

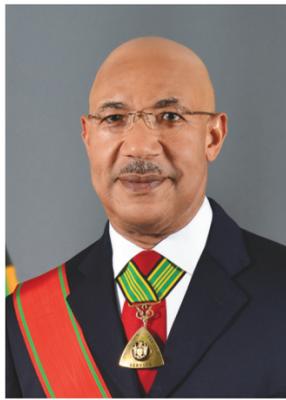
Gov't Will Build on Gains Made - PM

PRIME MINISTER the Most Hon. Andrew Holness, says the Government will act responsibly and wisely to build on the significant gains made in 2018.

In his 2019 New Year's Message, Mr. Holness said increased focus will be placed on reducing crime, economic growth, environmental preservation and implementation of the social housing component of the Housing, Opportunity, Production and Employment (HOPE) Programme.

"Through this modality, the Government will seek to improve and regularise the housing stock and living conditions of the most vulnerable Jamaicans, assisting them to realise the value in real estate," he said.

Prime Minister Holness highlighted the achievements made last year including record



Governor-General, His Excellency the Most Hon. Sir. Patrick Allen

high levels of employment, particularly youth employment; reduction in absolute poverty; and rapid expansion in industries such as business process outsourcing, mining, tourism and logistics.

In his message, Governor-General, His Excellency the Most Hon. Sir. Patrick Allen, said the nation has a lot to be proud of, highlighting the per-



Prime Minister the Most Hon. Andrew Holness

formances of the Sunshine Girls, Reggae Girlz and swimmer, Alia Atkinson.

He called on the nation to enter 2019 with hope and confidence, and resolve to be better persons and better citizens.

"I trust your paths will be lit with new hope, good values, and wise choices as we continue to be the happy, healthy,



Leader of the Opposition, Dr. Peter Phillips

prosperous nation we can, and ought to be," His Excellency said.

In the meantime Leader of the Opposition, Dr. Peter Phillips, urged Jamaicans, "to draw hope from the vision and aspirations of the founding fathers and mothers of our nation" and to "embrace the mission for national development."

Gov't Looking to Strengthen Law Applicable to Breaches of Single-Use Plastics Ban

MINISTER WITHOUT Portfolio in the Ministry of Economic Growth and Job Creation, Hon. Daryl Vaz, says the Government is looking to strengthen aspects of the law applicable where breaches of the ban on single-use plastics, may be committed. The ban takes effect on January 1, 2019.

While noting fines ranging between \$50,000 and \$1 million for breaches of stipulations under the Natural Resources Conservation Authority and Trade Acts, Mr. Vaz contended that, "too often [in several instances] we are using archaic outdated legislation and laws that are totally inadequate in terms of the consequences through fines and imprisonment".

"We are looking at that... [and] I can assure the public that there will be teeth [in the law]", the Minister added.

He was speaking at the recent launch of the Integrated Water, Land and Ecosystems (IWEco) sub-national project to restore the hydrological and other features of the Negril Great Morass in Westmoreland.



Minister without Portfolio in the Ministry of Economic Growth and Job Creation, Hon. Daryl Vaz, speaks on the impending plastic ban at a recent JIS 'Think Tank' session

Come January 1, the Government will commence imposition of the ban on the importation, manufacture, distribution and use of specific categories of plastic packaging material.

They include single-use plastic carrier/shopping bags; expanded polystyrene foam, and plastic drinking straws, which are often improperly discarded, causing significant harm to the environment.

Record Arrivals and Earnings for the Christmas Period

MINISTER OF Tourism, Hon. Edmund Bartlett says Jamaica saw record arrivals and earnings for the period December 21-24, 2018.

Preliminary airport arrivals was 34,081, an increase of 12.8 per cent over the corresponding period in 2017. The estimated gross earnings stand at US\$51,240,784 which represents a 17.1 per cent increase over last year.

"This is excellent news and shows the strength of Jamaica's tourism product. We expected a record season and the numbers highlight this fact. Arrivals from our



Minister of Tourism, Hon. Edmund Bartlett

source markets have been growing apace and we have been strategically engaging new and emerging markets to

add to this growth," Minister Bartlett said.

