

**Statement to be Delivered by Senator the Honourable Sean
Sobers, Minister of Foreign and CARICOM Affairs, on the
Occasion of
the 77th Republic Day of the Republic of India,
Mahatma Gandhi Institute for Cultural Cooperation,
Mt. Hope, Monday, January 26, 2026**

Good evening...

It is my distinct privilege to be here this evening as we commemorate the 77th Anniversary of the Republic Day of India.

The Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, extends congratulations to the Government and People of India as you celebrate the day a new Constitution came into effect, which transformed the country into a sovereign democratic republic. This marked a new dawn in history for not only your great nation, but for the Commonwealth and the world.

It has been said that India's struggle for independence, coupled with the achievement of Republican status, the evolution into the world's largest democracy and the country's emergence as a leading economy has served as a shining example for many countries,

particularly those in the Global South. Indeed, Trinidad and Tobago and other like-minded progressive nations have used the so-called “India model” as our blueprint for progress and development.

This is my first time attending India’s National Day reception since assuming responsibilities as Minister of Foreign and CARICOM Affairs. However, given the pleasure I had in meeting your esteemed Prime Minister the Honourable Shri Narendra Modi last July, I am convinced that Trinidad and Tobago enjoys a synergistic relationship with India.

I daresay Trinidad and Tobago, has been able to draw upon this experience as well as our shared history, culture and values to develop a strong, productive and enduring relationship.

This was made pellucid following the election of the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, led by Prime Minister the

Honourable Kamla Persad-Bissessar, where we saw greater focus being placed on the bilateral relationship between our countries.

Undoubtedly, the hallmark of this renewed thrust was the Official Visit of the Honourable Narendra Modi, Prime Minister of the Republic of India last July. It was indeed with great pride that the Government hosted Prime Minister Modi on his first visit to Trinidad and Tobago.

During the visit, a number of agreements were signed for cooperation in the fields of Pharmacopeia; Sports and Diplomatic Training, among others. The Government of India also made several donations, including 20 haemodialysis units and 2 sea ambulances for our local health sector, and 2,000 laptops, which will benefit students in the secondary school system.

The visit also signified a reaffirming of our bonds of friendship and fraternal ties as 2025 was the 180th anniversary of the arrival of the first group of indentured labourers from India. I had the immense

pleasure of attending the High Commission's commemorative event on Nelson Island, which not only remembered those ancestors who took the treacherous voyage but also celebrated their influence on the culture and history of Trinidad and Tobago.

In the latter part of 2025, as another outcome of Prime Minister Modi's visit and under the patronage of Prime Minister Persad-Bissessar, we saw the staging of the 50-day Artificial Limb Fitment Camp at the Divali Nagar. Under this project, 800 people were fitted for artificial limbs donated by the Government of India with the prospect for a permanent artificial limb centre being established in Trinidad and Tobago in the future. I wish to take this opportunity to record my gratitude to the Government of India for its generosity to the People of Trinidad and Tobago.

High Commissioner, I wish to publicly reiterate my commitment to and that of the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago to further strengthening relations between our two countries. Further,

I wish to take this opportunity to thank you for your efforts and that of your staff throughout the past year, especially to ensure that Prime Minister Modi's visit was a success.

I look forward to continuing such a collaborative approach for the upcoming year, with a view of even more achievements in our relationship.

Now I am excitedly looking forward to enjoying with you the promised entertaining cultural programme, delicacies, cuisine and wonderful and illuminating evening ahead.

Happy Republic Day!

I thank you.