

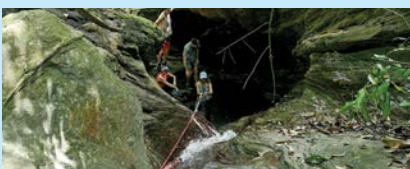
# P PANORAMA



## TRINIDAD & TOBAGO

The southernmost West Indies islands are most famous for the energy sector and carnival, but are looking toward a diversified and prosperous future

© SHUTTERSTOCK / DARRYL HERNANDEZ



Trinidad offers breathtaking scenery and dozens of hiking trails taking in waterfalls and gorges.



Lying on reclaimed land, the Port of Port of Spain is a major container port for the region.



Piarco International is the hub for Caribbean Airlines; ANR Robison International serves Tobago.



Trinidad's carnival is described frequently as the greatest show on earth, featuring a riot of color.

# Landmark deals for Trinidad's future

Trinidad straddles both energy interests with Venezuela and political interests with the U.S., whilst preparing for a general election

Trinidad and Tobago, as the biggest economy in the Caribbean, is a key pillar for U.S. interests in the region and economic, political, military and cultural ties run deep. The two countries share a range of values.



**Stuart Young**  
Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago and Minister of Energy and Energy Industries

Trinidad and Tobago enters an election year in 2025 with the knowledge that Prime Minister Keith Rowley, in power since 2015, will not be offering himself to voters on either island, having revealed he would be stepping down on March 16th. His party's chosen replacement, Stuart Young, a former attorney and currently the Minister of Energy and Energy Industries, will be leading the People's National Movement into the elections which must be held by August at the latest.

## Major oil and gas deals signed

Oil and gas, which have been the backbone of the country's economy for over a century, continue to be the major economic driver, only now the country is looking internationally. It is the world's 17th largest producer of natural gas and output increased 13 percent in 2023, but supplies are dwindling. For that, Trinidad has turned to its near neighbor Venezuela. Following intense negotiations with the U.S., in October 2023 the Treasury granted Trinidad an amendment to a license allowing the joint development of the Dragon offshore gas field, allowing Trinidad to pay Venezuela in hard currency or in kind. An agreement was signed between Venezuelan state-owned national oil company PDVSA, Stuart Young on behalf of Trinidad's National Gas Company (NGC) and the field is likely to be operated by Shell with NGC as a minority partner.

The Dragon field, located in Venezuelan waters near the maritime border with Trinidad, holds up to 4.2 trillion cubic feet of gas. Trinidad needs the fuel to boost its liquefied natural gas (LNG) and petrochemical industries and Venezuela hopes to

have access to cash. The field could provide up to half of Trinidad's natural gas demand of 700 million cubic feet and could even restart the country's long shuttered steel industry, resulting in thousands of jobs being recovered.

Shell also made a final investment decision in July 2024 to develop its share of the Manatee gasfield, part of the Loran-Manatee offshore gas field which crosses the countries' border. Production is expected to start in 2027.

Not finished there, however, another deal was signed in July between Venezuela, BP and NGC for the exploration and production of the Manakin-Cocuina field, which also

crosses the maritime boundary between the two countries. The 20-year deal sees the 1 trillion cubic feet gas field to be developed by BP's Trinidad entity, bpTT, on the Trinidad side and by BP and NGC on Venezuela's side. The U.S. Office of Foreign Assets Control had granted an exemption to sanctions in order for the field to be developed in May.

## Continued strong relations with the U.S.

The U.S. continues to be by far Trinidad and Tobago's most important trading partner. In 2022, Trinidad and Tobago exported \$5.4 billion of goods to the U.S. and imported \$3.5 billion of goods from the U.S. Exports mostly included LNG and downstream energy products, while imports include food products, refined petroleum and machinery. In November 2024, following the U.S. presidential election, Foreign Minister Amery Browne said that Trinidad expects excellent relations with President Trump following his return to the White House.

A further deepening of relations in December 2024 was the signing of agreements between the United States and Trinidad for greater cooperation in military matters, possibly allowing for U.S. troops to be stationed in Trinidad, although this is staunchly denied by the prime minister. The five agreements signed include a Status of Forces



The Gulf of Paria, Trinidad. The country has exploited its natural resources for over a century.



The Red House, the seat of Trinidad and Tobago's parliament, in downtown Port of Spain.

Agreement that facilitates interoperability between the two countries' armed forces.

