

Islandwide Curfew, Other COVID-19 Measures Extended

THE ISLANDWIDE curfew has been extended until May 13, as the country continues to observe measures aimed at containing the spread of the coronavirus (COVID-19).

Prime Minister the Most Hon. Andrew Holness made the announcement during a virtual press briefing on May 4 at the Office of the Prime Minister. The 12-hour curfew started on April 1.

As it relates to the other measures under the Disaster Risk Management Act, the Prime Minister said those will be further extended until May 31.

These include the stay-at-home order for persons 70 years and over; the 10-person limit on public gatherings; physical distancing of six feet; the mandatory wearing of masks in the public space; and the duty of employers to provide transportation for

exempted workers for the curfew hours.

Also extended are the operating hours for markets, vending and public transportation centres (6:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Mondays to Saturdays), businesses (8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.), gas stations (6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.), and public transportation (5:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.); restrictions for barbershops and hair salons; closure of bars, night clubs and other places of amusement, beaches and rivers; work-from-home measures; and procedures regarding the business process outsourcing (BPO) sector.

In the meantime, Prime Minister Holness said Cabinet has been examining the impact of the measures taken on the economy, which have been considerable but are necessary to contain and control the transmission of COVID-19.



Prime Minister the Most Hon. Andrew Holness

“The truth is that the measures have been very effective. Without a workplace outbreak, Jamaica would be on a 20-day doubling curve. We will be contemplating adjustments to the curfew

hours. But, again, it all has to be based on what the science is telling us, what the public health advice is, and we have to weigh that [against] the public interest,” Mr. Holness said.

Marked Improvement in Response Time by JCF Members – Minister Chang

MINISTER OF National Security, Hon. Dr. Horace Chang, says improved mobility and increased use of technology within the Jamaica Constabulary Force (JCF) have resulted in a marked improvement in its response time to incidents.

“A number of business leaders and private sector citizens have called me personally (to say) they have seen such a dramatic improvement in the response time of the police force. That’s a reflection of the Commissioner and his team using the resources we have given them in an efficient manner,” he said.

The Minister was speaking at a ceremony for the handover of 64 retrofitted Mitsubishi pickup trucks to the JCF, at the Office of the Commissioner of Police, in Kingston on May 5.



Minister of National Security, Hon. Dr. Horace Chang (left), and Commissioner of Police, Major General Antony Anderson, sit on motorbikes from the Jamaica Constabulary Force’s (JCF) fleet, which were on display during a handover ceremony for 64 new retrofitted Mitsubishi pickup trucks at the Office of the Commissioner on May 5.

Dr. Chang noted that in addition to increased mobility, the JCF’s technology support team has been working effectively and has made a major

contribution to the investigative capacity of the force.

In the meantime, Dr. Chang said the handover of the vehicles demonstrates

the Government’s commitment to ensuring the police force is properly equipped to carry out its functions efficiently.

The pickup trucks were provided under the Ministry of National Security’s project Rebuild Overhaul and Construct (ROC).

This batch now brings to 107, the total number of motor vehicles, valued at approximately \$700 million, which have been handed over to the JCF within the last two months.

Each motor vehicle is retrofitted with a mount for tablets with dash camera functionality, beacon (flashing) lights, siren and public address system, a high intensity portable searchlight and a first responder’s kit.

Tablets for Public School Teachers

WITHIN THE next two months, 25,000 public school teachers will benefit from the roll-out of the Tablets for Teachers Programme.

The tablet computers will be for personal use as well as to assist the educators in delivering content and lessons in a virtual environment, especially since the Coronavirus (COVID-19) has transformed the teaching/learning atmosphere in Jamaica and worldwide.

A sum of \$700 million was symbolically handed over to e-Learning Jamaica by the Universal Service Fund (USF) for the procurement of the devices, during a ceremony at PCJ Auditorium, in New Kingston on, May 7.

The Tablets for Teachers Programme is part of an agreement between the Government and the Jamaica Teachers’ Association (JTA) to provide each teacher in public schools with a 10-inch tablet computer as part of their compensation package. Speaking at the official handing over ceremony, Minister of Science, Energy and Technology, Hon. Fayval Williams, informed that distribution of the devices has already commenced.

