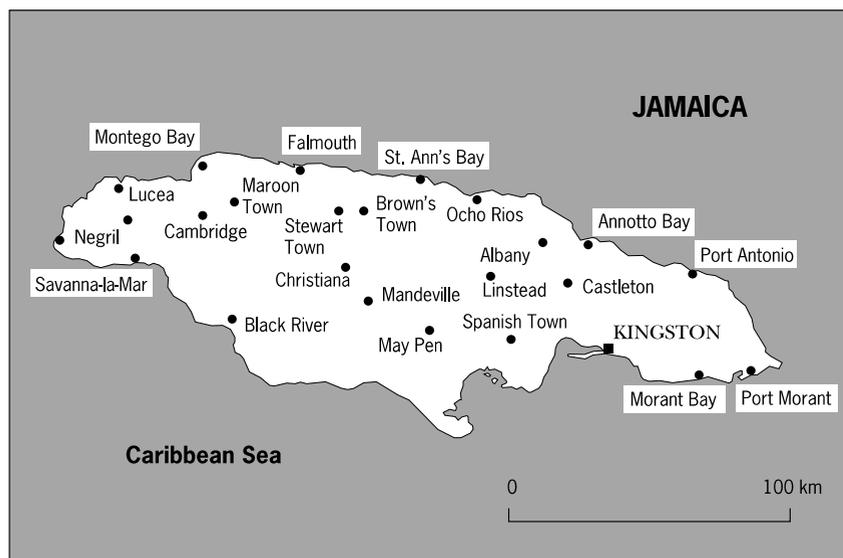


Jamaica



After cheering their super star, Usain Bolt, to victory in the 2012 Olympics, Jamaicans came back down with a jolt in 2013. An editorial in the *Gleaner* in October noted that 'In the absence of economic growth, Jamaican administrations borrowed to spend and to pay off debt. It was, in a sense, like operating a Ponzi scheme, from which we racked up a debt of J\$1.8 trillion (US\$17 billion), or one and a half times the value of the goods and services Jamaicans produce annually.'

Follow my leader... but which?

Politics in Jamaica in 2013 centred on the election due in November for the leader of the Jamaica Labour Party (JLP). The main protagonists were the incumbent, Andrew Holness, former prime minister Bruce Golding's protegee, and Audley Shaw, former minister of finance from 2007 until the snap general election in 2012 which the JLP lost.

The hustings were lively, with both sides and their supporters slanging off the other. Ian Boyne in the *Jamaica Gleaner* went so far as to say that some of the comments reminded him of some of the worst features of the old 'dutty' politics. Mr Boyne said that both men were 'eminently good candidates for leadership' although

both had their strengths and weaknesses, with little in the way of policy differences.

Youth suffers

The austerity programmes endorsed by both the ruling People's National Party (PNP) and the JLP have left the inner city youth with little to choose between migration, the gangs, political overseer, prison or death. Youth in the rural areas fare worse than their counterparts in the city, they become part of the social decay that permeates the topical landscape. Poorly paid menial jobs in the tourism sector are just about the only jobs available for those with little in the way of education, or the means to immigrate.

IMF relief

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) estimated that gross domestic product (GDP) had contracted in financial year (FY) 2012/13 by 0.7 per cent, inflation had reached 9.7 per cent at the end of July 2013, and unemployment was 16.3 per cent in April. Not good. Yet international reserves had increased to three months of exports (US\$1 billion) and fiscal performance in the first quarter of FY2013/14 was better than projected.

However, in early in 2013 Jamaica felt the need to go the IMF with a request for a

KEY FACTS

Official name: Jamaica

Head of State: Queen Elizabeth II (since 1952); represented by Governor General Patrick Allen (from 26 Feb 2009)

Head of government: Prime Minister Portia Simpson Miller (from 5 Jan 2012)

Ruling party: People's National Party (PNP) (from 5 Jan 2012)

Area: 10,989 square km

Population: 2.75 million (2012)*

Capital: Kingston

Official language: English

Currency: Jamaican dollar (J\$) = 100 cents

Exchange rate: J\$101.28 per US\$ (Jul 2013)

GDP per capita: US\$5,541 (2012)*

GDP real growth: 0.08% (2012)*

GDP: US\$15.25 billion (2012)*

Labour force: 1.25 million (2010)

Unemployment: 13.00% (2012)*

Inflation: 7.29% (2012)*

Balance of trade: -US\$4.16 billion (2012)

* estimated figure

loan of up to US\$958 million to help rescue its failing economy. By October the IMF was able to report that Jamaica had successfully passed its first review of a debt restructuring programme, despite the weak economic environment. IMF deputy managing, Nayouki Shinohara, reported that Jamaica's 'continued commitment to the programme objectives of strengthening Jamaica's fiscal position and creating the conditions for sustained economic growth will be critical to a revival of investor confidence and domestic demand in the period ahead.'

Key elements of the authorities' updated programme are:

- The adoption of fundamental tax reform before the next fiscal year, designed to broaden the tax base, simplify the tax system, reduce tax rates, and reduce economic distortions and support growth. Tax reform is programmed to commence with an Omnibus Incentive Tax Act and a Charities Bill, to be tabled in parliament before end-September. The tax incentives legislation is expected to replace and streamline the many existing sectoral incentive schemes by a rules-based regime for limited tax incentives.
- Steadfast implementation of the government's strategy to increase growth by improving the business environment and pursuing strategic investments.
- Further actions to make the financial sector more resilient, through enhanced supervision and monitoring,

and with phased reforms of the securities dealers sector.

- Strengthening the social protection framework, with enhanced efforts to move recipients from welfare to work.

