



# NationWIDE

SATURDAY MAY 28, 2016

## General Elections 2016

# Candidates Take The Nomination Line Today!



**I**t is Nomination Day today and all parties and candidates are lining-up at the designated points in the various Electoral Districts to nominate candidates. There was much ado about nothing after the date was announced last week, but it turns out candidates do not have to be present to be nominated. At least four parties – SLP, UWP, LPM and Green Party – have been known to have officially registered to contest. But only the SLP and UWP have filled all slates for the 17 seats. Several independents indicated they would run, but the number to contest is still uncertain. The Electoral Department started upgrading the Voters List several months ago and the final list is expected by May 31. From today, it will be the final week left -- and the last lap to Polling Day on Monday, June 6. The two major parties have been holding daily activities and nightly meetings in the final countdown in the shortest General Election campaign here ever. In this issue, Nationwide offers five full pages of wide coverage of election-related issues (Pages 4 to 8), including what the Elections Act says about various aspects of the process leading to the poll and on Voting Day (Page 8), the national addresses by the Prime Minister announcing the election date and explaining the change of date for Nomination Day (Pages 6 and 7), election-related quotes from the 2016 Throne Speech by the Governor General (Page 5) and the response by the Public Service Minister to some very outrageous and absolute fabrications (Page 7). Also in this issue, as always, are other features and news items highlighting the continuity of government and governance, despite the suspension of parliament for the upcoming General Elections. Read on and pay special attention to the advice from the Police Force (Page 8) – and standby for another two editions of Nationwide before June 6! Meanwhile, browse the Nationwide Website at [stlucianationwide.com](http://stlucianationwide.com) and view *NationwideTV* on NTN.

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WHAT'S INSIDE

Happy Reading! Happy Viewing! Happy Browsing!

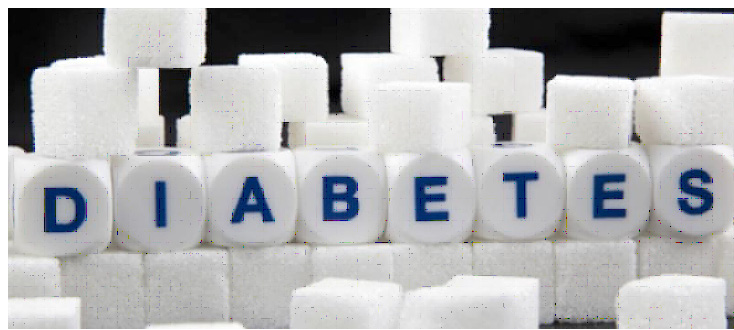
## National Coordinating Centre established to positively transform fight against Diabetes

The Government of Saint Lucia has announced a major national initiative that will transform the fight against diabetes in the country designated as the diabetic capital of the world.

The positive transformation will be through a unique public-private partnership between the Ministry of Health, Wellness, and Gender Relations and a non-profit supported by Switzerland-based W Science.

The initiative, which was long in coming and which the government always insisted was no pipe dream, will create a new standard for the diagnosis, treatment and research into this chronic condition.

It will be led by the newly-established National Diabetes Coordinating Centre (NDCC) and accompanied in the next twelve months by a nationwide diabetes screening program, an educational awareness-raising campaign, a training program for diabetes specialists and a national registry of people with diabetes that will greatly enhance clinical care and research in Saint Lucia and the Caribbean region.



The centre will identify mechanisms to better prevent, diagnose and treat diabetes.

Speaking at the launch, Minister for Health Alvina Reynolds said the impact of diabetes of public health resources is significant.

The launch followed more than a year of in-depth feasibility studies on diabetes by W Science.

The research team was led by Prof. Philippe Halban, a global authority on diabetes research with more than 40 years of experience in the field.

The NDCC will be directed by a team of national and international diabetes, healthcare and IT expert advisors.

Clinical research at the centre

will drive improved treatment and care of people with diabetes in Saint Lucia, alongside provisions for an immediate expansion of medical equipment and medication available through island-wide primary healthcare centres.

The centre will be run by a team of newly-recruited local clinical and administrative specialists, who will coordinate all aspects of the project with full involvement from primary healthcare centres, government ministries, regulatory authorities, academic institutions and non-governmental organizations.

## \$540 Million new Choiseul hotel development project to employ 200 in construction phase

A new \$540 million dollar foreign investment in Choiseul is poised to raise the standard of living for residents and spur economic growth in Saint Lucia.

The new luxury development, Sunset Bay Saint Lucia, plans to have 40 villas and about 110 rooms on property, while will

cost some US \$200 Million.

The developer, GP Group, is a leading European-based construction and project development company.

GP's CEO of Overseas Operations, Christo Pancheff, says Saint Lucians will benefit from several employment opportunities.

He says, "During construction

we are trying to [employ] about 200 local people. After we finish, [we are looking to employ] at least 250 or 300 people for the maintenance service. Also, we would like to [put in] a beer garden, and a sports centre. The idea is to evolve that part of the island."

The earmarked development site is Sab Wisla in Choiseul.

## Venezuelan ambassador defends country against international aggression

Venezuelan Ambassador to Saint Lucia, Her Excellency Leiff Escalona, addressed matters relating to the current situation in Venezuela via a press conference here last Friday.

Ambassador Escalona said that President Nicolas Maduro has denounced international aggression against Venezuela.

"He stated that Venezuela is facing an attack via world media that seek to establish a false picture of uncontrollable social and

economic decline in the country, leading to cause for a political militia intervention.

He stressed that the media campaign against Venezuela is designed to generate an impression of chaos and violence, leading to intervention by the United States government."

Her Excellency also said that President Maduro has called for strengthened solidarity among sister nations in dealing with this issue.

"The Head of State stressed

that the homeland of Bolivia will continue to defend its sovereignty and the principle of no interference in their internal affairs.

Finally, President Maduro says we need to launch a political and diplomatic counter-offensive and the mobilization of global awareness in defense of the right to peace, independence and democracy in Venezuela."

The diplomat said she hopes that media attacks against Venezuela will be curbed. (See The Diplomatic Courier on Page 11)

## Careers dependent on biodiversity highlighted in observance of Day

The International Day for Biological Diversity was recognized here on May 22nd. Biodiversity Coordinator at the Ministry of Sustainable Development, Energy, Science and Technology, Jannel Gabriel, said the purpose of the observance is to raise awareness on the world's biodiversity issues.

This year's theme involved mainstreaming biodiversity, sustaining people, and their livelihoods.

As part of our celebrations the planners featured livelihoods that involve biological resources.

A variety of careers dependent on biological diversity were highlighted at an event hosted in front of the Sir Stanislaus James Building on Friday, May 20.

These included tour guides who



The purpose of the observance is to raise awareness on the world's biodiversity issues.

conduct bird and turtle watching tours; persons making wine with local plants, for instance, the Latanye plant which is used to make wines as well as brooms; and persons who make shakes, smoothies, food items, punches all using biological, naturally and locally available goods.

There was also a section of fine boutique items such as handmade soaps, handcrafts, jewelry, souvenirs and fine chocolates that were locally made using local cocoa products.

The United Nations General Assembly, in the year 2000, named May 22 the International Day for Biodiversity.

Editorial

## Time will soon tell!



Self-proclaimed truth gladiators always draw horror pictures of nightmares in pursuit of Press Freedom along paths strewn with the most barbaric beasts barring free access to their imagined worlds. But none can point to one major road or stumbling road in Saint Lucia, which has been found by Freedom House to be the Most Press Free country in this part of the world, according to its latest report after examining 190 countries worldwide.

The Freedom House Press Freedom Report for 2015 placed Saint Lucia at the very top of the list of 199 countries surveyed for their respective levels of Press Freedom.

The methodology employed by Freedom House is the same since 1980. It used 90 analysts to ask 23 methodological questions and another 132 sub-questions. The questions looked at how the press relates to or is being treated vis-à-vis legal, political and economic issues. Then, based on the findings, it grades countries from Zero to 100 – from Best to Worst – to place them in brackets of Free, Partly Free and Not Free.

Saint Lucia and the Caribbean (CARICOM and OECS) region placed better than the rest of the world, registering in the top 25 of the 199 surveyed. And

the wider (Greater) Caribbean placed in the top 35.

After Saint Lucia, Jamaica and St. Vincent and the Grenadines (along with Costa Rica) placed a collective 2nd, with Barbados placing 5th (alongside Canada), Saint Kitts and Nevis in 7th place, The Bahamas at 8th, Belize at 9th (alongside USA), Bermuda at 11th, Dominica at 13th, Trinidad & Tobago at 14th, Surinam at 15th, Guyana at 17th, Antigua and Barbuda at 18th, Dominican Republic at 20th and Haiti at 25th. Venezuela scored 34 on the list, with Cuba at 35.

For reasons no one will understand, these signal achievements for Saint Lucia and the Caribbean were not appropriately registered or reported here. Their significance was absolutely and completely ignored.

But hardly anyone is fooled.

Some in the local press behave like the role of the press is to hound governments out of office.

But with public confidence in the local press put to the test over the next week, it will be left to be seen which offers a more true representation of the local reality -- the Freedom House 2015 Press Freedom Report, or those here who continue to dream they can simply wish it away. Time will soon tell!

## New President has eyes set on new horizons as CSA celebrates 65 years of service to members!

The Civil Service Association (CSA) on May 16 celebrated a milestone—its 65th anniversary.

President of the CSA, Yvonne Edwin, addressed the occasion by reflecting on the organization's aims and ambitions.

"The CSA was formed in the late 1940s by a group of public officers who saw the need for an organized and structured approach to effectively address the problems confronting public officers. This formal grouping took the necessary steps which led to the registration of the Saint Lucia Civil Service Association as a trade union on

May 16, 1951. Sixty-five years later our organization stands strong, resolute, and steadfast."

Ms Edwin sees a positive future ahead for the organization.

"Brothers and sisters, the turbulent waters have receded and it is time to raise anchor and set sail to new horizons. In the true spirit of our motto 'Optimum Dere, Optimum Expecti' (Do the Best and Expect the Best), I bid a happy 65th anniversary to the Saint Lucia Civil Service Association. It is a milestone and a journey worth celebrating."

Ms Edwin was elected President of the CSA on April 27, 2016

# Invest Saint Lucia targets US \$1.5 billion by 2020



Invest Saint Lucia top executives (left to right) Gordon Charles, Costello Michel and Mc Hale Andrew.

Invest Saint Lucia (ISL) has projected a flow of US\$1.5 billion in investment projects in Saint Lucia by the year 2020. The island's lone national investment company said it also plans to create 8000 jobs by that time. ISL last year recorded US\$168 million worth of investments, out of which US \$124 was attributed to foreign investment. Also last year, the company helped Saint Lucia welcome 2,914 transient jobs and 577 permanent ones that were directly attributed to investments.

