

ISSUE #1

WIN TT

MONDAY, JANUARY 5, 2026



MAGAZINE

PROGRESS YOU CAN SEE. LEADERSHIP YOU CAN TRUST.



Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. Dan Caine greets Prime Minister, The Honourable Kamla Persad-Bissessar, SC, at the Diplomatic Centre, St Ann's, Port-of-Spain. PHOTO: UNC Facebook

CONFIDENCE RESTORED

U.S. JOINT CHIEFS MEETING SIGNALS RENEWED TRUST IN T&T'S GOVERNANCE AND SECURITY LEADERSHIP



ENERGY



INFRASTRUCTURE



EDUCATION



CULTURE

PROGRESS YOU CAN SEE. LEADERSHIP YOU CAN TRUST.

Welcome to the inaugural edition of WIN TT Magazine, a bold new platform dedicated to documenting the work, achievements, and forward momentum of the Government.

WIN TT Magazine exists for a simple but powerful reason: the people of Trinidad and Tobago deserve clear, honest, and accessible updates on how their Government is rebuilding the nation with vision and determination.

Across every ministry, every community, and every sector, progress is being made, not by chance, but through focused leadership, evidence-based policy, and a renewed commitment to public service and national development.

Within these pages, you will find the real stories of transformation: infrastructure revived, education strengthened, healthcare modernised, communities uplifted, and national security restored. This is progress you can see and leadership you can trust.

As the year unfolds, it continues to demand responsibility, focus, and purposeful action. We extend our best wishes to the people of Trinidad and Tobago for a year guided by resilience, confidence, unity, and forward momentum.

Through WIN TT Magazine, we remain focused on telling the story of delivery, accountability, and results, because informed, empowered citizens are how nations move forward and win.



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ENDLESS LOVE

Prime Minister, the Honourable Kamla Persad-Bissessar, hosted her annual Toy Drive, spreading joy and smiles to hundreds of children who gathered to receive gifts and share in the warmth of the Christmas spirit. During the celebration, the Prime Minister reaffirmed her unwavering commitment to the well-being of children and extended heartfelt Christmas wishes and warm New Year greetings to the national community, embracing hopes for a happy, bright, and prosperous year ahead.



PM STRENGTHENS STRATEGIC SECURITY TIES WITH THE UNITED STATES

Prime Minister Kamla Persad-Bissessar, SC, has once again demonstrated the composure, clarity, and strategic depth required of a leader on the international stage. Her high-level meeting on November 25, 2025, with General Dan Caine, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff of the United States, was far more than a routine diplomatic engagement.

It was a clear, unmistakable signal that Trinidad and Tobago has re-emerged as a serious, stable, and respected partner in regional security.

Gathering at the Diplomatic Centre, the Prime Minister reaffirmed Trinidad and Tobago's long-standing partnership with the United States, emphasising shared priorities: regional security, stability, and the protection of citizens from the corrosive forces of transnational crime.

Her message was unequivocal—this Gov-



ernment is committed to dismantling the networks behind narco-trafficking, human trafficking, arms smuggling, and the organised criminal enterprises that have long destabilised our society and the wider Caribbean.

The meeting underscored something deeper: the renewed respect Trinidad and To-

bago is earning on the world stage. General Caine's recognition of our nation's role in regional security is not accidental.

It reflects the return of competent governance, disciplined diplomacy, and strong institutions—qualities that had been eroded under the former PNM administration.

When global partners signal confidence in our leadership, it is a direct reflection of the quality of stewardship at home.

While the relationship between Trinidad and Tobago and the United States spans decades, it takes effective leadership to strengthen it, modernise it, and reposition the country as a central player in hemispheric security efforts. Prime Minister Persad-Bissessar has done precisely that.

Her proactive stance and determination to confront transnational crime head-on have shifted Trinidad and Tobago from the margins to the centre of regional security conversations.

CANADA-T&T DIPLOMACY MOVES FORWARD WITH CLEAR DIRECTION

The contrast in leadership approach is unmistakable. Diplomacy thrives when guided by stability, credibility, and forward planning. What took place at that meeting reflected a government actively rebuilding international trust, restoring Trinidad and Tobago's reputation, and opening new avenues for opportunity—rather than treating diplomacy as a ceremonial exercise.

The recent engagement between Prime Minister Kamla Persad-Bissessar and His Excellency Michael Callan, Canadian High Commissioner to Trinidad and Tobago, reflected diplomacy at its most effective—focused, deliberate, and firmly anchored in the national interest.

Accompanied by Stuart Shaw, Counsellor for Political and Public Affairs, and Nancy Bernard, Senior Trade Commissioner, the Canadian delegation underscored the importance Canada places on deepening its partnership with Trinidad and Tobago.

Joining the Prime Minister was MP Barry

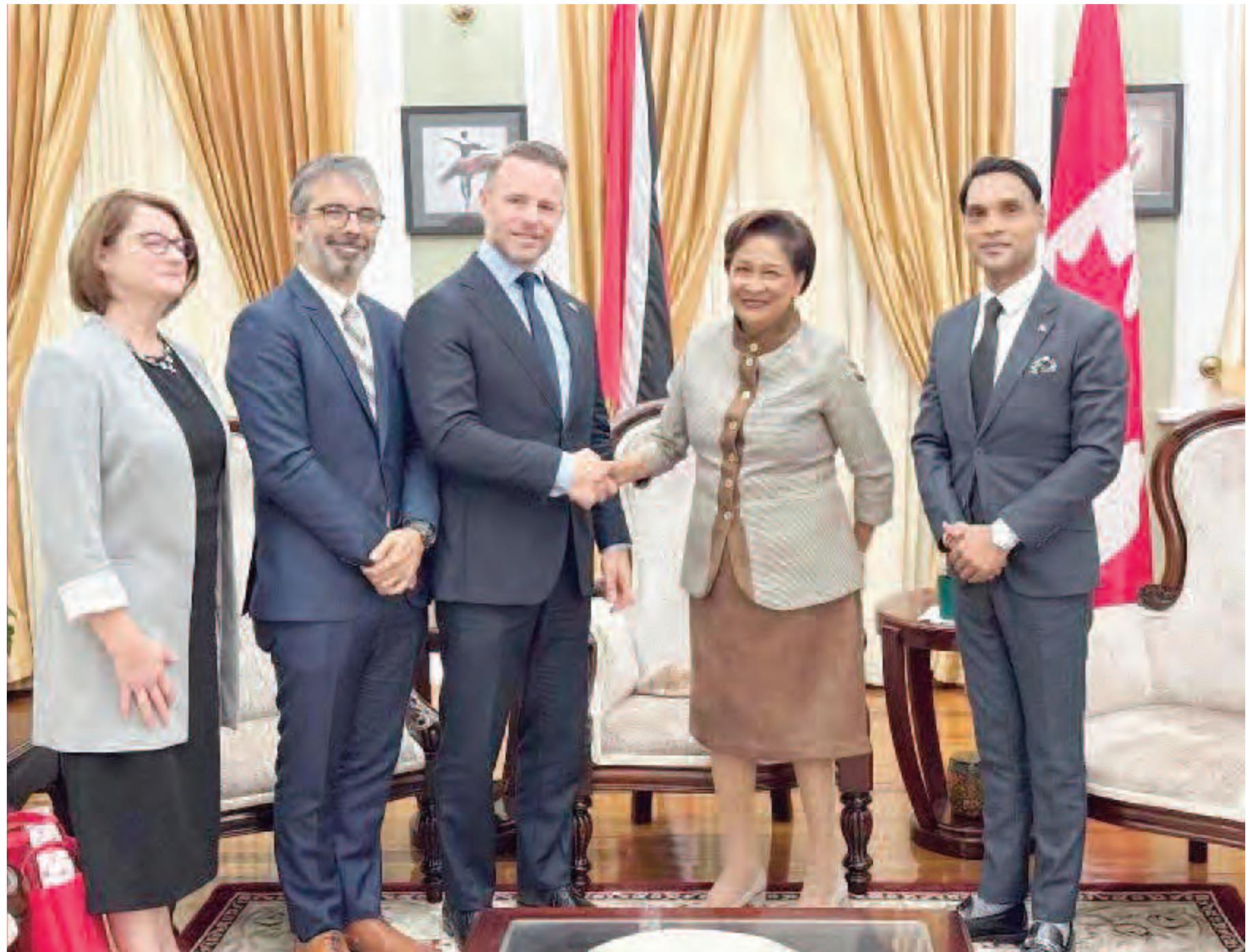
Padarath, Minister in the Office of the Prime Minister and Minister of Public Utilities, highlighting the Government's coordinated approach to international engagement. The discussions explored areas of shared priority, including trade expansion, security cooperation, education, and development initiatives, all within the context of strengthening long-standing bilateral ties.

The Trinidad and Tobago–Canada relationship has consistently played a strategic role in the country's development. This meeting reaffirmed its relevance in a modern global environment and demonstrated how purposeful leadership can translate estab-

lished partnerships into forward-looking collaboration. Under Prime Minister Persad-Bissessar's stewardship, diplomacy is being approached with renewed clarity, consistency, and intent.

These engagements extend beyond protocol. They represent a strategic investment in Trinidad and Tobago's future, guided by leadership that understands the power of diplomacy and the responsibility that comes with representing the nation abroad.

Through steady and principled engagement, the Government is strengthening relationships that will deliver lasting benefits for generations to come.





COUVA CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL ENVISIONED AS A MODERN MEDICAL CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE

By rededicating the Couva Children's Hospital, Trinidad and Tobago has done more than reopen a long-silent facility; it has reclaimed a moral obligation to its youngest citizens.

Speaking on December 8, 2025, Prime Minister Kamla Persad-Bissessar, SC, described the moment not as ceremonial, but as corrective: a decisive act to heal a wound left open for nearly a decade.

"This is not a routine government event," she said. "It is the restoration of a cherished promise that every child in Trinidad and Tobago deserves dignity, protection, and world-class care."

Delivered in the Christmas season, her message carried both accountability and renewal. "Christmas reminds us that no child is insignificant," the Prime Minister noted. "Every child is a possibility. A purpose. The future itself."

A Hospital built for children, then taken from them

The Couva Children's Hospital was commissioned on August 14, 2015, during Prime Minister Persad-Bissessar's first term in office, guided by a simple principle: children deserve world-class healthcare at home.

Designed as a 230-bed modern facility, it was envisioned as a centre of excellence for paediatric and maternal care, neonatal and critical services, advanced imaging, surgery, burns treatment, and specialist diagnostics, while also supporting medical training and research. Yet, within weeks of its commissioning, the hospital was shut down.

"It was not closed because it was unsafe or unfinished," the Prime Minister stated. "Some will say it was malice, spite, and ill will."

For nearly ten years, the hospital remained abandoned, while children were sent abroad for treatment at enormous public cost and others waited in vain.

"This was not delay," she said plainly. "It was neglect."

The cost of abandonment

Following the United National Congress' return to government on April 28, 2025, assessments revealed the scale of the loss. More than \$100 million in medical equipment had been left unused, expired, obsolete, or non-functional, including advanced radiology systems that never treated a single patient.

"That is taxpayers' money left idle," Persad-Bissessar said. "But the real cost was human, measured in suffering, delay, and lives lost."

Since returning to office, the Government has approved TT\$78.2 million to restore and replace equipment. Operating theatres were certified in September 2025, patients began receiving care in November, and the first surgery was successfully performed that same month.

By December 5, 2025, 86 surgeries had already been completed, helping to reduce a waiting list of more than 11,300 cases, including thousands of delayed ophthalmology procedures.

Specialist paediatric clinics have also begun, with children now receiving care in cardiology, neurology, neonatology, endocrinology, and rheumatology.

"Children who once waited months, or were sent abroad, are now being treated at home," the Prime Minister said.

One promise, two pillars

The hospital's reopening, Persad-Bissessar emphasized, is paired with reforms to the Children's Life Fund, among her government's first legislative actions in 2025.



CELEBRATING ACADEMIC BRILLIANCE: NATION'S TOP CXC PERFORMERS RECOGNISED

On Thursday, December 11, 2025, Prime Minister Kamla Persad-Bissessar, SC, joined students, educators, and families at the Government Campus Plaza for the 2025 CXC Awards Ceremony, celebrating academic excellence and national achievement.

The event recognised Trinidad and Tobago's highest-performing students in the May/June CXC examination cycle, honouring outstanding results across CSEC, CAPE, and specialised subject areas.

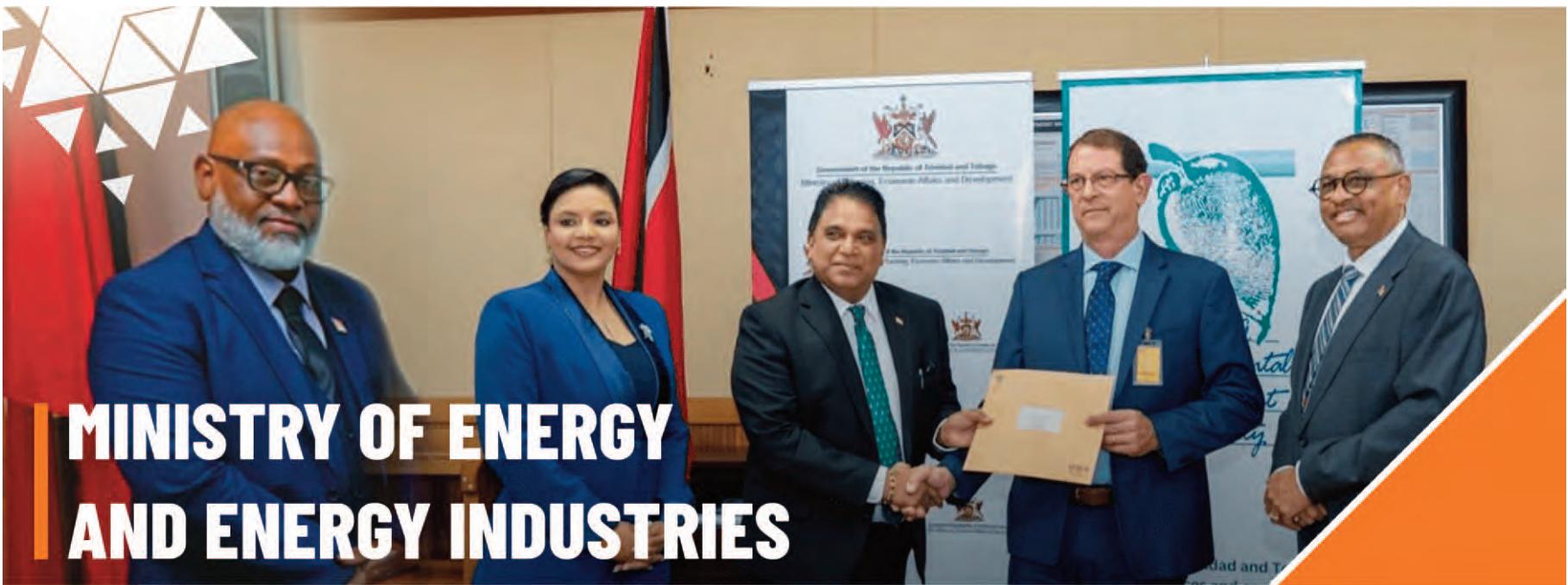
In remarks following the ceremony, the Prime Minister praised the awardees for their discipline, resilience, and commitment to excellence, noting that their success reflects the strength of the country's education system and the promise of its next generation. She described the achievements as evidence of what is possible when talent is matched with opportunity and support.