Passing the review means Jamaica will be able to receive an additional US\$30.6 million under the programme and support from other multilateral development partners.

Risk assessment

Politics	Fair
Economy	Poor
Regional stability	Fair

COUNTRY PROFILE

Historical profile

1494 Jamaica was sighted by members of an expedition led by Christopher Columbus.

1509 Jamaica was occupied by Spaniards. Most of the indigenous Arawak community died from exposure to European diseases. African slaves were brought in to work on the sugar plantations.

1655 The British captured the island. Jamaica became a slave-based economy producing sugar and some coffee for export.

1692 Jamaican capital, Port Royal, sunk into the sea after an earthquake and Spanish Town became the new capital.

1834 Slavery was abolished.

1865 A major revolt against Jamaican landowners among freed slaves living in hardship was brutally put down by the British. The local legislature surrendered

its powers and Jamaica became a crown colony.

1870 Plantations began to replace sugar cane with banana production, due to increased sugar beet production in Europe. 1884 A new constitution marked the revival of Jamaican autonomy.

1930s The worldwide economic depression and greater international competition further undermined the Jamaican sugar industry.

1938 Popular uprisings caused by unemployment and resentment of racial British policies led to the establishment of the People's National Party (PNP) by Norman Manley.

1943 The Jamaica Labour Party (JLP) was founded.

1944 Universal adult suffrage was introduced and a new constitution allowed for the election of the House of Representatives.

1958 Jamaica became part of the attempted West Indies Federation.

1962 At the insistence of Prime Minister Alexander Bustamante, Jamaica left the West Indies Federation and gained separate independence. It became a member of the Commonwealth. Kingston became the capital city.

1968-69 Protests against poor housing conditions turned into serious riots in Kingston.

1972 Michael Manley became prime minister and pursued a policy of economic self-reliance.

1976 The PNP won another term following elections marked by violence and proceeded to nationalise businesses and build closer ties with Cuba.

1980 The JLP won the elections and Edward Seaga became prime minister reversing the nationalisation policies of the previous government. The US granted the Seaga government substantial aid after it distanced itself from Cuba.

1988 Hurricane Gilbert caused an estimated US\$3 billion damage to much of the island.

1989 The PNP ousted the JLP in elections, returning Michael Manley as prime minister. Manley, however, chose to continue Seaga's policies.

1992 Manley retired on health grounds and was succeeded by Percival Patterson. 1993 The PNP was returned to office with an increased majority.

1997 The PNP won a third term in office. 1999 Protests against a new fuel tax spilled over into rioting in several areas.

The Jamaican Defence Force (JDF) was ordered onto the streets to tackle the high rate of crime.

2001 Violence broke out in Kingston. There were gun battles between the police and gangs with political links. The army

KEY INDICATORS

Jamaica

	Unit	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Population	m	2.71	2.72	2.73	*2.74	*2.75
Gross domestic product (GDP)	US\$bn	14.00	11.90	13.70	14.80	*15.25
GDP per capita	US\$	5,199	4,390	5,039	5,402	*5,541
GDP real growth	%	-0.8	-3.0	-1.2	1.5	*0.1
Inflation	%	22.0	9.6	12.3	7.5	*7.3
Unemployment	%	10.6	11.4	12.4	12.9	*13.0
Exports (fob) (goods)	US\$m	2,743.9	1,387.7	1,370.4	1,666.1	1,746.7
Imports (fob) (goods)	US\$m	7,546.8	4,475.7	4,629.4	5,881.4	5,904.7
Balance of trade	US\$m	-4,802.9	-3,087.9	-3,259.0	-4,215.3	-4,158.0
Current account	US\$m	-2,793.3	-1,125.6	-934.0	-2,063.2	*-1,817.0
Total reserves minus gold	US\$m	1,772.7	2,075.8	2,501.1	2,883.0	1,980.8
Foreign exchange	US\$m	1,772.6	1,729.4	2,171.4	2,547.1	1,674.3
Exchange rate	per US\$	72.75	87.89	87.20	85.65	91.23

* estimated figure

was called out after 25 people had been killed.

2002 The ruling PNP won parliamentary elections.

2004 Extra police were drafted into St James, the island's tourism capital, to tackle an escalating crime wave. Ivan, the worst hurricane since 1988, struck Jamaica, damaging thousands of homes and killing 15 people.

2005 Jamaica and Venezuela signed a US\$200 million agreement to modernise and expand the Petrojam oil refinery in Kingston.

2007 In parliamentary elections, the opposition JLP won 50.1 per cent, 33 seats (out of 60); the ruling PNP won 49.8 per cent (27). Bruce Golding became prime minister.

2008 Parliament voted to continue the death penalty; Jamaica has one of the world's highest murder rates.

2009 Dr Patrick Allen, pastor and president of the Adventist Church's West Indies Union became Governor General.

2010 A state of emergency was declared in parts of the capital after several police stations were attacked. Security forces stormed the Kingston suburb of Tivoli Gardens, to arrest Christopher 'Dudus' Coke, an alleged drugs baron. The resulting gun-battle killed 73 people. The US had issued an international arrest warrant for Coke for drugs smuggling and gang-related offences. He was extradited, without opposition, to the US. The state of emergency was ended in mid-July after the government failed to get enough votes in Parliament to extend it. All suspects arrested during the disturbances had to be released. In July, Jamaica announced it was establishing an embassy in Kuwait.

