



Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago

Ministry of Trade, Investment and Tourism

MEDIA RELEASE

Minister Maharaj: Finance Bill Will Strengthen Confidence in Business, Trade and Investment

Friday 12 June 2026:- Senator the Honourable Satyakama Maharaj, Minister of Trade, Investment and Tourism, has welcomed the Finance Bill, 2026, describing it as an important step toward building greater confidence in Trinidad and Tobago's economy.

Speaking in the Senate, Minister Maharaj said the Bill goes beyond increased penalties and technical amendments. He noted that its wider purpose is to strengthen fair competition, protect consumers, support responsible business conduct and modernise the environment for trade and investment.

In his view, the core of this legislation is about confidence, ***“Confidence for investors that our institutions are modern, transparent and efficient; confidence for businesses that they can operate in a fair and predictable environment; and confidence for citizens that our laws continue to uphold accountability, integrity and social responsibility.”***

The Minister highlighted the Bill's provisions to prohibit the importation of goods produced through forced labour, stating that Trinidad and Tobago supports free trade, but not trade at any cost. He said the measure protects human dignity while also supporting local businesses that compete honestly and responsibly.

“This measure is therefore not an attempt to restrict legitimate trade,” Minister Maharaj said. “Rather, it seeks to ensure that trade operates within reasonable ethical boundaries.”

Minister Maharaj also pointed to amendments that strengthen consumer protection and supply chain integrity, particularly in relation to pharmaceuticals, pesticides, toxic chemicals and regulated products. He said illicit, counterfeit and illegally imported goods place consumers at risk, undermine legitimate businesses and weaken confidence in the marketplace.

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He noted that the Ministry of Trade, Investment and Tourism continues to advance its National Action Plan to Combat Illicit Trade in Consumer Goods, supported by the Anti-Illicit Trade Task Force and collaboration among public and private sector stakeholders.

The Minister also welcomed amendments to support electronic filing and digital processing through the Registrar General, saying these reforms align with the Government's wider efforts to reduce bureaucracy, improve service delivery and make it easier to do business.

He cited platforms such as TTBizLink and the SailClear system as practical examples of how digital transformation can reduce delays, improve efficiency and strengthen Trinidad and Tobago's competitiveness.

“These are the kinds of reforms modern economies require,” Minister Maharaj said. ***“Reforms that reduce bureaucracy, improve coordination among agencies, enhance transparency and shorten processing times.”***

Minister Maharaj said the Finance Bill reflects a balanced approach to modern governance, supporting legitimate business activity while ensuring that commerce is conducted fairly, responsibly and with integrity.

He concluded that the Bill sends a clear message that Trinidad and Tobago remains open for business, while remaining committed to fair competition, consumer protection and responsible trade.

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