

N News

BEC keeping eye on job losses

THE BARBADOS EMPLOYERS' CONFEDERATION (BEC) is concerned about Barbados' falling employment rate.

Following the revelation from Dr Lynette Holder, chief executive officer of the Small Business Association (SBA), that around 100 businesses had folded and been struck from their list last year, BEC executive director Sheena Mayers-Granville said she, too, had been monitoring job losses, albeit from a different perspective.

"We are a membership-based organisation . . . so you can be a business of any size and join the BEC once you have employees. Because of our services, a straight comparison based on if people have fallen off our list or not would not work, but I can corroborate the fact that a lot of small businesses have been and continue to face hardships



BEC EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR Sheena Mayers-Granville says she has been monitoring job losses. (FP)

in the current economy. "Our membership, in terms of numbers, may not have reduced. However, the levels of employment among our members has definitely shifted between 2020 and now. There is no way in 2020, when you have an economy which contracted by 20 per cent, there would not be an impact on the number of businesses. "While there was a marginal improvement last year, our economy is still smaller than it was in 2019," she said.

Pandemic

Mayers-Granville said the falling employment rate was due to the economic impact of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

Drawing reference to tourism, she said numerous businesses were affected when there was a drop-off in visitor arrivals that resulted in working less hours. She said necessary measures



MINISTER OF ENERGY, Business Development and International Business Kerrie Symmonds. (FP)

such as the curfew and lockdown also affected businesses negatively. The BEC executive director said it was difficult to say when the economic prospects of Barbados were going to improve but they hinged on getting a grasp on COVID-19.

"As the economy starts to bounce back we can expect to see increases in small businesses and employment numbers. We would hope this year things start to improve as we get a better hold on managing the virus and its impact, internationally as well as locally," she said.

Minister of Energy, Business Development and International Business Kerrie Symmonds said the unemployment levels were of great concern to Government and they were doing their best to get a handle on the pandemic.

"Any unemployment is too much unemployment and Government is doing and will continue to do all within its power to ensure that our economy fully reopens in the safest and most responsible manner possible," he told the **DAILY NATION** yesterday.

In her report, Holder said they had also registered around 400 new businesses and, while the data was not to hand as yet, there was always the possibility some of the businesses struck from their list may have rebranded and re-signed with the SBA under a new business name. **(CA)**

Alliance to help descendants resettle

THE RIGHT TO RETURN ALLIANCE is on a mission to better serve African descendants who have repatriated to the continent and those who are interested in doing so.

Yesterday, during a virtual press conference to promote the organisation's year of activities, it was revealed that some descendants were experiencing challenges when entering some

this year as **2022: The Year Of Promoting The African Descendants' Right To Return.**

- The campaign seeks to:
- inform and organise other like-minded, non-governmental organisations and groups to join the movement;
 - work with as many descendants living in African states and those who plan on

- to facilitate repatriation; and
 - lobby European countries, which previously practised colonialism, especially in Africa, to facilitate the provisions needed for reparations.
- Some of this year's activities include a movie night, a diaspora symposium and a business summit.
- More than 50 people attended the virtual conference held