2011 In May Prime Minister Golding announced that Jamaica was officially out of recession, following modest GDP growth in the first quarter. In June parliament approved the increase of fees charged to airline passengers visiting Jamaica from US\$10 to US\$20. Prime Minister Golding announced his resignation in September and in October, the JLP voted for Andrew Holness as his replacement as both leader of the party and therefore the country. During the Commonwealth Heads of Government summit, in October, the 16 countries in which the British monarch is Head of State unanimously agreed to change the royal line of succession from that of first born son to the first born child (regardless of its gender). The change will be enacted after the succession of Prince William (currently second in line to the throne, after his father Charles Prince of Wales). An early, snap, general election was held on 29 December in which the opposition PNP won 53.32 per cent of the

vote (41 seats out of 63); the ruling JLP won 46.56 per cent (22 seats).

2012 Portia Simpson-Miller took office as prime minister on 5 January. During her inaugural speech she advocated replacing the monarch in favour of a presidency for Jamaica. On 24 October, Hurricane Sandy struck with heavy rains and winds of up to 125kph. On 1 November damage by Hurricane Sandy was estimated at over US\$55 million. Agriculture was the hardest hit sector (over US\$10 million), with significant losses of livestock as well as banana, plantain, cocoa, coffee and other cash crop production.

2013 In April the IMF agreed a US\$1 billion, 48-month arrangement under the Extended Fund Facility (EFF).

Political structure

Constitution

Jamaica is a parliamentary democracy and independent state within the Commonwealth. The British monarch is the titular head of state and is represented by a governor general appointed on the advice of the prime minister. The governor general's role is mainly ceremonial and is guided in most cases by the prime minister, who as head of government effectively exercises executive power. Duties include appointing the leader of the opposition from among members of parliament who do not support the government. The governor general must have no affiliation with any political party while holding office. Local governments in the 14 parishes are due for election every three years. The minimum voting age is 18. Voting is by secret ballot and the candidate who wins the most votes in each constituency is elected in a first-past-the-post electoral system.

Form of state

Constitutional monarchy

The executive

The head of state is the British monarch who is represented by the Governor General of Jamaica. The prime minister is selected by the governor general from the House of Representatives as the member best able to command the support of the House. Executive power rests with the cabinet – made up of the prime minister and at least 11 ministers. Cabinet ministers are chosen by the prime minister.

National legislature

The legislature is a bicameral parliament. It consists of a 60-member House of Representatives, elected every five years, and a 21-member Senate, appointed to a parallel term. The prime minister, who is also leader of the majority in the House of Representatives, appoints 13 senators, while the remaining eight are named by the leader of the opposition. The Senate mainly reviews legislation passed by the

House of Representatives, although it can also initiate legislation, except on financial matters.

Voting must be held within three months of the dissolution of parliament. There have been eight parliaments since 1962, when Jamaica became the first English-speaking West Indian island to gain independence from the UK.

Legal system

The judiciary is headed by a Supreme Court and a Court of Appeal. The governor general, acting under the guidance of a six-member Privy Council based in London, UK, can grant pardons to convicted criminals. The final appeal is to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council in the UK.

Last elections

29 December 2011 (parliamentary)

Results: Parliamentary: People's National Party (PNP) won 53.32 per cent of the vote (41 seats out of 63), the Jamaica Labour Party (JLP) won 46.56 per cent (22); four other political parties each won less than 1 per cent and failed to win any seats.

Next elections

2017 (parliamentary)

Political parties

Ruling party

People's National Party (PNP) (from 5 Jan 2012)

Main opposition party

Jamaica Labour Party (JLP)

Population

2.75 million (2012)*

Approximately 30 per cent of the total population is under 14 years of age.

Last census: September 2001:
2,607,632

Population density: 209 inhabitants per square km. Urban population 52 per cent (2010 Unicef).

Annual growth rate: 0.7 per cent, 1990–2010 (Unicef).

Ethnic make-up

Afro-Caribbean (90.9 per cent), East Indian (1.3 per cent), European (0.2 per cent), Chinese (0.2 per cent), mixed (7.3 per cent) and other (0.1 per cent).

Religions

Jamaica is home to a number of Christian denominations, mostly Protestant (over 61 per cent of the population). These include the Church of God (21 per cent), Baptist (9 per cent), Anglican (6 per cent) and Seventh-Day Adventist (9 per cent) churches. Roman Catholics (4 per cent) and spiritual cults (35 per cent) make up the other principal religious groups.

Education

The quality of schooling has slowly deteriorated over the last 20 years as debt reduction and other fiscal issues take higher

priority. Jamaica's education system is based on the British system. Schooling consists of a two year pre-primary from aged 4, then a compulsory primary cycle of six years. Secondary schooling is divided into three phases, at the end of each, students either leave or move up to the next grade. They enter a 'first cycle' secondary school for three years, then a sixth form education of two-years and finally a 'second cycle' secondary school of two years; GSE 'O' and 'A' level examinations conclude the latter two. The education system accommodates a variety of public and private schools. The main beneficiary of the government's spending on education is the primary school system, which enjoys a higher per capita expenditure than secondary and tertiary education.

Free places are offered in secondary schools through an annual common entrance examination, but a shortage of places has meant that not all children who qualify can be accommodated.

Post-secondary education is available at three universities and a number of community and teacher-training colleges. Opportunities for tertiary education remain limited, with only 8 per cent of high school graduates going to university or other higher institutions.

The primary and secondary education system was affected by the structural adjustment programme agreed with the IMF during the 1990s, which resulted in general cutbacks in social services expenditure. However, education has also benefitted from direct support from multilateral institutions. In 1996, the World Bank initiated a US\$28 million student loan project, and has sponsored reform of secondary education. In 2000, the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) approved a US\$31 million loan to support the development of the primary school system.

Literacy rate: 88 per cent adult rate; 95 per cent youth rate (15–24) (Unesco 2005).