The two nations also extended the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative Technical Assistance Field Team and the Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement, in a ceremony signed by the Commander of U.S. Southern Command, Admiral Alvin Holsey and Trinidad's Minister of National Security, Fitzgerald Hinds, in the presence of Rowley and U.S. ambassador to Trinidad, Candace Bond.

Aside from political, economic and military relations, the U.S. continues to be vitally important to Trinidad because of the vast diaspora residing there — South Florida and New York primarily. Trinidad-headquartered Caribbean Airlines operates a daily flight to Miami, a double daily schedule is operated by American Airlines and the diaspora plays a major part in the annual Miami Carnival and dozens of other cultural events. Bilateral relations run deep and are set to stay that way for the foreseeable future between two friendly nations.

# Ministry of Works is working well

A major road and aviation upgrade program are significant achievements

Trinidad's minister of works and transport, Rohan Sinanan, explains how his country is working on major infrastructure upgrades and is pondering a part privatization of the Port of Port of Spain (PPOS) for a more efficient and greener future.



**Rohan Sinanan**  
Minister of Works and Transport

What recent achievements would you like to highlight for our readers?

Over the last eight years, we have built out the national highways, upgraded all the secondary roads and we have a program for new roads and new avenues to alleviate overall traffic. There are repairs of bridges and construction of new ones to be done: a lot of our bridges are 60 or 70 years old and are overcapacity for modern times based on usage and climate changes.

In the last eight years, our projects have been the continuation of the San Fernando to Point Fortin highway which started in 2012 but had stopped and we were able to complete it. Another major highway was the highway from Cumuto to Sangre Grande which is 75% completed. There is also an upgrade of the road to Toco to international standards. We also have the east west corridor traffic alleviation program which is removing all the traffic lights from Diego Martin up to Arima across the width of the country. We have so far upgraded two interchanges, the Curepe interchange and the Diego Martin interchange and removed the lights that existed prior.

Outside of that, we are upgrading the port in Moruga and we are working on getting the statutory requirements for Toco port right now so that work will soon start and we will one day have a passenger ferry service to Tobago from Toco. This will remove some of the traffic from Port of Spain and take it to Toco which is one third of the distance to Tobago. It will cut the passenger time dramatically between the islands.

## Frontier now flies to Trinidad and United is flying from Newark for Christmas and Carnival. What is the future air connectivity program for Trinidad?

The first stage is signing the air services agreements but these can sometimes take years. We signed one with the UAE in September 2024 which was the culmination of a 15-year conversation. We have one with Ghana going on for a similar time. We want to accommodate and facilitate airlines from the Middle East and Africa and we have several in Central America. We're now in a position where we can have airlines from around the world having agreements here with us. The next stage of that is to get the airline to fly here but that is a commercial decision and that negotiation is taking place. I understand quite a few airlines have shown interest in taking up the opportunity

in Trinidad. So the aviation sector is really poised to take off.

The new facilities at the airport and the new airport in Tobago are part of this attraction. Nobody flies to your country unless it is viable for them, but we have laid the groundwork and the conversations have started. Codesharing is also something we are looking at with Caribbean Airlines and conversations are taking place at that level, so even if the airline doesn't come here directly, we can link with them in the U.S. or somewhere that does fly here and make it easier and quicker for passengers to reach our islands.

## You have requested expressions of interest for revamping PPOS. What feedback have you received?

We received 10 interested parties. We are looking at a landlord model where the port authority will manage operations of the international cargo handling facilities. It was an international tender that went out including to embassies and trade chambers so more than likely the partners that show interest will be international. The port market is

“Quite a few airlines have shown interest in taking up the opportunity in Trinidad, so the aviation sector is really poised to take off.”

Rohan Sinanan  
Minister of Works and Transport

different because you need to have that link to shipping lines, so we are looking for a partner who can move the port to where we want it to be. We're trying to create greater connections in maritime with a maritime policy.

## Trinidad is car dependent, there aren't many alternatives. As part of the road upgrade program, is there a public transport plan?

At this point in time it is difficult. About 15 years ago we looked into a rapid rail system in Trinidad which was shelved because of the economic situation. It still could be an option but the timing is key. That is why what we are concentrating on now is the build-out of the highway network. But we also have a plan to use the Public Transport Service Corporation — we want to modernize it and as we speak we are evaluating a tender to buy 300 new buses in phases, the first phase being 100 buses. We're hoping to make the fleet electric too.



Trinidad is also an exporter of manufactured products, food and agricultural produce.

