

# PM: Wind T&T's best bet in renewable energy sector

PETER CHRISTOPHER

While Trinidad and Tobago's immediate future remains with the hydrocarbon market, Prime Minister Dr Keith Rowley said yesterday that both solar and wind energy were programmes were in the works, with wind being recommended as the better option for this country.

Rowley made the comment yesterday as he addressed the Energy Conference at the Hyatt Regency in Port-of-Spain.

Rowley said with respect to the discussion on renewables, the Roadmap for a Green Economy in T&T determined that offshore wind was our best bet.

And so, he said an assessment will be undertaken to determine the best locations for wind farms.

"On November 29, 2022, the Government launched the Roadmap for a Green Economy in Trinidad and Tobago. The Roadmap was developed by the IDB in collaboration with the Ministry of Energy and Energy Industries and National Energy. The study determined that of all the potential renewable energy sources in Trinidad and Tobago, offshore wind offers the largest potential for the country with a projected output of approximately 25 gigawatts of levelised energy. The initial goal of the roadmap is the establishment of a wind pilot project, demonstrating visible end-use applications of green hydrogen in Trinidad and Tobago. Towards this end, the Ministry of Energy and Energy Industries, in collaboration with National Energy and the European Union, will be conducting a National Wind Resource Assessment to identify potential sites for wind farm development in Trinidad and Tobago," the PM said.

He also confirmed that the construction of solar parks will begin early this year, as the country starts its progression to renewable energy.

"Construction of the solar parks is scheduled to commence in the first quarter 2023, with full operationalisation of the project by fourth quarter 2024. The Solar Utility Project will, on completion, meet eight per cent of the country's power generation requirements," the Rowley said.

"It is the Government's stated objective to increase power from renewables to meet 30 per cent of the country's requirements."

He, however, said that this project had been challenged by supply chain issues which increased costs for the planned construction.

Despite this move towards renewable energy, Rowley explained that the country will continue to ride the positive momentum the energy sector is enjoying with the success of the recently completed onshore and nearshore bid round an encouraging sign.

"The 2022 Onshore and Nearshore Competitive Bid Round, which opened on July 8, 2022 and closed on January 9, 2023, we received sixteen bids for eight of the eleven blocks that were offered. It is the most successful Onshore/Nearshore Bid-Round to date, surpassing the Onshore/Nearshore Element of the 2005/2006 Bid Round in which eight bids were submitted for six of the eight blocks offered," Rowley said.

He added that this bid round will be followed by a shallow-water bid-round scheduled to be opened at the end of the first quarter 2023.

The Prime Minister also pointed to positive moves by Heritage Petroleum, as he stressed



Prime Minister Dr Keith Rowley delivers an address during the Energy Conference at the Hyatt Regency, Port-of-Spain, yesterday. PICTURE ANISTO ALVES

that it was important to consolidate our energy gains.

"The outlook in the near term is positive given the aggressive drilling programme of Heritage, the country's largest oil producer, new production by EOG and Trinity, recent discoveries by Touchstone and the generous fiscal incentives made available to onshore producers and shallow water marine areas in recent times. We have been working tirelessly to encourage further increased onshore oil production and I hope to see success in this area as time progresses," he said.

The Prime Minister said it was crucial to capitalise on this progress amid less-than-positive projections from international bodies.

He said, "A key concern raised by the World Bank is the possibility of high global inflation accompanied by slow growth, reminiscent of the stagflation of the 1970s. This, according to the World Bank, could result in a sharp tightening of monetary policy in advanced economies, which could have potentially harmful consequences on highly indebted developing and emerging markets. Therefore, Government and business must work together to develop strategies to ensure that the pursuit of critical energy goals remains on track. This is even more important to energy-driven countries such as ours."



Teddy Richards Sylvester

## Three Coast Guardsmen charged with murder

MARK BASSANT

Three members of the Trinidad and Tobago Coast Guard (TTCG) Special Naval Unit (SNU) have been charged with the murder of 34-year-old Teddy Richards Sylvester, who was kidnapped from his Cameron Hill, Maraval home on January 9 and found dead four days later.