Compulsory years: Six to 12

Enrolment rate: 101 per cent gross primary enrolment, of relevant age group (including repeaters) (World Bank)

Pupils per teacher: 31 in primary schools.

Health

Jamaica's health care is affordable and improving dramatically; increasing life expectancy and lowering infant mortality rates to some of the best figures in the Caribbean. Unfortunately, money has been taken out of the funding for the public education system.

Improved water sources and sanitation facilities are available to 71 per cent and

84 per cent of the population, respectively.

HIV/Aids

HIV prevalence: 1.2 per cent aged 15–49 in 2003 (World Bank)

Life expectancy: 72 years, 2004 (WHO 2006)

Fertility rate/Maternal mortality rate: 1.4 births per woman, 2010 (Unicef)

Birth rate/Death rate: 17.4 births per 1,000 population; 5.4 deaths per 1,000 population (2003).

Child (under 5 years) mortality rate (per 1,000): 17 per 1,000 live births (WHO 2012)

Head of population per physician: 0.85 physicians per 1,000 people, 2003 (WHO 2006)

Welfare

Welfare is provided under the National Insurance Scheme (NIS) and the Social Assistance Programme. The NIS is contributory and provides protection against loss of income for men aged 18 to 70 years and women aged 18 to 65 years. There has also been multilateral involvement in welfare provision, including a US\$20 million Jamaica Social Investment Fund (JSIF) initiated by the World Bank in 1996. JSIF is part of a national programme aimed at eliminating poverty and generating social funds. The Bank has initiated a social assessment programme for the inner cities, to allow the JSIF to target poverty more effectively. The Jamaican government has mobilised support from several non-governmental organisations and other charities towards the administration of social security and welfare measures. It is open to collaboration and partnership with stakeholders, both locally and abroad to improve the quality of services delivered to the poor. Such organisations include, Food for the Poor, which was involved in a massive programme to build 2,000 homes for poor families across Jamaica.

Main cities

Kingston (capital, estimated population 575,946 in 2012), Spanish Town (170,325), Portmore (132,777), Montego Bay (78,998), May Pen (49,471), Mandeville (48,849).

Languages spoken

English and a local patois, influenced by Elizabethan English.

Official language/s

English

Media

The media is free from censorship, although the government has wide involvement in television, it has little control over radio and none in the print media.

Press

Dailies: There of the three dailies, two are published in the morning, *The Jamaica Gleaner* (www.jamaica-gleaner.com) and *The Jamaica Observer* (www.jamaicaobserver.com), *The Jamaica Star* (an afternoon tabloid) (www.jamaica-star.com).

Weeklies: There are several publications for local communities as well as one national newspaper, *Sunday Herald* (www.sunheraldja.com), *North Star Times* and *Mandeville Weekly*. The *Xtra-News* (www.xnewsjamaica.com) is an entertainment magazine.

Business: The monthly *Investor's Choice* magazine serving a diverse audience. Daily and weekly newspapers have local business news articles.

Periodicals: A monthly magazine, *The Commentator* (www.thecommentatorjm.com) publishes submitted articles on a variety of historical and current topics.

Broadcasting

Radio: All radio stations are independently owned and commercially operated. RJR Communications Group (www.rjrgroup.com) operates Radio Jamaica with a network of three stations including RJR (www.rjr94fm.com) for news and talk radio, Fame FM (www.famefm.fm) for innovative music and Hitz 92. Other stations include NewsTalk (www.newstalk.com.jm), Kool 97 FM (<http://kool97fm.com>) and Irie FM (www.irielfm.net).

Television: There are three TV stations in operation, of which TVJ (www.televisionjamaica.com) and CVM TV (www.cvmtv.com) are the other major broadcasters providing locally produced and imported TV programmes, Love TV (www.love101.org) is a religious broadcaster. Cable and satellite TV is available for subscribers, including CETV, Hype TV and RJR (<http://rjrgroup.com>).

National news agency: Jamaica Information Service

Other news agencies: Caribbean Net News: www.caribbeanetnews.com

Jamaica New Bulletin: (www.jamaicanewsbulletin.com)

Economy

The economy is primarily based on services (71.3 cent of GDP in 2010), centred on tourism, with a record number of visitors for the year – 1.9 million, plus 909,619 cruise passengers. Agricultural production constituted 6.3 per cent of the economy with exports that include bananas, coffee, sugar, rum and spices. The industrial sector constituted 22.4 per cent of GDP, of which manufacturing contributed 9.2 per cent in 2010. Alumina and bauxite exports provide valuable foreign

earnings, combined they represented 36 per cent of total exports in 2010.

GDP growth fell into recession 2008 at -0.8 per cent, down from 1.4 per cent in 2007, however the economy remained in recession averaging -1.8 per cent for the period of 2008–10, before returning to growth with an estimated 1.5 per cent in 2011. Inflation for the first half of 2008 peaked at 22 per cent, accelerated by sharp increases in international commodity prices, before returning to a typical 9.6 per cent in 2009.

The economy has a history of low economic growth and high public debt, which was exacerbated by the global economic crisis. Average GDP growth since 1991 was 1 per cent per annum and in 2010 public debt was 140.5 per cent of GDP. However, damage from hurricanes and tropical storms create continued economic shocks and have an adverse effect on the Jamaican economy. Tropical storm Gustav, which struck in 2008, destroyed many plantations and halted all exports. However, by 2010 exports of commodities had recovered and resulted in a US\$667.2 million surplus. Remittances in 2010 were US\$2 billion (15.2 per cent of GDP) and were estimated to have risen to US\$2.2 billion in 2011.

