

JA Signs CARICOM Multilateral Air Services Agreement

JAMAICA IS now a signatory to the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Multilateral Air Services Agreement (MASA).

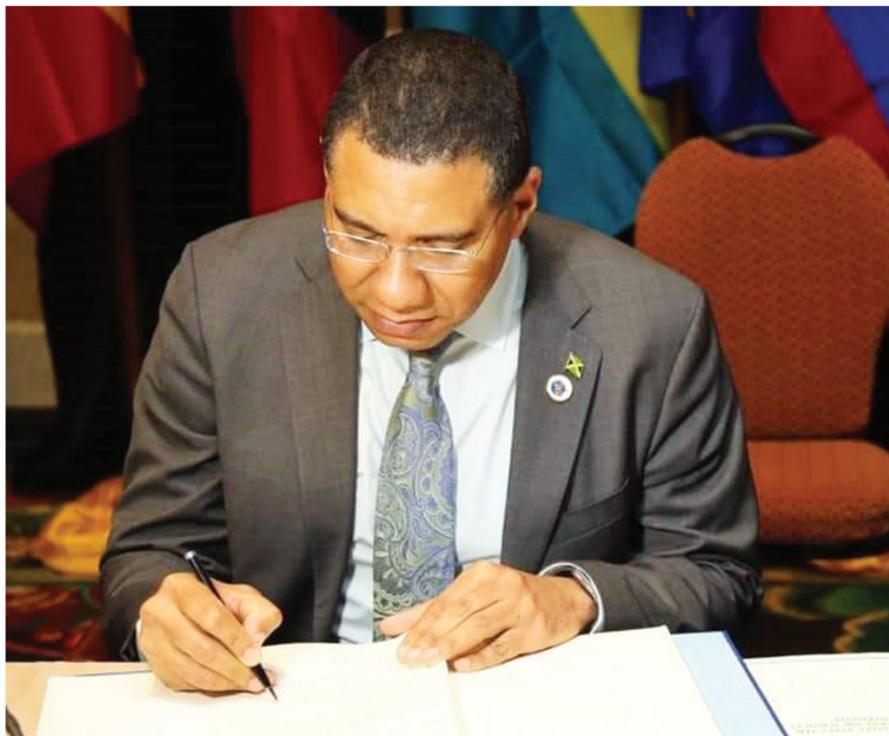
Prime Minister the Most Hon. Andrew Holness signed the historic agreement at the 30th Inter-Sessional Meeting of the Conference of Heads of Government of CARICOM on February 27 in Basseterre St. Kitts.

The regional MASA will allow for any CARICOM member state to move passengers and freight by air without having to apply for individual air services rights.

According to a release from the Office of the Prime Minister, the agreement, makes it easier for airlines in the region to operate both passenger and cargo flights in and out of the island.

Additionally, the agreement will allow Jamaica greater flexibility in negotiating air services agreements with other blocs.

Jamaica has more than 60 air services agreements.



Prime Minister the Most Hon. Andrew Holness signs historic CARICOM Multilateral Air Services Agreement (MASA), at the 30th Inter-Sessional Meeting of Conference of Heads of Government on February 27 in Basseterre, St. Kitts.

The CARICOM Multilateral Air Services Agreement should provide a major boost

to the regional transportation sector, which is a critical aspect of the CARICOM

Single Market and Economy (CSME).

JA Can Model Estonia in Creating Digital Society – PM

PRIME MINISTER the Most Hon. Andrew Holness says Jamaica can model Estonia's steps toward becoming fully digitalised.

He said there are many positive lessons that Jamaica can learn from Estonia's experience in creating a digital society.

Prime Minister Holness and the President of Estonia, Her Excellency Kersti Kaljulaid held bilateral talks on February 27 in Basseterre, St. Kitts.

"Estonia is a good example for the world to see. You have embraced technology and you are better off for it. Madame President, I must commend your country for leading on this very important matter as several countries grapple with how to transition into the

digital society as part of the fourth Industrial Revolution," Mr. Holness stated.

He noted that the Government of Jamaica, through the National Identification System (NIDS) and the Data Protection Act is moving to transition the society into a digital one.

The NIDS will provide a comprehensive and secure structure to enable the capture and storage of personal identity information for citizens and persons residing in Jamaica.

In her response, the Estonian President encouraged Jamaicans not to be left behind as there are significant benefits from embracing technology in building a modern country and moving to a digital society.



