

Gov't Allocates \$1 Billion to Repair Roads

THE GOVERNMENT has allocated, through the National Works Agency (NWA), \$1 billion to effect road repairs and carry out clean-up activities, following the impact of recent heavy rains on the road network.

Speaking in the House of Representatives on November 17, Prime Minister the Most Hon. Andrew Holness, informed that of the \$1 billion each constituency will be allocated \$15 million and the Members of Parliament will be given directions on how the resources should be utilised.

Giving a breakdown of the figure, Mr. Holness said some \$7 million has been allocated for road patching, \$4 million for de-bushing, \$2 million for beautification (sanitation and removal of garbage) and \$2



Prime Minister the Most Hon. Andrew Holness addresses the House of Representatives on November 17 at the Jamaica Conference Centre.

million for drain or gully cleaning.

Members of Parliament will not have the option of taking

any amount from this \$7 million to spend on bushing, beautification/cleaning and sanitation or drain cleaning.

"The allocations that we have made – the \$7 million of the \$15 million – has to be used very strategically. So, the Members of Parliament will have to work closely with the NWA to look at the list of affected roads and together make the allocation and selection of roads," he added.

Prime Minister Holness said MPs may reallocate a maximum of \$1 million from the \$2 million designated for drain cleaning to another heading.

He further added that similar reallocation can be made from the \$2 million designated for sanitation to another heading, while a maximum of \$2 million may be reallocated from the \$4 million for de-bushing to any other heading.

Evaluation of Pilot Face-to-Face Classes Favourable

MINISTER OF Education, Youth and Information, Hon. Fayval Williams, says the feedback from the evaluation of the pilot face-to-face classes has been favourable, even though there are areas to be addressed.

Speaking in the House of Representatives on November 17, she informed that officers from the Ministry visited the participating schools to conduct observation of the activities taking place and to provide guidance where necessary.

She noted that the high schools opted to have their grade-11 students return to the face-to-face setting, while the primary level has students across the grades.

Giving a synopsis of particular aspects under observation, Mrs. Williams said the overall management of the entry process was deemed to have been satisfactorily managed by the schools, in keeping with protocols for preventing transmission of COVID-19.

Regarding wash stations and sanitation facilities, the observers reported that wash stations are visible



Minister of Education, Youth and Information, Hon. Fayval Williams

and sanitisers are mounted at strategic locations in all schools, including on walls, at the entrance of or in classrooms.

The overall management of students' movements during class time was also found to be satisfactory.

In addition, the school's management of breaks (including mask breaks) and lunch sessions was rated as being satisfactory in most schools.

Mrs. Williams also stressed that parents have a responsibility to not send students to school if they are having symptoms of runny nose, cough and fever.

160 At-Risk Youth to Benefit from Crime and Violence Prevention Programme

APPROXIMATELY 160 youngsters from Trench Town and Whitfield Town, St. Andrew, will benefit from interventions aimed at steering them away from crime and violence under the Local Partner Development (LPD) Programme.

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID)-funded initiative, involves partnership with local civil society organisations to deliver crime and violence-prevention services to at-risk youth, enabling them to become productive members of society.

Three entities – Peace Management Initiative (PMI), MultiCare Youth Foundation (MYF) and Violence Prevention Alliance (VPA) have been awarded grants totalling \$156,400,000 (US\$1,070,000) to provide interventions, including cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT), mentorship, vocational and life skills training, and employability support.

The grant signing ceremony and launch of the LPD took place on November 19, at the



Minister of National Security, Hon. Dr. Horace Chang (left,) conversing with Chargé d'Affaires, United States Embassy in Kingston, John McIntyre, during the grant signing ceremony and launch of United States Agency for International Development (USAID)-funded Local Partner Development (LPD) Programme at the Terra Nova All-Suite Hotel in St. Andrew on November 19.

Terra Nova All-Suite Hotel in St. Andrew.

