

# Tourism on the upswing

**WITH THE OFFICIAL START of the tourism season just days away, the Barbados Hotel and Tourism Association (BHTA) anticipates the industry will continue to expand in 2020, despite the implications of Brexit and the US/China trade war.**

That was revealed by Senator Rudy Grant, chief executive officer of the BHTA, during their fourth quarterly general meeting at the **Lloyd Erskine Sandiford Centre**.

"The STR Report indicates that the occupancy for January to September 2019, increased by 5.1 per cent when compared to the same period for 2018. This was nominal movement in the average daily rate (ADR) of 0.9 per cent.

"While we anticipate expansion in 2020, we cannot, however, be complacent, and we must be determined to work even harder. The uncertainty of Brexit looms over us in a market which presently is our major

source market. The US/China trade war represents a threat to the global economy which could have serious consequences for small developing states like Barbados," he said.

Additionally, he noted tourism arrival numbers continued to be on an upward climb.

"There has been growth in long-stay visitor arrivals of five per cent for the period January to September 2019. We are anticipating that we will continue to perform better in 2020. The booking patterns for our visitors have changed, and we are observing a lot of more last-minute bookings which change the projections in a significantly positive way," he said.

"For the period January to September 2019, preliminary figures inform that 522 583 long-stay visitors came to Barbados. This was an increase of 4.2 per cent or 21 200 more visitors when compared to the corresponding period for 2018. The increase in long-stay visitor arrivals



**OUTGOING** chief executive officer of the Barbados Tourism Marketing Inc., William "Billy" Griffith (left), receiving a token from chairman of the BHTA, Stephen Austin. (Picture by Nigel Browne.)

was due mainly due to increases in arrivals from the USA by 9.5 per cent and the United Kingdom by 8.7 per cent.

"Increases also were noted for Central and South America which recorded long-stay visitor arrivals increasing by 11 per cent, whilst Germany also recorded growth in long-stay visitor arrivals of 5.7 per cent. The Canadian market registered a decline of 1.5 per cent with Trinidad and other Caribbean countries

recording declines of 2.4 per cent and 1.5 per cent," he said.

During the same period, Barbados welcomed 443 133 cruise visitors, which represented a decline of 1.3 per cent when compared to the corresponding period for 2018. There was also a decrease in the number of cruise ship calls to Barbados from 296 in 2018 to 278 in 2019, when comparing the period January to September 2019. (RA)

## Upgrades signal BERT is working, says Greenidge

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and economic challenges of doing so".

"Multilateral lending institutions, which we expect will continue to commit and disburse financial and technical assistance to Barbados, will also support the Government's mandate. We expect over the next 12 to 18 months the Government will continue to implement policies that achieve fiscal consolidation and instill institutional safeguards, while strengthening macroeconomic stability," S&P added in its ratings statement.

Mottley, who is on an official visit to Kenya, said she was "happy to learn of this significant upgrade by Standard & Poor by six notches".

She congratulated Barbadians "for pulling together and making the necessary adjustments and sacrifice to put us all on the right path to

sustainability".

"We are not yet where we need to be but if we stay the course and if we focus on adding value in all that we do and on growth, I have every confidence we will make it and reverse the impact of the lost decade," the Prime Minister said.

"We can return the country to investment grade and continue to build people's confidence in all that we are doing."

Greenidge, who is on secondment from the International Monetary Fund, said given that the BERT programme was just one year old, S&P's major upgrade "is quite an achievement for Barbados".

"The upgrade sends a strong statement that BERT is working and speaks to the strength of the adjustment programme and reforms being undertaken," he said.

"The report from S&P speaks to the outlook

being 'stable' as opposed to 'negative' a year ago, and is indicative of the Government's commitment to continue to implement policies that achieve fiscal sustainability. Indeed, the report states that if the Government adheres to its ambitious fiscal targets and reform agenda, then it can expect further upgrades over the next year.

"In general, the upgrade of such a large magnitude is an indication to the world that Barbados is back. It serves to further reduce uncertainty and improve prospects for investment, which augurs well for growth," Greenidge added.

In its ratings statement, S&P said it "could raise the ratings over the next year should the Government adhere to its ambitious fiscal targets and reform agenda, which could strengthen investor confidence and contribute to improved GDP growth prospects".

## NOTICE

Having received no suitable responses to the advertisement for the position of **Health & Environmental Manager**, it is our intention to submit application for a non-national to fill this position. Any persons objecting to the granting of this work permit should respond to the **Chief Immigration Officer** by **December 24, 2019**

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