

# Fiscal Discipline Enabling Capital Investments

**P**RIME MINISTER the Most Hon. Andrew Holness says that fiscal discipline is enabling the Government to make capital investments in critical areas to improve infrastructure and position the country for growth.

He was speaking on August 11 at the official commissioning into service of the Jamaica III Utility Vessel acquired by the Port Authority of Jamaica.

The state-of-the-art vessel, which replaces the 42-year-old Jamaica II, will be used primarily in the maintenance of navigational buoys and beacons in the island's ports.

Additionally, it will be utilised to carry out upkeep on the two offshore light-houses – Morant Cays and Pedro Cays – which mark the territorial limits of Jamaica's sea space and assist with maintenance of other offshore assets.



**Prime Minister the Most Hon. Andrew Holness (second right) looks on as Captain Hugh Helps (second left) points out the control panel system of the Jamaica III Utility Vessel during a tour of the boat on August 11. This was after the official commissioning and christening of the Port Authority of Jamaica vessel at Newport East in Kingston. Others (from left) are: President and Chief Executive Officer of the Port Authority of Jamaica, Professor Gordon Shirley; and Member of Parliament for East Rural St. Andrew and wife of the Prime Minister, the Most Hon. Juliet Holness.**

Addressing the ceremony held at the Harbours Department, Newport East, Mr. Holness said that the acquisition of the Jamaica III is in line with the Government's thrust to modernise public infrastructure and equipment and leverage technology for the country's benefit.

"Ten years ago...this country made the decision that we are going to ensure that all our economic decisions are on the basis of fiscal discipline, and now we are reaping the dividends from that," the Prime Minister noted.

He said that having vessels such as Jamaica III,

along with the resources of the Jamaica Defence Force (JDF) Coast Guard, which recently acquired an additional offshore patrol boat, will serve to boost national security and "help us to really focus on the maritime economy – the blue economy".

## Low Risk of Adverse Reaction to COVID-19 Vaccine – PM

**P**RIME MINISTER the Most Hon. Andrew Holness is assuring that there is a very low risk of persons having an adverse reaction to the coronavirus (COVID-19) vaccine.

"We are not here to say that vaccines are risk-less... there are concerns about vaccines and some of those concerns would be legitimate...[but] in general, the vaccines appear to be very, very safe," he said.

Mr. Holness, who was addressing a virtual vaccination town hall meeting on August 12, pointed out that "from all scientific evidence and from our own observation, the risk of taking the vaccine is insignificant".

He noted that the vaccines that have been given emergency approval were in

development for a long time.

"The technology around the development of these vaccines is in some cases fairly standard (and) would've been around for decades, even hundreds of years and the new technology is well tested and well proven as well," he pointed out.

The Prime Minister said it is natural for persons to be sceptical about new things, and advised those who are hesitant to seek information from credible sources, and to "observe, see how it works, and then make your decision".

"The quicker you get it, the safer you are," he said, noting that taking the vaccine is part of citizens' social responsibility.



**Prime Minister the Most Hon. Andrew Holness (right) highlights a point while addressing a virtual vaccination town hall meeting on August 12. At left is Minister of Health and Wellness, Dr. the Hon. Christopher Tufton.**

## Children Eligible for Pfizer Vaccine

**M**INISTER OF Health and Wellness, Dr. the Hon. Christopher Tufton, says Jamaica is to receive its first shipment of 200,000 doses of the Pfizer vaccine on August 17, with children and adolescents to be given priority access.

This represents the first tranche of approximately 600,000 doses and will further bolster the Government's coronavirus (COVID-19) vaccination programme.

Making the announcement

during Thursday's (August 12) COVID Conversations press briefing, Dr. Tufton said the Ministry will begin the administration of these vaccines on August 23 at all vaccination sites.

"We will focus on 15 years and older with parental consent as well as children 12 years and older with comorbid conditions and that's for the Pfizer vaccine," he said.

Dr. Tufton noted that the Pfizer vaccine has been proven to be safe and is approved for use in children

and adolescents.

