

PM Condemns Killing of Nine Year-Old Girl

PRIME MINISTER the Most Hon. Andrew Holness says the Government is urgently amending the Offences Against the Person Act, to provide stiffer penalties for individuals who terrorise and prey on people, particularly vulnerable and innocent children.

“Such barbaric criminals must be in no doubt that the country wants them separated from the society,” the Prime Minister said in a statement, addressing the death of nine-year-old, Nikita Noel in Hanover.

He noted that Nikita’s murder is a shock to “our collective conscience and sense of community and can only be described as evil”.

“My heart goes out to Nikita’s family and loved ones, and I am sure the entire Jamaica is praying for the family at this very sad time,” Mr. Holness stated.

The Prime Minister maintained that the society must never become numb to the increasing barbarity of violent acts.

“The society must clearly define and defend the moral



Prime Minister the Most Hon. Andrew Holness

line, by speaking out against and unequivocally condemning these violent acts and supporting measures that will bring the perpetrators to justice,” he underscored.

Meanwhile, Minister of Education and Youth, Hon. Fayval Williams, also expressed outrage and anger at the tragic death of the nine-year-old.

She informed that the Ministry will do all it can to provide counselling services and other forms of support to Nikita’s immediate family and the Esher Primary School, which she attended.

New Road Traffic Act and Regulations Come Into Effect

MINISTER OF Transport and Mining, Hon. Audley Shaw, is calling for the public’s patience and cooperation, in the wake of the new Road Traffic Act and Road Traffic Regulations, which came into effect on February 1.

He said the Ministry welcomes feedback and discussion on how “we can all work together for a better and safer road traffic environment”.

“I want to [encourage] every member of the public to remain calm,” the Minister stated, adding that, the public can contact the Ministry and/or the Island Traffic Authority at 876-754-1900, should they have further queries.

He was speaking during the House of Representatives’ sitting on January 31.

Mr. Shaw said with road traffic regulation and management being a multi-sectoral undertaking, the Ministry has been working closely with various entities and agencies to identify and resolve issues that could create challenges in

the Act’s successful implementation.

These stakeholders, he indicated, include the Ministry of National Security, Ministry of Justice, Office of the Parliamentary Counsel, Attorney General’s Chambers, Legal Reform Department, and Tax Administration Jamaica.

Provision has also been made for remote detection of offences, as tickets may be served for offences detected by cameras, and the owner of the vehicle will be held liable.

Meanwhile, there are key changes that are expected to directly impact the public. As it relates to cellular phone use, drivers will be restricted to hands free use while driving.

In addition, provision has also been made for remote detection of offences, as tickets may be served for offences detected by cameras, and the owner of the vehicle will be held liable.



Minister of Transport and Mining, Hon. Audley Shaw

\$350 Million Housing Development for St. Paul’s Lane, Tower Hill

THE GOVERNMENT will be spending \$350 million to construct 24 housing units at St. Paul’s Lane in Tower Hill, St. Andrew.

Programmed for completion by June 2023, the housing project will significantly improve the living conditions of families in the area.

It is a collaborative effort involving the Housing Agency of Jamaica (HAJ), National Housing Trust (NHT), Jamaica Social Investment Fund (JSIF), the National Water Commission (NWC) and Ashtröm Building Systems Limited.

It is part of a programme of integrated community development, which will include access to basic infrastructure such as roads, water and sewage systems.



Prime Minister the Most Hon. Andrew Holness speaking at a sensitisation session on the housing development project for St. Paul’s Lane, Tower Hill, St. Andrew, in the community on February 1.

Addressing residents during a sensitisation session in the community on February 1, Prime Minister the Most Hon.

Andrew Holness said that the Government is serious about transforming communities and the lives of Jamaicans.

“We are not just going to build new homes; we are going to put in pathways and a roadway. We are going to take down the zinc fences that have become such a symbol of urban blight and poverty... and replace them. We have already put some electricity infrastructure in place, and we are putting in the sewage infrastructure to make sure you have a sustainable community,” he noted.

The Prime Minister said that following completion of the units, work will commence on the construction of a golden age home and an infant school.

The 24 housing solutions will comprise 16 two-bedroom, one-bathroom units; and eight three-bedroom, two-bathroom units.

