GOVERNMENT OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

PRESS RELEASE

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Cyril B. Romney Tortola Pier Park Celebrates its 10th Anniversary

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The Cyril B. Romney Tortola Pier Park (CBRTPP) is observing its 10th anniversary; marking a decade of growth, opportunity, and Virgin Islands pride since its grand opening in 2016.

Speaking at the anniversary ceremony on the park's scenic waterfront, officials reflected on the facility's transformative impact on the Territory's cruise tourism sector and the enduring spirit of collaboration that made it possible. They also paid tribute to successive governments and visionary leaders who helped shape the facility's evolution over the years.

A Legacy of Leadership and Vision

Minister for Communications and Works Honourable Kye Rymer stated that the Territory's first cruise pier debuted in 1994, under the leadership of the late, Chief Minister Honourable H. Lavity Stoutt, followed by upgrades under Chief Minister and later Premier the late Honourable Ralph T. O'Neal, OBE. The modernised cruise pier, officially opened in 2016 by then Premier Dr. D. Orlando Smith and the Ministry of Communications and Works led by minister Honourable Mark Vanterpool, represented a new era in maritime infrastructure.

The facility was renamed in honour of the late Honourable Cyril B. Romney, a former Chief Minister and pioneer of cruise tourism in the Virgin Islands in 2019. This tribute recognised his vision and his lifelong dedication to advancing the Territory's tourism sector.

Looking Ahead: Sustainability and Innovation

Minister for Communications and Works Honourable Kye M. Rymer expressed optimism as the facility embarks on its next chapter, with a focus on sustainability, modernisation, and resilience. He announced that the government is exploring the implementation of an environmental levy for cruise passengers, which will be dedicated to supporting the preservation of the Territory's natural beauty.

Honourable Rymer said, "This is not a new concept; it's already in place elsewhere in the Caribbean. We must ensure that the revenues generated from our tourism sector help protect the very environment that draws visitors here. Additionally,

plans are in motion to integrate green technologies, enhance operational efficiency, and support ongoing business development within the park.”

Premier and Minister of Finance Honourable Dr. Natalio Wheatley also saluted the visionaries who laid the foundation for the Cyril B. Romney Tortola Pier Park to thrive and stimulate the Virgin Islands economy.

Premier Wheatley said, “Over the past decade, the Pier Park has become a launchpad for entrepreneurship. It has created employment. It has nurtured local talent, and provided a platform for Virgin Islanders to showcase our culture, creativity, and hospitality. Many of the businesses that open here, as hopeful startups, are now thriving enterprises. Their success is a testament to what happens when government investment meets private sector, innovation, and community determination.”

The Premier added that the next decade can be even more transformative. He said his government will continue to open up new attractions and destinations within the Virgin Islands for its people and to improve its tourism product.

Premier Wheatley said, “Make this anniversary inspire us to keep building. Keep striving, and keep moving the Virgin Islands forward. Let me remind you, no matter how someone gets to the Virgin Islands, by air or by sea, whether it's for an overnight stay, or whether it's for a cruise visit, let us ensure that each and every visit to the Virgin Islands feels like a million bucks. Give them the best that the Virgin Islands has to offer.”

A Decade of Economic Growth

Now hailed as the “Crown Jewel” of the BVI Ports Authority portfolio, the Cyril B. Romney Tortola Pier Park continues to be a cornerstone of the Virgin Islands’ economy. In 2025, the facility welcomed a record-breaking 875,000 cruise passengers, a nearly 14% increase over the previous year.

The pier park currently accommodates ships up to 180,000 gross registered tonnes (GRT) and hosts up to two cruise ships at a time, with unmatched efficiency and elegance. Beyond being a maritime hub, it is also a five-acre commercial and cultural destination featuring eleven (11) buildings, eighteen (18) kiosks, dozens of

retail shops, restaurants, and service centres, locally owned businesses that showcase Virgin Islands craftsmanship, cuisine, and hospitality with walkways laid by hand with 107,000 bricks, the park is both a symbol of local craftsmanship and a thriving centre of commerce—supporting hundreds of livelihoods, from taxi operators and tour guides to retail and hospitality professionals.

The tenth anniversary celebration also featured a commemorative video presentation, a strategic partner recognition award, a steel pan musical performance by Cedar School International, ten-year staff recognition, pioneer tenant recognition, and an outstanding tenant award. The full ceremony can be viewed on the Government's Facebook page at BVIGovernment.

About the Cyril B. Romney Tortola Pier Park

Opened in 2016 and renamed in 2019 in honour of the late Hon. Cyril B. Romney, the Cyril B. Romney Tortola Pier Park is the British Virgin Islands' premier cruise and lifestyle destination. Operated by the BVI Ports Authority, it serves as the Territory's main gateway for cruise passengers, combining modern port facilities with a five-acre shopping, dining, and cultural complex that celebrates Virgin Islands heritage and entrepreneurship.

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