

No Jamaican to be Negatively Affected by Digitization

P RIME MINISTER the Most Hon. Andrew Holness has given the assurance that no Jamaican will be negatively affected, as the country transitions to a digital society.

Mr. Holness stressed that the Government will proceed with the understanding that in many rural communities in Jamaica, cash is still the primary means of payment, and it is what people are accustomed to using.

“We have to engage the persons who will be affected, particularly our older citizenry, who have not assimilated into the information age,” he said.

The Prime Minister was speaking at the official commissioning service for three community Wi-Fi



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

access points in St. Andrew West Central at the Andrews Mews Recreational Park recently.

He noted that part of the Government’s strategy “is to develop programmes to bring on board the elderly, those persons who are not digitally literate, to bring them into this world, so that the transition can happen faster, fairly and equitably, so that everybody can have access”.

Mr. Holness stated that the Government does not intend for citizens to be left behind in the digital revolution.

He said that the world is changing every day with new technologies and new ways of doing business to increase efficiency and effectiveness.

“There are some countries that you go, and you go into your pocket, and you take out cash to pay your bill and they say, ‘I am sorry sir, we don’t take cash here’. It’s the reality; it is too expensive to deal with cash, so a lot of businesses are converting their systems away from cash, but we have to manage it carefully,” Prime Minister Holness said.

The Government does not intend for citizens to be left behind in the digital revolution.

Emphasis to be Placed on Farm Roads This Year

SPECIAL EMPHASIS will be placed on the Farm Road Programme this year, says Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Mining, Hon. Floyd Green.

Addressing stakeholders and patrons at the 27th staging of the Kingston and St. Andrew Agricultural Show (Agrofest), on May 27 at the Ministry’s playfield, in Kingston, Mr. Green said during consultations with the farmers, concerns were expressed about the state of the roads in several areas of Kingston and St. Andrew.

“We have to accelerate the pace of execution of [repairs] for our farm roads; and I want to say...that we’re going to be focusing



Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Mining, Hon. Floyd Green (right), looks at a display showing the use of agrotechnology, at the Kingston and St. Andrew Agricultural Show, held on May 27 at the Ministry’s playfield in Kingston. Looking on is Parish Agricultural Manager, Rural Agricultural Development Authority (RADA), Marvin Lawrence.

on St. Andrew Eastern, Western, West Rural and East Rural, in relation to doing some farm [road] works in that area, so that

it’s easier for them to get their produce to market,” he added.

To date, according to Minister Green, over 10,000

farmers are registered in Kingston and St. Andrew.

He informed that over 50 per cent of those persons are coffee farmers, resulting in the parishes achieving the largest production islandwide for the crop.

Mr. Green said the Ministry would be engaging with coffee farmers in the next three weeks.

“We want to see what more can be done to ensure that [the] coffee [industry] grows, and that we’re able to supply the international demand,” he added.

The Minister pointed out that some 3,000 farmers from the two parishes were trained in 2022.

Minister Bartlett Anticipates Summer Tourism Boom

MINISTER OF TOURISM, Hon. Edmund Bartlett says Jamaica is set to achieve record visitor arrivals for the summer.

“As of May 10, 2023, the island has welcomed just over 1.5 million total visitors, with provisional gross earnings exceeding US\$ 1.6 billion for the same period. The 2023 summer is gearing up to be the best in the history of tourism in Jamaica,” Mr. Bartlett said.

According to a release from the Ministry, already 1.4 million seats have been secured, representing a 16 per cent increase over the previous best in 2019. Jamaica’s main source market, the United States of America, has locked in 1.2 million of these seats.

“We are expecting a load factor of some 87.5 per cent, which means that 1.2 million visitors will come to Jamaica over the summer period and will bring revenue of some US\$1.5 billion just within that period of June to August,” Mr. Bartlett stated.



Minister of Tourism, Hon. Edmund Bartlett

Travel bookings are currently showing a rise of 33 per cent compared to summer 2022 and the anticipated boom is being weighed against Jamaica having welcomed approximately 3.3 million visitors for 2022/23 to register a remarkable recovery of earnings compared to pre-COVID earnings of 2019.

In the meantime, Minister Bartlett is also upbeat over the increasing number of celebrities flocking to Jamaica.

“Making Jamaica their place of choice for a vacation is testimony to the post-COVID impression we have made and the appeal that we now have in the marketplace,” he said.

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Edward Seaga Remembered

Prime Minister the Most Hon. Andrew Holness touches the headstone at the tomb of late former Prime Minister, the Most Hon. Edward Seaga, during a floral tribute to commemorate the 93rd anniversary of his birth, at National Heroes Park in Kingston, on May 28. Mr. Seaga was Jamaica’s fifth Prime Minister, serving from 1980 to 1989.