Persad-Bissessar also acknowledged the crucial role played by parents, teachers, and schools, underscoring that academic success is built through sustained guidance, encouragement, and shared effort.

Addressing the students directly, she urged them to remain focused and ambitious as they move into the next phase of their academic and professional journeys, reminding them that their accomplishments carry both personal significance and national importance.

The ceremony highlighted the Government's ongoing commitment to education as a cornerstone of national development, reaffirming its focus on nurturing talent, rewarding merit, and empowering young people to contribute meaningfully to Trinidad and Tobago's future.





MINISTRY OF ENERGY AND ENERGY INDUSTRIES

PROMISES MADE AND KEPT FOR 2025



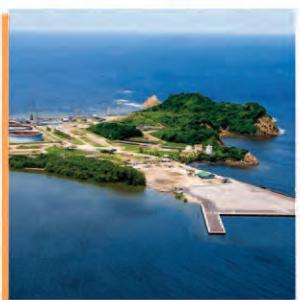
REVITALIZATION OF THE ENERGY SECTOR

REVITALIZATION OF INVESTMENT CLIMATE

- T&T REGAINED OFAC LICENCE FOR THE DRAGON GAS PROJECT
- ENABLES MONETIZATION OF SHARED GAS RESOURCES WITH VENEZUELA
- REINFORCES INVESTOR CONFIDENCE DESPITE GEOPOLITICAL CHALLENGES

RESTORING T&T AS REGIONAL ENERGY HUB

- STRATEGY FOCUSES ON BUSINESS, INFRASTRUCTURE, AND HUMAN CAPITAL
- LEVERAGES LNG, POINT LISAS, AND EXTENSIVE OFFSHORE/ONSHORE ASSETS
- STRENGTHENS LEADERSHIP ROLE WITH GUYANA, SURINAME, AND GRENADA



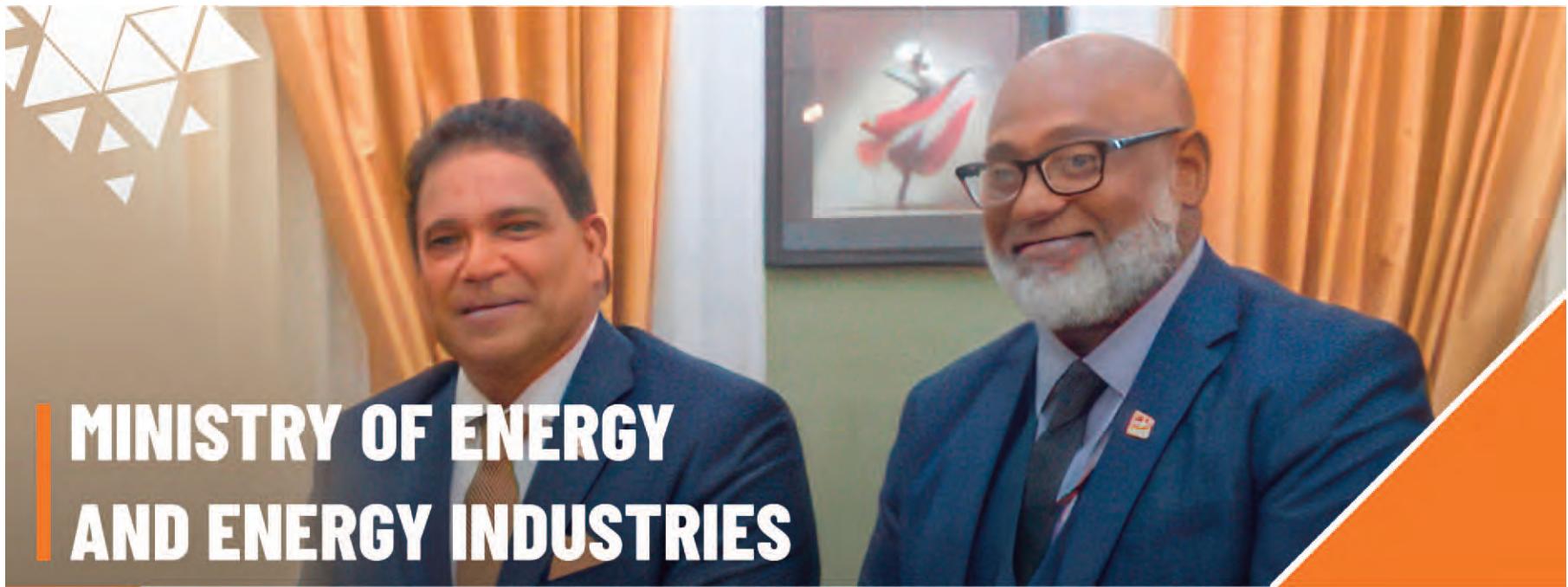
ENHANCING EASE OF DOING BUSINESS

- GOVERNMENT COMMITTED TO REDUCING BUREAUCRATIC DELAYS AND BOTTLENECKS
- ENERGY ACCELERATOR HUB TO FAST-TRACK APPROVALS ACROSS THE VALUE CHAIN
- ENERGY HUB TARGETED FOR ESTABLISHMENT BY Q1 2026

RETURN OF EXXONMOBIL

- EXXONMOBIL SIGNED A PRODUCTION SHARING CONTRACT FOR THE TTUD-1 ULTRA-DEEP BLOCK
- EMA ISSUED A CERTIFICATE OF ENVIRONMENTAL CLEARANCE TO EXXONMOBIL TO CONDUCT A THREE-DIMENSIONAL SEISMIC SURVEY OF 8,825 KM²
- SIGNALS RENEWED GLOBAL CONFIDENCE IN T&T'S UPSTREAM SECTOR
- COMPANY PLANS RAPID DEVELOPMENT USING LOCAL EXPERTISE





MINISTRY OF ENERGY AND ENERGY INDUSTRIES

PROMISES MADE AND **KEPT** FOR 2025



REVIVAL OF STATE ENERGY ASSETS

BOOST IN OIL & GAS PRODUCTION

- OIL PRODUCTION INCREASED BY 5.5% BETWEEN APRIL–OCTOBER 2025
- GAS PRODUCTION ROSE FROM 2.41 TO 2.63 BCF/DAY BY AUGUST 2025
- MARKS REVERSAL OF A DECADE-LONG PRODUCTION DECLINE

RESTART OF GUARACARA REFINERY

- RESTART COMMITTEE CONFIRMED REFINERY IS TECHNICALLY AND FINANCIALLY VIABLE
- LIMITED OPERATIONS POSSIBLE WITHIN 18 MONTHS; FULL CAPACITY IN ~39 MONTHS
- PROJECT COULD CREATE 2,000–5,000 JOBS, MOSTLY LOCAL

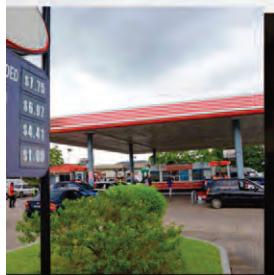


MANATEE PLUS GAS PROJECT

- FIELD CONTAINS 1.872 TCF OF RECOVERABLE GAS WITHIN T&T'S JURISDICTION
- PRODUCTION TARGET INCREASED BY 8–10% THROUGH GOVERNMENT INTERVENTION
- EXPECTED TO BOOST NATIONAL GAS OUTPUT BY OVER 25%

REGIONAL ENERGY COLLABORATION

- ACTIVE MOUs WITH SURINAME AND GRENADA ON GAS, RENEWABLES, AND CAPACITY BUILDING
- RENEWED GRENADA AGREEMENT FOCUSES ON EXPLORATION AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE
- ENERGY COOPERATION INITIATIVES ALSO BEING PURSUED WITH GUYANA



REDUCTION IN SUPER GASOLINE PRICES

- PUMP PRICE OF SUPER GASOLINE REDUCED BY \$1 PER LITRE
- BENEFITS ~400,000 VEHICLE OWNERS (40% OF VEHICLES)
- AVERAGE SAVINGS OF ABOUT \$200 TT PER MONTH PER VEHICLE



VMCOTT POWERS RAPID TURNAROUND FOR NATIONAL SECURITY GOVT DELIVERS 52 RESTORED VEHICLES TO TTPS

The Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago has handed over twelve additional restored police vehicles to the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service (TTPS), bringing the total number of vehicles returned to service to fifty-two within a three-week period.

The most recent handover took place at the Vehicle Maintenance Company of Trinidad and Tobago (VMCOTT), Beetham Estate, Laventille, and was led by the Honourable Roger Alexander, Minister of Homeland Security. Completed ahead of the Christmas season, the exercise fulfilled the mandate set by the Honourable Kamla Persad-Bissessar, SC, Prime Minister of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, for the repair of fifty police vehicles. Through accelerated repairs and coordinated execution, the initiative ultimately delivered fifty-two fully restored vehicles.

Also in attendance were Senator the Honourable Eli Zakour, Minister of Transport and Civil Aviation; Deputy Commissioner of Police (Administration), Mr. Junior Benjamin; VMCOTT Chairman, Mr. Amrall Mohammed; Acting Chief Executive Officer, Mr. Brian Aliendre; Board Member, Dr. Khemraj Nanh; Operations Manager, Mr. Robert Sampson Vialva; and Workshop Manager, Mr. Allister Martin.



In his remarks, Minister Alexander commended VMCOTT for its swift and efficient work and conveyed the Prime Minister's sincere appreciation to VMCOTT, the TTPS, and all stakeholders involved. He noted that many of the vehicles had been out of service for months, and in some cases years, and have now been returned to full operational readiness.

Earlier, on December 18, 2025, Prime Minister Kamla Persad-Bissessar officially handed over fourteen refurbished vehicles to the TTPS.

That handover followed the initial delivery of twelve vehicles, with a further fourteen handed over the following week. The final tranche of

twelve vehicles completed the programme, exceeding the original target.

At the handover, the Prime Minister emphasised that the restored vehicles would significantly strengthen the TTPS' ability to combat crime by improving mobility, expanding patrol coverage, and enabling faster emergency response.

She underscored that equipping the Police Service with functional, reliable resources is essential to enhancing public safety and supporting frontline officers.

This initiative underscores the Government's commitment to delivering practical, results-driven support to national security agencies.

As the Prime Minister reaffirmed, it represents another promise made and a promise kept in service of the people of Trinidad and Tobago.

TRANSPORT MINISTRY LAUNCHES PRIORITY BUS ROUTE COMPLIANCE UNIT

The Ministry of Transport and Civil Aviation officially launched the Traffic Warden Priority Bus Route Compliance Unit—a key advancement in strengthening enforcement and improving traffic management along the Priority

Bus Route.

The Minister of Transport and Civil Aviation, Senator the Honourable Eli Zakour, inaugurated the Unit during a ceremony at the Ministry's Head Office in Port of Spain. The Unit commenced full operations on

Monday, December 15, 2025.

The initiative is aimed at improving safety, reducing congestion, and ensuring greater compliance with traffic regulations to support a more efficient and reliable public transport system.



MINISTER ZAKOUR MEETS WITH T&T BLIND WELFARE ASSOCIATION

Senator the Honourable Eli Zakour, Minister of Transport and Civil Aviation, together with Ms. Nicolette Duke, Permanent Secretary, met with representatives of the Trinidad and Tobago Blind Welfare Association (TTBWA) to discuss accessible and inclusive public transportation services.

Led by Mr. Kenneth Surratt, Executive Officer of the TTBWA, the delegation highlighted several key concerns impacting the organization's members. Minister Zakour reaffirmed the Ministry's unwavering commitment to inclusivity in the delivery of its services.

He further emphasized the Ministry's dedication to advancing policies and initiatives to improve accessibility and reliability within

the national transportation system, with particular focus on persons with disabilities. This area remains a top priority for the Ministry.

The Minister also noted that the Ministry will maintain ongoing engagement with the Blind Welfare Association and other stakeholders to find practical solutions and put initiatives into place that support safer, more accessible, and user-friendly transportation options.

Minister Zakour expressed his appreciation to the Association for its continued advocacy and partnership, underscoring that such collaboration is vital to strengthening the national framework for inclusive and accessible transportation.



Senator the Honourable Eli Zakour, Minister of Transport and Civil Aviation, Ms. Nicolette Duke, Permanent Secretary, and Mr. Kenneth Surratt, Executive Officer, Trinidad and Tobago Blind Welfare Association.

CELEBRATING 65 YEARS OF PARTNERSHIP: NPTA MARKS MILESTONE ANNIVERSARY WITH INSPIRING ADDRESS

The National Parent-Teacher Association (NPTA) marked its 65th anniversary with an uplifting celebration that blended gratitude, reflection, and renewed purpose. The ceremony featured the Minister of Education, Dr. Michael Dowlath, who delivered a keynote address on behalf of Prime Minister Kamla Persad-Bissessar.

Although the Prime Minister was unable to attend, Dr. Dowlath conveyed her warm congratulations to the Association, praising its unwavering commitment to the children of Trinidad and Tobago. Her message set an inspiring tone for the morning, as attendees honoured six and a half decades of steadfast advocacy, volunteerism, and service.

Dr. Dowlath traced the origins of the NPTA, reminding the gathering that the Association was founded on a simple but powerful belief: when parents and teachers stand together, an entire nation thrives.