Some 277 of the permanent jobs created last year by ISL went to tourism, while 183 went to infrastructure and 117 to the private commercial sector. This year, ISL projects investment flows of US \$331 million and 2,200 jobs. Among new investments expected this year are chicken processing facilities, a pasta and ramen processing facility, a flour mill, an insulated concrete farm factory, a dining and entertainment centre, two 4-star developments, a 5-star hotel development and

another development that straddles both the tourism and infrastructure sectors. Several developments that started last year are also due for completion this year, including hotels and commercial centres. Apart from several hotel and commercial properties under construction in the north of the island, ongoing projects also include the Six Senses Residences at Freedom Bay and a hotel project being undertaken in the Anse La Raye/Canaries area by The Boka Group.

## Commerce Minister receives Report of Trade License Act Review



Commerce Minister Emma Hippolyte earlier this week received the review report from consultant David Jordan.

The Ministry of Commerce, Business Development, Investment and Consumer Affairs, with the assistance of an independent Consultant David Jordan (a regional Trade and Economic Policy Specialist and a former Director of International Trade and Investment in Saint Lucia), concluded the Evaluation of the Saint Lucia Trade Licensing Regime of 1984. Commerce Minister Emma Hippolyte, who commissioned the study, formally received the copies of the Report from the Consultant on Wednesday 25th May 2016, following the acceptance of the finalized document by the Ministry officials.

These instruments are considered obsolete and need to be more relevant. The Report calls for a more appropriate Investment Act, in light of recently adopted Investment Policy by the Ministry. The Director of Investment Coordination in the Ministry of Commerce notes that the report highlights the distinct "need to include Services as a trading area, given recent developments that has national significance which must also be considered". The Report details the work of the presenters at the symposium held last December and embodies several Recommendations from the Consultant.

The Ministry, together with the private sector, previously deliberated over the draft document which was submitted in December 2015, by the consultant, David Jordan in accordance with specific terms of reference. The Permanent Secretary of the Ministry and Chairperson of the Trade License Advisory Board (governed by the Trade License Act 13.4 of 1984) Dr. Alison Plummer, stated in accepting the final report that the research and the consultation process conclude "the need to maintain a strengthened World Trade Organization (WTO) compliant Trade licensing Regime. She further stated that there is confirmation of the need to revise the existing Trade License Act and develop supporting regulations to allow for greater compliance with international trade law as well as for improved effectiveness of its administration ie monitoring, data collection and dispute settlement mechanism" unquote. The fifty 50-page Report assessed other complementary and related legislation and regulations, including the Fiscal Incentives Act and the Economic Areas Reserved for Nationals

and which came for critical review. The Report sought to clarify the impact of the Trade License Regime and its relevance within the context of the modern business environment. Trade licensing models, in several regional and extra regional territories were examined. The consultant states that therein lies the provision of a framework of recommendations on the current Trade License Legislation, with guidance on the implementation and transformation of the current regime.

## Wind farm construction begins in December

Construction of a 12-megawatt wind farm, the first of its kind in Saint Lucia, will begin in December. The wind farm will consist of four turbines erected on the ridge near the Bordelais Correctional Facility (BCF). At full capacity, it will generate enough energy to power approximately 19,475 homes and its output will be equivalent to the production power of one of LUCELEC's 10 diesel engines. The wind farm is projected to reduce the amount of fuel purchased by the company by about 10 percent. The project was officially launched in April 2015 with a test tower and equipment used to record wind speeds and wind direction to assist in the design of the wind farm. To date, a number of studies including geotechnical and environmental impact studies have been completed, paving the way for construction on the project to begin this year, once the appropriate approvals have been secured. A community meeting was held recently, to brief residents of Dennerly on the progress of the wind farm.

Close to 100 people attended the meeting during which the Ministry of Sustainable Development, Energy, Science and Technology, LUCELEC, and Windtex Energy, made presentations on the purpose, current status and implementation schedule for the wind farm. Residents were also briefed on job opportunities the construction project would provide, and were informed that an employment job fair will be held to fill a number of positions including truckers, laborers, security, accountants, engineers and surveyors. A number of services like housing, catering and rental cars will also be sourced from the surrounding area. Beyond the construction period, job opportunities for maintenance of the wind farm will be available, for which training would be provided. The wind farm is a joint project between the Government of Saint Lucia, Saint Lucia Electricity Services Limited (LUCELEC) and Windtex Energy, a wind developer from the US. The wind farm project is expected to be completed in September 2017.

## St. Jude Hospital almost complete, after which Saint Lucia will have the best health care infrastructure in OECS!

— by Alvina Reynolds Minister of Health —

*"The expenditure on St. Jude Hospital, when it is completed, including furniture, fittings and equipment, will be close to \$150 million. The expenditure on the Owen King-EU Hospital, minus furniture and equipment was \$152 Million, with an additional 9 million Euros spent on furniture and equipment."*

Our government is extremely pleased that St. Jude Hospital is finally nearing completion. There have been many challenges in completing this hospital and I must admit that this process has taken much longer than we had originally anticipated. Allow me to provide some background on this so that you may better understand. Originally, the United Workers Party administration had decided to renovate St. Jude Hospital, and it spent \$45 million on this exercise, before it realized that the problems associated with renovation were so significant that it would have been better to demolish the structure and rebuild. Therefore, while some of the \$45 million was used for the demolition of the old structure, it is clear that both time and money were wasted because of the original decision by the UWP to renovate. When the decision was made to rebuild St. Jude, no source of financing was identified and the Government was hoping to finance this project from bonds. It was not until Prime Minister Hon. Dr. Kenny Anthony visited Taiwan in November 2013 and met with then Taiwanese President Ma that any external source of funds for



*Health Minister Alvina Reynolds says a look at work in the health sector in its totality, with the Wellness Centre, which was a product of the last Labour administration and the numbers of health centres we have either built or renovated, will show that Saint Lucia will have the best health care infrastructure of any country in the Eastern Caribbean, and quite possibly the English-speaking Caribbean.*

the construction of St Jude Hospital had been identified. In October 2014, the Government of Saint Lucia signed a loan with the Taiwan Export-Import

Bank for the reconstruction of St. Jude Hospital and the first set of funds from this loan was disbursed to the Government of Saint Lucia in January 2015. There were also problems with the main contractor who had been engaged to undertake the construction. He experienced financial difficulties and had to be terminated in 2014, causing a further set back to the project. When the construction of St. Jude Hospital is completed, which we anticipate will happen toward the end of this year, the residents of the south of the island in particular, and the people of Saint Lucia in general, will be extremely pleased and proud of the end product. We will have a new St Jude that is equal to the Owen King-EU Hospital. In fact, the expenditure on St. Jude Hospital, when it is completed, including furniture, fittings and equipment, will be close to \$150 million. The expenditure on the Owen King-EU Hospital, minus furniture and equipment was \$152 Million, with an additional 9 million Euros spent on furniture and equipment. So, in effect, when you look at our work in the health sector in its totality, with the Wellness Centre, which was a product of the last Labour administration and the numbers of health centres we have either built or renovated, Saint Lucia will have the best health care infrastructure of any country in the Eastern Caribbean, and quite possibly the English-speaking Caribbean. All of this because you have a Labour Government that is dedicated to looking after the health and wellbeing of its citizens.

# PM calls snap election!

Prime Minister Dr. Kenny D. Anthony has announced an early election date of June 6. In a May 19 address titled "The Die is Cast," Dr. Anthony stressed that while the fifth anniversary of the last general election isn't until November, an early election is in the best interests of the country. "As you are probably aware, the fifth anniversary of the last general election is Nov. 28. Our Constitution says that 'Parliament, unless sooner dissolved, shall continue for five years from the date of the first sitting of the House...'

This would mean that general elections are constitutionally due, for the latest, three months

after the first sitting of Parliament which was [last] held on Jan. 5, 2012. In effect, the government would have had until April 5, 2017 to call general elections," he explained.

"However, I have decided in the interest of our country to call the general election several months ahead of its due date, [as] I felt it best that the government be given the opportunity to present, within a reasonable period after the general election, its economic and policy proposals by way of a financial statement to the House."

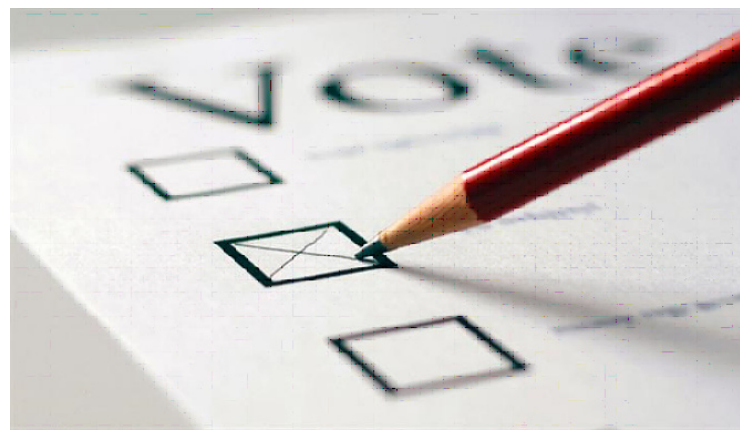
Earlier this year, following the debate on the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure for 2016/2017, there was no presen-

tation of a budget.

"You would have noticed that while there was a debate on the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure for the Financial Year 2016/2017, there was no presentation of a Budget Address. The explanation is rather simple. Our Constitution requires that the Minister of Finance prepares and lays the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure 'before or not later than thirty days after the commencement of the financial year.'

In turn, the Constitution provides for an Appropriation Bill to be introduced in the House of Assembly to authorize expenditure from the Consolidated Fund.

These are the two fundamen-



Prime Minister Dr. Kenny Anthony said the early election will allow the new government a reasonable time frame within which to present its economic and policy proposals.

tal requirements established by the Constitution to allow expenditure by the Government. Clearly, we need to ensure that any expenditure by the Government is fully authorized, and

we have done so."

The early election will ensure peace, stability and certainty in the country and its affairs, Dr. Anthony added. (See full PM Address in Centre Pages)

## Today is Nomination Day!

Civic and Voter Education Coordinator at the Electoral Department, Alympia Lionel, has announced that nomination day will be Saturday, May 28.

Prime Minister of Saint Lucia, Hon. Dr. Kenny D. Anthony previously announced during a national address last week that preceding the general election, nomination day will be on Friday, May 27. "There is a change," Lionel said.

"Nomination day is now Saturday, May 28, and between the hours of 9 a.m. to noon, persons can go to do their nominations at the various electoral districts at the office of the returning officers. We will be sending notices out to say exactly where those offices are located."

Lionel said the past weekend's voter registration exercise met the Electoral Department's approval.

