

Gov't to Continue Effective Management of COVID-19

PRIME MINISTER the Most Hon. Andrew Holness has given the assurance that the Government will continue its effective management of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"No doubt, we are entering a new phase of the pandemic, an inevitable phase of the pandemic and that will require a new strategy of management, but whatever we do, you can rest assured that we will keep you safe, we will keep our front-line workers safe, we will make the necessary allocations in our budget, so that you can be cushioned and cope with the economic fallout that accompanies the pandemic," he said.

The Prime Minister was addressing the nation during his acceptance speech at the Jamaica Labour Party's (JLP)



Prime Minister the Most Hon. Andrew Holness

headquarters on Belmont Road.

The JLP has been re-elected to serve as Government for a second consecutive term, after winning the General Election, held on September 3. Preliminary results show that the JLP, led

"Whatever we do, you can rest assured that we will keep you safe."

by the Mr. Holness, won 49 seats, while the People's National Party (PNP), led by Dr. Peter Phillips, won 14 seats.

Addressing matters relating to the economy, the Prime Minister noted that there must be agreement among stakeholders.

"We, as a country, have managed to come to consensus on fiscal matters and monetary policy. There is evolving consensus on crime and violence (and) national security. There is consensus developing around growth, but there must now be consensus, a strong position, on

anti-corruption," Mr. Holness said.

The Prime Minister also thanked the Almighty for sparing and guarding Jamaicans.

"As I stand here, I am obviously happy to have won, but I want to assure all of you that I do carry this burden with great consideration of the expectations of not just those who elected us, but those who are looking on us for future decisions as to whether or not they will participate in the process," Mr. Holness said.

This is the 18th General Election to be held in the country since Universal Adult Suffrage in 1944.

NWC Spends US\$50M on Water Improvement Projects

PRESIDENT OF the National Water Commission (NWC), Mark Barnett, says the agency has spent approximately US\$50 million on water infrastructure improvement works, under the Major Infrastructure Development Project (MIDP).

"The overall project included works on the now completed Ferry pipeline. Work was also done on Marcus Garvey Drive, Constant Spring Road, Barbican Square, Mackfield (Westmoreland) and several other small projects," Mr. Barnett told **JIS News**.

"We would have collaborated with the National Works Agency (NWA) to ensure that pipelines were being laid by the NWC, while the new roads were being paved. This massive undertaking was not entirely based in Kingston and St. Andrew, albeit most of the funds were spent in Kingston and St. Andrew," he said.

He also noted that the NWC has done other improvement works under its Non-Revenue Water Programme to improve services to its customers.



President of the National Water Commission (NWC), Mark Barnett

"The NWC was not able to finance all of these works by itself, so we relied heavily on the support of central government and the kind support of the Ministry of Finance to improve these infrastructure, which we believe will serve generations to come," Mr. Barnett said.

The MIDP forms part of the NWC's comprehensive plans for efficient distribution of water and part of its broader efforts to build resiliency and reliability within the network.

More Jamaicans Encouraged to Embrace 'Rediscover Jamaica' Campaign

TOURISM STAKEHOLDERS and 'Resilient Corridor' interests are encouraging more Jamaicans to embrace the 'Rediscover Jamaica' campaign, in order to drive a sustainable domestic tourism market.

The initiative, which is being promoted by the Jamaica Tourist Board (JTB), was launched in July and encourages Jamaicans to take advantage of the country's many tourism products and attractions through staycation packages.

Speaking at a Jamaica Information Service (JIS) Think Tank at the agency's Regional Office in Montego Bay, St. James, on August 31, President of the Jamaica Hotel and Tourist Association (JHTA), Omar Robinson, noted that the

campaign has been doing "tremendously well".

"The Rediscover Jamaica programme has done tremendously well for the hotels and attractions. We have seen a lot of people taking up these exciting rates that both attractions and hotels have put out," said Mr. Robinson.

"And these are really discounted rates to get Jamaicans to come out," he added.

Mr. Robinson indicated that hotels are experiencing up to 50 to 60 per cent occupancy from Jamaicans alone, who are buying into deals that are being offered under the campaign.

"So, we are seeing the occupancy go up and we attribute that to the Jamaicans, and we are



President of the Jamaica Hotel and Tourist Association (JHTA), Omar Robinson, speaks at a JIS Think Tank, held at the agency's Regional Office in Montego Bay, St. James, on August 31.

grateful. We say thanks for supporting the Jamaican hotels and attractions [and] thanks for your support over the years," he said.

