

Montego Bay airport sets sights on Europe



From left: Chief Executive Officer of MJB Airports Limited Jorge Sales takes members of the aviation and tourist industry on a tour of the new south wing of the Sangster International Airport. He is accompanied by public relations consultant Sonia Rickards and president of the Jamaica Hotel and Tourist Association Horace Peterkin and Minister of Transport and Works, Hon. Robert Pickersgill (in dark glasses in background).
- PHOTO BY JANET SILVERA

WESTERN BUREAU:

MORE FOCUS will be placed on increasing airline flights out of Europe over the next two years, says MJB Airports Limited chief executive officer, Jorge Sales.

MBJ operates the Sangster International Airport in Montego Bay under a 30-year build-operate-transfer concession granted by the Airports Authority of Jamaica in 2003.

"Our market has been so far (geared) towards the United States and Canada market," Mr Sales said. "Therefore, our big effort now is trying to get more traffic from Europe and in that sense we have started to secure new flights from that end."

He was speaking at a press conference shortly after the ground-breaking ceremony to commence work on the final phase of the airport expansion programme last Friday.

"Virgin Atlantic will start to operate in July this year, using the big 747-400 aircraft," he continued. "Also, Air Plus Comet airlines that is usually flying from April to November directly from Madrid (Spain) once a week with only one plane will this year bring two flights with two planes on Mondays and Tuesdays."

EXISTING FLIGHTS

Commenting on the existing flights to Jamaica, chairman of the Jamaica Tourist Board (JTB) Dennis Morris, said, 'destination Jamaica' has been experiencing significant increases in airlifts across the Atlantic.

"We have an increased airlift from both sides of the Atlantic and this is very important as we seek to grow our visitor arrivals from both parts of the World," he said. He noted that with the scheduled increases in hotel capacity, "It is really timely that we will have the capacity of the airport going up three times."

Some of the existing European flights to Jamaica are First Choice from Manchester in the U.K., Tui Airlines from Belgium, Air Italy and Lauda Air from Austria.

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