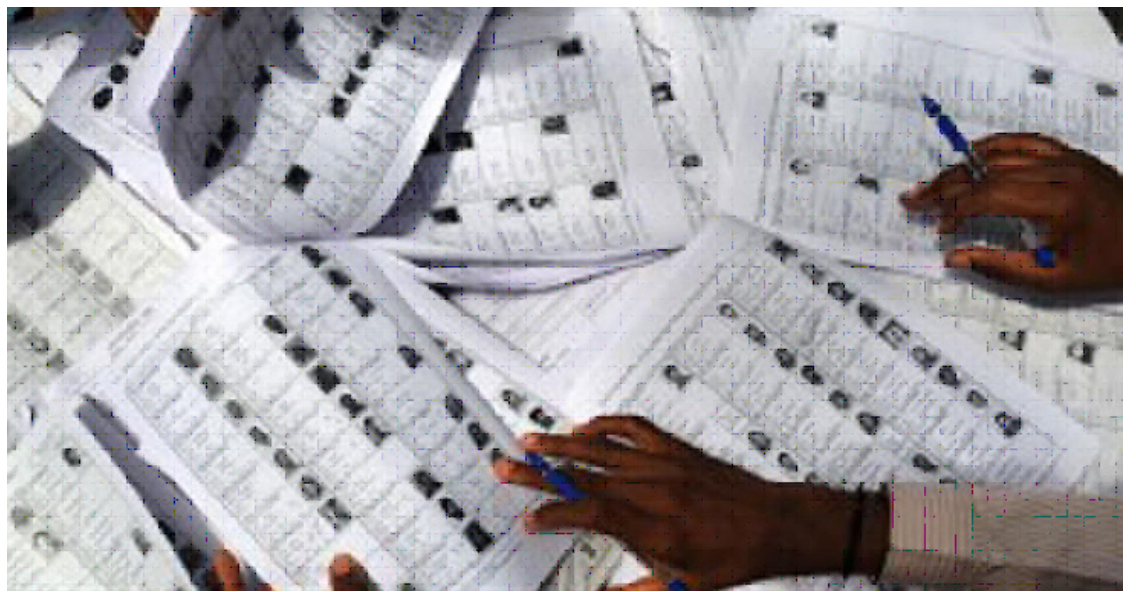


Nomination day is now today, Saturday, May 28.

"It went as planned. We extended our hours on Sunday to accommodate persons with the registration."

The final voters list is expected to be published on Monday, May 30. (See full PM Address in Centre Pages)

## Electoral Department finalizing Voters List



The list will be made public at community post offices, libraries, electoral sub offices, and also via the electoral department's website.

The Electoral Department is busy finalizing the voters list following Prime Minister Dr. Kenny D. Anthony's recent election date announcement.

Voters will go to the polls on June 6 to elect a government.

Civic and Voter Education Coordinator in the Electoral Department, Alympia Lionel, said the priority now is to finalize and publish the voters lists by the end of May.

"The final voters list should be out by May 30 and it will

be posted in all communities, on public buildings, post offices, and the Central Library. We're going to have it on our website, and at all our sub-offices such as Gros Islet; Grande Riviere, Dennery; and Soufriere, and you can check the main office on High Street," she said.

Last Thursday, Dr. Anthony announced that Parliament was dissolved to pave the way for the upcoming general election.

"Fellow Saint Lucians, the die is cast. Decision time has ar-

rived. Today, I advised the Governor General to dissolve the Parliament of Saint Lucia, and to issue Writs of Election to pave the way for the general election. The general election will be held on June 6, 2016. Nomination day will be May 27, 2016."

General elections are constitutionally due, for the latest, three months after the first sitting of Parliament, which was held on January 5, 2012. The government would have had until April 5, 2017 to call the next election.

## Advance Polling to take place on June 3



Advance polling allows poll workers and attendants, police, and fire service personnel the opportunity to vote.

The Electoral Department has announced the date for its advance poll.

Civic and Voter Education Coordinator at the Electoral Department, Alympia Lionel, said the advance poll will take place on June 3.

She explained, "We're going to have advance polling, and the date for the advance poll will be June 3. Those persons who will be voting at the advance poll would be the poll workers, for example the returning officers, the election clerks, the assistant election clerks, the presiding officers, the police, fire service and persons from the correctional facility."

In April, amendments were

made to the Election Act.

Lionel said although the stamp was proposed, it will not be used during this general election. However, the nomination fee will double from \$250 to \$500, and other aspects of the amendment will be introduced.

"There will be mobile units at the homes for the elderly. These mobile units will run from 6 a.m. - 6:30 p.m., as a normal polling station would, and they will be placed there to allow those persons to exercise their franchise."

The Electoral Department hopes to publish the voters list on May 30.

General elections will be held on June 6.

## Big Battle for Ballots!

It will definitely be a big battle for ballots on June 6, when Saint Lucians go to the polls to choose their next government. It will be the 17th poll since the island became a nation 37 years ago, with each of the two major parties (SLP and UWP) having won eight times. This will be the tie-breaker that will put one of the two parties in a 9-8 position. Parties and candidates, including Independents, have been pulling all stops to attract last-minute votes in the shortest election campaign known here. It is Nomination Day -- and



in just one week, the world will finally get to know who among the nominated candidates will win and lose, which party will form the next government --

and who will be nominated to become the next Prime Minister of Saint Lucia. The bell has rung. Now the clock is ticking...

**PUBLIC NOTICE** 

# No clash between Elections and Exams

*Education Ministry assures exams will run smoothly without disruptions*

The Ministry of Education, Human Resource Development and Labour wishes to assure all candidates/students who are writing the Caribbean Examinations Council's (CXC) Caribbean Secondary Examination Certificate (CSEC) and the Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Examination (CAPE) examinations that all necessary steps have been taken to ensure the examinations scheduled for Monday, June 6, 2016 run smoothly without disruptions. General Election has been scheduled for Monday, June 6, 2016.

Many schools, principally the primary schools, a few secondary schools and the Sir Arthur Lewis Community College, are used as polling stations for the general election. Moreover, this time of year is traditionally the period for many national and regional examinations.

On Monday, June 6, the Caribbean Secondary Examination Certificate (CSEC) Food and Nutrition Paper I and Additional Mathematics Papers I and III are scheduled for 9:00 am and 1:00 pm respectively.

Consequently, the following secondary schools will serve as both CSEC centres and polling stations: Anse Ger Secondary, Castries Comprehensive Secondary, Choiseul Secondary, Clendon Mason Secondary,

Corinth Secondary, Entrepot Secondary, Gros Islet Secondary, Micoud Secondary, Vide Bouteille Secondary and the Vieux Fort Comprehensive Secondary.

At the Sir Arthur Lewis Community College (SALCC), examinations for the Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Examination (CAPE) in Biology Unit 2, Economics Unit 2 and Spanish Unit 2 will be held.

On Friday, May 20, the Chief Education Officer Mr Marcus Edward met with principals of all secondary schools to discuss the arrangements for the concurrence of the general election and the examinations at the schools affected.

At the end of the meeting, the principals agreed that the two activities run concurrently do not adversely affect each other.

Moreover, the Electoral Department and the SALCC have already met and have made all arrangements for the sitting of the CAPE and the use of some buildings at SALCC as polling stations.

The CSEC and the CAPE examinations are regional examinations administered by the CXC. Therefore, the Ministry of Education, Human Resource Development and Labour received the blessings of the CXC for its examinations to be held simultaneously with the General Elections of 2016.

# Governor General encourages all voters to vote!

*... And cautions about impact of Bloggers, Talk Show hosts and Social Media threads!*

*Thus far, since Adult Suffrage, both the Saint Lucia Labour Party and the United Workers Party have been victorious in eight polls. Further to this, the peaceful transfer of the reins of power from one party to another has occurred five times since Independence and six times since Adult Suffrage.*



*Delivering her Throne Speech at what she correctly predicted might have been the last Session of Parliament before the next General Elections in Saint Lucia, Her Excellency The Governor General Dame Pearlette Louisy offered words of wise advice to Saint Lucians ahead of what will be the islands 17th poll since Independence in 1979. Nationwide offers the appropriate section from the Governor Generals 2016 Throne Speech below, in the national public interest.*

**THE DEMOCRATIC WILL OF THE PEOPLE**

Mr President, Mr Speaker, Political representation is a major preoccupation this year.

I open today what is likely to be the last Session of this Parliament prior to the next General Elections. Our country will, in time, proceed to the polls to allow for the expression of the democratic will of the people to select their political representatives.

This upcoming General Elections would represent our tenth such event since attaining Inde-

pendence in 1979 and our seventeenth since attaining Adult Suffrage in 1951.

Thus far, since Adult Suffrage, both the Saint Lucia Labour Party and the United Workers Party have been victorious in eight polls. Further to this, the peaceful transfer of the reins of power from one party to another has occurred five times since Independence and six times since Adult Suffrage.

We have therefore, if only by virtue of this metric, achieved a mature and stable democracy. The electorate, therefore, ex-

pects behaviour that reflects our maturity as a nation and as a people.

Our democracy traverses deeper than institutions such as Parliament. It goes beyond political leadership, or the commonly coined "card-carrying" party membership.

Each citizen must be responsible in its actions towards the other.

*I urge all eligible voters to exercise their franchise, not only in the interest of some perceived personal gain, but in the interest of our collective and common dominion.*

Democracy also requires expression of views that does not cause unfair injury to the other. And so, the way we speak on talk shows, what we write on blogs and other social media threads, all impact the richness, diversity and quality of our democracy.

**THE BALLOT REMAINS FUNDAMENTAL**

Once the day arrives, there may well be those who will cast a ballot for the seventeenth time, and many would be exercising this right for the first time.

Whatever the case may be, this process represents a fundamental pillar of our democracy and the responsibility of the ballot should never be taken lightly no matter if it is new or habitual.

The ballot still remains the fundamental expression of each citizen's political will. As such, I urge all eligible voters to exercise their franchise, not only in the interest of some perceived personal gain, but in the interest of our collective and common dominion.

# Fixed Date for Next General Elections?

*This may very well be the last General Elections to be held here on a date selected by the Prime Minister. That is, if the next Government of Saint Lucia elects to follow the path outlined by Her Excellency the Governor General during delivery of her 2016 Throne Speech last month. Dame Pearlette Louisy indicated the Government has given consideration to considering following the path taken by the UK government in opting to elect for a fixed date for general elections. Nationwide reproduces below the relevant section from the Governor generals 2016 Throne Speech.*

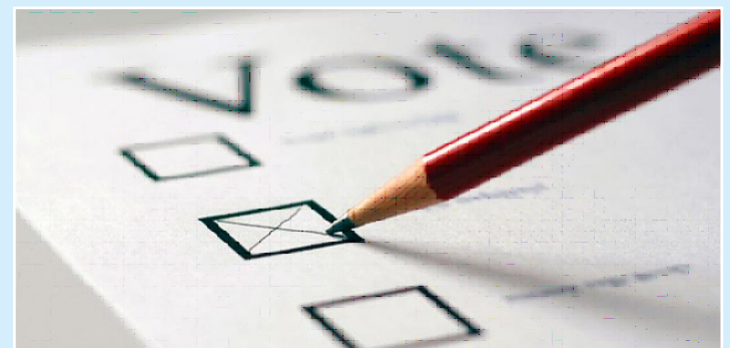
Mr President, Mr Speaker, I commenced this address by referring to electoral matters. It is fitting that I come to a close on that subject.

