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## BVI to See Daily American Airlines Flights Beginning June 2023; Residents Urged to Prepare Airbnbs

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Airlift versus accommodation was the question at hand when the premier of the British Virgin Islands and his deputy announced the addition of more flights into the territory starting next summer.

Deputy Premier & Communications & Works Minister Kye Rymer made the announcement during a press conference on Friday.

"American Airlines direct service to the (British) Virgin Islands will see daily flights departing Miami at 10:25 a.m., arriving Beef Island at 1:30 p.m. Leaving Beef Island at 2:30 p.m. and arriving in Miami at 5:30 p.m.," Mr. Rymer announced.

"What is even better for us is that Miami is American Airlines' home base, and American Airlines is the largest carrier at Miami International Airport. This means that persons traveling out of the (British) Virgin Islands using this service, including (British Virgin Islanders), belongers, residents and visitors will be able to seamlessly connect to more than 140 destinations that are serviced by American Airlines, including other Caribbean destinations and the rest of the world," he added.

Mr. Rymer said the new flights will increase arrivals to the BVI by over 400 people weekly. "The impact of this will be tremendously positive for us," he said.

The new seasonal flight will begin on June 1, 2023 and will run through the summer before returning in November.

Local journalists, however, had questions on whether the territory's poor infrastructure, more pointedly a stretch of road that visitors have to travel on, would be addressed ahead of the new flights in June 2023.

BVI Premier and Minister of Finance, Natalio Wheatley, said the plan is to repair the damaged road ahead of the new flights. "We're going to borrow what we have to borrow to get it done," he said.

There were also questions about whether there was sufficient accommodation in the territory, and Mr. Wheatley referred back to his budget presentation during which he had advised residents to prepare any suitable places for self-catering accommodation such as Airbnbs.

"The good thing about Airbnb is that you can use your house even. You can use property and one thing that we have in the (British) Virgin Islands that has helped to elevate us and propel us is land ownership," Mr. Natalio said.

The government of the BVI says it continues to fine tune their airport master plan, which includes a proposed runway expansion for the Terrance B Lettsome International Airport. The territory will continue "working with what we have" according to representatives at Friday's press briefing.