

Medera resigns from CAL

...leaving after eight years in CEO post

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AFTER eight years at the helm, Garvin Medera has resigned as chief executive officer of Caribbean Airlines Ltd, leaving as the carrier's longest-serving CEO.

His resignation comes months after Prime Minister Kamla Persad- Bissessar issued an ultimatum to the State airline's management, telling them to 'sort out the mess' within two years or face replacement.

Sources say Medera is currently on vacation ahead of his departure.

He is reportedly in talks with third-party organisations in the private sector about new roles.

Before joining Caribbean Airlines, Medera was the CEO of Digicel Play.

Medera was not immediately available for comment yesterday.

His departure follows the resignation of the previous Caribbean Airlines board after the United National Congress's general election victory on April 28, marking the latest in a series of leadership changes at State organisations since the election.

On June 24, Reyna Kowlessar was appointed chairman of the Caribbean Airlines board.

The Government approved her appointment for a two-year term, effective from the date of the shareholders' resolution, in accordance with the Companies Act, Chap 81:01, and the company's by-laws.

Kowlessar did not respond to a WhatsApp message seeking comment on Medera's resignation yesterday.

She replaced Shameer 'Ronnie' Mohammed, who had resigned following the general election.

Mohammed had been on the board since November 2016.

Minister of Finance Davendranath Tancoo is the line minister for Caribbean Airlines.

In response to queries on Medera's resignation, Tancoo stated in a WhatsApp message last evening: 'Good night. Thank you for the information.'

'Frankly I don't think it's the practice for persons resigning from jobs they held, to advise me. But I note your confidence that I am intimately familiar with Mr Medera's or anyone else's actions.'

Medera's resignation comes as Caribbean Airlines faces increased scrutiny. During a UNC Monday Night Report in August, Persad-Bissessar issued ultimatums to State companies, singling out Caribbean Airlines, which she described as 'a corrupt mess' with unprofitable routes and years of unaudited financial statements.

She noted the airline's finance department comprised 86 staff members, yet more than \$60 million had been spent hiring Ernst & Young and Pricewaterhouse-Coopers to conduct audits.

'I am giving the management of CAL two years to sort it out; otherwise, everyone there will be looking for a new job,' Persad- Bissessar said in August, stressing that taxpayers would no longer bankroll under-performing State enterprises.

In 2021, Caribbean Airlines reported unaudited financial results showing an operating loss of US\$48 million for the first half of the year, similar to a US\$48.7 million loss for the same period in 2020. The airline attributed the decline in part to a 44.8% drop in passenger traffic amid the Covid- 19 pandemic.

Last year, during a customer appreciation event, then-finance minister Colm Imbert said the State airline recorded an operating profit of US\$12.1 million for 2024, excluding debt service.

Speaking at the airline's 'Welcome Home to Love and Loyalty' celebration at Queen's Hall, Port of Spain, he highlighted the turnaround from a US\$36.7 million loss in 2022 to a US\$24.7 million profit in 2023, excluding debt service.

Revenue increased from US\$306.4 million in 2022

to US\$430.9 million in 2023-a 41% rise. In 2024, revenue reached US\$444.6 million-up 5.2%.

Imbert credited the results to the dedication and resilience of the Caribbean Airlines team, noting rising maintenance, handling and security costs contributed to the reduced operating profit.

Cost cutting

Caribbean Airlines recently announced that effective November 2, 2025, the airline will discontinue services between Kingston and Montego Bay, Jamaica, and Fort Lauderdale, Florida.

The airline said the move is part of an ongoing network optimisation programme aimed at improving operational efficiency and sustainability.

The airline also cancelled this year's annual career expo, originally scheduled for November, citing operational considerations.

In recent weeks, Caribbean Airlines' chief commercial officer, Martin Aeberli, has been providing comments on the organisation's releases.

Leadership shake-up Just days before the end of his probationary period, Kern Gardiner was dismissed from his role as executive manager of finance at Caribbean Airlines last week.

The move followed an earlier shake-up at the carrier, where chief financial officer Varuna Kuarsingh was placed on leave until October 10.

Neera Ramai-Williams, senior manager of cost and management accounting at Caribbean Airlines, has been named the airline's acting chief financial officer.