

Electronic Platforms to Facilitate Investments

THE GOVERNMENT has started development of two complementary electronic platforms that will enable increased efficiency in the investment and exporting sectors.

The platforms are the National Business Portal (NBP) and the National Trade Portal.

This was announced by Minister of Industry, Commerce, Agriculture and Fisheries, Hon. Audley Shaw, during his address at the opening ceremony for the Jamaica Investment Forum (JIF), hosted at the Iberostar Beach Hotel in Montego Bay, St. James recently.

Mr. Shaw said the NBP, being developed on a phased basis, will be the central point through which all investments are routed, providing access to all relevant stakeholders.

"Ultimately, the NBP will seek to better streamline business approvals and will represent one key output of the



Minister of Industry, Commerce, Agriculture and Fisheries, Hon. Audley Shaw, delivers the main address at the opening ceremony for the Jamaica Investment Forum (JIF) 2018, at the Iberostar Hotels in Montego Bay, St. James, on June 12.

National Investment Policy," he said.

The National Trade Portal, meanwhile, is aimed at fast-tracking information sharing, facilitating online application submissions; and enabling back-office interface among the Government's Border Regulatory Agencies.

The trade portal was approved by Cabinet in the 2017/18 fiscal year under the overarching Trade Facilitation Initiative.

Mr. Shaw said both projects are funded through the Foundations for Competitiveness and Growth Project of the World Bank.

"As a country, we have sought to build a strong and robust landscape in which business can thrive, recognising that comprehensive and supportive business facilitation frameworks are essential for investments and business development," the Minister explained.

North-South Highway Renamed in Honour of Edward Seaga

PRIME MINISTER the Most Hon. Andrew Holness, has renamed the North-South Highway as the Edward Seaga Highway.

Mr. Holness, who officially renamed the highway during a ceremony at the Unity Valley Toll Plaza in Moneague, St. Ann, on June 12, said the gesture is in honour of the former Prime Minister's "contribution, his work, his dedication, his sacrifice and his life".

The Prime Minister said the renaming was appropriate, given that Mr. Seaga was responsible for the development of downtown Kingston and initiated the development and expansion of Ocho Rios as a tourism destination.

"The highway which spans several Administrations, links the two economic centres – Kingston and Ocho Rios. It is, therefore,

symbolically appropriate to accord Mr. Seaga this honour," he said.

Mr. Holness said Mr. Seaga will live on through his work because he has spent his life building institutions and infrastructure that define the nation and provide service and value.

"We memorialise his work, his legacy in a physical manifestation, and we inscribe his

name on it that it might live on in the minds of those who own the future, that they may be inspired by it and seek to make similar if not greater contributions to building our nation," he said.

In response, Mr. Seaga said the event represented an "extraordinary moment" in his life and thanked Prime Minister Holness for according him with the honour.



Prime Minister the Most Hon. Andrew Holness (3rd right), after the unveiling of the sign renaming the North-South Highway the Edward Seaga Highway during a ceremony at the Unity Valley Toll Plaza in Moneague, St. Ann on June 12. Pictured (from left) are Ambassador of the People's Republic of China to Jamaica, His Excellency Tian Qi; Wife of the Prime Minister, the Most Hon. Juliet Holness; former Prime Minister, the Most Hon. Edward Seaga; Minister of Culture, Gender, Entertainment and Sport, Hon. Olivia Grange; and Minister of Local Government and Community Development, Hon. Desmond McKenzie.

Cabinet Approves Tabling of Logistics Hub Initiative Master Plan

CABINET APPROVED tabling of the Jamaica Logistics Hub Initiative (JLHI) Market Analysis and Master Plan in Parliament last month for adoption.

The implementation strategy for the JLHI Market Analysis and Master Plan was also approved.

This is according to Minister without Portfolio in the Ministry of Economic Growth and Job Creation, Hon. Daryl Vaz, who was addressing a plenary session of the Jamaica Investment Forum (JIF) on June 14 at the Montego Bay Convention Centre, in St. James.

Mr. Vaz said the Master Plan specifically details the actions Jamaica will need to take "on several fronts simultaneously", in order to realise the vision of the Jamaica Logistics Hub Initiative.

"This entails approximately 3,900 hectares of development across the island, with a total investment cost of over US\$28 billion," he pointed out, adding that this represents a potential to create some 87,000 direct jobs.

