

COVID Measures Will Bring Numbers Down - PM

PRIME MINISTER the Most Hon. Andrew Holness, says he is confident that the measures put in place by the Government to contain transmission of the coronavirus (COVID-19), will bring the numbers down.

"The measures that we have put in place... will have a lag effect. So measures that we put in place two weeks ago, we are not going to see the impact, until two to three weeks, because it takes several incubation cycles to see the impact," he noted.

He noted that the restrictions which started on March 27, "will have a more immediate effect, because they are stronger, but the real effect will be several weeks in advance".

"They will get the numbers down, I am confident of that," Mr. Holness said during the sitting of the House of Representatives on March 23.



Prime Minister the Most Hon. Andrew Holness, speaking during the sitting of the House of Representatives on March 23.

The new measures, including expanded weekend curfews, form part of provisions under the Disaster Risk Management Act to curtail the spread of COVID-19 in Jamaica.

On Holy Thursday, April 1, the curfew will begin at 8:00 p.m., continue through Good Friday, April 2, and end at 5:00 a.m. on Saturday, April 3.

On April 3, the curfew will begin at midday, and continue through Easter Sunday, April 4, Easter Monday, April 5, and end on 5:00 a.m. on Tuesday, April 6.

On Tuesday, April 6, the measures run from 8:00 p.m. to 5:00 a.m., ending at 5:00 a.m. on Saturday, April 10.

The expanded curfew will, again, come into effect on Saturday, April 10, at 12:00 noon, continue through Sunday, April 11, and end at 5:00 a.m. on Monday, April 12. The curfew's 8:00 p.m. to 5:00 a.m. timeline will remain in place on all other days.

Gov't Earmarks Funds to Support Vulnerable Persons During Expanded Weekend Curfews

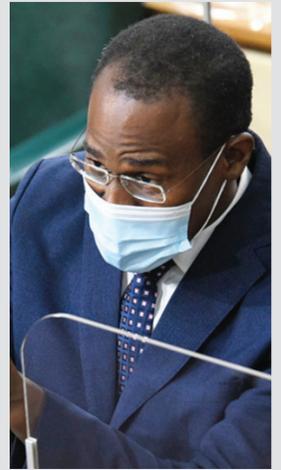
THE GOVERNMENT is providing \$2 million for each of the 63 constituencies to support citizens requiring assistance during the expanded triple weekend curfews.

The provision will be allocated to the Constituency Development Fund (CDF) on April 1 for further disbursement.

This was announced by Minister of Finance and the Public Service, Dr. the Hon. Nigel Clarke, as he closed the 2021/22 Budget Debate in the House of Representatives on March 23.

"We will have to work on the operational dynamics... but this is the policy intent, that funds will be made available to ease the burden that the most vulnerable of citizens [could potentially] face over those lockdown weekends," Dr. Clarke said.

He noted that the expanded curfews, which were among revised measures announced by Prime Minister, the Most. Hon. Andrew Holness, on March



Minister of Finance and the Public Service, Dr. the Hon. Nigel Clarke

21, are intended to curtail the spread of the coronavirus (COVID-19) by restricting movement.

"The progress of the vaccination programme will also be critical. The evolving nature of the coronavirus public health dynamics could have a significant impact on budgetary outcomes. Uncertainties exist and Sunday's announcement was a fulfilment of that reality," Dr. Clarke said.

Prime Minister Highlights Importance of NIDS

PRIME MINISTER the Most Hon. Andrew Holness, used the occasion of receiving the coronavirus (COVID-19) vaccine to advocate for the National Identification System (NIDS), noting that the registration process to receive the jab would have been much easier for Jamaicans under NIDS.

and all that data captured would then go into the vaccination database. It would take maybe two or three [or] four minutes off the process time," Mr. Holness said.

"This means that you could have a throughput that is 20 per cent higher than what it is now," he added.

NIDS will provide a comprehensive and secure

structure to enable the collection and storage of identity information.

Enrolment under the NIDS is being targeted for commencement in September 2021.

NIDS will provide a comprehensive and secure structure to enable the collection and storage of identity information.

Mr. Holness was speaking to journalists after getting his first shot of the AstraZeneca vaccine at the Good Samaritan's Inn in Kingston on March 22.

The Prime Minister's wife and Member of Parliament for East Rural St. Andrew, Mrs. Juliet Holness, was also inoculated.

Mr. Holness, in noting the registration process at the vaccination facilities, which involves filling out a form with several questions, said that the procedure would have been shorter and smoother had NIDS been in place.

"If we had the NIDS, then all that would happen is, you come in, just show your card



Prime Minister the Most Hon. Andrew Holness (left) receives his first dose of the coronavirus (COVID-19) vaccine from nurse, Fiona Ellis, at the Good Samaritans Inn in Kingston on March 22. Observing in the background is Minister of Health and Wellness, Dr. The Hon. Christopher Tufton.



Prime Minister the Most Hon. Andrew Holness (left) and his wife, Member of Parliament for East Rural St. Andrew, Hon. Juliet Holness hold a 'Just Got My COVID Vaccine' sign after receiving their injection at the Good Samaritans Inn in Kingston on March 22.

Gov't Provides \$119M to Help Farmers Transport Sugar Cane

THE GOVERNMENT is providing \$119 million to assist farmers with the transportation of 35,000 tonnes of sugar cane to the Worthy Park Factory in St. Catherine for the 2020/ 2021 crop year.

The Government has expended more than \$500 million in support to facilitate the transportation of sugar cane.

Making the disclosure on March 24, at the virtual post-Cabinet press briefing, Minister of Education, Youth and Information, Hon. Fayval Williams, said that support will benefit farmers from Clarendon, St. Catherine and Trelawny.

She said that the funds will be reallocated from approximately \$177 million previously allotted to the



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

Sugar Industry Authority (SIA) and the Sugar Company of Jamaica (SCJ) Holdings Limited.

Mrs. Williams noted that over the past three years, the Government has expended more than \$500 million in support to facilitate the transportation of sugar cane and to effect repairs to cane roads as part of the continued support to farmers and other stakeholders within the industry.

25 Member NCDs Committee Launched

MINISTER OF Health and Wellness, Dr. the Hon. Christopher Tufton, on March 23, officially launched the 25-member National Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) Committee, which will be charged with buttressing the Ministry's work to effectively combat NCDs in Jamaica.

The body is chaired by Professor of Epidemiology and Internal Medicine and Director of the Epidemiology Research Unit (ERU), Caribbean Institute of Health

Research (CAIHR) Professor Trevor Ferguson, and includes representatives of ministries and agencies, health experts, and other stakeholders,

Dr. Tufton, in his address at the virtual ceremony, said that the Committee will provide leadership for multisectoral action, with a goal towards advocating and recommending policies and programmes for the prevention and control of NCDs.

This includes identifying the different aspects of the

problem surrounding NCDs, including the current patterns, and offering policy and implementation solutions to tackle the issue.

A key aspect of the work of the Committee is to review and make proposals to the Ministry on the various policies, laws and programmes in keeping with national, regional and international commitments related to NCDs.

Dr. Tufton said that the Committee represents a whole-of-government approach to



Minister of Health and Wellness, Dr. the Hon. Christopher Tufton (left), addresses the virtual launch of the National Committee on Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs), on Tuesday (March 23).

tackling the crisis of NCDs in Jamaica.

"It will add value to the work of the Ministry at a policy and strategic level, which is going to be extremely important as we bring greater focus to the ways in which we can develop greater policy tools for preventing and controlling NCDs," he noted.

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