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# GROS ISLET POLICE DIVISIONAL HEADQUARTERS: A SIGNIFICANT MILESTONE ACHIEVEMENT



**By Reginald Andrew**

**THE official opening and handover of the Gros Islet Police Divisional Headquarters on Thursday was aptly described as a milestone achievement.**

The event, attended by government officials including Prime Minister Philip J. Pierre, Member of Parliament for Gros Islet Kenson Casimir, and Crime Prevention Minister Jeremiah Norbert, was a momentous occasion for the community.

Representatives from The National Insurance Property Development and Management Company Ltd (NIPRO), the Gros Islet Town Council, and other distinguished guests also joined the celebration. The atmosphere was filled with a distinct sense of purpose as attendees gathered to witness the opening of a facility designed to effectively manage the growing demands of business, entertainment, traffic, and residential affairs in the northern region.

MP Casimir expressed his pride in being part of this significant occasion, as the fully furnished facility, costing over \$35 million, was officially handed over.

“Today marks a significant milestone, not only for the Royal Saint Lucia Police Force but for the people of Gros Islet and indeed for our nation as a whole,” he said proudly.

“This facility stands as a symbol of progress, partnership, and our collective commitment to enhancing national security and public service,” the Gros Islet MP declared.

Casimir emphasized the importance of collaboration and dedication that brought the project to life, stating, “We gather here to celebrate more than just the completion of this building; we celebrate the vision, the collaboration, and the tireless efforts of all who contributed.”

He added that the people of Gros Islet deserved a police station that is conveniently located and accessible.

Prime Minister Pierre echoed this sentiment, noting the strong record of the Saint Lucia Labour Party (SLP) administration in constructing police stations and fire services across the country. He highlighted the provision of new equipment for the police, including vehicles, motorcycles, jet skis, bulletproof vests, and other essential gear.

The National Security Minister urged law enforcement officers to work diligently and proactively, stressing their responsibility to the citizens. He remarked that all individuals involved in the construction were Saint Lucians, including the architect, engineers, and contractors.

*Cont'd on page 17*

## Grand Independence Anniversary Celebrations Underway: Douvan Ansanm - Nourishing Our People, Strengthening Our Nation



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# Health Focus: JICA Hosts NCDs Prevention and Control Seminar

**THIS week, key stakeholders from the sub-region and further afield gathered for a comprehensive three-day seminar organized by the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) to address the issue of Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) impacting residents and communities.**

The workshop was designed to develop solutions for managing chronic health issues across the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) and the wider region, with participation from at least nine countries.

Hiiohito Takata, Director of JICA Saint Lucia, emphasized the importance of addressing regional challenges related to healthcare. He noted that this seminar continues a journey that began a year ago when a group of participants visited Japan in January, followed by a second cohort in August.

"This seminar provides a first-hand update on the challenges and successes of individual programs and their contributions to this initiative," he stated during the opening ceremony at Harbor Club, Rodney Bay.

Takata outlined that the NCD challenge is part of a broader regional cooperation effort, covering six priority areas: education, health, climate change, private sector, agriculture and fisheries, and collaboration with CARICOM. He stressed the serious health risks posed by NCDs, highlighting their social and financial impacts and the need for research and shared cooperation and information to combat them.

Dr. Sharon Belmar-George, Saint Lucia's Chief Medical Officer, highlighted that NCDs are a principal cause of morbidity in the country and the region. She acknowledged the support

of the Japanese Pro-Creation Project and the contributions from the nine Caribbean countries involved in the NCD strengthening program.

"NCDs are our leading causes of morbidity and mortality, contributing significantly to hospitalization and early deaths," Dr. George noted.

Yuki Takano, Programme Formulation Advisor with JICA Saint Lucia, spoke about the seminar's objectives, stating, "This seminar focuses on NCDs, and JICA has been providing technical cooperation, now specifically targeting the Caribbean region."

He emphasized that this program aims to improve the capabilities of participants trained in Japan, enhancing their action plans to combat NCDs, which account for over 80% of deaths in the region.

Takano mentioned that JICA is engaging major health officials and community personnel to gather information on local plans and ensure that the program encompasses both policy and community engagement.

Dr. George added that JICA is working with nine countries—Barbados, the OECS, Trinidad and Tobago, and Jamaica—to assess, review, and train professionals on improving chronic NCD management in the region.

Utilizing the Japanese model, several cohorts have visited Japan over the past two years to learn from its health system and policies. She expressed satisfaction with the visits, describing them as practical and insightful.

Dr. George emphasized, "Non-communicable diseases



(NCDs) are the primary cause of morbidity and mortality in our population, leading to increased hospitalization and utilization of primary care services. They also contribute significantly to years of life lost due to amputations and premature deaths."

She further said, "Our data across the region reveal many similarities. Through the JICA network, we have studied Japan, a country that has effectively managed these diseases through strategic national policies."

"Japan is a model of longevity and low NCD rates, and our local health personnel have developed realistic measures we can implement. This initiative is timely for Saint Lucia, especially as we advance towards Universal Health Coverage and strengthen our approach to preventable diseases," Dr. George concluded.

## Saint Lucia Reaffirms Strong EU Tax Compliance Record and Commitment to



**THE Government of Saint Lucia Wednesday reaffirmed the country's full compliance with European Union tax good-governance standards, underscoring a reform process that has strengthened transparency, modernized the tax framework, and reinforced Saint Lucia's standing as a responsible and cooperative international financial jurisdiction.**

Saint Lucia was initially placed on the European Union's list of non-cooperative jurisdictions in December 2017. Following high-level commitments to address identified concerns, the country was moved to the EU's state-of-play (Annex II) list in

March 2018. After implementing comprehensive legislative and regulatory reforms, Saint Lucia was officially removed from all EU tax-related lists in February 2021, having fulfilled every commitment made to the EU.

Since that time, Saint Lucia has maintained its cooperative status through successive bi-annual reviews conducted by the EU Council.

The reforms undertaken by Saint Lucia were substantive and structural. They included the abolition of preferential tax regimes deemed potentially harmful, including elements of the former International Business Company framework and related offshore incentives. The modernization of the corporate tax system through the introduction of a territorial regime, coupled with strict economic substance requirements to prevent artificial profit shifting was also part of the reforms. Also included was the enactment and strengthening of Economic Substance legislation to ensure that companies benefiting from tax provisions demonstrate real commercial presence and activity within Saint Lucia and the enhancement of transparency measures, including full participation in the OECD's Common Reporting Standard for automatic exchange of financial account information and compliance with Global Forum standards on exchange of information upon request. The alignment with OECD Base Erosion and Profit Shifting (BEPS) minimum standards, including transfer pricing rules and anti-abuse measures formed part of the adjustment made.

These reforms were implemented in close collaboration with international partners and in keeping with evolving global standards on tax fairness and transparency.

Prime Minister Hon. Philip J. Pierre stated:

"Saint Lucia has demonstrated that small states can meet the highest international standards while safeguarding their economic sovereignty. Our removal from the EU lists was not incidental. It was the result of deliberate, responsible legislative action and sustained engagement. We remain firmly committed to transparency, fairness, and cooperation within the global financial system."

The successful completion of these reforms has reinforced Saint Lucia's credibility among international partners, financial institutions, and investors. By eliminating harmful tax practices and strengthening regulatory oversight, the country has positioned itself as a transparent, rules-based jurisdiction aligned with OECD and EU principles.

The Government says it views tax compliance not merely as a listing exercise, but as part of a broader strategy to protect correspondent banking relationships, safeguard access to international financial markets, support investor confidence and promote sustainable economic growth.

Saint Lucia continues to monitor developments in international tax policy, including evolving OECD and EU standards, to ensure ongoing compliance and policy coherence.

The next scheduled review of the EU list of non-cooperative jurisdictions is expected in October 2026. Saint Lucia remains fully compliant and committed to maintaining its cooperative status.

## SARSEA Project: €1 Million Grant to Strengthen Cooperation and Validation with Saint Lucia and OECS



Photo Credit: OECS



**SAINT Lucia is taking a proactive role in addressing the ongoing challenges posed by sargassum through a €1 million grant aimed at enhancing strategic projects within the sub-regional states.**

This initiative is part of a wider commitment to engage regional stakeholders and policymakers in meaningful dialogue to combat the burdensome issue of sargassum.

On February 12, a memorandum of understanding (MoU) was signed by Expertise France, the Government of Saint Lucia, and the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS). The signing took place in the presence of Her Excellency Marie-Noëlle Duris, Ambassador of France to the Eastern Caribbean States, Barbados, and the OECS.

This agreement marks a significant advancement in the efforts to manage the large-scale sargassum accumulations that have affected Caribbean coastlines since 2011.

Strengthening Regional Collaboration for a Unified Response

The SARSEA (Sargassum Regional Strategies for Ecosystem-based Actions) project is designed to bolster the capabilities of small Caribbean islands in responding to substantial amounts of sargassum washing ashore.

This comprehensive initiative combines integrated management approaches, efforts to restore seaweed populations, and essential scientific research to mitigate the phenomenon. The MoU outlines the contributions, rights, and responsibilities of each stakeholder, aiming to formalize collaboration among scientists, private organizations, civil society groups, and project leaders.

The focus will be on managing sargassum sustainably while exploring its potential as an economically beneficial resource.

Bradley St. Ange, Permanent Secretary in Saint Lucia's Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, Food Security and Climate Change, expressed gratitude for the support from the Agence Française de Développement and Expertise France.

"We recognize and deeply appreciate this partnership, which underscores France's ongoing commitment to tackling the sargassum issue both nationally and regionally," he stated.

He also acknowledged the OECS Commission's leadership in fostering a regional framework for knowledge sharing and strategy alignment.

Similar agreements have been established with ministries in Dominica, Grenada, and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, the other participating countries in the project. The SARSEA project is now transitioning into its operational phase, introducing regional thematic workshops to engage technical and institutional stakeholders in the countries impacted by sargassum.

Additionally, the €1 million grant will enhance the sargassum value chain, with plans for two calls for projects. One initiative will target private stakeholders interested in utilizing sargassum, while the other will focus on scientific research regarding its impacts on human health and biodiversity.

Participants at the meeting unanimously emphasized the significance of these developments in advancing the implementation of the SARSEA project and fortifying the regional response to sargassum strandings.

"Our livelihoods, economies, and communities are impacted by this phenomenon. It is evident that we must unify our efforts regionally to tackle this challenge," remarked OECS General Counsel, Dwight Lay.

Her Excellency Marie-Noëlle Duris also emphasized the need for collective action: "No single country can tackle this issue alone. Sargassum does not recognize borders. Therefore, our response must be collective, coherent, and forward-looking. The MoU signed today reflects that spirit."

### THE EASTERN CARIBBEAN SUPREME COURT

IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUSTICE  
SAINT LUCIA

CLAIM NO. SLUHCV2015/0269

BETWEEN: REPUBLIC BANK (EC) LIMITED

Claimant

and

- (1) AUGUSTIN DAVILLA ETIENNE
- (2) GLORIA ETIENNE
- (3) HERMIONE B ETIENNE
- (4) JUNIOR ETIENNE

Defendants

#### NOTICE TO HEIRS

Any person(s) who has an interest as heirs or otherwise in the property of the late **GLORIA ETIENNE** (Deceased) whose last known address was Cedar Heights in the Quarter of Vieux Fort, is hereby requested to file within one (1) month a Notice to that effect in the High Court Registry, La Place Carenage, Jeremie Street, Castries.

Dated this 11<sup>th</sup> day of February, 2026

McNAMARA & CO.  
Legal Practitioners for the Claimant

Per: .....  
**ALEX BOLAND**

The Claimant's address for service is: McNamara & Co., Chambers of #20 Micoud Street, Castries, Tel: 1-758-452-2662; Fax: 1-758-452-3885; Email: [alex@mcnamara.lc](mailto:alex@mcnamara.lc)

The Court Office is at La Place Carenage Jeremie Street, Castries, Saint Lucia. Telephone No (758) 468-7500, Fax No (758) 453-1917. The Office is open between 9.00 am and 2.00 pm, Monday to Friday except public holidays. The Court Office can also be contacted via email [sluhco@eccourts.org](mailto:sluhco@eccourts.org)

# Medical Associates Tapion Hospital Congratulates the Government and People of Saint Lucia on 47 Years of Independence.

*We are proud to contribute with 30 years  
of Advancing Healthcare Independence.*

AS Saint Lucia celebrates 47 years of Independence, we reflect not only on our political sovereignty, but on the steady strengthening of our national institutions. Among the pillars of true independence is healthcare, the ability of a nation to diagnose, treat, and save its own people without relying solely on external systems.

Over the past three decades, Tapion has evolved from a bold idea into a regional center of medical excellence, transforming healthcare delivery in Saint Lucia and across the Eastern Caribbean. This year, as Tapion Hospital approaches its 30th anniversary, the institution stands as a powerful symbol of what is possible when vision, investment, and commitment converge.

The following are novel advances over the past three years.

Bringing Advanced Cardiac Care Home  
Dr. Romel Daniel/ Dr. Kurlene Cenac/ Dr. Julien Fabre

In 2024, Tapion Hospital achieved a historic milestone by successfully performing Saint Lucia's first coronary angiograms and angioplasties with stent placement. These minimally invasive procedures diagnose and treat coronary artery disease; one of the leading causes of death on the island.

A coronary angiogram allows cardiologists to visualize blocked arteries using advanced imaging technology. When blockages are found, angioplasty with stent placement

restores blood flow by opening narrowed arteries and inserting a small mesh tube to keep them open. These procedures often mean the difference between life and death.



For decades, patients in need of this level of cardiac care had no choice but to travel overseas often urgently, at great financial strain, and always with emotional hardship for families left behind. Today, with a state-of-the-art catheterization laboratory, skilled local cardiologists, and strong regional collaboration, life-saving heart procedures are performed right here at home.

Twenty-eight patients have already benefited from this groundbreaking service. But beyond the numbers lies something greater increasing confidence in our healthcare system and reassurance for both locals and visitors that advanced cardiac care is available within our shores.

Elevating Surgical Excellence Across Specialties  
*Tapion's innovations extend far beyond cardiology.*  
ENT: Dr. Leonard Surage & Dr. James Fortson

The hospital introduced balloon sinuplasty, a first for the English Speaking Caribbean providing patients suffering from chronic sinusitis with a safer, minimally invasive alternative to traditional sinus surgery. By using a small balloon catheter to gently widen sinus passages without cutting tissue, this procedure reduces pain, shortens recovery time, and allows patients to return to normal life more quickly.

General Surgery: Dr. Dawit Kabiye

The reintroduction of Endoscopic Retrograde Cholangiopancreatography (ERCP) has significantly advanced digestive and pancreatic care. ERCP combines endoscopy and imaging to diagnose and treat bile duct and pancreatic duct disorders without open surgery. Conditions such as gallstones, strictures, and tumors can now be

treated with precision, minimizing surgical trauma and improving patient outcomes.

Urology: Dr. David Brathwaite & Dr. Paul Rouse

The adoption of the Holmium:YAG laser has revolutionized the management of kidney stones, bladder tumors, and ureteral strictures. Using high-energy laser pulses delivered through specialized scopes, surgeons can perform highly precise procedures that reduce bleeding, shorten hospital stays, and accelerate recovery. Patients no longer face the financial burden and disruption of overseas medical travel for these treatments.

Pioneering Advanced Neurological Care  
Dr. Curby Sydney & Dr. Esteban Roig Fabre

Tapion's advances in neurosurgery are stellar. The hospital performed Saint Lucia's first brain tumor surgery using neuro-navigation and ultrasonic aspirator technology. Neuro-navigation acts as a "GPS system for the brain," guiding surgeons with real-time imaging to ensure maximum precision while protecting healthy tissue. The ultrasonic aspirator allows for the safe removal of tumor tissue with minimal disruption to surrounding structures.

Additionally, Tapion successfully carried out the country's first surgical treatment for Trigeminal Neuralgia, a debilitating condition known for causing severe facial pain. For patients who had exhausted medication options, this procedure offered life-changing

relief. These accomplishments establish Saint Lucia not only as self-reliant in complex neurological care but also as a growing regional beacon for brain and spine surgery.

Advancing Women's Health  
Dr. Nadia Samuel/ Dr. Jocelyn Brookes

Tapion's commitment to innovation extends equally to women's health, where transformative advances are reshaping gynecological and obstetric care on the island.

With a patient-centered approach and a strong commitment to clinical excellence, minimally invasive treatment options have been brought to women in Saint Lucia and across the islands - most recently, Uterine Artery Embolization (UAE) for the management of uterine fibroids.

This groundbreaking service offers new hope to women who suffer from symptomatic fibroids, a condition that can significantly affect quality of life through heavy menstrual bleeding, chronic pelvic pain, anemia, abdominal pressure, and fertility challenges. By providing a non-surgical alternative to hysterectomy and myomectomy, UAE allows women to preserve their uterus, experience shorter recovery times, and return more quickly to their normal daily activities.

For many patients, this means relief from years of discomfort without the emotional and physical impact of major surgery.

A Sustainable Vision for Innovation  
Continuous incremental improvement remains the mantra.

These milestones are not isolated achievements; they are the product of deliberate planning, strategic investment, and purposeful collaboration. At Tapion Hospital, innovation is not defined solely by advanced



to excellence make these advancements possible. From the operating theatre to the recovery room, from diagnostics to patient care coordination, every member of the Tapion family contributes to life-saving outcomes.

Their work reflects not only clinical skill, but patriotism and commitment to ensuring that Saint Lucians and visitors to our shores receive world-class care.

The Broader Impact on Saint Lucia  
The impact of these innovations extends beyond individual patients.

By keeping advanced healthcare services local, Saint Lucia retains valuable capital that would otherwise be spent overseas. Families avoid the financial strain and emotional separation that medical travel often requires. The hospital's growth stimulates job creation, attracts regional patients, and supports the development of a high-skill workforce.

The cruise liners are increasingly comfortable in debarking their ill staff and passengers here.

Medical tourism is expanding. Regional referrals are increasing. Confidence in Saint Lucia's healthcare sector is rising.

Healthcare innovation, in this sense, becomes central to national development.

Strengthening Diagnostics and Pharmaceutical Care

Tapion's expanding clinical services are supported by major advances in diagnostics

and medication access. The installation of the 128-slice CT scan in the Radiology Department allows for faster, high-resolution imaging for conditions such as stroke, trauma, cancer, and heart disease, enabling earlier diagnosis and quicker treatment locally.

Complementing this is the hospital's well-stocked Pharmacy, which offers a wide range of essential and specialized medications including therapies that are often unavailable elsewhere on the island. This consistent availability ensures that patients can begin and continue treatment without interruption, further reinforcing Tapion's ability to deliver complete, modern healthcare at home.

30 Years of Commitment — And the Future Ahead

As Tapion Hospital prepares to celebrate 30 years of service, its journey mirrors the resilience and ambition of the nation itself. From its founding vision in 1996 to its current status as a regional referral center, the hospital has consistently pushed boundaries in pursuit of excellence.

True independence is not only measured in years. It is measured in a nation's ability to care for its people, to respond to emergencies, to treat complex disease, to innovate, and to grow.

Saint Lucia can stand proud knowing that advanced, life-saving healthcare is no longer beyond its borders.

It is here.  
And it is in capable hands.  
The above is not a limit; it is a warm up.  
There is more to come.



# THE VOICE Weekend

THE NATIONAL NEWSPAPER OF ST. LUCIA  
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DARLING RD., CASTRIES, P.O. BOX 104, ST. LUCIA

## Editorial

# Vaval Woes

FEBRUARY has welcomed the verbal launching of the 2026 St. Lucia Carnival season, marked also by the marketing of pre-carnival fringe events.

The conversation this year is not vastly different from what obtained in 2025, with revelers and carnival band leaders and supporters calling for much more time on the road and at organized band fetes. In recent years, revelers on carnival Monday and Tuesday, have had to get their fun and enjoyment before a 7pm cut off point administered by the Royal St. Lucia Police Force. Additionally, the apparent 2am shut off time for carnival fetes has attracted more disdain for the island's authorities.

Band leaders and administrators have taken to social media to express their dissatisfaction, making comparisons with situations that exist in Dominica and Trinidad and Tobago carnival. One of their key arguments is that both those territories boast longer party time, street and fete, because of heightened security and police presence and that we must do the same.

How much is one life worth? Is this question premature in this discussion? Let's continue.

It is a fact that measures were installed during local mass crowd events largely because of the rising violent crimes at night time events. It seemed, as some online have recognized, that sadistic behaviour spawns at sunset. Others online have suggested that these decisions to trim the fete and jump-up times were made because the police have chosen the easy, lazy path and refuse to work later hours.

In the years leading up to the decision to trim the times at Vaval events the island experienced and recorded increased violent activity during the carnival season almost as if the occasion was being used as cover for nefarious activity. In the process numerous young lives were lost. At the time all of St. Lucia agreed that something had to be done to curb the growing unwanted trend.

The supporters for the relaxation of the time restrictions have cited the fact that Dominica and more so Trinidad and Tobago are not without incident during the carnival season, yet they enjoy more playing time than we do.

If we agree that trimming the late night off carnival events may have saved some lives, can we then agree that a few hours is a small price to pay for a life?

It would be reckless to suggest that carnival lovers and band leaders are willing to sacrifice a few lives for the fun and enjoyment of the rest, however, if we are clamouring for a return to times past particularly in this volatile time, isn't that what we are saying?

If we must be honest, the issue of misbehaviour during the Vaval season is not restricted to criminal elements. Revellers themselves or at the least, individuals posing as revellers, have done themselves no justice.

It is therefore a bit disingenuous to attempt to castigate the police or individuals supporting the curtailed times, many of whom are former revellers.

The Carnival Bands Association and the other entities responsible for the staging of St. Lucia Carnival probably need a reset and install a proper plan to fully exploit the allotted time.

And by the way, as the vaval lovers clamour for extended hours, should not the citizens who wish to rest in comfort at their homes at night not also be considered?

# Deadline for 2026 Taiwan Scholarships Applications Nears

Applicants have until Friday, March 13 to submit applications



*H.E. Nicole Su, Taiwan's Ambassador to Saint Lucia, joins Hon. Kenson Casimir, Minister for Education, Youth Development, Sports and Digital Transformation, Mrs. Selena Chang, Deputy Counselor at the Embassy of the Republic of China (Taiwan) in Saint Lucia, Ms. Yiwen Chiu, Third Secretary at the Embassy of the Republic of China (Taiwan) in Saint Lucia, other officials and prospective scholarship applicants at the briefing.*

**NEARLY** forty potential applicants attended a Taiwan Scholarship Briefing last Tuesday, at the Union Orchid Gardens. Held annually about a month before the scholarship application period ends, the briefing serves to apprise prospective applicants about the process involved in applying for the scholarships.

The briefing was co-hosted by the Embassy of the Republic of China (Taiwan) in Saint Lucia, and the Ministry of Education, Youth Development, Sports and Digital Transformation in Saint Lucia.

H.E. Nicole Su, Taiwan's Ambassador to Saint Lucia, commended the shared commitment between the Ministry of Education and the Taiwan Embassy in working closely to expand educational opportunities for Saint Lucian youths. She applauded the Government of Saint Lucia's bold initiative of working to achieve its goal of "one university graduate per household", noting that education is the foundation of national development.

"Taiwan shares this commitment in empowering the next generation through knowledge and opportunity," Ambassador Su said in her remarks. "That is why we are proud to introduce the Taiwan Scholarship programmes — a partnership that connects our two nations through education. These scholarships are not only financial support, but are gateways to high-quality academic opportunities, international exposure, and meaningful cultural exchange."

Since 2007, more than 300 Saint Lucian students have received Taiwan Scholarships, with more than 190 of them currently studying in Taiwan. This year, it's expected that at least 35 MOFA scholarships will be offered, plus TaiwanICDF global quota. Ambassador Su said that due to the growing interest in studying in Taiwan, the scholarships areas have expanded.

The three types of Taiwan Scholarships available are as follows, from which students have diverse options to choose according to their interests and career goals:

- **MOFA:** The MOFA Taiwan Scholarship Programme is offered by Taiwan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It supports a wide range of academic disciplines and remains one of Taiwan's most established scholarship pathways. With this programme, students will have the option of spending their first year studying Mandarin first before commencing the degree programme.

- **ICDF:** The TaiwanICDF Scholarship Programme supports Bachelor's, Master's, and PhD degrees across partner universities in Taiwan. These programmes are all offered in English. It is a globally competitive programme that attracts applicants from many countries. This year, more new undergraduate programmes have been added, and they focus on high-demand fields such as Electrical Engineering, Computer Science, and Information Technology.

- **Public Health-related English Programme:** As health and wellbeing are essential to national prosperity, this programme focuses on areas including public health, nursing, biomedical science, and medical technology. Sixteen universities offer 88 English-taught programmes under this category. Like the others, it is a global competition without a fixed quota.

Despite both Taiwan and Saint Lucia being island countries, Ambassador Su cautioned applicants that they will experience some level of culture shock when they arrive in Taiwan. Although many of the programmes are conducted in English, she encouraged applicants to consider taking the advantage of learning Mandarin language no matter which type of scholarships they apply for.

Successful awardees will be provided with flight tickets, housing, tuition fees, credit fees, insurance, and textbooks during their period of study in Taiwan.

Hon. Kenson Casimir, Minister for Education, Youth Development, Sports and Digital Transformation, encouraged applicants to take full advantage of the opportunities that are being made available.

"Forty-four students went to Taiwan last year, and that speaks volumes about what Taiwan is doing for Saint Lucia and the effort being made by the Ministry of Education to ensure that we have one university graduate per household in Saint Lucia, a goal that is very much achievable," he explained.

Hon. Casimir added: "Most of you would be versed in understanding what is happening in the global village and seen some of the challenges our students face in places like Cuba and some of the other areas in Europe. But I just want to say that with Taiwan, there seems to be a symbiotic relationship between the Taiwanese Government and Saint Lucia that allows for smooth transition of our students from Saint Lucia into Taiwan, and, by and large, from Taiwan back to Saint Lucia."

He thanked the Government of Taiwan for continuing to make these opportunities available to Saint Lucia, and also thanked Ambassador Su for the support that has been given to the Department of Youth Development and Sports.

He also had some important words of advice for the applicants: "Let's continue to do our best to represent Saint Lucia. Many of you will be going to Taiwan, so you will effectively be ambassadors of Saint Lucia. Take full advantage of this opportunity by representing your country and yourselves very well, and come back to Saint Lucia and make a contribution to the overall development of our economy."