"You have been the bridge between home and classroom," he told members, acknowledging the NPTA's long-standing influence on educational policy, student welfare, and the strengthening of school-community relationships.

Invoking the well-known African proverb, "It takes a village to raise a child," Dr. Dowlath applauded the NPTA for embodying that village for 65 years, through changing societal demands, technological evolution, and even the unprecedented challenges of a global pandemic. He also commended the leadership of NPTA President Walter Stewart and his executive for their commitment to keeping the organisation's mission alive, calling their work "both noble and necessary."

The Minister noted that true leadership has never been about titles, but about service. He highlighted the NPTA's extensive contributions, from national conferences to countless voluntary initiatives, which have uplifted parents, empowered teachers, and supported students across the country. The Association, he said, has been instrumental in cultivating a culture where every child is encouraged to dream boldly and equipped to succeed.

As delegates prepared to begin a full day of strategic discussions, Dr. Dowlath urged them to be



guided by the vision of the founders. In a world of rapid transformation, he said, the NPTA remains one of the most important anchors of the education system, ensuring that learning touches not only the mind, but the heart of every child.

The ceremony closed with a message of continuity and hope, reminding all present that the enduring partnership between homes, schools, and the State will continue to illuminate the path for generations of students to come.





THE FUTURE OF THE NATION IS IN OUR CHILDREN'S LAPTOPS

The national debate on digital learning shifted into high gear recently as Government officials, educators, parents, and students gathered for the official relaunch of Trinidad and Tobago's Laptop Rollout Programme, a defining moment in the country's push toward a modern education system.

The event drew an energised crowd and renewed public confidence, signalling that the country is ready to reclaim its place as a regional leader in digital education. It also served as a reminder of the programme's historic roots. Minister of Education and MP for San Fernando West, Dr. Michael Dowlat, underscored that this relaunch is not an isolated intervention, but part of a transformative legacy.

He pointed to the years 2010 to 2015, when then Prime Minister Kamla Persad-Bissessar, SC, introduced the first-ever nationwide laptop distribution for Form One

students. That pioneering initiative closed digital gaps, modernised classrooms, and gave thousands of young people their first personal access to technology, a move seen by many as a turning point in educational equity.

However, the Ministry made it clear that the new rollout is more ambitious in scope and vision. This version is not about handing out devices. It is about building a fully digital learning ecosystem.

Among the key upgrades announced were:

- stronger wireless connectivity across hundreds of schools;
- advanced teacher training in digital platforms and AI-supported lesson planning;
- accessibility enhancements tailored for students with disabilities;
- a long-term modernisation framework to



ensure the system never again slips into obsolescence.

These improvements come after a decade in which digital education efforts stagnated. Many schools were left to operate with slow labs, unreliable internet access, and outdated equipment, creating serious divides between urban and rural learners and limiting opportunities at a time when global education was rapidly moving online.

The emotional peak of the event came when Prime Minister Kamla Persad-Bissessar delivered a clear and powerful message that resonated across the audience.

"The future of the nation is in our children's laptops."

The applause that followed was not simply political. It was an expression of hope, the hope that this time the vision will be protected, expanded, and properly maintained.

As Trinidad and Tobago enters this new era, education leaders are urging families and communities to treat these devices not as expensive gadgets, but as essential gateways to digital literacy, creativity, and opportunity. When used effectively, they argued, laptops can level the playing field, uplift struggling communities, and give every child, regardless of circumstance, a fair shot at success.

The relaunch marks more than the return of a programme. It signals a national recommitment to investing in the next generation.





The 2025–2026 Cruise Ship Season was officially launched with the arrival of the Coral Princess at the Port of Port of Spain, marking the start of another vibrant cruise season for Trinidad and Tobago.

CORAL PRINCESS ARRIVES AS T&T OPENS 2025-2026 CRUISE SEASON

The official launch of the 2025–2026 Cruise Ship Season took place with the arrival of the Coral Princess Cruise Vessel. The Honourable Jearlean John, Minister of Works and Infrastructure, joined tourism partners to celebrate the start of another exciting season of welcoming visitors from around the world to our beautiful twin-island Republic of Trinidad and Tobago.

In her remarks, Minister John underscored the growing competitiveness of global tourism and encouraged all partners and stakeholders to unlock Trinidad and Tobago's full potential as a premier cruise destination—one capable of attracting even more cruise calls through its unique experiences and vibrant culture, all with the aim of diversifying and boosting the national economy.

She reinforced the Government's bold vision: "It is the vision of this Government that the cruise ship terminals in Trinidad and Tobago will not only be the best regionally, but will rival all major cruise terminals internationally. Through our Revitalisation Blueprint, strategic investments and stronger collaborative efforts, we will transform the Port of Port of Spain into a world-class facility."





MINISTER JOHN ACCELERATES DEVELOPMENT DRIVE AT HOME AND ABROAD

The Ministry of Works and Infrastructure (MOWI) has delivered one of the most aggressive national development pushes in recent history, completing and advancing projects valued at over TT\$750 million between the Government's swearing-in on April 28, 2025, and December, 2025.

Under Minister Jearlean John, MOWI has simultaneously driven major on-the-ground upgrades while strengthening international partnerships to position Trinidad and Tobago as a rising global logistics hub.

At home, the Programme for Upgrading Road Efficiency (PURE) executed the bulk of road and highway works, accounting for TT\$590.3 million in 2025 alone.

Among the Ministry's most visible accomplishments was the long-awaited opening of the third lane of the Sir Solomon Hochoy Highway (SHH) between Chaguanas and Chasse Village, finally relieving one of the country's worst traffic bottlenecks.

Major highway builds also surged forward. The Solomon Hochoy Highway Extension to Point Fortin reached 94% completion, with six segments advancing to 88–99% completion. Stabilisation and finishing works continued on the Churchill Roosevelt Highway Extension to Manzanilla, where emergency erosion repairs and roadway reinforcement were undertaken immediately after the new administration assumed office.

PURE also delivered substantial progress on community-level upgrades. Along Penal Rock Road, a critical 23.3 km slope stabilisation project is now 98% complete, with teams finishing drainage upgrades, structural stabilisation,



base-course works, fresh thermoplastic road markings, and new pedestrian handrails to improve safety and connectivity for residents.

Nationwide, the Ministry completed two new bridges—at Chickland Road, Caparo, and Sam Boucard Extension Road, Santa Cruz—and advanced seven more to as much as 99% completion. Landslip repairs, now consolidated under PURE, saw four major slopes stabilised in Paria, Mamoral, and other high-risk areas.

Flood mitigation also formed a major pillar of MOWI's 2025 performance, with TT\$162.4 million invested in river defence, drainage upgrades and pump rehabilitation.

Reinforced concrete retaining walls were completed along the Malick, Cap-de-Ville, Guapo, Ramkhalia, Maraval, and Rio Negro waterways, while critical pump upgrades continued at Bamboo No. 1, Bamboo No. 2, and Sadhu Trace.

But while infrastructure rolled out at pace across Trinidad and Tobago, Minister John also advanced the nation's global investment and logistics agenda.

As part of the Government's Strategic Investment Mission to the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Minister John joined Ministers Sean Sobers and Saddam Hosein in high-level meetings with UAE Minister of State for Foreign Trade, H.E. Dr. Thani bin Ahmed Al Zeyoudi, to deepen trade and investment opportunities in alignment with the Government's Revitalisation Blueprint.

The delegation also met with H.E. Ahmed Al Mutwaa, CEO of AD Ports Group, one of the world's leading port authorities. Minister John delivered a detailed presentation on the Government's emerging Trinidad and Tobago Global Logistical Hub, exploring investments in port development, port management, and maritime expansion.

Back home, the maritime sector recorded a major milestone as the APT James became the first vessel dry-docked on the new AMT Goliath, Trinidad and Tobago's state-of-the-art semi-submersible heavy-lift floating dock. The upgrade—overseen by senior Ministry officials—marks a new era in local ship repair capacity.

The Ministry also completed the Maraval Access Road Upgrade and Bridge Reconstruction Project, delivering two new lanes, improved accessibility, and a modern pedestrian walkway to ease chronic congestion in and out of Maraval.

In just eight months, the Ministry's results signal a decisive shift—from stagnation and slowdowns to delivery, momentum, and national transformation.

APT JAMES BECOMES FIRST VESSEL SERVICED ON NEW AMT GOLIATH

Senior officials of the Ministry of Works and Infrastructure — including Permanent Secretary Ian Ramdahin and Deputy Permanent Secretary Ronald Alfred — visited the National Marine Maintenance Services Company Limited on Friday 21 November, 2025, to witness the APT James becoming the first vessel to undergo dry-docking on the AMT Goliath.

The AMT Goliath, Trinidad and Tobago's new semi-submersible heavy-lift floating dock, is fully equipped to deliver advanced ship repair services such as hull works, high-pressure washing, blasting, painting, and general maintenance.

The APT James, one of the three fast ferries that service the inter-island sea bridge, is currently completing its scheduled 5-year warranty dry-docking.

The vessel is expected to return to normal operations on December 21, 2025.



TINSEL & TIDINGS CHRISTMAS MARKET SIGNALS NEW ERA FOR COMMUNITY-BASED ECONOMIC GROWTH

Minister of Rural Development and Local Government, Khadijah Ameen, has described the Tinsel & Tidings Christmas Market as a significant step forward in strengthening community-based economic activity and empowering small entrepreneurs across Trinidad and Tobago.

The initiative, developed through the Ministry's newly established Local Economic Development (LED) Unit, was launched as a pilot project with the Chaguanas Edition, held from December 12 to 14 at the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries Head Office car park, Chaguanas.

"The pop-up market allows us in local government, under our newly formed LED Unit, to bring artisans, caterers and micro-entrepreneurs from different parts of the country together to showcase their wares, meet new clients and access real economic opportunities," Minister Ameen said.

The market featured more than 40 local vendors, alongside live entertainment and family-friendly activities, creating a vibrant and inclusive space that celebrated creativity, culture and entrepreneurship. Minister Ameen noted that the strong public turnout and enthusiastic participation by vendors underscored the value of local markets as effective drivers of economic activity within communities.

Minister Ameen emphasized that local economic development is a critical component of the United National Congress' broader economic recovery strategy.



"When people think about economic recovery, they often focus on the macro level, such as energy revenue and large-scale investment, and those are important. But just as critical is local economic development—where villages and towns generate their own economic activity and stimulate growth from within," she stated.

She further noted that many entrepreneurs do not require handouts, but rather structured systems of support to help them grow and sustain their businesses.

"Many people do not need a handout. What

they need is a system that supports what they already do. That is the thinking behind the LED Unit, and why projects will be tailored to the specific needs of each community," Minister Ameen said.

As a pilot initiative, Tinsel & Tidings represents the beginning of a wider national rollout. Plans are already underway to expand similar markets and LED programmes across other municipal corporations, bringing opportunity, empowerment and sustainable local development to communities throughout Trinidad and Tobago.





MORDLG BOOSTS TUNAPUNA/PIARCO SECURITY WITH REFURBISHED POLICE POST AND EXPANDED EAGLE EYE SYSTEM

The Ministry of Rural Development and Local Government (MoRDLG) has reaffirmed its commitment to strengthening community security and municipal policing with the commissioning of the refurbished Tunapuna/Piarco Municipal Police Post and the launch of the "Building Trust Through Vigilance" programme.

Speaking at the ceremony, Minister of Rural Development and Local Government, the Honourable Khadijah Ameen, urged regional corporations to adopt more innovative, strategic, and proactive approaches to securing funding for infrastructure and security development.

"Every regional corporation must be innovative. Don't just put aside a room for municipal police: build an entire municipal police post. Bring the land and plans. We will secure funding through public-private partnerships," Minister Ameen stated.

Enhanced facility and expanded Security Capabilities

The upgraded facility now accommodates 44 municipal police officers and features a modernized reception area, charge room, processing zone, secure cell block, and administrative offices. The Minister noted that the improved working environment must lead to an improved standard of public service.

"This station now reflects the professional-

ism and dignity our officers and citizens deserve. You have an uplifted workplace, so you must uplift the standard of service," she said.

As part of the broader Eagle Eye Project, the "Building Trust Through Vigilance" initiative includes an expanded CCTV surveillance network and a new monitoring room to enhance real-time crime detection, rapid response, and disaster-management capabilities.

"The system is not about watching people—it is about protecting people. Early detection prevents crime. Quick response saves lives," Minister Ameen emphasized.

Supporting the National Agenda for Safer, Smarter Communities

Minister Ameen linked the upgraded surveillance and policing infrastructure to the national security strategy championed by Prime Minister the Honourable Kamla Persad-Bissessar, noting that the Tunapuna/Piarco region—home to over 250,000 residents—is a major residential, commercial, and cultural hub that requires robust, technology-driven support.

She also underscored the need for corporations to prioritize appropriate accommodation for municipal police as the Government continues to train and deploy officers across Trinidad and Tobago.

"We will continue to train and assign offi-

cers. But where will you put them? The health and safety of office spaces must be your priority."

Re-defining the core duties of Municipal Policing

Minister Ameen reminded officers and regional bodies of the specific mandate of municipal police, which includes enforcing corporation by-laws, asset protection, and addressing littering and illegal dumping. She cautioned against the routine diversion of municipal officers into general TTPS duties.

"I don't want our municipal police doing breathalyser tests or routine roadblocks. They have plenty of work to do with the regional corporation," she said.

Municipal police, she noted, operate within civilian-led structures under the direction of regional chairmen, councils, and CEOs—reflecting their unique role in community-centred governance.

Appreciation for Officers and Community Service

Minister Ameen thanked the Tunapuna/Piarco Municipal Police for their continued service and for supporting community and cultural events throughout the region.

"This launch is an investment in the stability of the corporation and the economic well-being of its people," she added.



SWORN TO SERVE, PREPARED TO PROTECT

MINISTER URGES INTEGRITY AND DISCIPLINE AT TTPS PASSING OUT CEREMONY

On Monday November 17, 2025, the Honourable Roger Alexander MP, Minister of Homeland Security, joined families, senior officers, and national security officials at the Passing Out Ceremony for the newest recruits of the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service (TTPS).

It was a proud and emotional moment as these young men and women took their place among the ranks of those who protect and serve our Republic.

The event celebrated months of rigorous training, personal sacrifice, and unwavering commitment by the recruits. Families looked on with pride as the officers marched onto the parade ground, ready to begin their careers as protectors of our communities.

