

PM Announces US\$160M Water Initiative

PRIME MINISTER the Most Hon. Andrew Holness announced on May 14, several initiatives to improve the supply of water to the Corporate Area and St. Catherine, with an estimated expenditure of US\$160 million.

Among the new measures is the construction of a 15-million-gallon-per-day water treatment plant in the Rio Cobre in St. Catherine.

This new plant will be established under a public-private partnership (PPP) arrangement, with the private entity being responsible to finance, design, construct, operate and maintain this plant and to sell water to the National Water Commission (NWC).

The total cost to develop the project and construct the



Prime Minister the Most Hon. Andrew Holness

new water treatment plant is estimated at US\$60 million (J\$7.77 billion).

"The project will take 24 months, and we have received the approval from

the Public Investment Management Committee (PIMC)," Prime Minister Holness said, as he addressed the House of Representatives in downtown Kingston.

He pointed out that the private partner – a consortium consisting of a local bank and international construction company in water infrastructure development – will have 45 days to complete negotiations with the Government, after which they will break ground and start construction.

Other projects include the installation of transmission mains from Stanton Terrace to Marescaux Road (US\$12 Million); East Kings House Road to West Kings House Road/Constant Spring (US\$12 Million); Norman Manley Airport Road to Port Royal (US\$15 million); Seaview to Jack's Hill (US\$5 million); Six Miles to North Street; and Six Miles to Constant Spring Road.

Outstanding Economic Performance Over the Last Three Years

THE COUNTRY has performed well in several key areas of the economy over the last three years.



Chairman of the Economic Growth Council (EGC), Michael Lee-Chin

This is according to Chairman of the Economic Growth Council (EGC), Michael Lee-Chin, who noted that since 2016, debt to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) has fallen from 147 per cent to under 100 per cent, Net International Reserves (NIR) is now greater than 3.1 billion, and inflation is at 2.4 per cent.

He said that the Bank of Jamaica policy interest rate is now at "an unheard of" 1.25 per cent; consumer confidence is at an all-time high of over 177.5 per cent; and business confidence is also at an all-time high of 151 per cent.

Mr. Lee-Chin, who was speaking at the EGC's Eighth Quarterly Report at Jamaica House on May 15, said that these achievements are due, in part, to the work of the Council since its establishment in 2016.

He noted that over the last three years, the Council has had over 380 meetings with stakeholders, noting that the Secretariat "has worked tirelessly to ensure that projects are followed up".

He added that, by working to achieve a GDP growth rate of five per cent in four years, "we have imbued confidence in the nation, so that the population is confident that if we haul together, five in four is possible".

Security Forces Adequately Equipped to Protect Nation

MINISTER OF National Security, Hon. Dr. Horace Chang, says the Government is committed to ensuring that the security forces are adequately equipped to carry out the task of protecting the nation.

Dr. Chang, who was delivering the keynote address at the opening of the Jamaica Defence Force's (JDF) Burke Barracks in Providence, St. James, on May 14, said that despite the financial constraints, the Government is already putting the necessary infrastructure in place where the "brave men and women of the security forces" can meet the challenge of bringing crime under control.

It is to this end, the Minister said, that the new

Burke Barracks accommodation, to be constructed in two phases at a combined cost of \$1.6 billion to house 528 members of the JDF, represents a powerful statement as to the level of commitment "in taking the fight to criminals".

"Phase one has been built at a cost of \$708 million and will house 264 persons. Phase 2 will be built at an additional \$896 million and will house another 264 JDF personnel. I can also report to you that this will be done within budget and also on time," the Minister said.

He added that the men and women of the JDF must also be commended for their level of professionalism and



Minister of National Security, Hon. Dr. Horace Chang (centre), cuts the ribbon to officially open the Jamaica Defence Force (JDF) Burke Barracks in Montego Bay, St. James, on May 14. Sharing the moment (from left) are Chief of Defence Staff, Lt. General Rocky Meade and Custos of St. James, Bishop Conrad Pitkin.

the quality work they have been doing to ensure the safety and protection of residents during "these trying times".