During the briefing, Ms. Yiwen Chiu, Third Secretary at the Embassy of the Republic of China (Taiwan) in Saint Lucia, shared information on the various criteria and benefits of the three types of scholarship programmes. Mrs. Sheena James, Scholarship Assistant at the Embassy of the Republic of China (Taiwan) in Saint Lucia, and Mrs. Earline Jules-Justin, Human Resource Development Officer, Ministry of Education, Youth Development, Sports and Digital Transformation, shared information on the application process.

This year's application process for the Taiwan Scholarships ends on Friday, March 13, 2026, at 5:00 p.m. Eastern Caribbean Time (ECT). All application documents must be submitted to the Taiwan Embassy in Rodney Bay, Gros Islet, by that date and time, as late submissions will not be accepted.

# CHEMICO SALUTES THE GOVERNMENT AND PEOPLE OF SAINT LUCIA

# *Happy Independence!*

As our nation moves forward with unity, purpose, and resilience, CHEMICO proudly stands with the people of Saint Lucia — supporting local industry, fostering opportunity, and building a brighter future together.

Proudly Saint Lucian. Proudly Yours.



THE POWER OF CLEAN...

# CELEBRATING THE SPIRIT OF SAINT LUCIA

# *Happy Independence, Saint Lucia!*

**Roserie Leasing Corporation proudly joins the Government and People of Saint Lucia in celebrating our nation's Independence.**

As we honour this moment of national pride, we salute:

- The resilience of our people
- The leadership shaping our nation
- The hardworking families and businesses driving progress
- The unbreakable spirit of unity that defines us

**Our commitment remains strong:**

- Empowering families.
- Providing access.
- Enabling mobility.
- Supporting Saint Lucia's development.



Proudly Serving Saint Lucia with Integrity and Purpose.

# LUCELEC AND INTERNATIONAL CONSULTANT HOST ENERGY STAKEHOLDERS AT IRRP WORKSHOP



**MULTIPLE stakeholders from across Saint Lucia's energy landscape convened at the Harbor Club recently for a national workshop hosted by St. Lucia Electricity Services Limited (LUCELEC) and consultants ESB International. The gathering marked a significant step in developing the country's Integrated Resource and Resilience Plan (IRRP), a long term blueprint to guide the future of the island's electricity sector in keeping with the new draft Electricity Act.**

LUCELEC is developing the IRRP with technical support from ESB International and inclusive of feedback from these key energy sector stakeholders.

The company's Chief Strategy Officer, Ian Peter, says the engagement will ensure the IRRP reflects the interest of all stakeholders in the country's energy sector.

"LUCELEC is supposed to present an IRRP to the Regulator for approval. The Regulator takes this to the stakeholders for some level of engagement. What LUCELEC is trying to do from a perspective of risk management is engage stakeholders in the process of developing that IRRP that we will be presenting to the Regulators."

Chief Energy and Public Utilities Officer Terrence Gilliard endorsed this proactive approach, as it introduces "transparency and inclusiveness" and is essential for sector modernization.

"The IRRP is consequential to the transition of our electricity sector to a path of sustainability and of course it has major implications on cost, cost of optimization, system reliability and the flexibility and climate resilience of our energy systems in Saint Lucia. The inclusion of the stakeholders is necessary to ensure this process has legitimacy, is credible and we mainstream national priorities throughout the planning process."

One of the key players in the energy sector is Denell Florius. The Founder of solar energy company EcoCarib welcomed the opportunity to have a say in his industry's future direction.

"This process is significant in chartering the path for the next ten to 20 years for renewable energy in Saint Lucia, to really get us to where we need to be not just at the local level but in the international eyes as well. The key thing is that with this everybody knows what role they play and that is very important and that also speaks to development partners and investors as well because by having this IRRP process in place and having a specific guide to these development partners, getting access to capital for Saint Lucia to develop the renewable energy sector is not going to be a problem."

CARILEC Executive Director Dr Cletus Bertin applauds the collaborative approach to developing the IRRP.

"Not at the end of the process when everything is all done and dusted but at the very beginning where it matters to get stakeholder views, opinions, inputs, concerns so that feeds into the planning process and delivers a plan that speaks to the various requirements, needs and concerns of the various constituency groups on island. Not just LUCELEC's, not just government's, the regulators but other critical stakeholders in the business sector and at large," says Dr Bertin.

LUCELEC System Development Engineer Abigail

Charles from the company's Planning Department is the Internal Project Manager leading the IRRP's development. She says the plan will be a 20-year roadmap for the country's energy sector.

"Integrated Resource and Resiliency Planning is seeking to set a strategic roadmap for the energy future of our country. They're done for all different countries, specifically we want to look at high level goals including sustainability, reliability and affordability. As part of our goals of doing this IRRP, we want to engrain reliability as a non-negotiable while still balancing sustainability and affordability for all."

Consultant Nicholas Codd of ESB International has worked in 120 countries and logged more than 50 years in the energy sector and breaks down the specific components of the IRRP.

"We look at what we need to deliver the resources, we look at the systems and we look at their resilience, that's the second "r" – the first piece is integration and that's bringing those two together but also bringing through the key parties that are in it, that's the parties that are going to build and develop out some of those systems. It's the government ministries that are going to be looking at making sure that the power systems are there to support economic growth on the island and the regulators, the utilities regulator has a role as well where they're looking to see that that whole process is being well managed, well implemented and they will regulate that and have their input into it."

Once completed, LUCELEC will present the IRRP to the Regulator, the National Utilities Regulatory Commission (NURC) who will be responsible for consultative review and approval. The plan will serve as a living document that is expected to be reviewed every five years to incorporate shifts in technology, economic and climate considerations.

## UBX Beach Rave 2026 Set to Energize Independence Weekend at Pigeon Island

**AS Saint Lucia prepares to celebrate its 47th Anniversary of Independence this weekend, one of the island's most anticipated entertainment experiences is set to return in grand style. UBX Events has officially announced the staging of UBX Beach Rave 2026, an electrifying beachfront celebration scheduled to take place at the iconic Pigeon Island National Landmark during the Independence weekend festivities.**

Scheduled for Saturday, February 21, 2026 and renowned for its high-energy atmosphere, premium entertainment, and immersive beachside experiences, UBX Beach Rave is this year positioning itself as a signature Independence event, fusing music, culture, and celebration in a uniquely Saint Lucian setting.

The production is managed by Joseph Wendell Steven of

Wamtec Services, whose team will oversee the execution of the event to ensure a seamless, high-quality experience for patrons and visitors alike.

"This event is more than just a party; it is a celebration of our Independence spirit, our culture, and the vibrancy of Saint Lucia's entertainment scene," said Joseph Wendell Steven of Wamtec Services. "Hosting UBX Beach Rave during Independence weekend at Pigeon Island adds a powerful sense of national pride and unity, and we are committed to delivering a safe, dynamic, and unforgettable experience for everyone in attendance."

Headlining the event is international artiste Nice, best known for the hit track "Situationship," supported by an exciting lineup of regional and local DJs who will deliver nonstop music and energy throughout the event.



**Local soca powerhouses include Nerdy, Arthur Allain, Ezra 'd Fun Machine' and Dezral, while top trending Dj's include Levi Chin, Dj Shane and Dj Payou.**

General Admission patrons can look forward to high-energy performances from international and local acts, a full DJ lineup delivering nonstop vibes, beachside food and drink specials, interactive experiences, and an immersive Independence celebration atmosphere.

For those seeking an elevated experience, the VIP package offers exclusive front-stage access, private Meet & Greet opportunities with artists and cast, premium beverages, curated finger foods and hospitality service, 360 photo booth access, signature cocktails, sponsor gift experiences, and a private VIP ambiance designed for comfort and exclusivity.

Organizers anticipate a strong turnout from both locals and visitors, particularly as the event aligns with the national Independence celebrations, further reinforcing UBX Events' commitment to delivering high-quality entertainment productions that highlight Saint Lucia's vibrant party culture and tourism appeal.

UBX Beach Rave 2026 continues to grow as a cultural and entertainment staple, bringing together music lovers, influencers, party enthusiasts, and premium brands in one unforgettable beachfront showcase of freedom, energy, and national pride.

THE EASTERN CARIBBEAN SUPREME COURT

IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUSTICE (DIVORCE)

SAINT LUCIA

IN THE MATTER of a proposed Petition for Dissolution of Marriage

And

IN THE MATTER of Order 11 Rule 8 of the Divorce Rules No. 2 of 1976.

CLAIM NO: SLUHC2022/0116

BETWEEN:

KETRA COX  
Victoria  
Choiseul

Petitioner

And

SAMUEL CHIBUIKEM FREEMAN  
La Clery  
Castries

Respondent

TAKE NOTICE that an application has been made in the High Court of Justice, of Saint Lucia in Suit No. SLUHMT2022/0116 by KETRA COX in which the Petitioner desires to serve a Petition for Divorce filed on the 11th day of July 2022 in this cause.

AND IT HAS BEEN ORDERED that service of the Petition for Divorce and all other documents in this proceedings be effected on the Respondent by advertisement in two (2) consecutive issues in the Official Gazette and two (2) consecutive issues in local newspaper circulating in Saint Lucia.

IF YOU DESIRE to defend the said action you must within twenty-eight (28) days of the last publication of this advertisement enter at the Registry of High Court of Justice in the City of Castries an Acknowledgment of Service.

IN DEFAULT thereof an order may be made in favour of the Petitioner against you.

Dated 10th day of February 2026

Lorenzo R. Francis

Lorenzo R. Francis

Legal Practitioner for the Petitioner

The Court Office is at La Place Carenage, Jeremie Street, Castries Telephone Number (758) 468-7500 Fax (758) 468-2071. The office is open between 9:00 a.m and 2 p.m Mondays to Thursdays and 9:00 a.m to 3:00 p.m on Fridays except public holidays. The office can also be contacted via Email at [sluhco@eccourts.org](mailto:sluhco@eccourts.org).

This was prepared and filed on behalf of the Petitioner by LORENZO RUDOLPH FRANCIS, of Tax & Corporate Law Offices, Solicitors for the Petitioner, Tel: (758) 451 5300, Email: [Ludolphfrancis@gmail.com](mailto:Ludolphfrancis@gmail.com)

THE EASTERN CARIBBEAN SUPREME COURT

IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUSTICE

SAINT LUCIA

CLAIM NO. SLUHC2020/0028

BETWEEN: ST LUCIA MORTGAGE FINANCE COMPANY LIMITED

Claimant

And

(1)CHRISTINA ALCIDE  
(2) HEIDRIN ALCIDE

Defendants

To:-HEIDRIN ALCIDE whose last known address was Leslie Land, Castries

TAKE NOTICE that the Claimant discontinues the action instituted against you therein.

AND service of the Discontinuance is being effected upon you by advertisement in two consecutive issues of a local newspaper circulating in St Lucia.

A copy of the Notice can be obtained at the High Court Office at La Place Carenage, Jeremie Street, Castries, Saint Lucia or at the Chambers of McNamara & Co., 20 Micoud Street, Castries.

Dated: This 17th day of February 2026.

MCNAMARA & CO.  
Legal Practitioners for the Claimant

Per: Zinaida C. McNamara-Phillip

This Court Office is at La Place Carenage, Jeremie Street, Castries, Saint Lucia, Telephone No. (758)468-7500, Fax No. (758)468-7543. The Office is open between 9:00 am to 2:00 pm Mondays to Thursdays and 9:00 am to 3:00 pm on Fridays, except public holidays. The Office can also be contacted via email at [sluhco@eccourts.org](mailto:sluhco@eccourts.org).

The Claimant's address for service is McNamara & Co., Chambers, 20 Micoud Street, Castries, Saint Lucia, Telephone no. (758)4522-2662, Fax No. (758) 452-2885, email: [zinaida@mcnamara.lc](mailto:zinaida@mcnamara.lc)

# Fear Grips Fishermen After Deadly U.S Strikes

## Antigua Newsroom

FEAR is spreading across the Eastern Caribbean fishing community after a U.S. military strike destroyed a small vessel at sea on February 13, leaving three people dead.

U.S. Southern Command says the action was part of a counter-narcotics operation targeting what it described as traffickers. But in Saint Lucia and nearby islands, fishermen say the incident has created deep anxiety — with many now worried about being mistaken for drug boats while working traditional fishing grounds.

Prime Minister Philip J. Pierre confirmed that lives were lost and said authorities are still verifying details, including whether any Saint Lucians were among those killed.

Fishing leaders across the region are now calling for clearer safeguards, better communication, and stronger coordination to ensure legitimate fishermen are not caught in anti-drug operations at sea.

The incident comes amid an intensified U.S. maritime crackdown in Caribbean waters — raising broader questions about safety, transparency, and sovereignty in a region where the sea remains both a livelihood and a lifeline.



Fishing Boats in Antigua and Barbuda  
Photo : Fisheries Division

# MPs Across the Political Divide Deliver Marathon Tributes as Sir Robin Yearwood Ends 50 Unbroken Years in Parliament

## Antigua Newsroom



Photo Credit : Antigua Newsroom

IN a sitting marked by reverence, reflection and rare bipartisan unity, Members of Parliament from both sides of the House delivered extended tributes to Sir Robin Yearwood, honoring his 50 consecutive years in the House of Representatives before formally adjourning the special session.

The proceedings followed the order of speakers, each adding a layer to the portrait of a parliamentarian whose career began on Feb. 18, 1976, and spanned independence, political transitions and 11 consecutive electoral victories in St. Philip's North.

Prime Minister Gaston Browne opened the tributes, describing Yearwood as “a titan of life, a steadfast servant of the people, and a living pillar of democratic tradition.”

“Through it all, he has remained a constant, calm in moments of crisis, wise in moments of decision, and grounded in service above self,” Browne said.

He reminded the House that Yearwood's career stretched from the pre-independence era through Antigua and Barbuda's independence on Nov. 1, 1981, into what he described as a “confident, young, developing nation with a strong voice on the world stage.”

Yearwood's leadership, Browne said, was “rooted not in spectacle but in substance, not in rhetoric but in results.” He emphasized that constituents knew him not simply as an MP, but as “an affable, down-to-earth neighbor,” adding that his home in Willikies functioned as his constituency office.

“Sir Robin never formally operated a constituency branch office,” Browne said. “His home was accessible to all.”

The prime minister outlined Yearwood's ministerial roles — agriculture, aviation, public utilities, finance — and his tenure as deputy prime minister and leader of the opposition.

“Our nation is stronger because of Sir Robin's service,” Browne said. “Generations have benefited from his contribution.”

He confirmed Yearwood's retirement after reaching the milestone, saying the decision did not diminish the record but rather crowned it.



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# Grenada moves closer to accepting U.S. deportees

The New Today

**“THE reality is if there is an opportunity for us to get workers through this Third Country National programme from the United States I have no difficulty in taking those workers.”**

This is the strongest hint given yet from Prime Minister Dickon Mitchell that his National Democratic Congress (NDC) administration is leaning in the direction of accepting a proposal put forward by the Donald Trump government in Washington on accepting nationals from Third countries who will be deported from the United States.

In an interview with “THE NARRATIVE” programme hosted by long standing journalist Calistra Farrier, the Prime Minister said his three-and-a-half year old government will not accept criminal deportees but would be more inclined to accept persons without a criminal track record but who possess a skill that is needed on the island.

He said the government has not signed onto any Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on the issue as has already been done by several member states of the sub-regional grouping known as the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS).

“We have not yet signed – we are considering. We have not signed on to any such MOU and if we get to that point then obviously, we would publicly indicate that to the public,” he said.

“We are in discussion – those discussions are ongoing ... once the Cabinet reaches a decision on the matter, we will communicate that decision prior to the signing or execution of any such agreement,” he added.

According to the Prime Minister, the U.S government had approached Grenada on the issue over a year ago and St George’s had declined the offer back then.

“Those requests have been repeated – we are engaged in extensive back and forth over what that means and the form of MOU that has been in a sense considered is a non-

binding MOU to take what is called Third Country Nationals – meaning they are not nationals of the United States and they are not nationals of Grenada,” he said.

Asked under what conditions Grenada will accept Third Country Nationals (TCN), the Prime Minister said: “... We see this as a potential opportunity – we have some significant labour constraints in Grenada. We have a labour shortage in the Construction industry ... it’s chronic in Agriculture and to some extent in the Hospitality sector.”

“Farmers don’t have people to work on their farms – that’s the facts – they can’t get people. If you go on the construction sites now, Contractors are telling you they can’t get labourers – and am not talking about big contractors – even the small contractors are telling you that. Some of the hotels are complaining they still can’t find labour.”

“So we view this as a potential opportunity for us to see whether there is an opportunity for us ... if we are going to accept, accept primarily persons who are workers, persons of working age. So some of the conditions (the person) would have to be probably between eighteen and fifty – you would have to have no serious criminal infraction.”

Prime Minister Dickon Mitchell stated that he suspected most of the persons facing deportation would have merely violated U.S immigration laws by overstaying their time in the country or had illegally entered the country.

“As much as possible we would want to target persons who have the capacity to work and who probably have the skillset that we have shortage in,” he said.

He outlined another condition under which Grenada would accept TCN is the cost of relocation of these persons.

“We would certainly want to ensure that the U.S underwrites the cost associated with that,” he remarked.

The Prime Minister disclosed that Grenada did inform Washington in the discussions that it was “interested in exploring the possibilities of getting workers under the TCN programme but the U.S government indicated that it wanted



Prime Minister Dickon Mitchell – seems inclined to accept some U.S deportees

St George’s to sign onto just a basic framework agreement for the time being that it was prepared to accept these people.

“What they said is that the detailed operative conditions they wish to negotiate on a separate actual agreement.”

According to PM Dickon Mitchell, the Grenada MOU and the others that he has seen do have a clause indicating that the countries can refuse the U.S request “and that will be the end of the matter.”

He said the OECS countries have agreed in the interest of saving time and effort in the deliberations with Washington and to make sure there is consistency that they would put together a team that will negotiate with the U.S on this matter.

“I can certainly say and I think all of us in the OECS are clear on that – if they are criminals outside of the Immigration violation laws have committed acts of crime like that, we are not going to take them because obviously the risk is simply not worth it,” he said.

He is confident that if the situation is handled properly and in the right way, he can get Grenadians to buy into the arrangement.

The Prime Minister acknowledged that the U.S administration can attempt to pressure countries to accept TCN but the ultimate decision will have to be made by the countries themselves.

# PM hails Trinidad and Tobago’s EU blacklist removal

Chester Sambrano - Trinidad and Tobago Guardian



Prime Minister Kamla Persad-Bissessar

**PRIME Minister Kamla Persad-Bissessar says Trinidad and Tobago’s removal from the European Union list of non-cooperative jurisdictions for tax purposes marks a major step forward for the country and signals renewed confidence in its financial system.**

Trinidad and Tobago was recently removed from the EU blacklist, a designation applied to countries that fail to meet international standards for tax transparency.

“This is a major step forward.”

The Prime Minister said the previous PNM administration failed to take the necessary actions to secure compliance and removal, and that since assuming office her UNC Government moved swiftly and decisively to correct the issue.

“Through legislative reform, sustained international engagement, and stronger institutions, we restored credibility

and rebuilt trust.”

She said blacklisting constrained investment, limited opportunity, and weakened confidence in the country’s financial system. In less than a year, she said, the Government strengthened the country’s laws, enhanced transparency, and put Trinidad and Tobago back on the right track.

“Removal from the list signals clearly to the world: we have met our commitments and reclaimed our standing on the global stage. We inherited an economy under real strain, with fiscal pressures high and confidence low. But we promised action – and we are delivering.

Investor interest is rising. Confidence is returning. Momentum is building.

Trinidad and Tobago is open for business, compliant, and ready for sustainable growth.”

# Russia hosts Cuban foreign minister and urges US not to blockade Cuba

Trinidad and Tobago Guardian

**THE Cuban foreign minister visited Moscow on Wednesday as the island faces blackouts and severe fuel shortages worsened by a U.S oil embargo.**

Cuban Foreign Minister Bruno Rodriguez held talks with his Russian counterpart Sergey Lavrov and was set to meet later in the day with President Vladimir Putin.

Lavrov urged the U.S. to refrain from blockading Cuba, which has struggled to import oil for its power plants and refineries after U.S. President Donald Trump threatened any nation that sold oil to Cuba with tariffs.

“Together with most members of the global community, we are calling on the U.S. to show common sense, take a responsible approach and refrain from its plans of sea blockade,” Lavrov said during the talks with Rodriguez.

He promised that Moscow will “continue supporting Cuba and its people in protecting the country’s sovereignty and security.”

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov also noted that “Russia, like many other countries, has consistently spoken against the blockade of the island.”

“We have our relations with Cuba, and we value these relations very much,” Peskov told reporters. “And we intend to further develop them — of course, during difficult times, by providing appropriate assistance to our friends.”

Asked whether sending fuel to Cuba could derail a recent warming of ties with Washington, Peskov responded that “we don’t think these issues are linked.”

Putin has praised Trump’s efforts to mediate an end to the conflict in Ukraine, and Moscow and Washington have discussed ways to revive their economic ties.

Venezuela, one of Cuba’s main oil suppliers, stopped selling crude to the island in January after the U.S. captured then-President Nicolás Maduro in a pre-dawn raid and flew him to New York to face drug trafficking charges.



Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, 2nd left, meets with Cuban Foreign Minister Bruno Rodriguez, right, in Moscow, Russia, Wednesday, Feb. 18, 2026. (Hector Retamal/Pool Photo via AP) Hector Retamal

Mexico also cut off oil shipments to Cuba in January, after Trump issued the tariff threat.

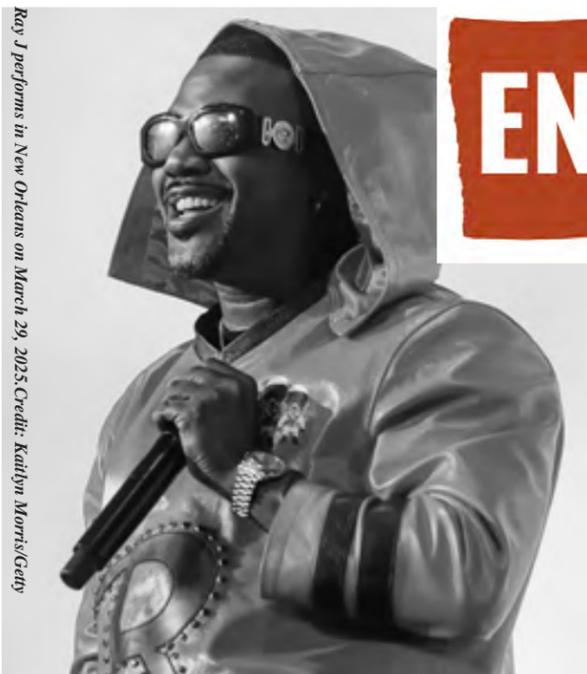
Russia’s Izvestia news outlet last week cited the Russian embassy in Havana as saying that Moscow was preparing to send humanitarian fuel shipment to Havana in the near future. On Monday, Russian ambassador to Cuba, Viktor Koronelli,

said that Moscow was looking into details of organizing assistance to Cuba but offered no specifics.

Cuba’s fuel shortages already have forced Russian tourist companies to halt the sales of package tours to the island after the Cuban government said that it will not provide fuel to planes that land on the island.

# ENTERTAINMENT

## Shia LaBeouf and Mia Goth Privately Broke Up After 9 Years of Marriage



Ray J performs in New Orleans on March 29, 2025. Credit: Kaitlyn Morris/Getty

### Ray J applied 'fake blood' to his eyes and heart monitor before alarming live show, photographer alleges

The R&B singer previously claimed that he has less than a year to live.

**Shania Russell - Entertainment Weekly**

Ray J is being accused of using fake blood to cause a stir at his latest live show.

The "One Wish" singer prompted concern over Valentine's Day weekend after attendees of his intimate Feb. 14 concert in Shreveport, La., noticed blood dripping from his eyes and heart monitor during his performance.

Now, days later, footage obtained by KTAL 6 seems to show the musician applying a substance to his face before stepping out on stage. In the same report, a photographer who was working at the event told the local outlet that the "fake blood" was all part of Ray J's plan.

"He loves the camera. He loves the attention," said the photographer, identified as Tommy Nard II. "Anybody that knows him, it's all theatrical."

Nard added that while watching Ray J prepare for the show backstage, he was confused by the musician's decision to apply the fake blood.

"I'm behind the scenes like, 'What are you doing?'" he recalled. "So I literally [saw] him literally put on the fake blood and go out there with the crowd — which is very shocking that he would do something like that."

### Backstreet Boys want to play Super Bowl halftime show 25 years after turning down the chance



Backstreet Boys want to play Super Bowl halftime show 25 years after turning down the chance

Backstreet Boys want to play Super Bowl halftime show 25 years after turning down the chance

**Lauren Huff-Entertainment Weekly**

Backstreet's not just back, they want to rock their bodies at the Super Bowl. (All right!)

Fresh off their popular ad during this year's big game, the Backstreet Boys — AJ McLean, Kevin Richardson, Howie Dorough, Nick Carter, and Brian Littrell — are manifesting their next gig: Super Bowl LXI.

"What do you guys think? Backstreet Boys:

### Cardi B falls out of chair and crashes on stage during Las Vegas show



Cardi B performs at the 2025 Global Citizen Festival in New York City on Sept. 27, 2025. Credit: Taylor Hill/Getty

"That was the government!" the "I Like It" rapper joked after returning to her feet.

**Wesley Stenzel - Entertainment Weekly**

Be careful!

Cardi B fell off a chair mid-song during her concert in Las Vegas on Friday night.

The rapper was in the middle of performing her "Thotiana" remix when she took a provocative pose in a metal chair on stage at the T-Mobile Arena in Paradise, Nev. After she leaned back a little too far, the chair came crashing down on her and she toppled backwards.

The good news? She didn't miss a beat, continuing her signature flow while lying on her back.

After returning to her feet, Cardi joked about the tumble. "That was the government!" she yelled. "That was the government!"

The musician continued to poke fun at her accident in a video posted to her Instagram Stories afterwards. "Y'all, the government was out to get me today," she said, laughing. "I'm telling you, it was the government! The government, bitch!"

Cardi also joked about the incident in a post on X. Resharing video footage of it, she wrote, "Can someone put a community note on this? This video is clearly AI."

2027 Super Bowl halftime, McLean asked the crowd during their show at the Las Vegas sphere earlier this week, per E! Online. "Let's make it happen! I mean, why not? It's in Los Angeles, it's right down the street."

McLean also reiterated his manifestation in an interview the boy band did with PEOPLE recently. "I just started an online petition on behalf of the group for us to do halftime 2027," he said. "You better vote yes for us to do halftime, especially because it's gonna be in Los Angeles at SoFi next year. That's home for me and Kevin, so that

would be pretty awesome."