It cannot have gone unnoticed that with each passing

electoral cycle, political campaigning to remain in office or be elected to office seems to commence far ahead of the eventual dissolution of Parliament.

The uncertainty over election dates does not fully explain this phenomenon, but it can also en-

courage it. Some have argued that the system is manifestly unfair as the incumbent party has the advantage of surprise. These days, that argument can hardly stand scrutiny as electoral preparations have become rather public.



There can be no doubt that impending elections can add to uncertainty and indecision by investors, domestic or foreign. Investors often prefer to wait on the outcome of General Elections to make investment decisions.

Of course, it does not follow that if fixed election dates are introduced the tendency to early campaigning for General Elections will cease. But the argument about "fairness" cannot be totally dismissed.

It was once thought that fixed election dates were inconsistent with the parliamentary system

of governance that we inherited from Westminster. This view has now been discarded, by none other than the United Kingdom Parliament; the cradle of Westminster conventions and practices. That country's parliament has now enacted what it has described as a "Fixed-term Parliaments Act."

My Government has noted this development with considerable interest and will also consider the enactment of legislation to introduce fixed election dates.

# THE DIE IS CAST!

Following is the full text of the address to the nation delivered by Hon. Dr. Kenny D. Anthony, Prime Minister & Minister for Finance, Economic Affairs, Planning & Social Security, on 19th May 2016, on the set date for the next General Elections in Saint Lucia.

## PURPOSE OF ADDRESS

Fellow citizens, I address you tonight on the date for the next General Election in our country. As you are probably aware, the fifth anniversary of the last General Election is November 28, 2016. Our Constitution says in section 55(2) that "Parliament unless sooner dissolved shall continue for five years from the date of the first sitting of the House after any dissolution and shall then stand dissolved." This would mean that General Elections are constitutionally due for the latest, three months after the first sitting of Parliament, which was held on January 05, 2012. In effect, the Government would have had until April 05, 2017 to call General Elections.

However, I have decided in the interest of our country to call the General Election several months ahead of its due date to ensure peace, stability and certainty in our country and its affairs. The Opposition United Workers Party has agitated for elections for months and on our side, the Saint Lucia Labour Party says, "we are ready."

## PASSAGE OF BUDGET

You would have noticed that while there was a debate on the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure for the Financial Year 2016/2017- which of course, most members of the Opposition did not attend- there was no presentation of a Budget Address. The explanations for what appears to be unusual, are rather simple.

Section 79(1) of our Constitution requires that the Minister of Finance prepares and lay the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure "before or not later than thirty days after the commencement of the financial year." In turn, section 79 (2) of the Constitution provides for an Appropriation Bill to be introduced in the House of Assembly to authorize expenditure from the Consolidated Fund. These are the two fundamental requirements established by the Constitution to allow expenditure by the Government. Clearly, we need to ensure that any expenditure by the Government is fully authorized. And we have done so!

Given my decision to call the General Election just after the passage of the Appropriation Bill 2016/17, I felt it best that the Government elected by the will of the people in the General Election which I am about to announce, be given the opportunity to present,



Prime Minister  
Dr Kenny D. Anthony

within a reasonable period after the General Election, its economic and policy proposals by way of a Financial Statement to the House. Incidentally, that was the view I held and expressed way back in 1997 when General Elections were held on May 23, 1997, just after the presentation of the budget in that year.

## THE ISSUES

We come to this juncture after four years of collective effort and sacrifice. These past four years have been a period of adjustment for our economy and indeed, for all of us.

I remain eternally grateful to you for the support and understanding that you have shown for the adjustments we have made to ensure that our economy became stronger, better, and more resilient. Some of our measures were not always popular but it was never in doubt that the measures were implemented in the best interests of our country. By our common will and collective efforts, we saved our country from the IMF. The results of our efforts have now begun to yield fruits. Our economy has returned to growth. Last year, it grew by 1.3%.

We have reduced our fiscal deficit from 9.6% of GDP in 2012 to 3.1% in 2015. This is a remarkable reduction by any measure.

Our current account surplus increased to \$73.8 million in 2015/16. We also registered a significantly improved performance in the primary surplus, which grew to \$45.3 million in 2015/16 from \$3.7 million in 2014/2015.

Unemployment is finally trending downwards, from a high of 24.5% to 20% in the last quarter. There was a net increase in the number of employed persons by 3.8% to 77,131. In the Fourth Quarter alone, our Labour Force grew by 5,220 persons. It is clear we are the only Government with a plan for jobs! We need to continue on our path.

Tourism arrivals continue to increase steadily. For the first

time ever, we surpassed the one million mark for combined stay-over and cruise passenger arrivals. The construction sector expanded by 7.4%. Manufacturing too, is on the rebound. The sector grew by an estimated 13.7%.

Agricultural production, though uneven, is rising, with banana exports surging by 35.3%. Many of us may not be aware, but Saint Lucia is the only Windward Island still exporting bananas to the United Kingdom.

Investment has also returned to our country. Currently, two major new hotels are under construction. Some 700 Saint Lucians are employed at the Royalton at Cap Estate; another 275 are employed at the Harbour Club in Rodney Bay. When the Royalton is completed, some 650 to 700 Saint Lucians are expected to find jobs. In the next few days, I expect a sod turning ceremony will be held to signal the construction of the new hotel, Sunset Bay Hotel, at "Sabwisha", in Choiseul. The developers have already paid for the land.

The local private sector too is investing in our country again. Unicomer Limited, the parent company of Courts (Saint Lucia) is constructing its new headquarters. The Dayana Centre in the City Centre is nearing completion.

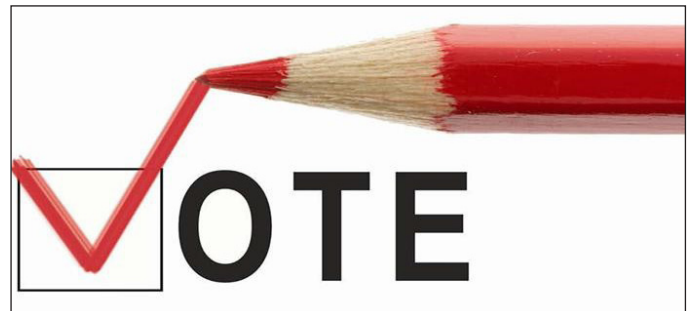
The public sector too is also playing its part! A sod turning ceremony has already been held to confirm the commencement of the Administrative Complex in Vieux Fort. Two new bridges, one in Thomazo and the other in Canaries are about to commence construction. Plans are now at an advanced stage for the commencement of the Secondary Roads Improvement Project to pave the way for the expansion of the Choc to Gros Islet Highway. The European Union has confirmed financing of a new bridge at Piaye and the reconstruction of the Venus Road in the Anse La Raye Quarter.

The prospects for the health sector are promising. The creative industries have begun to take shape; youth and sports are in good hands.

We continue to educate the children of Saint Lucia to equip them to be the future drivers of our country's destiny. We provided our students from Form 3 to Form 5 in our secondary schools with Laptops. We plan to extend this programme to Form 1 of all our secondary schools.

We are well on our way to diversifying our energy needs by developing alternative sources of energy. All over the country we are opening modern, state-of-the-art Information Technology Centres to give all Saint Lucians free access to computers and high-speed internet for learning and entrepreneurship.

Our country is, once again, proud, resilient and on the move! However, it is also delicately poised, and all of these



gains and the sacrifices we have made to get us here can be quickly undone and reversed by recklessness and irresponsible actions.

## DELICATE CHOICES

One such example is the recent opportunistic and bizarre proposal by the leader of the United Workers Party on VAT. The leader of the UWP, at a recent meeting on the Boulevard, stated that his Party will do an "immediate reduction and ultimate removal of the dreaded VAT." He added: "We will find a more creative way and less onerous way of raising revenues generated by VAT". These are his words, not mine.

So in the mind of Allen Chastanet, VAT is "dreaded" and yet, at a Town Hall Meeting in Gros Islet last night at which some twenty persons were in attendance, he told his audience that "VAT is the best and most effective tax in the world. No argument". Now, which is it? Ask yourself, why this incredible about turn and inconsistency?

In 2015/2016 our country earned \$346.37 million dollars from VAT. It is this revenue that pays for our nurses, doctors, teachers, police officers, civil servants, and repays our debt. For every 1% reduction in VAT Revenue, the country loses \$7.0 million dollars. The question then is this: what are the new "creative" measures, what are the new taxes that Allen Chastanet plans to impose on the people of Saint Lucia to make up for this staggering loss of \$ 346.37 million dollars in revenue?

In 2007, Sir John Compton announced in his only Budget Address before his death that his Government will introduce VAT. He said so in these words: "Madam Speaker, I wish to draw to the attention of this Honourable House that VAT is not a tax with which we are unfamiliar. We currently have on our books a number of transaction taxes such as the consumption tax, hotel accommodation tax and the travel tax. It is more efficient to bring all those taxes under a single legislative and administrative structure that would widen the tax base while easing the burden of existing taxpayers. The VAT will not be another tax, but a replacement for some existing taxes. It will be a broad based comprehensive and simplified system of taxation on transactions. During the course of this financial year, we will be consulting with you on an appropriate schedule for implementation of this modi-

fied tax system." [See Page 42 of the Budget Address, 2007/2008]

Sir John's successor, Hon Stephenson King, in his 2011 Budget Address, reiterated Sir John's comments promising to introduce VAT in April 2012. He prepared draft legislation and engaged civil society on the merits of VAT.

Apparently, the wisdom of Sir John Compton in announcing the introduction of VAT in 2007, was conveyed to his successor, Hon Stephenson King, but somehow not to King's successor as leader of the UWP, Allen Chastanet, even though he was part of the Cabinet that made those decisions.

Our Government believes that VAT has settled reasonably well. It is not perfect. Adjustments may well be necessary from time to time but our number one priority must remain the creation of new jobs. And this will be the continuing focus of a new Labour Government.