In the meantime, he is assuring that local hotels

are maintaining a strict adherence to the COVID-19 safety protocols. Among these are sanitisation, physical distancing, enhanced digital enablement and monitoring.

DBJ to Assist Medium-Sized Companies Through Innovation Grant Fund

THE DEVELOPMENT Bank of Jamaica (DBJ) has embarked on the implementation of a new product, the Innovation Grant Fund, to provide financial support for medium-sized companies looking to introduce or expand innovative processes, products, and/or services.

General Manager for Strategic Services at the DBJ, Christopher Brown, told **JIS News** that the facility aims to assist entities fulfilling the eligibility criteria to create additional revenue streams and employment, through the provision of a maximum \$14 million grant to fund innovation ventures.

The US\$2.7 million grant facility is the first of six products being launched by the DBJ under the five-year US\$25 million Inter-American Development Bank (IDB)-funded Boosting Innovation, Growth and Entrepreneurship Ecosystems (BIGEE) Programme.

The initiative is a comprehensive undertaking aimed at building out entrepreneurs and stimulating more innovation from micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs), as well as strengthening the innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystem.



General Manager, Strategic Services Division, Development Bank of Jamaica (DBJ), Christopher Brown

Mr. Brown informs that this grant product is designed to support medium-sized entities that have been registered for a minimum of seven years, are generating annual earnings of between \$75 million and \$150 million, and have a board of directors in place.

He advised that the BIGEE Programme also has a funding facility tailored for business start-ups and smaller companies, adding that "our aim is to have both products in the market to support companies at all stages".

Mr. Brown said that under the two-stage Innovation Grant Fund application

process, which opens on September 7, representatives of these entities are invited to log on to the project website www.thinkbigee.com; fill out the concept note/application form, which provides a basic outline of the proposed engagement; and submit same for evaluation.

Evaluations will be undertaken at the end of September or each month, depending on the number of applications meeting the criteria, until the 30 entities being targeted for support are identified.

Mr. Brown said entities passing the concept stage will, thereafter, be invited to submit a comprehensive project proposal, detailing their engagements' main objectives/goals and how these will be achieved.

He told **JIS News** that a \$300,000 grant, in the form of a voucher, will be available to assist each entity in preparing their comprehensive project proposals.

The General Manager explained that the grant will enable them to engage the services of a member of the DBJ-accredited list of consultants to assist in writing the proposal "and really helping

A \$300,000 grant, in the form of a voucher, will be available to assist each entity in preparing their comprehensive project proposals.

them to think through and design the project".

Mr. Brown said the successful applicants will have access to a grant intended to cover 70 per cent of the overall project, up to a maximum of \$14 million, with the applicants putting up the remaining 30 per cent as counterpart contribution.

He pointed out that the businesses' counterpart input, which can take the form of cash and kind, will be evaluated.

Mr. Brown advised that phased disbursement of grants will be undertaken for each applicant, pointing out that this will be contingent on milestones achieved.

Resumption of Dispute Resolution Service by Commission of Strata Corporations

THE COMMISSION of Strata Corporations (CSC) has announced the resumption of its dispute resolution service, with new safety protocols to protect staff and clients from contracting the novel coronavirus (COVID-19).



Chief Executive Officer of the Real Estate Board (REB)/Commission of Strata Corporations (CSC), Sandra Garrick

"Before proceeding, participants are required to now sign off on a sanitisation agreement. A minimum of six feet will be maintained between persons at hearings, in keeping with the Disaster Risk Management Order. The maximum number of persons now permitted at each hearing is six, two persons representing each party – the applicant, the respondent and the CSC," Chief Executive Officer of the CSC, Sandra Garrick, told **JIS News**.

Mrs. Garrick said that under the new COVID-19 protocol, each person is subjected to a temperature check upon entering the venue, and each hearing is now limited to a maximum period of two and a half hours.

"During a hearing, each party is given 35 minutes to make their oral submission and an additional 20 minutes for rebuttals. If the matter is not completed within the prescribed time frame, it is adjourned to another date for an additional two and a half hours," she noted.

The dispute resolution process forms part of the responsibility of the CSC under the Registration (Strata Titles) Act. The process allows the CSC to oversee disputes between proprietors or between proprietors and the executive committee of a strata property.

"To access our dispute resolution service, persons can complete and submit an application form found on our website, www.csc.gov.jm, and pay the required fee of \$4,000. Hearings are scheduled within 30 days of the application and based on the availability of inspectors," Mrs. Garrick explained.

She is encouraging more persons to utilise the service, as it helps in clearing the judicial system's court case backlog.