

# business



## Ali: Refinery investment must be viable, sustainable

Guyana's President Dr Irfaan Ali says his country is concentrating on building out its own infrastructure and he will only be able to make an assessment on the Petrotrin refinery when the discussion comes up.

He was speaking to Guardian Media in an interview on the sidelines of the Global Biodiversity Alliance Summit taking place in Georgetown.

His comments came a day after Natural Resources Minister Vickram Bharrat, told Guardian Media no discussion with T&T will take place regarding the energy sector until after Guyana's general election scheduled for September 1.

However, on Wednesday evening, Ali was adamant his plans lay with Northern Brazil.

"We have major plans here with the gas to shore project coming on stream. We are looking at the opportunity of integrating Northern Brazil with Guyana to have a storage platform and a supply platform for all aspects of refined products. Then we also have the gas. We'll be able to be a major supplier of almost all of the requirements for the region and Northern Brazil," Ali said.

He added: "So, we are busy building out an infrastructure here that will support the region and support Northern Brazil. That is what we are concentrating on. If and when such a discussion or proposal comes our way, we'll be in a better position to make an assessment."

Bharrat confirmed in an interview on



Wednesday that Minister of Energy and Energy Industries, Dr Roodal Moonilal, reached out to him via a letter seeking discussions.

However, Ali is adamant that whatever investments Guyana makes in the energy sector must be viable.

He further added, "I can say we have not had that discussion right now (on partnering with T&T to reopen the refinery). Of course, we have discussions with every member of Caricom on how we can advance development, how we can look at ways in which we improve our relationship and expand economic opportunity. But everything must be viable. Whatever you invest in or whatever partnership you build must be one that is built on sustainability, viability, one that is built on public good."

The Guyanese president says they must also look at how the business of refining has revolutionised.

He added, "The business of refinery has changed tremendously across the world.



Guyana President Dr Irfaan Ali speaks at the closing plenary of the Global Biodiversity Alliance Summit in Georgetown yesterday. PICTURE COURTESY FACEBOOK/GLOBAL BIODIVERSITY ALLIANCE SUMMIT

You have to be very efficient in what you do. You have to have the technology to back the type of infrastructure that you have. We have seen around the world many refineries are out of operation now. So, it's to understand the ecosystem, understand what it is all about."

The Petrotrin refinery was closed in November 2018 by the previous administration.

Prime Minister Kamla Persad-Bissessar has established a committee chaired by former energy minister Kevin Ramnarine to conduct a feasibility study into whether the refinery can be reopened.



Minister of Energy and Energy Industries Dr Roodal Moonilal. PHOTO COURTESY OFFICE OF THE PARLIAMENT

## Moonilal advocates for wind energy

Energy Minister Dr Roodal Moonilal has identified wind as a key resource for utility-scale power development in T&T.

The minister highlighted the importance of wind energy while he delivered the keynote address at the Validation Workshop for the European Union Funded National Wind Energy Action Plan (WEAP), hosted at the head office of the National Energy Corporation of T&T Ltd (National Energy) in Couva.

He noted the progress of the Onshore Wind Resource Assessment Programme (WRAP), which will be expanded with the deployment of two additional wind measurement devices covering the Los Iros/Santa Flora and Toco/Manzanilla areas by the end of this week.

The Energy Minister announced that wind energy progress will not be limited to the completion of the onshore WRAP as he has directed that offshore wind will be pursued concurrently.

"The ministry, as chair of the Wind Energy Steering Committee of T&T, will be issuing a request for proposals to conduct an offshore wind resource assessment programme for T&T. Ladies and gentlemen, it is my intention to have bankable data available for investors by 2026, identifying the best sites both for onshore and offshore wind deployment," Minister Moonilal said.

According to a release from the workshop led by the Ministry of Energy and Energy Industries, the event sought to progress through presentations and discussions, the action plan for the National Wind Energy Development which builds upon the wind strategy, "Setting the Path for Wind Energy Generation in T&T Report", a desktop study funded by the Delegation of the European Union.

"As the executing agency for the Wind Resource Assessment Programme, National Energy remains fully committed to our Ministry, to our partners, and to the people of T&T. We are determined to ensure that our energy transition remains focused, ambitious, and above all achievable," president of National Energy, Dr Vernon Paltoo, stated.

## CTO appoints T&T national as deputy director, sustainable tourism

T&T national Narendra Ramgulum has been appointed by the Caribbean Tourism Organisation (CTO) as its new deputy director, sustainable tourism.

This newly-created position underscores the CTO's commitment to prioritising sustainable and regenerative tourism development across the region, a statement by the CTO said.

It added that Ramgulum, who initially joined the CTO last year as a Sustainable Tourism consultant, has quickly proven his invaluable contributions to the organisation's vision for a more resilient and inclusive tourism sector.

His formal approval by the CTO Board of Directors marks a significant step forward in advancing the CTO's ambitious Reimagine Plan.

"We are pleased to welcome Narendra to this new leadership role," stated CTO secretary-general Dona Regis-Prosper.

"His contributions over the past year have been instrumental, and we are confident that his expertise, innovation, and deep passion for sustainability will continue to elevate our work across the region."

In his new capacity, Ramgulum will be at the forefront of strategic development and implementation for initiatives focused on promoting and enhancing sustainable and regenerative tourism in CTO member countries.



Narendra Ramgulum, new deputy director of sustainable tourism at the Caribbean Tourism Organisation

The CTO said that his extensive portfolio will include crafting regional strategies and policies, bolstering stakeholder capacity, highlighting successful case studies and best practices, and diligently monitoring the effectiveness of sustainability programmes.

It noted that Ramgulum brings a wealth of experience and academic rigour to this crucial role.

A prolific researcher, he boasts 13 publications in peer-reviewed journals and book chapters.

Prior to his work with the CTO, he served as director of tourism product development and destination management at the Tobago Tourism Agency Ltd.

During his tenure there, his efforts garnered prestigious sustainability awards and significantly enhanced the agency's reputation for safety during the challenging COVID-19 pandemic.

He also held positions as a postgraduate coordinator and lecturer at the University of the West Indies, St Augustine Campus.

Ramgulum is set to officially assume his new duties in mid-August and will be based at the CTO headquarters in Barbados.

The CTO, headquartered in Barbados, is the leading tourism development agency for the Caribbean. Comprising member countries and territories from Dutch, English, and French-speaking regions, alongside a diverse range of private sector allied members, the CTO's overarching vision is to position the Caribbean as the most desirable, year-round, warm-weather destination.

Its core purpose is "Leading Sustainable Tourism—One Sea, One Voice, One Caribbean," providing specialised support and technical assistance in areas such as sustainable tourism development, marketing, communications, advocacy, human resource development, event planning and execution, and research and information technology.