

Government Investing in Transforming the JCF- PM

PRIME MINISTER the Most Hon. Andrew Holness says the three-fold increase in the capital budget of the Jamaica Constabulary Force (JCF) over the last eight years represents the Government's commitment to national security.

"We have made a very serious commitment to putting the resources where our (priorities) are," the Prime Minister emphasised, adding that this is evidenced by the significant investments made in the technological and human resource capacities of the JCF.

Mr. Holness was addressing the opening of the JCF's inaugural Expo 'Transformations JCF 2023 - People, Quality and Technology', on May 11 at the National Arena, in Kingston.

"Whether it is motor vehicles, camera systems, the introduction of new motor bike patrol systems, the introduction of the new traffic ticketing system, new com-



Prime Minister the Most Hon. Andrew Holness (left) uses a virtual reality headset at the Jamaica Constabulary Force (JCF) Expo, at the National Arena in Kingston on May 11. Others (from centre) are representative from Virtual Reality Jamaica, Wayne Chong, and Commissioner of Police, Major General Antony Anderson.

munications system, new uniforms, new processes... this represents massive investments in the Jamaica Constabulary Force," he said.

Mr. Holness noted that the outdated manual station diaries are being replaced with the records and case

management system, as part of the JCF's thrust to digitise its operations, adding that 23 stations so far have gone live on that system.

"A big part of the technology integration of the JCF is digitisation," the Prime Minister said.

Mr. Holness explained that this is part of a larger mandate to modernise the police stations and incorporate contemporary policing technologies within the JCF to improve service delivery and strengthen the national security framework.

\$1.2 Billion for National Broadband Initiative

THE NATIONAL Broadband Initiative has been allocated approximately \$1.2 billion for the 2023/24 fiscal year.

This will be used to connect another 102 schools across six parishes – St. James, St. Ann, St. Mary, Portland, St. Catherine, and Clarendon.

Minister of Science, Energy and Technology, Hon. Daryl Vaz, made the disclosure during his contribution to the 2023/24 Sectoral Debate in the House of Representatives, on May 10.

"Due to the current road infrastructure work, the schools in the parish of St. Thomas will not be connected via fibre, as the nature of the works means that the fibre-optic cables will be liable to frequent damage.

However, efforts will be made, where possible, to connect these schools via microwave," Mr. Vaz said.

Meanwhile, work on the National Broadband Initiative saw significant advancement during the 2022/2023 fiscal year.

Mr. Vaz said the emergency fibre-optic ring achieved almost 90 per cent comple-



Minister of Science, Energy and Technology, Hon. Daryl Vaz

tion with the support of private-sector partners, FLOW (Jamaica) Limited, Digicel Jamaica Limited and community cable operators, along with key agencies, such as the National Works Agency, eGov Jamaica Limited and the Universal Service Fund.

"Approximately 118 additional high bandwidth public educational institutions were connected via this fibre-optic ring during the fiscal year, bringing the total number of these schools connected to date to 180 institutions across eight parishes," Mr. Vaz said.

Residents from St. Andrew West Central Get Improved Internet Access

APPROXIMATELY 1,500 residents from three communities in St. Andrew West Central now have greater access to the internet.

This follows the official commissioning into service of safe, secured community Wi-Fi in Tower Avenue, Cockburn Pen and Penwood.

The three sites, established by the Universal Service Fund (USF), were officially commissioned into service by Prime Minister and Member of Parliament for the area, the Most Hon. Andrew Holness on May 11.

He was joined by Minister of Science, Energy and Technology, Hon. Daryl Vaz, Chief Executive Officer, USF, Daniel Dawes, and other stakeholders.

Addressing the commissioning ceremony held at the Andrews Mews Recreational Park, Prime



Prime Minister the Most Hon. Andrew Holness (second left) accesses the internet via the free secured community Wi-Fi commissioned on Rhoden Crescent, Penwood, St. Andrew West Central on May 11. Also sharing in the moment (from left) are Minister of Science, Energy and Technology, Hon. Daryl Vaz; Custos of St. Andrew, Hon. Ian Forbes; and Chief Executive Officer, Universal Service Fund (USF), Daniel Dawes.

Minister Holness said the Government remains com-

mitted to providing internet access to Jamaicans and

making the transition to a digital society.

"On the information highway are vehicles that can uplift us... that can take us to places that make us better people, that can help us to fulfil our dreams and aspirations. And so, the Government is interested in ensuring that every Jamaican can get access to the information highway because information that you convert to knowledge that gives you wisdom, is power," he said.

The Prime Minister further added that the Government is spending millions of dollars to boost public access to Wi-Fi in urban and high-trafficked areas, as well as communities.

