

## Western Jamaica flooded

The Savannah-La-Mar Baptist Church on Great Georges Street in Westmoreland's capital collapsed and several houses and businesses lost their roofs to the fury of a tornado packing howling winds and heavy downpours of rain Tuesday.

Several church goers who normally worship at church were spared what could have been a huge disaster as the heavy rains which have been and still are wreaking havoc across the island kept them home. A section of the Long Hill main road in St James, yesterday. (Photo: Alan Lewin) This gas station on St James Street, Montego Bay had to cease operation due to flooding. (Photo: Alan Lewin)

"Is God keep them at home because every evening they meet there at that time. Is because the rain continue falling why they did not turn out," an eye witness told the Observer West yesterday. According to the witness, the heavy rains and gusty winds took effect shortly after 6:00 pm on Tuesday, ripping the roofs off several business establishments and houses. The police were unable to confirm several reports that persons were injured yesterday, however several families from the surrounding communities of Little London, Big Bridge Mango Hall, Sheffield and Petersfield had to be evacuated after the flood waters overwhelmed their houses. Additionally, an elderly man who marooned in his house at the McNeiland community in Little London had to be rescued by fire fighters. Yesterday's disaster also uprooted utility poles, disrupting the electricity supply in several sections of Westmoreland. Checks by the Observer West revealed that the power had not been restored to the affected areas up to late last night. The Commander of the Westmoreland Division Dezeta Taylor praised her colleagues for working round the clock last night to prevent looting. Meanwhile, the Office of Disaster Preparedness Management (ODPEM) has opened shelters at the Savannah-la-Mar Primary and Godfrey Stewart High schools. In St James, the Barnett River overflowed its banks causing flooding along the Fairfield main road. Several business in Montego Bay remained closed and cases scheduled to be heard in the St Resident Magistrate were put off. The communities of Granville, Pitfour, Tucker, Retirement, Johns Hall in St James were marooned by flood waters and debris. Port Hill View in Pitfour was also marooned up to press time last night. According to Clinton Pickering, president of the Port Hill View Citizens Association, The Pitfour boulevard was also impassable due to tons of debris which washed down from the hills last night. The Long Hill main road in St James also suffered flooding which led to lengthy traffic snarls. A section of the road broke away under the deluge of water. In Trelawny the communities of Wiltshire, Warsop and Troy reported strong winds and heavy downpours which took down banana crops. The communities of Mahogany Hall, Hyde and a section of Clarkes Town also experienced flooding.