# Trading relationships the world over

Trinidad has been enriched by oil for over a century, but it's time to move on

## Trinidad's relationship with the U.S. runs deep and the country's diverse product portfolio keeps it a solid bet for future success.

Trinidad's economy, whilst dominated by energy and natural resources, is bolstered by a manufacturing sector, many dozens of SMEs and, as the largest economy in the English speaking Caribbean, business and finance as well. The Ministry of Trade and Industry's main responsibility is growing these sectors and it works closely with other promotional agencies to make this happen.

The country's geography lends itself to this too. A preferential trade agreement with the U.S. under the Caribbean Basin Economic Recovery Act and further agreements with Mexico, Panama, Colombia and many others underscore its position as both "an entry point for goods into the region and a staging area for Caribbean Community (CARICOM) exports," as noted by Sekou Alleyne, the president of InvestTT, which reports to the ministry. He expanded, saying "Trinidad and Tobago's location between North and South America and its relationship with the CARICOM market makes it an ideal logistics hub."

The U.S. is Trinidad's largest trading partner; exports sent to Trinidad include petroleum oil, aircraft parts, machinery, chemicals, plastics and food and beverage products. Decades of oil-generated wealth has left Trinidadians with a strong taste for American foods which are considered high quality goods. From Trinidad, oil and natural gas are by far its biggest export globally, accounting for around 30 percent of exports, however the country's enormous Point Lisas Industrial Estate



**Paula Gopee-Scoon**  
Minister of Trade and Industry

ensures that organic and inorganic chemicals make up a further 20 percent of exports each, along with fertilizers produced from numerous petrochemical plants. The world famous Angostura aromatic bitters hail from Laventille, on the outskirts of the capital, Port of Spain, while other unique products such as Moruga rice, an exceptionally nutritious red rice, grow in southern Trinidad.

In October 2024, trade minister Paula Gopee-Scoon hosted a CARICOM ministerial meeting with the U.S. Trade Representative, Katherine Tai, which focused on key concerns in the Caribbean Basin Initiative, a collection of trade programs between the U.S., the Caribbean and Central America. It is designed to give member countries duty-free access to the U.S. market, vital for these nations. Trinidad exports about \$5.5 billion of goods to the U.S., around 35 percent of its total exports, yet it runs a persistent trade deficit year after year.

Regionally, Trinidad maintains strong relationships with many of its neighbors through CARICOM and regularly conducts trade missions to countries including Jamaica, Barbados, The Bahamas and especially Guyana, whose oil boom has seen a glut of Trinidadian companies expanding there and setting up subsidiaries.

Trade policies can change very quickly, the current administration in the White House is proof enough of that. Nevertheless, Trinidad has a strong and deep relationship with the U.S. and with dozens of other trading partners regionally and internationally. Further diversification is coming soon and everyone should benefit.

## PILLARS OF THE U.S.-TT PARTNERSHIP



Thousands of Trinbagonians live in the U.S. and many U.S. citizens live in Trinidad



Daily flights to Miami, New York and Houston; others to Orlando and Fort Lauderdale



Cultural exchanges offered by the U.S. for Trinidadians e.g. steelpan, youth workshops



Imports from the U.S. include machinery, food; exports include gas, petrochemicals



U.S. troops were based in Trinidad during WWII; there are still close defensive ties

# A world beyond oil and gas

Long dependent on fossil fuels, Trinidad is stretching its wings, guided by InvesTT

InvesTT, soon to become the Trinidad and Tobago Investment Promotion Agency, encourages investment and works for greater private sector participation in Trinidad's economy. It is leading the charge for diversification.



**Sekou Alleyne**  
President, InvesTT

ports to the Ministry of Trade and Industry and is governed by a board of directors. We work closely with the private sector, domestically and internationally, to raise awareness of Trinidad and Tobago as an investment destination, arrange visits and provide end-to-end support for setting up operations, all free of charge.

**Thinking of the upcoming Trinidad and Tobago Investment Promotion Agency, what are the target industries for the new entity and the rationale for its creation?**

Creating the Trinidad and Tobago Trade and Investment Promotion Agency as a larger, more prominent and well-resourced body that combines trade and investment promotion was a significant policy step in recent years to boost trade and investment outside of the oil and gas sector. The decision to consolidate ExporTT and CreativeTT — two other agencies under the Minis-



Trinidad's main export historically was cocoa, sending 34,000 tons abroad in the 19th century.

try of Trade and Industry that also focus beyond oil and gas — reflects the government's commitment to continuity and impact, building on the good work each agency has achieved.