External trade

Along with 11 other members of the Caribbean Community and Common Market (Caricom), Jamaica operates within the single market (Caribbean Single Market and Economy (CSME)), which became operational in 2006. CSME includes the free movement of goods and services, a common trade policy and external tariff. There is a heavy reliance on commodity exports while its dependency on energy imports continues to cause severe balance of payments difficulties, although the PetroCaribe Energy Co-operation Agreement with Venezuela helps to ease these difficulties.

Imports

Principal imports are foodstuffs, petroleum, capital goods and industrial supplies, vehicles, machinery and transport equipment, construction materials and consumer goods.

Main sources: US (32.7 per cent of total in 2011), Venezuela (15.6 per cent), Trinidad and Tobago (14.1 per cent).

Exports

Principal exports are alumina, bauxite and chemicals, rum, coffee, sugar, bananas and yams, manufactured clothes. An ethanol plant exported seven million barrels to the US in 2008 and earning around US\$60 million in 2007.

Main destinations: US (37.2 per cent of total in 2011), Canada (18.3 per cent), The Netherlands (7.3 per cent).

Re-exports

Re-exports including chemicals, machinery, transport equipment and miscellaneous manufactures represent 3.5 per cent of total value.

Agriculture

The agricultural sector, including forestry and fishing, typically contributes 6.9 per cent to GDP and employs approximately 19 per cent of the workforce. Agricultural production is often affected by adverse weather conditions. Blue Mountain coffee, one of the most expensive in the world, is grown in Jamaica.

The 2012 annual crop of the famous Jamaican Blue Mountain Coffee was severely damaged by the African Coffee Berry Borer beetle (*Hypothenemus hampei*). The Coffee Industry Board (CIB) revised its projection for coffee output from 234,000 boxes to 150,000–180,000 as a result of the infestation. The estimate to coffee growers is reduced production of 30–50 per cent and an industry loss of J\$432.5 million (US\$5 million).

Although most fishing is for domestic consumption, inland commercial fishing could be developed. The local freshwater fish industry has been able to increase production of fish in smaller ponds and cut its production cost by 30 per cent, thanks to new technology. Traditional ponds which occupy vast acreages, produce a negligible 6.25 fish per square metre. Latest technology put to use at the Longville Park fish farm, which consists of four concrete-lined ponds approximately 250 square metres in size with automated systems to monitor oxygen levels in the water and feeding, is likely to increase production up to 125 fish per square metre. Estimates show that annual output could increase to 6.6 million pounds of freshwater fish, enabling Jamaica to compete on the world market.

The typical annual marine fish catch is 4,660mt and 560mt shellfish.

Industry and manufacturing

The growth in cement production, in line with increased construction, and food processing were 2004 production leaders. Agro-industries dominate the manufacturing sector, particularly textiles, sugar refining, paper products, cigarettes and alcohol, particularly rum and beer. Of these the textile industry has declined under the impact of competition from producers with freer trade links to the US, such as Mexico.

Other important manufacturing industries (most of which are foreign-owned and heavily dependent on imported materials

and components) include chemicals, machinery and tools, glass, cement and metal products. Industry in Jamaica has suffered from difficulty in competing with more efficiently produced imports. Other problems include the high cost of security due to instances of drug contamination of exports by smugglers.

The main capital-intensive industries are petroleum refining at Kingston (capacity 34,200 barrels per day), and the refining of bauxite for export. The emphasis of industrial policy during the 1990s was on expanding facilities at the Kingston and Montego Bay free zones, encouraging foreign investment in export-based manufacturing and exploiting opportunities offered under the Caribbean Basin Initiative (CBI). In 2003, Alcoa Inc, the world's leading supplier of alumina, completed a 250,000 tonne expansion project at the Jamalco refinery at a cost of US\$115 million. The revised tax arrangements, along with the expansion, lowered costs at the refinery by approximately 30 per cent. Further expansion of the Jamalco's Clarendon refinery was announced in July 2005 when a plan was agreed by Alcoa and the Jamaica government. This will add 1.5 million tonnes per year (mtpy) of capacity at a cost of US\$1.2 billion, bringing the total capacity to 2.8 mtpy. The construction costs include a new power station and high hurricane wind and earthquake protection.

Tourism

Jamaica has been a leading Caribbean holiday destination for decades and has an established tourism infrastructure. It offers a wide range of accommodation and cultural and sports activities such as carnivals, yachting regattas and sports fishing. Jamaica was the home of the creator of James Bond, Ian Fleming and Noel Coward, whose home Firefly Estate is a national heritage site.

Jamaica's tourism sector is an important component of the economy and typically constitutes around 25 per cent of GDP, which despite the fall in visitor numbers due to the global economic crisis has remained relatively constant. In 2011, from January–August, visitor arrivals increased by 5.7 per cent over the same period in 2010; in August 2011 2,098,964 people had arrived compared to 1,985,784 in August 2010. Over 60 per cent of visitors come from the US and over 15 per cent from Canada. Europe accounts for 15 per cent of all visitors, of which the UK represents 10 per cent. Employment in the travel and tourism sector is typically 22.2–24.5 per cent. Foreign exchange earnings were US\$2.128 billion in 2010 and was projected to be US\$2.293 billion.

In October 2011 the tourism minister called on his Caribbean counterparts to address the adverse effect of the UK-applied Air Passenger Duty (APD) that levies an average of US\$478 on a family of four flying economy class from the UK to the region.

Legislation was passed in October 2011 for gaming regulation and the opening of two casinos.

China has designated Jamaica as an approved destination for its holidaying citizens; Chinese visitors could swell arrival numbers by many thousands.