Thousands of additional airline seats were negotiated for the 2018-2019 'High Season' in December, out of North America, Canada, the UK and Northern Europe.

In addition, several new flights made their landing at the Sangster International Airport out of Eastern Europe, including Eurowings, Pegas Fly and Nordwind, as well as Canadian airlines Westjet, Sunwing and Swoop.

"Airlift remains a key strategy in achieving our growth targets of five million visitors

and US\$5 billion by 2021 and the numbers show that we are well on our way to meeting these targets. By the end of the year it is expected that the country will welcome well over 4.3 million visitors and earn US\$3.3Billion," Mr. Bartlett said.

UDC Stages Fireworks on the Kingston Waterfront and in Ocho Rios

THE KINGSTON Waterfront will come alive on New Year's Eve with the 17th staging of the Urban Development Corporation's 'Fireworks on the Waterfront', under the theme 'Feel the Magic, Be the GLOW'.

The event, which is the "the largest family-oriented event that takes place anywhere in Jamaica", will once again branch out to include the northern half of the island.

"Last year, we extended the event to Ocho Rios through our subsidiary company, the St. Ann Development Company. So this year, we will again be doing two events with the St. Ann event being dubbed, 'Fireworks on the Bay', at the Ocho Rios Bay," said Director of Corporate Communications at the Urban Development Corporation (UDC), Lorna Clarke,



Director of Corporate Communications at the Urban Development Corporation (UDC), Lorna Clarke

at a JIS 'Think Tank', on December 27.

The functions in St. Ann and Kingston will begin at 2:00 p.m. and 3:00 p.m., respectively, and will include a kiddie's village, a vending village, an early show and a main stage event, which will culminate with fireworks at midnight.

The main stage event will feature artistes, such as

Agent Sasco, Bugle and Kevin Downswell in Kingston, and Ernie Smith and Devin di Doctor in Ocho Rios.

Fireworks on the Waterfront will include two new additions this year – a second VIP package (VIP Sky), and a park-and-ride service with the Jamaica Urban Transit Company (JUTC).



Minister Shaw Opens Road in Litchfield, Manchester

Minister of Industry, Commerce, Agriculture and Fisheries, Hon. Audley Shaw (2nd right), and Chairman of Carib Cement Company Limited, Parris Lyew-Ayee (left), applaud following the official unveiling of the new concrete road in Litchfield, Manchester recently. Others (from 2nd left) are Councillor, Walderston Division, Leroy Mitchell; and General Manager, Carib Cement Company Limited, Peter Donkersloot Ponce. Caribbean Cement Company Limited rehabilitated 530 metres of roads in the farming community as part of its corporate social responsibility programme.

MOH Advises of Continued Caution Against Viral Illnesses

THE MINISTRY of Health is urging Jamaicans to reduce the number of mosquito breeding sites around their homes and surrounding areas. This will help to minimise the number of mosquitoes that carry the dengue virus.

There is an increase in the number of cases of viral illnesses, including cases of suspected dengue at the Bustamante Hospital for

Children over the Christmas period.

The Ministry is therefore advising that members of the public should cover stored water, empty and clean regularly containers that can collect water, bore holes in containers being discarded, clear away garbage and keep grass and shrubbery low to prevent breeding of mosquitos.



Minister of Health, Dr. the Hon. Christopher Tufton (left) fields questions from journalists during a press conference held at the Ministry's New Kingston offices recently. At right is Acting Chief Medical Officer, Dr. Jacqueline Bisasor-McKenzie.

Persons should also protect themselves by wearing long sleeves especially at dusk and dawn when mosquitos are more likely to be around; use mosquito netting and mosquito repellents frequently as directed on the containers.

Also, Jamaicans should only use paracetamol, cetamol and Panadol to treat fever and pain. The Ministry of

Health says many viral illnesses look alike and dengue can be mistaken for other illnesses. Persons should not use any other pain or fever medication stored at home.

Many cases of dengue are mild but if persons experience belly pain, vomiting, weakness, bleeding, other severe or persistent symptoms seek medical advice.



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