The Market Analysis and Master Plan is being advanced by the Jamaica Special Economic Zone Authority (JSEZA), in association with the Planning Institute of Jamaica (PIOJ).

The Master Plan recommends land use and infrastructure improvements as necessary for successful implementation of the Jamaica Logistics Hub Initiative, which will involve the creation of zones, the upgrading and further development of ports and the creation of an enabling environment, allowing businesses to fully exploit Jamaica's strategic location.

It was developed through the World Bank-funded programme, the Foundations for Competitiveness and Growth Project (FCGP), a US\$50-million project designed to strengthen the business environment in Jamaica for private sector development.

Gov't Heightening Citizen Safety and Security

THE GOVERNMENT is heightening citizen safety and security through measures targeting more efficient policing and greater social development interventions.

National Security Minister, Hon. Dr. Horace Chang, says priority focus is being placed on: transforming the Jamaica Constabulary Force (JCF) into a modern service; targeting social interventions in volatile communities; instituting strong anti-gang, and anti-corruption strategies; and public order and law enforcement.

Speaking in the 2018/19 Sectoral Debate in the House of Representatives last week, Dr. Chang advised that work is far advanced with the drafting of legislation to govern the new police service, and instituting an effective oversight mechanism for its functions.

He indicated that the proposed legislation is slated to be tabled in Parliament this year.

Dr. Chang said review of the Anti-Gang Law has commenced and is expected to be completed this legislative year.

The proposed amendments include: strategies to monitor gang members and special measures in Court proceedings to protect witnesses.

Additionally, the Minister said the Major Organized and Anti-Corruption Agency's establishment as an inde-



Minister of National Security, Hon. Dr. Horace Chang

pendent body, will help to address issues of integrity and corruption across the society.

He further pointed out that the Administration is developing a master plan to improve public order in communities, while simultaneously enhancing access to social amenities.

Dr. Chang noted that the current operational programmes are having positive results based on the eight per cent decrease in major crimes.

"But to continue this downward trajectory, and ensure the sustainability of these efforts, the Government must embark on a more fundamental and all-encompassing programme, aligned to the 5-Pillar Strategy for Crime Prevention and Citizen Security," he said.

\$230 Million Saved Under Energy Efficiency and Conservation Projects

THE GOVERNMENT has saved \$230 million, to date, and reduced environmental emissions from the implementation of major programmes in energy efficiency, conservation and management.

The Petroleum Corporation of Jamaica (PCJ) implemented initiatives are the Deployment of Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency in the Public Sector Project and the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Programme (EECP). The former launched in 2016, aims to provide renewable energy and energy-efficiency systems in six hospitals. The latter aims to retrofit several government entities and facilitate training in best practices for energy efficiency and conservation.

Portfolio Minister, Dr. the Hon. Andrew Wheatley, said that together, these programmes have enabled the country to "cut down expenditure and high electricity bills within the public sector".

"We are environmentally conscious people as well, so



Science, Energy and Technology Minister, Dr. the Hon. Andrew Wheatley (right), speaks with Energy Efficiency and Conservation Programme Project Manager, Jody Grizzle, at the launch of the Energy Champion Competition, at the Jamaica Pegasus hotel in New Kingston on June 13.

we (have) also reduced our carbon footprints. To date, we have cut our carbon dioxide emissions by 3,000 tonnes, and that is important. We have also reduced our demand for fossil fuels, reducing oil importation by some 2,293 barrels," he noted further.

He was speaking at the launch of the PCJ/Government

of Jamaica, Energy Champion Competition at the Jamaica Pegasus hotel in New Kingston on June 13.

Dr. Wheatley explained that having already moved the original target of obtaining electricity from renewable energy sources from 20 to 30 per cent by the year 2030, the Government is contemplating raising the target even further.

St. Catherine YIC Opens Homework Centre and Recording Studio

Minister of State in the Ministry of Education, Youth and Information, Hon. Floyd Green (centre), looks on as Senior Director, Youth and Adolescent Policy Division, Education Ministry, Naketa West, tests her vocal skills in the newly opened recording studio at the St. Catherine Youth Innovation Centre (YIC). At left is Acting Mission Director, United States Agency for International Development, Andrew Colburn. The studio, as well as a new homework centre, were opened during a ceremony at the YIC's Young Street location recently.