We believe that more money must be put in the pockets of Saint Lucians by reducing on the number of persons who pay personal income taxes, reducing corporate income tax to encourage even more investment, and ensuring a fair and just property tax regime. We believe that our revenue base must be protected to pay for hospital care for our people, pay our teachers to educate our children, provide more access to university education for our young people, and to protect our elderly, our poor and our vulnerable. These are the issues before us.

## DECISION TIME

Fellow Saint Lucians, the die is cast! The decision time has arrived! Today, I advised the Governor General to dissolve the Parliament of Saint Lucia, and to issue "Writs of Election" to pave the way for the General Election. The General Election will be held on June 06, 2016. Nomination day will be May 27, 2016. Good night and may God bless and protect each and every one of you and our island home, Saint Lucia! I thank you.

PM clarifies why Nominations Day is today

## May 28th was the only fair and appropriate date for Nominations!

Following is the full text of the Statement on the Change in the Date for Nomination of Candidates issued by Prime Minister Dr Kenny D. Anthony on the evening of May 25th 2016 in an Address to the Nation.

In the light of the concerns raised in some quarters over the change in the date for the nomination of candidates from Friday, 27th May 2016 to Saturday 28th May, 2016 it is necessary that I clarify the circumstances that made this change necessary.

Let me first state unequivocally that no consideration whatsoever was given on my part or any other person's part, of offending or inconveniencing any candidate's or person's religious beliefs or faith.

The sole consideration and motivation to the change of the date of nomination was to ensure adequate time for the nomination of candidates, and to preserve the date for the election as required by law.

As I mention later, the Elections Act does not, except in exceptional circumstances which do not apply, allow the date of an election to be changed by the Executive or Judicial Branches of the Government of Saint Lucia.

On Thursday, 19th May, 2016, prior to my announcement of the date for the General Election on national television, the Office of the Governor General was advised of the date for nominations and General Election.

The writs for the General Election should have been signed on that day, but was held up to await the list of Returning Officers from the Electoral Commission.

That list was only made available in the afternoon of the next day, allowing publication in the Gazette, but not in a local newspaper by way of extraordinary publication, because by then, most newspapers had closed for the day.

This resulted in the first publication in a newspaper becoming available on the morning of Saturday, 21st May 2016.

That publication date meant that if the original nomination date of Friday, 27th May 2016 had been kept, candidates may not have had the seven (7) days prior to Nomination Day.

Consequently, it became necessary for the Governor General to send to the Chief Elections Officer amending writs to correct the date for nomination day.

It must be noted that the law permits the date for Nomination Day to be changed. But, as I have indicated the law does not permit or allow a change of the date for the General Election except in specific and restricted cases of emergencies.

Therefore, in the circumstances, Saturday, 28th May 2016 became the only fair

and available date to hold nominations and Her Excellency the Governor General issued the amending writs accordingly.

I recognize that Saturday, 28th May 2016 is a day of religious worship for many in our society. Indeed, Fridays and Sundays are also religious days of worship for some. I was, however, mindful that a particular day of worship may be difficult for some candidates. However, I was equally mindful of the fact that the law allows a candidate's agents to nominate him or her in their absence.

I should add that, two of the candidates of the Saint Lucia Labour Party, Joachim Henry and Jerome Gedeon, belong to denominations which worship on a Saturday. It is therefore inconceivable that anyone could sensibly believe that I would intentionally or otherwise discriminate against any of the religious beliefs of our candidates, supporters or that of any or all citizens.

I sincerely regret the inconvenience that this change may cause to Saint Lucians for whom Saturday is their Sabbath.

Fortunately, as I mentioned earlier the Elections Act provides authority for the nomination of a candidate who may be unable to attend because of his Sabbath to be nominated in his or her absence by his or her duly authorized representative or agent.

This will allow any candidates affected by the regrettable but, in the circumstances, unavoidable change of date to proceed with their nomination without offending their religious beliefs or sensitivities.

Therefore, this change of date does not prevent or affect the nomination of any candidate of any of the Parties intending to contest the General Election on Monday, 6th June 2016.

In closing, I wish to reiterate that it was never my intention or that of my Government to discriminate against or inconvenience any religious group or offend any sensitivities.

The decision that had to be made required that careful consideration be given to the law and the various options in order to preserve the date for the General Election.

In any event, I wish to place on record my apologies for any difficulties or any inconvenience that this unavoidable change may cause, and trust that all will go well on Nomination Day, so that we can proceed to elect the new Government for Saint Lucia on the 6th June 2016. God's speed and God bless!

## Public Service Minister responds to Outrageous and Absolute Fabrications!

Following is the full text of the statement by Minister for the Public Service Senator Dr Jimmy Fletcher, on a social media notice on the Public Service.

My attention has been drawn, as Minister for the Public Service, to a notice that is being circulated on social media suggesting that the Labour Government has plans for the Public Service after elections that will negatively impact the livelihoods of Public Officers.

I wish to respond to the following claims that have been made in the social media notice entitled Attention Public Servants:

1. There is absolutely no truth to the claim that Public Officers on temporary appointment will be placed on contract for two years. It is also patently false that officers who are on contract, or any other officers for that matter, will be dismissed if they score less than 85% on their appraisals.
2. There are no plans to change the pension arrangements for officers on Permanent Establishment. In other words, the claim that when officers on Permanent Establishment retire they will not receive a gratuity but will receive only a monthly pension, are outrageous



Public Service Minister Senator Dr James Fletcher

3. Finally, there are absolutely no plans to implement the 5% salary reduction. Because of our collective sacrifice we have been able to close the fiscal gap and stimulate growth in our economy. We need to continue to build on these gains and catalyse even more positive sustained growth in our economy.

I can however state with a high degree of confidence that the Labour Government intends to undertake the following measures in the Public Service in its new term of office:

1. Establish a state-of-the-art modern Training Facility

ity for Public Officers at Union, in what was previously Spinners, to equip Public Officers with the necessary skills to operate even more efficiently and effectively.

2. Initiate a comprehensive programme to upgrade and enhance the information technology skill sets of Public Officers.
3. Create a child care facility on the Waterfront to provide a safe place for the Public Officers who work on the Waterfront to keep their children in the period between the dismissal of school and the end of the work day.
4. Continue the Employee Assistance Programme to provide support to Public Officers who may be experiencing distress that is impacting on their ability to function in the work place.
5. Integrate the new Unified Communications System in the operations of all government offices so that Public Officers may communicate more effectively with each other, using voice-over-IP technology and having greater ability to host teleconferences and video conferences.
6. Continue to address the several Occupational Health and Safety issues that plague some of the Government offices, so as to ensure that our Public Officers are not exposed to hazards in the work place.
7. Complete the digitization of all government records and make it possible for processes such as Leave Management to be done quickly and more efficiently on an online platform.
8. Integrate the successful 311 Contact Centre with the Emergency 911 and 999 services for greater efficiency and more efficient response times.
9. Complete the Vieux Fort Administrative Complex to provide Public Officers in the south and the general public with modern, spacious premises to work and transact business
10. Make it possible for more government services, such as renewal of Driver's Licences and application for Birth Certificates, to be done online via the Government Web Portal.



Government plans to continue to integrate ICT solutions to ongoing administrative problems to facilitate greater efficiency throughout the Public Service.



Government plans to make it even more easy to get quicker responses when calling government telephone numbers or seeking emergency help from government services.

## What The Law Says...

What the Law says on

### Number of Days between Nominations and Elections

The Opposition mounted a big hue and cry following the announcement of the dates for Nomination of Candidates and for the next General Elections, claiming Prime Minister Dr. Kenny Anthony broke the law, as 21 days notice is supposedly required between nominations and elections. Here is what the Elections Act, Chapter 1 Section 2 at sub-section 36 says:

#### ISSUE OF WRITS

- (1) For the purposes of every general election of members of the House, and for the purposes of the election of members to fill vacancies in the House caused by death, resignation, or otherwise, the Governor General shall issue writs under the Public Seal of the State, addressed to the returning officers of the respective electoral districts for which members are to be returned. Such writs shall be forwarded to the Commission for transmission to the several returning officers.
- (2) Every writ shall be in the form set out as Form I in Schedule 3 and shall specify—
  - (a) the day of the nomination of candidates being not less than 7 and not more than 14 days after the day of issue of the writ;
  - (b) the day upon which, if necessary, the poll shall be taken, being not less than 7 days and not more than 14 days after the day of the nomination of candidates;
  - (c) the day the writ is returnable to the Governor General being not more than 7 days after the polling day.
- (3) Upon receipt of such writ every returning officer shall proceed to hold the election in the manner hereinafter provided.



### Police Warning

## No Alcohol on Election Day

#### ELECTION OFFENCES

### INTOXICATING LIQUOR NOT TO BE SOLD SUPPLIED OR GIVEN ON POLLING DAY

(ELECTIONS ACT 2008)

This is what the law says about Sale or Use of Alcohol on Election Day in Saint Lucia.

Chapter 72 Sub-section (1) No intoxicating liquor shall be sold, offered for sale, supplied or given away, at any premises situate in any electoral district in which an election is being held, to which a licence issued under the Liquor Licence Act, or under the Registration of Proprietary Clubs Act or under any other enactment applies, at any time between the opening and the closing of the poll on polling day.

- (2) Any person who contravenes subsection (1) is liable on summary conviction to a fine of \$500 or to imprisonment for 6 months.
- (3) This section does not apply to any port or airport wherein liquor is sold under concession to persons therein who are about to leave Saint Lucia.

The Royal Saint Lucia Police Force would like to encourage the citizenry to read and study the laws which govern the country.

(Know Your Laws is a production of the Press Office of the Royal Saint Lucia Police Force.)



### Police Warning

## Employers Must Allow Workers Time to Vote!

#### ELECTION OFFENCES

### EMPLOYERS TO ALLOW EMPLOYEES PRESCRIBED PERIOD FOR VOTING

(ELECTIONS ACT 2008)

This is what the law says about the rights of workers to get time to vote on Election Day.

Chapter 73 Sub-section (1) An employer shall, on polling day, allow every elector in his or her employ a reasonable period being not less than 2 hours or such other period as may be prescribed for voting, and no employer shall make any deduction from the pay or other remuneration of any such elector or impose upon or exact from him or her any penalty by reason of his or her absence during such period.

(2) Any employer who, directly or indirectly, refuses, or by intimidation, undue influence, or in any other way, interferes with the granting to any elector in his or her employ, of the period for voting as provided in subsection (1), is liable on summary conviction to a fine of \$500 or to imprisonment for 6 months.

The Royal Saint Lucia Police Force would like to encourage the citizenry to read and study the laws which govern General Elections in Saint Lucia.

(“Know Your Laws” is a production of the Press Office of the Royal Saint Lucia Police Force.)



### Police Warning

## Arrangements for General Elections

(ELECTIONS ACT 2008)

This is what the law says about the rights of workers to get time to vote on Election Day.

