

Economy Must Transform Via Innovation and Diversification

PRIME MINISTER the Most Hon. Andrew Holness says that the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic has highlighted the need for Jamaica to reconfigure the economy, while accelerating investment in emerging markets and future jobs.

He noted that amid the current disruption from the pandemic-induced lockdowns and economic contraction, technological adoption by companies is transforming tasks, jobs and skills.

“Automation in conjunction with the COVID-19-induced recession is creating a double disruption scenario for workers. The pace of technology adoption is expected to remain unabated and likely to accelerate in some areas,” Mr. Holness said.



Prime Minister the Most Hon. Andrew Holness

The Prime Minister was speaking recently at the launch of the Digital Acceleration Through Education: Partnership event, between the HEART/ NSTA Trust and Cisco Networking Academy.

Mr. Holness pointed out that although a number of jobs will be eliminated, there will be huge opportunities created in the digital economy.

“The World Economic Forum in the most recent Future of Jobs Report estimates that by 2025, 85 million jobs may be displaced by technology, while 97 million new roles may emerge that are more adapted to the new division of labour among humans, machines and algorithm,” Mr. Holness said.

He further noted that Jamaica has to accelerate investments in the markets and jobs of tomorrow.

“We need to diversify our industrial and productive base. Far too long we have been dependent on the ‘tradi-

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tional’ industries that have sustained us over the years. The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the need for us to be more innovative. We must bring new ideas and technologies to expand and increase efficiency of our traditional industries. We must also invest in the industries of the future,” he added.

Year to Date Jamaica Welcomes 209,930 Passengers

MINISTER OF Tourism, Hon. Edmund Bartlett, has indicated that year to date, Jamaica has welcomed some 209,930 passengers to the island, 164,157 of whom were tourists.

“I am very heartened by the data we have received, as it shows that Jamaica is still top-of-mind to our visitors and that we are making steady progress towards a full recovery of our sector,” Mr. Bartlett said.

“I commend the team at the Jamaica Tourist Board (JTB), for their aggressive and innovative marketing campaigns, which have clearly been impactful. Special commendation must also be given to our tourism partners and stakeholders for the hard work they also do in marketing Brand Jamaica to the world,” he added.

Jamaica recorded a major increase in stopover arrivals over the Easter holiday weekend, with the island recording the highest number of visitors since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.

“According to preliminary data from the JTB,



Minister of Tourism, Hon. Edmund Bartlett

Jamaica recorded some 14,983 visitors to the island from April 1 to 5, 2021. Over 13,000 of these visitors entered the island via the Sangster International Airport in Montego Bay,” Mr. Bartlett said, in a release from the Ministry on April 7.

The Minister also informed that representatives of the Tourism Product Development Company (TPDCo) and other Government entities visited a number of properties over the holiday weekend to inspect entities and also check for compliance, by locals and visitors, with COVID-19 health and safety protocols.

ENDS Can Bring More Informal Operators Into Formal Economy

BUSINESS SECTOR leaders say the E-Commerce National Delivery System (ENDS) can potentially assist in revolutionising economic activity in Jamaica, by facilitating the transition of more informal operators into the formal sector.

ENDS is a partnership between the Government and the Private Sector Organisation of Jamaica (PSOJ).

It allows the quick service industry and delivery operators registered on the web-based platform to operate until midnight during the hours of the curfew, which has been imposed to control the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19) infections.

Jamaica Manufacturers and Exporters Association (JMEA) President, Richard Pandohie, describes ENDS as an “excellent initiative,” noting “I think it is part of the whole progress towards getting (informal businesses) registered”.

“You have to be registered (to participate)... and I think it also augurs well in the Government’s thrust towards

transitioning Jamaica to a fully digital economy,” he tells **JIS News**.

Small Business Association of Jamaica (SBAJ)

President, Michael Leckie, tells **JIS News** that the initiative augurs well for commercial activity, in terms of enhancing service delivery and regularising

the operations of informal entrepreneurs.