Caledonia Medical to Provide Lab Tests for Several Public Hospitals

THE MINISTRY of Health and Wellness has partnered with Caledonia Medical Laboratory Limited to provide laboratory tests for several public hospitals across the island.

Portfolio Minister, Dr. the Hon. Christopher Tufton and Managing Director of Caledonia Medical Laboratory, Barbara Hendricks, signed the memorandum of understanding (MoU) on May 13, at the Ministry's New Kingston offices.

Under the agreement, Caledonia Medical Laboratory will provide microbiology services to: Kingston Public Hospital (KPH), Bustamante Hospital for Children, Victoria Jubilee Hospital, Spanish Town Hospital, National Chest Hospital, Princess Margaret Hospital and Linstead Hospital.

The tests include ear, eye, throat, nasal, sputum, urine, blood and sterility.

The provision is part of a \$1-billion programme being undertaken by the Government to reduce waiting time within the public health system.



Minister of Health and Wellness, Dr. the Hon. Christopher Tufton (2nd left), presents a signed copy of a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to Managing Director, Caledonia Medical Laboratory Limited, Barbara Hendricks (third right), during a ceremony at the Ministry's New Kingston offices on May 13. Looking on (from left) are Permanent Secretary in the Health Ministry, Dunstan Bryan; Director, Health Systems Support and Monitoring, Health and Wellness Ministry, Dr. Beverley Wright; Head, Health Promotion and Protection Branch in the Ministry, Dr. Simone Spence; and Administrative Manager, Caledonia Medical, June Bryan.

Caledonia Medical Laboratory is the first entity to sign on to the diagnostic aspect of the programme.

Dr. Tufton said that the Government's objective is to "do away" with the practice of sending public health patients to

do diagnostic tests privately, at their expense.

As such, he said that the arrangement will enable persons to access diagnostic services in the private space "but we will deal with the cost".

These include computerised tomography (CT) scans, magnetic resonance imaging (MRI), ultrasound, angiography, endoscopy (colonoscopy and urogenital endoscopy), and histopathology.

31,000 Jamaicans to Own Shares in Wigton Windfarm

THE LEAD broker in the initial public offering (IPO) of shares in Wigton Windfarm, Mayberry Investments, has indicated that 31,000 Jamaicans will own shares in the company.

"What is more noteworthy, is that these 31,000 Jamaicans were willing to invest some \$14 billion, when \$5.5 billion was on offer. On May 22, Wigton will be proudly listed on the Jamaica Stock Exchange's main market," Minister of Science, Energy and Technology, Hon. Fayval Williams said.

She was making her contribution to the 2019/20 Sectoral Debate in the House of Representatives in downtown Kingston on May 14.

Mrs. Williams pointed out that the IPO has demonstrated the appetite of the Jamaican people to invest in the Jamaican energy sector.

In April of this year, history was made in the renewable energy industry, when Jamaicans were given



Minister of Science, Energy and Technology, Hon. Fayval Williams

the opportunity to invest in that sector by becoming owners of the largest wind energy facility in the English-speaking Caribbean – Wigton Windfarm Limited in Manchester.

Through this successful IPO, Jamaicans, with the smallest purchase of \$1,000, were given the opportunity to take a further step towards energy independence by owning a stake in the company.

Computer Lab at Maverley Primary Opens



Principal, Maverley Primary and Junior High School in St. Andrew, Dorothy Taylor (left); Minister of Science, Energy and Technology, Hon. Fayval Williams (2nd left); Minister of Finance and the Public Service, Dr. the Hon. Nigel Clarke (3rd left), and Chief Executive Officer, Universal Access Fund (USF), Daniel Dawes, interacting with students, Jordache Deuce and Twain Adlam after officially opening a new computer lab/access point at the school on May 15.



WE HAVE MOVED

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