

## Top cop calls for stronger police-business partnerships

■ Vishanna Phagoo

POLICE COMMISSIONER Allister Guevarro says no police service can secure prosperity in isolation and has called for stronger collaboration with business stakeholders.

'We must forge deeper alliances with the business community. I invite Chaguanas and its members to engage in sustained dialogue with the TTPS through advisory boards, intelligence-sharing platforms and joint public safety initiatives,' Guevarro told attendees at the Chaguanas Chamber of Industry and Commerce's breakfast meeting at Passage to Asia.

He added that a dedicated police liaison mechanism within the chamber could ensure information flows swiftly and constructively, enhancing the collective ability to anticipate and neutralise threats. 'Let us envision a Trinidad and Tobago where entrepreneurs invest both ways, citizens are confident, and communities thrive under the watchful care of the dependable security framework. That vision is not aspirational. It is achievable, and with strategic partnership, it becomes inevitable. The TTPS remains committed to transparency, integrity and innovation,' he said.

Guevarro also reassured the public that the TTPS remains committed to protecting both the business community and the wider society.

He further assured the business community that he had heard their concerns and would act on them.

In his remarks, chamber president Baldath Maharaj said business owners were living in fear and emphasised that crime was not solely a police issue, but also a business, human and national concern.

Reflecting on the chamber's consistent stance on crime, Maharaj said it had long advocated for decisive action and was among the first to support the postponement of certain rights and raise alarm about extortion in central Trinidad, even when many were afraid to speak.

'We're still here, still fighting for the safety of our community and the business sector. That's the kind of leadership that the chamber continues to offer and the kind of accountability we expect in return. Commissioner, we know you inherited a difficult job,' he said.

Maharaj noted that the borough's population has increased by 50% over the last 12 years without a corresponding increase in police resources.

'And also, we have more and more prime hotspots,' he highlighted.

He acknowledged the formation of an extortion unit under his tenure and said the stand-yourground legislation was one of the most anticipated by the chamber. However, he expressed frustration with the current Firearms User's Licence (FUL) process, saying it was too slow and that some applicants have been waiting up to a decade.

'If we need to reform it, let's reform it,' Maharaj urged.

He added that the chamber would continue to advocate, hold all agencies accountable, and work alongside anyone serious about implementing real, sustainable solutions.