

PM confirms attendance at Caricom summit in St Kitts



Prime Minister Kamla Persad-Bissessar

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Prime Minister Kamla Persad-Bissessar has confirmed that she will travel to Basseterre, St Kitts and Nevis, on Monday evening to attend the 50th Regular Meeting of the Conference of Heads of Government of Caribbean Community (Caricom)—marking her first face-to-face engagement with regional leaders since assuming office for a second term.

Persad-Bissessar did not attend the 49th Regular Meeting in Montego Bay, Jamaica, in July last year, when Trinidad and Tobago was instead represented by Foreign and Caricom Affairs Minister Sean Sobers, National Security Minister Roger Alexander, Acting Permanent Secretary Randall Karim, Ambassador to Caricom Ralph Maraj, and Director of Caricom and Caribbean Affairs Ayesha Wharton.

While her Government has emphasised strengthening ties beyond the Caribbean, Persad-Bissessar has stressed that Trinidad and Tobago has no

plans to withdraw from the regional bloc. Following a January 30 meeting with Caricom Chairman Dr Terrance Drew in Port-of-Spain, she told social media that the country remains committed to the organisation and regional development.

“The Government of Trinidad and Tobago attaches great importance to our country’s longstanding relationship with Caricom,” she wrote, noting that productive discussions were held and affirming support for regional unity while recognising the need for transformation within the bloc.

Her upcoming visit will also be her first direct engagement with Caricom leaders since she publicly criticised the organisation’s stance on Venezuela. In December, she described the bloc’s perceived alignment with the government of Nicolás Maduro as supporting dictatorship and drugtrafficking, saying Trinidad and Tobago would not participate. Some regional leaders responded by reaffirming the importance of dialogue and collaboration within Caricom.

Jamaica’s Foreign Affairs Minister Kamina Johnson Smith sought to ease tensions after Persad-Bissessar’s remarks, emphasising in January that disagreements within Caricom are manageable and that communication at the highest political level remains intact.

Speaking at the CAF International Economic Forum in Panama City, Johnson Smith said, “As in any family, you will have disagreements. And the thing about family is that you retain the ability to talk.” She noted that relations between Kingston and Port-of-Spain remain strong and that past border issues have since been addressed.

“As we have solved those issues, we try to build and strengthen at all times,” she said, adding that both leaders remain accessible to one another.

Caricom leaders are expected to discuss a wide range of regional priorities at the 50th meeting, including economic integration, security, climate resilience and the Caricom Single Market and Economy (CSME).

Efforts to secure further comment from the Prime Minister’s Office on her Caricom agenda were unsuccessful at the time of publication.