Chapter 36. ISSUE OF WRITS

- (1) For the purposes of every general election of members of the House, and for the purposes of the election of members to fill vacancies in the House caused by death, resignation, or otherwise, the Governor General shall issue writs under the Public Seal of the State, addressed to the returning officers of the respective electoral districts for which members are to be returned. Such writs shall be forwarded to the Commission for transmission to the several returning officers.
- (2) Every writ shall be in the form set out as Form I in Schedule 3 and shall specify—
  - (a) the day of the nomination of candidates being not less than 7 and not more than 14 days after the day of issue of the writ;
  - (b) the day upon which, if necessary, the poll shall be taken, being not less than 7 days and not more than 14 days after the day of the nomination of candidates;
  - (c) the day the writ is returnable to the Governor General being not more than 7 days after the polling day.
- (3) Upon receipt of such writ every returning officer shall proceed to hold the election in the manner hereinafter provided.

Chapter 37. NOTICE OF TIME AND PLACE FOR ELECTIONS

Upon the issue by the Governor General of a writ the Chief Elections Officer shall give notice thereof, and of the day and place fixed for the nomination of candidates, by publication in the Gazette and one or more local newspapers at least 7 days before the day fixed for such nomination; and the returning officer shall give further notice of the issue of such writ and of the time and place for the nomination of candidates by causing notices in the form set out as Form 6 in Schedule 3 to be posted or affixed in some conspicuous place near the principal door of every court house, police station and Revenue Office, and in any other place he or she may deem necessary

Chapter 38. RETURNING OFFICER TO OBTAIN LISTS OF ELECTORS

Before the day fixed for the nomination of candidates, the Chief Elections Officer shall supply the returning officer with the prescribed number of copies of the register in force by virtue of this Act.

The Royal Saint Lucia Police Force would like to encourage the citizenry to read and study the laws which govern General Elections in Saint Lucia.

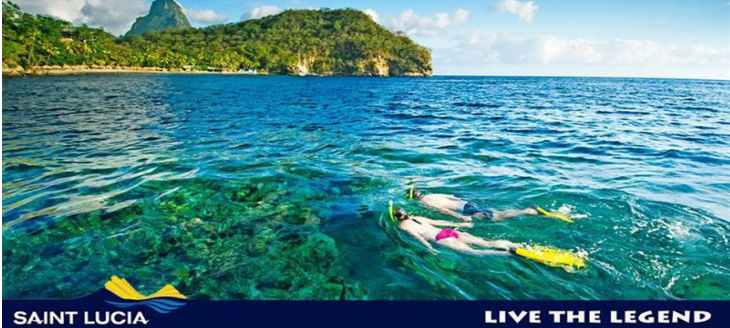
(“Know Your Laws” is a production of the Press Office of the Royal Saint Lucia Police Force.)

## St. Lucia listed as top honeymoon spot in the Caribbean by travel booking site



Travel booking site The Romantic Tourist has listed St. Lucia as the top destination in the Caribbean for couples looking to go on their honeymoon. The site referred to the experience of the founders of its parent company during their honeymoon at Crystals which is located in Soufriere. The Romantic Tourist allows site visitors to plan and book trips to various destinations. The trips include events and hotel rooms and allow visitors a unique opportunity to browse the benefits of different destinations located in various countries around the world. (Courtesy Saint Lucia News Online)

## Scandinavian travel agents open way for new tourism market



SAINT LUCIA LIVE THE LEGEND

Hot on the heels of the success of the 25th Saint Lucia Jazz and Arts Festival, efforts are well under way to open yet another new European market for the island. The Saint Lucia Tourist Board (SLTB) UK hosted a number of journalists and travel agents from Scandinavia (Sweden and Denmark) earlier this month. The group visited a number of hotels and participated in many activities whilst on island – chocolate-making at Boucan by Hotel Chocolat, hiking the Tet Paul Nature Trail, visiting the Sulphur Springs and Antillia Brewery, touring the Pigeon Island National Landmark, and riding the Rainforest Aerial Tram. This growing market will now be able to fly to Saint Lucia without the need to overnight in London through Condor, which will fly direct from Frankfurt to Saint Lucia in November. While here, the agents got access to a growing market that will now be able to fly direct from Frankfurt to Saint Lucia, starting November.

## Tourist Board promoting Saint Lucia in Connecticut, USA

Agents received incentives for referring their clients to Saint Lucia for summer 2016 and beyond. The Saint Lucia Tourist Board (SLTB) hosted the monthly meeting of the Travel Association of Connecticut (TACT) in Wallingford, CT on May 17. Utilizing a combination of one-on-one interactions, a mini-tradeshow and a detailed destination update, TACT members received incentives for referring their clients to Saint Lucia for summer 2016 and beyond.

TACT is a membership of over 90 travel agency owners and advisors from the state of Connecticut. Each month destinations, hotels, wholesalers or airlines are invited to host meetings where exclusive access is given to the membership. The host is also featured on the association's website for that corresponding month. The SLTB also continued its

spring luxury tour this time at Island Destinations' Larchmont, New York headquarters, celebrating "chocolate luxury" and the new JetBlue Mint Service. Island Destinations is the leading luxury boutique tour operator on the eastern seaboard focusing on promoting and marketing the Caribbean, Europe and Africa. The program featured 12 Saint Lucia properties. A total of 40 in-house and remote staff attended the day of training.



Agents received incentives for referring their clients to Saint Lucia for summer 2016 and beyond.

## Coco Palm awarded 2015 Hotels.Com Certificate of Excellence

Another saint Lucian hotel has won another top regional award. This time Saint Lucia's boutique hotel, Coco Palm has once again been honoured with a Certificate of Excellence by Hotels.com for 2015. Chairman Allen Chastanet promised Coco Palm would be something special.

He said, "Our vision was to offer guests something authentically Saint Lucian without compromise, with value for money and the best food in town. Those values still hold today and are enhanced each year".

Chastanet said he picked the best team he could over ten years ago and together they have created something special.

"Credit must go to our Heads of Department and Team members who have taken Coco Palm to another level and never rests on their laurels" noted Allen Chastanet.

General Manager Mr Jean St Rose, who has been at the helm for over ten years, couldn't be prouder. He said, "I will share this Certificate of Excellence with our Team who have made Coco Palm something special. When we opened our



Coco Palm Revenue Department and Front Office proudly display Certificate of Excellence.

doors, we never imagined the power that people have influencing your product via Online Travel Agents (OTA) as Hotels.com With 89% positive reviews, this has certainly proven to be the endorsement consumers need today" noted St Rose.

Revenue Manager and Front Office Managers, Mrs Claudine Gilbert Mashack Biroo are the engines behind Coco Palm and can take pride in such an honour.

Gilbert measures her success by seeing the award winning boutique hotel placing in the top spot week after week, year after year and this is no small feat.

"I am so proud to share this with my Team who have all stepped up to

the plate and contributed enormously. Our work speaks for itself" Mrs Gilbert went on to say.

The Certificate of Excellence bestowed by Hotels.com honours hospitality excellence, is given only to establishments that consistently achieve outstanding traveller reviews on TripAdvisor, and is extended to qualifying businesses worldwide.

Establishments awarded the Certificate of Excellence are located all over the world and represent the upper echelon of businesses listed on the website.

When selecting Certificate of Excellence, Hotels.com uses a proprietary algorithm to determine the honorees that takes into account reviews ratings.

## Du Boulay's Bottling voted one of top regional investors

Du Boulay's Bottling Company has been recognized as one of the top investors in the Region, having emerged winner in the Local Investor of the Year category at this year's Regional Investor of the Year Awards (RIYA).

The RIYA is a collaborative initiative that seeks to recognize and promote the contribution of foreign and local investors to the Caribbean economy.

Du Boulay's beat out two other nominees – Chocolate Dreams Ltd. from Jamaica and Bowjay from Guyana – to win the category title.

The overall award of Regional Investor of the Year was captured by Kikaboni (Healthy Flow Agro-industrial SRL), a healthy snack manufacturing company from the Dominican Republic which became the first company in the world to produce healthy snacks using Moringa Oleifera as one of their main ingredients.

Speaking at the conclusion of the ceremony held earlier this month during the Caribbean Investment Summit in Miami, Dunstan Du Boulay, Managing Director of the local bottling company conveyed his appreciation to the Caribbean Export De-



McHale Andrew, President of CAIPA & CEO of Invest Saint Lucia and Dunstan Du Boulay, Managing Director of Du Boulay's Bottling Company Ltd. receiving the Local Investor of the Year Award 2015.

Investment Never CAIPA President and CEO of Invest Saint Lucia Andrew, who also attended the Summit, remarked that this latest award is testimony to the fact that Saint Lucia's manufacturing sector is on a growth trajectory.

The manufacturing industry in Saint Lucia accounts for approximately five percent of the island's gross domestic product and employs about six percent of its workforce. The companies within this sector, including Du Boulay's, Baron Foods, Viking Traders, St. Lucia Distillers and Windward and Leeward Brewery Limited, continue to receive international recognition and numerous accolades for their brands.

The local manufacturers anticipate that over the next two to three years, the manufacturing sector will be further expanded with the introduction of a new flour mill in VieuxFort, a chicken processing plant in Dennery and the expansion of Antillia Brewing Company to a full-fledged brewery, with the intention to export within and outside of the region. These prospects can only augur well for the sector and the country overall.

velopment Agency (CEDA) and the Caribbean Association of Investment Promotion Agencies (CAIPA) for naming the Company as the Local Investor of the Year.

He expressed his sincere gratitude and appreciation for the many courtesies extended during his attendance at the 2016 Caribbean Investment Summit in Miami, which was a great experience, the memories of which will be with him for years to come.

# Musical Therapy working well at Wellness Centre!

At a time when the Prime Minister is being scandalously accused of having not a care in the world for mentally disturbed saint Lucians, patients at the National Wellness Centre have been proving the claims as being just wild and ridiculous.

Staff and clients of the St. Lucia National Mental Wellness Centre were thoroughly entertained by various artistes the likes of Sisterhood, Linda 'Chocolate' Berthier, Shirleyann Cyril-Mayers and others, including performances by some of the clients during the first ever-Jazz and Arts show held on the grounds of the facility.

Dubbed the "Jazz Climax: Mental Wellness Centre Edition", the aim was to provide a different type of therapy, musical therapy to clients, in a very light, social atmosphere with family, friends and fantastic music.

One of the organizers of the activity, Jane Charles, the Occupational Therapist at the Wellness Centre, was very pleased with the way the event turned out. "We planned a Jazz Session for our mental patients and they were looking forward to this

session. We had a great and fantastic time.

Musical therapy is part of occupational therapy and music therapy does allot for our patients. It helps our patients relax and puts them in a very good mood as well as it helps them sleep properly. So, all in all, music therapy is very good for our patients."