The Minister's message: service, integrity, courage:

In his feature address, Minister Alexander

reminded the officers that their uniforms are more than fabric, they carry the expectations of 1.4 million citizens. He highlighted that the country is experiencing a positive shift in public safety, with improved crime detection, increased firearm seizures, and declining murder rates.

"For the first time in more than a decade, Trinidad and Tobago is no longer ranked among the top ten most violent nations," the Minister noted, emphasizing that this progress is not accidental, but the result of determination, intelligence-driven operations, and stronger policing.

A call to duty:

The Minister encouraged the recruits to uphold discipline, professionalism, and integrity in every decision they make.

"If you want respect, earn it. If you want trust, build it. If you want honour, live it."

He reminded them that the country does not

only need more police officers, but good police officers who stand firm against temptation, uphold the law, and treat citizens with dignity.

A National commitment to safety:

Minister Alexander reaffirmed Government's commitment to closing security gaps, strengthening border protection, and ensuring criminals have "nowhere to hide and nowhere to run." He acknowledged the work of regional and international partners in combating illegal guns, drugs, and trafficking, noting that the fight against crime is a united effort.

The ceremony concluded with the Minister extending heartfelt congratulations to the graduates and their families:

Serve with courage. Protect with compassion. And wear your uniform with pride. Our nation is depending on you."

The Ministry of Homeland Security congratulates the new Officers of the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service.

MINISTER OF HOMELAND SECURITY VISITS TOBAGO DIVISION

The Honourable Roger Alexander MP, Minister of Homeland Security, accompanied the Honourable Kamla Persad-Bissessar MP, Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago on her recent visit to Tobago.

During that visit the Minister took the opportunity to meet with officers of the Tobago Division.

The Minister met with officers from various stations and departments from across Tobago at the Scarborough Police Station, where discussions were held on the current security situation in Tobago.

The Tobago Division has reported a remarkable reduction in the murder rate on the island and a 85% increase in the rate of solved murders, reflecting the dedication and commitment of our law enforcement officers. The Officers expressed their support for the crime fighting initiatives implemented on the island of Tobago.

The Minister expressed his appreciation to the officers for their continued service and reaffirmed the Government's full support for the Police Service and the ongoing crime-fighting initiatives in the Division.





MINISTER MEETS SAUDI FUND CEO TO DISCUSS DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIPS

The Minister of Trade, Investment and Tourism engaged in productive discussions with Sultan bin Abdulrahman Al-Marshad, Chief Executive Officer of the Saudi Fund for Development, on potential development projects aimed at supporting Trinidad and Tobago's national growth and economic advancement.



GOVT ADVANCES AGRI-PRODUCE EXPORT OPPORTUNITIES

Senator The Honourable Satyakama Maharaj Minister of Trade, Investment and Tourism and MP for La Horquette/Talparo Minister Phillip Watts met with businessman Sean Harding to explore new export opportunities for local agri-produce.



SAPA POP-UP SHOP: Senator the Honorable Satyakama Maharaj, Minister of Trade Investment and Tourism supporting local SMEs at TTMA's popup shop at SAPA.

TRADE AND TOURISM TALKS WITH BUNJI GARLIN AND FAY-ANN LYONS



The Ministry of Trade, Investment and Tourism, led by Parliamentary Secretary Dr. Collin Gosine and Permanent Secretary Abigail Bynoe, met with soca icons Bunji Garlin and Fay-Ann Lyons for exploratory talks on trade and destination promotion opportunities. Harnessing music, creativity, and commerce to showcase Trinidad and Tobago to the world!



GOSINE TO SAN FERNANDO BUSINESS LEADERS: THE NEW ECONOMY WILL NOT WAIT FOR US

Parliamentary Secretary in the Ministry of Trade, Investment and Tourism, Dr. Colin Neil Gosine, delivered a clear and uncompromising message to San Fernando's private sector: South Trinidad must step up — and quickly — if it intends to lead in the Government's national revitalisation drive.

Speaking at the Greater San Fernando Area Chamber of Commerce's "Mix and Mistletoe" event which took place on November 15, Gosine tied the Chamber's longstanding charitable work to a broader economic mission, urging business leaders to match compassion with assertive commercial leadership.

He anchored his address in Prime Minister Kamla Persad-Bissessar's newly launched Trinidad and Tobago Revitalisation Blueprint, calling it "the country's most ambitious roadmap to becoming a Global Hub of Innovation, Industry, and Opportunity." But he warned that the plan will fail without strong, immediate regional action.

"Revitalisation is not a slogan. It is a mission — and San Fernando must lead from the front. The new economy will not wait for us," he said.

Manufacturing: From production to high-value exports

Gosine described San Fernando as the "industrial heartland of the South" and urged manufacturers to move aggressively toward value-added production, branding, and export readiness.

The Ministry, he said, stands ready to provide standards support, packaging innovation, quality certification, and export facilitation. But the Chamber must organise its members into a San Fernando Manufacturing Cluster to accelerate shared logistics, product development and export penetration.

"This is the moment to stop exporting raw potential and start exporting branded, competitive, globally recognised products," he said.

A Logistics Hub for the new Trinidad and Tobago

Gosine identified logistics as one of the most immediate opportunities for South Trinidad, noting the region's strong highway access, industrial footprint, and proximity to major ports.



Parliamentary Secretary in the Ministry of Trade, Investment and Tourism Dr Colin Neil Gosine and President of the Greater San Fernando Area Chamber of Commerce Kiran Singh at the Chamber's Mix and Mistletoe Event on November 15.

This is the moment to stop exporting raw potential and start exporting branded, competitive, globally recognised products.

companies across sectors to develop export-ready products, services, and visitor experiences aligned with the new economy of 2026–2030.

A direct challenge to the business community

Gosine ended his remarks with three immediate action items for 2026:

- Map export-ready manufacturers;
- Design a South Trinidad logistics plan;
- Launch a pilot "San Fernando Experience" tourism route.

"San Fernando has always been a city of industry and culture. Now it must become a pillar of the new Trinidad and Tobago Global Hub," he said.

The Revitalisation Blueprint envisions digitised supply chains, expanded warehousing, and green transport systems — all areas in which San Fernando can lead.

He challenged the Chamber to convene a South Trinidad Logistics and Connectivity Forum in 2026 to set clear infrastructure priorities and position the city as a distribution powerhouse by 2027.

Turning culture into commerce

Gosine said economic transformation must also include cultural and creative industries — a sector he called "one of the most underutilised yet highest-value opportunities in the country."

He encouraged the formation of a South Trinidad Cultural & Tourism Alliance, linking artisans, chefs, event planners, and cultural practitioners to create marketable experiences such as a San Fernando Cultural Trail and heritage events that attract domestic and international visitors.

"Our culture is not just identity. It is industry," he said.

Integration: The real key to transformation

According to Gosine, the city's real power lies in connecting its manufacturing base, logistics potential, and cultural assets into a single economic ecosystem.

He proposed a San Fernando Value-Chain Incubator, uniting



PUBLIC SERVICE AT A CROSSROADS: MINISTER SMITH WARNS T&T CANNOT ENTER THE FUTURE WITH OUTDATED SYSTEMS

"We cannot prepare the future with institutions designed for the past." With that stark warning, Senator Dominic Smith, Minister of Public Administration and Artificial Intelligence, ignited the most consequential conversation at ICATT's Annual Conference on November 21, 2025.

Speaking under the banner Public Sector Transformation: Building Capacity for the Future, Minister Smith made it clear that the country is at a decisive turning point. Trinidad and Tobago, he argued, can no longer demand first-world results from a public service still operating with decades-old structures.

What followed was not a ceremonial address, but a pointed national challenge.

Modernisation or stagnation

Minister Smith outlined a slate of reforms aimed at dragging the public service into the 21st century. At the forefront are the National Payment and Innovation Company and the long-awaited Digital ID framework—initia-

tives he described as "structural corrections," not symbolic upgrades.

These reforms, he said, are designed to



eliminate inefficiency, strengthen verification systems, and ensure government processes finally move at the speed citizens expect.

AI as an engine of efficiency

Addressing public anxieties, the Minister emphasised that artificial intelligence is not a threat to workers but a catalyst for better service delivery. Properly deployed, AI reduces errors, shortens processing times, and frees public officers to perform higher-value responsibilities—functions that create a more responsive, citizen-centred service.

Fixing institutions by strengthening people

But technology alone, he warned, cannot transform a system. Training, reskilling, and ongoing support for public servants are non-negotiable if Trinidad and Tobago intends to keep pace with global competitiveness.

"The institutions that survive the next decade," he stressed, "will be those that learn and evolve the fastest."

T&T SIGNS LANDMARK MOU WITH UAE

TECHNOLOGY ENTITIES TO ACCELERATE DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

In a landmark step toward accelerating the nation's digital future, Senator the Honourable Dominic Smith, Minister of Public Administration and Artificial Intelligence has officially signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the United Arab Emirates Government-linked technology entities to accelerate National Digital Transformation.

This strategic agreement establishes a robust framework for co-operation on National Digital Transformation initiatives, leveraging the UAE's globally recognised expertise in Digital Identity, Border Management, Interoperability and Smart-Government Systems. The partnership marks a decisive move to modernise public services, strengthen technological infrastructure, and position Trinidad and Tobago at the forefront of digital innovation.

Minister Smith said, "We are committed to advancing digital transformation and AI integration in alignment with the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago's Official Policy Framework and the National Digital Transformation Strategy 2025–2028. This initiative strengthens our pursuit of a digitally empowered society, enhances public sector service delivery and deepens citizen engagement."

He continued, "The MoU will enable the MPAAI to accelerate the delivery of national digital-transformation projects, facilitate direct technical cooperation with UAE government-linked entities, and establish a structured mechanism for knowledge transfer, capacity building, and sustainable financing."

This partnership represents a significant opportunity for Trinidad and Tobago to leverage the UAE's global leadership in digital governance, cloud infrastructure and artificial intelligence.

During Minister Smith's visit, accompanied by Mr. Cory Belfon, Permanent Secretary of the MPAAI, he finalised and executed the MoU, engaged in a series of bilateral meetings with UAE Government counterparts and strategic partners, and toured key facilities related to digital identity systems, national cloud infrastructure and command-and-control operations.

"The Government of Trinidad and Tobago is energised by the opportunities ahead as we advance our national digital roadmap. We are charting a bold path toward a smarter, more connected society," Minister Smith affirmed.

This partnership solidifies the three pillar approach that anchors the Digital Transformation Agenda vision for Trinidad and Tobago: Citizen Services, Smart Government and Future Nation.



MEMBERS PRESENT AT THE SIGNING:

Senator the Honorable Dominic Smith, Minister of Public Administration and Artificial Intelligence, Mr Cory Belfon, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Public Administration and Artificial Intelligence, Omar Shehadeh, Envoy of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, ممدوح رمزي جراح, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Juma Abdullah Alkaabi, Executive Director at ICP, توشع بمريزو, and other members of the UAE delegation.

MINISTER WATTS' TRANSFORMATIONAL IMPACT ON SPORT AND YOUTH DEVELOPMENT



When Minister Phillip Watts assumed leadership of the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs (MSYA) in May 2025, he pledged to chart a new course, one grounded in empowerment, accountability, and opportunity. Eight months on, that vision has evolved from promise to progress, transforming communities, rebuilding public trust, and igniting national pride in sport and youth development.

What began as a commitment to restore integrity has matured into a dynamic movement of renewal. From revitalizing grassroots cricket and modernizing national facilities to advancing youth training programmes and pioneering transformative policy reform, Minister Watts has led with purpose, not promises, driving measurable change and steering the Ministry into a bold new era of performance, inclusion, and impact.

Reviving community sport through the JAVA Cricket Programme

Under the leadership of Minister Phillip Watts, and in collaboration with the Sport Company of Trinidad and Tobago (SporTT), led by Chief Executive Officer Jason Williams and his dynamic team, the JAVA Cricket Programme has reignited the heartbeat of community sport across the nation. Rolled out

across 47 communities, 42 in Trinidad and 5 in Tobago, the initiative engaged over 2,400 young participants, including 630 girls, restoring cricket's role as a channel of discipline, teamwork, and national pride.

This revival is not only about rekindling passion but also about building pathways to excellence. The programme's strong community foundation transitioned seamlessly into a targeted talent development phase across 14 key communities, where 332 young players (46 girls and 286 boys) are now receiving specialized training.

Already, 52 of these promising athletes have been shortlisted for the Trinidad and Tobago Cricket Board's (TTCB) Zonal Pathway screenings for Under-13 and Under-15 levels, a testament to the transformative power of structured grassroots engagement.

In a landmark move for youth sport, Minister Watts partnered with the Caribbean Premier League (CPL) to host the first-ever "JAVA Meets CPL" event at the Brian Lara Cricket Academy. This groundbreaking collaboration brought together hundreds of young participants from the JAVA Programme to experience elite cricket firsthand, meeting professional CPL players, participating in live mentorship sessions, and witnessing the excitement of top-tier competition in person. It marked a historic moment where grassroots cricket met the professional arena, igniting

dreams and inspiring a new generation of players. Through these efforts, Minister Watts has not only revived community cricket but also built a sustainable bridge between youth development and professional opportunity, ensuring that young cricketers see themselves not just as participants but as the future stars of Trinidad and Tobago's sporting legacy.

Recognizing football's unifying role, Minister Watts also prioritized funding to the Trinidad and Tobago Football Association (TTFA), ensuring the sport's continued growth and competitiveness.

Building the foundations for high-performance sport

Under Minister Watts' transformative guidance, Trinidad and Tobago's sporting landscape has entered a new era of modernization. Significant investments in elite and community facilities have made world-class resources accessible to athletes nationwide.

Two cutting-edge Elite Athlete High Performance Gyms, at the National Racquet Centre and the National Cycling Velodrome, now serve as hubs for conditioning, science-based training, and athlete rehabilitation. Minister Watts also championed the establishment of

MORE ON PAGE 26

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BUILDING PATHWAYS FROM TRAINING TO EMPLOYMENT

■ CONTINUED FROM PAGE 25

a National Sports Rehabilitation Centre, ensuring that all athletes, including those representing Paralympics and Special Olympics Trinidad and Tobago, can access specialized recovery and support services. This reinforces his vision of a truly inclusive sports ecosystem, one that uplifts every athlete, regardless of ability.

