

Rock Hard boss sourcing forex outside T&T

As he prepares to release imported cement shipment ...



Bags of Rock Hard cement before the commodity was removed from the domestic market in 2021. PHOTO COURTESY ROCKHARD-CEMENT.COM



Rock Hard Distributors managing director Ryan Ramhit

ANDREA PEREZ-SOBERS SENIOR REPORTER ANDREA.PEREZ-SOBERS@GUARDIAN.CO.TT

After ceasing operations in T&T in August 2021, Rock Hard is re-entering the local cement market because its management believes the current administration will be more accommodating to competition in the market.

This was confirmed by Rock Hard Distributors managing director Ryan Ramhit yesterday.

He said the previous People's National Movement administration had reduced the rate of duty on the hydraulic cement down to zero per cent.

However, he said at the time his cement company was operating in T&T, the previous administration increased the tariffs to as much as 50 per cent when it was supposed to be zero to five per cent. He said this was instrumental in Rock Hard leaving the domestic market.

"I waited till after the election simply because I just did not want the instability of investing to come back onto the market. And then let's just say if the previous government was still in power today, they would have gone out of the way to remove me from the market again," Ramhit claimed.

"I just really waited until after the election just to see how stable the country would have been in whatever may have been the outcome of that election, and I'll move forward with it."

Ramhit said his first shipment arrived last Wednesday and the company had completed its discharge.

"We are at the stage of having the T&T Bureau of Standards conduct its testing on the cement to give me the release once all goes well. I am not officially open to the market as yet. I have to wait for the release from the Bureau of Standards, which is the norm. That's the norm for me."

Asked about the foreign exchange crunch, Ramhit admitted that it would be a little hindrance to the business, but stated he is very resourceful and resilient.

"I have ways of getting foreign exchange outside of Trinidad. I have ways of overcoming that issue of foreign exchange locally in Trinidad."

The company will still be operating out of Mausica.

Asked what the proposed price point would be, Ramhit said he will make an official statement when it was worked out and once he got the release from the T&T Bureau of Standards.

"But I will say that Rock Hard's cement quality is second to none. I will stand by the quality of my cement. Our prices will be extremely competitive, and the hardware and construction firms are

happy that we will be coming back,” he said.

Ramhit said he stands by the quality of cement, which the company receives from its supplier in Turkey.

Rock Hard’s decision to shut down its operations in August 2021 came after the company complained that it faced “continuous challenges” from the then- T&T government.

Trinidad Cement Ltd (TCL) is the only local cement manufacturer.

It raised its prices on February 17, 2025, which was the fifth time since December 2021.