

Gov't Looks to Improve Business Processes Within Growth Ministry

PRIME MINISTER the Most Hon. Andrew Holness says he will be issuing a directive for an assessment of business procedures within the Ministry of Economic Growth and Job Creation and for the re-engineering of processes where necessary in order to enhance efficiencies.

He said improving operations within the public sector is integral to achieving sustained levels of economic growth and reducing the debt to gross domestic product (GDP) ratio.

"That directive is going to flow down to you, the leaders... you are going to have to look at every single business process that you undertake. So that means (looking at) every bit of delegation, every bit of process that you do for decision-making,



Prime Minister the Most Hon. Andrew Holness address a two-day strategic planning retreat hosted at the Spanish Court Hotel on August 3.

ing, for applications (and for approvals," he said.

Mr. Holness, was addressing a two-day strategic planning retreat for directors and heads of agencies of the Ministry at

the Spanish Court Hotel in New Kingston on August 3.

The Prime Minister advised the leaders to look at how best to utilise technology to make their agencies and departments more

effective. "Good management builds in technology, innovation, risk-taking and reward," he pointed out.

Mr. Holness stated that the Ministry was set up to drive the Government's economic growth agenda, and to execute as well as monitor the effective execution of this policy.

"Good management builds in technology, innovation, risk-taking and reward."

He added that bureaucracy will have to be eliminated in order for the growth targets to be achieved.

Red Stripe Project to Create More Jobs

INDUSTRY, COMMERCE, Agriculture and Fisheries Minister, Hon. Karl Samuda, has committed the Government's full support for plans by Red Stripe to expand its cassava project, which will create more jobs for Jamaicans.

He was speaking at a press conference following a tour of the Red Stripe plant at Spanish Town Road on August 3.

The expansion plan will see an additional 1,000 acres of cassava planted for a total of 4,000 acres of the crop by 2020. The company also plans to contract 400 small farmers to grow the cassava. This is up from the 180 farmers the company had initially planned to engage for the project.



Minister of Industry, Commerce, Agriculture and Fisheries, Hon. Karl Samuda

The small farmers will receive equipment, support and training to get them started. They will also be provided with a guaranteed price for their cassava.

Red Stripe will directly employ 600 persons on the project in the next four years.

JCA Nets \$44.136 Billion in Revenue

THE JAMAICA Customs Agency (JCA) is reporting net revenue of \$44.136 billion, for the first quarter of the 2016/17 financial year (April to June), surpassing its target by \$2.183 billion or 5.2 per cent.

Chief Executive Officer of the JCA, Major (Ret'd) Richard Reese, made the disclosure during a press briefing held at the agency's head office, Newport East, on August 4.

He noted that when compared to the first quarter of financial year 2015/16, the JCA recorded growth in net revenue collection by 13 per cent or \$5.120 billion, up from \$39.016 billion in 2015.

He informed that major tax items, including



Chief Executive Officer of the Jamaica Customs Agency, Major (Ret'd) Richard Reese

Import Duty, General Consumption Tax (GCT) and Special Consumption Tax (SCT) performed positively relative to the targets for the quarter and prior year.

"At the end of June, collection in respect of Import Duty was 5.4 per cent above the target, while General Consumption Tax and Special Consumption Tax were 9.35 per cent and eight per cent, respectively, above the targeted collection," Major Reese said.

In addition, non-tax revenue for the fiscal period totalled \$3.526 billion and was \$109 million or three per cent above the targeted collection of \$3.417 billion.

Some of the revenue growth drivers included automotive diesel oil, motor spirits (unleaded 87 and 90), cigarettes and motor vehicles.

Funds Available for Drain Cleaning

MINISTER OF Local Government and Community Development, Hon. Desmond McKenzie, says that adequate funds are available for Parish Councils to undertake drain cleaning during the 2016 hurricane season.

He said the Administration has set aside \$250 million for the first phase of drain cleaning for all Parish Councils.

Mr. McKenzie advised that allocations have been made to several Councils which submitted requests to the Ministry.

He informed that of the 14 Parish Councils, including the Portmore Municipal Council, only five have not received funds for drain cleaning.



Minister of Local Government and Community Development, Honourable Desmond McKenzie

Mr. McKenzie said that the Councils were

also advised that they could use allocations from the parochial revenue fund for drain cleaning during June and July.

"When we receive the requests from the Parish Councils we respond. But, each Parish Council knows by protocol that for the months of June and July, the monthly allocation that goes to the Parish Council from the parochial revenue fund... they know they can use the first two months' allocation for drain cleaning," he said.

He noted further that within the Councils "there is a source of funding that is kept in savings that they can be used to respond to emergencies.

\$1 Billion Artisan Village to be Built in Falmouth

THE GOVERNMENT plans to spend just over \$1 billion to develop the old Hampden wharf in Falmouth, Trelawny, into an artisan village.

The village will feature 300 shops where craft and other indigenous products are sold, as well as an area to facilitate the pro-

duction of these items by local artisans.

It will be the first to be constructed locally and is among the centrepiece tourism projects scheduled to be undertaken during the 2016/17 fiscal year.

Tourism Minister, Hon. Edmund Bartlett, says this and other earmarked projects

should significantly transform Falmouth by encouraging "buy in" among stakeholders that facilitates the town's continued growth and development.

"The important thing for us is that we want Jamaican goods to be showcased and merchandised at this artisan village so that the people of Falmouth will have a chance to be a part of the process," Mr. Bartlett stated.

He was speaking during a recent tour of projects that have been or are being jointly undertaken in Falmouth by the Ministry and other stakeholders.

Mr. Bartlett added that the artisan village will provide an avenue for unearthing the talents of local artists and enable them to express their creativity.



A section of the old Hampden wharf in Falmouth, Trelawny, which is to be developed into Jamaica's first artisan village by the Ministry of Tourism.

Petrojam Awards \$1.2 Million in Scholarships



Students from the Greenwich All-Age School perform at Petrojam's scholarship award luncheon held recently at the Terra Nova Hotel in St. Andrew. Twenty-four students from Greenwich All-Age and St. Andrew Primary received scholarships valued at \$1.2 million.

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