"There are some special programmes that we are planning that will involve pulling both child and parent out at a location to provide that vaccine," he informed.

Dr. Tufton said that the administration of the vaccine to children is part of the Government's mandate to prioritise education and the reopening of schools for face-to-face instructions in the new academic year.

He indicated that the

Ministry will now finalise discussions with the Ministry of Education, Youth and Information on the ways in which students 15 years and older, particularly those who will be sitting exit examinations, can be facilitated for early vaccination.

## Curfew Hours Tightened as COVID-19 Cases Climb

**C**URFEW hours have been tightened further in the Government of Jamaica's latest response to the continued rapid increase in coronavirus (COVID-19) cases and hospitalisations in the country.

Prime Minister the Most Hon. Andrew Holness made the announcement in a virtual press conference on August 9.

Effective August 11 to August 31, the new curfew hours are from 7:00 p.m. to 5:00 a.m. Mondays to Fridays; 6:00 p.m. to 5:00 a.m. on Saturdays; and 2:00 p.m. to 5:00 a.m. on Sundays.

The Prime Minister pointed out that the revised strategy of the Government is to now "gradually ease in" the tighter measures.



**Prime Minister the Most Hon. Andrew Holness**

Mr. Holness however warned that while the Government has not yet implemented a "no movement day", it is possible.

Regarding other measures, beaches which are not under management or con-

trol are to be closed. Beaches that remain open will operate under the existing protocols and are subject to tighter operating hours of 6:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Mondays to Saturdays; and 6:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. on Sundays.

In addition, rivers will be restricted to domestic use and river rafting only, in accordance with the established protocols. The operating hours will be the same as for beaches.

Places of worship will be restricted to having no more than 50 persons in physical attendance including clergy and support personnel. No crusades, conferences or conventions will be permitted.



**Minister of Health and Wellness, Dr. the Hon. Christopher Tufton (second left) emphasises a point during the virtual COVID Conversations press conference on August 12. Listening (from left) are: Permanent Secretary in the Ministry, Dunstan Bryan; Chief Medical Officer, Jacquiline Bisasor-McKenzie; and Director of Family Health Services in the Ministry, Dr. Melody Ennis.**

## \$4.3 Billion Allocated to Primary-Level Schools for 2021-2022

A SUM of \$4.3 billion has been allocated to primary, all-age, and Junior High schools for the 2021-2022 academic year.

The funds are being disbursed in four tranches, with the first tranche paid over in June 2021.

The Ministry of Education, Youth and Information, in a recent bulletin, said that each school will receive a maintenance grant in the amount of \$150,000; janitorial grant in the amount of \$250,000; and internet/telephone grant in the amount of \$60,000.

In addition, all infant and primary level institutions with an enrolment of fewer than 120

students will receive a flat rate of \$300,000 per annum.

**"A sum of \$600 million will be distributed among selected primary level institutions for critical repairs."**

The Ministry indicated that it would continue to provide the regular grant in the amount of \$2,500 per student, which will be paid directly from the central Ministry.

Meanwhile, a nutritional grant of \$1.7 billion has been provided for the Programme of Advancement Through Health

and Education (PATH) students, with \$120 per day for pupils in grades one to three, and \$150 for those in grades four to six.

The bulletin also stated that a sum of \$600 million will be distributed among selected primary level institutions for critical repairs. These schools have already been advised and procurement activities are in progress.

Under the National Textbook Loan Scheme and the Primary Textbook Programme, educational resources valued at \$800 million, to include electronic tools, will be made available to students.

## Victoria Jubilee Hospital Receives Donation of Appliances



**President, Women Without Blemish Ministry of the Liberty for Living Ministries International, Marsha Wade (second left), and Pastor Rowan Wade (second right) hand over a kettle to Registered Nurse Midwife at the Victoria Jubilee Hospital (VJH), Charlene Brown (left); and Deputy Chief Executive Officer, VJH and Kingston Public Hospital (KPH), Diane McIsaacs (right). The occasion was the handover of appliances to VJH by Women Without Blemish Ministry at the hospital's downtown Kingston location recently.**

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