



GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO
OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER

**MESSAGE TO THE NATION
FROM DR THE HONOURABLE KEITH ROWLEY
PRIME MINISTER OF THE REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO
ON THE OCCASION OF
DIVALI 2016**

On behalf of the people and Government of Trinidad and Tobago, I extend to our Hindu brothers and sisters warm greetings on the occasion of Divali.

Today the national community joins you in the celebration of one of your major religious festivals, which has now become a much anticipated and significant facet of our country's cultural heritage.

The stunning visual impact of thousands of lighted deyas, arranged on intricate bamboo designs or simply laid in rows on the ground to illuminate homes, streets and communities on Divali night, continues to enthrall both citizens and visitors alike.

Divali is celebrated on the darkest night of the darkest period in the Hindu calendar, yet it is a joyous celebration of light – not merely the light from the flames of the deyas, but a deeper more enduring light which dispels the darkness of ignorance, a light which shows us the way on our journey through life.

That light has the power to pierce the shroud of intolerance, hatred, ungratefulness, fear, greed and injustice to allow in God's gifts of grace, enlightenment, peace, success and prosperity. It is the eternal light which nourishes the soul bringing self-improvement and greater communion with God.

At Divali we also recall the Ramayana. We learn of the duty and devotion of Lord Rama and the loyalty and love of his wife Sita, both of whom suffered great difficulties and injustice but responded to all of their hardships by behaving nobly and with humility.

Very often as we go on with our daily tasks and duties we forget that the symbolism and messages in the stories of our various religious traditions offer a guide to the conduct of our lives.

No one can deny that we are experiencing the darkness of unacceptable levels of violence in our communities. Many among us may be shrouded in the fear of an uncertain economic future. But as a nation, as a community and as individuals we must never allow ourselves to sink into the depths of despair. Filled with the light of hope, we too, can face our challenges boldly, courageously and fearlessly to emerge with a single-minded focus of building a strong, united, prosperous Nation.

On this Divali day, may our Hindu community be showered with the blessings of Mother Lakshmi and may God continue to bless each citizen of Trinidad and Tobago.

Shubh Divali