Quite thrilled and excited for her clients was the Executive Director for Mental Wellness Services, Charmaine Hippolyte-Thomas, who encouraged opportunities for more social involvement between clients, family and the general public such as this jazz event.

"It is special for me knowing that persons who are able to sign and dance and demonstrate arts are able to come to the Wellness Centre to share with the clients and it is also exciting for me knowing that the clients are not forgotten in the whole spirit of jazz.

Thomas added that the wellness centre will encourage even more opportunities like the jazz event which can add therapeutic components to the care provided at the facility and said he staff were all happy when fami-



Staff and patients together stamped the Wellness Centre trademark on the Saint Lucia Jazz and Arts landscape.

lies and other persons come around.

Brian Francis, father of one of the clients at the facility, agrees that activities such as the Jazz Climax can help in the rehabilitation of the mentally ill patients and keep them motivated. He encouraged family members to play a more supportive role in the recovery process of their

loved ones by simply visiting them more often.

"Actually visiting the patient is like a medication for them. When they see their relatives it's like they have a joy in them and actually that can motivate them to cure faster and get better.

So it's a nice thing to have the family members come around to visit their family. Actually I've got my son here and I am

here every day probably sometimes twice a day and he is happy to see me around and I am happy coming around too.

I pray to God that I can come around every day to see my son so that he could be better." Organizers hope to make the "Jazz Climax: Mental Wellness Centre Edition" an annual events on the calendar of activities at the Mental Wellness Centre.

## Trade Saint Lucia launched to enhance business support

The initiative combines the efforts of TEPA and the SBDC to enhance business support services. Trade Saint Lucia, an initiative of the Ministry of Commerce, Business Development, Investment and Consumer Affairs, was launched here earlier this week.

The initiative combined the efforts of the Saint Lu-

cia Trade Export Promotion Agency (TEPA) and the Small Business Development Centre (SBDC) with an aim to enhance business support services to the business sector.

"The creation of Trade Saint Lucia is part of a wider structuring effort of the Ministry of Commerce as we continually seek to improve our services to the local commercial sector,

thereby providing an ecosystem that will enhance Saint Lucia's international competitiveness," Minister for Commerce, Business Development, Investment and Consumer Affairs, the Hon. Emma Hippolyte said.

"The SBDC with its core strength of capacity-building, long term consultations and startup assistance; and TEPA's strength and focus in market in-

telligence, trade facilitation and export strategy; together under one roof, is the perfect union to lead Saint Lucia to economic prosperity."

Barbara Innocent Charles, SBDC Director, spoke on the importance of micro-enterprises and the youth.

"The economy is such that we need to harness the capabilities of our people in

Saint Lucia. We need to get our youth to realize their dreams, to tap into their skills and to contribute to this economy."

Cabinet approved the creation of Trade Saint Lucia on March 21, with the entity coming into effect April. Trade Saint Lucia was created as a statutory body drawing on established resources.

## Public Service Training Institute launched



The first of its kind, the training institute will formulate customized programs to improve public service delivery.

The Ministry of the Public Service, Information and Broadcasting has formally launched the Public Service Training Institute.

The first of its kind, the training institute will formulate customized learning and development programs to meet the deficiencies identified by the Learning Needs Assessment and aims to build capacity within government ministries by strengthening human resources in accordance with service delivery and policy and program objectives.

The institute will also adopt a competency-based approach to human resource training and development in the public service, in keeping with objectives identified for training in the Ministry of the Public Service's Strategic Plan for 2014-2017.

Currently, the training division of the Ministry of the Public Service operates two training rooms, one with a seating capacity of 15, and the other with a seating capacity of 25.

The spatial constraints restrict the number of people that can be trained at any given time, resulting in the sub-optimal use of allocated resources.

The absence of break-out rooms and video-conferencing technology has also affected the quality of training being offered.

The Public Service Training Institute will address these short comings.

The launch of the Public Service Training Institute took place on May 25. The training institute is located in the former Spinners building at Union.

## Minister pleased about Agriculture Sector performance

Agriculture Minister, Moses Jn Baptiste, has said that he is pleased with the performance of the sector, despite a few downsides.

"We have seen agriculture increase value added by seven percent in this year's estimates and seen double digit growth in almost every area," he said, nothing that there was a slight decrease in chicken and fish landings.

Jn Baptiste said that the progress now recorded in terms of

sales to hotels and supermarkets, has a lot to do with efforts made to standardize the operations of farmers.

He explained that as a result of the long-running farmer certification program, farmers are more aware of what they need to do to produce quality food; and that there is a greater awareness of standards, due largely to the work of the Saint Lucia Bureau of Standards to develop product standards for the agriculture industry.

The minister opined that Saint Lucia can look forward to an increase in the consumption of safe, healthy local food, and an increase in the number of businesses in agriculture.

He spoke of an increase in the use of local food in the school feeding program, and the need for emphasis on essential oils.

The minister said that millions of dollars plus employment can also be had from chicken production.

## US \$1.4 Million worth of Bailey Bridges to accelerate disaster recovery

The Ministry of Infrastructure, Port Services, and Transport, has welcomed the recent consignment of Bailey Bridges which have been used to restore vital roadway access between communities following severe infrastructural damage caused by storms.

In April, the ministry received 15 single and double-lane Bailey bridges of varying lengths. The Government of Saint Lucia had previously purchased 300 meters of Bailey bridges in 2013.

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Infrastructure, Hon. Philip J. Pierre, recalls that following the 2013 Christmas Eve trough the ministry was able to restore vehicular access in the communities of Canaries and Piaye within less than a week, with the erection of Bailey bridges.



In April, the Ministry of Infrastructure received 15 single and double-lane Bailey bridges of varying lengths.

The minister noted that while the traditional concrete and steel approach was costly and required a lot of time, the investment in Bailey bridges allowed government to respond to emergencies in a timelier manner and at a lower cost.

The Government of Saint Lucia also came to the rescue of Saint Vincent following the Christmas Eve trough by donating over 100 meters of Bailey

bridges. These bridges were used to reconnect communities severed as a result of the weather event.

The new shipment of Bailey bridges was financed by the World Bank under the Disaster Vulnerability Reduction Project (DVRP) at a cost of \$1.4 million.

Staff training on the installation of Bailey bridges is also being provided to the Ministry of Infrastructure.

# The Diplomatic Courier

## New Taiwan President takes office

Dr. Tsai Ing-wen of the Democratic Progressive Party was on May 20 inaugurated as the 14th-term President of the Republic of China (Taiwan).

In her address at the inaugural ceremony, President Tsai laid out her vision for Taiwan's future and elaborated on the policy goals of her administration.

Regarding the ROC's foreign policy, President Tsai stressed her desire to bring Taiwan closer to the world while upholding the universal values of peace, freedom, democracy, and human rights.

Taiwan will continue to deepen relations with friendly democracies including the US, Japan, and European nations. It will also proactively participate in international economic and trade cooperation, as well as free trade negotiations. Furthermore, Taiwan will contribute to fostering environmental sustainability.

President Tsai stated her administration's commitment to strengthening regional peace and stability, and emphasized the importance of fostering closer economic links with other Asian countries. As part of this commitment, President Tsai announced a new southbound policy to broaden exchanges in the areas of technology, culture, and commerce.

In her address, President Tsai also touched on various domestic issues, such as pension and judicial reform, long-term care mechanisms, and transitional justice.

Saint Lucia and other Caribbean states were also represented at the inauguration in Taipei, which saw the change of power from outgoing



President Tsai stated her administration's commitment to strengthening regional peace and stability.

ing President Ma Ying-jeou to President Tsai.

Saint Lucia was represented at the inauguration by Education Minister Dr Robert K. Lewis, as well as by Cabinet Secretary Darrel Montrope and Speaker of the House of Assembly Peter Foster.

Ahead of the inauguration, the Taiwan Embassy here hosted a special ceremony at the Union Agricultural Station to mark the occasion of yet another change of government in Taiwan.

Deputy Prime Minister Philip J. Pierre and Taiwan Ambassador His Excellency Ray Mou officiated at the special event, which was also attended by other diplomats and government officials, along with special guests.

## Venezuela reiterated commitment to PetroCaribe during Maduro visits to Jamaica and Trinidad

Despite facing economic challenges, the Venezuelan Government has reiterated its commitment to maintaining its arrangements with Jamaica and the rest of the Caribbean under the PetroCaribe Agreement.

President Nicolás Maduro made the promise during a recent working visit to Jamaica, as he sought to allay uncertainty about his country's commitment to the agreement.

He said that both governments discussed the need to strengthen the scheme and that was important, as the PetroCaribe Agreement has been successful in bolstering the economic and energy exchanges of the member countries.

"We are fully convinced that in the last 10 years, PetroCaribe has clearly demonstrated that it's only together that we can reach development and (achieve) happiness for our peoples," President Maduro said.

He noted that the meeting with Jamaica's Prime Minister Andrew Holness and Jamaican Government ministers was marked by dialogue on cooperation and a strong will to continue efforts to further unite both countries.

Meanwhile, Venezuela has agreed to buy US\$50 million in food from neighbouring Trinidad and Tobago, including the priority items like butter, chicken, pork, ketchup, rice and black beans.

News of the purchase came from Venezuela President Nicolas Maduro at a joint press conference with Trinidad and Tobago Prime Minister Dr Keith Rowley in Port of Spain.

President Maduro described his meeting with Rowley and his Cabinet as fruitful and successful, promising to strengthen ties and the relationship with Trinidad and Tobago going forward, the Trinidad Guardian reported.

"We need to continue working hard in the future to further our relations in the premise of principles



Jamaican Prime Minister Andrew Holness and Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro hit the red carpet in Kingston following their successful meeting last Sunday.

of respect, brotherhood and co-operation," Maduro told Rowley.

Among the issues discussed were trade, security and repatriation of citizens who are currently detained in prisons on both sides.

The Trinidad and Tobago government also signed a memorandum of understanding with Maduro to purchase gas from Venezuela,

which Maduro said stood to benefit both countries.

"We look forward from Trinidad and Tobago to provide significant relief to the people of Venezuela. This relief to come from a supply of manufactured goods from Trinidad and Tobago," Rowley told Maduro.

"We have created a joint venture that would be responsible to conduct all the investments required in order to tap those resources for the benefit of both countries.

"We have also decided to increase the trade flow between the two nations. We have already established the contacts and very soon, through a revolving fund with US\$50 million, we will be able to strengthen the flow of trade between Trinidad and the Eastern part of Venezuela," Maduro said.

Following Maduro's address, Trade and Industry Minister Paula Gopee-Scoon spoke about the arrangements that would be put in place for Venezuela to obtain the much-needed food.

She said the US\$50 million fund Venezuela had established would be used to purchase manufactured goods from Trinidad and Tobago, which would be sent to the eastern states of Venezuela, which have been faced with a shortage of food for months.



Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro and Prime Minister Dr Keith Rowley in a handshake during a joint press conference following bilateral talks in Trinidad on Monday.

### SLHTA looks to foreign languages lab

The Saint Lucia Hotel and Tourism Association (SLHTA) has collaborated with the Embassy of Mexico, the Embassy of Spain and the University of Quintana Roo, to discuss the establishment of a private sector foreign languages lab.

Recently, SLHTA representatives met with representatives of the organizations as they work to move closer to the realization of the facility.

The facility will be located

within the SLHTA's Hospitality Training Centre at Rodney Heights and will provide training for private sector employees.

Discussions also explored scholarship opportunities for employees in maintenance and air conditioning repair.

The private sector foreign languages lab will be available to all SLHTA members and their employees to access training and receive internationally recognized certification.

## OECS Foreign Affairs ministers will remain engaged on regional and global issues

The second Meeting of the OECS Council of Foreign Affairs Ministers was convened in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines on May 8, under the chairmanship of the Foreign Affairs Minister of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Hon. Sir Louis Straker.

Minister Straker accepted the mantle of chairmanship of the council from the outgoing chairman, Hon. Alva Baptiste, Minister for External Affairs, International Trade and Civil Aviation of Saint Lucia.

The incoming chairman expressed the hope that the council would continue to address the business of the OECS in an efficacious manner.

The second Meeting of the OECS Council of Foreign Affairs Ministers was convened against

the backdrop of profound and dramatic changes taking place on the geopolitical front and offered the ministers the opportunity to contribute to the process of designing and fashioning responses to the challenges confronting the region as a result of those changes.

The council considered a wide range of issues including the external representation of member states, relations with third states, progress towards the realization of the OECS Single Domestic Space, United Nations matters, relations with the EU post-Cotonou, and matters relating to hemispheric institutions such as the ACS, CELAC and the OAS.

The council committed itself to remain engaged on these and other matters under its purview.

## OECS DG met Martinique Council President to continue engagements with neighbouring French member-state

Director General of the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) Dr. Didacus Jules met with the President of the Executive Council of Martinique, Alfred Marie-Jeanne at the offices of the Collectivité de Martinique in Fort-de-France.

The meeting was the first since the election of a new administration in Martinique following the French national elections of Dec. 2015 and followed the long-established practice of briefing engagements between the Director General and newly-elected heads of political administrations of member states.

The meeting covered a wide range of issues including the nature and structure of the new governance arrangements in Martinique, as well as the inherent implications for a smooth transition between both administrations and systems; the priorities of the new administration both domestically and in respect of regional cooperation; the governance structure and arrangements of the OECS; and the modalities of participation by Martinique as a member of the OECS in the work of the organization.

The meeting also discussed the efforts of the OECS Commission to make the organization more relevant for its non-independent and associate



Jules was the first since the election of a new administration in Martinique following the French national elections of Dec. 2015.

membership, and received the assurance of the Director General that the OECS Commission existed to serve the member states of the organization.

Attention was also given to the necessity for continued active participation of Martinique in the organization, and for continuation of the active engagement between the administration and the OECS Commission. In this regard, the President confirmed the decision of his administration to maintain its resident representation at the OECS Commission via the physical presence of the Commissioner for Martinique, and agreed on the urgent ne-

cessity for the appointment of elected representatives and other officials to the various OECS organs and working groups.

The parties to the meeting considered it a tremendous success and agreed on the need for continued engagement and action in the interest of achieving concrete results.

The President and the Director General were supported by their respective delegations which included Chef de Cabinet Mme. Maguy Marie-Jeanne, OECS Commissioner for Martinique Mme. Murielle Lesales and Head of International Relations at the OECS Commission, Mr Anthony Severin.

## Marchand honours 36th Mother of the Year

The Marchand community has honored its 36th Mother of the Year. In its 37th year of observance of this prestigious event, the Marchand Women's League this year chose Mrs Lesnie Louisa Gill as the 2016 Marchand Mother of the Year.

The 69-year-old housewife is a mother of five with 17 grandchildren and three great grandchildren. Mrs Gill has also been a member of the Marchand Women's League for over 25 years.

A devout Catholic, speaking after the honoring ceremony, she said she raised her children in the fear of God, to the best of her abilities and urge young mothers to do the same.

She told members of the press after the ceremony, "Never give up on your children, no matter what -- and with the help of God, they will be good citizens and make you proud. With God, all things are possible."



Deputy Prime Minister and Castries East MP Philip J. Pierre celebrated Mrs Lesnie Louisa Gill as the 36th Marchand Mother of the Year.

Parliamentary Representative for Castries East Philip J. Pierre said, "Mrs. Gill is a fitting per-

son worthy of this honor. There are people who go about their daily lives, with no fanfare and no media coverage, but they make very meaningful contributions to the community -- and Mrs. Gill is one of them."

Referring to the coming General Elections and the ongoing festive Jazz fanfare with a broad smile on his face, the four-term MP went on to say, "I have been attending this ceremony for almost 20 years now and even when I was Minister of Tourism, no jazz activity has ever stopped me from coming to celebrate with you. So, I hope that I will have the privilege, through the people of this constituency, to return here on many other occasions to honor many more mothers in this constituency."

The Marchand Women's League also elected a new president this year. Mrs. Paula Charles replaced Mrs Monica Alcide, who had served for over twenty years.

## ISL again contributes to National Telethon



ISL's annual donation this year was \$5,000 and Executive Director Madonna Monrose (right) says it will help supplement the NCF's existing educational assistance program. At left is ISL representative Natasha Edwin-Walcott

For the fourth consecutive year, Invest Saint Lucia (ISL) has shown its support for the National Community Foundation (NCF).

During its annual telethon held on May 22, ISL made a donation of \$5,000 to the foundation which is geared towards assisting disadvantaged students meet the cost of their educational needs.

As is customary, ISL also assisted with the pledges during the event which was carried live on local television.

During ISL's cheque presentation to the NCF, ISL representative Natasha Edwin-Walcott said, "ISL is once again proud to assist with such a worthwhile cause not only because it is part of our community outreach program, but more so because this

initiative is one of the ways in which we are able to contribute to Saint Lucia's most important resource."

ISL's annual donation was aimed at supplementing the NCF's existing educational assistance program that helps provide much needed financial support to students who have difficulty meeting the expenses associated with getting an education.

## Free 2016 Jazz & Arts concert held at Marchand Children's Park to close Silver Jubilee!



Castries East, through the initiative of MP Philip J. Pierre, hosted one of the many activities that brought the curtains down on the 2016 edition of the Saint Lucia Jazz and Arts Festival -- a free concert at the Marchand Children's Park. The festival was officially opened at the Mindoo Phillip Park -- also in Marchand -- on April 29. The free concert, held on May 14, was therefore more welcome news for the community. The concert featured Dynamix, a relatively young local band, whose members are from the Castries East and Gros Islet constituencies. The members, all former students of the Saint Lucia School of Music, are below the age of 20. Dynamix's repertoire comprises local, regional and international selections. Mr Pierre said he was pleased with the fact that Marchand and Castries East continue to host Jazz activities, both big and small

## NCF concludes 2016 telethon with plan to review format

The National Community Foundation (NCF) concluded its largest annual fundraiser last Sunday. The 13th edition of the NCF's Telethon took place at the National Cultural Centre, raising just about \$147,000 -- far below previous years.

Madonna Monrose, Executive Director of the non-profit organisation, said the NCF needs to review the format of the telethon to make it more cost effective.

"We noticed that there was a lot of expenditure attached to the Telethon. We try to raise critical funds that we need to assist our clients, but at the same time we spend so much to get those funds in. So we decided we would make a change - take the risk. We did that last year and we were pleasantly surprised in that we found that the amount of funds raised was not that much different in the past or the year before."

This year's telethon was dedi-

cated to renowned Saint Lucian musician and philanthropist Ronald "Boo" Hinkson, who performed at the live event.

"I must say it is a great honour for me to be recognized in this way. It was something I did not expect. When I got the phone call, I was pretty surprised. I think it sends a good signal to the young people. I'm no rocket scientist and what I have done throughout my music career is something that I know and I hope the young people would aspire to and achieve also. With regards to my philanthropic work, I think it is my civic duty to do the things that I do."

The NCF, as a non-governmental organization, depends on donations to service six core areas - education, health, youth-at-risk, persons with disabilities, the elderly and the homeless.

Those interested in donating can contact the NCF office on High Street in Castries.

## Nationwide Sports

### Saint Lucia considering international Jet Ski Race

A team of jet ski enthusiasts from Martinique spent the last weekend in Saint Lucia exploring logistical arrangements for Saint Lucia's possible involvement in an international jet ski race in 2017.

Martinique recently hosted the first round of an international jet race competition organized by the International Jet Sports Boating Association (IJSBA). The IJSBA is the worldwide sanctioning body for personal watercraft competitive racing.

Team 972 from Martinique, comprising 17 jet skis, visited Saint Lucia in response to an invitation from the Consul General in Martinique, Yasmine Walcott, for discussions and first-hand experience of Saint Lucia as a likely host for the 2017 international jet ski race.

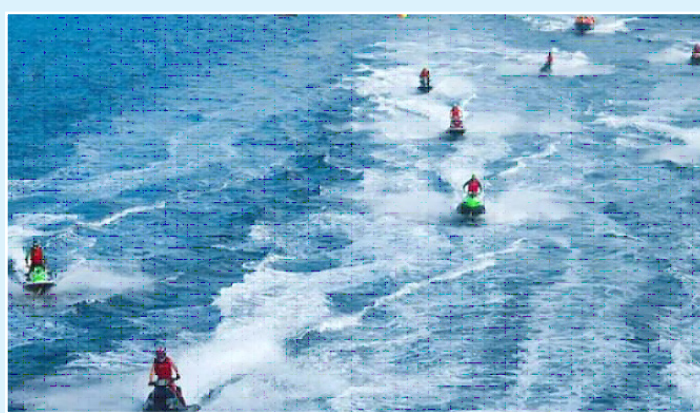
The proposal is for the race to start in Martinique and culminate in Saint Lucia - the first time an international jet ski race will start in one country and end in another.

Edson Eugene of Team 972 (Martinique's area code) said the trial run brought a total of

over 40 persons to Saint Lucia including three boats with security, emergency and other logistical personnel.

The international jet ski race, he added, brought to Martinique over 50 participants from the United States, Russia, Canada, Kuwait, Qatar, Belgium, Peru, the United Kingdom, Italy, China, South Korea, Japan, Saudi Arabia and France.

The hope is that Saint Lucia Jet Ski Pilots will participate in the 2017 international race. Team 972 is expected to provide training and race orientation.



The proposal is for the race to start in Martinique and culminate in Saint Lucia.