PM Launches New Electronic Business Registration Form

PRIME MINISTER, the Most Hon. Andrew Holness, on August 7, launched the Companies Office of Jamaica's (COJ) newly created Electronic Business Registration Form (eBRF).

The online platform, which replaces the COJ's one-stop-shop paper-based super form that was introduced in 2014, will facilitate 24-hour business registrations at the agency's website: www.orcjamaica.com, from any location globally.

The initiative is a collaborative effort involving the Cabinet Office and the Public Sector Transformation Unit, with funding from the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB).

Mr. Holness, who delivered the keynote address at the launch at The Jamaica Pegasus hotel in New Kingston, praised the stakeholder partners for the "tremendous work" undertaken to establish the new platform.

He said that the ease of registering a company on the eBRF is "mind-blowing" and serves as an indication that Jamaica is transitioning "boldly" into a digital society.

Prime Minister Holness said that the platform is "a step further" in positioning Jamaica as a "potential place for international businesses," which will be further enhanced with the creation of the proposed international business centre for which "we have almost completed the legislation".

In his remarks, Industry, Commerce, Agriculture and Fisheries Minister, Hon. Audley Shaw, said that eBRF represents a major thrust towards modernising and transitioning the business environment to offer world-class services to clients.

Prime Minister, the Most Hon. Andrew Holness, formally launches the Companies Office of Jamaica's (COJ) Electronic Business Registration Form (eBRF) at the Jamaica Pegasus hotel in New Kingston on August 7.

New Police Recruits Urged to Remain Steadfast to Duty

NATIONAL SECURITY Minister, Hon. Dr. Horace Chang, is imploring the latest batch of police recruits to be steadfast in their commitment to safeguarding the society.

Addressing the passing-out parade for 147 new police constables at the National Police College of Jamaica's Harman Barracks Campus in Kingston on August 7, Dr. Chang urged them to make public safety a priority and, in so doing, serve with pride and professionalism.

"Through your efforts, you will be able to reaffirm the Jamaica Constabulary Force (JCF) as a premier Force for good, with truly Jamaican characteristics. You will be able to accomplish this through respect for your fellow Jamaicans [and] strong community spirit," he further stated.

The Minister described the recruits' completion of their training as a "true reflection" of purpose, strength of character, and "unwavering dedication to Jamaica", adding that they have heeded the call to serve and protect Jamaicans with integrity, while respecting the rights of all persons.

National Security Minister, Hon. Dr. Horace Chang, presents Woman Constable Blonette Barrett, with her award for attaining the highest mark among the 147 latest police recruits graduating from the National Police College of Jamaica's Harman Barracks Campus in Kingston on August 7.

Dr. Chang also indicated that Police Commissioner, Major Antony Anderson, is spearheading the JCF's reform, which aims to identify the quantity and quality of personnel required to transform the organisation's culture.

The Minister said significant emphasis is being placed on infrastructure upgrading, specialised training, and appropriately equipping the members.

Jamaica and Kenya to Collaborate in Sport, Culture, Tourism

JAMAICA AND the Republic of Kenya have signed four agreements, which will facilitate collaboration in sport, culture, tourism, among other areas.

The signing followed a bilateral meeting between Prime Minister, the Most Hon. Andrew Holness, and President of the Republic of Kenya, His Excellency Uhuru Kenyatta, at the Office of the Prime Minister in St. Andrew on Aug. 5.

The documents signed were: a framework agreement on cooperation; and three Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) on collaboration in the fields of sport, culture and heritage; political consultations; and cooperation in the area of tourism.

Speaking at a joint press conference following the signing, Prime Minister Holness explained that the framework agreement creates "a structured mechanism for regular dialogue to pursue meaningful and defined cooperation activities in areas such as trade, agriculture, sport, culture education, tourism and health."

Prime Minister, the Most Hon. Andrew Holness (standing, left); and President of the Republic of Kenya, His Excellency Uhuru Kenyatta (standing, right), witness the signing of a framework agreement on cooperation by Jamaica's Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade, Senator the Hon. Kamina Johnson Smith (seated, left); and Kenya's Cabinet Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Monica Juma. The signing took place at the Office of the Prime Minister in St. Andrew on August 5.

"We are equally confident that with the signing of these MoUs, relations between our two countries will be strengthened and advanced," he noted.

In his remarks, President Kenyatta said that the countries share a legacy of strong, cordial bilateral and people-to-people relations that have been developed and strengthened over the years.

He noted that both countries have taken bilateral relations "to another level with the signing of the MoU on political consultations as well as the framework for co-operation."

Rita Marley Honoured

Alpharita Constantia "Rita" Marley, OD (in wheelchair), accepts her Reggae Icon award from President of the Republic of Kenya, His Excellency Uhuru Kenyatta, during the Jamaica 57 Independence Grand Gala, held at the National Stadium on August 6. Sharing in the moment are: Prime Minister, the Most Hon. Andrew Holness (right); Minister of Culture, Gender, Entertainment and Sport, Hon. Olivia Grange (left), and relatives of Mrs. Marley.

623 New Housing Solutions at Shooter's Hill

CONSTRUCTION IS to begin by December on 623 new solutions under the Shooter's Hill Housing Development project in Portmore, St. Catherine at a cost of $7 billion.

This is being facilitated through a joint venture agreement between the Housing Agency of Jamaica (HAJ) and Rite Solutions Development Company.

Under the public-private partnership, affordable housing solutions, starting at $7.6 million, will be built on 157 acres of elevated land, primarily for low and middle income earners.

The development is in keeping with measures by the Government to address the deficit of approximately 20,000 housing solutions yearly.

Chairman, Housing Agency of Jamaica, Norman Brown

Prime Minister, the Most Hon. Andrew Holness, who signed the agreement along with principals of HAJ and Right Solutions at Jamaica House on Thursday (Aug. 8), said the cost of the units to be provided are "fairly reasonable," especially for young professionals.

"I think these are very affordable. I can see the young nurse, the young policeman, the young university graduate immediately just waiting to get one of these (units)" he said.

The Shooter's Hill Housing Development, which is to be done on a phased basis over a three-year period, will be a gated community featuring communal play areas and a police post.

For his part, HAJ Chairman Norman Brown said he expects the project to be completed on time.

Clarendon and St. Catherine Farmers to Benefit from Drip Irrigation Project

MINISTER OF Industry, Commerce, Agriculture and Fisheries, Hon. Audley Shaw, says hundreds of small farmers in Clarendon and St. Catherine are to benefit from the build-out of irrigation infrastructure under the Essex Valley Agriculture Project.

He noted that the project includes the development of a climate-resilient, off-farm irrigation system consisting of six irrigation wells, four of which have already been drilled.

Mr. Shaw, who was addressing the recently concluded Denbigh Agricultural, Industrial and Food Show in May Pen, said that the initiative is aimed at counteracting the impact of drought associated with climate change.

"We have the ambition that between 50,000 and 100,000 small farmers must get access to drip irrigation systems in this country," he noted.

Meanwhile, the Minister pointed to the need for greater focus on agro-processing for local consumption and export.

"We have to look at improving the value chain of what we produce; it is not about selling everything fresh," he said, noting that crops such as pumpkin and sweet potatoes can be processed and sold to various markets.

Turning to the recently announced National Fruit Tree Planting Programme, Minister Shaw said that the initiative will provide a major boost to the School Feeding Programme by supplying institutions with locally grown fruits.