Carter took it one step further by suggesting such a show would be a "pop explosion" full of other stars from the late '90s and early aughts. "We're bringing back Britney Spears, we're bringing back \*NSYNC," Carter said, to which McLean chimed in, "They both already did it, though."

Undeterred in his idea, Carter added, "We're bringing back 98 Degrees, I don't care. We're headlining. We're bringing all of our pop friends back; it would be something like that."

Shia LaBeouf and Mia Goth—who married in 2016 and welcomed daughter Isabel in 2022—privately broke up last year after nine years of marriage, multiple outlets reported.

**BRAHMJOT KAUR**



Gareth Cattermole/Getty Images for BFI

Shia LaBeouf and Mia Goth have parted ways. Nearly a decade after getting married—and days after LaBeouf's arrest in New Orleans—multiple outlets have confirmed that the Holes star and Pearl actress privately broke up last year.

E! News has reached out to LaBeouf and Goth's reps about their split and has not heard back.

While they've yet to publicly address their status, the pair—who've been in an on-off relationship since 2012—have previously spoken out about their 3-year-old daughter Isabel and the impact she's had on their lives.

"She is the most dynamic spark of life and most magical. It's a game-changer," LaBeouf said of their baby on the Real Ones with Jon Bernthal podcast that August. "Me and my girl had been in love for a long time, but I didn't really know it. I didn't really know what love was until all this s--t hit the fan and she was still around."

But LaBeouf—who also settled a lawsuit from ex FKA twigs (real name Tahliah Debrett Barnett) last year—emphasized how much his life had transformed "out of this newfound discovery of real love" in his relationship.

Likewise, Goth's world has been forever changed since entering parenthood.

"It's a really psychedelic experience to have a child," she told Elle in an interview published in October. "You're parenting her, but you're also parenting the version of you that existed when you were that age."

### Proof Millie Bobby Brown's Birthday Celebration With Jake Bongiovi Was an 11 Out of 10

Stranger Things' Millie Bobby Brown and her husband Jake Bongiovi celebrated her 22nd birthday with a breakfast outing in New York City's SoHo neighborhood.

**BENTLEY MADDOX**

I don't know about you, but Millie Bobby Brown is feeling 22.

The Stranger Things actress was all smiles with her husband Jake Bongiovi as they stepped out to celebrate her birthday in New York City.

For the Feb. 19 breakfast outing in Manhattan's SoHo neighborhood, Millie donned a pair of baggy denim pants and black leather jacket, while Jake sported a pair of straight-leg blue jeans and gray-green sweater. As the pair—who tied the knot in May 2024—got into their car, they smiled and waved.

Of course, the Enola Holmes star has much to celebrate on her birthday—within the last year she said goodbye to Stranger Things, revealed she changed her last name and became a mom when she and Jake adopted a baby girl.

And indeed, Millie has reflected on the "beautiful, amazing journey" she has experienced as a first-time parent.

"She's taught us so much already," she told British Vogue in an interview published in November. "Perspective is a huge thing. The smaller things in life are so much more precious. Our days are filled with lots of cuddles and laughter and love. It's just endless joy."

After all, Millie has been reminded why she's happy to have Jake—the son of Jon Bon Jovi and Dorothea Hurley—along for the ride.

"We are 50-50 on everything," she continued. "That's why I'm so grateful to have partnered with him in this life—he is just the most amazing dad."

Plus, the couple is completely aligned on prioritizing their daughter's privacy, including not revealing the child's name until she's "ready to decide for herself."

# Israel kills two in Gaza, blocks thousands from medical exit through Rafah'

*The latest deaths come as just 260 people, out of 18,500 in urgent need, have been allowed to seek medical care via the crossing to Egypt, the United Nations says.*

AL Jazeera

**ISRAELI fire has killed at least two Palestinians in separate incidents across the Gaza Strip on Wednesday, as Israel continues to block thousands of Palestinians from seeking urgent medical attention through the partially-reopened Rafah crossing in its ongoing, more than two-year genocidal war on the enclave.**

Al Jazeera's correspondent on the ground reported that one child was killed in the northern Strip when an Israeli drone targeted children on their way to check their destroyed homes in the area.

Meanwhile, soldiers opened fire on and killed Muhand Jamal al-Najjar, 20, near the Bani Suheila roundabout east of the city of Khan Younis, Palestinian news agency Wafa reported.

Gaza hospital sources told Al Jazeera that Israeli fire also wounded three Palestinians in al-Mughraqa in the central Strip and the al-Mawasi area of Rafah to the south.

Since the "ceasefire", which Israel has violated on a near-daily basis, took effect in mid-October, more than 600 Palestinians have been killed and more than 1,600 wounded, according to the latest figures released by the Palestinian Ministry of Health earlier this week.

The latest deaths come as the Israeli military maintains its blockade on Palestinians looking to exit Gaza via the Rafah crossing to Egypt for medical care.

The United Nations Office for the Coordination of

Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) has tallied a total of 260 patients leaving Gaza since the first day of reopening two and a half weeks ago, the office told Al Jazeera on Wednesday – a small fraction of the roughly 18,500 people who desperately require evacuation.

The figure even falls short of an earlier promise from an Egyptian border official that at least 50 Palestinians would cross in each direction starting from the first day. Instead, just five patients were permitted to leave.

Human rights and medical groups, including the World Health Organization (WHO), have repeatedly called for Palestinians to be able to access critical care outside Gaza.

WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus wrote on social media earlier this month that the body wanted to see an "immediate reopening of the medical referral route to the West Bank, including East Jerusalem", and for more countries to accept patients for specialised care not available in the Strip.

But Gaza's health system – which Israel has largely decimated since starting its war on the embattled enclave in October 2023 – must look to "reduce reliance on medical evacuations", he added.

"This is now the top priority," Tedros said, ticking off necessities including scaling up health services inside Gaza, stocking fresh medical supplies, and repairing damaged facilities.

The rate of return to Gaza through the checkpoint has also been slow: 269 people had passed into Gaza as of February



*Palestinians mourn during the funeral of a 14-year-old boy killed by Israeli fire in Gaza [Abed Rahim Khatib/Anadolu]*

11, OCHA said in its latest report.

One recent batch – made up of 41 people who were transported to Nasser Medical Complex – said Israeli soldiers subjected them to humiliating physical searches and intense interrogations, an Al Jazeera team reported.

Returnees have previously recounted being blindfolded during hours of political interrogations and psychological pressure before being allowed to re-enter Gaza.

## Tested on Palestinians: Epstein, Israel's Barak pushed spy tech in Nigeria

*Disgraced financier and former Israeli PM used surveillance tools honed under occupation of Palestine to secure resource and logistics deals in West Africa, investigation shows.*

AL Jazeera



*Former Prime Minister Ehud Barak delivers a statement in Tel Aviv, Israel, June 26, 2019 [Corinna Kern/Reuters]*

**Convicted American sex offender Jeffrey Epstein and former Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak collaborated for more than a decade to profit from instability in Nigeria, marketing surveillance technology honed in the occupied Palestinian territory to gain access to the West African country's lucrative oil and logistics sectors, according to an investigation by Drop Site News (DSN).**

A trove of emails originally released by the United States Department of Justice, the DSN investigation found, outlines how the late financier and the Israeli politician leveraged the Boko Haram rebellion to pitch "field-proven" security solutions to Nigerian officials.

The correspondence indicates that these security deals were frequently utilised as a gateway for broader commercial interests, including infrastructure projects for DP World and investments in the energy sector.

The revelations come days after Sultan Ahmed bin Sulayem resigned as chairman of the Emirati logistics giant DP World on February 13 amid fallout from the disclosure of his close ties to Epstein.

According to the documents, Epstein and Barak viewed the escalating violence in West Africa not as a humanitarian crisis but as a business opportunity. In a 2014 email (PDF) regarding civil unrest in Syria, Libya, and Somalia, Epstein wrote to Barak, "isn't this perfect for you".

Barak replied, "You're right in a way. But not simple to transform it into a cash flow."

The files detail how Israeli intelligence firms marketed their technology to Nigeria using euphemisms such as "field-proven", a reference to systems deployed by the Israeli military against Palestinians under occupation.

In 2015, Barak and a business partner invested \$15m in FST Biometrics, a firm founded by the former head of Israeli military intelligence, Aharon Ze'evi Farkash. The company's core technology, a biometric system known as Basel, was originally prototyped at the Beit Hanoon (Erez) crossing between Israel and the besieged Gaza Strip to control the movement of Palestinian workers.

While the Nigerian military battled Boko Haram, Barak facilitated the sale of similar biometric surveillance equipment to Babcock University, a Christian institution in Nigeria. The project was framed as a counterterrorism measure, with a press release at the time boasting that the technology would "filter away all unwanted persons".

The emails suggest this initial foothold allowed Barak to institutionalise Israeli cyber-expertise within the Nigerian state. By 2020, the World Bank had tapped the Israel National Cyber Directorate and a startup cofounded by Barak to shape Nigeria's national cyber-infrastructure.

The documents indicate that security cooperation was often a pretext for accessing Nigeria's vast resource wealth. Epstein facilitated high-level talks for DP World, aiming to secure ownership of ports in Lagos and Badagry.

In the summer of 2018, Epstein brokered discussions between Jide Zeitlin, then-chair of Nigeria's sovereign investment fund, and bin Sulayem. The documents show Epstein attempting to navigate US sanctions on figures involved in the mining sector to facilitate these

The correspondence highlights the immense access Epstein and Barak secured within the Nigerian government. In 2013, Barak attended a cybersecurity conference in Abuja, which organisers privately described as a cover to arrange meetings with then-President Goodluck Jonathan.

Following these meetings, Israeli defence contractor Elbit Systems proceeded with a controversial internet surveillance project in Nigeria, despite opposition from the country's legislature.

The documents further reveal that Epstein coached Barak on how to parlay these security relationships into personal gain. When Barak shared financial details of a potential oil deal, Epstein responded (PDF) with harsh advice: "I told you on the phone before sending or asking anyone about it you should do your own homework."

The ties between Epstein and Israel have come into sharp focus after the release of millions of documents.

The documents have revealed more details of Epstein's interactions with members of the global elite, including Barak. But they also document his funding of Israeli groups, including Friends of the Israeli army, and the settler organisation the Jewish National Fund, as well as his ties to members of Israel's overseas intelligence services, the Mossad.

Barak, who led Israel from 1999 to 2001, has expressed remorse over his lengthy relationship with Epstein. However, despite Epstein having been convicted of procuring a minor for prostitution in 2008 and spending about a year in prison during the course of their relationship, Barak, maintaining a close personal and business relationship, claimed he was unaware of the scope of Epstein's crimes until a wider inquiry into him was opened in 2019.

## US military prepared to strike Iran as early as this weekend, but Trump has yet to make a final call, sources say

Kristen Holmes & Kevin Liptak-CNN

**THE US military is prepared to strike Iran as early as this weekend, though President Donald Trump has yet to make a final decision on whether he'll authorize such actions, sources familiar with the matter tell CNN.**

The White House has been briefed that the military could be ready for an attack by the weekend, after a significant buildup in recent days of air and naval assets in the Middle East, the sources said. But one source cautioned that Trump has privately argued both for and against military action and polled advisers and allies on what the best course of action is. It was not clear if he would make a decision by the weekend.

"He is spending a lot of time thinking about this," one source said.

The US's readiness to strike by the weekend was first reported by CBS News.

Iranian and US negotiators passed notes for three-and-a-half hours Tuesday during indirect talks in Geneva, though they departed with no clear resolution. Iran's top negotiator said both sides had agreed upon a "set of guiding principles," though an American official said "there are still a lot of details to discuss."

White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt said Wednesday that Iran was expected to provide more details

on its negotiating position "in the next couple of weeks," but she wouldn't say whether Trump would hold off on military action within that timespan. US Secretary of State Marco Rubio is expected to travel to Israel on February 28 to meet with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and update him on the Iran talks, a State Department official told CNN Wednesday.

"I'm not going to set deadlines on behalf of the president of the United States," Leavitt said.

She added that while "diplomacy is always his first option," military action remains on the table.

"There's many reasons and arguments that one could make for a strike against Iran," she said, adding Trump was relying on counsel from his national security team "first and foremost."

The opaque statements have fueled increasing fears of military conflict between the two nations — even as officials ostensibly hold out hope for diplomacy. The USS Gerald Ford — the most advanced carrier group in the US arsenal — could arrive in the region as soon as this weekend, after a flurry of other military buildup. US Air Force assets based in the United Kingdom, including refueling tankers and fighter jets, are being repositioned closer to the Middle East, according to sources familiar with the movements.

For its part, Iran is fortifying several of its nuclear facilities, using concrete and large amounts of soil to bury key sites amid US military pressure, according to new satellite imagery and analysis from the Institute for Science and International Security.

A number of calendar events could play a role in the timing of an attack. The Winter Olympics — traditionally a moment of global unity — conclude on Sunday; some European officials said they believed no strike would occur before then. Meanwhile, Ramadan began Wednesday; some officials from US allies in the Middle East — which have lobbied against an attack, fearing regional destabilization — said an attack during the Muslim holy month would convey American disrespect. And Trump is delivering his annual State of the Union address on Tuesday; aides have said it was likely to act as a kickoff for Trump's midterm year message on domestic issues. It wasn't clear whether the president was taking any of those events into account as he weighs his options.

Trump, in his statements on Iran over the past weeks, has done little to gain buy-in from the American public or Congress for a large military operation in the country. He has hinted at a desire for regime change, and insisted Iran not obtain a nuclear weapon, but has not said what precisely his objectives would be in ordering an attack.





# Saint Lucia Independence Day 2026:

## A Guide to the Celebration

Discover the history, traditions, and events celebrating the island's 47th year of independence.

By Cassidy Rush

**E**very February, the island of Saint Lucia transforms into a vibrant sea of blue, gold, black, and white. Flags wave from porch railings, buildings light up in national colors, and the sound of calypso fills the air. It is a time of immense pride, reflection, and joy.

For Saint Lucians at home and across the diaspora, Independence Day is more than just a public holiday. It is a commemoration of the moment in 1979 when the island became an independent state within the Commonwealth of Nations, ending centuries of colonial rule. Whether you are planning a trip to witness the festivities firsthand, or you are a Saint Lucian living abroad looking to connect with your roots, understanding the significance of this day brings you closer to the heart of the island.

This guide covers everything you need to know about Saint Lucia Independence Day 2026, from the history behind the holiday to the events you can expect.

### When is Saint Lucia Independence Day 2026?

Saint Lucia Independence Day is celebrated annually on February 22.

In 2026, February 22 falls on a Sunday. Because of this, the public holiday will be observed on Monday, February 23. This ensures that everyone on the island has the opportunity to participate in the celebrations and enjoy a day off to spend with family and friends.

Leading up to the main event, the entire month of February is usually dedicated to national pride. You will often see "National Colours Day" celebrated on February 21, where



citizens and residents wear traditional madras or clothing in the flag's colors to work and school.

### The History of Independence

To truly appreciate the celebrations, it helps to understand the journey that led here. Saint Lucia has a complex history, often called the "Helen of the West" because it changed hands 14 times between the French and the British during the 17th and 18th centuries.

the celebration:

### The Military Parade

On the morning of Independence Day, a grand military parade is usually held. This is a formal event featuring the Royal Saint Lucia Police Force, the Cadet Corps, and other uniformed groups. They march with precision, accompanied by marching bands, saluting the country's leadership and the flag. It is a display of discipline and national pride that draws large crowds.

### The National Ecumenical Service

Faith plays a central role in Saint Lucian society. An ecumenical service is held to give thanks and pray for the nation's well-being. Leaders from various religious denominations come together to lead the country in prayer, reinforcing the spiritual foundation of the island.

### Cultural Showcases and Rallies

Throughout the month, you can expect various cultural rallies. These events highlight the island's rich heritage, blending African, French, and English influences. You might see traditional dances like the Quadrille, hear folk songs in Kwéyòl (Creole), and watch performances that tell the story of the island's past.

### The Best of Saint Lucian Cuisine

No celebration is complete without food. Independence Day is the perfect excuse to indulge in the island's national dish, green figs and saltfish. Street vendors and restaurants serve up local favorites like bouyon (a hearty soup), accras (fish cakes), and cocoa tea. It is a time for families to gather for large meals, sharing food and stories.

### National Colors Day

On the eve of Independence, or the Friday before, the island participates in National Colors Day. Offices, schools, and streets are awash in the colors of the flag:

- Blue: Representing the sky and the sea.
- Gold: Symbolizing the sunshine and prosperity.
- Black and White: Representing the harmony between the races.

### The Significance of the Flag

The Saint Lucian flag is a powerful symbol during independence celebrations. Designed by Sir Dunstan St. Omer, it is distinct and meaningful. The central feature is a stylized isosceles triangle representing the Pitons—the two famous volcanic mountains rising from the sea.

When you see the flag raised high on February 22, it is a reminder of the island's beauty and the resilience of its people. The upward thrust of the triangles represents the aspirations of the Saint Lucian people to move forward and achieve greatness. – **Article (excerpt) via remitly.com**

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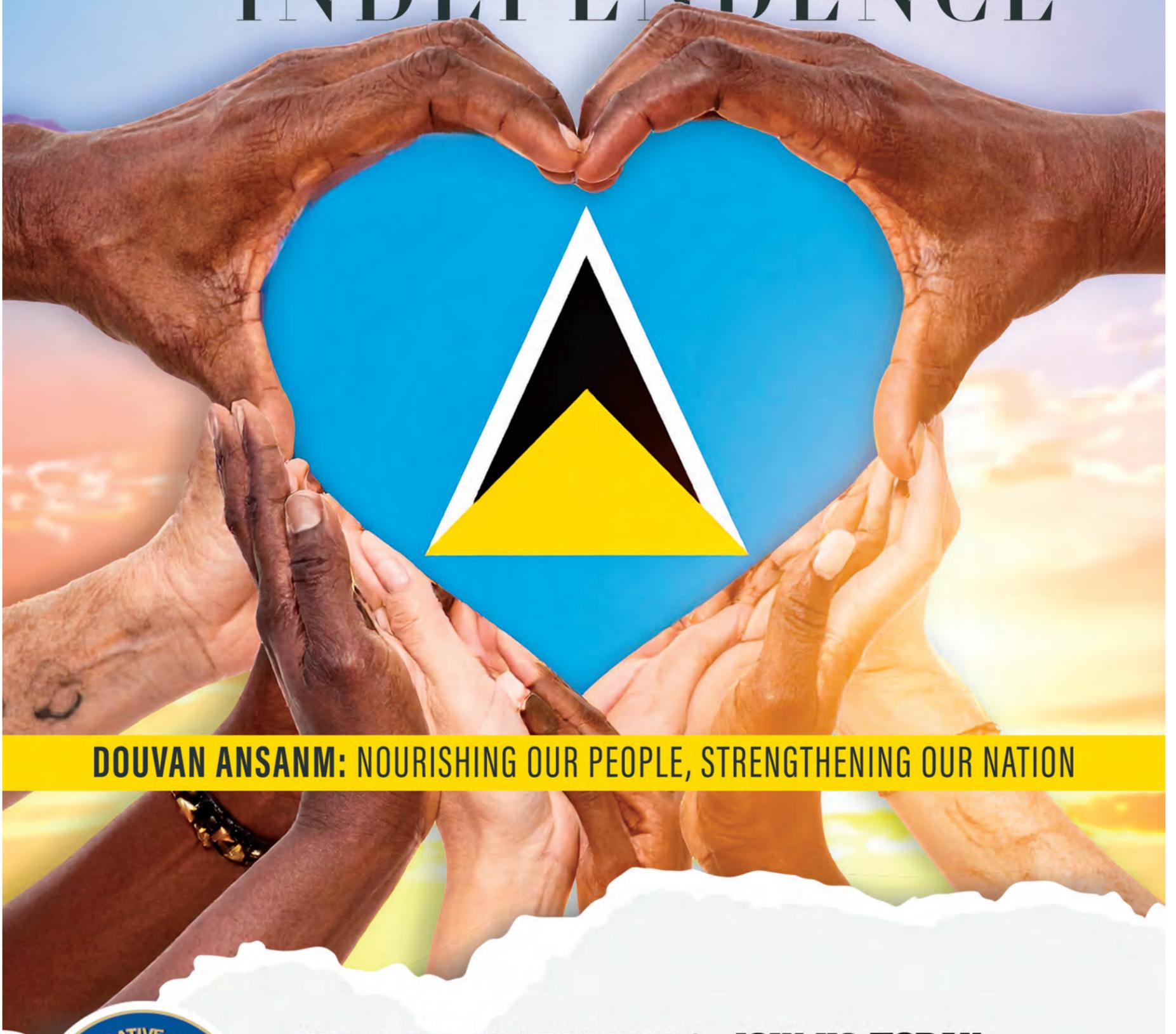
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**X** X: <https://www.x.com/mylaboriecu>



# Governor General of Saint Lucia

## Cyril Errol Melchiades Charles

**Place and Date of Birth-** Castries Saint Lucia, 10th December 1942

**1. Religion** Roman Catholic

**2. Academic Background**

i. Attended St. Aloysius R.C. Boys' School, Castries, Saint Lucia

ii. Attended St. Mary's College, Saint Lucia

iii. Completed Correspondence Course with Wolsey Hall, England in the Following Disciplines: English, Mathematics, History, Introduction to Political Science (Constitution of The United Kingdom)

iv. Completed Course in Income Tax Law and Practice (Six Months) and a Three Month Training Course In Examination Of Accounts In Trinidad & Tobago

v. Attended Several Tax Administration and Executive Management Conferences / Workshops in Saint Lucia, Trinidad & Tobago, Dominica And Guyana

**3. Spoken Language:**

English & French Creole

**4. Work Experience Government of Saint**



**Lucia 1962 – 1992**

i. Accountant General Chambers, Treasury Department: Temporary Clerk  
ii. Inland Revenue Department: Junior Clerk; Income Tax Inspector; Senior Income Tax Inspector – 1..2..3..4

iii. Ministry of Communications Works, Transport & Public Utilities: Senior Licensing Officer

**5. Employment Private Sector 1993-2007**  
J.Q Charles Limited: Human Resources Manager / Legislative Officer

**6. Self-Employed 2007-2021**  
Tax Management Consultancy

**7. Civic Duties**

i. Lions Club Of Castries, Saint Lucia, Member, Former President

ii. Lions Club Of Gros Islet, Saint Lucia, Member, Honorary Member

iii. St. Lucia Road Transport Board – Member: 1989-1992; 1997-2006; 2011-2016

iv. Board Of Visiting Justices (Bordelais Correctional Facility): 2013-2016

**Info via [governorgeneral.govt.lc](http://governorgeneral.govt.lc)**

## Office of the Governor General

**Services to Stakeholders**

The Office of the Governor-General is located in – and often referred to as – Government House. It is responsible for:

- The provision of official services to the Governor-General and his/her household
- The provision of official services to government agencies and organisations
- Arranging the Governor-General's official activities at home and overseas
- The Governor-General's correspondence
- Liaising with Buckingham Palace on honours, awards and diplomatic credentials
- Liaising with the Office of the Prime Minister on all honours and awards
- Administrative arrangements for conferment of honours and awards

**History, Tours**

The Government House, which serves as the official residence of the Governor General, is one of

the main historical sites of Saint Lucia, dating back to 1895. Situated at Morne Fortune on the outskirts of the city of Castries, the building reflects the period of Victorian architecture and is a popular attraction for persons interested in the history of Saint Lucia.

Tours of the Government House can be arranged by appointment only. Visitors can be accommodated during the following days and times:

Tuesdays: 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.; 2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Thursdays: 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.; 2:00 p.m. –



4:00 p.m.

Visitors can call or email to arrange an appointment

**Photos and info via [governorgeneral.govt.lc](http://governorgeneral.govt.lc)**

## House of Assembly



**The Cabinet of Ministers for Saint Lucia consists of the Prime Minister and the other Ministers as outlined under section 30 of the Constitution.**

**Government Members**

**Hon. Philip J. Pierre**

*Parliamentary Representative for Castries East*

Prime Minister and Minister for Finance, Justice, National Security, Constituency Development and People Empowerment  
Prime Minister, Hon. Philip J Pierre was re-elected as the Parliamentary Representative for Castries East on July 26, 2021. He also serves as Minister for Finance, Economic Development, and the Youth Economy.

Prime Minister Pierre is a dedicated politician and a committed district representative with over thirty (30) years of experience in government and opposition. He has held many portfolios over the years including Deputy Prime Minister as well as Minister with responsibility for Tourism, Civil Aviation, Commerce, Investment, Consumer Affairs, International Financial Services, Infrastructure, Ports Services, and Transport. In 2016 he became Leader of the Opposition and Political Leader of the Saint Lucia Labour Party which he led to victory in July 2021.

*Cont'd on page 5*



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# House of Assembly

Cont'd from page 4

Hon. Pierre is a management professional with a broad range of skills and extensive public and private sector experience that he utilized in his private practice to assist state agencies and private sector enterprises to achieve their goals. His areas of proven expertise include: Programme and project planning, implementation and evaluation, Design of hotel development incentive packages, Economic analysis and economic forecasting, Financial policy, financial management and budgeting, Organization management and development, Business Plans, Feasibility Studies, Business Re-organization Advice, Sourcing Business Financing, Tourism policy development, policy advice, facilitation and implementation, and Training in Capacity Development for SME in St Lucia and region.



