

**Statement delivered by the Honourable Sean Sobers,
Minister of Foreign and CARICOM Affairs at the Farewell Reception in
Honour of
His Excellency Dr. Pradeep Singh Rajpurohit,
High Commissioner for the Republic of India**

**Mahatma Gandhi Institute for Cultural Cooperation
Sunday 06 September 2026**

Ladies and Gentlemen

Good evening,

It is my great pleasure to deliver lightened and lighthearted remarks, as we gather at this Reception, to bid fond farewell to my close friend, Excellency Rajpurohit, as his tenure as High Commissioner of the Republic of India to the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago draws *closer* to an imminent end. This occasion is for me *and* for many, a bittersweet one, as it is filled with both a tinge of sadness *and* of celebration, as we reminisce and pay homage to a dedicated son of Indian soil, who worked tirelessly during his term, to deepen, *even further*, the close ties which already existed between our two Republics.

Your Excellency, your assumption in October 2023, which predated my appointment as Minister of Foreign and CARICOM Affairs, has been marked by remarkable events and milestones and I'm certain our distinguished guests would permit me to reflect on but *some* of these momentous achievements.

Indeed, in the year prior to my Ministerial appointment, an Official Visit to Trinidad and Tobago was paid by the Honourable Shri Pabitra Margherita, State Minister for External Affairs of India in August 2024.

Since my installation, our country has witnessed historic visits from the Honourable Shri Narendra Modi, Prime Minister of the Republic of India in July 2025 and External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar in May of this year. It has been a great honour for the Government of Trinidad and Tobago, led by the Honourable Kamla Persad-Bissessar, to host these eminent events and world leaders and, these significant events have illustrated the great importance attached by both countries to the bilateral relationship that exists between us.

Another notable highlight was the High Commission's commemorative event at Nelson Island, in May 2025, for the 180th anniversary of the arrival of the first group of indentured labourers from India to Trinidad and Tobago. I had the great pleasure of attending this illuminating and inspirational event and wish to reiterate my commendation to you, Excellency and staff of the High Commission for your collective efforts in spearheading this initiative. Your interest in preserving the history of Nelson Island was warmly welcomed and greatly cherished.

It would be remiss of me to not *underscore* that, over the last three (3) years, the legal framework to operationalise our bilateral cooperation evidenced a heightened profile and assumed greater significance, with the signing of numerous agreements in areas, *not least of which*, include Sport; Tourism, Diplomatic Training; Indian Pharmacopeia; Infrastructure Development and Cultural exchanges. Admittedly, the conclusion of many of these agreements was precipitated by the aforementioned high-level visits, however, these agreements represent a *materialisation of the intention* of both sides to strengthen the partnership between our nations.

Excellency, on behalf of the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, I wish to reiterate our country's gratitude for the assistance of the High Commission, *under your stewardship*, in facilitating generous donations from the Government of India, such as, rice and edible oil from Haryana State Cooperative Supply and Marketing Federation Ltd. (HAFED), the two thousand (2,000) laptops which assists the Ministry of Education's drive to ensure that *every* student entering secondary school receives a laptop for their educational development, as well as, the twenty (20) haemodialysis units and two (2) sea ambulances donated for the public health sector.

Additionally, special recognition must be made of the artificial limb fitment camp venture, which fitted eight hundred (800) people with prosthetics and formed the genesis of the National Prosthetic Centre in Penal, which was launched in May. Such support is very much appreciated and will surely increase the momentum in the advancement of the Government's mandate to deliver people-centred policies, with a focus on developmental priorities.

Your Excellency, you may be pleased to know that that particular programme has now evolved, it has been transformed to facilitate prosthetic limbs to the rest of the CARICOM region so that those within CARICOM who require prosthetic limbs can obtain such.

Of course, High Commissioner, your efforts to foster people-to-people exchanges and cultural cooperation *via* the Know India Programme, the visits of cultural troupes from India to Trinidad and Tobago and the High Commission's participation in various national and cultural events also deserve *honourable mention*. An exemplary, demonstrative illustration of such people-centred focus has been your strict observance of memorialising the 21st of June as the 'International Day of Yoga, in accordance with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's clarion call for the commemoration of this day. It is evident that yoga has gained ever increasing popularity among a wide cross-section of our population and has been embraced as a holistic approach to building resilience and good health for all. In this regard, your efforts towards the promotion of the triad wellness of body, mind and spirit, through such annual celebration, is simply to be *applauded*.

Undoubtedly, Your Excellency, you have many reasons to be proud of your assiduous efforts during your tour of duty in Trinidad and Tobago, as you have not only ensured an intensification of the relationship between Trinidad and Tobago and India but executed programmes and projects, which have had tangible, measurable benefits for our nationals. Your enduring legacy will undeniably set the stage for such relations to continue to flourish long after your departure from these shores.

Your Excellency, I trust that your time in Trinidad and Tobago was enjoyable and that you depart with warm memories of our twin-island Republic. As you prepare to leave Trinidad and Tobago, I take this opportunity to wish you good health and success in all your future endeavours and extend best wishes to you and your wife as you move on to this new phase of your life.

Namaste and Thank you.