This integration allows us to raise awareness of export-ready goods and services and attract foreign investment more effectively. Additionally, it positions us to compete with major regional trade and investment agencies, such as ProColombia and JAMPRO in Jamaica. This is a core part of the government's diversification strategy. The recently enacted Special Economic Zone (SEZ) legislation targets sectors outside of oil and gas offering du-

ty-free, VAT-free and reduced corporate tax to incentivize businesses within designated zones.

Our manufacturing sector is a key focus as shown by the development of Phoenix Park Industrial Estate — a light industrial park designated as an SEZ in the recent budget. Agri-processing is a key focus as the Caribbean Community aims to reduce the food import bill by 25 percent by 2025. Trinidad is contributing through the Moruga Agro-Industrial Estate, which provides infrastructure for SMEs to produce goods like jams, sauces and condiments, both for import substitution and export.

# Reaching for the skies and getting there too

Aviation in Trinidad and Tobago is on an inexorable rise. The U.S, Canada, Latin America and the Middle East all in the crosshairs

**As interest in airline travel to Trinidad and Tobago surges, Hayden Newton explains how the country is leveraging demand and what expansions are coming. More connectivity with the U.S. and further afield is on the horizon.**



**Hayden Newton**  
General Manager  
Airports Authority of  
Trinidad and Tobago

The Airports Authority of Trinidad and Tobago (AATT), the government-owned entity which manages the country's two airports, Piarco International in Trinidad and ANR Robinson International in Tobago, is charged with ensuring safe aviation services, negotiating and attracting airlines to the twin island republic and ensuring airport facilities are fully utilized and revenue is maximized. In Q1 2025, a brand new terminal is to be opened at ANR Robinson with facilities including jet bridges, LED lighting and a much bigger footprint able to handle multiple wide body planes.

"We ensure both airports receive the attention they deserve. Although Tobago's airport is smaller, the new terminal is extensive and its footprint is significant," explained Newton. He also highlighted how Tobago is actually a very busy airport since there are almost one million passengers annually

who fly between the two islands "so although most traffic to Tobago is indeed domestic, there is plenty of it."

That's not to say that AATT is not looking internationally, for it very much is. At the Routes 2024 conference held in Bahrain, teams from the country made contact with WestJet, from Canada, about restarting flights to the country as well as Sunwing. The Latin American market is also important. Newton commented that "we discussed GOLs [a Brazilian carrier] potential return to both Piarco and ANR Robinson because right now other than Caribbean Airlines, Copa Airlines [from Panama] is the only passenger airline which operates from Piarco International Airport to Latin America and there is room for another carrier. We are having significant conversations with Avianca for Piarco too, for both passengers and cargo."

2024 nevertheless yielded many successes in expansion. Frontier Airlines began a twice weekly service to Trinidad in July; United Airlines, which already serves Piarco from Houston, revealed it would fly from Newark for Christmas and Carnival

2025; and Air Canada announced in November a resumption of flights from May 2025.

As Trinidad has recently agreed air services agreements with Qatar and the UAE and negotiations are ongoing with Saudi Arabia, it is no surprise that this region is also in focus. "We also met with Emirates, who are exploring linking Piarco with

**“We have a large diaspora in Florida and the U.S., making it crucial for the Airport Authority to maintain strong connectivity with Miami.”**

Hayden Newton, General Manager  
Airports Authority of Trinidad and Tobago

South and Latin America, now that an air services agreement has been signed," informed Newton. "Demand for flights to the Middle East is notable," he added, given the country's large Muslim population traveling for Umrah and Hajj pilgrimages.

**Upgrades to airports and beyond**

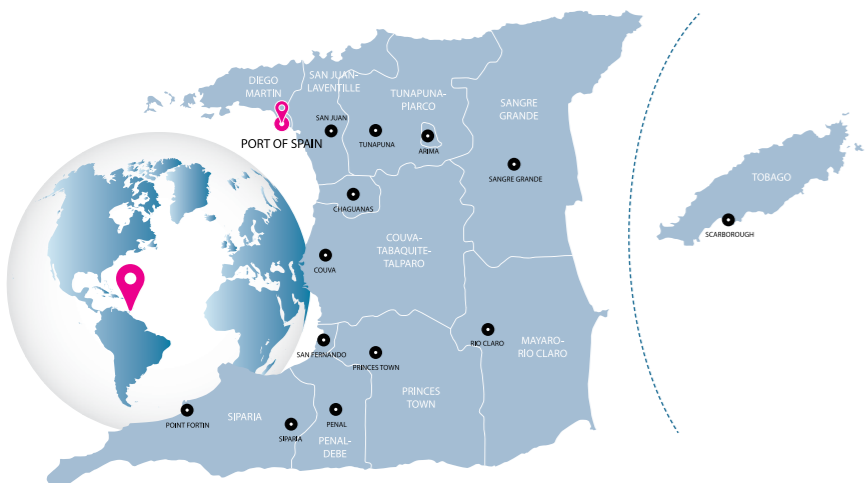
With so much expansion planned, AATT is also working hard on improving the passenger experi-

