

# Now is the Time to Invest - PM

**PRIME MINISTER** the Most Hon. Andrew Holness is encouraging investors to make Jamaica their place of choice to invest and do business, in a bid to boost the country's economic recovery.

"If you are a businessman or an investor, if you are into construction or you want to open a restaurant... now is the time to do it. If you don't invest, then there will be a recession," the Prime Minister said.

Mr. Holness was speaking at the official opening of Island Grill's new restaurant on King Street in downtown Kingston, on July 2.

"We see this [restaurant] as an investment in Jamaica's economic recovery. The COVID crisis has had adverse economic implications for the world and for Jamaica. The \$25-billion stimulus package that the Government has provided is the largest fiscal stimulus in Jamaica's history. We have



**Prime Minister the Most Hon. Andrew Holness (left) displays a gift bag which he received during the opening of Island Grill's new restaurant on King Street in downtown Kingston, on July 2. With the Prime Minister are Founder and Chief Executive Officer of Island Grill, Thalia Lyn, and Minister of Local Government and Community Development, Hon. Desmond McKenzie.**

done this to build confidence in the economy at a time of global uncertainty and to provide support for those in need," he said.

The Prime Minister pointed out that the reduction in GCT

from 16.5 to 15 per cent was done in an effort to "give back" to Jamaicans.

He noted too that the National Housing Trust (NHT) interest rates have been reduced "to give a stimulus to

the construction sector, so that there is real demand for housing".

Mr. Holness reminded all business people, small and large, that "now is the time to get back into the field, into the markets, into the construction sites, and into the offices".

"Let's get back to work but, of course, don't forget to wear your masks," the Prime Minister urged.

## PM Hands Over New Houses to Three Sisters in St. Mary

**PRIME MINISTER** the Most Hon. Andrew Holness, on July 2, handed over a new multifamily house to three sisters living in Annotto Bay, St. Mary, under the social housing component of the Housing, Opportunity, Production and Employment (HOPE) programme.

The seaside board and zinc tenement yard, which had housed three sisters and their children, was transformed into three attached two-bedroom units with bathrooms and other amenities, at a cost of approximately \$22.6 million.

Before officially handing over the units, the Prime Minister encouraged the three families to take care of the facility.

"This is a facility that, anywhere, would be rated as first-class, strong [and] well-built and we believe we have come in at a reasonable price," Mr. Holness said.



**Prime Minister the Most Hon. Andrew Holness (right) speaks to one of the beneficiaries of a multifamily housing solution, Kadian Pitter (centre), on July 2 inside the new unit in Annotto Bay, St. Mary. Sharing the moment is Member of Parliament for St. Mary South Eastern, Dr. Norman Dunn.**

He said the handover forms part of the housing element of the HOPE programme, on which the Government will place more focus.

"We are launching, and this is evidence of it, the housing element of our social intervention and this is the

new social housing programme. Initially, we had a budget of \$1 billion and that would have done over 1,000 units right across Jamaica.

"That was the intention. We have had to cut the budget because of the COVID situation, but we are still pressing ahead," Mr. Holness said.

## Agriculture Ministry to Purchase Drones

**THE MINISTRY** of Industry, Commerce, Agriculture and Fisheries will be purchasing 13 drones that will help to bolster the capacity of extension officers in the field.

The drones will be among other equipment and machinery, valued at a total of \$230 million that will serve to enhance the technological modernisation of the agricultural sector and facilitate increased production and productivity.

According to Minister without Portfolio in the Ministry, Hon. J.C. Hutchinson, the use of drones is critical to assist extension officers and investors in the determination of physical characteristics of soil and ground cover.

"There is a need for greater infusion of technology in the sector to determine crop production acres, livestock production numbers, soil fertility status and environmental and crop fore-



**Minister without Portfolio in the Ministry of Industry, Commerce, Agriculture and Fisheries, Hon. J.C. Hutchinson**

casting. This is a priority," he pointed out.

In the meantime, Mr. Hutchinson said priority focus will also continue to be placed on the Ministry's Production Incentive Programme, aimed at boosting the capacity of small farmers to achieve greater productivity.

"Under the Production Incentive Programme, it is projected that farmers will be provided with support for

soil analysis, soil nutrient management, marketing, land preparation, seeds and planting material, fertilisers – all valued in excess of \$350 million," he said.

These provisions form part of strategic projects being pursued under the Ministry's Coronavirus (COVID-19) Recovery Programme, which is being financed with the support of \$1 billion from the Ministry of Finance and the Public Service.

## New Traffic Ticket Management System This Year

**THE GOVERNMENT** is spending \$25.6 million to implement a new Traffic Ticket Management System (TTMS) this year.

Minister of National Security, Hon. Dr. Horace Chang, said that work is in progress on the system, which involves collaboration with Court Management Services, Tax Administration Jamaica (TAJ), Island Traffic Authority, and eGov Jamaica Limited.

It is aimed at improving efficiency and effectiveness in the enforcement of the road traffic rules while restoring public order.

"We will be able to hold [persons] on the road accountable... who wish to break the law without any penalty," Dr. Chang said in his contribution to the 2020/21 Sectoral Debate in the House of Representatives on June 30.

"The lawbreakers on the road, of all types, will be held accountable and can be prosecuted effectively



**Minister of National Security, Hon. Dr. Horace Chang**

by the police officers," he stressed.

Dr. Chang said that the new system will improve on the existing arrangement, which he noted, is inefficient and does not work.

"We have individuals driving on the road with 1,000 tickets, 900 tickets and nothing is done holding them accountable. It will be corrected and I want to assure the public that this will make a major impact on public order in this country," he noted.

## Early Childhood Institutions to Get Sanitisation Grant

**THE MINISTRY** of Education, Youth and Information is to provide a sanitisation grant to assist early childhood institutions across the island.

This was disclosed by portfolio Minister, Hon. Karl Samuda, during the sitting of the House of Representatives on June 30.

He added that the Ministry understands the negative impact COVID-19 has had on the sector, and the Government will be doing all it can to ensure that early childhood institutions are prepared to reopen in September.

"We know that with the physical distancing requirements for students to be seated six feet apart, these schools will face further challenges come September. As a Government we take this very seriously. We will continue to provide additional temporary trained teachers to ensure that at least one trained teacher is



**Minister of Education, Youth and Information, Hon. Karl Samuda**

available in each early childhood institution," the Minister said.

Meanwhile in July, the Early Childhood Commission (ECC) field staff, in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and Wellness, will be providing sensitisation and training regarding new protocols.

Also in August, the ECC field staff will be in institu-

tions to assist with rearranging the learning environment.

"Community Relations Officers will be in the community with parents to further sensitise and support the new measures in schools. This will be done to assist parents with coping mechanisms as they prepare for the reopening of early childhood institutions and supporting children's learning," Mr. Samuda said.

## Cornwall Regional Hospital Gets Donation of 10 Beds



**Senior Medical Officer, Cornwall Regional Hospital, Dr. Derek Harvey (right), and Senior Nursing Department Manager, Leset Stephenson (centre), accept a donation of 10 beds from Chief Executive Officer of MJB Airports Limited, Shane Munroe (left), on July 2.**