

Tancoo knocks Transparency

...slams organisation's credibility over T&T's corruption ranking

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FINANCE Minister Davendranath Tancoo says Trinidad and Tobago is expected to be removed from the European Union's list of non-compliant countries within weeks.

This even as the country recorded a score of 41 on the 2025 Corruption Perceptions Index and ranked 81 out of 182 countries and territories.

The Corruption Perceptions Index, published annually by Transparency International since 1995, measures perceived levels of public sector corruption based on assessments by experts and business executives. The latest report was released on Monday. Transparency International is a Germany-based organisation.

Contacted yesterday for comment on the ranking, Tancoo said he fully endorsed the Prime Minister's dismissal of the organisation's credibility and accused it of inconsistency.

He blamed the former People's National Movement (PNM) administration for what he described as theft and corrupt practices during its tenure.

'Our actions have already yielded fruit and we expect to be off the EU list of non-compliant countries within weeks. We are improving training and staffing at Courts, the AG's office and in the Police Service to improve detection and successful prosecution,' Tancoo said.

He added that under the 'hands on guidance' of the Prime Minister, Cabinet approved the revocation of the Trinidad and Tobago Revenue Authority (TTRA) and opted instead to strengthen the Inland Revenue Division.

'We have already started increasing staffing, technical and IT support, strengthening the administration and broadening the tax base. We passed legislation and there is more coming which will improve fair trade practices, confront conglomerates involved in transfer pricing,' he said. Tancoo also questioned Transparency International's credibility. 'They have clearly lost their moorings and have only emerged now that the UNC is in power,' he said. Referring to a report by the Procurement Regulator, Tancoo said, 'When you have the fact that the Procurement Regulator reported that over \$5 billion was lost in just one year of PNM and this organisation kept ratings the same, you would understand why the organisation lacks credibility and why we believe they turned a blind eye to PNM corruption.'

He further alleged that there had been 'massive stealing from the public purse' between 2015 and 2025 and cited what he described as irregular contracts and expenditure under the previous administration.

'The PNM sabotaged the Board of Inland Revenue so that corruption could not be investigated. You think is joke corruption these people engaged in? And Transparency International had nothing to say. When we came in, we discovered how badly the PNM stealing and corruption had damaged our revenue base and our savings,' he said.

Tancoo maintained that the current administration has the political will to address both violent and white-collar crime.

'This Government has the political will and leadership to confront crime including white collar crime and I believe the population knows this. From the Ministry of Finance I have seen an increased willingness

by public servants and the public generally to support the investigations of the Financial Intelligence Unit and the Central Audit Committee of the Ministry of Finance. This Prime Minister has openly said that she will use every possible action to confront crime and ensure citizens get justice,' he said.

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