Special Focus on Marcus Garvey

August 2012 is shaping up to be one of the most exciting months in Jamaica's recent history. The island is still celebrating the spectacular events to mark its 50th year of independence, scintillating performances by our athletes at the London Olympics...and there is more.

On August 17, a number of activities are planned to mark the 125th anniversary of the birth of the country's first National Hero and internationally renowned proponent of Black Nationalism and Pan Africanism – the Right Excellent Marcus Mosiah Garvey. Dr. Julius Garvey, son of the National Hero, will be in Jamaica from August 16 to 19, to participate in the activities to commemorate the birth of his father. He will be the guest of Big Stone Records, the promotional group responsible for ‘Tribute to Marcus Garvey 2012'. Chairman of Big Stone Records, Claude Sinclair, says it is expected that Dr. Garvey will be participating in some 23 events over the three days, in honour of his father. "The first call will be on Minister of Education (Rev. the Hon.) Ronald Thwaites, where an autographed copy of the philosophy will be handed over to him,” he notes. Also, Minister of Youth and Culture, Hon. Lisa Hanna and Dr. Garvey will lay flowers at the monument dedicated to the National Hero, in National Heroes Park, on August 17, beginning at 8:00 a.m. The Floral Tribute is an official event on the Jamaica 50 Calendar. Following the ceremony, Dr. Garvey is expected to visit Liberty Hall for the launch of the Marcus Mosiah Garvey Mobile Museum. A National Monument, Liberty Hall houses the only Museum in the world dedicated to the life and work of Marcus Garvey. Liberty Hall is located at 76 Upper King Street, in the heart of Downtown Kingston. In an interview, Director/Curator at Liberty Hall, Donna McFarlane, says with the launch of the mobile museum, individuals residing at various sections of the island will be able to garner information on the Hero. “There are also some areas in Jamaica where they simply cannot afford to get a bus to come (to the museum) and we’d like to be able to take the museum to them,” she says. Additionally, the Kingston and St. Andrew Corporation (KSAC) moved a Resolution at its council meeting, on August 14, that August 17 be observed as Marcus Garvey Day, starting this year. Mayor of Kingston, Councillor Angela Brown-Burke says the initiative is being undertaken as a means to continue recognising the National Hero. "We're doing this because Marcus Garvey was a Councillor in the KSAC, he is a National Hero and one of those visionaries who has inspired a number of great leaders all over the world," she says. On Friday (August 17), the Keys to the City of Kingston will be given posthumously to the Right Excellent Marcus Mosiah Garvey. "It will be collected by his son, Dr. Julius Garvey, and we will be doing that in a ceremony at Emancipation Park, beginning at 4:00 p.m." the Mayor notes. The celebration of Garvey’s birth will not be complete without the involvement of the parish of St. Ann, the birthplace of the National Hero. The Ministry of Education will launch the re-introduction of civics in schools on August 17, at the Marcus Garvey Technical High School in St. Ann's Bay. As such, come this academic year, the teaching of civics and Garveyism will be re-introduced in schools. Prior to the launch, there will be a function to honour Mr. Garvey, starting at 10:00 a.m. at the St. Ann’s Bay Parish Library. Acting Secretary/Manager, St. Ann Parish Council, Claudia Carter, informs that the Prime Minister, Minister of Education and the Minister of Youth and Culture are expected to be in attendance at the function. Immediately following this event, the celebrations will move to Marcus Garvey Technical High School, for the launch of the civics programme in schools. "We will have a marching band, which will be led by the Island Special Constabulary Force (ISCF)...and all the uniform groups marching to Marcus Garvey High School along Main Street...where the programme continues,” she says. On Friday night, celebrations continue in Kingston with a massive concert at the Eastern Peace Centre, 121 Windward Road, Kingston. Chairman of Big Stone Records, Claude Sinclair, says the concert consists of a number of prominent artistes. "Artistes such as Cat Coore...members of the Jamaica Constabulary Force Band...the Kingston Drummers...performances by Capleton, Sizzla Kalonge... and of course, it will be hosted by the number one host of all time, Mutabaruka,” he says. For more information on the Marcus Garvey Tribute Concert, persons are being asked to call 365-4443. With the number of activities planned to commemorate the 125th anniversary of the Hero’s birth, Jamaicans are being encouraged to participate in the events. Born in St Ann, Mr. Garvey was a political leader, publisher, journalist and entrepreneur. He was a passionate believer in black repatriation to Africa. His work has inspired groups, such as the Nation of Islam and Rastafari and influenced artistes, including Burning Spear, Culture and Bob Marley. Mr. Garvey died in England on June 10, 1940. He was 52. Source: JIS