**Hon. Kenson Joel Casimir**  
Parliamentary Representative for Gros Islet  
Minister for Education, Youth Development, Sports and Digital Transformation

Hon. Pierre holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Economics and a Master of Business Administration (MBA) from the University of the West Indies. Prime Minister Pierre continues to be a very strong advocate for the promotion and advancement of entrepreneurship, and the small business sector as a critical engine for economic growth. – [opm.govt.lc](http://opm.govt.lc)



**Hon. Dr. Ernest Hilaire**  
Parliamentary Representative for Castries South  
Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Tourism, Commerce, Investment, Creative Industries, Culture and Heritage



**Hon. Alva R. Baptiste**  
Parliamentary Representative for Laborie  
Minister for External Affairs, International Trade, Civil Aviation and Diaspora Affairs



**Hon. Lisa Cassandra Joahil Jawahir**  
Parliamentary Representative for Castries South East  
Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries, Food Security and Climate Change



**Hon. Shawn Andrey Edward**  
Parliamentary Representative for Dennery North  
Minister for Infrastructure, Ports Services and Energy



**Hon. Moses Jn Baptiste**  
Parliamentary Representative for Vieux Fort North  
Minister for Health, Wellness and Nutrition



**Hon. John Paul Estephane**  
Parliamentary Representative for Babonneau  
Minister in the Ministry of Tourism, Commerce, Investment, Creative Industries, Culture and Heritage



**Hon. Alfred P. Prospere**  
Parliamentary Representative for Dennery South



**Hon. Emma Hippolyte**  
Parliamentary Representative for Soufriere  
Minister for Equity, Labour, Gender and Elderly Affairs, Social Justice and Consumer Welfare



**Hon. Danny Marvin Butcher**  
Parliamentary Representative for Vieux Fort South  
Minister in the Ministry of Education with responsibility for Early Childhood, Continuing and Special Education and Digital Transformation



**Hon. Jeremiah Norbert**  
Parliamentary Representative for Micoud North  
Minister for Home Affairs, Crime Prevention, Conflict Resolution and Persons with Disabilities



**Hon. Wayne D. Girard**  
Parliamentary Representative for Anse La Raye/Canaries  
Minister for Economic Development and Youth Economy



**Hon. Keithson Hermine Charles**  
Parliamentary Representative for Choiseul  
Minister for Physical Development and Public Utilities



**Hon. Richard Frederick**  
Parliamentary Representative for Castries Central  
Minister for Housing, Local Government and Urban Renewal



**Hon. Stephenson King**  
Parliamentary Representative for Castries North  
Senior Minister and Minister for Public Service, Transport, Information and Utilities Regulations

Cont'd on page 6

## Independent Members

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# House of Assembly

Cont'd from page 5

## Opposition Leader

Hon. Allen M. Chastanet

Parliamentary Representative for Micoud South

**Hon. Allen Chastanet has been the Political Leader of the United Workers' Party since 2013 when he was elected by party members at their convention that year and again at all subsequent conventions.**

Allen has been involved in many large regional companies as well as charitable and nonprofit



organizations such as Air Jamaica's Lovebird Kids' Club, the Make it Happen Foundation and the Caribbean Media Exchange – the region's premier non-profit forum for examining regional issues through journalism.

Allen Chastanet holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Economics and Political Science, as well as an MA in Development Banking – degrees earned from Bishop's University in Quebec, Canada and American University in Washington D.C., USA respectively. He is married to Raquel Du Boulay and has two children, daughter Rhyana and son Braden.

1992- 1994: Director of Tourism, St. Lucia Tourist Board  
1994-1997: Director of Sales and Marketing at Island Outpost

1995-2003: Vice President of Worldwide Sales and Marketing at Air Jamaica, implemented strategies for increasing international flight market share and increased customer satisfaction.

2000: Allen Chastanet was named Travel Agent Magazine's "Caribbean Destination Person of the Year".

2003: Coco Resorts Managing Director

2002-2004: Chairman of the Marketing Committee for the Caribbean Hotel Association

2003: Chairman of the Marketing Committee, St. Lucia Hotel & Tourism Association

2004: 2nd Vice President of the St. Lucia Hotel & Tourism Association

2005- 2006: Chairman Caribbean Hotel Association's Advocacy Committee

2005- 2006: President St. Lucia Hotel & Tourism Association

2006: Minister for Tourism & Civil Aviation, Government of Saint Lucia.

2007 – Recipient of Counterpart International's "World Leadership Award".

2009 – Allen M Chastanet was named Travel Agent Magazine's "Caribbean Travel Personality of the Year".

2016-2021 – Prime Minister of Saint Lucia. – [uwpstlucia.com](http://uwpstlucia.com)

# History of Independence

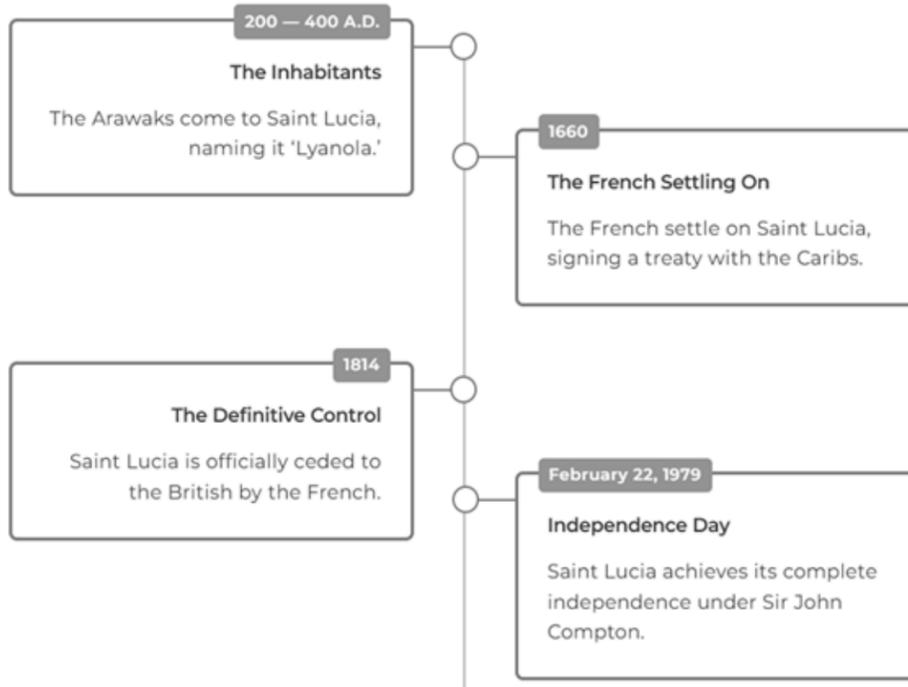
## Day

**S**aint Lucia Independence Day is celebrated annually on February 22 to commemorate the day when Saint Lucia gained its complete independence from the United Kingdom in 1979. First inhabited by the Arawaks and Caribs, Saint Lucia was colonized by the French and British in the 17th century. Previously called Iyanola by the Arawaks and later Hewanorra by the Caribs, Saint Lucia was also known as Helen of the West Indies due to being frequently switched between French and British control. It was then officially ceded to the British by the French in 1814.

### History of Independence Day

Saint Lucia Independence Day is celebrated annually on February 22 in remembrance of the day when the county achieved its complete independence from the United Kingdom. There are typically events held on the day, including a ceremony, annual

## ST. LUCIA INDEPENDENCE DAY TIMELINE



military parade, street parade, tennis tournaments, church services, culture exhibitions, and concerts. The day before, February 21, the eve of Independence Day, is National Colors Day, when people are encouraged to wear something reflective of the country's national colors.

Saint Lucia is an island country located in the Western Indies in the eastern Caribbean Sea. Its first proven inhabitants were the Arawaks, believed to have come here around 200 to 400 A.D. The Caribs later arrived

and seized control from the Arawaks around 800 A.D. The Arawaks called the island 'Iyanola' – meaning 'Land of the Iguanas' due to the island's high number of iguanas. The Caribs called this island Hewanarau and later Hewanorra. Besides, it was known as Helen of the West Indies because of being fought over by the French and British.

The French were the first Europeans to settle on Saint Lucia, signing a treaty with the Caribs in 1660. In 1663, the British took control of the island. They were then at

war with the French 14 times, resulting in frequent changes in the rule on the island. In 1814 Saint Lucia was officially ceded to the British by the French as part of the Treaty of Paris, and it became one of the British Windward Islands colonies. Saint Lucia joined the West Indies Federation in 1958 and became a self-governing island as a member of the West Indies Associated States in 1967. On February 22, 1979, Saint Lucia achieved its complete independence under Sir John Compton of the conservative United Workers Party (U.W.P.).

### 1. It's named after a woman

Saint Lucia was named after Lucia of Syracuse, a Christian martyr, making it the only country named after a woman.

### 2. Jacquot can only be found here

Jacquot, or Saint Lucia parrot, is endemic to Saint Lucia; it is the country's national bird.

### 3. The world's only drive-in volcano is here

The only drive-in volcano in the world is located in Sulphur Springs, Saint Lucia.

### 4. It has a World Heritage Site

Saint Lucia is home to a World Heritage Site, the Pitons – Gros Piton and Petit Piton.

### 5. Its homebrew pilsner is named Piton

Saint Lucia produces its own homebrew pilsner called Piton, a local favorite. Cont'd on Page 7

# HAPPY 47<sup>th</sup> INDEPENDENCE ANNIVERSARY Saint Lucia

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# 47 YEARS OF INDEPENDENCE

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# History of Independence Day

Cont'd from Page 6

## WHY WE LOVE INDEPENDENCE DAY

### 1. We commemorate it

Saint Lucia Independence Day is to commemorate the day when this island gained its complete independence. Independence for one's country is really precious.

### 2. We appreciate freedom

Freedom is usually attained through sacrifices. We should appreciate it once we

have it. Saint Lucia Independence Day is the right time for people to do so, and it can be as simple as a prayer or just being grateful for it.

### 3. It's a day off

Saint Lucia Independence Day is a public holiday, which means free time for us. We can have additional free time for ourselves thanks to this holiday. – Info via [nationaltoday.com](http://nationaltoday.com)

*(Photo credit for Saint Lucia Independence celebrations: Events Saint Lucia)*



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The Power of Caring





# Sir Dunstan St. Omer, Designer of the National Flag, Reflects

**F**or many Saint Lucians, holding the Saint Lucia flag high is the best expression of national pride. In all walks of life, the flag stands out prominently and serves to inspire Saint Lucians about their nation's aspirations, achievements and artistry. In fact, the man who designed the flag some decades ago

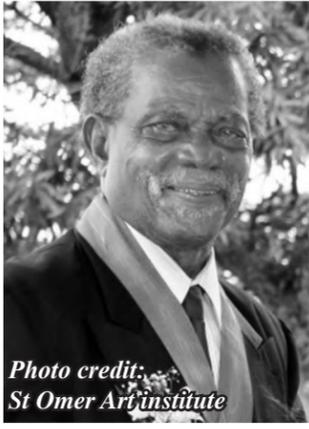


Photo credit: St Omer Art Institute

**believes it's actually the best flag in the world.**

Acclaimed painter, Sir Dunstan St. Omer, has spent most of his life painting some of the most captivating scenes, many of which reflect various aspects of Saint Lucian life. After a sterling career that saw him teaching art from 1971 to 2002 and increasing the national consciousness through his church murals, he was conferred with a knighthood in April 2010.

Having interviewed him at the time he received his knighthood in 2010, I wanted to delve deeper into the life of the man most Saint Lucians know as painter and flag designer. The following is an extract from an interview I conducted with the 87-year-old icon at his home in 2015 in anticipation of Saint Lucia's 36th anniversary of Independence.

**Before we get into the interview, here are some quick facts on Sir Dunstan.**

- Born and raised in Castries, near the Columbus Square (now Derek Walcott Square)
- Entered a national competition that offered \$100 for the person who came up with the best flag design
- At the time of the competition, Sir Dunstan was in his late 30s
- The flag was designed for Saint Lucia's attaining Statehood in 1967
- Taught art for about 30 years before retiring
- Served as sub-editor and later editor of The Voice Publishing Company Ltd.
- Got a one-year scholarship to Puerto Rico in the 1950s

• On being named a Saint Lucian icon: "It's only now that I can appreciate the fact that people decided to promote me as an icon. But the benefit of being an icon, I think, was afforded to me in the past six to eight months when I got sick and had to go to hospital. The kind of treatment I got and still get has been great. If it were not so, maybe I wouldn't have been here today."

• Joke about being black and getting the knighthood: "I'm not dark (as night), eh. I may be black, but not dark."

• Prior to receiving the knighthood, he was made an Officer of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (MBE), and he received the Papal Medal for his murals in churches around Saint Lucia and an Honorary Doctor of Letters from the University of the West Indies (2009).

• Was designated a Saint Lucian icon in 2010

• Is the father of the artistic genre known as "Prismism"

• Has nine children – five daughters, four sons

**Question: How did you end up being the designer of the Saint Lucian flag?**

**Answer:** There were two motivations for me deciding to design the flag. The first motivation was that naturally anybody would want to be the one to design the flag for his country. Number two, there was a little money involved, so I said, 'Why not?' Fortunately, I'm a painter. So when you do something, you want it to communicate (a message). So by having the opportunity to design the flag, I wanted to make my own little contribution by telling the people what I would want for Saint Lucia. And so I put various elements that I had in mind to make it what it is. Today it is considered one of the best flags in the world. It's beautiful. I know that many people who make the flag do not use the right colours and proportions to do so. But if they used the right colours and proportions, it's an absolutely beautiful flag.

**Question: When are you proudest of the flag?**

**Answer:** I feel proudest of the flag whenever I see it in an international forum. Saint Lucia is like a dot on the map of the world. In the last Greek Olympics, it led the whole procession as the number one flag. That made me feel good.

**Question: What prompted you to get into painting?**

**Answer:** My grandfather on my father's side was a violinist. So the artistic gene must be in our blood. Now look at Giovanni son and his costumes and all the things the boys are doing. You know what I mean. It's in the blood.

**Question: Why painting?**

**Answer:** I took up painting because it was the only thing I could do by myself. I've always had it in me ever since I was at school. No matter what school I went to I loved painting because it has always put me in an imperial position that I had to be subject to the teacher. It was all part of growing up and I moved from water colours to murals and so on.

Photo credit: St Omer Art institute

**Question: Who were your childhood influences?**

**Answer:** Harry (Harold Simmons) was one of the fellas that influenced Derek and I more than anyone else we knew at the time. Harry was a person that was so different in his time. Harry was a brilliant little man: he was archaeologist, historian and everything else you could think of. All of his work seemed to centre on Saint Lucia. Because of him, we got to look at Saint Lucia with different eyes. Before then we saw everything as being European but he told us to paint what we saw. And that's what he did as well all his life.

**Question: What inspired you to come up with that design for the flag?**

**Answer:** Even before the competition, the design of the flag was in my mind already. Not that I had thought that I would be designing a flag. But I was already thinking about what I would want for it. In fact, I submitted two flags. It was the time of Black awareness, so I had a green flag with a black eagle on it. That was too radical for them. Some of my best

friends told me that was too much, even though they became as radical as I was afterwards. So the authorities chose to go with the milder flag. With things like these, you cannot simply say that you achieved them; it's just things that happen to you.

**Question: Do you think Saint Lucians have a true appreciation for the arts?**

**Answer:** It's a difficult question to answer. If you grew up among artists who were older than you and in the business for quite a while, then you shouldn't be complaining that government is not helping you. That's one way of looking at it. But you'll always find that among the ordinary people it's as if there's a kind of art aristocracy, a kind of appreciation. It's amazing. The people love the arts. I guess it's because they don't have the money to spend that they wouldn't go spending the little they have on paintings. The thing about it is that you cannot go around selling paintings for \$25 and expect to survive, although I did it for a long time selling paintings for \$10. When I got my first \$10 from a painting, I was happy. In those days, that supported me for more than a day.

**Question: What was your response on being told you had been considered for a knighthood?**

**Answer:** You get the news that you have been accepted as a knight, you know, a real knight. All of my dreams about it had been about the knights at the round table. So I asked myself, 'How could St. Omer be a member among the knights at the round table?' But it means that you're one of the Queen's closest friends. When I was a kid, we used to see in magazines that came from England admirals, generals and these kinds of people got knighthoods. When I got the knighthood, I said I was the poorest knight in the world. I mean, you might have some things as childhood dreams but there are certain things you never expect to happen. We never thought that Derek would get a Nobel Prize until he began to move towards it. So, yeah, I'm a knight. That is what I wanted all my life. The life you're seeing me live on a wheelchair now is a bonus. Before I had been struck down by a series of illnesses and so forth, at the back of my mind I knew I was invincible. I put no date for that to be announced. So you can curse or criticize me as you feel like, you're only showing how ignorant you are. I've seen people try hard to gain certain honours or positions in their communities. I've always said that the easiest way to do it is by doing something for your community. You'll be promoted not by yourself but by the people in the community. Although they say you shouldn't blow your own trumpet, Derek will tell you that he's never found a fella that does it better than me.

**Question: What does the knighthood mean to you?**

**Answer:** I don't want to mention any politician's name or anything but the only fella I'm very appreciative of is Stephenson King. I belong to no political party; he knows that and all the others know that. But that didn't prevent him from singlehandedly – against his own committee – defending his suggestion that I got a knighthood. Everyone said 'No' but he singlehandedly worked it out. So I'm grateful to him, Her Majesty, the Saint Lucian people for their appreciation. In fact, when I got it, I said it was not for me but for my country and people. I didn't have to go gallivanting all over the world. From the time I was a little boy, I used to dream of going to the States and be an artist because I always knew that Saint Lucia couldn't support an artist. But why did I stay here instead, I do not know. I guess it's just part of my complex of wanting to do what's best. It's such a beautiful and complicated situation.

**Question: What's life like for Sir Dunstan St. Omer? What's your philosophy on life?**

**Answer:** I base my life on two principles. The first one is that if you have to live a good life, you have to find the right road. I found the right road in christianity because if you do good, then why should you be afraid? If good is not a greater power, forget it. The other side of me is that I'm a black man and the whole world is open to me to make a name not just for myself but for my people. No man can really be great by himself; he has to be part of his people.

**Question: Are you proud of where we're at today as a nation?**

**Answer:** I cannot tell you what I really feel about Saint Lucia right now. I've been on my back for over six months now. The farthest I can see is my watch (on my hand). I used to be very hungry and thirsty about knowing what was going on in the world because I've always seen Saint Lucia in a world perspective – never as a little island. It all depends on the mind you put in the constructive of things. I've always felt that Saint Lucia could have been like a Hong Kong but it needs imagination to do that. It was possible, but we missed it. I don't regret that we missed it because maybe that's how we're most comfortable. But we can't go down. This is a blessed country.

**Question: What would you want to tell Saint Lucians this Independence Day?**

**Answer:** I would say something that I would normally not have said before. We have problems, much of it because of our smallness and whole history and so forth. But that does not mean that we're small. A person of a country is as big as its people. We are the only people in the world with two Nobel Prize-winners for a nation with about 170,000 people. That's history forever. So I know they will make it; they just have to have that ability to make it. No matter what they do, they will make it. Do not be afraid. Just hold tight and continue as you are being very artistic, creative. Sometimes I want to say I love them but I love mostly the women, of course. But I have great hope for them. I can only see the future positive for them.

**Question: Any final comments?**

**Answer:** We must believe in our hearts that we are the greatest. That's the only way we can move effortlessly.

- Story by Stan Bishop (21/02/15)

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# National Symbols- The Flag of Saint Lucia

**Designed by:**  
Dunstan St. Omer  
**Meaning of the Flag**

1. Cerulean Blue represents fidelity. This blue reflects our tropical sky and also our emerald surrounding waters—the Caribbean Sea and the Atlantic Ocean.
2. Gold represents the prevailing sunshine in the Caribbean and prosperity.
3. Black and white stand for the cultural influences – the white part, the white culture; the black part, the black culture –the two races living and working in unity.
4. The design impresses the



Photo credit: Jiri-Flogel/Shutterstock.com

the flags –and its staff should be in front of the staff off the other flag. When a number of flags are grouped and displayed from staffs the Saint Lucia Flag should be at the Centre and it the highest point of the group.

vii. When the National Flag is flown with other flags it should be the first to be hoisted and the last to be lowered. It should never be lowered while the other flags are flying or being hoisted.

viii. The Flag may be displayed flat above and behind the speaker in a church or in an auditorium. If on a staff, it should be at the right of

dominance of the Negro culture vis-à-vis that of Europe, against a background of sun–shine and ever–blue sea. This is represented by the three triangles in the centre of the flag, symbolising three pitons.

5. The Triangle, the shape of which is an isosceles triangle, is reminiscent of the island's famous twin Pitons at Soufriere, rising sheer out of the sea, towards the sky –themselves, a symbol of the hope and aspirations of the people.

**How to Display the Flag**

- i. The flag should be of regulation appearance. It should not be faded or bleached. A torn flag should be repaired before being hoisted.
- ii. The flag–mast, when erected on land, should be placed right and should be in a central or conspicuous place. On buildings, however, the flag–mast may either be placed

in an upright position on the roof or fixed at an angle on the front of the building or from a balcony.

- iii. The flag–mast should be painted white.
- iv. No other flag may be flown above the Saint Lucia flag. When several flags are flown on one halliard the Saint Lucia Flag is placed at the peak. When the flags of two or more nations are displayed together they are to be flown from separate staffs of the same height and all the flags should be, as far as possible, of the same size. The flag of one nation should not be displayed above that of another.
- v. No other flag, colour, standard, ensign or other emblem should be displayed above or to the right of the National Flag i.e. the observer's left facing it.
- vi. When two flags are placed against a wall with crossed staffs, the Saint Lucia Flag should be at the right i.e. to the observer's left facing

the speaker as he faces the congregation of audience. Other flags should be at the speaker's left. If the flag is displayed on a staff elsewhere than on a platform or chancel it should be at the right of the audience or congregation as they face the speaker. It should not cover a speaker's desk or be draped in front of a platform.

- ix. Except on a day of special significance the National Flag shall not be flown on a motorcar without the permission of the Minister.
- x. Where the National Flag is flown on a motor car, it shall be affixed to a small staff erected on the right front fender of the motor car so that the Flag should be above the bonnet of that motor car.
- xi. A citizen may fly the flag on a day of special significance provided he flies from an upright staff on or in front of his dwelling or place of business. – **govt.lc**

Cont'd on page 10

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# National Symbols

Cont'd from Page 9

## Coat of Arms



The emblems on the Coat of Arms and what they represent:

- Tudor Rose:** England 
- Fleur de lis:** France 
- Stool:** Africa 
- Torch:** Beacon to light the path 
- Saint Lucia Parrot:** Amazona versicolor, the National Bird
- The Motto:** "The Land, The People, The Light"
- Designed by:** Sydney Bagshaw

### A description of the Coat of Arms

The rose which you see on the Coat of Arms tells us about England. At one time England was our "mother" country because she was in charge of our affairs. The Fleur-De-Lis reminds us that we belonged to France as many as seven times. The bamboo is our national plant, two pieces form the cross of the shield. The little African Stool in the centre is African and reminds us of our ancestors who were shipped from Africa during the slave trade. To light us on our way, we have a Torch which is held up high. The Saint Lucian Parrot Amazona versicolor is our national bird guards each side of the Coat of Arms. Our Motto "The Land, The People, The Light", is printed at the bottom of the shield.

**The Saint Lucia Parrot (Amazona versicolor)**  
First described by Miller in 1776, this beautiful



Photo Credit: Te-Hsin Tsai (via Forestry Department)

parrot is, and always has been found only in Saint Lucia.

It is predominantly green in colour, and a typical specimen has a cobalt blue forehead merging through turquoise to green on the cheeks and a scarlet breast. There are no visible differences between the two sexes.

Mating for life and maturing after five years, these long-lived birds are cavity nesters, laying two to three white eggs in the hollow of a large tree during the onset of the dry season between February and April.

Incubation commences on the appearance of the second egg and lasts 27 days. The young fledge leave the nest 67 days after hatching.

Saint Lucia Parrots are birds of the forest canopy. Despite their large size and bright plumage these are difficult to detect among the dense foliage as they clamber about in search of fruits, nuts, seeds and berries from a wide variety of trees including Gommier, Chatagnier, Bois Pain Maron and Aralie.

In former times this bird was not as rare as it is today. In 1902 Lady Thompson described it as "not uncommon in the high woods of Saint Lucia." Whilst in 1928 Bond wrote this Parrot, "Occurs in some numbers in the mountains of Saint Lucia from La Sorciere, south along the backbone ridge."

In the intervening years a combination of hunting, habitat destruction and the illegal bird trade resulted in a rapid decline in its numbers and in the mid 1970's our parrot faced extinction.

Commenting on the hunting of this species, Lady Thompson (1902) wrote, "Unfortunately dead birds may be found almost every week in the market of the little town of Soufriere, and they are eaten as a delicacy by both black and white Creoles."

In 1968 Wingate wrote that "as many as forty parrots are probably shot each year in an attempt to catch them alive for sale." Jovicich (1976) adds, "fourteen of fifteen parrots which are shot in this manner die."

Deforestation, however, remains the most serious threat faced by the Saint Lucia Parrot. Charles (1982) estimates that the nation's forest is being cleared at "2% a year," leaving land barren and useless, our rivers silted and the parrot and other forest wildlife without a home.

Jovicich (1976) writes, "Saint Lucia's remaining Amazona versicolor population of 150 +/- 25 is fast approaching extinction in the wild ... it is certain that it will not escape oblivion."

In 1978 the Forestry Division of the Ministry of Agriculture launched a campaign to save this species from extinction.

In 1979 the Saint Lucia Parrot was declared the island's National Bird and in 1980 wildlife legislation was revised.

Today the parrot, and most other forms of wildlife are absolutely protected year round and anyone found hunting, keeping or trying to trade in these birds is liable to a fine of \$5000 or 1 year in jail.

Forestry laws were also revised to protect watersheds as well as wildlife habitats, and illegal clearing of forest are punishable by fines of \$2000.

During the last decade protected areas have been set aside and educational programmes

an endangered species and still needs your help.

## The National Dress

### The Wob Dwiyet

The Wob Dwiyet is a style of ladies' dress which began appearing in the French West Indies towards the end of the 18th century. Its design is believed to have originated from Southern France, where women at the time wore a similar outfit.



Photo via Facebook



The Voice Images  
www.thevoicesla.com  
Photo By: Stan Bishop

## The National Flowers

The Rose and the Marguerite are the symbols of the two flower societies of Saint Lucia. They emerged as winners of the National Flower Competition in September 1985.

### The National Flower Festivals: La Rose and La Marguerite

Where, in some countries, the population may be divided into classes and castes, in the context of Saint Lucia's Cultural traditions there exist two 'Societies', Roses and Marguerites - singing societies whose members are dedicated to the praising of those respective flowers.



The Rose

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initiated. These are having the desired effect. By 1988 the Saint Lucia Parrot was slowly increasing in numbers and today its population stands at about 250.

It may be seen flying across the forests of Quillesse, Millet and Edmund symbolic of the island's beauty and uniqueness.

In 1982 the first ever successful captive breeding of the Saint Lucia Parrot occurred at Jersey in the UK, and in 1989 two young were returned to Saint Lucia and can be seen at Union Mini Zoo.