Strengthening partnerships and governance

For the first time in the nation's history, Minister Phillip Watts convened an official National Governing Body (NGB) General Meeting, setting an unprecedented standard for governance and collaboration. The historic session, held at the Hasely Crawford Stadium, united 52 NGBs, 37 under the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs and 15 under SporTT.

When Minister Watts assumed office, only four NGBs were governance-compliant under the ministry. Through structured consultations and reform initiatives, that number rose to 25, now including 12 of 37 under MSYA and 11 of 15 under SporTT. This leap in compliance showcases the Minister's success in rebuilding trust, strengthening accountability, and institutionalizing transparency across the sporting ecosystem.

Further solidifying his legacy of partnership, Minister Watts appointed four celebrated athletes, Dwayne Bravo, Kieron Pollard, Nicholas Pooran, and Keshorn Walcott, as Sports Ambassadors of Trinidad and Tobago. Their mission: to inspire youth, elevate national pride, and champion excellence on and off the field.

Expanding opportunities for youth

Youth development remains a cornerstone of Minister Phillip Watts' national agenda, guided by his vision to turn training into real employment and opportunity. Under his stewardship, the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs (MSYA) has restructured and expanded its youth programmes to align skills training with the evolving needs of Trinidad and Tobago's workforce.

Minister Watts has also prioritized the protection and empowerment of vulnerable youth through the ongoing refurbishment and modernization of residential and non-residential facilities.

The Los Bajos Youth Development Centre was fully recommissioned on July 15, 2025, joining upgraded facilities in California, St. James, Malick, Palo Seco, Point Fortin, and Basilon Street, while refurbishment continues at Chatham, Persto Praesto, El Dorado,



and Chaguaramas. These centres now offer safe, inclusive spaces where young people can learn and grow.

Across the country, access to high-quality recreational and training spaces continues to expand with the official opening of the Sangre

Grande Multi-Sport Facility, a key hub for sport and youth engagement, and renewed upgrades to national stadia, regional arenas, and community clubhouses. These investments support not only athletes but also foster community wellness and economic activity.

Expanding opportunities for youth and community empowerment

Minister Phillip Watts has placed youth empowerment at the heart of his national transformation agenda.

His leadership of the National Service and Youth Affairs Division focuses on converting training into real employment opportunities, ensuring that young people move from classrooms to careers with confidence and pur-

■ MORE ON PAGE 27

LAYING THE FOUNDATION FOR NATIONAL GROWTH THROUGH SPORT AND YOUTH

■ CONTINUED FROM PAGE 26

pose.

To achieve this, Minister Watts launched a comprehensive review and restructuring of all youth development programmes, including YouTEC, the Healthcare Training Programme, DROP (Drilling Rig Operations Programme), PLAR (Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition), and PIPE (Plumbing Skills Programme). His goal is clear: participants should not just walk away with certificates of participation, but with gainful employment and lifelong skills ready for the workforce.

Minister Watts personally attended the HOIST Programme Graduation, hosted by Trinidad Tower Cranes Services Limited, where he celebrated the achievements of trainees and PLAR graduates. There, he pledged to strengthen partnerships between training institutions and industry to secure employment integration after completion, fulfilling his promise that no young person should be left without opportunity.

In addition, initiatives like the Retiree Adolescent Partnership Programme (RAPP) continue to uplift vulnerable youth through mentorship, academic guidance, and life-skills development.

Under Minister Watts, RAPP is undergoing a structural review and expansion to improve accountability and ensure sustainable, nationwide impact. Parallel efforts are also underway through the review and modernization of Transition Homes, aimed at providing stability and reintegration support for at-risk youth.

Minister Watts has also turned attention to community revitalization by leading the refurbishment of all ten public swimming pools under the Ministry, many of which had fallen into disrepair.

This initiative will restore safe, accessible spaces for recreation, training, and community well-being across the country.

Grounded in his belief that youth development must create empowerment, not paperwork, Minister Watts continues to bridge the



gap between training and employment, building a generation equipped to drive Trinidad and Tobago's social progress and economic future.

Empowering through policy and partnership

Under the visionary leadership of Prime Minister Kamla Persad-Bissessar, Minister Phillip Watts made history as the first to pilot the groundbreaking Grant Parent Law, a transformative policy allowing athletes with Trinidad and Tobago heritage through parents or grandparents to represent the nation internationally.

This landmark measure strengthens ties with the diaspora, broadens the national talent pool, and deepens pride in representing the red, white, and black.

Complementing policy with innovation, Minister Watts also advanced inclusive partnerships such as Creative Faces, a joint initiative between the MSYA and Sacha Cosmetics Ltd. The programme trained 54 young participants in professional make-up artistry, entrepre-

neurship, and creative enterprise, turning talent into sustainable income and proving that strategic collaboration can empower youth and industry alike.

A vision for 2026 and beyond

Minister Phillip Watts' first eight months in office have been defined by purposeful restructuring, renewed transparency, and measurable progress, laying the groundwork for a stronger, more accountable Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs. His leadership has reestablished confidence in public institutions and reignited the belief that sport and youth empowerment can drive real, inclusive national growth.

As 2026 approaches, Minister Watts and his team are preparing to unveil a bold, new suite of programmes, developed in collaboration with SporTT and other key partners. These initiatives are designed to deepen community engagement, expand athlete support systems, and create lifelong pathways of empowerment for young people across Trinidad and Tobago.

They will focus on turning participation into progress, ensuring that sport, training, and mentorship not only inspire excellence but translate into opportunity, employment, and nation-building.

"We are building a legacy of transformation," Minister Watts affirmed. "Our mission is to reignite the spirit of excellence in every athlete, in every community, and in every young person who dares to dream. Sport and youth development are not separate journeys; together, they form the engine that will power Trinidad and Tobago into a new era of unity, pride, and success."



CASSAVA BREAKTHROUGH IN RIO CLARO MARKS NEW MOMENTUM FOR FOOD SECURITY

Trinidad and Tobago's agricultural sector achieved a significant boost recently, as a cassava yield trial in Pinda Trace, Rio Claro, delivered results that far surpassed national expectations. The trial—executed through a partnership among CARDI, the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries' Research Division, and The University of the West Indies—recorded a remarkable 30,000 lbs of cassava from a single plot, outperforming the traditional national average of 20,000 lbs per acre.

Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries, Senator the Honourable Ravi Ratiram, hailed the achievement as a defining moment for the emerging cassava industry, noting that the yield was accomplished with minimal agrochemical use. He praised the research teams for demonstrating how science-led agriculture can increase production, strengthen resilience, and reduce the nation's food import bill.

With cassava now proving its potential as both a commercial crop and a food-security asset, the Ministry is positioning this success as a model for future crop expansion, farmer support, and research-driven innovation.



MINISTRY ADVANCES CLIMATE-RESILIENT FARMING WITH BIOREACH CROP DISTRIBUTION



On December 18, 2025, the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, in partnership with key national and international stakeholders, distributed 1,160 fruit and tree crops to farmers across Trinidad and Tobago under the BIOREACH Project. The distribution included avocado, breadfruit, coconut, and other climate-resilient crops aimed at strengthening sustainable agricultural practices.

The BIOREACH Project is jointly implemented by the National Agricultural Marketing and Development Corporation (NAMDEVCO) and the Environmental Management Authority (EMA), with funding and technical oversight provided by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), under the Ministry of Planning, Economic Affairs and Development. The four-year initiative focuses on restoring degraded forest and agricultural lands, conserving biodiversity, and improving rural livelihoods.

Delivering the feature address, Senator the Honourable Ravi Ratiram, Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries, reaffirmed the Ministry's commitment to sustainable agricultural development through strong partnerships that enhance climate resilience, food security, and long-term productivity within the farming sector. He commended the participating farmers for their engagement, noting that the initiative promotes inclusive participation, knowledge-sharing, and gender balance.

The Minister also emphasized the importance of collaboration among Government, development agencies, and farmers in advancing sustainable agriculture and safeguarding the natural resources that support national development.

Through initiatives such as BIOREACH, the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries continues to work closely with farmers and partners to strengthen the agricultural sector while protecting the environment for future generations.



LEE WARNS: CONSTRUCTION WILL MAKE OR BREAK T&T'S FUTURE—DELIVER OR STEP ASIDE

In a blistering and uncompromising address that electrified the Trinidad and Tobago Contractors Association's (TTCA) Contractor of the Year Awards on the night of November 15, Housing Minister Dr David Lee declared that the country's future now rests squarely on the shoulders of the construction industry—and failure is no longer an option.

Speaking at the Radisson Hotel, Lee tore into a decade of stalled projects, abandoned communities and crippled delivery, insisting that Trinidad and Tobago has reached a defining national crossroads. "If there was ever a time when the construction industry could change the destiny of Trinidad and Tobago, it is now," he told a packed ballroom of contractors, engineers, executives and industry leaders.

Just days after Prime Minister Kamla Persad-Bissessar unveiled Phase Two of the National Revitalisation Blueprint, Lee described the plan not as "a slogan" but as "a work programme for the construction sector"—a national portfolio of more than 129 major developments including the San Fernando-Mayaro Highway, new waterfronts, expanded ports, a 250-acre replacement of the Golden Grove prison, a Justice Centre in Tamana, a major tourism facility on Carrera Island, and 50,000 construction-related jobs.

"The Blueprint will rise or fall on the strength of the construction industry," Lee warned. "If you succeed, it succeeds. If you stall, it stalls."

A Housing Sector in Collapse — and a new line in the sand

Turning his fire toward the country's chronic housing shortage, Lee lambasted the last administration's record: 4,000 homes in ten years against more than 100,000 active HDC applicants.

"That is not a shortage. That is a failure of delivery," he said bluntly.

The new government's target: 20,000 homes in four years — supported by 66 sites already identified and a shift toward modular building technologies, climate-resilient design and new mixed-use communities.



But he reserved his sharpest criticism for poor workmanship in State projects.

"When a family receives a new unit and their home floods in the first rainy season, we have all failed — the Ministry, the HDC, the contractor," Lee said, vowing an end to inflated contracts, collapsed retaining walls, leaking roofs and deteriorating infrastructure. "We are drawing a line in the sand."

Faster approvals, faster payments, real local content

In a direct acknowledgement of long-standing contractor complaints, Lee announced:

- * A new Priority Portal Desk to fast-track approvals for projects over \$50 million

- * Dedicated financing mechanisms to ensure timely contractor payments

- * A renewed push for local content, ensuring Trinidad and Tobago contractors do

not "compete for scraps while foreign firms dominate major works."

"Resilience is not only about stronger structures, it is about stronger cashflows," Lee said. "If we ask you to build on schedule, we must commit to paying on schedule."

A call to arms for a nation under construction

With climate change accelerating, coastlines eroding and drainage systems collapsing, Lee said the construction sector is now part of the national disaster-resilience strategy:

"You are not just building for handover day. You are building for the next hurricane season—and the next one after that."

Lee closed with a challenge: "We will build homes, not just housing stock. Communities, not just developments. Value, not vanity projects. Trinidad and Tobago is under construction. And we will build this nation with you."

When a family receives a new unit and their home floods in the first rainy season, we have all failed — the Ministry, the HDC, the contractor.



CARNIVAL 2026 OFFICIALLY LAUNCHED

The vibrant spirit of Carnival was on full display on November 7, 2025, as the Honourable Michelle Benjamin, Minister of Culture and Community Development, alongside Dr. Narindra Roopnarine, Parliamentary Secretary, and senior officials, attended the official launch of Carnival 2026 at the Brian Lara Promenade.

The event captured the colour, culture, community pride, and infectious energy that make Trinidad and Tobago's Carnival truly unmatched.



PANORAMA 2026 IGNITES THE SAVANNAH

The heartbeat of Trinidad and Tobago was once again alive at the Queen's Park Savannah as the 2026 National Panorama season was launched in an explosion of rhythm, colour, and cultural pride on Sunday, November 9, 2025.

Minister of Culture and Community Development, the Honourable Michelle Benjamin, joined pan lovers, musicians, and cultural stakeholders as Pan Trinbago, the world governing body for the steelpan, unveiled this year's season under the powerful theme, "Legacy: Ours to Love, Ours to Cherish!"

From the very first strike of the sticks, one message was clear. Pan is we: loud, proud, and forever home-grown. The Drag at the Queen's Park Savannah came alive with the unmistakable energy that only Panorama can deliver, as steel orchestras, supporters, and cultural icons gathered to celebrate not just music, but the legacy of the only musical instrument invented in the 20th century, right here in Trinidad and Tobago.

As the season begins, excitement is already building nationwide. Bands are gearing up, arrangers are crafting their magic, and communities are preparing for the unforgettable months ahead. The journey to Carnival has officially begun, and the rhythm of pan will lead the way.



TT STRIKES MAJOR DEALS ACROSS THE GLOBE IN 2025

In just eight months, Trinidad and Tobago has executed one of its most aggressive and consequential foreign-policy pushes in over a decade—securing multimillion-dollar grants, forging new global alliances, reopening strategic doors in the Middle East, and restoring the country's credibility across CARICOM, Africa, Asia, and Europe.

Under the leadership of Minister of Foreign and CARICOM Affairs Sean Sobers, the Ministry has transformed foreign engagement from routine diplomacy into a results-driven engine aimed at strengthening national security, expanding trade access, and delivering measurable benefits to citizens.