Mrs. Williams noted that the Government is strengthening efforts to equip teachers and students with digital skills which will foster inno-



Minister of Finance and the Public Service, Dr. the Hon. Nigel Clarke (left); Minister of Science, Energy and Technology, Hon. Fayval Williams (2nd left); and Minister of State in the Ministry of Education, Youth and Information, Hon. Alando Terrelonge (centre), display a symbolic cheque for \$700 million presented to e-Learning Jamaica by the Universal Service Fund (USF) for the procurement of tablet computers, under the Tablets for Teachers Programme, during a ceremony at the PCJ Auditorium, in New Kingston on May 7. Also at the presentation are Chief Executive Officer, e-Learning Jamaica, Keith Smith (2nd right) and Chief Executive Officer, Universal Service Fund (USF), Daniel Dawes.

vation. She added that this is integral as COVID-19 has shifted the teaching and learning experience and has pushed more teaching and learning exercises online.

Meanwhile, Minister of State in the Ministry of Education, Youth and Information, Hon. Alando Terrelonge, said the distribution will assist in ensuring that the education system is not disrupted, although aspects of the teaching and learning environment have shifted.

More Support For Children’s Homes

Minister of State in the Ministry of Labour and Social Security, Hon. Zavia Mayne (right), presents items to Chief Executive Officer of the Child Protection and Family Services Agency (CPFSA), Rosalee Gage-Grey (centre), at a handover ceremony at the Glenhope Nursery and Place of Safety in Kingston on May 5. Observing (at left) is Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Labour and Social Security, Colette Roberts-Risden. The donated goods, valued at \$1.2 million, included basic food supplies, children’s stationery, toiletries and cleaning items.



Gov’t Brings 120 Jamaicans Home

ONE HUNDRED and twenty Jamaicans who were stranded in the United Kingdom (UK) are now back on local soil through the assistance of the Government.

A TUI chartered Boeing 787 aircraft with the passengers aboard landed on May 6 at the Norman Manley International Airport in Kingston.

A total of 124 persons were approved for the flight based on applications through the immigration section of the <https://jamcovid19.moh.gov.jm> website.

The flight consisted primarily of crew members, who were on the Marella Discovery 2 cruise ship as well as six other vessels owned by that cruise line.

Present at the airport to greet the passengers was Minister of Foreign Affairs

and Foreign Trade, Senator the Hon. Kamina Johnson Smith, who told **JIS News** that the Government is pleased that the Jamaicans are now home.

She said that the mission involved collaboration with the Ministries of Health & Wellness, National Security, and Transport and Mining; Jamaica Defence Force (JDF); Passport, Immigration and Citizenship Agency (PICA); Airports Authority of Jamaica, and Jamaica Urban Transit Company (JUTC).

Senator Johnson Smith, who greeted all the passengers immediately after they exited the aircraft, said the feedback was positive.

The 120 Jamaicans were repatriated under the controlled re-entry protocols and will be in State quarantine for 14 days.



Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade, Senator the Hon. Kamina Johnson Smith (right), speaks to a senior citizen, who was among 120 Jamaicans, who returned from the United Kingdom on May 6 at the Norman Manley International Airport in Kingston.

Gov’t Further Expands COVID-19 Testing

WITH JAMAICA now current with coronavirus (COVID-19) testing, the Ministry of Health & Wellness will be expanding its testing options to include all admissions to hospitals and the creation of an appointment system for all eligible persons, who wish to be tested.

This was announced by portfolio Minister, Dr. the Hon. Christopher Tufton, who noted that this will be facilitated and managed through the jamcovid19.moh.gov.jm website – the Government’s easy to use, centralised source for COVID-19 information and services.

“Sometime [this] week we should be in a position to receive those expressions of interest on the...website,” Dr. Tufton explained during a digital press conference on May 6.

He noted that the expanded testing of persons admitted in the public health system will be done in collaboration with the regional health authorities.

Meanwhile, Chief Medical Officer (CMO) in the Ministry, Dr. Jacqueline Bisasar-McKenzie, explained that persons will be screened through the [jamcovid](https://jamcovid19.moh.gov.jm) website to determine their eligibility for testing.

She noted that the testing option will mainly cater to persons, who may be ill, but have stopped visiting public health facilities as they have been staying home in adherence to the Government’s measures to contain the spread of COVID-19.

The Ministry will also be targeting at-risk groups such as transportation and security personnel as part of its expanded testing protocol.