



## PORT AUTHORITY OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

Corporate Communications Department

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### Statement on Inter-Island Sea Bridge Operations

**Port of Spain-Monday 9 February, 2026**

The Port Authority of Trinidad and Tobago (PATT) is reiterating vessel maintenance requirements, fleet availability, and how the inter-island services are managed.

#### **Statutory Vessel Maintenance and Dry Docking**

Passenger vessels operating on the inter-island sea bridge are withdrawn from service only in accordance with statutory requirements established by their classification society and flag state administration. Dry docking is not discretionary, nor is it scheduled based on seasonal demand, commercial considerations, or short-term operational pressures.

The timing of dry docking is governed by mandatory class inspection cycles and technical thresholds, including engine running hours, as required under international maritime safety and certification standards. Once these thresholds are reached, a vessel must be withdrawn from service to maintain certification and legal operability. Neither the Port Authority nor vessel operators have discretion to defer or bypass these requirements.

In this context, the *Buccoo Reef* entered mandatory maintenance work in January 2026, in accordance with its certification schedule. The vessel has resumed commercial sailings with effect from today.

## **Unplanned Disruptions Within a Managed System**

The recent reduction in available capacity resulted from a convergence of events, including scheduled statutory maintenance and unplanned incidents affecting multiple vessels.

It is important to state plainly, based on historical operating patterns over the past decade, that the inter-island sea bridge has never operated as a static or perfectly balanced system. Capacity and sailing volumes have consistently fluctuated from year to year and month to month, reflecting the realities of vessel maintenance cycles, regulatory compliance, weather conditions, and operational constraints inherent in maritime transport.

Periods of reduced availability are not anomalies; they are a known and managed feature of multi-vessel ferry operations and the system is designed to respond to anticipated stress points.

## **Fleet Redundancy and Managed Capacity Reduction**

The inter-island sea bridge is structured with fleet redundancy to ensure continuity of service when individual vessels are withdrawn for scheduled maintenance or experience unplanned technical issues.

When one vessel is unavailable, others are redeployed to absorb demand. Capacity is reduced, but service does not stop. Sailings decrease, but operations continue. This reflects a managed reduction in capacity, not an abandonment of service.

Historical data shows that even during periods of reduced availability, passenger, vehicle, and cargo movement has continued through redeployment of vessels, schedule adjustments, and contingency measures. The system is designed to flex under pressure, not collapse.

## **Service Continuity and Cargo Separation**

Over time, operational patterns have increasingly emphasized the separation of passenger and cargo movements, particularly during periods of constrained passenger capacity. This approach allows essential goods and construction materials to continue moving while preserving passenger space on available vessels.

## **Current Availability and Capacity Restoration**

In addition to a cargo barge, the inter-island sea bridge is being supported by:

- *Buccoo Reef* – approximately 950 passengers and over 160 vehicles

- *APT James* – approximately 900 passengers and up to 250 vehicles
- *Galleons Passage* – approximately 400 passengers and around 60 vehicles

With three passenger vessels now active, capacity on the sea bridge has ramped up. Additional sailings are being introduced where operationally feasible and safe to do so, particularly as travel demand rises ahead of the Carnival period.

### **Active Management and System Stabilization**

Operational decisions continue to be guided by safety requirements, regulatory compliance, and the need to maintain reliable connectivity for passengers, businesses, and communities that depend on this national transport link.

PATT remains focused on managing the inter-island sea bridge as a critical national system, restoring capacity responsibly and maintaining essential connectivity between Trinidad and Tobago.

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