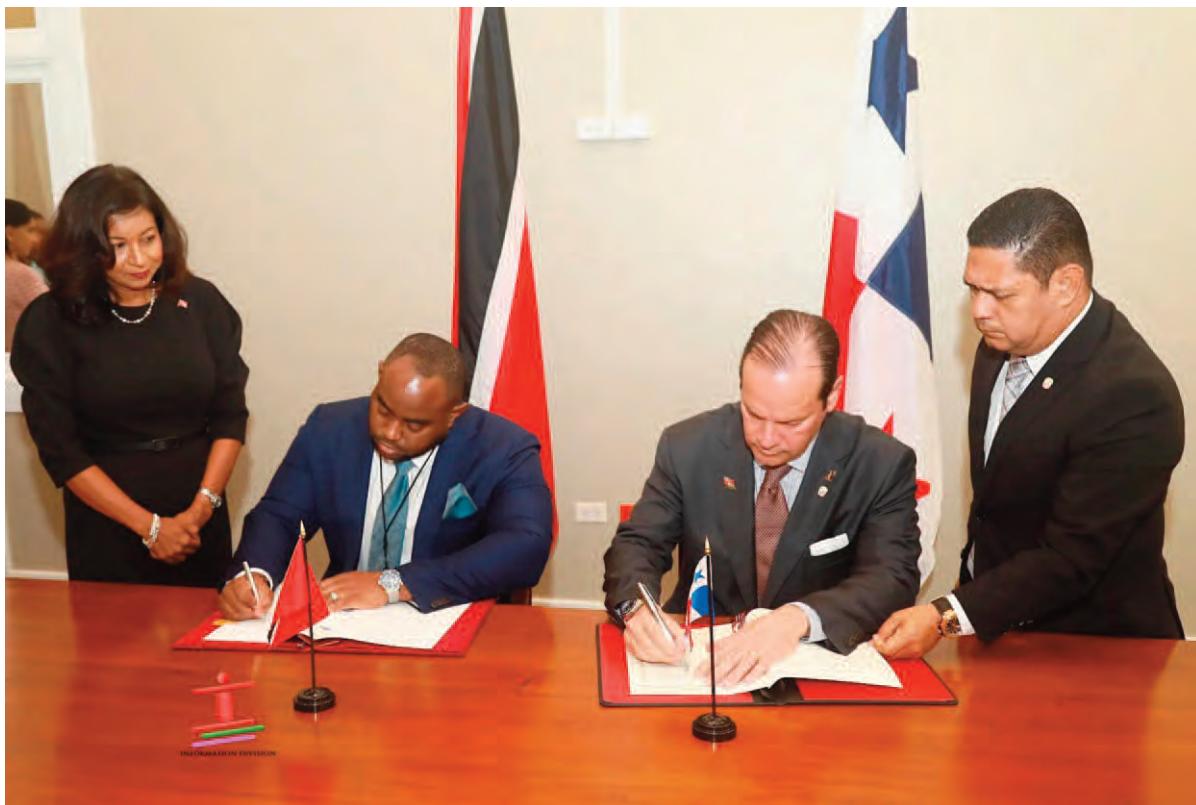
India Visit: Historic Modi mission delivers high-value agreements

The diplomatic tone for 2025 was set on July 3–4 when India's Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi, touched down in Trinidad and Tobago for a historic visit.

The outcome: a sweeping package of agreements that inject new capacity into health, education, diplomacy, renewable energy, and sport.

Among the most significant were:

- A Pharmacopoeial Cooperation MoU to expand medical and pharmaceutical standards
- A US\$50,000-per-year Quick Impact Project facility for community upgrades
- Re-establishment of Hindi and Indian Studies Chairs at UWI
- Cultural and sports cooperation agreements



- A MoU on Diplomatic Training to strengthen TT's foreign-service corps

This visit signaled to the world that Trinidad and Tobago is once again a serious global partner.

China, UAE & Panama: Strategic partnerships expand

TT also secured a US\$94 million grant from China, earmarked for national infrastructure—including new fire tenders and the refurbishment of the Couva Children's Hospital.

A new Bilateral Political Consultations Mechanism with Panama tightened regional cooperation.

But the most explosive diplomatic gains came from the United Arab Emirates:

- A mutual visa-waiver agreement for diplomatic and official passport holders
- UAE backing for the Couva Children's Hospital
- Advanced discussions on establishing a TT Embassy in the Middle East
- High-level talks with AD Ports Group—operators of 50 ports worldwide—on TT's role in the Global Logistics Hub initiative

These engagements mark TT's strongest push into Middle Eastern diplomacy in years.

TT reasserts its Global voice at UNGA

At the United Nations General Assembly in September, Minister Sobers reaffirmed TT's unwavering support for women's rights at the landmark 30th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration.

His bilateral meeting marathon—with Austria, Benin, Saudi Arabia, the Dominican Republic, Antigua and Barbuda, and the WTO—advanced TT's interests in:

- Healthcare
- Artificial intelligence
- Trade expansion
- Air transport connectivity

Diplomatic relations were also formally established with Monaco and Tunisia.



MORE ON PAGE 34



RESULTS-DRIVEN DIPLOMACY DELIVERS SECURITY, TRADE, AND GLOBAL REACH

■ FROM PAGE 33

CARICOM: Regional security and integration take centre stage

At the CARICOM Heads of Government Conference in Jamaica, TT helped drive regional unity on one of the Caribbean's most pressing issues: transnational organised crime, signing on to the Montego Bay Declaration.

TT also backed major regional frameworks, including:

- A regional telecommunications strategy
- Common social-media legislation
- A Regional Digital Safety Commission
- Continued work on an intra-regional ferry service

Migration policy reforms are also being shaped to strengthen participation in the CSME and expand opportunities for nationals.

Africa Engagement: A reopened frontier

At the CARICOM–Africa Summit in Addis Ababa, TT moved to secure deeper linkages in:

- Air transport
- Cultural exchanges
- Diaspora outreach



- Academic and aviation partnerships with Ethiopia

These efforts position TT to benefit from Africa's rapidly expanding markets and geopolitical influence.

Consular Services: Quiet wins with major impact

Between May and September, the Ministry processed:

- 1,500+ apostilles
- 201 authentications
- 37 repatriations of deceased nationals
- Assistance for nationals in distress—often overlooked but politically vital—was

significantly strengthened, with new diaspora-mapping and registration systems underway.

TT Missions abroad advance security and development

TT's overseas embassies delivered targeted interventions:

- In Brussels: Lobbying under EU–CELAC on drug policy and judicial responses
- In Washington: Support for a regional strategy to disrupt organised crime
- In Kingston: Cybersecurity training and key inputs into the EU–LAC Digital Alliance

These efforts modernise TT's defence posture against international threats.

Korea–Caribbean Partnership: New opportunities at 40 Years

At the High-Level Korea–Caribbean Forum in Seoul, Minister Sobers laid out TT's position on resilient oceans, climate threats, and maritime security.

A Finland-based firm also signalled interest in constructing a sargassum bio-refinery in TT—an investment with strong potential for sustainable manufacturing and export earnings.

GOVERNMENT EXPANDS CHRISTMAS FOOD SUPPORT TO REACH MORE VULNERABLE FAMILIES

As an early Christmas gift to citizens, the Government expanded its seasonal food support programme, providing immediate relief to vulnerable households across the country.

Under the initiative, an additional 50 Christmas Food Support Cards were allocated to each of the nation's 41 Members of Parliament, increasing the total from 200 to 250 cards per constituency. The expansion significantly enhanced constituency-level responsiveness and ensured a wider reach

during the festive season, when household expenses typically rise.

The measure was implemented through the Ministry of the People, Social Development and Family Services, which has continued to modernise its operations and strengthen national social safety nets. Thousands of families benefited from the expanded distribution, receiving timely assistance to help meet basic food needs during the Christmas period.

Officials said the initiative reflects the Gov-

ernment's commitment to fairness, dignity and people-centred governance, ensuring that support reaches those who need it most. The expanded programme forms part of broader efforts to protect and empower vulnerable citizens while delivering tangible, community-level assistance nationwide.

Minister Vandana Mohit has reaffirmed that social protection remains a central pillar of its policy agenda, particularly during periods of heightened financial pressure on low-income and at-risk households.



MINISTRY AND UNICEF LEAD NATIONAL DIALOGUE ON CHILD POVERTY

The Ministry of the People, Social Development and Family Services, in collaboration with the United Nations International Children's Fund (UNICEF), hosted a series of stakeholder meetings to discuss the findings of the Multidimensional Child Poverty Study in Trinidad and Tobago.

The first meeting was held on Wednesday, December 10, 2025, at the Pamela Benson Room, National Library and Information System Authority (NALIS), Port of Spain, followed by a second session in Tobago on Friday, December 12, 2025, at the Tobago Library Services, Scarborough.

The meetings brought together government officials, civil society organisations, youth representatives, development partners, and other key stakeholders to review the findings of the 2023 Multidimensional Child



Poverty Study and to identify next steps toward a coordinated, evidence-based national response to child poverty.





GOVERNMENT MOVES FAST \$365,500 IN FLOOD RELIEF DELIVERED TO TUNAPUNA/PIARCO FAMILIES

In a climate where citizens are tired of excuses and delays, the Government delivered what many flood-affected families had been desperately waiting for: real help, delivered quickly. More than \$365,000 in Disaster Relief Grants was issued to families across the Tunapuna/Piarco Region, a decisive intervention that underscored the administration's push to replace bureaucracy with speed, compassion and accountability.

At the distribution ceremony held on November 24 at the St. Augustine South Community Centre, 53 recipients, representing 168 household beneficiaries, received relief to rebuild after heavy rainfall destroyed furniture, appliances and essential belongings.

The grants totalled \$365,500, broken down into \$350,500 for household items, \$14,000 for clothing, and \$1,000 for school supplies — a tangible demonstration that the Ministry of the People, Social Development and Family Services is prioritising real impact over red tape.

Mohit: "People deserve action—not obstacles."

Delivering a forceful address, Minister of the People, Social Development and Family Services Vandana Mohit left no room for ambiguity: disaster response is not a privilege, it is a moral obligation.

"We are committed to strengthening every aspect of disaster response so that families receive assistance faster and with greater ease," she said. "We will continue to evaluate, listen and improve because citizens deserve nothing less."

Her message was clear: delay is disrespect, and the Ministry intends to lead with urgency, transparency and dignity.

Ameen: Community voices are reshaping Government response

Minister of Rural Development and Local Government Khadijah Ameen commended the Ministry for its speed and sensitivity, pointing out that the system is being shaped not only from the top down but from the ground up.

She stressed that residents' real-world experiences are feeding directly into policy adjustments, ensuring that the Government's support becomes stronger, faster and more responsive with each weather event.

Two Ministries, One Message: Swift Relief is the New Standard

The operation highlighted tight, efficient coordination:

The Disaster Management Coordinating Unit (DMCU) conducted detailed assessments across affected communities.

The Ministry of the People rapidly processed verified claims and released relief without delays or bureaucratic hurdles.

The result? A model of Government response built on coordination, compassion and community resilience, setting a new expectation for how disaster relief should be done in Trinidad and Tobago.

With extreme weather becoming more frequent and more destructive, the distribution sent a decisive signal: this Government intends to meet crises with action, not apology. And for 168 families who were left cleaning mud from their living rooms and salvaging what they could, that difference was life-changing.

JUSTICE MINISTRY DELIVERS SWEEPING SYSTEM REFORMS IN JUST SEVEN MONTHS



The Ministry of Justice, under the leadership of Minister Devesh Maharaj, has delivered the most extensive restructuring of Trinidad and Tobago's justice system in more than two decades, recording major institutional, legislative and operational gains between April 28 and December 2, 2025. In just seven months, the Ministry—created by Gazette in late May—moved from concept to commanding centre, driving reforms across prisons, forensics, court digitisation, legal aid, offender management and victim services.

The most far-reaching development was the establishment of the Ministry itself as a stand-alone authority with a consolidated mandate. For the first time, the country's justice functions, ranging from the Quicker Justice Initiative and forensic science operations to electronic monitoring, youth rehabilitation and victim compensation, were brought under a unified framework. This redesign replaced the fragmented architecture that had long slowed justice delivery and contributed to case backlogs, inconsistent standards and oversight gaps.

Within weeks of its creation, the Ministry redefined the national corrections landscape. Government reassigned reha-

bilitation, probation, prisoner reintegration and youth re-offender programmes to the Justice Ministry, shifting the prison system away from a security-heavy model to one grounded in structured reform and long-term reintegration.

The move placed Minister Maharaj at the centre of the country's correctional transformation, supported by a dual-ministry interface with Homeland Security for operational prison matters.

By July, the Ministry had already positioned Trinidad and Tobago within a major international justice partnership. High-level engagements with the United Nations Development Programme advanced work under the EU–Caribbean PACE initiative, securing technical support for strengthening DNA and pathology capacity, reducing youth offending, expanding restorative justice models, and implementing modernised indictable trial procedures under the Administration of Justice Act. The collaboration also fast-tracked institutional training and justice-sector legislative refinement.

Digital justice became another defining priority. On August 27, the Ministry convened the inaugural meeting of the Cabinet-approved Working Group on Virtual

Court Hearings—a multi-agency team tasked with overhauling the systems that handle remote proceedings. The group's mandate includes resolving chronic delays, standardising technology, improving coordination among the TTTS, Prison Service and Judiciary, and preparing for a future where virtual hearings form a permanent part of the justice process.

The strengthening of access to justice was also a headline achievement. The Ministry completed leadership changes at the Legal Aid and Advisory Authority in September, aligning legal aid delivery with the Ministry's wider reform mission.

This complemented the consolidation of victim compensation, victim support, and restorative justice programming into a cohesive national framework under the Victims of Crime portfolio.

A critical administrative milestone came in October with the establishment of Head 58: Ministry of Justice, its first independent budgetary head.

The new allocation, reflected in the 2026 Draft Estimates, funds youth rehabilitation projects, forensic expansion, victim support, digital justice upgrades, and court infrastructure improvement, creating the financial backbone for sustained reform.

By July, Trinidad and Tobago had already been positioned within a major global justice initiative. Through high-level collaboration with the UNDP under the EU–Caribbean PACE programme, the Ministry advanced reforms in DNA and pathology, youth offending, restorative justice and indictable trial procedures, while accelerating institutional training and legislative strengthening.

MPEAD RECORDS MAJOR POLICY SHIFTS, DIGITAL ROLLOUTS & INVESTMENT DRIVE

The Ministry of Planning, Economic Affairs and Development (MPEAD) has completed one of its most active periods in recent years, executing a wide slate of national development, digital transformation, investment mobilisation and data-modernisation initiatives.

Under the leadership of Dr. the Honourable Kennedy Swaratsingh, Minister of Planning, Economic Affairs and Development, the Ministry has repositioned itself as the Government's "centre of strategy," introducing a new five-pillar framework—Social, Economic, Environmental, Statistical and Spatial Planning (S.E.E.S.S.)—to guide national policy direction. Officials describe the shift as a structural reset that moves the Ministry from a narrow planning office to the central coordinating hub for socio-economic policy, climate action, statistical accuracy and investment targeting.

One of the Ministry's core deliverables within the period has been the completion and publication of the Public Sector Investment Programme (PSIP) 2026 for both Trinidad and Tobago.

The Ministry's Project Planning and Reconstruction Division led the realignment of the capital programme toward Vision 2030, with increased emphasis on economic diversification, infrastructure modernisation, housing, education, digital government and climate resilience. Senior officials say the new PSIP signals a move toward more disciplined, evidence-guided investment.