ence at its airports. Aside from the new Tobago terminal that is set to open, in Trinidad, "we especially want to improve facilities for transit passengers and expand security checkpoints. We're collaborating with government stakeholders to modernize the airport, with plans to introduce digital equipment in the near future."

The North Aviation Park is also underway which will eventually be the site for a Marriott hotel and companies including cargo operators, maintenance and repair businesses and warehousing. "Developing the 988 acres of land around Piarco is crucial for the Authority's plans for monetizing its assets," explained Newton. This land could support future expansions too. Newton pointed out "there is also space for a second runway as passenger demand grows." Solar power has also begun at Piarco, with an adjacent solar park providing four percent of the airport's power needs and more projects in the pipeline for this to increase to 30 percent at both airports in the near future.

Trinidad and Tobago's aviation sector is on a roll. With such a large diaspora in the Miami region, there is room for further expansion too and it's a crucial locality for the AATT to maintain strong relations. As Newton says "we are ready and eager to welcome Floridians to our destinations."

## Here every creed and race find an equal place



- Trinidad and Tobago's population is 1.4 million, of whom 1.2 million live on Trinidad
- The country is extremely diverse due to constant colonization and imported labor
- Most people live near the Churchill-Roosevelt highway, built in 1941-2 by the U.S. Army

## Everything needed for good health

Biomedical Enterprises of Trinidad & Tobago Ltd (BMETT), founded in 2017, is one of the leading biomedical companies in the Caribbean. The company has established partnerships with Siemens Healthineers and Varian Medical Systems to provide premier solutions to its clients.

Headquartered in El Socorro, San Juan, just east of Port of Spain, BMETT serves Trinidad & Tobago, Guyana and the Eastern Caribbean islands, including Anguilla, Aruba, Antigua & Barbuda, Barbados, Grenada, St. Lucia, St. Kitts and more. BMETT has expanded its operations into Guyana, offering state-of-the-art equipment and training to the local population.

In addition to offering medical radiology, laboratory, and oncology equipment, BMETT provides a range of services, including equipment consultancy, site planning, project management, turnkey solutions, and smart remote services.

The company is at the forefront of technological advancements in the medical industry. "Technology is constantly evolving, and companies must innovate to stay ahead. We are seeing significant developments with our part-



**Kieran Thompson**  
Managing Director  
Biomedical Enterprises  
of Trinidad and Tobago  
Limited

ners, particularly Siemens," explained Kieran Thompson, BMETT's managing director.

**Well prepared for the future**

Looking to the future of healthcare, he added, "global trends such as robotics, AI and drug customization are rapidly evolving and will soon be making their way to the Caribbean, including Trinidad & Tobago."

BMETT remains open to new partnerships as it continues to grow and innovate. Thompson is currently in discussions with a U.S. company about robotic medical equipment designed to sanitize surgical rooms. The robot measures the room's dimensions and calculates the required time for disinfection which essentially improves infection control and reduces human exposure to various pathogens. Where healthcare advancements were once limited, BMETT is offering cutting-edge solutions to ensure progressive healthcare across the Caribbean.



## Trinidad and Tobago: 1 island nation with 2 world-class airports



Connect with the Caribbean hub for leisure, business and cargo through the award-winning Piarco International Airport in Trinidad, or Tobago's newly expanded ANR Robinson International Airport. Both will be ready to welcome you in 2025.

[www.tntairports.com](http://www.tntairports.com)



# A reorganization like nothing seen before

The Water and Sewerage Authority of Trinidad and Tobago (WASA) was formed in 1965 and is the largest public utility in the country. It is fully state owned. For decades it has suffered from corruption, malpractices and unionized employees making hiring and firing almost impossible, but this has all begun to change under Ravindra Nanga.



