

Over 5 000 hotel workers home

Sixty hotels are closed and more than 5 000 hotel workers off the job in the fallout from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Chief executive officer of the Barbados Hotel and Tourism Association (BHTA), Senator Rudy Grant, told the **Weekend Nation** those hotels represented 87 per cent of its hotel membership of 79, which employed 6 515 people.

He said the data was gleaned from a recent survey to determine the level of staff dislocation among its hotel membership.

"Of those 60 hotels, they have indicated they have employed 6 515 persons but presently some 5 287 persons are not working," Grant said.

Direct tourism services, which include restaurants, attractions and car rental operators, have also taken a bullseye hit as Grant said he was not aware of any of them currently operational.

"Even when the curfew ends, my expectation is that the vast



majority of the direct tourism services will continue either not to function and those that do, will probably be doing so in a very limited kind of way."

He said the BHTA was collaborating with the Ministry of Tourism to facilitate training for workers at all levels of the industry.

"We recognise this is important, particularly when there is some measure of recovery, to ensure there is good value for money because we think that value for money proposition is going to be very important."

Grant conceded it was unlikely that in the rebuilding process, the hospitality industry would immediately be able to return to where it was before the COVID-19 pandemic, but added: "We do believe that through the collaboration with our partners, that we can see a rebuilding of this very important industry."

The CEO said the organisation was optimistic that though the recovery would be "slow", there was confidence of a resurgence in business "and that we can put the measures in place to take advantage of any opportunities that exist".

However, he cautioned a lot would depend on the airlift, which would not be solely determined by Barbados.

"That will largely be determined by the airlines which function in our major source markets and also will depend on what is happening in those source markets," Grant explained.



Fish vendors waiting for the gates to be opened yesterday at the Bridgetown Public Market. They complained that they had to wait for almost half an hour.

(Picture by Nigel Browne.)

Long wait for fish market to open

Customers and vendors outside the Bridgetown Fisheries Complex yesterday expressed concern over how long they had to wait to get in.

Under the 24-hour curfew, all fish markets have been operating from 8 a.m. to noon daily. But at 8 o'clock yesterday, vendors still had not gained access and the first customer was only allowed in at 8:31 a.m.

Clifton Garnes said he had been waiting since 7:40 a.m.

"It is 8:21 a.m. by my watch and we have not entered the complex as yet. At eight o'clock the place still wasn't open. Even some of the fish sellers were not allowed in the complex until after the opening time. Presently they are still setting up and persons are

still outside waiting," he lamented.

"Workers should have been set up at least half-hour before so that when customers come, they would be allowed to do their business. This is a sad state of affairs, because I would think things would be put in place for the ordinary citizen to get in and get out as quickly as possible," said Garnes, who is also a Barbados Football Association referee.

May abandon plans

Some customers complained they might have to abandon plans of going to the supermarket and the bank if they did not get through in time.

One man said he had rushed

down there in the hopes of getting through early to then go and purchase "milk and pampers" for his infant son.

An elderly woman said she had been in the line just after 7 a.m. and was surprised at the lengthy wait.

"I just come to get few pieces of fish and head back home. They need to do better, though. This sun not easy and you have old people like me standing in the sun for too long."

Some vendors sat in the Princess Alice Bus Terminal across the street while waiting for the gates to be opened.

One of them, who also declined to give her name, said the four-hour operation was not enough especially if they started later than 8 a.m. (RA)

Govt to review supermarket protocol 'soon'

Government will let its new supermarket shopping protocol run, but the entire programme will be reviewed in a couple of days.

News of this came from COVID-19 czar Richard Carter yesterday.

Carter, as has become the norm in recent times, took to the phone lines during **Starcom Network's** radio call-in programme **Down To Brass Tacks**, after criticism of the new shopping regime just two days into the initiative.

He said Government would make changes if that were deemed necessary, and the entire programme would be reviewed by Cabinet.

On Wednesday, as part of the National Pandemic Preparedness Plan, Government started alphabet-based shopping, hoping it would reduce the need for large crowds at supermarkets and still allow for social distancing.

Six feet apart

In most instances, shoppers were at least six feet apart, but lines snaked around supermarkets, and some people were even turned back without getting a chance to shop in the three-hour windows provided.

"The opening times were discussed with all the retailers and distributors, the private sector agencies and even the unions," Carter said.

"The decision was based on that discussion, based on what they thought would work. It is going to be reviewed over the next couple of days, and if we find there is the need [for it] to be adjusted, then it will be adjusted."

The czar also confirmed that village shops and minimarts would continue to act within the time limits allowed everyday, and that schedule would not be affected by the protocols for supermarket shopping. (BA)

Request for Proposal For Public Private Partnership In Broadcasting

In view of various unforeseen circumstances generated by the Coronavirus 2019, the Board of Directors of the Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation has decided to extend the deadline for submission of proposals **May 21st, 2020 at 4pm**.

Any enquiries or discrepancies concerning the Request for Proposals must now be communicated to the Corporation no later than the **May 6th, 2020** via email at **rpf@cbc.bb** to allow for any written addenda to be communicated to all Interested Parties. The Corporation will respond to all queries no later than 10 days before the Proposal closing date.

Interested Parties are reminded that they should visit the Corporation's website at **https://cbc.bb** or the GIS website at **http://gisbarbados.gov.bb/** for the document of the Request for Proposals.

Board of Directors
Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation