



Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago

Ministry of Trade and Industry

## MEDIA RELEASE

### ***Minister Gopee-Scoon: S.M. Jaleel centennial a remarkable milestone of excellence, innovation, and unwavering dedication to community***

**October 12, 2024:** Senator the Honourable, Paula Gopee-Scoon, Minister of Trade and Industry congratulated the founder, executives and staff of S.M. Jaleel & Company Limited on its centennial anniversary, describing the achievement as a remarkable milestone of excellence, innovation, and unwavering dedication to community—a testament to family, foresight and fortitude. The gala celebration and Long Service Awards function took place on Saturday, October 12, 2024 at the Achievors Banquet Hall in San Fernando.

While delivering the Feature Address, Minister Gopee-Scoon commended S.M. Jaleel for their significant contributions to Trinidad and Tobago’s manufacturing sector and economic growth. “Over the past decade, the non-energy manufacturing sector has experienced remarkable growth, in large part due to the food and beverage subsector. Between 2015 and 2023, food and beverage exports grew by 49 percent, from TT\$2.1 billion to TT\$3.2 billion, with non-alcoholic beverage exports rising by TT\$188 million over that period. S.M. Jaleel is one of the largest non-oil exporters, accounting for 12 percent of the country’s food and beverage exports in 2023.”

Minister Gopee-Scoon also recognized several of S.M. Jaleel’s pioneering achievements, including being the first in the Caribbean to manufacture hot fill P.E.T bottles for the Fruta and Caribbean Cool ranges, and being the first in the world to market fruit juices in two-piece aluminum cans using nitrogen and eliminating the use of artificial preservatives. She also praised the company for their internship programme themed “Inspiring Excellence through Experience.” “This new programme will help your company retain young skilled individuals which will carry the company into the future, and perhaps one day, inspire them to create their own business,” she said.

Reaffirming the Government’s commitment to supporting small and large businesses, Minister Gopee-Scoon mentioned various initiatives such as hosting trade missions and exhibitions, which are designed to facilitate international market expansion. “Just last month, I led a total of 27 companies to Canada, including S.M. Jaleel, with very

encouraging outcomes. We have also established Commercial Officers and appointed Commercial Officers across and outside the region to help companies navigate and better exploit external markets” she said.

The Minister welcomed S.M. Jaleel’s proposed investment at the Phoenix Park Industrial Estate, which has been conditionally designated as a Special Economic Zone. She stated that the new Special Economic Zones regime will help to transform Trinidad and Tobago’s economic landscape by encouraging new investment, and will create an environment in which firms can grow and succeed as S.M. Jaleel did and continues to do.

Also speaking at the event were father and son duo Dr. Aleem Mohammed, Chairman of S.M. Jaleel and Eesa Mohammed, Vice President of Marketing. The Chairman shared personal memories from the early days of the company, defining its very beginnings as a “leap of faith,” while noting the values and determination that have contributed to its ongoing legacy.

Mr. Eesa Mohammed, speaking in representation of the fourth generation of the family, explained, “We are incredibly proud of our contributions to our nation. ... Our products are not just beverages—they represent the entrepreneurial spirit of this country. We are committed to being a key player in the diversification of our economy, providing jobs to over 1,000 people locally and contributing to the livelihoods of many across the region. This commitment to our nation and our CARICOM neighbors is also part of the heart and soul of S.M. Jaleel.”

During the function, several staff members received awards. Minister Gopee-Scoon participated in the presentation to those who served the company for over forty of its 100 years.

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