Mining

The mining sector generates around half of export earnings and contributes approximately 9 per cent to GDP. Mining and quarrying employs approximately 1 per cent of the workforce.

Activity is centred on the extraction of bauxite and alumina refining. Known reserves of bauxite are around two billion tonnes, although most is of relatively low quality. Other minerals exploited include gypsum, marble, silica and clays.

In 2005, a bilateral agreement was signed between China and Jamaica to, establish a bauxite mining and alumina refinery facility, projected to process 1.4 million tonnes of alumina a year.

There are no known oil or natural gas reserves. Consumption of oil was 78,000 barrels per day (bpd) in 2008, all of which was imported. In 2005, Jamaica, plus a number of other Caribbean states, signed an agreement with Venezuela to establish PetroCaribe, a multi-national oil company, owned by the participating states. PetroCaribe buys low-priced Venezuelan crude oil under long-term payment plans. The state-owned Petroleum Corporation of Jamaica (PCJ) is responsible for the management, exploration and importation of oil. Around 48 per cent of all imported oil is used in the bauxite refining and alumina processing industry. A refinery is located in Kingston, which processes 36,000bpd of oil, all of which is consumed locally.

Coal imports were 44,000 tonnes in 2008, used in power generation.

Energy

Total installed generating capacity was 1,161MW in 2007, producing over 7.04 billion kilowatt hours (kWh). The commercial company, Jamaica Public Service Company (JPS) is the sole distributor of electricity and owns four power stations and an additional eight-hydropower stations producing only 23.8MW of electricity, but which have a further installed potential of 100MW. There are five alternative, private independent power producers.

On 1 August, a new 66MW heavy fuel oil power plant began commercial operations. The West Kingston Power Project was financed by a consortium of foreign lenders.

Almost all the country's energy needs are imported, with an estimated 70 per cent of foreign exchange earnings spent on oil. Oil is supplied at concessionary rates by Mexico and Venezuela. The major consumer is the alumina industry, where energy accounts for around 48 per cent of production costs. There is a strategy to move from oil to liquefied natural gas as the country's main source of energy for electricity generation; however this is dependent on the construction of either an undersea gas pipeline from Trinidad and Tobago, or a liquefied national gas processing plant for supplies from elsewhere. Other renewable sources of power are being considered.

Financial markets

Stock exchange

Jamaica Stock Exchange (JSE)

Banking and insurance

The banking sector has undergone extensive restructuring since 1997, when the government intervened to prevent a complete collapse of the country's financial institutions. The sector's problems arose from a lack of proper risk management which created inherent weaknesses. These were exposed when the monetary authorities raised interest rates to stem the tide of inflation causing asset values to plummet. The restructuring of the financial sector was completed by the Financial Sector Adjustment Company (Finsac) in 2002 at an estimated cost of around 30 per cent of GDP. In the restructuring process, Finsac merged banks and sold them to the Royal Bank of Trinidad and Tobago. Consequently, foreign banks have a high presence in Jamaica, controlling around 80 per cent of total bank deposits.

Central bank

The Bank of Jamaica

Time

GMT minus five hours

Geography

Jamaica, with an area of 10,989 square km, is the third largest island in the Caribbean. Covered with dense tropical vegetation, it is 234km long and 82km across at the widest point. The island lies about 145km south of Cuba and 160km west of Hispaniola. Mountain ranges snake across the island from south-east to north-west, with many long spurs to north and south. The highest summits are at the eastern end of the island, with the Blue Mountain Peak the tallest at 2,256 metres. The longest river, the Rio Minho,

flows south from its source in the centre of the country, and is 92km long.

Hemisphere

Northern

Climate

Jamaica is around 5 degrees south of the Tropic of Cancer and has a maritime tropical climate characterised by warm trade winds. Average coastal and lowland temperatures are around 27 degrees Celsius, with little seasonal variation. Mean annual rainfall is about 200mm, with the main rainy season in October and a second one in May. Jamaica may be subject to the tropical storms and hurricanes typical of the Caribbean basin weather system.

Dress codes

Dress codes are mainly informal. Officials wear a jacket and tie or loose-fitting lightweight clothes when the climate is hot and humid. A sweater is rarely needed, even on cooler evenings. Light rainwear is useful. On social occasions, dress as for business meetings unless otherwise indicated.

Entry requirements

Passports

Required by all, valid for six months from date of departure, except nationals of the US and Canada, who require only proof of identity and nationality, (all US and Canadian nationals require a passport for re-entry to their country from January 2007).

Visa

No visa requirements for nationals of EU/EEA countries, North America, Australasia, and some Latin American and Asian countries. For details, see www.jhcuk.com/newguide-fr.html. Business visas require a letter from the employer, an itinerary and evidence of sufficient funds.

Currency advice/regulations

The import and export of local currency is prohibited. The import and export of foreign currency is allowed, subject to declaration.

Prohibited imports

Obscene images and publications. The following items are restricted and require permits: meat, ground provisions, fruit and vegetables, pharmaceuticals, firearms, used tyres, two-way radios, coconut derivatives, motor vehicles, explosives, bulk alcohol, sugar, human remains, pesticides and live animals.

Health (for visitors)

Mandatory precautions

A yellow fever vaccination certificate is required if arriving from an infected area.

Advisable precautions

Hepatitis A and B, tetanus, TB, typhoid and polio vaccinations are recommended.

Drinking water from the public supply is safe.

Foreigners visiting the island can use public health services, but are advised to seek private medical attention. Insurance to cover the latter which can be expensive is highly recommended.

Hotels

Hotels and guest houses are graded and mostly geared towards holidaymakers. There are also numerous resort villas and apartments.

