

Jamaica Targets US-Based Crime Enablers

PRIME MINISTER the Most Hon. Andrew Holness has called on the assistance of the United States (US) in identifying and prosecuting individuals who fund criminal operations in Jamaica.

"We intend to use the relationship to try and tackle a part of the problem for which we have no reach and that is the Jamaicans, who have migrated to the United States and use the cover of their residence (in the US) to influence, solicit and fund crime in Jamaica," he said.

"We have a list of them which we intend to pass on to you, but we will welcome your help and support in identifying, tracking and prosecuting those persons and potentially extraditing those persons to Jamaica," he added.

He was speaking during a meeting in Washington DC on December 8, involving Commissioner of Police, Major General Antony Anderson, and



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Prime Minister the Most Hon. Andrew Holness (right) along with Commissioner of Police, Major General Antony Anderson (2nd right), participate in a meeting in Washington DC on December 8, involving senior United States Department of Justice and Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) officials and other stakeholders, to discuss tackling organised crime and illegal guns.

senior US Department of Justice and Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) officials and other stakeholders.

Mr. Holness pointed out that 90 per cent of the guns in Jamaica are from the US, noting that the country is challenged to treat with this influx of weapons.

"We were assured that the United States is taking even greater steps to deal with the problem of illegal export of firearms and we are pleased to note the passage of the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act, which creates a legal framework to interdict and

prosecute persons illegally exporting guns from the United States," he said.

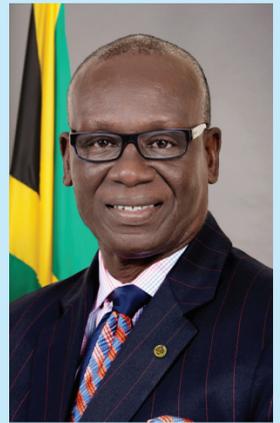
The Prime Minister urged for Jamaican traffickers, and guns destined for Jamaica, to be given priority attention under this new Act.

\$41 Million Contract Signed for Rehabilitation of Beckford Lodge Road

SIGNIFICANT REHABILITATION work will be undertaken on the Beckford Lodge Road in Westmoreland at a cost of \$41,723,887.50.

The project is slated to be undertaken over four months from January to April 2023.

"The upgrading of the roadway will bring more business to the area and boost the productivity of the residents."



Minister of Local Government and Rural Development, Hon. Desmond McKenzie

by the Ministry and the Westmoreland Municipal Corporation.

"All the materials that will be used on the roads will be subjected to testing and can only come from an approved source," Minister McKenzie said, noting that this will assist in verifying the quality of the material.

He said that an annual maintenance programme will be put in place to preserve the integrity of the road.

Minister McKenzie noted that Beckford Lodge Road is an important throughfare for the surrounding communities.

"The residents will benefit immensely," he said, noting that the upgrading of the roadway will bring more business to the area and boost the productivity of the residents.

Minister of Local Government and Rural Development, Hon. Desmond McKenzie, signed the contract with Managing Director of Wadmar Construction Limited, Mark Knight, at the Ministry's Hagley Park Road offices in Kingston on December 7.

The approximately 1.9 kilometres of roadway will be fully rehabilitated with new base and wearing surface comprised of asphaltic concrete and surface dressing.

Drainage features, including curbs and channels, have been incorporated in the design to facilitate surface water run-off.

The contract will be implemented and supervised

Hospitals to Benefit from Oxygen Project

THE KINGSTON Public and Annotto Bay Hospitals will be retrofitted with the infrastructure required to better support oxygen delivery to patients who use the facilities, through a US\$2 million project.

The project, which will provide lifesaving oxygen to the bedsides of patients in need of respiratory support, is being funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and implemented by Meeting Targets and Maintaining Epidemic Control (EpiC).

It aims to enable the public hospitals to expand use of Liquid Medical Oxygen (LOX).

There will be the installation of piping infrastructure that delivers oxygen to patients in the two facilities, as well as

training to ensure the efficient management, maintenance and sustainment of the liquid oxygen ecosystem in the country.

Addressing the launch of the LOX expansion project at the Ministry's offices in New Kingston, on December 8, Minister of Health and Wellness, Dr. the Hon. Christopher Tufton, hailed the partnership.