Minister of National Security, Hon. Dr. Horace Chang, in hailing the initiative, said that effective social intervention strategies and programmes are vital for safeguarding lives, transforming communities and reducing the number

of young men turning to gangs.

He noted that the Government has been steering young people into productive training programmes such as the Jamaica National Service Corps, which exposes them to military skills and has a strong technical component.

The LPD is a six-year activity that is funded by USAID through the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative and implemented by international non-profit organisation FHI360, which works to improve the health and well-being of people in the United States and around the world.

Growth in Construction and Agriculture for July to September

THE PLANNING Institute of Jamaica (PIOJ) is reporting growth in construction and agriculture, forestry and fishing during the July to September 2020 quarter.

The entity's Director General, Dr. Wayne Henry, said that construction increased by an estimated five per cent, while agriculture grew by approximately two per cent.

He said that the growth of the subsectors is despite a 3.6 per cent contraction of the goods-producing industry. Overall, the economy contracted by 11.3 per cent during the quarter, compared to the corresponding period in 2019.

Dr. Henry, who was addressing the PIOJ's quarterly media briefing on Wednesday (November 18), said that the upturn in construction was mainly spurred by improvement in the 'other construction' component, resulting from increased capital expenditure on civil engineering activities.

These included \$5.3 billion disbursed by the National Works Agency (NWA), relative to \$2.7 billion in 2019; and \$1.4 billion disbursed by National Road



Director General, Planning Institute of Jamaica, Dr. Wayne Henry

Operating and Constructing Company Limited (NROCC). As it relates to agriculture, Dr. Henry said that the growth was mainly due to favourable weather conditions, as well as Government initiatives to improve the industry's output.

Among these are the Productivity Incentive Programme, which provided farmers with seedlings and fertiliser and the Agriculture Excess Buy-Back Programme. This provided an outlet for farmers' produce to be sold due to oversupply from a reduced demand consequent of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

5,000 NCD Patients to Benefit from \$100-Million Pilot Programme

APPROXIMATELY 5,000 persons with diabetes and hypertension are to benefit from free treatment and care under a \$100-million pilot programme being undertaken by the Government in collaboration with private practitioners.

Under the Public-Private Partnership for Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs), non-coronavirus (COVID-19) patients with the chronic conditions who access care at health centres, will be referred to selected private providers.

The objective is to reduce the exposure of these persons to COVID-19.

Health and Wellness Minister, Dr. the Hon. Christopher Tufton, in his address at the virtual launch on November 17, said that the initiative will be piloted in eight health centres and four private practices in Clarendon and St. Ann and two in Kingston and St. Andrew, in the first instance.

In outlining the components of the programme, Minister Tufton said that the local health centres will be charged with the task of identifying eligible persons from their registers who will then be referred to the participating private practitioners for continued treatment.

He said that patients will be able to access diagnostic



Health and Wellness Minister, Dr. the Hon. Christopher Tufton, displays the interim guidelines for the clinical management of diabetes and hypertension in Jamaica during the virtual launch of the Public-Private Partnership for Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) pilot programme on November 17.

The initiative will be piloted in eight health centres and four private practices in Clarendon and St. Ann and two in Kingston and St. Andrew, in the first instance.

and monitoring tests free of cost. In addition, prescriptions written by the private providers will be administered by the National Health Fund (NHF) at no cost to patients.

The NHF will facilitate payment to the private providers through its swipe card system.

Republic of Korea Donates Testing Kits to Fight COVID-19

Minister of Health and Wellness, Dr. the Hon. Christopher Tufton (centre), touches a box with medical supplies donated by the Government of Korea, on November 17, at the Ministry in New Kingston. Sharing the moment are Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade, Senator the Hon. Kamina Johnson Smith; and Charge d'Affaires, Republic of Korea, Lim Baejin. The Government of the Republic of Korea has donated US\$300,000 in testing kits geared towards Jamaica's fight against COVID-19.

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