**Ravindra Nanga**  
Chairman, Water and Sewerage Authority of Trinidad and Tobago

Unlike most directors, Nanga and his team are hands-on in the running of WASA, explaining that "at our first board meeting, we realized we could not manage WASA solely from the boardroom. While a board's role is typically strategic, we were required to be both strategic and operational due to a lack of trust in the manner in which the authority was being managed." The mandate is simple. "WASA is a financial drain, costing the government nearly \$2 billion annually, with little return on investment," explained Nanga, adding that he and the other directors had three choices: close it, privatize it or restructure from the ground up. The first two were deemed in-

feasible due to WASA's vital nature, so the restructuring has begun in earnest. The changes have been remarkable. "Since 2020, we have completed over 200 projects, improving water access for over 200,000 people, many of whom are receiving a reliable water supply for the first time," emphasized Nanga. Leaks have been rectified at a similarly incredible speed. "When we started, there was a backlog of about 5,000 leaks. While leaks will continue due to our aging infrastructure, we have cleared the backlog and currently have around 700-800 island-wide," highlighted Nanga.

## Technology being embraced

The establishment of an operational control center (OCC) which opened in July 2024 has been key to this. Nanga boasted that the OCC allows WASA to "enhance digitalization and move towards a smart water network. The OCC provides us for the first time with the ability to monitor our system. With the installation of bulk meters, this allows us to monitor

## A restructure with nothing off-limits is bringing the impossible to reality

water volumes and identify pressure drops thus alerting us to problems on our system."

An app is also coming that will allow members of the public to report leaks by taking a picture which will be geotagged, entered into the system and a tracking number will be given allowing the repair to be monitored, with the aim to fix the leak in 48 hours. Not only that, the app will allow WASA to send push notifications to users. "We are also partnering with the Telecommunications Service of Trinidad and Tobago in order to improve our interaction with our customer database," he explained. For example, "if there is scheduled maintenance in Port of Spain, we will notify affected residents in advance, reducing complaints about unexpected water disruptions."

Part of an \$80 million loan from the Inter-American Development Bank is also being used to invest in modular water treatment plants. "These plants can be delivered in containers, allowing us to set up a desalination facility within six months," a crucial money-saving opportunity, as Trinidad spent \$90 million desalinating salt water in 2023.

Water meters will soon be installed across Trinidad for the first time. The pandemic slowed the initial timeline as it affected WASA's ability to source meters in bulk, but it now intends to have the whole island metered in five years. "With universal metering, we can identify abnormal usage patterns and notify customers. Although there are constraints to the rollout, we are working to implement universal metering as efficiently as possible, linking it to our OCC," noted Nanga.

## Dealing with a changing climate

That's not to say there aren't any outside troubles. Climate change is changing rainfall patterns in



WASA is repairing more leaks than ever before.

Trinidad, which are moving west, away from the reservoirs from which WASA draws the majority of its water. "A study had previously been conducted on building reservoir capacity in western Trinidad and I have asked the team to revisit it. For instance, we are considering a dam in Ravine Sable to capture rainwater, especially since it often flows out to sea. It's absurd to let fresh rainwater go to waste when I have to pay to desalinate seawater," stressed Nanga.

WASA is also focused on groundwater expansion to supplement supply during the rainy season when turbidity affects surface water quality. "Last year," added Nanga, "we successfully desilted the Hillsborough Dam in Tobago, restoring lost capacity."

As Nanga highlighted, "all this progress comes at a cost" and he is looking for financing for the transformed WASA. "We welcome investors from Florida to explore public-private partnerships. WASA had a poor reputation, but that is behind us. Our doors are now open for business and we welcome any assistance to move forward."

## Just off the coast of South America, Trinidad has many benefits for logistics operations



The Phoenix Park Industrial Estate is 95 percent leased with 26 tenants, one of whom is working on a data center for greater digitalization



Trinidad is undertaking a major highway rehabilitation, removing traffic-causing junctions along major roads to be replaced with flyovers



The Port of Port of Spain handles cruises, naval vessels, cargo, rural produce and more. No other regional port handles so much variety.



Trinidad's water taxis serve 2,000 passengers daily between Port of Spain and the second city of San Fernando, relieving road congestion

We are transforming our systems to ensure Trinidad and Tobago receives reliable, sustainable and smart water and wastewater services.

WATER AND SEWERAGE AUTHORITY OF TRINIDAD & TOBAGO  
[www.wasa.gov.tt](http://www.wasa.gov.tt)



The Port of Port of Spain is the most diversified in the region, handling all kinds of cargo and people.



It has invested in new cranes, trucks and equipment as part of an \$18 million upgrade.

