

PM bans Carnival fetes at Brian Lara Cricket Academy, targets music trucks, bars next



Prime Minister Kamla Persad-Bissessar



The Brian Lara Cricket Academy in Tarouba, San Fernando.

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Several Carnival fete promoters are already searching for new venues to host their Carnival 2026 events after the Prime Minister directed that all fetes be stopped from taking place at the Brian Lara Cricket Academy (BLCA).

After years of hosting some of the country's biggest fetes, the BLCA has been silenced by order of Prime Minister Kamla Persad-Bissessar.

The decision, she said, is part of her Government's promise to tackle noise pollution and restore peace to nearby communities.

The announcement has thrown several major promoters into uncertainty.

After months of planning and investment, they are now scrambling to find alternative venues for the season ahead.

"I instructed that all fetes at the Brian Lara Cricket Academy be stopped as the noise has become unbearable for residents. For far too long, the issue of noise pollution and its negative impact on communities has been ignored," Persad-Bissessar said yesterday in a post on X (formerly Twitter).

She described noise pollution as a nuisance.

She added that before the end of this year, the Government will pass fireworks legislation in Parliament.

"In addition, enhanced noise pollution laws will be introduced to regulate designated quiet hours, as well as new restrictions on fetes, music trucks, residential parties, and bars."

As part of her message, the Prime Minister posted a clip of herself on the election campaign, promising that when the United National Congress wins, people's mental health would also win, as she assured of stronger laws to stop noise pollution.

"The UNC will amend the noise pollution laws to protect your mental health in these noisy residential neighbourhoods and

businesses.

The system of granting bar licences and party licences will be changed by the UNC,” she said in the clip.

In a recent report, Urban Development Corporation (Udecott) chairman Shankar Bidaisee claimed fetes have caused significant wear and tear, high maintenance costs, and security concerns. The revenue from such events, he noted, is negligible compared to the damage and upkeep expenses.

Relief and unrest among residents

As Novell Wolfe prepared to bury his mother, Rosemarie Williams-Wolfe, yesterday, he said she would have been relieved by the ban. Williams-Wolfe, who died last Thursday, lived along Ria Ramnarine Circular, Tarouba Heights, overlooking the stadium.

He said the noise disturbed many residents, though most preferred not to complain publicly.

“She used to put it in a joke because she was always trying to make me not worry. When I was here, she used to make jokes like, ‘why those people did not carry their fete’ and some other venue she would call. She was old school, so sometimes she would call places I didn’t know,” Wolfe said.

On Tarouba Estate Road, Tarran Kissoondath said the events were so loud they kept him awake for hours. A recovering heart patient, he said he feels “really good” and expects better rest during Carnival 2026.

“The roof vibrates and the galvanise inside, the windows, everything is in a mess,” Kissoondath said.

In Lexus Villas, Marabella, a community poll showed that many residents were unbothered by the fetes, some even enjoying the music. Over in Harmony Hall, Gasparillo, and Reform Village, residents said they rarely heard anything. A few admitted they usually attended the fetes themselves.

Promoters weigh losses

The Prestige Past Pupils Foundation (PPPF) is already seeking a new location for its all-inclusive fete, which supports Presentation College, San Fernando. The Air Committee is also scouting alternative venues for Stink + Dutty and Out in South, two of south Trinidad’s largest Carnival events.

Air Committee co-director Shane Baird told Guardian Media that Udecott initially approved the use of the stadium but later withdrew permission. He said the events will go on, with the team exploring venues across the country.

Responding to Bidaisee’s claims, Baird said fetes do not damage the stadium, as they are held in the car parks, and that clean-up deposits are part of the rental cost. He acknowledged, however, that noise levels are a recurring issue.

“With regards to the noise, I know it is a problem. We cannot really stop that because you have one or two residents who may not agree with that particular stance.

So it goes when it comes to larger-scale events,” Baird said.

He maintained that BLCA remains one of the best venues in the country for large events.

“It is a full package when it comes to space and parking— parking being number one, a reason why you will want to use it. To me, it is just one of the best event spaces, not just in South, but probably nationwide.”

PPPF chairman Ainsley Welch said planning for Prestige 2026 began months ago, and two alternative venues have been identified for the January 25 event. As a non-profit organisation, 85 per cent of Prestige’s profits go toward school maintenance, five per cent to charity, and the remainder to operational expenses.

Responding to the noise issue, Welch said, as a former Gopaul Lands resident, he understands the complaints. However, he noted that the stage is positioned to minimise sound impact.

“From a Prestige Past Pupils Foundation perspective, we normally leave the car park space in the condition that we receive it,” Welch said.

‘Don’t call culture noise’

Former Tourism, Culture and the Arts Minister Randall Mitchell said he hopes the Prime Minister implements cultural policies without an age bias, favouring one group.

He said T&T’s cultural expression should not be dismissed as “noise” or its creative economy treated as a nuisance.

“Noise pollution is a legitimate concern, but banning cultural events and event spaces is not the solution. The concept of nuisance always involves a balancing act— protecting residents’ peace while allowing the cultural economy to thrive,” Mitchell said.

He added that fetes, concerts, and community events at venues like the BLCA employ hundreds of people—from vendors and sound engineers to artistes and stage crews.