Such access, he argued, is critical, as more businesses and services are being provided digitally.

Residents of Portland to Benefit from Billion-Dollar Water Projects



Minister without Portfolio in the Ministry of Economic Growth and Job Creation, Senator the Hon. Matthew Samuda

THE GOVERNMENT will be undertaking a number of projects, valued billions of dollars, to improve access to water in Portland.

Minister without Portfolio in the Ministry of Economic Growth and Job Creation, Senator the Hon. Matthew Samuda, who outlined details of the projects at the post-Cabinet press briefing at Jamaica House on May 10, said these engagements are "progressing apace".

Senator Samuda indicated that \$3.9 billion will be spent to upgrade the Grants Level Well.

"One of the main water supply areas for Portland is ..., the Grants Level Well, with the development projected to meet the increases in population and density requirements," he further said.

The Minister advised that this will be supported by the National Housing Trust's

(NHT) dealing with existing and future schemes, adding that the project will be undertaken by the National Water Commission (NWC).

"That project is proceeding apace, and we expect within the next fiscal year to break ground," he stated.

Senator Samuda said the scope of works will include the installation of a new well, upgrade of the electrical capacity, and a new transmission line.

"That will come next year and will connect to the [water] mains that exist there now," he said.

Additionally, Senator Samuda said the Government is implementing a \$2.4-billion investment programme in water mains along the South Coast Highway, noting that a large portion of the project is in Portland.

PM Appoints Four New Ambassadors/Special Investment Envoys

PRIME MINISTER the Most Hon. Andrew Holness has appointed four new ambassadors/special investment envoys who will play a pivotal role in attracting investment and driving economic growth.

According to a release from the Office of the Prime Minister, Adam Stewart has been appointed as Ambassador/Special Investment Envoy for Tourism and Theresa Roberts as Ambassador/Special Investment Envoy for Culture and Art.

In addition, Lloyd Carney and Dushyant Savadia, have both been appointed Ambassador



Prime Minister the Most Hon. Andrew Holness

/Special Investment Envoy for Technology.

In announcing the appointments, Prime Minister Holness expressed confidence in the capabilities of the newly appointed envoys.

"Jamaica is fortunate to have such highly capable individuals who are internationally renowned in their fields and possess a deep understanding of the investment landscape, both locally and internationally. Their collective expertise and networks will be invaluable in catalysing innovation, driving investment, and stimulating our economy," he said.

The Prime Minister also emphasised the Government's

unwavering commitment to creating an enabling environment for investment, by working hand-in-hand with the private sector to drive innovation and unlock the country's full economic potential.

He also pointed out that two of the Ambassadors/Special Investment Envoys are technology-focused and will help to accelerate Jamaica's transition to becoming a digital society, that is well-positioned to take advantage of global opportunities presented by the fourth industrial revolution.

New Senators take the Oath of Allegiance



Senator Dr. Dana Morris Dixon (left) and Senator Abka Fitz-Henley, (right) take the Oath of Allegiance during the sitting of the Senate on May 12 at Gordon House. Also present is Clerk to the Houses, Valrie Curtis (centre).

ABKAFITZ-Henley and Dr. Dana Morris Dixon were sworn in as Government Senators in the Upper House on May 12.

The new Senators were warmly welcomed by their colleagues after they took the Oath of Allegiance.

They will fill seats in the Upper House left vacant following the resignation of Natalie Campbell-Rodrigues and Leslie Campbell.

President of the Senate, Tom Tavares-Finson, congratulated Mr. Fitz-Henley and Dr. Morris Dixon on their appointment.

"We trust that the manner in which you have carried

out your allotted tasks elsewhere in the private sector and the manner in which you have approached your various professions ..., that enthusiasm and comp-

The new Senators were warmly welcomed by their colleagues after they took the Oath of Allegiance.

etence will be brought into this Chamber for the benefit of this Jamaica land we love as a whole," he said.

In welcoming his new colleagues, Deputy Leader of Government Business, Senator the Hon. Aubyn Hill, noted their commitment and contributions to Jamaica.

He wished the outgoing Senators the best in their new endeavours. "We wish them both well and we know that they will do well," he said.

Leader of Opposition Business in the Senate, Senator Peter Bunting, said he looked forward to the contributions that the new

Senators will make in the Chamber.

In his response, Mr. Fitz-Henley committed to doing right for the Jamaica people and thanked the Prime Minister for the opportunity to serve.

Dr. Morris Dixon, for her part, said she is humbled to serve her country.

"I thank the Honourable Prime Minister for asking me to serve in this way. I know very clearly it is not about me, it is about service," Dr. Morris Dixon said.

For more JIS News visit www.jis.gov.jm