# Port of call for new investors

## The most diverse port in the region seeks modernization for an even better future

**Col. Lyle Alexander, the commissioner and chairman of the Port Authority of Trinidad and Tobago explains how vital it is for the country's economic success, handling passengers to cars to food and everything in between.**



**Col. Lyle Alexander**  
Commissioner and Chairman  
Port Authority of Trinidad and Tobago

## Can you provide an overview into the port's structure?

Port operations in Trinidad have a history spanning over a century and since gaining independence 62 years ago, they've evolved into a structured system of Strategic Business Units (SBUs). Currently, the port's operations are managed by three SBUs: the Port of Port of Spain handling cargo, the Port of Spain Infrastructure Company managing real estate and the Trinidad and Tobago Inter-Island Ferry Service managing ferry transport.

The ferry service plays a vital social role, connecting Trinidad and Tobago, while the cargo operations are the economic backbone of the country. Our multi-operations port handles containerized cargo, less-than container loads and fluids, supporting industries like the flour mills. During the pandemic, we continued operations uninterrupted, which is a testament to the dedication of our employees.

We've identified several areas needing attention, with productivity being a key focus. Currently, we are the only public port in the region, while others have partnered with private investors to stay competitive. To remain relevant, we need to address this by investing in both equipment and our workforce. We've made progress, replacing outdated equipment, including two ship-to-shore cranes, trucks and trailers, with a total investment

of over \$18 million. Much of this funding has come from the government's public sector investment program (PSIP). However, the challenge lies in the timely availability of funds, as PSIP competes with other sectors. This highlights the importance of attracting private investors to gain the flexibility needed to further improve our operations.

## You are looking for investors to form a public-private partnership. When will evaluations be completed?

We currently have six potential investors, including two international investors, including two international investors and are in the process of assessing their qualifications. Right now, we're reviewing their submissions to determine who will proceed to the final proposal stage. This ambitious project follows a landlord model concession and we're optimistic about the opportunities it presents. Our location, south of the hurricane belt, offers a competitive edge, particularly compared to Florida, which faces hurricane challenges. Additionally, our proximity to Guyana and Suriname, combined with our oil and gas experience, positions us as an attractive investment destination for those willing to navigate associated risks.

## What are the island's unique selling points and attractions for cruise ships?

The main challenge for the cruise sector is our location. Being further south, it costs cruise companies more in fuel, so we need to make the destination appealing by highlighting the benefits. While the port provides access and key services, making Trinidad and Tobago a more attractive

stop requires coordinated efforts. Currently, we can only accommodate two cruise ships comfortably, so any future investment would likely require expanding berths. Decisions on this are still pending. Locations like Chaguaramas and the water taxi terminal are being considered for expansion.

Beyond Trinidad, we manage cruise shipping in Charlotteville and Scarborough, with Charlotteville being a deep port that attracts cruise ships. There are many opportunities for expansion across Trinidad and Tobago, but the key is making these options appealing to investors.

## How does Port of Spain perform in terms of regional connectivity?

Compared to other regional ports, we stand out for our diverse operations, handling cruise ships, naval vessels, cargo and rural transport while also managing Caribbean Community (CARICOM) trade. No other port in the region offers such a comprehensive range of services. I strongly advocate for an inter-island ferry service

**“ We stand out for our diverse operations, handling cruise ships, naval vessels and cargo. No other port in the region offers such a range of services ”**

Col. Lyle Alexander  
Commissioner and Chairman  
Port Authority of Trinidad and Tobago

hancing local supply, we can reduce reliance on imports from the U.S. and Mexico for items like pineapples and oranges. The inter-island ferry service is a promising solution but requires a strong commitment to sustainability, as maintaining vessels and routes demands significant resources. For governments to support this initiative, they need to understand the requirements and challenges involved. While governments may struggle to sustain it long-term, they can facilitate private sector involvement through various arrangements.