Public holidays (national)

Fixed dates

1 Jan (New Year's Day), 23 May (Labour Day), 1 Aug (Emancipation Day), 6 Aug (Independence Day), 25–26 Dec (Christmas).

Variable dates

Ash Wednesday, Good Friday, Easter Monday, National Heroes' Day (third Mon in Oct).

Working hours

Banking

Mon–Thu: 0900–1400; Fri 0900–1500. Branches of some banks open on Sat.

Business

Mon–Fri: 0830–1630/1700. Some offices open Sat.

Government

Mon–Fri: 0830–1630/1700. Some offices open Sat.

Shops

Mon–Sat: 0830–1630/1700.

Telecommunications

Mobile/cell phones

There are several GSM 850, 900, 1800 and 1900 services available throughout the country.

Electricity supply

110/220V AC, 50 cycles

Social customs/useful tips

Appointments should be made in advance. Punctuality is appreciated. An additional 10 per cent tip is usual, even where a 10–15 per cent service charge is billed automatically. Penalties for drug offences are severe, with possession of even small quantities possibly leading to imprisonment. Luggage should be packed without the help of others and only your own should be carried through customs.

Security

It is advisable not to walk around after dark due to street crime. Some parts of Kingston are considered dangerous even during the daytime, avoid exploring nightlife away from main hotels and restaurants, unless accompanied by Jamaican friends. Only taxis, authorised by the Jamaica Union of Travellers Association (Juta) should be used and preferably ordered through hotels.

Getting there

Air

National airline: Air Jamaica.

International airport/s: Kingston-Norman Manley International (KIN), 17km south-east of city, duty-free shop, bars, restaurants, bank, post office, car hire.

Other airport/s: Montego Bay-Sangster International (MBJ), 3km north of Montego Bay.

Airport tax: J\$1,000.

Surface

Water: The island has several ports catering for international shipping and local ferries.

Main port/s: Kingston, Montego Bay, Ocho Rios and Port Antonio.

Getting about

National transport

Air: Air Jamaica serves several destinations. TimAir Ltd and International Air Link provide charter services.

Road: There is an extensive network of surfaced, all-weather roads, accounting for 70 per cent of the total of around 18,000km.

Buses: Minibuses in towns are generally cheap but crowded; in the country they are often considered slow, crowded and sometimes dangerous. There are regular, scheduled services over longer distances (eg Kingston-Montego Bay; journey time varies, to some extent dependent on route).

Rail: Jamaica has 272km of track. Passenger services have been suspended since 1992. A privately-owned portion of the network is used for transport of bauxite.

City transport

Taxis: All taxis have red PPV plates. It is advisable to negotiate fares (J\$) in advance. Taxis in Kingston no longer use meters. A 10 per cent tip is usual.

Car hire

Widely available. International or national licence accepted; traffic drives on the left.

BUSINESS DIRECTORY

The addresses listed below are a selection only. While World of Information makes every endeavour to check these addresses, we cannot guarantee that changes have not been made, especially to telephone numbers and area codes. We would welcome any corrections.

Telephone area codes

International direct dialling code (IDD) for Jamaica is +1 876, followed by subscriber's number.

Chambers of Commerce

American Chamber of Commerce of Jamaica, Le Méridien Jamaica Pegasus Hotel, 81 Knutsford Boulevard, Kingston (tel:

929-7866; fax: 929-8597; e-mail: info@amchamjamaica.org).

Jamaica Chamber of Commerce, 85a Duke Street, Kingston (tel: 922-0150; fax: 924-9056; e-mail: jamcham@cwjamaica.com).

Montego Bay Chamber of Commerce and Industry, 4-7 Overton Plaza, PO Box 213, Montego Bay (tel: 952-6045; fax: 952-2784).

Banking

National Investment Bank of Jamaica, 32 Trafalgar Road, Kingston 10 (tel: 929-9050).

Bank of Nova Scotia Jamaica, Scotia Centre, Port Royal Street, Kingston (tel: 922-1000).

CIBC Jamaica, 23-27 Knutsford Boulevard, Kingston 5 (tel: 929-9310).

Citibank N.A., 63-67 Knutsford Boulevard, Kingston 5 (tel: 926-3270/3285; fax: 929-3745).

National Commercial Bank of Jamaica, The Atrium, 32 Trafalgar Road, Kingston 10 (tel: 929-9050).

RBTT Bank Jamaica, 17 Dominica Drive, Kingston 5 (tel: 960-2340; e-mail: rbtt@cwjamaica.com).

The Financial Sector Adjustment Company, PO Box 54, 76 Knutsford Boulevard, Kingston 5: (tel: 906-1809; fax: 906-1822; info@FINSAC.com).

Trafalgar Commercial Bank, 60 Knutsford Boulevard, Kingston 5 (tel: 929-3383, 929-3511, 929-3521; fax: 929-3654).

Central bank

Bank of Jamaica, Nethersole Place, PO Box 621, Kingston (tel: 922-0750; fax: 922-0854; e-mail: info@boj.org.jm).

Stock exchange

Jamaica Stock Exchange (JSE) www.jamstockex.com

Travel information

Air Jamaica Ltd, 72–76 Harbour St, Kingston (tel: 922-3460; fax: 967-3125; pr@airjamaica.com).

Jamaica Hotel and Tourist Association, 2 Ardenne Road, Kingston 10 (tel: 926-3635; fax: 929-1054; e-mail: info@jhta.org).

National tourist organisation offices

Jamaica Tourist Board, Knutsford Boulevard, Kingston 5 (tel: 929-9200; fax: 929-9375; e-mail: info@visitjamaica.com).