Saint Lucia's National Bird remains



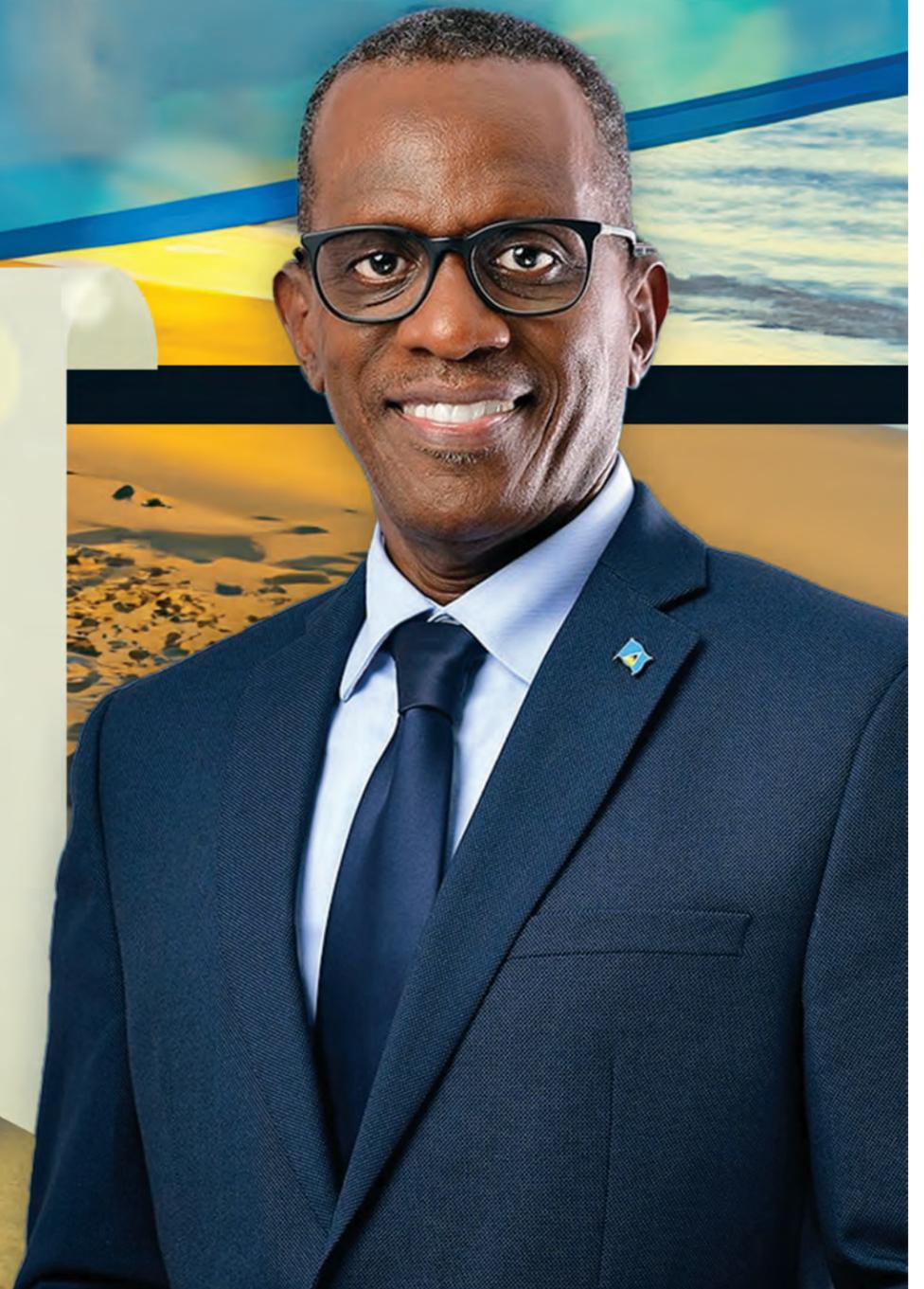
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# *Anniversary of Independence*

TO THE PEOPLE OF  
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Nourishing our  
People,  
Strengthening our  
Nation



Cont'd from page 10

# The National Flowers



The Marguerite



The Voice images  
www.thevoiceslu.com  
Photo By Stan Bishop

# National Symbols



The Voice images  
www.thevoiceslu.com  
Photo By Stan Bishop



Photo Credit - Travel Saint Lucia UK



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Each society holds an annual festival or grande fete, an elaborate and colourful event full of pomp and pageantry, which is preceded by several months of nightly singing practices called "Seances".

Presiding over the annual festivals are the 'King' and 'Queen who are accompanied by their royal entourage of Dukes, Duchesses, Princes, Princesses, Soldiers, Policemen, Magistrates, Doctors, nurses, the clerical hierarchy and supporters of the respective flowers. Strict protocol is observed at

those nightly Seances, with every visitor or participating member, upon entering, bowing to the King and Queen who are present with their court. Police and soldiers in uniform enforce regulations against any disorder, breaches of protocol, or what are considered misdemeanors. Offenders are taken before a magistrate for a mock trial and then fined.

Each society has a patron saint on whose feast day the grande fete is celebrated. For the

## The National Plant-Bamboo

The official national plant of Saint Lucia is the bamboo, recognized for its cultural and practical significance in, for example, creating crafts and local fishing pots. It is prominently featured in the island's Coat of Arms, which includes two crossed sticks of bamboo.

Roses it is the feast of St. Rose of Lima on



## The National Tree -Calabash

Famous for its large, hard-shelled fruits used to make bowls, containers, and musical instruments, this tree symbolizes local culture and utility. It is often found in rural areas and represents local resourcefulness.



the 30th August; and for the Marguerites it is that of St. Margaret Mary Alacocque, 17th October.

The grande fete is celebrated, first with church services through-out the island and afterwards with processions through the streets, the principal personages magnificently attired. In the evening there is a sumptuous banquet to which dignitaries and leading personalities are invited. The rest of the evening is spent in dancing. One can then witness and participate in some of the colourful folk dances, the Quadrille, the Mappa, the Belair and such like.

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# Understanding Independence



**Independence is a condition of a nation, country, or state in which its residents and population, or some portion thereof, exercise self-government, and usually sovereignty, over the territory. The opposite of independence is the status of a dependent territory.**

Abstractly independence refers to breaking chains. Typically by 'independence' of a 'country' we understand a distinct group of people living in a specific region, who are similar in terms of race, ethnicity, culture or any other significant factor binding them together that results in a coherent thinking, setting itself free from the governance

of another entity which is fundamentally different from them.

Independence is important for a country because it's the very reason of the country's existence. A country or a nation wouldn't exist or have a distinct identity if it weren't independent in the first place. The idea of independence becomes prevalent in the mindset of a distinct group of people when the belief of transcendence as an individual nation becomes prominent whether it is due to indignation or necessity of self-identity or any other cause for that matter. Most of the countries we see today got independence from an imperial force. One may ask why some ethnic groups, fundamentally disparate from the countries they are part of, are content with their circumstances despite having no independent country of their own. Well, these groups are intimately assimilated to the countries they are part of, their interests are coherent with their national



interests or they will be more benefited if they stay with the nation rather than having an independent country of their own.

Concisely put, independence gives a nation the right to decide its own

fate. Whether that fate will be a good one or a bad one depends on the vision of the leaders who led the nation to liberation and then took on the role of governing body. As they say, 'Staying free is harder than becoming free'.

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# What Is the Purpose of a National Anthem?

## What is a National Anthem?

A national anthem is a patriotic song or musical composition that is either recognized officially by a nation's government and constitution or is accepted as such by convention through popular use. The national anthem reflects the history, struggles, and traditions of a nation and its people and serves as an expression of national identity.

## When Is a National Anthem Used?

National anthems are usually played or sung during national holidays, especially during the Independence Day celebrations in a country. National anthems are also performed during cultural and other festivals in the country, usually marking off the beginning or the end of such festivals. National anthems are often performed in international sporting events. For example, in the Olympic Games, the national anthem of the winning team is played during the medal ceremony. National anthems of the participating nations are also played prior to the start of a game and usually, the anthem of the host nation is played last.

The National anthem is also an

integral part of a school's daily routine in some countries.

Most countries also mention several etiquettes to be observed while performing or listening to the national anthem like standing up, removing headwear, etc. Although the national anthem of a country is recognized within the country, the use of the anthem outside the country is dependent on the country's recognition at a global level. For example, Taiwan is not recognized as an independent country by the Olympics committee. Hence, the national anthem of Taiwan is not performed in the Olympics and instead the National Banner Song is played.

## What Is the Importance of a National Anthem?

The national anthem, like other national symbols of a country, represents the tradition, history, and beliefs of a nation and its people. Hence, it helps evoke feelings of patriotism among the country's citizens and reminds them of their nation's glory, beauty, and rich heritage. It also helps unite the citizens of the country by one single song or music. During the performance of the national anthem, citizens of a nation, despite their ethnic

differences, rise up in unison and listen attentively or sing the song with great enthusiasm. Players also feel a great moment of pride when they receive a medal at an international sporting event while their country's national anthem is played in the background. It gives them a feeling of having made their country proud. Students who listen to the national anthem in their schools learn to respect their nation and develop a sense

of unity among themselves.

## How and When Did the Concept of a National Anthem Develop?

The concept of a national anthem was first popularized in 19th century Europe. After their independence from European colonial powers, many of the newly-independent nations also composed their own national anthems and today, virtually every sovereign nation in the world has its own national anthem. – **Article (excerpt) via worldatlas.com**

## National Anthem of Saint Lucia

### National Anthem of Saint Lucia by Rev Fr. Charles Jesse (deceased)

1. Sons and daughters of Saint Lucia love the land that gave us birth. Land of beaches, hills and valleys, fairest isle of all the earth. Wheresoever you may roam, love, oh love, our island home.

2. Gone the times when nations battled for this Helen of the West. Gone the days when strife and discord, dimmed her children's toil and rest. Dawns at last a brighter day, stretches out a glad new way.

3. May the Good Lord bless our island; guard her sons from woe and harm. May our people, live united, strong in soul and strong in arm. Justice, truth and charity, our ideals forever be.

### Lyrics by: Rev. Charles Jesse FMI

### Music by: Mr. Leton Thomas Chanson Nasyonnal Sent Lisi

1. Fí èk fíis, manmay Sent Lísí Chéwí péyí nésans-nou Péyí montany, lans èk valé Plí bèl líl kí asou latè! Nenpòt

Uniformed persons should act in accordance with instructions.

2. All three verses of the National Anthem will be sung. Normally one verse will be played. It shall consist of the first twelve bars of the anthem unless otherwise stated.

3. The National Anthem shall be played:-

(a) for the purposes of a salute on ceremonial or official occasions, on arrival and departure of:

- the Governor-General
- the Sovereign or a member of the Royal Family
- a foreign Sovereign, Head of State, or member of a reigning foreign Imperial or Royal Family
- Governor-General of Independent Commonwealth countries

v. Governors of the OECS States

vi. Governors, High Commissioners or Officers administering the Government of a dependent territory within the commonwealth, and

(b) at the beginning of all



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plas nou vwayajé Toujou chéwí líl natal-nou.

2. Sa pa tan nasyon bat ladjè Pou bèlté Élenn nou-an Sa pa tan wivòt èk konba

Té twoublé laví nou tout Mètnan, syèl-la éklési An lawout nèf ouvè pou nou.

3. Dyé, Senyè, benní péyí-nou Pwotéjé'y kont tout malè Fè nou viv an sanm an lapé

Fè nou fò an kò é lam Endé nou tjenn kon pwensíp Jístis, Lamou, Lavévité!

### Protocol for the National Anthem

1. Whenever the National Anthem is played, all civilians present should stand at attention, men with bared heads.

public performances in a cinema house or other public building.

4. The National Anthem may be played:-

(a) at the completion of any public function, or  
(b) when toasts are proposed at official functions

5. The National Anthem should not be parodied in verse or in song, neither should it be played in any tempo other than that officially recognised. In particular, the tune should not be used as a dance number or for the purposes of advertisement.

6. When more than one anthem is played, the Saint Lucia anthem should be played last. – **govt.lc**

# Why Saint Lucia Keeps Winning The World's Top Honeymoon Title

**Key Points**

- **Saint Lucia has been named the world's leading honeymoon destination for eight years in a row, beating far bigger rivals.**

- Romance travel is now a core growth engine for the island's private tourism industry and for thousands of local jobs.

- The strategy relies on investment, competition and service quality rather than grand state projects or ideological tourism experiments.

Saint Lucia just did something few small countries ever manage: it beat Paris, Maui, Mauritius and the Seychelles yet again to be named World's Leading Honeymoon Destination at the 2025 World Travel Awards, held in Bahrain on 6 December.

It is the island's eighth consecutive global win and comes on top of regional awards for best Caribbean honeymoon destination and



*(Photo Credit : Internet reproduction)*

fresh Gold Travvy trophies for Best Honeymoon Destination and Best Wedding Destination, plus a Silver as Best Destination in the Caribbean.

US News & World Report also ranks it the world's top honeymoon spot. The appeal is easy to understand. The iconic Pitons, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, rise steeply from the sea, framed by rainforest, waterfalls and geothermal springs such as Sulphur Springs, where couples cover

themselves in warm mineral mud.

Luxury resorts like Jade Mountain, Sugar Beach, Ladera and Serenity at Coconut Bay have built directly into this landscape, with open-air suites, private pools and uninterrupted views. Many rooms have only three walls, so the fourth side is the ocean and mountains.

### Private Investment Fuels Growth

Behind the romance

imagery sits a serious economic story. Tourism supplies most of Saint Lucia's GDP, and honeymooners are among its highest-spending visitors, buying private excursions, spa treatments and tailor-made wedding packages.

In 2024 the island welcomed more than 435,000 stay-over visitors, with cruise and yachting arrivals also rising strongly. This success did not come from central planners drawing up five-year tourism blueprints.

It has grown from years of private investment, competition between resorts and a clear focus on service and safety.

Government campaigns such as "Romance Capital of the Caribbean" and the appointment of Olympic sprint champion Julien Alfred as tourism ambassador help to tell that story, but it is entrepreneurs and workers who ultimately keep couples coming back.

**- riotimesonline.com (08/12/25)**

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# From Colonization to Independence

**C**hristopher Columbus was said to have named the island Saint Lucia when he sighted it on St Lucy's day in 1502, however, historians have refuted that claiming that Columbus never set foot on the island. After unsuccessful early attempts by the Spanish to take control, possession of the island was disputed, often bloodily, by the French and British.

Around 1600, the Dutch started the first European camp, at what is now Vieux Fort. The Caribs pushed them out.

In 1605, an English vessel called the Olive Branch was blown off-course on its way to Guyana, and the 67 colonists started a settlement on Saint Lucia. After five weeks, only 19 survived, because of disease and conflict with the Caribs, so they fled the island.

In 1635, the French officially claimed the island but didn't settle it. Instead, it was the English who attempted the next European settlement in 1639, but the Caribs wiped them out too. In 1643, a French expedition sent out from Martinique by Jacques Dyel du Parquet, the governor of Martinique, established a permanent settlement on the island. He appointed an experienced French officer named De Rousselan as the island's governor. De Rousselan had married a Carib wife, a fact that du Parquet must have thought would ingratiate him with the Caribs of St. Lucia. De Rousselan remained in post until his death in 1654.

In 1664, Thomas Warner (son of the governor of St Kitts) claimed Saint Lucia for England. He brought 1,000 men to defend it from the French, but after two years, only 89 survived, mostly because of disease. In 1666 the French West India Company resumed control of the island, which in 1674 was made an official French crown colony as a dependency of Martinique.

The British made further attempts to gain control, and the island changed hands again and again and was a focus for Anglo-French

hostilities during the Seven Years' War.

During the war, Britain occupied Saint Lucia in 1762 but gave the island back at the Treaty of Paris on 10 February 1763. Britain occupied the island again in 1778 after the Grand Battle of Cul de Sac during the American Revolutionary War.

**Slavery**

The British developed a prosperous plantation economy based on sugar and imported enslaved Africans to do the work. Conditions were harsh, and many African slaves died, requiring continued importation of new captives.

By 1779, the island's population had increased to 19,230,

which included 16,003 slaves working 44 sugar plantations.

The British abolished the African slave trade in 1807. They acquired Saint Lucia permanently in 1814. It was not until 1834 that they abolished the institution of slavery. Even after abolition, all former slaves had to serve a four-year "apprenticeship," during which they had to work for free for their former masters for at least three-quarters of the workweek. They achieved full freedom in 1838. By that time, people of African ethnicity outnumbered those of ethnic European background. Some people



The island is one of the more prosperous in the Eastern Caribbean. It has attracted foreign business and investment, especially in its offshore banking and tourism industries. Tourism is Saint Lucia's primary source of jobs and income. The manufacturing sector is the most diverse in the Eastern Caribbean area. Crops such as bananas, mangos, and avocados continue to be grown for export, but St. Lucia's once solid banana industry has been devastated by strong competition.



of Carib descent also comprised a minority on the island.

**When did Saint Lucia become independent?**

The island was a member of the Windward Islands Federation until 1959. In 1959, Saint Lucia joined the West Indies Federation, under which it was proposed that the British Caribbean countries should proceed to independence as a federation. Disagreements among the larger members led to the dissolution of the federation in 1962, and the larger members proceeded alone to independence.

In the West Indies Act of 1967, Saint Lucia received a new constitution, giving full internal self-government under universal franchise, as one of the states of the Federated States of the Antilles.

On 22 February 1979, Saint Lucia became independent, as a constitutional monarchy and member of the Commonwealth, with John Compton of the United Workers Party as its first Prime Minister, and Sir Allen Montgomery Lewis as its first Governor-General.

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**HAPPY INDEPENDENCE ST.LUCIA**



# Why Saint Lucia is one of the best adventure travel destinations for 2026

Billy Johnson

**T**he Caribbean island of Saint Lucia might be best known as a package holiday destination, but away from the gleaming sands and plush comforts of the resorts is a world of adventure just waiting to be explored.

Yes, there are those marvellous white-sand beaches, but step into the interior, and you'll be treated to lush rainforest treks, mountain trails, wildlife encounters, and pulse-raising ziplines.

But there's also more relaxing experiences to be had, and you can kayak around tranquil bays, observe colourful fish while snorkelling under the shadow of the majestic Pitons, and glide through the rainforest on an aerial tram

All this is just an easy direct flight away, so although you'll feel a world away once you arrive, you won't feel like you've travelled around the world to get there.

This is why Saint Lucia is on our list as one of the best adventure travel destinations for 2026.

**A hiking paradise**

Although a relatively small landmass (27 miles long and 14 miles wide), Saint Lucia is packed with hiking opportunities for every ability.

The most famous hike on the island involves summiting the iconic Pitons, the two volcanic



plugs that loom over the colourful town of Soufrière. Although the taller of the two at 798m, Gros Piton presents a slightly easier outing although is still a formidable ascent, while Petit Piton rises to 743m and features a challenging, steep trail with roped scrambling sections and often thick foliage to find your way through.

Your efforts are rewarded with panoramic views over the island, from the opposing spire of Gros Piton to the shimmering waters of the Caribbean. As the Pitons are a UNESCO World Heritage site, guides are required to help protect the area, but they're easy to arrange either by pre-booking a tour or at

the base of the hike.

Keen hikers can combine the two Pitons with an ascent of Saint Lucia's highest peak, Mount Gimie (950m) to complete the local Three Peaks Challenge.

If you're after a more relaxing hiking experience, you can opt for the Tet Paul Nature Trail around the base of the Pitons, or hike around Pigeon Island, where you can discover old forts and views across to Martinique.

**Discover unique wildlife**

Saint Lucia is a haven for wildlife, with a wide range of endemic species including birds, reptiles, and plants. To promote its unique animals, the island has developed its own spin on Africa's Big Five safari: the Small Six. This safari encourages people to explore the rainforests of Saint Lucia in search of six small yet spectacular creatures, all of which are endangered but also the focus for successful conservation efforts.

Scan the trees for the bright flashes of colour of the Saint Lucia Parrot or the yellow and black plumage of the Saint Lucia Oriole, and see if you can spot the iridescent blue of the Saint Lucia Whiptail lizard or the smallest

known snake in the world, the Saint Lucia Worm Snake, in the undergrowth.

You can also take to the water, diving and snorkelling to get up close with brightly coloured coral and sponges, fascinating and peculiar fish, and even turtles, which lay their eggs on the beaches of the island. If you're lucky, you might even see them hatch as you stroll along Anse Chastanet Beach in September or October.

**Adrenaline and relaxation**

If you're after a thrilling experience, you can spend an afternoon flying through the rainforest canopy on one of the island's three zipline courses, explore the beaches or trails by bicycle, ATV, or horse, and try kitesurfing or kayaking on one of Saint Lucia's many bays.

You can also enjoy more relaxed experiences, such as open-air aerial tramway that glides serenely through the rainforest, or visit the vibrant markets and street scenes of the capital Castries or the buzzing town of Gros Islet.

While you're there, you can't miss the local cuisine, with its



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**From The Management and Staff of**

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**- Article (excerpt) and photos via wiredforadventure.com**



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PLEASE SCAN TO APPLY



# Community tourism elevates St. Lucia's experiences and empowers its locals

By Meagan Drilling

**We revved up our engines and peeled away from the dusty roadside shack where we'd signed our waivers, helmets snugly fitted on our heads. In the morning heat, with a breeze kicking up, we dove straight into the banana fields: acres upon acres of towering green, slicing the bold, blue horizon.**

This all-terrain vehicle ride was more than an adrenaline adventure. It was a dive into St. Lucia's heart.

I was on the Irie Valley Ride with Eastern Exotic ATV Tours, a half-day excursion that blends back-road thrills with cultural immersion. Our vehicles climbed muddy mountain trails slick with rain, the scent of guava sweetening the air.

At the summit, where bulbous blossoms drooped low and the island unfurled below us, the buzz of the ATVs gave way to something softer.

We'd arrived at a Rastafarian community nestled in the Mabouya Valley. From a hillside perch, a Rasta elder greeted us with freshly baked coconut bread and stories about the lifestyle and community-based living. This experience was just one piece of a much larger movement sweeping across St. Lucia: an effort to root tourism in the people, not just the place.

This is the new St. Lucia. Or, rather, the St.



Photo Credit: Meagan Drilling

The Irie Valley Ride takes travelers through banana plantations and guava orchards.

## Projects worth exploring

Let's start with the ATV tour, which is one of the agency's latest success stories. This locally owned venture takes guests through the agricultural heart of the Mabouya Valley, culminating in visits with Rastafarian community members and organic farmers. It layers cultural storytelling with ecological insight, offering an inside look into a way of life that is tied to the land.

Then there is the Morne Fortune view point (Morne Layby). One of Castries' most beautiful lookouts is getting a glow-up. The popular photo stop for visitors heading along the west coast has been revitalized with improved walkways, new artisan vendor stalls and interpretation panels that share the site's history, including the colonial past and its role in the island's independence movement. The goal is to make it a meaningful pause in the journey, more than just a quick scenic stop.

Along the western coast, the fishing village of Anse La Raye is getting a gentle nudge into the nautical tourism space. With the support of the tourism agency, the village's jetty has been upgraded to safely welcome more daytrippers and boaters.

Mooring buoys have been installed to attract smaller boats. These upgrades are designed to disperse tourism away from the north and give smaller communities a chance to thrive economically.

Then there is Helen's Daughters, a powerful nonprofit that puts women at the forefront of agriculture. Through farm-to-table tours, hands-on harvesting, cooking workshops and women-led market visits, Helen's Daughters connects travelers with the grassroots of St. Lucian food production.

Visitors can spend a day with Helen herself, learning how to grow crops, listening to her stories, planting their own seedlings and then whipping up their own spice blends. Every experience directly supports the livelihoods of local women.



Photo Credit: Meagan Drilling

Ti Kaye sits on a cliff overlooking the Caribbean.

## Where to stay (responsibly)

For a socially responsible boutique hotel on St. Lucia, Ti Kaye Resort & Spa matches the spirit of these grassroots experiences. Perched dramatically above Anse Cochon on the western coast, this adults-only retreat is quiet, romantic and emphasizes sustainable practices.

Ti Kaye goes beyond green practices by committing to its people. Staff benefit from healthcare subsidies and education support for themselves and their children, and many have been with the resort for over a decade.

Guests are treated to a true sense of place, from the Kai Koko Spa's island-sourced ingredients to the Creole-inflected menus that spotlight local farmers and fishers. The private plunge pools, secluded beach and wood-fired pizza oven don't hurt the resort's appeal, either.

– [travelweekly.com](http://travelweekly.com) (19/07/25)

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Lucia that has always been there, based on community, culture and sustainability. Now, through new initiatives and immersive experiences, travelers are being invited in.

## The rise of community tourism

In 2025, St. Lucia's Community Tourism Agency has gone full throttle. With the motto "See, Do, Stay," the agency is empowering micro, small, and medium-size enterprises (MSMEs) across the island to build and profit from tourism experiences.

These aren't generic tours. They're sea moss farming demonstrations, cassava-baking workshops, women-led agritourism initiatives and community-based kayaking expeditions. They're built by locals, for locals and shared with travelers who want a deeper connection.

Through grants, low-interest loans, training programs, infrastructure support and marketing assistance, the Community Tourism Agency gives local entrepreneurs the tools to elevate their businesses and reach international visitors.

The Executive, Staff and Affiliates of the **Saint Lucia Football Association Inc.** congratulate the **Government and People of Saint Lucia** on the

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# Saint Lucia: The Wild Side

An Urgent Call to Discover, Preserve and Protect Saint Lucia's Wild Side

*By Earl Bousquet*

**The trailer will haul you along a brief but exciting trail into a deepest parts of Saint Lucia's unknown world you'll never have seen or heard of.**

It's called 'Saint Lucia - The Wild Side', inviting you to realize that 'Beyond the Beaches, A Wild Side Awaits!'

I knew nothing before its screenings at Caribbean Cinemas, until a friend invited me to share the pleasure of "discovering the wild side of Saint Lucia..."

And though the producers of this documentary film on Saint Lucia's wildlife may not be well-known beyond Caribbean shores, their joint production shoots at the stars in ways no-less skyrocketing than what David Attenborough, the

British wildlife bard, has been producing for the world.

The production is as riveting a story as the original 1903 version of 'Call of the Wild' - a 1903 novel by Jack London upgraded to an epic movie in 2020.

But while London's story is about the life of a dog relocated from city life to the Alaskan wild, the Saint Lucia film documents the various birds and animal species indigenous to the island.

The producers - brothers Lyndon and Kendal John - combined for their first joint production on wildlife, conservation and biodiversity, shown in local cinemas since June.

The film is actually for everyone, as it tests viewers' knowledge of their island's wildlife - and easily reveals just-how-little even the most-knowledgeable amateurs will have learned over time.



The producers directed the cameras to the actual locations of the birds, animals, snakes, bats and other wild beings, taking viewers the closest possible and sometimes directly into their actual habitats - and the research was as deep and wide as the scope of materials covered.