Gov’t Adding Electric Buses to JUTC Fleet

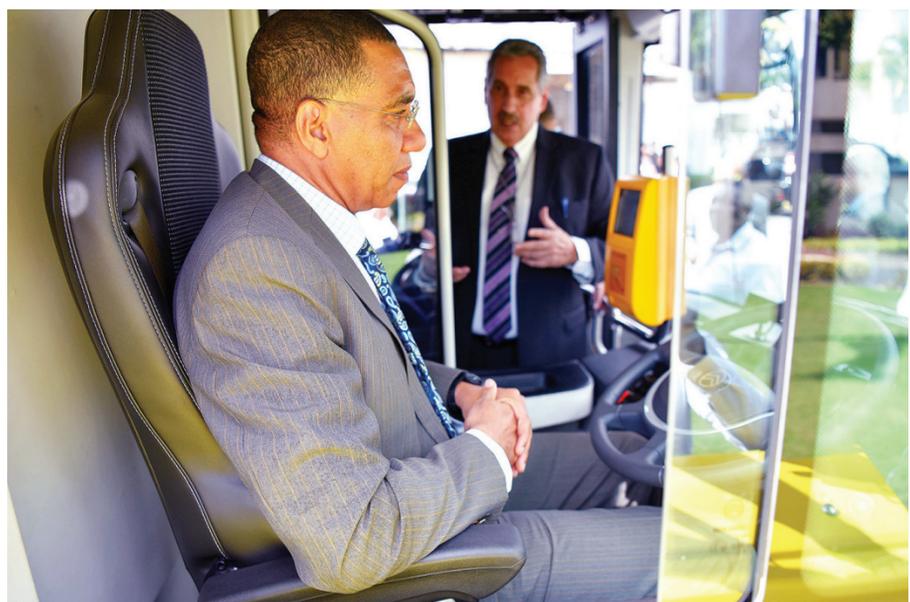
PRIME MINISTER the Most Hon. Andrew Holness says the Government is moving quickly to incorporate new, cleaner technologies into the Jamaica Urban Transit Company (JUTC) fleet, eventually replacing the existing combustion engine units.

He said that the objective is to reduce the company’s carbon footprint as well as improve its bottom line.

“The Government is very serious about its environmental commitments, its climate change commitment, but even more so... the fiscal commitments, to ensure that an entity like the JUTC does not become a fiscal risk or threat to the Government,” Mr. Holness said.

He was speaking at the unveiling of the JUTC’s first electric-powered unit at the Office of the Prime Minister in St. Andrew on January 30.

The bus, which will be tested under a six-month pilot programme, can accommodate members of the disabled com-



Prime Minister the Most Hon. Andrew Holness (left) listens as Managing Director, Jamaica Urban Transit Company (JUTC), Paul Abrahams, explains some of the features of the entity’s first public passenger electric bus at the Office of the Prime Minister in St. Andrew on January 30.

munity as well as parents travelling with a stroller.

Prime Minister Holness said the six-month testing period will allow the JUTC to gather empirical data, which will determine the way for-

ward, as it relates to introducing other vehicles.

“We will get a better understanding of the changes that will have to be made to the design and specifications. So, all in all, I am very happy we

have reached this point. The Government has made [the] allocation, we have five more buses coming in and those, of course, will go through the rigorous testing process,” he said.

RGD to Commence Printing Certificates Using New Security Paper

BEGINNING IN February, all certificates produced by the Registrar General’s Department (RGD) will be printed on a new security paper with enhanced features.

Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Charlton McFarlane, told **JIS News** that the agency expects to start using the paper by the last week of February.

He said this is being done in a bid to prevent the documents from being forged.

The CEO, who noted that the special paper is not manufactured locally, said it incorporates advanced tamper-proof technology and has more than 12 security features.

These include the actual paper, along with the method of printing and the information being printed.

These will result in changes to the appearance of birth, marriage and death certificates issued by the RGD.

Mr. McFarlane advised that the issuance of certificates printed on the new paper does not nullify previous certificates issued.

“Once a certificate has been issued by the RGD, it is valid. It does not matter when it was issued.”

“Once a certificate has been issued by the RGD, it is valid. It does not matter when it was issued. Once it was duly issued under the Registrar General’s authority, then it is a valid document. It does not expire, neither does it become outdated,” he further informed.

Mr. McFarlane advised that all RGD customers and stakeholders will be given sufficient notice of this change to prepare them for the difference in appearance of the certificates that will be issued by the Department.



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NFA Conducting Fish Feed Study

Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries, Hon. Pearnel Charles Jr., pulls in a net from a pond at McLish Fish Farm in St. Catherine, during his visit on February 1. During the visit, the Minister observed engagements being carried out in relation to fish feed research under the partnership between the National Fisheries Authority (NFA) and proprietor, Stephen McLish.