Ministries

Office of The Prime Minister, Jamaica House, 1 Devon Road, Kingston 6 (tel: 927-9941/3; fax: 929-0005).

Nations of the World: A Political, Economic and Business Handbook

Ministry of Agriculture, Hope Gardens, Kingston 6 (tel: 927-1731/45; fax: 927-1904).

Ministry of Education and Culture, 2 National Heroes Circle, Kingston 4 (tel: 922-1400/19; fax: 967-1837).

Ministry of Finance and Planning, 30 National Heroes Circle, Kingston 4 (tel: 922-8600/15; fax: 922-7097).

Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade, 21 Dominica Drive, Kingston 5 (tel: 926-4220/8; fax: 929-5112; e-mail: mfaftjam@cwjamaica.com).

Ministry of Health, Oceana Hotel Complex, 2 King Street, Kingston (tel: 967-1092; fax: 967-7293).

Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Technology, 36 Trafalgar Road, Kingston 10 (tel: 929-8990/9; fax: 960-1623; e-mail: gojmii@infochan.com).

Ministry of Labour and Social Security, 1f North Street, Kingston (tel: 922-9500, 967-1900; fax: 922-6902).

Ministry of Land and Environment, 2 Hagley Park Road, Kingston 10 (tel: 926-1590, 926-7008; fax: 926-2591; e-mail: mehsys@hotmail.com).

Ministry of Local Government, Youth & Community Development, 85 Hagley Park, Kingston 10 (tel: 754-0994; fax: 960-0725).

Ministry of Mining and Energy, 36 Trafalgar Road, Kingston 10 (tel: 926-9170/7; fax: 968-2082; e-mail: hmme@cwjamaica.com).

Ministry of National Security and Justice, Mutual Life Building, North Tower, 2 Oxford Road, Kingston 5 (tel: 906-4908/33; fax: 906-1724; e-mail: infoform@infochan.com).

Ministry of Tourism and Sports, 64 Knutsford Boulevard, Kingston 5 (tel: 920-4956; fax: 920-4944; e-mail: opmt@cwjamaica.com).

Ministry of Transportation and Works, 1c-1f Pawsey Place, New Kingston (tel: 754-1900; fax: 927-8763).

Ministry of Water and Housing, 7th Floor, Island Life Building, 6 St Lucia Avenue, Kingston 5 (tel: 754-0973; fax: 754-0975; e-mail: prumow@cwjamaica.com).

Attorney General's Department, Mutual Life Building, North Tower, 2 Oxford Road, Kingston 5 (tel: 906-2416/7) and 79-83 Barry Street, Kingston (tel: 922-6140; fax: 922-5109).

Other useful addresses

All-Island Jamaica Cane Farmers' Association, 4 North Ave, Kingston 4 (tel: 922-3010; fax: 922-077).

Banana Export Co (BECO), 10 South Ave, Kingston 4 (tel: 922-5490).

British High Commission, Trafalgar Road, PO Box 575, Kingston 10 (tel: 926-9050; fax: 929-7869).

Cabinet Office, 1 Devon Road, Kingston 10 (tel: 927-9941/3; fax: 929-8459).

Cocoa Industry Board, Marcus Garvey Drive, PO Box 68, Kingston 15 (tel: 923-6411).

Coffee Industry Board, Marcus Garvey Drive, Kingston 15 (tel: 923-7211).

Jamaica Bauxite Institute, Hope Gdns, PO Box 355, Kingston 6 (tel: 927-2073; fax: 927-159).

Jamaica Exporters' Association (JEA), 13 Dominica Drive, PO Box 9, Kingston 5 (tel: 929-1292; fax: 929-831).

Jamaica Information Service, Kingston (tel: 926-3740, 926-3590; fax: 926-715).

Jamaica Manufacturers' Association, 85a Duke Street, Kingston (tel: 922-8880/2).

Jamaica Promotion Corporation (Jampro Limited), 35 Trafalgar Road, Kingston 10 (tel: 929-9450, 929-9452/6; fax:

924-9650; e-mail: jamprouk@investjamaica.com).

Jamaica Stock Exchange, 40 Harbour Street, Kingston (tel: 922-0806; fax: 922-6966; e-mail: info-jse@jamstockex.com).

Jamaican Embassy (USA), 1520 New Hampshire Avenue, NW, Washington DC 20006 (tel: (+1-202)-452-0660; fax: (+1-202)-452-0081; e-mail: emjam@sysnet.net).

Kingston Free Zone, Lot 27, Shannon Drive, Kingston 15 (tel: 923-5274).

The Planning Institute of Jamaica, 39 Barbados Ave, Kingston 5 (tel: 926-1480; fax: 926-4670).

US Embassy, Mutual Life Centre, 2 Oxford Road, Kingston 5 (tel: 929-4850).

National news agency: Jamaica Information Service

58a Half Way Tree Road, Kingston 10 (tel: 926-3740; fax: 926-6715; email: jis@jis.gov.jm; internet: www.jis.gov.jm).

Other news agencies: Caribbean Net News: www.caribbeanetnews.com

Jamaica New Bulletin: (www.jamaicanewsbulletin.com)

Internet sites

Export Jamaica: <http://www.exportjamaica.org>

Jamaica Stock Exchange: <http://www.jamstockex.com>

CVM Television: http://www.cvmtv.com/top_news1.htm

Jamaica and Jamaican Top 5 Sites: <http://www.top5jamaica.com>

Jamaicamarket (business gateway): <http://www.jamaicamarket.com>

Jamaica Promotions Corporation (Jampro) (export and investment promotion agency): <http://www.investjamaica.com>