Prime Minister the Most Hon. Andrew Holness (right) converses with President of Estonia, Her Excellency Kersti Kaljulaid, during bilateral talks on February 27 in Basseterre, St. Kitts.

\$489M Allocated to Boost Investigative Capabilities of JCF

THE MINISTRY of National Security will be spending \$489.7 million in the new fiscal year to increase the conviction rate for murders in the country.

The funds will be used to improve investigative capabilities for violent crimes with the purchasing of a BULLET-TRAX Machine, engraving machine and computer server for the Firearm Licensing Authority (FLA).

It will also be used to procure: a Station Records Management System for the Jamaica Constabulary Force (JCF) digital registries; a Jail Management System (software, computers, cables, professional services) for the Department of Correctional Services (DCS); and a Case Management System (software, computers, scanners, professional services) for the JCF.

In addition, contractors will be engaged for installation services for 292 cameras; there will be procurement of

surveillance cameras, and equipment for the JCF and DCS Monitoring Centre's information technology (IT) equipment for JCF Fleet Management and to enhance JCF connectivity will also be bought; and scientific equip-

ment for the forensic lab and IT equipment will be purchased.

Details of the project, entitled, 'Security Strengthening Project', are outlined in the 2019/20 Estimates of Expenditure, now before the House of Representatives.

The project seeks to increase the capacity of the JCF to generate high-quality and timely data to assist in crime prevention; implement a case management system; and design and implement a digital registry, among other things.

Reggae Gold Awards Ceremony



Minister of Culture, Gender, Entertainment and Sport, Hon. Olivia Grange (left), celebrates the recognition of crowd favourite and veteran Jamaican singer, Beres Hammond, at the Reggae Gold Awards Ceremony, held on February 27 at the National Indoor Sports Complex in St. Andrew. Some 100 awards were presented to individuals and entities for their contribution to the music industry.

Four Primary and Infant Schools in St. Ann to be Upgraded

THE MINISTRY of Education, Youth and Information is to upgrade the

infrastructure of four St. Ann-based Primary and Infant schools.



Minister of Education, Youth and Information, Senator the Hon. Ruel Reid (right), is greeted by Principal of Hoolebury Primary School in Runaway Bay, St. Ann, Leon Lamont, during a visit on February 26.

Portfolio Minister, Senator the Hon. Ruel Reid, told **JIS News** that the upgrading work forms part of the Ministry's national infrastructure development programme, adding that the Government remains committed to tackling the infrastructural needs of schools across the country.

The schools to benefit are Philadelphia All-Age, Lower Buxton Primary and Infant, Keith Primary and Infant, and Hoolebury Primary and Infant. Senator Reid visited the schools on February 26.

"We indicated to them where we are in the process in terms of ensuring that their facilities are improved.

We are looking especially at their infant/early childhood department to make sure that they are up to standard. Many schools require upgrades in terms of their grounds. So, there will be some amount of paving done," Senator Reid said.

The Minister further noted that the establishment of information and communications technology (ICT) infrastructure is also in the pipeline for the schools.

"Philadelphia, for example, they have some challenges with the Internet. We have to provide ICT solutions that are offline... updating data on tablets and so on. So, that will be something that we want to look at," he added.

Finance Minister Tables Microcredit Bill

THE MICROCREDIT Act (2019) was tabled in the House of Representatives on February 26 by Minister of Finance and the Public Service, Dr. the Hon. Nigel Clarke.

credit institutions, in order to ensure that such services may be utilised by micro, small and medium-sized enterprises and individuals to facilitate their financial or economic advancement. It also aims to protect the interest of borrowers by discouraging excessive interest rates and predatory lending practices by microcredit institutions.

The Bill seeks to regulate the persons who provide microcredit services.

It prohibits false and misleading advertising by microcredit institutions; and makes it an offence for microcredit institutions to use threats and violence in the process of collecting a debt.

The Bill identifies the Consumer Affairs Commission as the body responsible for accepting complaints against microcredit institutions, investigating complaints against microcredit institutions and formulating a code of conduct for microcredit institutions on consumer-related matters.



Minister of Finance and the Public Service, Dr. the Hon. Nigel Clarke

The Bill seeks to regulate the persons who provide microcredit services, ensuring that such persons are licensed by the Regulatory Authority.

They will also be required to keep proper accounting and other records and make reports to the Regulatory Authority on a timely basis.

The Bill also seeks to regulate the provision of services offered by micro-



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