

Proman shuts melamine plant



The Proman plant in Point Lisas

Proman Trinidad has announced that it will temporarily suspend operations at its melamine plant in Point Lisas for an initial twoyear period, citing continued unfavourable global market conditions.

In a news release, the company explained that the decision follows a detailed review of international market dynamics and is intended to safeguard the longterm sustainability and efficiency of its operations in T&T.

The move comes one year after the United States International Trade Commission imposed steep anti-dumping and countervailing duties of 154.28 per cent on melamine imports from Trinidad and Tobago and other countries.

Those duties, introduced in January last year, combined with persistent global price pressures, have made the continued production of melamine economically unviable.

Proman emphasised that the pause is a strategic response to these challenges rather than a permanent closure, and that it will continue to monitor market conditions to assess the feasibility of resuming production in the future. While production at the melamine plant would be halted, Proman underscored its commitment to employees and local communities.

Of the 89 workers potentially affected, the vast majority would be redeployed to other plants, projects and roles across the company's operations. Staff will also have access to training and resources to support their transition.

For the small number of employees who cannot be redeployed, Proman pledged to provide full outplacement support, access to its Employee Assistance Programme (EPA) and statutory benefits, ensuring that all are treated with dignity and respect during the process.

Proman Trinidad's executive director, Anand Ragbir, stressed the company's long-standing role in the national energy sector and its ongoing commitment to the country.

"We do not take these decisions lightly. Proman has been a key contributor to the Trinidad and Tobago energy sector for over 35 years, and we will continue to invest in our operations, our people, and our local communities.

This decision does not affect the production or operations of our other plants in Trinidad," Ragbir said.

Looking ahead, Proman confirmed that it would continue to evaluate global market conditions and explore opportunities to restart melamine production if circumstances improve. In the meantime, the company remains focused on strengthening its core operations and ensuring longterm competitiveness, reinforcing its pledge to remain a central player in T&T's energy landscape.

Proman's disclosure of the shutdown of its melamine plant comes less than three months after Canadian fertiliser producer, Nutrien, announced the controlled shutdown of its ammonia and urea plants on the Point Lisas Industrial Estate.

When contacted for comment, Minister of Energy Dr Roodal Moonilal said the decision reflects difficult market conditions affecting the global melamine trade.

“It is clear that this is an issue arising from challenging market circumstances. I am aware that Proman has been seeking alternative markets for melamine, but the global environment is extremely difficult. In the short term, the company has taken a decision to pause production,” Moonilal said.

He added that companies must continually assess what is required to ensure long-term sustainability.

Moonilal said the majority of employees will be retained and redeployed, which he described as a positive outcome.

He also noted that the matter first arose in January last year and that the former energy minister was made aware of the situation at that time.

What is melamine

Melamine is a nitrogen-rich organic compound commonly used in the production of various products, including tableware, laminate flooring, and cabinetry.

It is a colorless crystalline substance that serves as a starting material for synthetic resins, making it versatile in industrial applications.