

Growth of 2.3% for July to September Quarter

THE ECONOMY grew by 2.3 per cent for the July to September quarter, the highest quarter growth recorded since 2002.

This was disclosed by Minister of Finance and the Public Service, Hon. Audley Shaw, during the sitting of the House of Representatives on November 1.

The Minister said the agricultural sector in the last quarter grew by 28.8 per cent, while the hotel and restaurant sector grew by more than two per cent.

Mr. Shaw said with this positive outcome, the Government is targeting growth of 1.8 to two per



Minister of Finance and the Public Service, Hon. Audley Shaw

cent for this fiscal year, up from the 1.4 per cent projected by the Planning Institute of Jamaica (PIOJ).

The Minister also said that the Government is well on its way for the targeted growth of five per cent in four years, as put forward by the Economic Growth Council (EGC).

The EGC was set up as part of the Government's efforts to grow the economy and create jobs.

It has responsibility to advise the Government on the establishment of a framework of growth initiatives to be adopted, along with a timeline for implementation, as well as to monitor and report on the progress in the execution of those measures.

The Council reports to the Prime Minister.

OPM to Take Lead on Public Sector Reform

PRIME MINISTER the Most Hon. Andrew Holness said the Ministry of Economic Growth and Job Creation and the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) will be leading by example in the push for public sector reform.

He said he has already given directive for the OPM to identify ways it can restructure its operations.

Mr. Holness indicated that he has had meetings with the directors and heads of departments within the Growth Ministry, for which he has portfolio responsibility, and has given instructions for all processes to be examined with a view to making them more efficient.

"Every single leader has to look at that process and see how they can make it shorter, faster, less bureaucratic; (they have to) re-engineer the process to support the growth agenda," he said.

Mr. Holness said directors and department heads will be outlining how they propose to fast-track processes within the Ministry.



Prime Minister the Most Hon. Andrew Holness

He was speaking during the recent Growth and Developing the Economy series, aired on Nationwide 90 FM.

The Prime Minister noted that a great deal of work has already been done in the area of public-sector transformation to identify how functions and assets can be divested or contracted out to the private sector, what organisations can be merged, what areas need to be augmented, and how business procedures can be improved through the integration of technology.

Schools Urged to Look Out for Hand, Foot and Mouth Disease

THE MINISTRY of Education, Youth and Information is advising schools to be on the lookout for symptoms of hand, foot and mouth disease (HFMD) among children.

last for one to two days before a blister-like rash appears on the hands, feet and in the mouth.

The rash initially emerges as small red spots, but then develops into blisters. The blisters may develop on the gums, inner cheeks and tongue and patients may complain of mouth pain and a sore throat.

Any high fever in a very young infant should be evaluated by a healthcare practitioner. Children infected with the virus generally recover within one week of developing symptoms.

HFMD is most frequently seen in young children, infants and toddlers.

There is no specific treatment for HFMD.

Supportive care, including fever management and prevention of dehydration, is advised.

Appropriate infection-control practices are recom-

mended to prevent the spread of the disease, including limiting person-to-person contact and promoting hand washing and other hygienic measures.

High fever in a very young infant should be evaluated by a healthcare practitioner.

Initial signs of the disease include fever and general malaise (poor appetite, aches and pain, etc.). These symptoms generally

Working Group to Deal With Devaluation – Hon Audley Shaw

MINISTER OF Finance and the Public Service, Hon. Audley Shaw, has announced that a Working Group has been established to deal with the continued devaluation of the Jamaican dollar against the United States currency.

Addressing the House of Representatives on November 1, Mr. Shaw said the group will meet with the Bank of Jamaica (BOJ) on a weekly basis.

The Minister said he is concerned about the rate of devaluation, as there is no shortage of foreign exchange, adding that the Net International Reserve (NIR) is more than US\$3 billion.

He also said that the BOJ and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) have assessed that "we

have a fair market value for our exchange rate."

"We have to come together to find a solution. And, as a working group, we are going to look steadfastly at the trigger points that can affect the exchange rate negatively," Mr. Shaw explained.

Meanwhile, the Finance Minister said he met with representatives from the financial sector, and it was noted that the fundamentals in the economy are going in the right direction.

"We have stuck with the IMF programme and we have fiscal containment," Mr. Shaw said.

He added that inflation is at an all-time low, and the current account, "although still in deficit, is at the two per cent range, down from 10 to 11 per cent."

Supreme Court Receives Computers from Canada



Justice Minister, Hon. Delroy Chuck (left), shakes hands with Canadian High Commissioner to Jamaica, His Excellency Sylvain Fabi, following the presentation of one of 15 desktop computers acquired for the Supreme Court's new jury management system. The presentation was made during a brief ceremony at the Supreme Court on King Street, downtown Kingston, on November 1. Looking on is Chief Justice, the Hon. Mrs. Justice Zaila McCalla.

PM Names Enterprise Team for Riverton Landfill Divestment

PRIME MINISTER the Most Hon. Andrew Holness on Monday, October 31 announced the formation of a nine member Enterprise Team to manage the process of the Government's waste to energy programme as well as contracting out solid waste management and collection.

The team will also manage the divestment of the Riverton City landfill.

The members of the Enterprise team are:

- Chairman – **Lyttleton Shirley**
- Deputy Chairman – **Milton Clarke**
- Representative from the Development Bank of Jamaica – **Milverton Reynolds**
- Representative from the Ministry of Finance and

the Public Service – **Rochelle Dacres**

- Representative from the Ministry of Science, Energy and Technology – **Fitroy Vidal**
- Representative from the National Environment & Planning Agency – **Dr. Kerrine Senior**
- Representative from the National Solid Waste Management Authority – **Audley Gordon**
- Mechanical Engineer – **Patrick Gordon**
- Attorney-at-law – **Paul Tai**

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Prime Minister the Most Hon. Andrew Holness

The Prime Minister said the Government has received more than 30 expressions of interests to either bid on the waste to energy programme or to collect solid waste or both.

Local Gov't Elections on November 28

MINISTER OF Local Government and Community Development, Hon. Desmond McKenzie, has announced that local government elections are to be held on November 28 and that Nomination Day will be November 11.

In an address at the Jamaica Conference Centre in downtown, Kingston, on November 3, the Minister said the time has come for persons to elect those offering themselves as local representatives to communities across the island.

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