## What measures do you have in place to mitigate your environmental footprint and impact on the local environment?

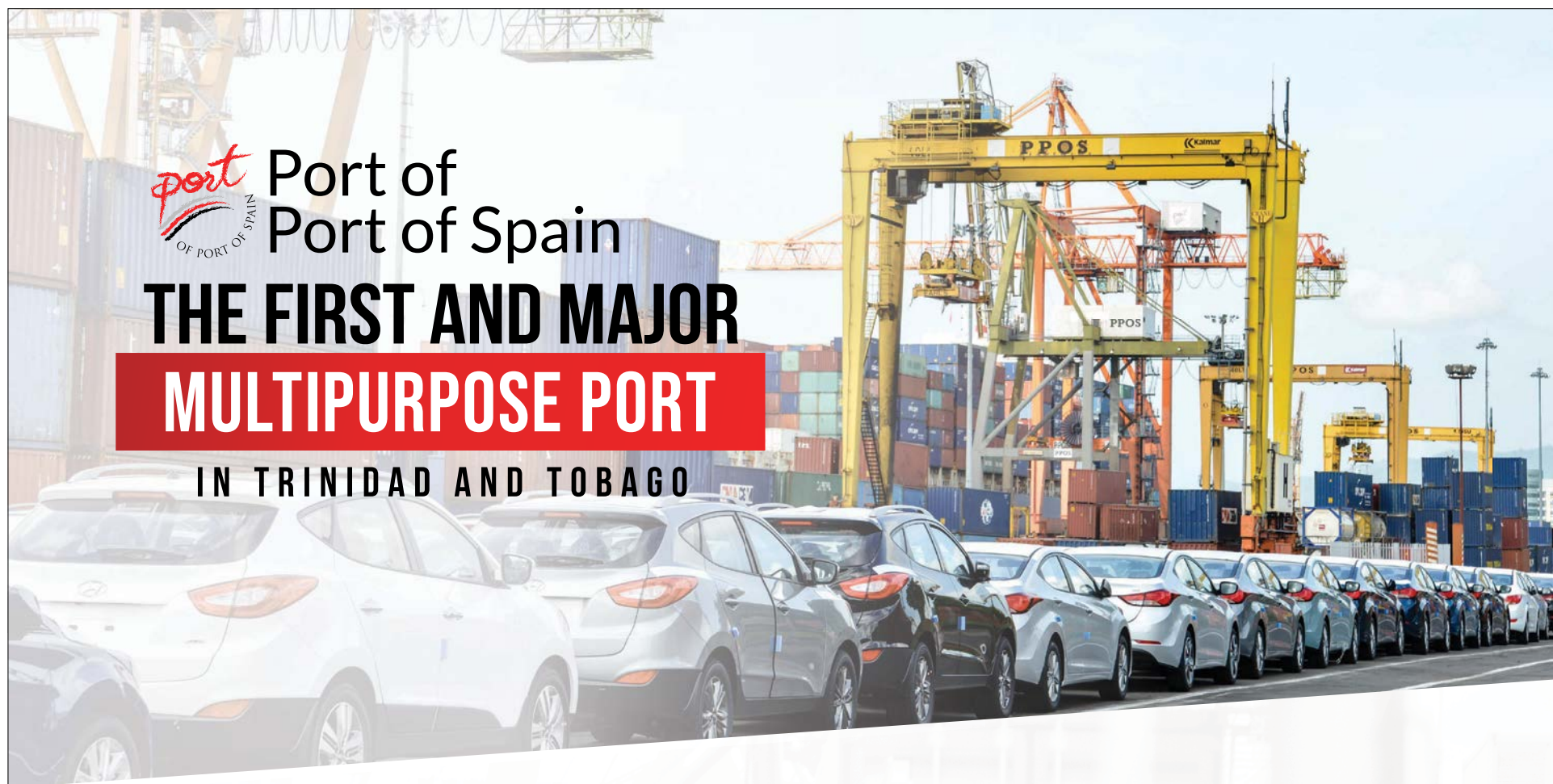
We have good intentions and a clear understanding of our challenges and objectives. With global expectations for green initiatives by 2030 approaching, it's crucial to act. We are exploring how to meet the cruise ship industry's requirements, including discussions with Proman about methanol and establishing shore-based services for incoming vessels.

The prime minister has also mentioned Trinidad as a potential methanol bunkering hub within the region. While we haven't fully implemented all the initiatives yet, we have committed to including a green component in all new equipment tenders. These small steps are part of our broader goal to achieve a more sustainable operation and preserve our environment.

## What is your final message for readers of the Miami Herald?

Trinidad and Tobago offers great opportunities for business investment for several reasons. While profit is a primary motive, investors can also contribute to the region's development. The country has numerous investment prospects with strong profit potential. Despite some challenges that may slow progress, I see these as part of a continuous improvement process.

Legislative awareness is growing and steps are being taken to facilitate investment. Although crime may be highlighted in the media, many of us living here feel secure and recognize the stability of our environment. I believe investing in Trinidad and Tobago remains a promising opportunity for satisfactory returns for investors from Miami, Florida and around the world.



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