



Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago

Ministry of Trade, Investment and Tourism

The Launch of the Trinidad and Tobago- India Business Federation

Feature Address

Senator the Honourable Satyakama Maharaj

Minister of Trade, Investment and Tourism

Sunday 22nd February, 2026

Salutations

- The Honourable Davendranath Tancoo - Minister of Finance
- The Honourable Nicholas Morris – Minister in the Office of the Prime Minister
- Dr. Colin Neil Gosine - Parliamentary Secretary in the Ministry of Trade, Investment and Tourism
- Dr. Pradeep Singh Rajpurohit - High Commissioner of India to the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago
- Dr. Vaalmikki Arjoon – President, and Directors of the T&T-India Business Federation
- Dr. Sieunarine Coosal - Executive Chairman, Coosal's Group of Companies
- Members of the Diplomatic Corps
- Distinguished Guests
- Members of the Media
- Ladies and Gentlemen

Good evening.

It is truly a pleasure to join you for the launch of the Trinidad and Tobago–India Business Federation. This is **not** just a ceremonial launch. This is a **business instrument**, built to convert history into opportunity, and relationships into results. We are taking 180 years of shared heritage and turning it into a modern platform for trade, investment, innovation, and enterprise.

I congratulate Dr. Rajpurohit and Dr. Arjoon for their leadership in establishing this Federation and for bringing us together at such a pivotal moment. I also extend my appreciation to the entrepreneurs, industry leaders, investors, and partners from both Trinidad and Tobago and India. Your presence signals one thing: **there is appetite for deeper cooperation, and we are ready to move.**

Our Shared History and Diplomatic Ties

The relationship between Trinidad and Tobago and India is built on nearly two centuries of friendship, cultural exchange, and shared values. From the era of indentureship, the Indian community has become an integral part of our national identity—shaping our cuisine, music, festivals, and, importantly, our entrepreneurial spirit.

Over time, that social bond matured into diplomacy, and diplomacy opened doors for business.

We built a framework: the **2007 Trade and Investment Promotion and Protection Agreement (TIPPA)**, and later, the 2012 visit of Prime Minister Kamla Persad-Bissessar that yielded key agreements. And, more recently, we welcomed Prime Minister Narendra Modi Ji to Trinidad and Tobago, an important visit that reaffirmed our ambition to strengthen this corridor.

Economic Relations: A Partnership of Scale and Opportunity

India today stands among the world’s fastest-growing economies, home to more than 1.4 billion people, a rapidly expanding middle class, and GDP growth projected at 7 percent. That is scale. That is demand. That is opportunity.

At the same time, Trinidad and Tobago is advancing a deliberate diversification agenda. When you connect India’s scale, innovation, and capital with our location, stability, and skilled workforce, you don’t get a nice photo-op, you get **a partnership with transformative potential.**

India is one of Trinidad and Tobago’s most important emerging trading partners. In 2024, it ranked as our 31st export destination and 11th largest source of imports, particularly in pharmaceuticals and automobiles, sectors where India is globally competitive.

Our trade complementarity index with India averaged 47.3 between 2022 and 2024, indicating real alignment between what we produce and what India demands. Our task now is to deepen that alignment through targeted market penetration and diversification.

We are already seeing encouraging signs:

Last month, we celebrated the first shipment of Angostura products to India in over a decade.

In May 2025, Carib Brewery entered the world’s largest beer market through a partnership with Globus Spirits Ltd. Carib is now sold in cities such as Lucknow, Kanpur, and Ayodhya.

These are not isolated wins; they are signals of momentum.

Following Prime Minister Modi’s recent visit, several areas have been identified for expanded cooperation:

- **Information and Communications Technology**
India is known as the “back office of the world.” Trinidad and Tobago is building its own digital ecosystem. Together, we can collaborate in software development, fintech, cybersecurity, and business process outsourcing.
- **Pharmaceuticals and Healthcare**
India’s pharmaceutical sector is among the largest globally.

We welcome partnerships in generics manufacturing, clinical research, and training for healthcare professionals.

- **Agriculture and Agro-Processing**
With our fertile land and India's expertise in agri tech, drip irrigation, high-yield seeds, cold-chain logistics, we can boost production and expand exports.
- **Tourism, Hospitality and Culture**
Joint festivals, dual-destination packages, and hospitality training can strengthen people-to-people ties.
- **Renewable Energy**
India's leadership in solar, wind, and bioenergy aligns with our own clean energy ambitions.

The TT-India Business Federation can be the engine that converts these opportunities into real investments, jobs, and export growth.

Why This Federation, and Why Now

For nearly two centuries, our shared love of culture, music, cuisine, and cricket has built deep social capital. This Federation aims to convert that trust into tangible outcomes: investment, technology transfer, and sustainable growth.

And the timing matters.

The global landscape is shifting. Supply chains are being redesigned. Digital technologies are reshaping productivity. Clean energy is redefining competitiveness. In this environment, the Trinidad and Tobago–India corridor is uniquely positioned as a bridge between South Asia and the Caribbean and Latin America.

This Federation therefore is meant to be a results-driven platform.

Five Expectations for the Federation

Drawing on my 45 years in the private sector, I challenge the Federation to focus on five key pillars:

1. Implement the MoUs

Agreements signed during Prime Minister Modi's 2025 visit, health, digital services, agriculture, must move from paper to projects, from MoUs to money flows.

2. Unlock the Gateway Potential

Trinidad and Tobago is the Eastern Caribbean's largest economy and the ideal gateway to a 700 million person Latin American and Caribbean market. We are open for business.

3. Support MSMEs

Our "Buy Local, Build Trinidad" campaign envisions small businesses integrating into Indian supply chains—especially in manufacturing, food and beverage, pharmaceuticals, and agro-processing.

4. Align with PSOTT

I encourage you to join the Private Sector Organisation of Trinidad and Tobago (PSOTT). One unified voice strengthens advocacy and accelerates solutions.

5. Connect with the Diaspora

Our diaspora is not just a cultural bridge—it is a business multiplier. Let us engage them with purpose.

Government Commitment

The Government of Trinidad and Tobago is committed to building a future-ready economy. We are pursuing a Partial Scope Trade Agreement with India to reduce tariff barriers and encourage joint ventures. We are also integrating India's Unified Payment Interface (UPI) to make cross-border transactions as seamless as sending a text message.

The Ministry of Trade, Investment and Tourism stands ready to partner with you. Trinidad and Tobago is open for business. Together, let us build bridges of commerce, not just corridors of conversation. Let us innovate, invest, and inspire each other as partners in progress.

In conclusion, I congratulate the President and Board of the Trinidad and Tobago–India Business Federation for your vision.

I thank our private sector for the confidence and commitment, and I welcome our international partners to this new chapter of collaboration.

And, I leave you with the words of Mahatma Gandhi:

"You must be the change you wish to see in the world."

That is why we are here today, to shape that change together.

I thank you.