I never felt I knew it all (as this isn't how the journalist in me thinks) but was indeed surprised at how many local wildlife species I'd never seen or heard of, including invasive species that now threaten the existence of a few - from the world's smallest snake to the iguana.

The researchers also record which local species (like the mongoose) introduced by colonial settlers to get rid of others - and which invasive species came from where and did what damage.

It was the second film by local producers that I've been to Caribbean Cinemas for a special screening, the first being 'Shantaye's World' produced by Mathurine Emmanuel, tracing the story of a Saint Lucian girl extracted from her rural home and transplanted to London's city life - a virtual a human version of 'Call of the Wild'.

Like with 'Shantaye's World', Saint Lucia's cinematic ride on the wild side is essential viewing for not just every Saint Lucian, but anyone from anywhere interested in better understanding the importance of ecological equilibrium to Planet Earth and all of Humankind.

Climate Change is unfolding everywhere, every day and new features come more often than before, some entirely new - like the appearance of a water sprout over Saint Lucia's Western coastline last Saturday.

As I watched last Sunday's final screening before the local production heads abroad, my long memory went all the way back to the start of the end of Century 20, when Gabriel 'Coco' Charles - the island's best-known promoter of conservation, who lived and died also promoting the cause of the protecting and preserving the island's wild species.

'Coco' tirelessly walked and drove, climbed hills and mountains and descended slopes and valleys, to take and preach the message of conservation that eventually got to the minds of the likes of the producers of the original 'Wild Side' film produced by the John brothers decades after his transition to The Great Beyond.

That night's audience featured mainly adults and those of my near-septuagenarian generation, but there were also a few young persons brought along by parents to ensure the continuity the likes of 'Coco' (and others named in the ending credits) would have willed in their last testaments.

Environmental literacy, conservation education and climate change awareness are among the many new features of life today that children, youth and tomorrow's people need to learn as of now, when their brains are still fresh and unclogged.

Just like 'Civics' was introduced in the local school curricula in the late 1960s and it is now being applied to daily school work, it's important for governments and education ministries across the Caribbean always review students' forever need to adjust, adopt and adapt accordingly.

Where History has become so-much of an endangered subject in Caribbean education at all levels (from secondary to university) that the University of the West Indies (The UWI) had to go to extreme lengths to preserve it as a vital subject, the same can happen unless ways are found to attract, encourage and engage young people to become more environmentally aware and conscious.

The film being reviewed here is one-of-a-kind on a subject that preceded us all and will continue to be relevant to all future generations, starting with all humans inhabiting Planet Earth today - and especially small-island states already overwhelmingly vulnerable to all that's changing global climates for the worst.

It's understandable that the producers will do their best to recover the costs of putting such a production together, but films like this ought not to be treated as children coming of age and expected to find their feet along life's difficult highways and byways.

But they shouldn't be left to discover by accident.

Instead, films like these with more meaning than just storytelling are important to be adopted in ways that will allow for them to be viewed by every Saint Lucian everywhere - at school, at home and abroad, at work and play.

I'm happy my friend encouraged me to attend the screening of a second Saint Lucia film produced locally for international viewing - and I do encourage the producers to continue sharing their brotherly love for producing films we'll simply want to see - over and over again! (01/10/25)



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Douvan Ansanm: Nourishing Our People, Strengthening Our Nation

# Global Marketing Initiative: Positioning Saint Lucia as a Must-Visit Destination

By Reginald Andrew



SLTA's PR Manager Geraine Georges

**Key stakeholders in Saint Lucia's tourism industry and media representatives recently convened to explore collaborative strategies aimed at enhancing the local hospitality sector.**

The discussion centered on a strategic Global Marketing Initiative designed to elevate Saint Lucia's international image through targeted tourism promotions.

Hosted by the Saint Lucia Tourism Authority (SLTA) during a Media Breakfast on February 6, at Sandals Regency, the event facilitated meaningful dialogue among key media partners, including updates and opportunities for collaboration.

SLTA's PR Manager, Geraine Georges, and CEO, Lewis Louis, shared insights during their opening remarks, including recent developments in the tourism sector. Lewis highlighted impressive statistical performance, stating, "At a high level, the country had its best performance in 2025," emphasizing the proactive efforts to attract visitors.

SLTA's PR Manager Geraine Georges Participants at the tourism promotion discourse

Tourism Minister Dr. Ernest Hilaire



Participants at the tourism promotion discourse

reinforced this outlook with a detailed overview of the local hospitality sector, applauding Saint Lucia's significant accomplishments in 2025. He underscored the vital role the media plays in promoting the country's economic development, stating, "As media, you have a responsibility to cover happenings in the country and provide context for public consumption."

Tourism Minister Dr. Ernest Hilaire Dr. Hilaire acknowledged that the tourism industry is sensitive to media portrayal, noting the substantial impact published stories can have on the destination's image and fortunes.

The Minister addressed challenges faced by the sector, particularly the recent lack of available room stock due to construction and renovations at major hotel properties. Despite having 500 fewer rooms, he noted, "We were still able to achieve and remain competitive regionally."

A key concern highlighted was the issue of airlift capacity. "If airlift declines, you are reducing your ability to bring in visitors," he stated, explaining the difficulties encountered in negotiations with Virgin Airlines regarding room availability.

"We've struggled to meet the requested number of rooms, impacting our ability to package tours," he said.

Dr. Hilaire described this as a "good headache," emphasizing the growing demand for the destination despite rising accommodation rates. He acknowledged the necessity of catering to families seeking affordable options, pointing out the shift of some resorts, like Zoetry at Marigot Bay and Secrets at Choc, away from family-oriented offerings.

To address these challenges, the Minister has been actively sourcing investors for family accommodations. He mentioned negotiations with

l'sla Resorts, which aim to enhance family-friendly options at their hotels.

Additionally, plans for a new apartment hotel offering fully contained units are in the works, set to provide attractive choices for families and budget-conscious travelers.

While still facing challenges, including travel disruptions in the Canadian market, after the merger between Sun Link and West Jet, Dr. Hilaire remained optimistic about the future. He assured that over the next two to three years, Saint Lucia would see the availability of over 1,000 new rooms, with confidence that room availability issues would soon be resolved.

This proactive approach aims to ensure that Saint Lucia remains a top destination for travelers while catering to diverse market needs.

**Tourism Minister Announces Bold Initiatives to Boost Airlift and Global Visibility**

The Tourism Minister reaffirmed the government's commitment to enhancing air travel and hospitality in Saint Lucia. "The government has agreed to provide substantial support to the Saint Lucia Tourism Authority (SLTA) to facilitate the introduction of more flights into the island. By next winter season, we anticipate having the highest number of available seats to Saint Lucia," he stated.

Dr. Hilaire emphasized a strategic approach to addressing both room availability and airlift requirements, aiming for improved visitor numbers. "We are working in a deliberate way to ensure that our infrastructure can meet the increasing demand," he noted.

To heighten Saint Lucia's global presence, Dr. Hilaire revealed plans for a bold Global Marketing Initiative.

He stated, "This initiative will help position Saint Lucia in major world capitals, ensuring it remains top-of-mind for travelers."

This will include leveraging the popularity of Saint Lucian sports personalities, such as Julien Alfred, alongside collaborations with global sporting entities. The program will also spotlight the island's culinary arts, music, and culture, creating unique Saint Lucian experiences in key global cities.



Tourism Minister Dr. Ernest Hilaire

Additionally, manufacturers and producers of local goods, such as sea moss, chocolate, and rum, will participate in roadshows worldwide.

"Let's celebrate the success stories of our nation and allocate resources that allow us to consistently showcase Saint Lucia," the minister urged.

He envisions a continuous global campaign that keeps the island in focus through billboards and other promotional efforts.

An interactive session that followed highlighted the SLTA's dedication to transparency and collaboration with the media.

Discussions focused on crisis communication management and the media's role in promoting the upcoming Saint Lucia Jazz & Arts Festival, fostering a spirit of open dialogue and partnership as the festival approaches; with top media personnel presenting on key factors to help build growth and sustainability in the industry.

This comprehensive initiative is poised to significantly boost tourism and visibility for Saint Lucia on the global stage.

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# Scenes From Past Independence Celebrations



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## Happy 47<sup>th</sup> Independence Anniversary, Saint Lucia!





# Historic Independence Quotes

"This yearly moment of reflection provides an opportunity to honour our past, celebrate our achievements, and renew our shared commitment to our country's unity, resilience, and prosperity."

On February 22, 1979, we raised our flag and began our journey to independence. During this Independence journey, we have been enabled to shape our policies, develop our economy, and advocate our national interests on the world stage. We have freely engaged in regional and international cooperation and strengthened our democratic institutions while preserving our unique Saint Lucian identity.

Independence gives us the power to decide our path, the solemn responsibility to promote fairness, justice, and opportunity for all, as well as the preservation of the dignity of our people."  
**- Prime Minister Philip J Pierre (2025)**

"Ladies and Gentlemen, if I may say so, for a small island, St. Lucia has a big history, and the road that St. Lucia travelled to Independence in 1979 was long and took many turns. Four decades on, as you look back at the



journey you have taken and look ahead to the future you are building, the people of St. Lucia have so much of which they can be proud."



Photo credit: Pool/Getty Images

**- HRH, Prince of Wales (2019)**

"In 1979, we had a vision of nationhood which went beyond mere attainment of full responsibility for the government of our own affairs. It envisaged the full development of our human potential and the astute management of our resources. True, we anticipated struggle and sacrifice, but we recognized that what we needed was unity and discipline.

We were promised that independence and sovereignty were instruments that we could use to free ourselves from the scourges of ignorance, poverty and disease, but we were warned that we had a choice: we could use these instruments wisely to achieve our national

goals or we could dissipate them in foolish and unproductive strife and discord. The celebration of yet another anniversary of this special event in the history and life of our country, would seem to suggest that we believe that we have chosen wisely. Why else would we celebrate?"



Photo credit: deliador.com  
**- Governor General Dame Pearlette Louisy (2003)**

"Through the years, we have both chosen and changed our Government, and done so in an orderly and democratic way and accepted the will of the people as expressed through the ballot box.

We have seen improvements and changes in every sphere of national life – changes to which we must adapt if we are not to be



Photo credit: Timothy Sullivan - UNCTAD (via Wikipedia)

overwhelmed by events in the outside world – changes which we must accept if we cannot influence them.

In all this, we must remember that we are a very small country, with but few resources except those enshrined in our motto – "THE LAND, THE

PEOPLE, THE LIGHT".

Because of our efforts in the past, with some assistance from friendly countries and international institutions, Saint Lucia is once again being discovered. We must however, realize that this little jewel in the Caribbean Sea is all we have. We must, in the words of our Anthem – 'Love the Land which not only gave us birth,' and the land to which we can return – 'where so ever we may roam'.

Your Government must ensure that our second discovery is not like the first when Christopher Columbus came, but a discovery of ourselves, our potential and the potential of our country. In developing this potential, others may come to help us, but we should accept their help and use it in such a way, that we are not pushed to the very margins in our own country."

**- The Rt. Honourable Sir John G. M. Compton, Prime Minister of Saint Lucia (2007)**

"Our first 25 years have seen us forge for ourselves a place among the nations. Our Nobel Laureates have placed us on a pedestal that is as much a pinnacle of

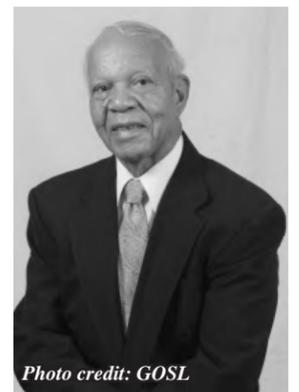


Photo credit: GOSL

achievement as our Pitons are twin peaks of world beauty and environmental heritage. Our bi-lingual and multi-cultural heritage adds to our diversity, but also makes us unique.

Indeed, we are special.

But even while we are special, we are also citizens of the universe, of the wider world – a world that is increasingly becoming a global village.

We are no longer tied to the apron strings of our former colonial masters. We are today masters of our own destiny. But we are also the bearers of the historic responsibility of shaping the



Photo credit: SKN News

destiny of our young nation. Where others are celebrating the growth of civilizations, we are deciding who the St. Lucians of tomorrow will be. Yet, even as we shape our future, we cannot do so in isolation from what's happening around us." **- Prime Minister Dr Kenny D. Anthony (2006)**

"Saint Lucia, we have come far, but we have further to go. Our future is not written in the struggles of today, but in the resilience we show in overcoming them. The path ahead will not be easy, but history has proven time and again that we are a people of boundless courage and unshakable determination." **- Director General of the OECS, Dr. Didacus Jules**

"The Government and People of Saint Lucia can reflect with pride on forty-four years of independence as a nation that have embodied the principles of peace, progress, and stability

in a fractious world.

The significant accomplishments of a small State in the face of daunting circumstances speak to the spirit, perseverance and strong work ethic that have come to define the People of Saint Lucia." **- CARICOM Secretary-General Dr Carla Barnett (2023)**





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 extend congratulations to the Government and People of Saint Lucia on the achievement of **47** Years of Independence. We are proud to be a partner in Saint Lucia's continued progress. May our relationship grow even stronger as together, we celebrate this major milestone in the life of our young nation.

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# Saltfish Balls

By Renee Robley

**T**here's something about Caribbean snacks that just makes gatherings feel extra special. Whether it's a lime with friends, a family get-together, or just you craving something crispy and savory, saltfish always finds a way onto the menu. Today we're rolling that flavor into bite-sized treats that are easy to make and even easier to eat. Time for some saltfish balls.

Saltfish is a star ingredient across the Caribbean, and these saltfish balls are one of the tastiest ways to enjoy it. Made with flaked salted cod mixed into seasoned green fig (green bananas), they fry up into golden, savory bites that are perfect for snacking.

Some cooks

substitute breadfruit as the binder, giving the balls a slightly different but equally delicious flavor. Whether you call them saltfish balls or codfish balls, one thing is certain: these little bites disappear fast once they hit the table.

**What are saltfish balls?**

Saltfish balls are a popular Caribbean snack made by combining flaked saltfish with a starchy base, usually green fig or breadfruit, seasoned with herbs and spices, and fried until crisp on the outside and soft inside. They're sometimes compared to saltfish accra (fritters), but while accra are looser and more irregular in shape, saltfish balls are rolled and compact, almost like savory croquettes.

And about the name: in the Caribbean, we usually say "saltfish," but you'll often see them called codfish balls in other places. It's the same thing; the cod is salted, dried, and then rehydrated before cooking. So whether you search for saltfish balls or codfish balls, you'll end up with the same addictive little bites.

**Why you'll like this recipe**

- Caribbean flavor in every bite – The mix of saltfish, green fig, and fresh herbs gives that unmistakable island taste.
- Versatile binder options – Traditionally made with green fig (green bananas), but



slightly earthy taste, while breadfruit adds a nutty, creamy texture.

- Fresh herbs and aromatics – Onion, garlic, chive, parsley, and thyme layer in brightness and balance the saltiness.
- Seasonings – Black pepper, lime juice, and optional hot pepper. Just enough to lift



the flavors without masking the saltfish.

- Egg + breadcrumbs – Help bind and give structure, and create that crunchy outer layer.
- Oil – For frying until golden brown and crisp.

**How to make saltfish balls**

1. Prepare the saltfish – Soak (or boil), and flake your saltfish. Place into a large bowl.
2. Cook the green bananas – Boil in salted water for 10–15 minutes until tender. Cool under cold water, peel, and mash with milk and butter.
3. Mash with flavor – Add the mashed bananas to the flaked saltfish. Mix in onion, parsley, chives, thyme, garlic, lime juice, and black pepper. Taste now for salt if needed. Stir in one beaten egg until combined.

breadfruit works just as well for a different spin.

- Crispy outside, soft inside – The perfect texture contrast that keeps you reaching for "just one more."
- Snack, appetizer, or side – These balls fit in anywhere, from party platters to Sunday lunch spreads.
- Easy to customize – Add extra heat with hot pepper or keep it mild for the whole family.

**How to make saltfish balls**

**Ingredients you'll need**

- When it comes to making saltfish balls, each ingredient has its role.
- Saltfish (salted cod) – The star of the show. Once soaked and flaked, it adds that signature savory, briny flavor.
- Green fig (green bananas) or breadfruit – Acts as the binder to hold everything together. Green fig brings a

4. Mash with flavor – Add the mashed bananas to the flaked saltfish. Mix in onion, parsley, chives, thyme, garlic, lime juice, and black pepper. Taste now for salt if needed. Stir in one beaten egg until combined.
5. Shape the balls – Roll mixture into 2-inch balls and refrigerate for 30 minutes to firm up.
6. Coat for crispiness – Dip each ball in breadcrumbs, then into beaten eggs, and back into breadcrumbs.

Fry until golden – Heat oil and fry until crisp and golden brown. Drain on paper towels and serve warm.

**Serving Suggestions**

- Appetizer or snack – Serve with tambran sauce, pepper sauce, or cucumber chutney.
  - Party platter – Perfect finger food for limes, potlucks, or holiday spreads.
- Storage & Reheating**
- Refrigerate – Store in an airtight container for up to 3 days.
  - Freeze – Coat and freeze before frying for up to 1 month.
  - Reheat – Use oven or air fryer to crisp back up. Skip the microwave.

**Bringing it all together**

Crispy on the outside, tender on the inside, and loaded with flavor—saltfish balls are a

true Caribbean crowd-pleaser. Whether you enjoy them with tamarind sauce, tuck them into a party spread, or snack on them straight out of the fryer, they always hit the spot. – Info (excerpt) and photos via thisbagogirl.com



H A P P Y

# 47<sup>TH</sup> IN DEPENDENCE

S A I N T L U C I A

The Management and Staff of **Jamecob's Quality Construction Ltd.**, extend warm congratulations and best wishes to the Government and people of Saint Lucia.

As we reflect on our nation's journey, we recognize the strong foundations laid over the years—built through unity, resilience, and hard work.

Like quality construction, national development requires vision, commitment, and teamwork to ensure lasting progress.

We remain proud to contribute to the continued growth of Saint Lucia and look forward to helping build a stronger, more prosperous future for generations to come.



# How to Taste St. Lucia in a Day

## Savor Saint Lucia From Spices to Chocolate and Rum

**By Amanda Eyre Ward**

**O**n Saint Lucia, twin peaks called the Pitons rise overhead, and roads corkscrew through banana groves toward delicious destinations. The island's cuisine fuses West African traditions, French technique, and indigenous Caribbean knowledge with ingredients from its mineral-rich volcanic soil. For those with only a few hours in port, here's a plan for every palate.

On my first visit to St. Lucia, I asked a local where to eat. "You want to eat like a tourist or a St. Lucian?" he asked.

"A local!" I replied.

He answered with one word: "Castries."

Castries Market is a marvel with hundreds of vendors speaking English and Kwéyòl, the French-based Creole spoken across the island. Stalls are heaped with knobby dasheen roots, clenched fists of pale green christophene squash, and breadfruit with dragon-scaled skin hiding white flesh that tastes like fresh bread when roasted over fire. I discovered pyramids of nutmeg still in the shell, cinnamon bark bundled with twine, fiery scotch bonnet peppers, and the bay leaves that flavor local recipes from rum punch to pepper pot stew.

To sample cocoa tea, look for cacao beans shaped into balls or logs, often bundled with cinnamon, nutmeg, and bay leaves. The island's traditional breakfast

drink was developed by newly freed people who were formerly enslaved as a substitute for expensive imported coffee and tea. Grated into boiling water with star anise and sometimes lime zest, the cacao bean bundles become an earthy, bittersweet concoction served with tiny flour dumplings boiled directly in the pot.

Behind the main market building, hole-in-the-wall food stalls offer bouillon, a hearty one-pot stew of beef or salted pigtail, and accra, golden saltfish fritters spiked with scotch bonnet and served with pepper sauce. Try a taste of cow-foot soup, a local hangover cure, if you're feeling adventurous.

For those who prefer gazing at food rather than a map or app, book a guided expedition like a chef's tour of the market.



Photo By Matt Wild

### For the chocolate devotee

If cocoa tea isn't enough for your sweet tooth, visit Rabot Hotel, where Hotel Chocolat

has transformed a working cacao farm into an edible museum. Book the Tree to Bar Tour to taste fresh cacao pulp straight from the cracked pod (it tastes more like lychee than chocolate), watch beans ferment in wooden boxes, and roast, winnow, and temper your own bar to take home.

### For the Creole soul

To savor Creole cuisine, born when enslaved Africans merged West African cooking methods with French technique, drive the winding coast road to reach Plas Kassav, a family-run roadside bakery in the village of Canaries. Here, cassava bread has been made the same way for generations, by grating, pressing, and baking cassava root into round, chewy flatbreads with a texture somewhere between a tortilla and mochi. The flavors range from chocolate-cherry to ginger to saltfish.

Ask about paimé (also called pemmie) — a Creole dessert of cornmeal, grated pumpkin, dried coconut, cinnamon, and nutmeg, wrapped in banana leaves and boiled until firm. The leaf imparts a subtle grassy, tropical aroma. It's dense and earthy-sweet, almost like a spiced Caribbean tamale.

In Soufrière, Martha's Tables has a view of the Caribbean Sea and serves traditional home cooking. It's only open for lunch on weekdays, and reservations are required for large groups.

Those arriving at Port Castries face a 90-minute drive, but it's worth every thrilling turn. Travelers anchoring in Soufrière are a short walk from Martha's Tables and the Pitons.



Courtesy of St. Lucia Distillers

### For rum runners

St. Lucia Distillers in the Roseau Valley has been perfecting its rum since the 1930s. ToursByLocals offers half-day excursions that whisk you from Castries port to the distillery for a behind-the-scenes tour with tastings of local rums and spirits. Try Chairman's Reserve, the island's flagship aged rum, or Bounty Spiced Rum, which locals pour over ice.



Courtesy of Perch at Windjammer Landing

### For the sunset sipper

As the sky turns pink, head to the Perch at Windjammer Landing, a rooftop lounge overlooking Labrelotte Bay and the secluded white sand of Windjammer Beach. Order a sorrel cocktail, the island's ruby-red drink brewed from hibiscus calyces, steeped with cloves, cinnamon, ginger, and allspice, and served cold over ice. Tart, spicy, and impossibly refreshing — it's a perfect way to end your day in St. Lucia.

If you're in port on a Friday, stay up for the Gros Islet Friday Night Jump-Up — a weekly street party where the entire fishing village transforms into an open-air feast. Lambi — conch pounded tender and simmered in peppery sauce — is hard to find on a restaurant menu but can be purchased at the Jump-Up. Pair your lambi with a Piton beer, a crisp Pilsner perfectly suited for the tropical climate, and party like a Lucian until the music stops. — [foodandwine.com](http://foodandwine.com)



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# Green Fig and Saltfish



## Ingredients

- 1 lb. salt-fish
- 8-12 green bananas
- ¼ cup vegetable / coconut oil
- 1 medium bell pepper (seeded and chopped)
- 1 large onion (peeled and diced)
- 4 pimento peppers (seeded and thinly sliced)
- ¼ cup finely chopped chives
- 3 cloves garlic (grated)
- 2 tsp. fresh thyme
- Salt
- Black pepper
- Parsley (garnish)

## Directions for Preparing Green Fig and Saltfish

1. Rinse the green bananas and slice off both ends.
2. Make one slice lengthwise in each banana and place it in a heat-proof bowl.
3. Cover the bananas with hot water and let rest for about ten (0:10) minutes, then drain and allow to cool.
4. Carefully peel the bananas and place them in a pot of boiling water with ½ teaspoon of salt and ¼ teaspoon of oil.
5. Bring to a boil and cook for fifteen (0:15) minutes until tender, then drain and cool.
6. Diagonally slice each banana into three pieces, then set aside.
7. Rinse the saltfish, then simmer in boiling water for fifteen (0:15) minutes to remove excess salt.
8. Drain the water and repeat the previous step.
9. Clean the saltfish by removing any scales, bones, and viscera, then flake the fish with a fork and set it aside.
10. Heat the remaining oil in a saucepan over medium heat.
11. Sauté the peppers, onions, and half of the grated garlic for five (0:05) minutes until soft and fragrant.
12. Add the flaked saltfish, half of the thyme, and half of the chives.
13. Stir well and cover the pan, allowing the herbs to cook for ten (0:10) minutes.
14. Uncover and add the remaining thyme, chives, and garlic to the pot.
15. Season with salt and pepper, stir well, and turn off the heat.
16. Plate portions of green bananas and top with generous servings of saltfish.
17. Garnish with chopped parsley and serve.



## Dish Origin & History

Green Fig and Saltfish is the national dish of Saint Lucia and one of the most important expressions of the island's culinary history. "Green figs" is the local term for unripe bananas, which form the starchy base of the dish, paired with salted codfish.

The origins of the dish date back to the 19th century during the era of slavery. Bananas were abundant and inexpensive on the island, while salted cod was cheaply imported from Canada as a long-lasting protein source used in rations for enslaved people. Over time, African-descended cooks enhanced the dish with local

herbs, peppers, and seasonings, transforming it into a flavorful and deeply rooted staple.

Green Fig and Saltfish evolved from a survival meal into a symbol of national identity. It is traditionally prepared on weekends and is especially associated with Saint Lucia's Creole Day Festival in October, where it represents resilience, heritage, and cultural pride.

Today, the dish is served in homes, roadside eateries, and restaurants across the island. Its balance of tender green bananas and savory, herb-seasoned saltfish reflects Saint Lucia's history, resourcefulness, and enduring connection to Caribbean food traditions.

WISHING THE GOVERNMENT & PEOPLE OF SAINT LUCIA

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# The Pitons In Saint Lucia: Everything You Need To Know

By K. Williams, T. Thompson & W. van der Hoop

**H**ands down, Saint Lucia is one of the finer vacation destinations in the Caribbean. With plenty of sun, sea, sand, greenery, peace, quiet... and as much excitement as you can fit into your itinerary, you'll find that these shores are pure magic.

Of all the amazing things to do in Saint Lucia, climbing the Pitons is one of the most popular. These incredible twin peaks are a UNESCO World Heritage Site and a trek to the top of Gros Piton in particular, is a sure way to get your adrenaline going. Book an excursion through your resort or online, it'll without a doubt be the highlight of your trip.

### About the Pitons

Not only are the Pitons in Saint Lucia a UNESCO World Heritage Site (designated in 2004), they have over the years become a symbol commonly associated with the island. What stands out most about the Pitons is that together, they make for a majestic and carefully composed natural monument, but in actuality, they are located in two different communities on the small, volcanic, island of Saint Lucia. The Pitons are volcanic plugs (dormant), and both are located on the southwestern coast of Saint Lucia.

