

# CAL, TTALPA conclude negotiations, sign agreement



Chief operations officer (CAL) Nirmala Ramai, seated left, and TTALPA chairman Jason Wickham, seated right, shake hands after signing the agreement, while surrounded by CAL and TTALPA officials, at CAL's Piarco head office yesterday. PHOTO COURTESY CAL

Caribbean Airlines Limited and the Trinidad and Tobago Airline Pilots Association (TTALPA) have signed a collective agreement covering the period September 1, 2020, to August 31, 2023, bringing closure to prolonged negotiations between the parties and marking a significant step in stabilising industrial relations at the national carrier.

The agreement, which addresses salaries, allowances and other terms and conditions of pilots' employment, follows sustained engagement and extensive dialogue between the airline and the pilots' body.

In a joint statement, both sides described the outcome as a product of good-faith negotiations and a commitment to stable industrial relations, but did not put a figure to the agreement.

In a joint statement, the parties said the deal provides clarity and alignment

for both the company and its pilots, while supporting operational continuity at a time when the regional aviation industry continues to face evolving challenges.

They noted that the signing marks the second collective agreement concluded within the past 16 months, allowing both sides to shift focus towards operational performance, workforce stability and financial resilience in a challenging aviation and geopolitical environment.

Caribbean Airlines said it acknowledged the role of pilots in ensuring the safe and efficient delivery of its services, while TTALPA said it recognised the airline's continued engagement in resolving outstanding matters through the collective bargaining process.

Both parties reaffirmed their commitment to ongoing collaboration to strengthen the employment relationship and support the long-term growth and sustainability of the airline.

Over the last year, negotiations between CAL and TTALPA were tense over retroactive pay and long-overdue collective agreements.

In late 2024, the Minister of Finance authorised a four per cent salary increase for the 2015–2020 period and an additional four per cent for 2020–2023.

While this appeared to be a breakthrough, the situation soured by early 2025 as TTALPA accused the airline's management of stalling.

The union had claimed that despite the government's authorisation and the signing of a collective agreement in December 2024, pilots had received only a fraction of the promised payments, leading to public protests and calls for direct intervention from the Prime Minister.

The relationship has remained strained due to a combination of legal restrictions and operational anxieties.

An Industrial Court injunction issued in 2023 continues to bar pilots from taking formal strike action, forcing the union to rely on “educational campaigns” and public demonstrations, such as billboards, to voice their grievances.

As of early 2026, the discourse had expanded beyond just wages to include

deep-seated concerns over job security following route reductions and government pressure for the airline to achieve profitability within a two-year window.