

Barbados to Allow Commercial Flights Beginning July 12; Air Canada Schedules Twice-Weekly Flights

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BARBADOS — The Government of Barbados has announced that effective July 12, scheduled commercial air traffic will resume at the Grantley Adams International Airport.

Prime Minister Mia Amor Mottley, in an address to the nation Friday at Ilaro Court, said it was expected to start with traffic out of Canada, with the arrival of Air Canada which would be coming initially twice per week on Thursdays and Sundays, according to the government's official news platform.

This would be followed by British Airways resuming its flight from Gatwick on July 18, which she said would initially be once a week, but will also respond to demand.

The Prime Minister added that on July 25, JetBlue was expected to return, coming four times per week from JFK, while American Airlines would come by August 5, out of Miami.

“We will continue to take a risk-based approach to the protection of our country, our people and our visitors,” she said.

With respect to Virgin Atlantic, Ms. Mottley said this airline was expected to resume flights on

August 1, and was scheduled to come once a week initially, until they ramp back up their full schedule for the winter in October.

Speaking about flights out of the Caribbean, Prime Minister Mottley noted that it was anticipated that Caribbean Airline Limited (CAL) would resume in mid-July.

And, she further informed media representatives that the shareholders of LIAT would be holding an informal caucus tomorrow in order to be able to determine the future of LIAT.

“We will be in a better position to speak to that over the course of the next few weeks as to how we would proceed. Suffice it to say, though, that we are committed to ensuring that there will be effective, affordable, reliable and safe inter regional travel as part of the product mix, starting from July,” Prime Minister Mottley stressed.

Meanwhile, Minister of Tourism and International Transport, Kerrie Symmonds, noted that the refueling of business could not be done “without also having a clear mind and understanding towards the health of workers and the health of Barbadian citizens”.

Minister Symmonds noted that the country had never closed the airport and that it had been open for the repatriation flights, and for cargo being flown into the island.

He also pointed out that the focus now was on the protocols which would ensure the safety of the workers at the airport, and obviously the safety of the Barbadian citizens.

“That has been the first priority of the Ministry working in collaboration with Ministry of Health officials, and I’m happy to say that we’ve been able to work through a number of protocols. The first of them would have been the protocols for the accommodation sector, and they have been settled with the Barbados Workers Union and the National Union of Public Workers.

“And, we’ve done protocols for the attractions, and for the villa accommodations, as well. And we are now at the stage where we have settled the protocols for people arriving into the country, and that is perhaps the most important of the processes. Before you embark on your journey to Barbados, you must within 72 hours of the commencement of travel, do a COVID-19 PCR antigen test.

The Minister further pointed out that the standard of the test must be ISO, or CAP, or in the case of United Kingdom, UKAS compliant, or the equivalent, and he said the specifics of that would be made available as Government undertakes a public education and awareness programme.

While stating that after passing that test, persons would be given a certificate indicating that they are COVID-19 negative, Mr. Symmonds added: “And, you’re expected to fill out online your Embarkation/Disembarkation (ED) card The ED card now will have a new look and will carry within it, a number of questions which relate specifically to issues relating to personal health and symptoms.

“And once you have filled that out online and submitted it, you’ll get an exchange sent back to your email address; most people will walk with it on their telephone, a barcode, which once you arrive into the island and you have your certificate indicating that you have passed the COVID-19 test, you just clear immigration and you are allowed into Barbados.”

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