**Did you know?** So famous are the Pitons in and out of Saint Lucia, that the Windward and Leeward Brewery operating in Saint Lucia named a beer after them. Piton beer is light, refreshing, and might just be worth purchasing just to pop out of your bag at the summit of Gros Piton!

### Where in Saint Lucia are the Pitons located?

The Pitons are located in the south of Saint Lucia near the towns of Soufriere and Choiseul on the southwestern coast.

### Gros Piton vs Petit Piton: What's the difference?

Gros Piton is located in Soufriere, and Petit Piton a little way off in Choiseul. Though these mountains are side by side along the island's



coast, they are not identical. Gros Piton measures 2,619ft, while Petit Piton rises to 2,461ft. Gros Piton is the wider and more navigated Piton as it relates to excursions. Petit Piton is rarely climbed, and especially not during rainy weather. Some people attempt to climb Petit Piton, but special permissions and guides are required. Strenuous and steep with an unmarked trail, the Petit Piton climb is not usually offered by tour companies. Gros Piton on the other hand is frequently climbed

and includes marked trails. You can easily sign up to hike up Gros Piton through your resort or via a local tour company.

**Expert tip:** Land, sea or air, all these excursions will give a different perspective of the amazing Piton Mountains. If you're not sure which option would be best for you, do all of them. You won't get bored of this amazing sight!

### Where to get the best views

Heading south from Soufriere, you'll be treated to a marvellous view of the Pitons rising triumphantly from the ocean. You can in the same breath taking manner, take in these views from southern beaches like Sugar Beach. Hiking trails in proximity to the peaks, are also an excellent way to take in the views. And finally, a more leisurely way to appreciate the beauty of these peaks from up close is going on a Catamaran Cruise.

**Expert tip:** Saint Lucia is a great diving location, and it is possible to snorkel or go scuba diving at the foot of the Pitons while on the island. PADI® certified guests staying at any of the three Sandals all-inclusive resorts in Saint Lucia scuba dive for free (max. two tanks a day), this includes professional equipment!

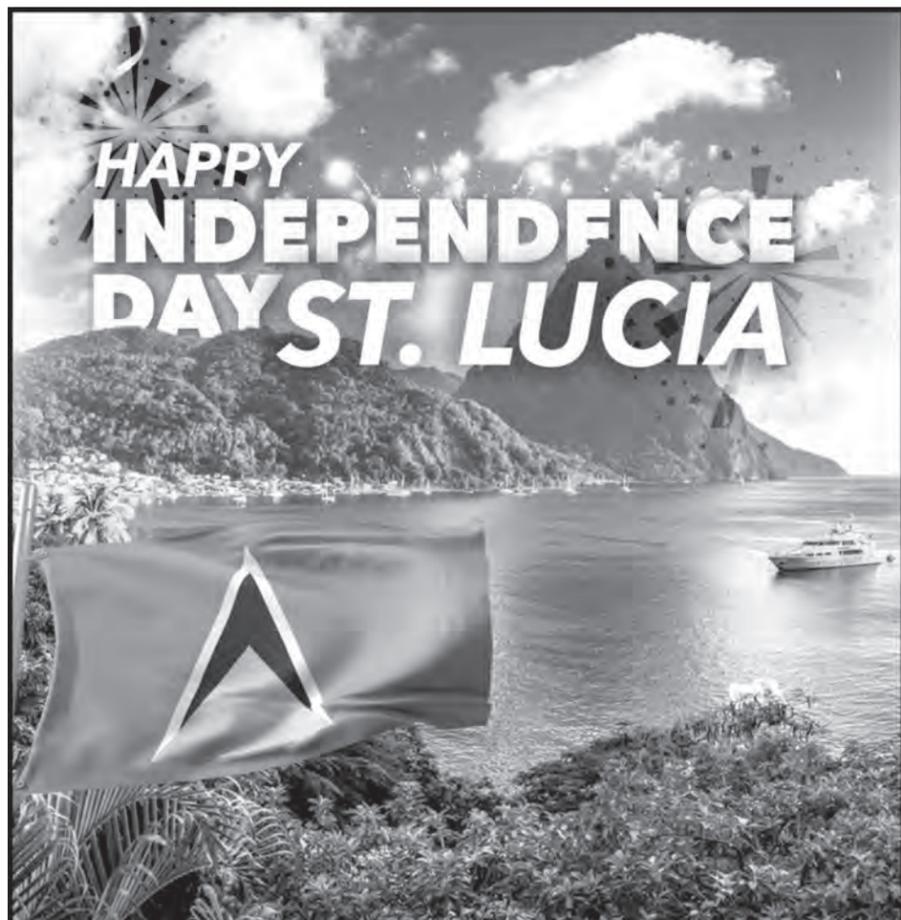
### Climbing and hiking at the Pitons

Climbing the Pitons is without a doubt one of the best things to do while in Saint Lucia. A vast majority of visitors climb Gros Piton and not the more challenging Petit Piton.

The hike up Gros Piton can take 3 to 6 hours each way, and for that reason, comfort is key. Go for footwear you'll be comfortable in for the duration of the hike (no flip flops!). Bring along sunblock and water as you're likely to be out for a half or full day.

**Expert tip:** If you don't necessarily feel like hiking for more than an hour, try out the Tet Paul Nature Trail which is located in proximity to the Pitons. This 45-minute hike will give you plenty of amazing viewpoints over Saint Lucia's famous peaks.

Cont'd on Page 31



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# The Pitons In Saint Lucia: Everything You Need To Know

Cont'd From Page 30

It is best to start the hike up Gros Piton in the early morning hours when it's cooler. You also don't want to get caught making your way back to the bottom at night fall, so plan accordingly. A tour guide is highly recommended for this excursion. Bring a camera with you as well, as the view from the top is simply divine. Find a full packing list further down this article.

**How long is the Gros Piton Trail?**

The Gros Piton Trail is about 3.2 miles (5.1 kilometres) long. The trail is rated as challenging, and offers many sights and sounds along the way, including colourful wildflowers, and other animal and plant life. The trail is accessible year-round.

**Sights along the Gros Piton Trail**

As this is a jungle expedition, you can expect to see a variety of tree, plant and wildlife species on your way to the top of Gros Piton. There are points along the way where you'll have amazing ocean views, and rest stops where you can stop to just chill and take in the ambiance. There's even points where you can see the nearby island of Saint Vincent. The views alone are enough to propel you to keep walking no matter how tired you might feel as you near the top. Though this hike can be difficult, it is by no means impossible. The victory at the summit is certainly sweet!

**The Interpretive Centre**

The Interpretive Centre in Fond Gens Libre is one of the first points you'll get to as you prepare for your trek up Gros Piton. It is more or less the point where you'll pay your fees to the guide, if these have not already been paid. Inside, there's a model of Gros Piton which your guide might refer to in order to get you familiar with the hike. Ask any questions you would like at this point.

Waypoint Coordinates: 13.8065755, -61.061749 (13°48'23.7"N 61°03'40.2"W)

**Park & Mango Trees**

Near the Interpretive Centre, you'll find the beginning of the trail. There's a rocky path your guide will show you through, and once cleared you'll get to a beautiful area filled with mango trees. If your tour is during mango season (May and June), you might even be able to pick a couple delicious ones for later!

Waypoint Coordinates: 13.80595, -61.06208 (13°48'21.4"N 61°03'43.5"W)

**Jungle Walking**

Once you get to this point, you'll be well on your way to the top of Gros Piton. It'll take a while to get to the top, but at this portion of the hike you'll basically be walking along a dirt path through the jungle, with thick overgrowth blocking the possibility of any real views. There's rocks and roots in some areas you'll have to make your way over, but this area can be navigated fairly easily with instructions from your guide.

Waypoint Coordinates: 13.8042833, -61.065681



(13°48'15.4"N 61°03'56.5"W)

**First Ocean View**

There's a point after this where you'll come around the curve of the mountain and you'll see a break in the trees which will be quite the welcome sight. The rush of cooling breeze through the open space, and the view of the ocean below will build your excitement even more for what awaits at the top. Just a little way after that, you'll be able to catch a glimpse of the summit of Gros Piton.

Waypoint Coordinates: 13.8054086, -61.0686207 (13°48'19.5"N 61°04'07.0"W)

**Halfway**

The halfway mark! The guide will let you know when you get to this point, and this announcement will definitely trigger a feeling of relief. Your reward? Amazing views of the nearby Petit Piton. Some say this is the point where things get a little more challenging, and some hikers even turn back. Whether you choose to turn back or not at this point, getting that far is still a commendable achievement!

Waypoint Coordinates: 13.8092, -61.06911 (13°48'33.1"N 61°04'08.8"W)

**Stairs**

This will feel like the point where a personal trainer turns up the heat of a workout. You'll see large stair steps here, just waiting for you to venture up. Some of these steps are cut out of dirt with logs and roots to keep the dirt stable, and others are made up of rocks and boulders. The steps of the stairs are pretty high in some places (some measuring as much as 24 inches) but there are handrails made out of sticks you can use in some areas, which will help you pull yourself to the next level. Take your time, and use your walking stick or your hands for support if you must. Slow and steady will get you there!

Waypoint Coordinates: 13.8102, -61.06761 (13°48'36.7"N 61°04'03.4"W)

**Summit of Gros Piton**

Finally, you've made it to the top! Your reward? The incredible panoramic views and the unmatched relaxation you'll get to bask in for a few moments before heading back to the bottom. Though the summit is covered with thick vegetation which makes it hard to see the views beyond, you can climb down a bit to an area with a small lookout platform. Once you make it to

the top, you'll be able to sign the summit register in the Interpretive Centre once you get back down, which will forever serve as a record of your momentous climb!

Waypoint Coordinates: 13.80978, -61.06544 (13°48'35.2"N 61°03'55.6"W)

**What to bring when hiking up Gros Piton**

Packing list of items to bring on your hike up the Gros Piton:

- Camera
- Sunscreen
- Towel
- Insect Repellent
- Swimwear (for before or after the climb)
- Cash

It's best to leave any jewelry at home, as you might lose it during the hike.

**Hiking the Pitons is not recommended if you:**

- Are pregnant
- Are physically challenged (not wheelchair accessible)
- Recently had arm/hand surgery
- Have back/neck problems
- Have motion sickness
- Have heart/respiratory issues

**How will I get there?**

There are many excursions to explore the Pitons in Saint Lucia, and you can book one easily through your resort, which would normally include transfers (but check to be sure!). The other option is to organize a taxi ride or rent a car.

**Where to stay when visiting the Pitons in Saint Lucia**

Although the Pitons are located in the South of Saint Lucia, you'll find that the north of the island is best for travelers who want to be part of the action; people who like to reconnect with nature during the day, but want to eat out, have a drink, and join the fun at night. The North of Saint Lucia is where you'll find the best beaches, restaurants, hotels and all-inclusive resorts.

It takes a 60-minute, or 90-minute scenic drive to get from north to south in Saint Lucia, depending on whether you're travelling on the east or west coast.

Sandals features three all-inclusive resorts in this area. Sandals Grande St. Lucian in Rodney Bay, located right next to Pigeon Island, is the most lively of the three with amazing views from the beach. Sandals Regency La Toc is known for its amazing cliff side views, and villa suites with private swimming pools. Last but not least, Sandals Halcyon Beach is the more intimate and quiet resort of the three, with the beautiful Paradise Pool.

The best part: when staying at one of these resorts, you'll get free access to all three Sandals Resorts on the island (including free transfers in between the resorts). This means any Sandals guest in Saint Lucia has access to 27 restaurants, 21 bars, and golf at no extra cost. It's all included in your stay. - Article (excerpt) via sandals.com

We are proud to join in the celebration of *47 years of Independence* with the Government and People of Saint Lucia from

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# Breaking Travel News Investigates: Saint Lucia: the light in an evolving Caribbean

While in the destination for the World Travel Awards Caribbean, Sapphire Goss takes in some of the sites of this island of contrasts.

There are islands that fit the typical idea of the Caribbean: sugar-white sands, turquoise seas, palm trees. Saint Lucia has those elements but is also wilder, darker, greener. A place where mountains rise like the curve of a reclining body, their slopes veiled in verdant rainforest, where light smears across Castries harbour in molten shafts, and where the west coast road pitches you dizzyingly through vertiginous climbs and descents, weaving past shacks strung with fairy lights, hand-painted murals on shipping containers, and the scent of



frying fish drifting from roadside grills.

Saint Lucia, often translated as the "saint of light," is an island of contrasts. Around 70% of its surface is rainforest. The soil here is compared to gold with bananas, cacao, nutmeg, and fruit thriving abundantly, and it is not uncommon for a guide to pluck guava or mango from a tree and press it into your hand, juice still warm from the sun. The land feels primordial, everything cloaked in ivy and jewelled flora, as though some submerged civilisation had been overtaken by Eden itself.

For tourism, these qualities offer a unique experience. The Caribbean is seeing powerful new trends, expanding from popular all-inclusives, honeymoons and cruises toward regenerative, community-driven experiences, demand for wellness rooted in nature and a hunger for the authentic for example Creole cuisine, fishing



hike through luscious flowers and glittering forest streams to a waterfall plunge pool, and finally the Sulphur Springs where mineral-rich mud rejuvenates body and skin. Lunch is served Creole-style: fish fresh from the net, ground provisions from the soil, spices that linger on the tongue. Storytellers like Crystal, brimming with wit and warmth, connect travellers to local culture in a way no brochure ever could.

Visitors are now increasingly seeking this kind of immersion within a destination. Caribbean tourism reports highlight the growing appeal of boutique accommodations, eco-lodges, and homestays that offer flexibility and intimacy. For



Saint Lucia, this aligns with the rise of brightly painted fishing villages on the west coast that welcome visitors for an authentic experience of local everyday life. Strings of cosy lights illuminate rustic bars, you can dive or snorkel around crags, caves, cliffs and reefs shimmering with luminous fish.

Wellness tourism too is flourishing here. Beyond yoga retreats and luxury spas, Saint Lucia offers geothermal healing, forest bathing in emerald canopies, and sea-based therapies that embody the "blue mind" philosophy (the theory that being close to water puts us into a healing, meditative state). The island is a natural fit for those seeking



Congratulations and best wishes to the **Government and People of Saint Lucia** on the observance of

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to slow down from the chaos of everyday life and renew.

Saint Lucia's appeal is not only aesthetic or ecological. It is strategic. While the wider Caribbean faces rising operational costs and competition from cheaper destinations, Saint Lucia can carve a niche in authentic, immersive, and sustainable travel. Multi-destination tourism is on the rise and Saint Lucia's

villages, roadside rum shacks, and cultural immersion. Saint Lucia is well-placed: its bubbling mud baths and volcanic springs offer more than spa-style pampering; its black-sand beaches and geothermal vents speak to travellers seeking depth, not just surface.

On the road to Soufrière, the island's tourism offering comes into focus. A jeep safari with Island Tours winds down the coast, led by the charismatic and entertaining Crystal and the driver Johnathan ("PhD pothole dodger"). There are stops for snapshots of the jewel-like Marigot Bay, a short

proximity to Martinique, Dominica, and Saint Vincent makes it a natural hub for eco-cultural circuits. There are challenges, of course such as sargassum seaweed, concerns over crime, and infrastructure strain but resilience is woven into the island's story.

This is something more than a Caribbean paradise of travel posters. It is lush, unexpected, and alive. Jungle paths, black-sand coves, bubbling mud, cliffs riddled with caves, waterfalls crashing into hidden pools. A place where even the mountains appear clothed in emerald green robes, a place where time itself moves differently,



a place that is experienced, absorbed, lived. In a Caribbean recalibrating its tourism identity, it is precisely this singularity that may be Saint Lucia's greatest light. - Article (excerpt) and photos via [breakingtravelnews.com](http://breakingtravelnews.com)

# Health and Wellness in Saint Lucia



Credit: sulphurspringstlucia.com

## Sulphur Springs

**The world famous Sulphur Springs in Soufriere are mineral rich mud pools perfect for balneotherapy... healing through the practice of bathing in therapeutic waters. It is thought that a dip in the sulphur springs for three consecutive days rids one of negative energy and blockages.**

Indulge in rejuvenating and restorative treatments like no other. Home to the region's only drive-in volcano, you will experience a unique site plus benefit from the therapeutic power of the hot mineral-rich springs. This natural phenomenon, named the Qualibou Caldera, leaves a marked impression upon those who stand above peering into its murky depths. Yet, in fact, the Sulphur Springs act as a safety valve, constantly releasing subterranean pressure, and stabilizing the area.

A visit to Soufriere is an absolute must for all wellness-minded visitors to Saint Lucia. Soak in the restored baths in the Diamond Falls Botanical Gardens or in the bathing pools at the nearby Sulphur Springs with purifying mud. The mud is said to detoxify the body and helps heal sunburns, eczema, sore joints and more. It's the ultimate natural spa treatment. Local legend insists that this experience will make you look and feel younger!

### Forest Bathing/Tours (Edmund Forest Trail)

A 3 1/2 hour hike through the island's lush

rainforest where you get to take in the flora and fauna as well as the En Bas Saut waterfalls. This is also available with Rainforest Sky Adventures and some hotels such as Hotel Chocolat offer forest bathing walks.

Discover the many plants in Saint Lucia that have been part of traditional Caribbean healthcare for generations, and are now being accepted and incorporated into modern medicine.

With over 1,300 different species of wild

Credit: sulphurspringstlucia.com



flowering plants and 150 species of ferns squeezed into less than 620 square kilometres, Saint Lucia is a botanical paradise.

Follow our Botanical Trail which takes you to attractive gardens and parks across Saint Lucia, where guides can show you some of the most important plants for natural health remedies and medicines.

To get your green fingers going, here is a list highlighting some of the most popular plants you'll find on the island.

#### They include:

1. Cymbopogon citratus (lemongrass)  
What it does: Anti-oxidant and immune

boosting, it is thought to be effective against: dandruff, stomach cramps, fever, common cold, exhaustion, anxiety, insomnia, headaches, and can also be used as an antiseptic, astringent and mosquito repellent.

2. Lippia Alba (Santa Maria)

What it does: Thought to be stress-busting, effective against colds, fevers, indigestion, bowel complaints, and yeast infections in any part of the body.

3. Justicia pectoralis (carpenter's grass)

What it does: A relaxing tonic, it is considered helpful for the management of endometriosis, menopausal symptoms, PMT, and menstrual pains due to its strong estrogenic, progestogenic, and anti-inflammatory properties. Also used for fever, cough, colds, sinus problems and to aid circulation.

4. Justicia secunda (St John's Bush)

What it does: Used for centuries to help women, it is thought to stimulate the womb, fallopian tubes and ovaries, assist with the proper functioning of the reproductive organs and aid menstrual cramps. Excellent to prepare for pregnancy, but should not be taken during pregnancy.

5. Momordica charantia (bitter melon)

What it does: Detoxifies by causing the liver to work more efficiently, thought to help improve skin conditions, help control diabetes and normalise blood pressure, and has strong anti-oxidant properties.

6. Morinda citrifolia (noni fruit)

What it does: Thought to boost the immune system, energise the body, normalise blood sugar in diabetics, and enhance prostate health. Also has pain relief properties, and can decrease swellings.

Cont'd on page 34

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# Health and Wellness in Saint Lucia

Cont'd from page 33

**7. Moringa oleifera (tree of life)**

What it does: Considered one of the most nutrient rich plants on the planet, gram for gram moringa leaves contain 7x the vitamin C in oranges, 4 x the calcium in milk, 4 x the vitamin A in carrots, 2 x the protein in milk and 3 x the potassium in bananas.

It is believed to improve the immune system, promote energy, beautify the skin, promote the functioning of the liver and kidneys, assist digestion, be an anti-inflammatory, help reduce cholesterol and normalise blood pressure, regulate the thyroid, help prevent dementia, and have antibacterial, antifungal and antioxidant properties.

**8. Ocimum basilicum (basil)**

What it does: With anti-inflammatory and anti-oxidant properties, it is considered effective against inflammatory bowel diseases, is antibacterial and reduces the effects of oxidative stress as well as helping the body adapt to stress.

**9. Petiveria alliacea (horney goat weed)**

What it does: A traditional remedy to treat cancer, modern research has shown extracts can indeed assist in cancer treatment. It is thought to stimulate the immune system, lower blood sugar in diabetes, help with arthritic pain and rheumatism, bring on menstruation, help remove mucus and phlegm from the body and help fight infections.

**10. Pimenta racemose (bay leaf)**

What it does: Believed to act as a pain relief, soothe the stomach (assisting with IBS, coeliac disease and diarrhoea), fight migraines, protect against cardiovascular diseases, lower cholesterol, strengthen the immune system, have a sedative effect, promote hair health, alleviate respiratory conditions, and work as an effective remedy for sore throats, coughs and colds.



mental clarity and create emotional stability. There are tours which will take you to discover various waterfalls or you can explore:

- \*Diamond Waterfalls
- \*Toraille Waterfalls
- \*La Tille Waterfalls and Gardens
- \*Piton Falls
- \*Superman Falls

**Botanical Trail**

Immerse yourself in the natural wonders of Saint Lucia with a trip down her Botanical Trail. As you traverse the island's idyllic gardens and serene parks, you'll encounter more than 1,300 different species of wild flowering plants and 150 species of ferns; all packed into fewer than 620 square kilometers. These plants have long been part of traditional Caribbean medicine, and only now are becoming accepted by conventional medical practitioners. See for yourself why Saint Lucia is among the Caribbean's most pristine botanical paradises. – Info via [stlucia.org](http://stlucia.org)



**Bird Watching**

Bird watching is a mindfulness which improves mental health and has been proven to have calming and centering effects. A recent study proves that seeing and hearing birds can improve one's mental well being for up to 8 hours. The island boasts myriad species of colorful birds. A few places offer this activity.

- \*Millet Bird Sanctuary
- \*Fond Doux Eco Resort
- \*Anse Chastanet
- \*Jade Mountain

**Chasing Waterfalls**

The sights and sounds of waterfalls have been proven to improve physical and mental health and wellbeing. The sound of running water helps to diminish depression, increase

*Happy*  
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# 47 On This Day in History...

Her Royal Highness Princess Alexandra delivers the first Throne Speech to the Houses of newly independent Saint Lucia. (Photo: St. Lucia National Archives Authority via The Star)



45 years ago: Princess Alexandra, Saint Lucia's first Governor General, Sir Allen Lewis, and Sir John Compton celebrating the birth of an independent Saint Lucia (Credit: Vincent Haynes via Facebook)

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## The Role of Education in an Independent Nation



45 years ago: Princess Alexandra, Saint Lucia's first Governor General, Sir Allen Lewis, and Sir John Compton celebrating the birth of an independent Saint Lucia (Credit: Vincent Haynes via Facebook)



45 years ago: Princess Alexandra, Saint Lucia's first Governor General, Sir Allen Lewis, and Sir John Compton celebrating the birth of an independent Saint Lucia (Credit: Vincent Haynes via Facebook)

**E**ducation plays a crucial role in driving economic growth and development. It is widely recognized as a key determinant of a country's economic performance and competitiveness. From an individual perspective, education equips individuals with the necessary skills and knowledge to participate in the workforce and contribute to economic productivity. Moreover, education fosters innovation, entrepreneurship, and

technological advancements, which are vital for sustained economic growth.

- Investment in education is essential for developing human capital, which refers to the skills, knowledge, and abilities of individuals that contribute to economic productivity. Countries with a highly educated workforce tend to have higher levels of productivity and innovation, leading to increased economic output. For example, countries like Finland and South Korea have made significant investments in education and have consistently ranked high in global competitiveness and innovation indices.

- Education also plays a crucial role in reducing income inequality and promoting social mobility. By providing equal opportunities for all individuals to access quality education, societies can reduce disparities in income and wealth distribution.

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# The Role of Education in an Independent Nation

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Education enables individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds to acquire the necessary skills to secure better-paying jobs and improve their socioeconomic status. For instance, studies have shown that investing in early childhood education programs can lead to long-term benefits, including higher earnings and lower rates of poverty.

**- In addition to its direct economic impact,** education also has indirect effects on **economic growth.** A well-educated population fosters a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship, driving technological advancements and creating new industries. For instance, the Silicon Valley in the United States emerged as a hub for technological innovation due to the presence of leading educational institutions like Stanford University and the University of California, Berkeley. The graduates from these institutions have played a pivotal role in the growth of the tech industry, leading to job creation and economic prosperity.

Considering the role of education in economic growth, it is essential to focus on effective policies and strategies to maximize the impact of education investments. Several options can be explored to ensure the best outcomes:

**- Enhancing access to education:** It is crucial to ensure that education is accessible to all individuals, regardless of their socioeconomic background. Governments should invest in infrastructure, such as schools and educational facilities, in underserved areas to improve access. Additionally, providing financial assistance, such as scholarships and grants, can help mitigate the financial barriers to education.

**- Improving the quality of education:** Simply increasing access to education is not enough; the quality of education also matters. Governments should invest in teacher training programs, curriculum development, and educational resources to enhance the quality of education. Additionally, promoting innovative teaching methods and incorporating technology in classrooms can improve learning outcomes.

**- Investing in vocational and technical education:** While traditional academic

education is valuable, vocational and technical education can play a significant role in addressing the skills gap and meeting the demands of the labor market. Governments should invest in vocational training programs that provide individuals with practical skills and knowledge needed in specific industries. For example, Germany's dual education system, which combines classroom learning with on-the-job training, has been successful in preparing individuals for careers in technical fields.

**- Promoting lifelong learning:** Education should not be limited to formal schooling but should extend throughout an individual's lifespan. Governments and employers should encourage continuous learning and upskilling by providing opportunities for professional development and retraining. Lifelong learning ensures that individuals can adapt to changing job market demands and contribute to economic growth.

Education plays a vital role in economic growth by developing human capital, fostering innovation, and reducing income inequality. To maximize the impact of education investments, policymakers should focus on enhancing access, improving quality, investing in vocational education, and promoting lifelong learning. By prioritizing education, surplus spending units can contribute to sustainable economic development and ensure long-term prosperity.

## The Role of Education in Economic Empowerment

Education plays a pivotal role in shaping the economic empowerment of individuals, communities, and nations. In the context of child economic empowerment, education becomes a powerful catalyst for unlocking potential and fostering sustainable economic success. Let us delve into the nuances of this critical relationship, exploring various dimensions and perspectives.

### Foundational Knowledge and Skills:

- Education equips children with fundamental knowledge and skills necessary for economic participation. Literacy, numeracy, and critical thinking abilities form the bedrock upon which economic empowerment is built.

- Example: A child who learns basic arithmetic can better manage finances, calculate interest

education can advocate for their rights and participate in economic decision-making.

