.

In addition, the magistrate also ruled that the sums of \$86,000 and US\$91 that were found in Hunter’s possession be forfeited by the State.

— Tanesha Mundle

Accountant faces court for breaches of Cybercrimes Act



The Observer

ST CATHERINE, Jamaica – Detectives attached to the Fraud Squad unit of the Counter-Terrorism and Organised Crime

Investigation Branch charged a man for breaches of the Cybercrimes Act yesterday. He is 33-year-old Gavin Champagnie, an accountant of Jackson Way, Meadowvale in Portmore, St Catherine.

Reports are that on February 29, Champagnie, who worked as a financial controller at a finance company, purported to be the chief executive officer (CEO) of the company and allegedly sent an email to a junior accountant with instructions to wire US\$42,000 to a bank account in the United States of America.

The junior accountant contacted the CEO for additional information when it was reportedly borne out that the email did not originate from him.

A report was made to the Fraud Squad and Champagnie was subsequently arrested and charged. According to a news release from the police, when he appeared in the Corporate Area Resident Magistrate's Court today, he was granted bail in the sum of J\$300,000.

Medical Doctor Impregnated 12-Y-O Girl And Aborted Pregnancies, Court Told

The Gleaner

A medical doctor was brought before the Mandeville Resident Magistrate's Court yesterday, arising from allegations that he impregnated a 12-year-old girl three times.

The court was told that the pregnancies were aborted.

Charged with three counts of sexual assault is 38-year-old Mark Gray.

Gray was granted \$200,000 bail with a surety following a bail application by attorney-at-law Hensley Williams.

The Crown is alleging that two of the pregnancies were aborted by the accused while the third was aborted by medical personnel at a hospital when the girl was five months pregnant.

It is further alleged that the offences took place in 2014 and 2015.

The girl was 12 years old at the time of the alleged incidents.

Williams, in making the bail application, said that there was no forensic evidence or witness to support the allegations.

The attorney argued that the teen suffered from a mental condition and that his client denied the allegations.

Gray is to return to court on May 4 when the case will be mentioned.

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The End