

Gov't Seeking to Maintain Growth Momentum

FINANCE AND THE Public Service Minister, Hon. Audley Shaw, says the Government is seeking to maintain and build on the momentum resulting from the 2.2 per cent rate of economic growth recorded during the July to September quarter.

In reiterating that this was the highest out-turn since 2007, Mr. Shaw said Jamaica's macroeconomic environment was stabilising, with the prospects for further growth being "excellent".

This, he contended, was the case, particularly for agriculture, in light of the 3,300 new hotel rooms coming on stream, pointing out that tourism "provides a vital linkage to agriculture".

He was speaking at a recent press conference at the



Minister of Finance and the Public Service, Hon. Audley Shaw (left), and General Manager, Jamaica National (JN), Earl Jarrett at a luncheon organised by JN Small Business Loans Limited, recently, at the Jamaica Conference Centre, downtown Kingston.

Ministry's National Heroes Circle offices in Kingston.

Meanwhile, Mr. Shaw advised that the Jamaican dollar was regaining the confidence of key stakeholders.

This, he said, was consequent on its stabilisation resulting from the contribution of a special working group which he established to address the currency's depreciation, in consultation with the Bank of Jamaica.

The Minister said that Jamaica was meeting its benchmark targets under the new International Monetary Fund (IMF) US\$1.64 billion precautionary Standby Agreement (SBA), and assured that the Administration would do everything necessary to generate sustainable economic growth.

BPO Providing Job Opportunities

PRESIDENT OF Jamaica Promotions Corporation (JAMPRO), Diane Edwards, said the business process outsourcing (BPO) sector is providing opportunities for financial and legal professionals.



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legal research and other routine work in the profession.

She is urging local lawyers and legal officers to consider these prospects.

Meanwhile, Ms. Edwards advised Jamaicans to take advantage of entrepreneurial opportunities in the services and tourism industries by setting up businesses that provide for the needs of visitors as well as locals.

"What do tourists want? Experiences that are different from what they have at home, and souvenirs. So that's what we need to start thinking about," she said.

Overseas companies are outsourcing work to Jamaicans in areas such as credit collections and back-office finance operations.

Speaking in a recent interview on the Jamaica Information Service (JIS) television programme 'Issues & Answers', Ms. Edwards noted that overseas companies are outsourcing work to Jamaicans in areas such as credit collections and back-office finance operations.

She said there is also increased demand for legal process outsourcing (LPO), which refers to law firms utilising outside support services for

JPSCo a Valued Partner



Prime Minister the Most Hon. Andrew Holness (2nd left) meets with representatives of the Jamaica Public Service Company Limited and Marubeni during a courtesy call recently. Prime Minister Holness assured the company of the Government's support for the construction of 190MW power plant in Old Harbour, St. Catherine. The new gas-fired plant will replace JPS' existing oil-burning plant in Old Harbour Bay to help reduce the country's dependence on oil as the primary fuel for electricity generation.

Police to Trace and Punish 119 Prank Callers

NATIONAL SECURITY Minister, Hon. Robert Montague, says technology will be utilised to track and then punish persons who continue to make prank calls to the 119 police emergency number.

Delivering remarks at a graduation ceremony held recently at the National Police College in St. Catherine, the Minister said he was awaiting delivery of the "the bits of equipment and the software".

He said the equipment will prevent people from "tying up the Government's resources".

Mr. Montague informed that out of the 32,000 calls made daily to the emergency number, 22,000 of those are made by persons intent on creating mischief.

These prank calls, he noted, clog the system,



National Security Minister, Hon. Robert Montague (left), is in discussion with Police Commissioner, Dr. Carl Williams, at the graduation ceremony for 173 new police recruits held at the National Police College in St. Catherine.

delaying attention to persons with emergencies.

"When people have genuine needs they cannot get through, and then you

have this backlog of people waiting and hoping. The prank callers are tying up the system and wasting resources," he lamented.

He is appealing to the pranksters to desist from "playing with the emergency services".

Infirmaries to be Upgraded in 2017

MINISTER OF Local Government and Community Development, Hon. Desmond McKenzie, says several infirmaries across the island are to benefit from certain upgrades and improvements this year.

"We're going to be rolling out some new features that will see changes to our infirmaries. We're going to be changing names of infirmaries and we're going to be doing a lot more to lift the social basket of that organisation (Board of Supervision)," he said.

Mr. McKenzie was addressing the Ministry's Christmas staff function at Spanish Court Hotel in New Kingston, recently.

Last year, while on a tour of the facility, the Local Government Minister noted that the Spanish Town Infirmary would be renovated.

He also pointed out that new wards are to be built at the Manchester and Portland infirmaries at a cost of \$135 million, and that the Santa Cruz infirmary is also to benefit from improvements to its administrative offices.



The male dormitory at the Spanish Town Infirmary in St. Catherine. (FILE)

Marcus Garvey Drive Road Work on Schedule

THE UPGRADING and expansion of Marcus Garvey Drive in St. Andrew is on schedule for completion by April 2017.

The works, which fall under the Major Infrastructure Development Programme (MIDP), involve widening a section of the roadway from four to six lanes and the installation of sidewalks; upgrading the drainage infrastructure; improving lighting, among other things.



Upgrading and expansion works being carried out on Marcus Garvey Drive in St. Andrew

Providing an update on the project, Manager, Communication and Customer Services, National Works Agency (NWA), Stephen Shaw, said the stabilised concrete base is nearing completion.

"The southern side has been completed. We have a couple of areas just to complete the northern side, and the work is moving a pace," he told JIS News.

He informed further that the contractor has

started to lay the asphaltic concrete surface, and the median barriers are being installed.

"All of these things together will see a vastly improved corridor, certainly by the end of January of next year," Mr. Shaw told JIS News.

He noted that while motorists have been inconvenienced throughout the life of the project, the improvements will

ease traffic congestion and make commuting easier.

"It will ensure a more efficient and reliable stretch of road because Marcus Garvey Drive, at times, had been an issue as it relates to flooding and causing significant traffic snarls (that affect) the city of Kingston," Mr. Shaw said.