Senior homicide sources, speaking to Guardian Media last night, confirmed that the DPP had given instructions to charge the men and the process took place overnight, with the men expected to appear today before the court to answer the charge.

The charged men were identified as Emmarson Pardassie from Carenage, Elijah Julian, of Barataria, and Kayden Boucaud, of St Ann's.

Guardian Media exclusively broke the story of their arrests in dramatic fashion last Tuesday morning, when a special T&T Defence Force (TTDF) unit and members of the T&T Police Service (TTPS) swooped down on them at the TTDF headquarters in Chaguaramas.

The three suspects were apprehended by a joint army and police team shortly after Chief of Defence Staff Darryl Daniel was driven to his office at the TTDF headquarters, where he usually reports to work at 9 am. Within minutes, police surrounded and arrested the suspects in one of the entourage security vehicles accompanying the CDS.

Senior homicide sources say it is likely that the men can face further charges arising out of Sylvester's death.

On January 9, Sylvester was kidnapped outside his Cameron Hill home by four armed men wearing tactical uniforms with the word "Police" written across their chests and taken away in a black Nissan X-Trail. Investigators were able to confirm the Nissan X-Trail was registered to a law enforcement agency after receiving information from various residents.

Four days later, Sylvester's body was found dumped off Cadet Road in Petit Valley by residents in the area. An autopsy later performed on his body confirmed he had been murdered.

Sylvester was buried last week following a church service in Maraval.

## Guyana transitioning towards energy options

Guyana President Irfaan Ali says natural gas and fossil fuels are not out of the conversation just yet and while his country will do its part with regard to reducing emissions and has already embarked on projects to do so, there is still a role for hydrocarbons at this time.

"I see the energy transition as a mix between the fossil fuel industry that still has a foreseeable life and natural gas, of course, but Guyana, for example, we have already been moving to solar, we are moving to examination of wind, hydro. A new hydro electric plant that will be 165 megawatts," President Ali told reporters at the Energy Conference the Hyatt Regency in Port-of-Spain yesterday.

"Yes the transition has to take place, but transition debate must not take place outside of the continued need for fossil fuel and natural gas and that is the balance we have to bring. Ensuring that in this entire transition and greening debate, the need for fossil and natural gas is not taken out of the equation."

During his address at the conference, the Guyana President also highlighted the increased difficulty oil and gas companies had been facing to get financing for future projects.

"It is reality, oil and gas companies, they are having a greater challenge these days raising capital and we had a recent example in Guyana, where a loan to an oil and gas company operating in Guyana through the IDB was vetoed and that loan was not approved because the US vetoed that loan. We have real examples," he said.

"If you look at the global trends and the narrative, you would see that there is less



Guyana President Irfaan Ali, centre, speaks with Shell senior vice president and country chair Eugene Okpere, left, and Shell executive vice president Cederic Cremers at the Energy Conference at the Hyatt Regency, Port-of-Spain, yesterday. PICTURE ANISTO ALVES

willingness to, or less appetite to that, is promoted to a large extent for lending in the oil and gas sector and even where there is lending, the cost of capital is very much different as it was a decade ago or less."

Despite these challenges, Ali said he was eager to push on and indeed partner with any government willing to do business with his country.

"We have been toying with a number of options. We have gone out publicly to the bid round but there is also that room that we are looking for more government-to-government collaboration," Ali said.

"There is a number of docks that are still available and we are having conversations with various governments to see the appetite for government-to-government. It involves any government that has an interest. India has expressed, I would say recently, they have expressed an interest in the oil and gas sector, not just the lift but the entire ecosystem surrounding oil and gas."

The Guyana President also said he was keen on seeing T&T's ability to explore and maximise its oil and gas resources, as he urged greater collaboration between Caricom nations in the sector.