"We appreciate the continued partnership between Jamaica and the US Government, and in this case, USAID. That partnership is strong; it continues to be stronger, and this \$2 million expenditure is a lifesaving venture," the Minister said.

He noted that the undertaking represents another good development in public health.



Minister of Health and Wellness, Dr. the Hon. Christopher Tufton (left), greets Country Representative, United States Agency for International Development (USAID), Alex Gainer, during the media launch of the liquid medical oxygen expansion project at the Ministry's offices in New Kingston, on December 8.

Country Representative, USAID, Alex Gainer, said the project aims to improve the efficiency with which oxygen is

supplied, stored and delivered and is a further demonstration of the longstanding Jamaica/US relationship.

Gov't and Private Sector Partner to Curb ICT Infrastructure Theft

THE GOVERNMENT has partnered with the private sector to curb the surging theft and vandalism of information and communications technology (ICT) infrastructure islandwide.

Come January 2023, Minister of Science, Energy and Technology, Hon. Daryl Vaz, will chair a taskforce that will address the issue, which is increasingly threatening national development.

He made the announcement on December 8 during a press conference hosted by telecommunications firm FLOW, at the Courtleigh Hotel and Suites in Kingston.

The group will comprise representatives of other ministries, telecommunications providers, the judiciary, police



Minister of Science, Energy and Technology, Hon. Daryl Vaz (at podium), speaking during a press conference by telecommunications firm, FLOW, at the Courtleigh Auditorium and Suites in Kingston, on December 8. Listening is FLOW's Vice President and General Manager, Stephen Price.

and entities that can contribute to its mission.

"If we do not get this situation under control, the country

and Vision 2030 [Jamaica] are in trouble. We will meet to find the solutions. We will use government apparatus... with

private security forces and all the technologies that we can use to stem this," he said.

Mr. Vaz gave this undertaking in response to calls from FLOW for swifter and greater government counteraction to the ongoing issue.

FLOW's Vice President and General Manager, Stephen Price, indicated that the company has incurred restoration costs totalling more than US\$15 million, since 2016.

Frequently stolen and vandalised items include batteries, generators, fibre cables, aerial and underground copper cables, and diesel fuel.

"Vision 2030 [Jamaica] cannot be achieved if the critical ICT infrastructure in the country is not protected," Mr. Price said.

JBDC Opens Essential Oil Incubator

State Minister in the Ministry of Industry, Investment and Commerce, Dr. the Hon. Norman Dunn (right), fills a container with essential oil at the Jamaica Business Development Corporation's (JBDC) Essential Oil Incubator, on Marcus Garvey Drive in Kingston recently. Looking on is Chief Executive Officer, JBDC, Valerie Veira.



24,238 Students Enrolled in Sixth Form Pathways

SOME 24,238 students are now registered in the Ministry of Education and Youth's Sixth Form Pathways programme.

Portfolio Minister, Hon. Fayval Williams, said the students are enrolled in Grade 12 and Grade 13 across Pathways one, two and three in 167 secondary schools and 42 tertiary/post-secondary institutions across all the education regions.

She was speaking in the House of Representatives on December 7.

The Minister explained that the programme will allow students to graduate from secondary school with one or more of the following – an occupational associate degree, certificate or a diploma (within an occupational discipline), or an accredited Council of Community Colleges of Jamaica (CCCJ) or University Council of Jamaica (UCJ) Associate Degree.

The seven-year high-school programme was piloted in 2019, and launched in September 2020.

Students can also graduate with Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Examination (CAPE) subjects (diploma or certificate) or a CAPE Associate Degree, National Vocational Qualification – Jamaica (NVQJ) and/or Caribbean Vocational Qualification (CVQ) at levels two or three. Mrs. Williams noted that the CVQ allows Jamaicans to work anywhere in the Caribbean.



Minister of Education and Youth, Hon. Fayval Williams

Participants may also receive dual certification in the CAPE Associate Degree in Industrial Technology and City and Guilds Engineering level three, additional entry-level qualification at Caribbean Examinations Council (CXC) or City and Guilds, and support towards the first two years of teachers' college in pursuit of a bachelor's degree in teaching.

Mrs. Williams said that Sixth-Form Pathways brings hope to many students who would have graduated from Grade 11 with reduced opportunities.

"[It] ensures that our students have the NVQJ certification. We are ensuring employability skills and personal and professional development along with career guidance," Mrs. Williams said.

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