

Jamaica's Economy Poised to Rebound Stronger

PRIME MINISTER the Most Hon. Andrew Holness says Jamaica is poised to rebound "even stronger" from the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic in 2021.

This, he said, by virtue of the "deep resilience" the country has exhibited to COVID-19, consequent on the Government's risk-based management approach to the crisis while maintaining macroeconomic stability.

Additionally, the Prime Minister said significant breakthroughs in COVID-19 testing and vaccines, "give us cause for optimism".

He was speaking during the 16th Jamaica Stock Exchange (JSE) Regional Investments and Capital Markets Conference at The Jamaica Pegasus hotel in New Kingston, on January 26.

Mr. Holness said Jamaica, like other countries, was not



Prime Minister the Most Hon. Andrew Holness

spared the pitfalls of COVID-19.

He cited among the negative outcomes first quarter

2020/21 fiscal year contraction of 18.4 per cent, from April to June 2020, and a \$71-billion decline in Government

revenue inflows, as at December 2020.

Despite these, Mr. Holness said the Government has managed the situation in "such a way as to ease the effect".

He said notable among the positive outcomes were seven per cent growth in the construction sector during the July to September 2020 quarter; a 31.6 per cent increase in net remittance inflows between April and October 2020; net international reserves totalling over US\$3 billion; and Government expenditure remaining on target, with no new net borrowing.

"We have been able to attain this momentous achievement because of a strong base and buffers that we had built from our fiscal discipline over the last several years," the Prime Minister stated.

Funeral Service Allowed in Church with no More Than 15 Persons

PRIME MINISTER the Most Hon. Andrew Holness has announced that effective February 1, churches will be allowed to host small funeral services.

Speaking in the House of Representatives on January 26, Mr. Holness said no more than 10 family members and five officiating ministers should be accommodated in the church during the service.

"We are not allowing mass open-ended funerals, regardless of how large the church is. It is the same rule that is applied at the grave-side that would be applied in the church," Mr. Holness pointed out.

The Prime Minister said the decision was taken as

part of efforts to allow family members to grieve.

"We decided that we would do this because there were many cases of persons who spent their lives in the church, many of them would have built their church... but when the last rites are to be administered, they cannot be brought back to the sanctuary. It is for the living that is hurting more than the dead that has departed," Mr. Holness noted.

Mr. Holness informed that the measure would be in effect for one month and would be monitored.

Meanwhile, public passenger buses will now be allowed to carry a limited number of standing passen-



Prime Minister the Most Hon. Andrew Holness addresses the sitting of the House of Representatives at Gordon House on January 26.

gers based on the seating capacity of the bus.

Mr. Holness said that the revised guidelines and regulations will be provided to the Transport Authority and

the police.

The measure becomes effective February 1, 2021.

Conch Season Commences April 1 with Strict Rules

MINISTER OF Agriculture and Fisheries, Hon. Floyd Green, says the new conch season will commence on April 1, with very strict rules to prevent illegal fishing.

Addressing a virtual press briefing on January 27, the Minister said following the 2018 ban on the fishing of conch to allow for the replenishment of stock, results from a 2020 survey have shown significant improvement in the density of the stock by some 16 per cent to just over 180 conchs per hectare.

He said, with the reopening there will be an allowance of a total catch of 250 and 300 metric tonnes for industrial and artisanal fishers.



Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries, Hon. Floyd Green, addresses a virtual press briefing on January 27.

"We have put in some very stringent regulations for this new conch season, as we

want to ensure that we are developing a sustainable industry," the Minister emphasised.

Mr. Green said it is important for persons in the industry to make all effort to abide by the requirements as stipulated by the National Fisheries Authority (NFA), as there will be tight monitoring of their movements.

Among the regulations to which fishers must adhere are: there should be no fishing for conch in the areas east of the South Cay; and all conch fishing vessels should operate with a real-time monitoring system that the NFA and the Veterinary Services Division can track.

'Mask Up Before You Talk Up' in Mandeville



Health and Wellness Minister, Dr. the Hon. Christopher Tufton (centre), is surrounded by placard-bearing Community Health Aides in the Mandeville town square on January 27, as he took the 'Mask Up Before You Talk Up' message to the residents, following the recent spike in the number of COVID-19 cases in Manchester.

Artisan Village in Falmouth to be Operational By July

MINISTER OF Tourism, Hon. Edmond Bartlett, says the country's first Artisan Village at Hampden Wharf in Falmouth, Trelawny, is slated to be operational by July.

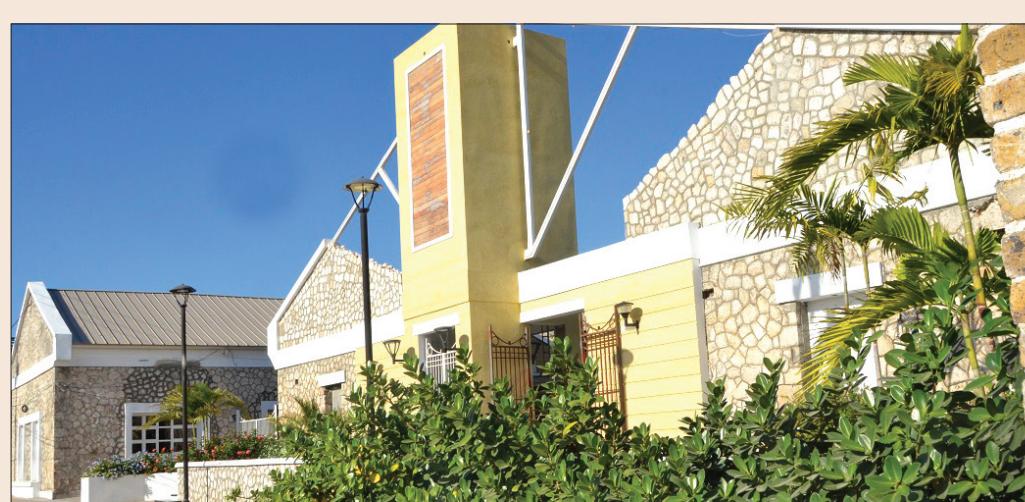
Work on the \$750 million project was delayed as a result of the (COVID-19) pandemic.

Following a tour of the facility on January 27, Minister Bartlett said that the construction phase has been "substantially completed", with finishing work to be finalised by the end of March.

"I am advised by the contractors that it is in an

actual handover position and the partners, who have overseen that contract work, the Port Authority of Jamaica (PAJ), are stating yes, they are in a position to receive the substantially completed project. There are some finishes that are to be completed by the 23rd of March by the contractor," he said.

The Artisan Village, which will accommodate several Falmouth-owned small and medium-sized enterprises, will tell the unique history of Falmouth and offer visitors an opportunity to enjoy the local cuisine, art, craft and culture.



Jamaica's first Artisan Village located at the Hampden Wharf in Falmouth, Trelawny.

Minister Bartlett told JIS News that once the finishing work is completed, "we have

the theming to be done because we are making this an iconic attraction by itself

and we are pulling on our culture and the history of the Falmouth area and the

myths and storylines that characterise the story of Falmouth over the years".

The Artisan Village, which is financed by the Tourism Enhancement Fund (TEF), forms part of the wider Hampden Wharf Development project and will be the first of a series of similar facilities that will be located in resort areas across the island.

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