The Ministry also accelerated its economic transformation agenda, outlining a strategy—published in regional investment journals—to attract US\$2–5 billion in private-sector financing over the next three to five years. The investment push targets agriculture, agro-industry, renewable energy, transport, housing and climate-resilient



infrastructure, supported by partnerships with the World Bank, IDB, CDB, IFC and the European Union. This effort is complemented by the work of the National Economic Council, the Economic Development Advisory Board and a new Council for Innovation and Competitiveness working alongside CARIRI.

Between May and July, the Ministry executed major steps in digital transformation through the expansion of DevelopTT, the national online construction and planning approvals system.

Town and Country Planning staff conducted hands-on training sessions for citizens and professionals on navigating the platform, submitting applications and transitioning away from paper-based approvals. In

July, MPEAD and the Ministry of Rural Development and Local Government co-hosted a technical workshop with regional corporations to harmonise local-government approvals with the national digital process.

In November, MPEAD strengthened the country's data-collection framework, deploying Central Statistical Office (CSO) field officers nationwide from November 3–17 to gather data for the Continuous Sample Survey of Population—critical for labour-market and social-development indicators. The Ministry said the renewed mobilisation demonstrates a return to "fresh, high-frequency data" as the standard for public policy.

Environmental and climate-action programmes also advanced, anchored by collaboration among the Environmental Policy and Planning Division, the Green Fund Executing Unit, the Environmental Management Authority and the Institute of Marine Affairs.

On December 2, Deputy Permanent Secretary Candice Ramsaran represented Trinidad and Tobago at a major Caribbean biodiversity forum hosted by the UNDP, underscoring the country's role in shaping regional conservation efforts.

Throughout the period, the Ministry increased public communication through a 32-page national supplement, social-media updates, and public notices on training, field surveys and environmental regulations.

With eight months of accelerated reform, MPEAD officials say the Ministry is now positioned as a stronger driver of national development, investment, sustainability and digital governance.





HEALTH MINISTER CONDUCTS COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW OF POINT FORTIN HOSPITAL

The Honourable Dr. Lackram Bodoe, Minister of Health, conducted an official visit to the Point Fortin Hospital as part of the Ministry of Health's ongoing efforts to strengthen healthcare delivery across the South-West region.

The visit commenced with a constructive meeting with members of the South-West Regional Health Authority (SWRHA) Board, after which the Minister undertook a comprehensive tour of key clinical departments. These included the Maternity Ward, Paediatric Ward, Psychiatric Unit, and the Accident and Emer-

gency Department. During the walkthrough, Minister Bodoe observed that all services were fully operational and supported by the appropriate complement of medical and support staff.

The Minister was joined by the Honourable Ernesto Kesar, Member of Parliament for Point Fortin and Minister in the Ministry of Energy, who also visited the site of the hospital's car park extension, where construction works officially commenced on the day of the visit. Accompanying them was Mr. Shankar Teelucksingh, Councillor for the Cedros area

and Deputy Mayor of the Siparia Borough Corporation.

The engagements underscored the Ministry's commitment to hands-on assessment, close collaboration with hospital leadership, and the continuous improvement of patient care, infrastructure, and health services across Trinidad and Tobago.

Minister Bodoe expressed sincere appreciation to the doctors, nurses, and support staff for their professionalism, dedication, and unwavering service to the people of the South-West region.





THOUSANDS TAKE STEPS TOWARD BETTER HEALTH AT RUN DATT 5K

Minister of Health, The Honourable Dr. Lackram Bodoe, delivered the feature remarks at the RUN DATT 5K, hosted by the Diabetes Association of Trinidad and Tobago (DATT) and supported by TATIL, bringing together more than 3,000 participants in a powerful show of national commitment to healthier living.

In addressing the large turnout, Minister Bodoe underscored the growing impact of diabetes on Trinidad and Tobago and highlighted the critical role of education in both the prevention and effective management of the disease. He stressed that informed lifestyle choices, supported by consistent public awareness, remain one of the strongest tools in combating non-communicable diseases (NCDs).

Minister Bodoe also highlighted the power of partnership in addressing diabetes and other NCDs, commending the collaborative efforts

between government, civil society, and the private sector. In this spirit, he invited participants and the wider public to join the Ministry of Health's soon-to-be-launched STEP INTO WELLNESS initiative, which aims to promote healthier habits through accessible, nationwide programmes.

He concluded by extending heartfelt congratulations to the Diabetes Association of Trinidad and Tobago for its unwavering dedication to diabetes awareness, prevention, and the promotion of better health for all citizens.



EXPLORING CULTURAL AND TECHNICAL SKILLS TRAINING FOR ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

Several areas of training were explored, including Tassa drumming skills, tailoring of East Indian attire, and harmonium repair. Minister Persad indicated his intention to engage with a range of NGOs in the coming year to identify practical pathways for sustainable collaboration.



Senator Professor the Honourable Prakash Persad, Minister of Tertiary Education and Skills Training, met with Shri Milind Parande, General Secretary of the Vishva Hindu Parishad; Mr. Krishna Murity Ramjit, President of the Shiva Gana Organization; and Mr. Keron Sooklal, Commissioner of the Port Authority, at Education Towers on Tuesday, November 25, 2025.

Discussions focused on potential collaboration between the Ministry of Tertiary Education and Skills Training and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to promote and facilitate skills training programmes aimed at equipping individuals for self-employment and entrepreneurship.

Several areas of training were explored, including Tassa drumming skills, tailoring of East Indian attire, and harmonium repair. Minister Persad indicated his intention to engage with a range of NGOs in the coming year to identify practical pathways for sustainable collaboration. He also underscored the vital role NGOs play in driving positive social transformation and community development across the nation.

The Ministry of Tertiary Education and Skills Training remains committed to strengthening partnerships that expand access to skills training and enhance employment and entrepreneurial opportunities throughout Trinidad and Tobago.

MTEST AND JAMAICA EXPLORE REGIONAL PARTNERSHIPS IN SKILLS, AI AND INNOVATION

Senator Emeritus Professor the Honourable Prakash Persad, Minister of Tertiary Education and Skills Training, and Mr. Hansen Narinesingh, Parliamentary Secretary, met with Her Excellency Natalie Campbell-Rodrigues, High Commissioner of Jamaica to Trinidad and Tobago, on December 10, 2025.

The meeting focused on strengthening partnerships among Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) and skills training institutions to empower learners, expand opportunities, and drive innovation in both countries. Discussions also explored avenues for joint collaboration in the

adoption and advancement of artificial intelligence technologies, as well as co-operation in strengthening environmental protection initiatives.

Minister Persad underscored the value of regional collaboration in building resilient, future-ready education and training systems that respond to emerging economic and technological demands.

The engagement reaffirmed the Ministry of Tertiary Education and Skills Training's commitment to creating pathways that benefit not only Trinidad and Tobago, but also contribute to the sustainable development of the wider Caribbean.





MODERNISING DEFENCE FOR A SAFER T&T

The Ministry of Defence holds responsibility for counter-terrorism, global and regional security coordination, and the protection of Trinidad and Tobago's borders, airspace, and territorial waters.

Under its remit fall the Trinidad and Tobago Defence Force (TTDF), the Trinidad and Tobago Cadet Force, Life Guard Services, and youth development initiatives including the Military-led Academic Training Programme (MiLAT), the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), and the Military-Led Programmes of Apprenticeship and Reorientation Training (MYPART).

During the review period, the Minister of Defence conducted site visits to military and civilian facilities and received operational assessments from multiple state agencies. These reports revealed significant and systemic neglect inherited from the previous administration. This Government has therefore committed to halting further decay and embarking on a structured programme to rebuild and modernise defence and security infrastructure nationwide.

Public safety outcomes remained a key priority. Through the Life Guard Services Unit, the Ministry ensured zero drownings on beaches secured by lifeguards. This was achieved through the strategic hiring of 21 casual lifeguards during high-demand periods, including weekends and public holidays. Additionally, nine lifeguard trainees were trained to support succession planning and ensure long-term sustainability of the service.

Capacity-building across the Ministry continued through participation in targeted training programmes, including the Ammunition Technician Foundation Course and multiple



CARICOM IMPACS regional workshops focused on data protection, firearms control, and security cooperation.

Further specialised training was approved for TTDF personnel, including a Telegraphy Course in Mexico, the Senior Leader Logistics Symposium in the United States, and the Caribbean Cadet Commandants' Conference in Dominica.

Operationally, fiscal 2025 reflected an intensive tempo of joint security activity. The Trinidad and Tobago Regiment conducted 19,110 land operations alongside the TTFS; the Coast Guard executed 1,938 maritime operations; and the Air Guard carried out 185 air operations, complemented by 723 Joint Mobile Patrols. These efforts resulted in seizures of firearms, ammunition, cocaine, marijuana, and the detention of offenders, reinforcing national security and public safety.

Strategic planning also advanced. A Committee was established to develop a comprehensive Strategic Plan for the TTDF, with its final report expected in February 2026. Cabinet further approved the urgent upgrade of the Trinidad and Tobago Coast Guard Station at Bonasse, Cedros.

Given its location at the south-western tip of

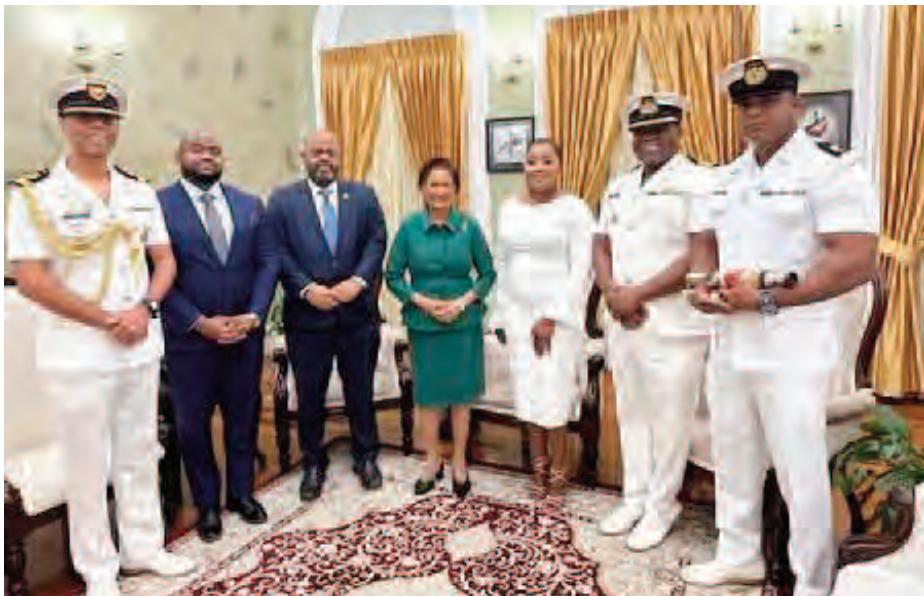
Trinidad—just seven miles from Venezuela—the Cedros facility is a critical first line of defence against illegal migration, drug trafficking, fuel smuggling, firearms imports, and human trafficking. It also supports Immigration, Customs and Excise, the TTFS, and the Coast Guard in coordinated, multi-agency operations while safeguarding the livelihoods of fishing communities in Cedros, Icacos, and Fullerton.

Infrastructure development continued at Camp La Romain with the completion of new living accommodations for the Trinidad and Tobago Regiment, forming part of a broader plan to secure the Southern Peninsula.

Looking ahead to fiscal 2026, the Ministry will upgrade electrical shore supply systems at Coast Guard bases in Scarborough, Tobago, and Staubles Bay, Chaguaramas—critical investments to enhance readiness, safety, and operational efficiency. Contracts for these works were executed in November 2025, with completion expected in fiscal 2026.

The Ministry also prioritised human capital and morale. In December 2025, a Staff Appreciation and Strategic Direction event was held to align personnel with the Ministry's mandate, vision, and mission. Key promotions within the TTDF reflected leadership renewal, including the appointment of Commodore Don Polo as Chief of Defence Staff.

Finally, the Ministry strengthened international cooperation through engagements with diplomatic and multilateral partners, including representatives of the United States, Japan, Australia, the Republic of Korea, the United Kingdom, the European Union, UNHCR, and UNICEF—reinforcing Trinidad and Tobago's role in regional and global security collaboration.



CAPTAIN A. ISAAC APPOINTED COMMANDER OF THE TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO COAST GUARD

Prime Minister Kamla Persad-Bissessar, SC, presided over the official promotion of Captain A. Isaac to the rank of Captain and his appointment as Commander of the Trinidad and Tobago Coast Guard.

Captain Isaac was accompanied by his wife, who witnessed the ceremonial occasion and

had the honour of replacing his shoulder marks, symbolising a significant milestone in his distinguished military career.

In her remarks, the Prime Minister expressed full confidence in Captain Isaac's leadership, professionalism, and dedication to service. She reaffirmed the Government's unwavering commitment to supporting the

Trinidad and Tobago Defence Force as it carries out its critical mandate to protect the nation's sovereignty and security.

The ceremony was also attended by the MP Wayne Sturge, Minister of Defence, and MP Sean Sobers, Minister of Foreign and CARICOM Affairs, and the Chief of Defence Staff, Commander Don Polo.

ADVANCING REGIONAL SECURITY: UK HIGH COMMISSIONER MEETS TTDF OFFICIALS

On December 5, 2025, the Trinidad and Tobago Defence Force (TTDF) welcomed His Excellency Jon Mark Dean, High Commissioner for the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to Trinidad and Tobago.

His Excellency was accompanied by Lieutenant Colonel Roger Carter, Commanding Officer of the Cayman Islands Regiment, and Lieutenant Colonel Keith Brewster, United Kingdom Defence Attaché to the Caribbean.

The visiting delegation held discussions with the Chief of Defence Staff, Commodore Don Polo, at Defence Force Headquarters, followed by a luncheon hosted in their honour at the Officers' Mess.

The visit underscored the strong partnership and continued cooperation between the Trinidad and Tobago Defence Force and its regional and international counterparts, reinforcing shared commitments to security, collaboration, and defence engagement.



FINANCE MINISTER: ACCOUNTANTS ARE THE GATEKEEPERS OF T&T'S FINANCIAL CREDIBILITY



The Institute of Chartered Accountants of Trinidad and Tobago (ICATT) recently hosted its Sixteenth Annual International Finance and Accounting Conference at the Hyatt Regency, Port of Spain, under the forward-looking theme: "Future Ready: Innovation, Transformation, Resilience."