“I believe that where persons see the benefits to be derived, we will have more individuals, who are operating informally buying into the concept and being more convinced that they can move from informal to becoming formal,” he tells **JIS News**.



Jerk chicken vendor, Kevin Simpson, preparing the popular delicacy at his business establishment in Harbour View, Kingston. Micro and small entrepreneurs, are among the stakeholders targetted under the E-Commerce National Delivery System (ENDS).

More Than 40,000 Young Persons Enrol in HOPE Programme

MORE THAN 40,000 young persons have been enrolled through the Housing, Opportunity, Production and Employment (HOPE) Programme since it was launched in May 2017.

HOPE is a youth engagement initiative that targets persons aged 18 to 24 who are not employed or enrolled in a school or training programme.

The programme is intended to provide an avenue for the development of fully rounded individuals who have the social, academic and technical skills to become productive members of the society.

Providing an update on the initiative, National Coordinator, HOPE Programme, Colonel Martin Rickman, tells **JIS News** that several measures are being implemented to ensure the continued engagement of youth, despite the onset of the coronavirus pandemic.

These include incorporation of online training; greater engagement with entities to provide employment and training opportu-



National Coordinator of the Housing, Opportunity, Production and Employment (HOPE) Programme, Colonel Martin Rickman (standing), interacts with HOPE interns (from left) Aaliyah James and Shavine Francis.

nities for youth; and the utilisation of community centres with Internet capabilities to facilitate ‘work from home’ for participants.

He notes that some components of the training and engagement are being undertaken online with the participants.

Colonel Rickman says notwithstanding the online component, community type training for certain skills is also being explored.

“For example, the construction skill – we can do block laying for instance. All we need is a yard space and then we can train persons in block laying, get them to a point where they can go out, either seek out employment with our help in the block-laying field or they can offer themselves to small homeowners to do block laying,” he explains.

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Eight Members of the Judiciary Appointed to Higher Office

Eight members of the judiciary were sworn into higher office on April 7, by Governor-General His Excellency the Most Hon. Sir Patrick Allen during a ceremony at King’s House.

They are Marsha Dunbar Green, Evon Brown, Cresencia Brown Beckford, who were appointed to act as Judges of the Court of Appeal from April 12 to July 31, 2021.

Also taking the oath of office as Acting Puisne Judges are Ann-Marie Lawrence Grainger, Tania Mott Tulloch-Reid and Sandria Wong Small. Their appointments became effective on April 7.

Carla Thomas and Heather Carnegie were also sworn in as acting Masters-in-Chambers. Ms. Thomas’s appointment becomes effective on May 3, while Ms. Carnegie’s appointment became effective on April 7.

The Governor-General commended the new appointees for their commitment to nation-building and wished them continued success.



Governor-General His Excellency the Most Hon. Sir Patrick Allen (right) presents the instrument of appointment to Marsha Dunbar Green, who has been appointed to act as Judge of the Court of Appeal from April 12 to July 31, 2021. Occasion was a swearing-in ceremony for members of the judiciary who have been appointed to higher office, at King’s House in St. Andrew on April 7.

“The appointment to higher positions of each one of you reaffirms a couple of things – your competence in service, your commitment to nation-building through work and the understanding that the tasks assigned to you are not easy.

“Your position, today, is the result of years of study followed by years of experi-

ence infused, of course, with your aptitude and attitude, your passion for precision and careful analysis of the principles of law, which underpin a just and safe society,” he said.

The Governor-General urged Jamaicans to support the country’s judicial system “as it continues to serve our people in receiving justice”.

Centenarian Gets Vaccinated



Centenarian Hazel Espeut (centre) takes her first dose of the AstraZeneca vaccine, while her Goddaughter, Malika Taylor (right), holds her hand. The COVID-19 vaccine is being administered by Public Health Nurse, Natalie Facey Cole. Occasion was the second COVID-19 Vaccination Blitz held recently at the National Arena in St. Andrew.