

Khan: Gas price, production are priority



Energy Minister Franklin Khan

ENERGY Minister Franklin Khan said he is ready to work as he begins his second term in this portfolio.

Khan continues a political tour of duty which began on October 2002. He first served as works and transport minister from October 15, 2002-May 13, 2005 in the Patrick Manning administration. From September 11, 2015-October 30, 2016, Khan was a government senator and local government minister. After a Cabinet reshuffle, he was appointed energy minister on October 31, 2016.

On Wednesday he was reappointed to both posts.

During his first tenure as energy minister, in 2016, Khan suffered from heart-related issues. But on Thursday, he said, "I'm feeling quite good. I am obviously a little more careful in how I use my time."

He said he remains very vigilant about his health and continues working "just as hard" as he normally does.

His first priority is "to continue the gas value-chain work that is currently under way to identify solutions to the challenges that face the petrochemical sector in Point Lisas."

He added that creative solutions are needed "as to how we price gas, how we keep the industry in Point Lisas alive."

Another priority is "to stabilise and increase gas production. This is well onstream and it is driven by upstream investments that are currently ongoing with Shell, BP and BHP."

He is looking at boosting domestic oil production, and said an area of focus in this regard is "Heritage's (Petroleum's) acreage on the west coast." He explained things are in place here with a memorandum of understanding with Shell and: "We are discussing some things with EOG Resources."

Signing the agreement for Patriotic Energies and Technologies Company Ltd to acquire and run the Pointe-a-Pierre refinery is another priority.

"The discussions are ongoing. As I said, I see no major encumbrances to bringing it to a conclusion."

Referring to the Government's success in being able to get out of the TT-Venezuela gas unitisation agreement, Khan said, "A very important project on the horizon is Shell's development plan of the Manatee field."

The agreement involved joint development of the Loran and Manatee fields, on the Venezuela and TT sides of the maritime border.

Khan said, "We can now detach Manatee from Loran and develop Manatee."

In February, the Prime Minister said gas from Manatee could be available to TT by 2025.

Khan also said Government will "continue to leverage in a big way" TT's energy experience throughout the Caribbean and further afield.

Khan disclosed that servicing Guyana's energy sector is closely tied to the development of the Galeota port.

"The suitability of that project is looking better and better as we speak."

Government continues to monitor the impact of covid19 on its energy-sector policies, he said, because key to the sector's success is "the world economy getting back on track, because commodity prices is what drives the industry."