Delivering the feature address on November 20, Minister of Finance, Davendranath Tanoo, underscored the indispensable role that accounting professionals play in the country's governance and economic transformation. He reminded attendees that every major reform—from public financial management to tax administration—depends on the expertise of accountants, auditors, financial

analysts, tax specialists, and compliance officers.

Describing accountants as the "gatekeepers of financial credibility," Minister Tanoo emphasised: "The professionalism, precision, and ethical standards of accountants form the backbone of public accountability. Accountants are not just number-crunchers—you are the sentinels of trust, the interpreters of fiscal truth, and essential partners in ensuring that governance remains honest, efficient, and responsive to the people."

He urged professionals across the sector to deepen their partnership with the Government in key areas, including:

- * Strengthening public financial management
- * Supporting the implementation of transfer pricing
- * Training the next generation of financial leaders
- * Designing scoreboards of measurable outcomes to show citizens exactly how their tax dollars are being used.

Minister Tanoo also highlighted several ongoing government initiatives aimed at improving transparency and value for money. These include enhanced project management offices, stricter quarterly reporting, modernised procurement systems, and the expansion of digital monitoring tools to track public expenditure.

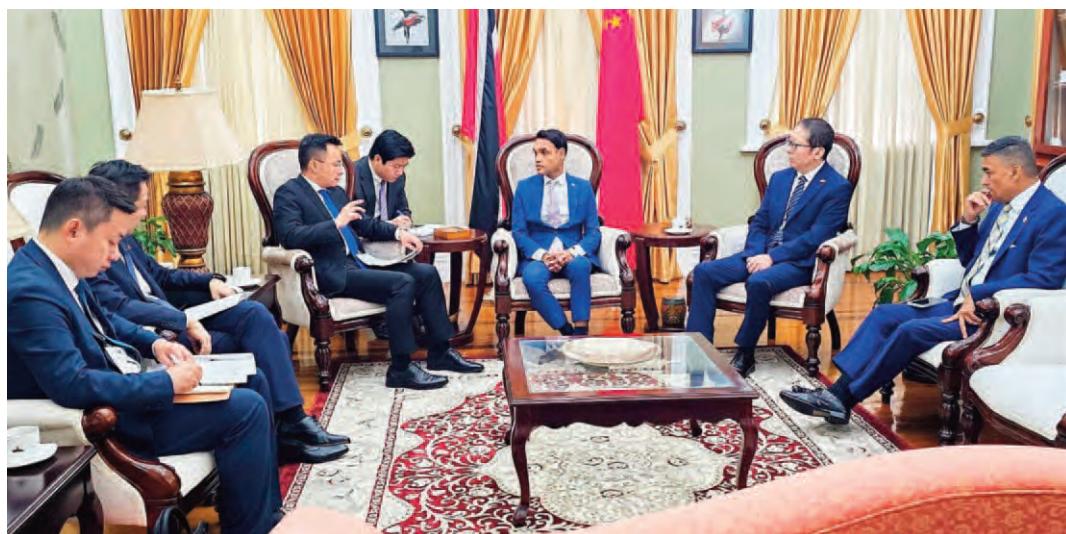
He noted that every major public investment is now subjected to stress testing and international appraisal standards by the Economic Resilience Council—ensuring over-



sight, accountability, and measurable returns.

As the Minister made clear, accountants sit at the centre of national development. Their discipline and integrity are essential to transforming budgets into real outcomes and safeguarding the credibility of Trinidad and Tobago's public finances.





MINISTERS RECEIVE COURTESY VISIT FROM CHINESE AMBASSADOR

Minister Padarath, together with Minister Tancoo, met with a delegation led by His Excellency Ren Hongyan, Chinese Ambassador to Trinidad and Tobago, during a courtesy visit earlier this month.

The meeting provided an opportunity to reaffirm the strong diplomatic relations between Trinidad and Tobago and the People's Republic of China, and to discuss areas of mutual cooperation, including development initiatives, trade, and bilateral collaboration. The engagement underscored both countries' shared commitment to continued partnership and constructive dialogue.



PRIME MINISTER SHARES CHRISTMAS CHEER WITH OPM STAFF

Prime Minister Kamla Persad-Bissessar hosted a Christmas luncheon for staff at the Office of the Prime Minister, bringing the warmth and spirit of the season to the team. The gathering was marked by festive cheer, camaraderie, and appreciation for the dedication and hard work of staff throughout the year. The Prime Minister joined staff in celebrating the season, as gifts were distributed and well wishes shared in an atmosphere of gratitude and goodwill. The luncheon reflected her continued emphasis on morale, teamwork, and recognizing the public officers who support the work of Government.

NEW MARRIAGE OFFICERS APPOINTED AS MINISTRY TARGETS 10-YEAR BACKLOG

The Ministry of Land & Legal Affairs has taken a significant step toward modernising marriage services, issuing 36 certificates to newly appointed marriage officers while announcing major reforms to reduce long-standing delays in the system. Land & Legal Affairs Minister Saddam Hosein said the new appointments represent the first decisive move to reduce a backlog that has seen some applicants waiting up to a decade for approval.

The Minister announced that the Ministry is moving toward a fully digital system for marriage officer applications, renewals, registrations, and certification. Once operational, the new platform is expected to cut approval times to under 30 days.

Minister Hosein noted that more than 200 marriage officer applications are still pending, along with additional backlogs involving justices of the peace and commissioners of affidavits.

In addressing the newly appointed marriage officers, the Minister stressed the importance of their role beyond ceremony, urging them to provide guidance to couples and remain vigilant to signs of domestic violence, which he identified as a serious national concern. He encouraged the officers to uphold the highest standards of professionalism, care, and integrity in the execution of their duties.





MINISTER BAPTISTE HIGHLIGHTS SMES AS PILLARS OF NATIONAL ECONOMIC GROWTH

Supporting local entrepreneurship from policy to practice, Senator the Honourable Leroy Baptiste demonstrated strong commitment to the growth of Small and Micro Enterprises (SMEs) through his active participation in key initiatives hosted by the Arthur Lok Jack Global School of Business.

From delivering the Feature Address at the Global Entrepreneurship Week Start-Up Session—where he outlined the Ministry's strategic plans for developing the SME sector—to officially opening the Festive Finds Christmas Market, Minister Baptiste underscored his Ministry's continued support for small and micro businesses.

As Minister with responsibility for Small and Micro Enterprise Development, Senator Baptiste emphasised the value of engaging directly with entrepreneurs, noting that these interactions provide critical first-hand insight into the challenges, gaps, and successes experienced by small business owners. Such engagement, he stated, helps to inform the development of more responsive policies, targeted incentives, and effective support programmes.

The Minister also led by example, patronising the market and purchasing locally made products in keeping with his personal mantra to "support local."

Looking ahead, the Ministry of Labour, Small and Micro Enterprise Development is set to launch its Micro and Small Enterprise (MSE) Policy, currently being developed by the Enterprise Development Division. The Ministry will also continue to promote the expanded and tailored services of NEDCO, along with new initiatives from the Cooperative Development Division, as part of a broader effort to advance MSE development across Trinidad and Tobago.



SERVICE SUNDAY REINFORCES GOVERNMENT ACCESSIBILITY UNDER MP MORRIS

Constituency service is at its strongest when it is accessible, meaningful, and consistent. MP Nicholas Morris once again demonstrated what hands-on representation looks like as he continued his growing Service Sunday programme at the BP Resource Centre—bringing vital public services directly to the people who need them most.

Building on the previous week's well-received free medical outreach, this instalment of Service Sunday delivered an even broader range of support to residents.

Constituents benefited from a Free Legal Aid Clinic, digital Government services from iGovTT, Agricultural Development Bank (ADB) support, and on-site NAMDEVCO assistance tailored to farmers, vendors, and small agro-processors.

In addition to the service booths, residents were able to meet face-to-face with MP Morris, raising concerns and receiving immediate guidance—an element of accountability often missing in modern constituency work.

Adding further value to the initiative was the presence of Minister of Agriculture, Ravi Ratnay, who ensured that farmers and members of the wider agricultural community were not left behind in national discussions surround-



ing food security, agricultural resilience, and rural development. His Ministry's involvement provided the technical expertise and solutions many farmers struggle to access on their own.

What continues to set Service Sunday apart is its model: practical, structured, and people-centred. Instead of asking residents to endure long lines, navigate bureaucratic challenges, or travel far distances, MP Morris and his team have flipped the script—bringing essential services directly into the heart of the community.

The results speak for themselves

Service Sunday is steadily becoming a blueprint for effective constituency representation, one that bridges gaps in public service delivery and ensures help reaches citizens where they live.



TUNAPUNA COMES ALIVE AT MP'S CHRISTMAS WONDERLAND



A large and enthusiastic crowd gathered for Roger's Christmas Wonderland, a festive holiday celebration hosted by the Honourable Roger Alexander, Minister of Homeland Security and Member of Parliament for Tunapuna.

Held at the Tunapuna Constituency Office on El Dorado Road, the event transformed the compound into a lively centre of Christmas cheer and community spirit. Families from across the constituency came out in full support, creating a warm and welcoming atmosphere for all in attendance.

Children were treated to a wide range of activities, including games, bouncy castles, face painting, snacks, and other festive attractions, while parents and guardians enjoyed the opportunity to celebrate the season together in a safe, family-friendly environment.





PM JOINS UNICEF TO CELEBRATE CHILDREN AND CREATIVITY



Prime Minister Kamla Persad-Bissessar marked World Children's Day in partnership with UNICEF, joining students whose photographs powerfully reflected their experiences, aspirations, and challenges.

Addressing the children, the Prime Minister encouraged them to remain curious and confident in their voices, underscoring the importance of young people in shaping the nation's future.

"Keep imagining. Keep questioning. Keep dreaming. Your voices help guide our nation forward."



THE PRIME MINISTER'S NEW YEAR MESSAGE 2026

On behalf of the Government, I extend my warmest best wishes to the people of Trinidad and Tobago for a happy, healthy, and prosperous New Year.

As we enter 2026, our nation does so with renewed confidence, clear direction, and a strong sense of responsibility. A new year invites reflection, but it also demands accountability.

It calls for leadership that delivers results, institutions that function with discipline, and public service that places the national interest first.

The year 2025 marked a decisive turning point. On April 28, 2025, the people entrusted this Government with a mandate to restore seriousness to governance, safety to communities, and fairness to working families.

From our first days in office, we have acted with urgency and purpose, moving decisively from promise to performance.

Public safety has been, and remains, a central priority. My Government's commitment to confronting violent crime, gang activity, and narcotics trafficking is ongoing and unwavering.

We have strengthened strategic alliances with international partners, particularly the United States, to disrupt transnational criminal networks, intercept illegal firearms, and secure our borders by land, sea, and air.

Intelligence sharing, maritime cooperation, and joint operations have expanded, contributing to crime reduction and stronger enforcement outcomes.

This is not a temporary focus. It is a sustained national effort. Trinidad and Tobago will not be a corridor for criminal enterprise. In 2026, we will continue to apply relentless pressure on gangs, illegal firearms, and narcotics traffickers, while strengthening intelligence-led policing and international cooperation.

That resolve has been matched by decisive legislative action. In 2025, Parliament passed the Stand Your Ground and Home Invasion legislation, restoring balance to a justice system that must protect victims and law-abiding citizens. Families now have clearer legal protection within their homes.

We also enacted Fireworks and Noise Pol-

lution legislation, bringing long-overdue order, enforcement, and public safety to communities, hospitals, the elderly, and vulnerable populations.

Beyond public safety, this Government has delivered on long-standing national commitments.

In health, we fulfilled a promise fifteen years in the making with the reopening and rededication of the Couva Children's Hospital to its original purpose. It now stands as a centre of specialised paediatric care, dignity,

This Government has also stood firmly with workers. In 2025, public officers received a cash advance on their back pay before Christmas, providing immediate relief to families. Structured negotiations continue to finalise remaining arrears lawfully and sustainably. Commitments made have been honoured.

As we enter 2026, I have issued a clear mandate to every Cabinet Minister and Government agency that this year must be a year of economic rebuilding, recovery, and delivery.

Every ministry is required to work diligently, coordinate effectively, and execute programmes with measurable outcomes. Inefficiency, delay, and waste will not be tolerated.

Our focus in 2026 will be on stimulating economic growth, supporting small and medium enterprises, accelerating public infrastructure projects, strengthening both the energy and non-energy sectors, expanding job opportunities, and ensuring that public spending translates into tangible benefits for citizens.

Economic recovery cannot occur without public safety, and crime reduction will remain central to national rebuilding.

The governing principle of this administration is unwavering and straightforward: Trinidad and Tobago first, above all. Every decision, every policy, and every dollar spent must advance the safety, prosperity, and dignity of our people.

Indeed, we begin this New Year not with hesitation, but with confidence grounded in achievement and strengthened by resolve. The year ahead will demand discipline, unity, and hard work, but it will also bring opportunity.

I extend to you and your families my warmest wishes for a happy, healthy, and prosperous New Year.

May 2026 bring safer communities, a stronger economy, and greater opportunity for our young people, dignity for our workers, and renewed hope in every home.

Let us move forward together with faith in our people, pride in our nation, and confidence in the future we are building: Trinidad and Tobago first, above all.

May God bless you, and may God bless Trinidad and Tobago.



and compassion for our children.

In education, we honoured our commitment to children and families by fulfilling the laptop programme, ensuring students have the tools required to learn, compete, and succeed in a modern, technology-driven world.

Through targeted infrastructure works and improved drainage management, many communities are now experiencing reduced flooding, protecting homes, livelihoods, and public assets. This is practical governance with real impact.

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MAGAZINE

PROGRESS YOU CAN SEE. LEADERSHIP YOU CAN TRUST.

A large, stylized '2026' logo in gold. The '0' is replaced by a silhouette of a person's head in profile, facing right. The background is a dark blue circle with a gold starburst effect at the top. Below the '2026' is a gold wavy line.

Happy New Year

As we close this issue, we do so with gratitude, determination and confidence. The New Year brings renewed responsibility and a shared sense of purpose. Our mission continues, our vision remains clear, and the future is shaped by the values we uphold together.

On behalf of everyone at WIN TT Magazine, we extend our best wishes for a year guided by clarity, resilience and steady progress. Together, we rise. Together, we rebuild. Together, we win.