### Entrepreneurship and Innovation:

- Education fosters an entrepreneurial mindset and encourages innovation. It teaches problem-solving, creativity, and adaptability—essential traits for economic success.

- Example: A young entrepreneur who learns about market dynamics and business management creates a successful startup, generating employment opportunities.

### Financial Literacy:

- Education should include financial literacy components. Understanding concepts like budgeting, saving, and investing empowers children to make informed financial choices.

- Example: A teenager who learns about compound interest realizes the long-term benefits of saving early and investing wisely.

### Global Competitiveness:

- In an interconnected world, education enhances a nation's global competitiveness. A well-educated workforce attracts foreign investment, drives technological advancements, and participates in international trade.

- Example: A country with a strong education system produces skilled professionals who contribute to its economic standing on the global stage.

### Social Mobility and Equality:

- Education serves as a ladder for social mobility. It allows individuals to transcend their socio-economic backgrounds and aspire to higher economic positions.

- Example: A child born into poverty, through education, becomes a successful professional, narrowing the wealth gap.

In summary, education is not merely a means to an end; it is the cornerstone of economic empowerment. By investing in quality education for children, societies can unlock their full potential, create sustainable economic growth, and build a brighter future for generations to come.

### The Role of Education in Economic Privilege

Education is often seen as a key driver of social mobility and a tool for breaking the cycle of poverty. However, the role of education in economic privilege is complex and multifaceted. On the one hand, education can provide individuals with the skills and knowledge they need to succeed in the workforce and earn higher wages. On the other hand, access to quality education is often tied to economic privilege, creating a self-perpetuating cycle of advantage and disadvantage.

### Education and the One Percent Rule

The One Percent Rule states that the top one percent of earners in a society hold a disproportionate amount of wealth and power. Education is often seen as a way to break into this elite group, as higher levels of education are associated with higher earnings and greater social status.

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**British High Commission  
Castries**

**The British High Commission** extends our warmest congratulation to the Government and people of Saint Lucia on the observance of the 47th Anniversary of your Independence, under the Theme – **"Douvan Ansanm - Nourishing Our People, Strengthening Our Nation,"**

The government of the United Kingdom values and celebrates the many achievements of Saint Lucia and remains committed to strengthening the longstanding friendship and cooperation between our two countries.



Happy 47<sup>th</sup> INDEPENDENCE Anniversary

May unity and prosperity continue to guide your nation forward

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rates, and make informed decisions about savings and investments.

### Human Capital Development:

- Education contributes to the development of human capital—the collective skills, knowledge, and health of a population. A well-educated workforce enhances productivity, innovation, and adaptability.

- Example: A child who receives quality education grows up to become a skilled worker, contributing to economic growth through their expertise.

### Breaking the Cycle of Poverty:

- Education disrupts intergenerational poverty by providing opportunities for upward mobility. When children receive education, they are less likely to remain trapped in low-income cycles.

- Example: A girl from an impoverished family who attends school may break free from the cycle of early marriage and limited economic prospects.

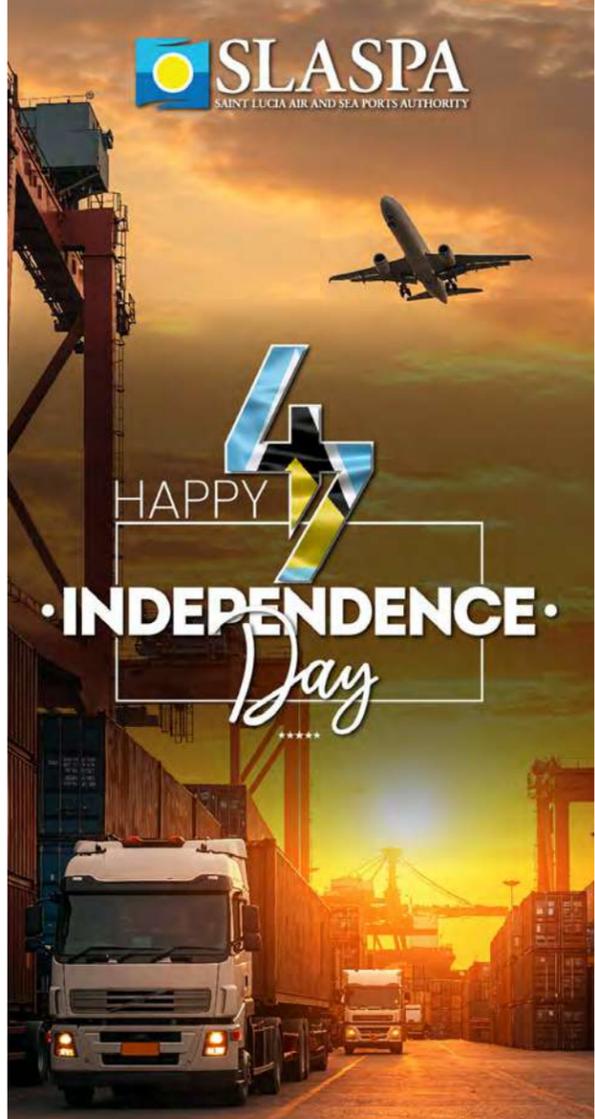
### Empowering Marginalized Groups:

- Education can empower marginalized communities, including girls, ethnic minorities, and children with disabilities. It promotes inclusivity and equal access to economic resources.

- Example: A child from an indigenous community who gains



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HAPPY 47<sup>th</sup> INDEPENDENCE Day



# Another Independence Anniversary

*This article was written in 2022 in celebration of Saint Lucia's 43rd Independence Anniversary. Read the article and compare it to today's situation. Have we improved since?*

**We are at the cusp of yet another February 22, the day in 1979 when Saint Lucia gained its Independence from Britain - 43 years ago to be exact. And just as in the last 42 years, government is set to launch a programme of activities to honour the day.**

A look back at 43 years of Independence to see how far we have come, or how far we should have been at age 43 is a worthy exercise, one undertaken with the hope that the powers that be recognise the need for introspection, an exercise we deem valuable in planning the country's foray into new activities or spheres, this year and the years ahead.

Looking back, however, is just as important as looking forward if we want to avoid past mistakes and tackle unexpected obstacles effectively as we forge ahead.

We believe in exposing our achievements over the years, not only as a reminder to the naysayers who believe we are incapable of success, but to serve as a catalyst for us to keep on striving forward for bigger and better successes.

Many Saint Lucians over the years have made us proud. They have earned the respect of their peers locally, regionally and internationally in their respective fields and showed the world that a micro-size country like ours can produce the very best.

Today we uplift the Saint Lucia Electricity Services, LUCELEC for short. Wherever we may roam LUCELEC stands proudly in the hearts and minds of Saint Lucians as a company which has the island's electricity on lock, meaning island wide steady electricity coverage. The company has not only moved into the modern age, but has a work ethic that brings joy to consumers.

The National Insurance Corporation (NIC) is another outstanding success story in Saint Lucia's 43-year-old history. Its importance to almost every Saint Lucian, irrespective of political leaning cannot be overstated.

The harmonisation of our air and sea ports under the Saint Lucia Air and Sea Ports Authority (SLASPA) is another achievement Saint Lucians can be proud of.

Our indigenous banks and credit unions are success stories as well as they have played and continue to play significant roles over the years in how we live, how the country develops and keeping businesses afloat.

The Water and Sewerage Company (WASCO) could have done better over the years but we cannot deny the genius of the Roseau Dam and the water treatment plant at Ciceron.

We have had our failures as well over the



Photo credit: GOSL

years, thanks in large measure to political shortsightedness, political greed and a lack of political will by too many of our leaders and a large swath of a clueless population, bent only on seeing their political party in power.

There is no reasonable explanation for our road structure to be in the poor condition it is currently in when a road tax is being paid to maintain it. We are still lost for words over the amount of time spent travelling from Castries to Gros Islet.

Too much productivity time is lost traversing this short stretch of road on any given day, a statistical fact which should have been acted on long ago to shorten the travel time, which if done would automatically increase the productivity levels in certain areas.

Too many problems besiege our educational system, which were exposed by COVID-19. Our experiment with online education due to the closure of schools as a result of COVID-19 showed how backward we have been on that score, despite our Ministry of Education being

choked with university graduates in all fields relating to education.

Then there is political tribalism. This overly loyal affinity Saint Lucians have to their respective political party results in a lack of continuity in

the country's development as is regularly seen when an incumbent party loses an election, as projects are stopped, funds are redirected or halted and jobs are lost, sometimes permanently.

Political tribalism in the Saint Lucian context has had devastating consequences as has been seen in times gone by. The country has suffered through civil protest and disorder, drug smuggling and abuse, civil disobedience, horrifying criminal acts, outright disrespect for its leaders, just to name some of the ills of political tribalism.

We could go on but the point has been made. As we join every Saint Lucian and friends of our beloved country in celebrating our 43rd Year of Independence, we call on our political leaders to rely not only on their own collective strength to move the country forward, but also seek wisdom and strength from above, as only through divine help can Saint Lucia truly overcome its obstacles.

## 2026 Independence Theme

Saint Lucia's 47th Anniversary of Independence on February 22, 2026, is celebrated under the theme "Douvan Ansanm: Nourishing Our People, Strengthening Our Nation". This theme emphasizes national unity, resilience, and a people-first approach, with



celebrations including a Baton Relay and the official Military Parade.

### Key aspects of this year's theme:

- Significance: The theme "Douvan Ansanm" translates to "Forward Together," signaling a focus on collective progress, cultural pride, and economic development.

- Focus Areas: The campaign highlights "nourishing" the nation through improved health, eating

local food, and investing in community growth, aiming to build a stronger, more self-reliant country.

- Activities: Celebrations include a National Independence Baton Relay and the main parade on February 22, 2026.

- Observance: While Independence Day is Sunday, February 22, it is observed with a public holiday on Monday, February 23, 2026.

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# 2025 Year in Review: A Reflection on Key Issues

**In its 2025 Year in Review, THE VOICE offers a concise overview of significant issues that have influenced both our community and the nation as a whole.**

This report highlights the pressing matters that shaped our experiences and responses over the past year. Readers are encouraged to reflect on these developments and their impacts as we move forward into the future.

**The highlights include:**

- Health
- Education
- Politics
- Business /Technology
- Agriculture
- Manufacturing
- Tourism
- Youth Development
- Housing
- Industrial Relations /Labour
- Social / Community Relations
- Sports

**Industrial Relations/Labour: January 2025 PM Pierre Promises No Industrial Disputes**

Prime Minister Philip J. Pierre explicitly stated that there will be no industrial dispute with the trade unions regarding wage negotiations.

During his recent End-of-Year Media Conference, the Prime Minister underlined the necessity for effective pay discussions between the Civil Service Association (CSA) and the Government's Negotiating Team (GNT).

He expects swift action, urging the GNT to move forward with discussions with public servants expeditiously.

**More Access to Visitors for Dry Goods**

**Vendors**

Sunday's (January 12) meeting of members of the Saint Lucia Vendors Association was an exciting one as it dealt with the developments planned for the Castries Seaport and its environs which includes the vendors arcade where the vendors are presently located.

Peter "Ras Ipa" Isaac, President of the Saint Lucia Dry Goods Vendors Association, stated that the membership was energized and prepared for the upcoming Biennial General Meeting. Isaac underscores the importance of this meeting, declaring it a pivotal moment for the association's evolution and a critical step towards empowering members to take decisive ownership of their business ventures.

**Social /Community Relations PM Pierre: Saint Lucia is on an upward developmental trajectory despite challenges**

While acknowledging that Saint Lucia has made significant strides in global sports, tourism, commercial and social endeavours -Prime Minister Philip P Pierre noted that the benefits accrued from these enterprises should ultimately benefit citizens of the country.



Addressing issues at the recent End-of-Year Media Conference, PM Pierre said, it is important for the people to benefit from the exploits of their icons.

He referred to the accomplishments of Julien "Juju" Alfred - winning Gold and Silver Medals at last August's Paris Olympics, along with other major global successes and accolades, as well as, other Saint Lucian achievers globally.

Saint Lucia Takes Bold Steps Toward Inclusive Development with IT Support for Vulnerable Populations

Major social agencies are making decisive moves to bridge the Educational and Service Delivery Gaps within the Saint Lucian populace.

*Cont'd on page 39*



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# 2025 Year in Review: A Reflection on Key Issues

Cont'd from page 38

In a strong demonstration of commitment, the Ministry of Equity, Social Justice, and Empowerment, together with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB), recently held a significant handover ceremony of IT equipment under the Safety Nets for Vulnerable Populations Affected by the Coronavirus.

This initiative underscores the ministry's unwavering dedication to resilience, empowerment, and inclusive development for Saint Lucia's vulnerable groups. At the ceremony in December, Tricia Leo, the Project Coordinator, underscored the initiative's crucial role as a direct counter to challenges exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

**- Sports**

Selena Ross Joins Windies for ICC Under-19 Women's T20 World Cup

Selena Ross, another young athlete from Saint Lucia is set to represent the West Indies Under-19 Women's team.

She will be part of the West Indies team for the highly anticipated ICC Under-19 Women's T20 World Cup in Malaysia.

This marks her second appearance representing the 'Windies,' after her impressive



Selena Ross (Photo credit: CWI)



Minister Joachim Henry (2nd from left) and other officials at the handover ceremony

debut performance against the USA Under-19s last July.

During that five-match series in Trinidad and Tobago, the 17-year-old left-arm fast bowler took the lead, claiming five wickets and achieving the best match figures of the series with 3-12. She was also instrumental in Team Saint Lucia's victory in the Windward Islands Championship earlier this year, which culminated in her senior Windward Islands debut in March.

**Entertainment - Music & Arts**

**Ashanti Honoured**

Local calypsonian Herman Hippolyte (also known as "De Ashanti") was recently honoured with a plaque acknowledging his contribution to music in Saint Lucia.

The Cultural Development Foundation (CDF) recognized the artiste on , December 30, during a brief function with support from his family and CDF staffers

**The St. Lucia Visitor Channel at 25: Celebrating Innovation and Growth in Tourism**

The St. Lucia Visitor Channel is proud to mark a milestone celebrating 25 years of promoting Saint Lucia as a premier travel destination.

Since its inception, the Visitor Channel has consistently evolved, adapting to the ever-changing landscape of technology, while maintaining its reputation as a vital source of local information for visitors and residents. The channel remains a vital and effective mass communication tool and is now available to other OECS islands.

Given the digital world is transforming how

we communicate, the Visitor Channel has embraced online platforms, blending traditional and modern approaches to hospitality marketing.

Its commitment to delivering relevant content about local history, culture, tourism awareness, and opportunities has ensured its continued relevance in Saint Lucia's tourism landscape, making certain to also include older and less tech-savvy audiences.

**Housing**

**DCA Set to Implement New Land Development Regulations**

The island's Development Control Authority (DCA) is set to implement new land development regulations that integrate the Saint Lucia Building Code with Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) regulations.

The purpose of these changes is to improve planning and effectively encourage sustainable development. Beginning March 1, 2025, the DCA will implement these mandatory regulations across various sectors, including building codes, land development, and EIA regulations.

Karen Augustin, the Chief Planning Officer and Executive Secretary of the DCA emphasised the importance of this action.

"These regulations have been long overdue since we have seen substantive regulations enacted under the Physical Department Act since 2001," she stated.

After 24 years, the DCA is ready to implement these essential regulations. It will start by distributing application forms and detailing the related fees.

Cont'd on page 40

**Happy 47th Anniversary of Independence Saint Lucia**

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# 2025 Year in Review: A Reflection on Key Issues

Cont'd from page 39

## Business / Technology Saint Lucia's Data Processing Systems To be Improved

Saint Lucia is preparing to improve its data processing infrastructure under the continuing Data for Decision-Making (DDM) project led by the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS).

A high-level delegation of key stakeholders is actively analysing and optimising the country's data systems in partnership with the World Bank.

In December, the World Bank (WB) collaborated with OECS officials and the Government of Saint Lucia to conduct a detailed assessment and review of performance measures, clearing the way to complete this crucial effort.

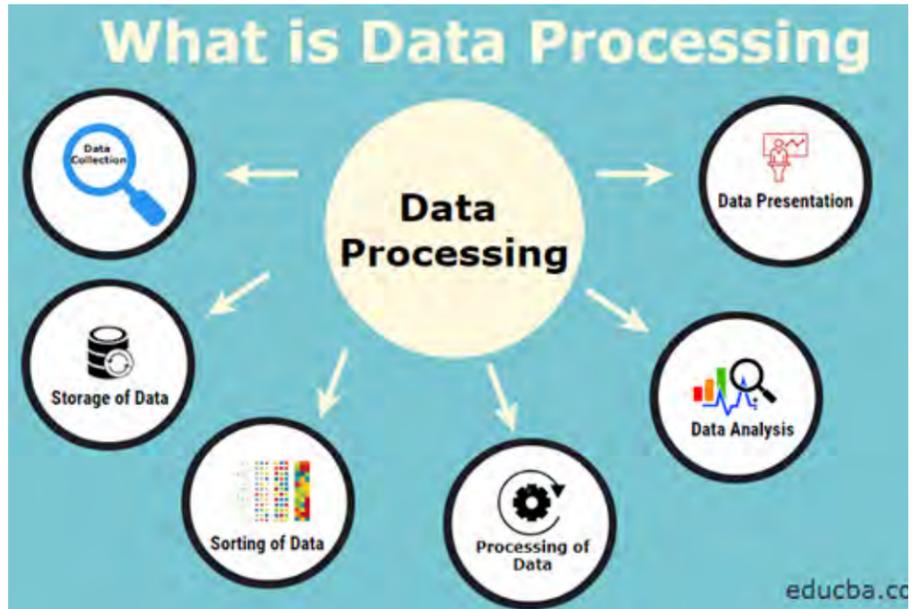
## Electronic Travel Authorisation Takes Effect in the UK

## Saint Lucians Must Obtain Document Beforehand

An Electronic Travel Authorization (ETA) system is now in effect in the United Kingdom



Heathrow Airport (Photo credit: stv.tv)



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(UK). British High Commissioner for the Eastern Caribbean Scott Fursse donn-Wood said at a press conference that Saint Lucians who would like to visit the UK must obtain an ETA beforehand.

## But the rule doesn't apply to Saint Lucians alone.

"This is a global programme," he said, that it's used by many countries and most travellers will be familiar with it.

However, he stated, "If you aren't granted one, you then have to apply for a full visa to enter the United Kingdom, but for the vast majority of people, it's a simple process. It's not even a piece of paper or a stamp on your passport, it's digitally connected and your passport then gives you full access as you would be used to."



# Sir John Compton: A Life in Politics

*Pete Ninvalle and team in St Lucia*

*Additional reporting and images by BBC Caribbean*

**O**n September 1st 1939, the day Adolf Hitler invaded Poland, 13 year-old John George Melville Compton also entered another country. But his move was by invitation.

He had left his birthplace on Canouan (in St Vincent and the Grenadines) to begin a new life in neighbouring St Lucia.

It could not have been predicted then



that 40 years later John Compton would lead his adopted homeland into independence and be affectionately referred to, in a country where he was not born, as 'Father of the Nation'.

Young John Compton had gone to St Lucia ahead of his mother Ethel, who joined him later. They had been invited by his uncle - and her brother - Mailings Compton, who had also made the short trip from Canouan to Castries.

Mailings' wife had died, and he wanted his sister to come and help him out in Saint Lucia.

It was at the Castries Intermediate School that John Compton would form boyhood friendships which later matured into political alliances: Henry Giraudy, George Mallet and Maurice Mason.

His quest for a sound education took him to Curacao in the Netherlands Antilles, then to London where he studied economics and political science at the London School of Economics, and then law at Gray's Inn.

**Politics beckoned**

A cousin, Jacques Compton, recalls that in his student days, John Compton and two other companions, Claudius Thomas and late Maurice Mason would meet every Sunday afternoon in London, where they would discuss politics.

John Compton returned to St Lucia from London in 1954 and joined the St Lucia Labour Party which was in power at the time.

He had expressed interest in 'contributing tangibly to the development of his adopted home as a politician'.

One of his first battles was fought over the plight of the workers on the sugar plantations which brought him into conflict with the members of the 'propertied class'.

He was branded as a rebel and a communist by many of them, but to the labourers, he was a God-send.

John Compton went on to get his first ministerial posting as Trade Minister in the SLP government of Chief Minister George Charles from 1951 to 1963.

But problems developed between John Compton and George Charles.

Compton's detractors claim he'd outfoxed Charles and 'stabbed him in the back'.

Compton quit the Labour Party and established his own National Labour Movement in 1963.

**Boyhood friends to political allies**

He was soon having talks with a party headed by his boyhood friend George Mallet.

On Easter Sunday of 1964, Compton's National Labour Movement and the People's Progressive Party (PPP) of George Mallet and Wilfred St Clair Daniel consummated their new relationship, with the United Workers Party becoming the product of their union.

The stage was being set for a dramatic twist in the politics of St Lucia.

Taking centre stage in the unfolding drama, would be two brothers, J.M.D Bousquet and Alan Bousquet, at the time both members of the ruling St Lucia Labour Party.

Both had resigned from the party effectively toppling the administration that had governed for thirteen years.

In the general elections that followed in which the Bousquet brothers would contest as Independents, John Compton's United Workers Party won six of the ten seats in the House of Legislature.

The brothers subsequently joined Compton's UWP, strengthening his hand and putting him firmly in the driving seat.

The UWP won the next elections in 1969 and 1974.

During that time Compton guided St Lucia into becoming an Associated State with Britain (March 1st, 1967).

While starting the political process that would eventually lead to a severing of colonial ties with Britain, he had also earlier embarked on a personal journey (more of a mission by his zeal of pursuing his dreams) of wooing one Janice Clarke, daughter of the island's Governor General Sir Frederick Clarke.

It was not quite 'love at first sight'.

Lady Janice Clarke recalls an incident when her father, Sir Frederick, insisted that she pay her respects to the then Premier, one John Compton.

She was not impressed but followed her father's instructions.

John and Janice were married in 1968.

**Independence**

As St Lucia approached the general elections of 1979, John Compton had independence on his mind.

It was felt that the opposition St Lucia Labour Party, which had regrouped after suffering two consecutive election defeats at the hands of their former colleague, was not in favour of independence.

Some SLP stalwarts rejected that, but the pros and cons of completely severing ties with Britain were hotly debated.

Despite the controversy, St Lucia under John Compton attained independence on February 22nd, 1979.

It was undoubtedly the most significant feather in John Compton's cap up to that time, but many years later he would ruefully admit that independence was not

his first choice.

More so perhaps, because the 1979 general elections which should, by all accounts, have capped that most significant political achievement for John Compton, ended up with him being relegated to the opposition benches.

The reinvigorated Labour Party had won 12 of the 17 seats at stake.

But there was trouble brewing in paradise.

The SLP was 'reinvigorated' by new blood from the Saint Lucia Labour Action Movement headed by George Odum (another of Compton's boyhood friends) and Peter Josie.

Splits emerged in the party and government between Odum and then Prime Minister Allan Louisy. The split widened and the government collapsed three years later.

There are some pundits who maintain that Compton exploited the rift between his boyhood friend and the prime minister to cause the government to break up.

**Political battleground**

The crisis forced early elections in 1982.

John Compton's United Workers Party won the poll 14-3.

It however could not maintain that

margin in the next elections in 1987. Compton's UWP barely managed to hang on to power by a one seat majority in a 9-8 split.

The majesty of the Pitons was a natural counterpoint to the political turmoil that had engulfed St Lucia

Not satisfied with the outcome Compton took the country back to the polls only to reprise the previous results: 9-8.

But while the opposition SLP seemed just short of power, internal wrangling would push them further away from it culminating with then political leader Neville Cenac making way for Julian Hunte to head the Labour Party.

Mr. Cenac would later cross the floor, giving John Compton the fairly comfortable majority he craved; 10 seats to 7 for the SLP.

The 1992 elections would be bitter-sweet for John Compton.

He won the poll but might have lost some of the public trust he'd held dearly.

*Cont'd on page 45*



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# Events and Activities

## Independence Seafood Fiesta

The festival showcases a wide variety of seafood, including fish, lobster, shrimp, and conch, prepared by local vendors who ensures the island's diverse seafood and culinary traditions are on display. The festival also features live performances by local artists and a kids' zone with various activities for children to enjoy, making it a fun-filled event for families. (February 22)

### Seafood Fest Inspo



- 1 bay leaf
- 1 teaspoon white vinegar

- 4 tablespoons coconut oil
- 8 ounces okra, sliced
- ¼ cup chopped fresh tomato
- Salt & freshly ground black pepper, to taste

### Bakes

- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 3 tablespoons sugar
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon dry active yeast
- 1 teaspoon baking powder

- ¾ cup water
- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil
- Vegetable oil, as needed, for frying

### Instructions:

1. Prepare the filling: Add all ingredients, except okra and tomatoes, to a large pot or saucepan and cook over medium heat, stirring occasionally, until the cabbage is soft and translucent, about 20

dough forms. Form into a ball, cover and allow to rest for 45 minutes.

6. Divide into 4 equal portions and shape them into individual balls.

7. On a lightly-floured surface, stretch the dough balls to ¼-inch thickness using a rolling pin.

8. In a heavy, high-sided pot, heat 3 inches of vegetable oil to 370°F (190°C) over high heat. Carefully add the dough and cook on both sides (flip over once one side browns nicely) until puffy, browned, and cooked through.

9. Allow to cool for 5 minutes, then slice them



¾ of the way, horizontally, to make space for the filling.

10. Assemble the Stuffed Bakes: Fill your bakes with the mixture and enjoy.

**Chef's Note:** For a non-vegetarian option, add 6 ounces of white fish the same time as the okra and tomatoes.

### Snapper in Banana Leaf with Sousaki

Caille Blanc Villa & Hotel

2 servings, prep time: 30 minutes cook time: 15 minutes

Caille Blanc is a luxury villa resort nestled by the Pitons. All guests can enjoy the fresh, local creations as prepared by the property's wonderful Saint Lucian chef, Marilyn. Fishing is a huge part of Saint Lucian culture and the red snapper is a popular fish used in cooking.

### Ingredients:

#### For the Sousaki..

- 3 golden apples
- 1 clove of garlic chopped
- 1 tbsp fresh parsley chopped
- 2 tbsp fresh chives chopped

- 1 tsp fresh thyme chopped
- 1/2 red pepper chopped
- 3 tbsp olive oil
- Juice of one lime
- Red and yellow pepper

#### For the snapper..

- 2 red snapper filets
- 2 green banana leaves
- 1 clove of garlic chopped
- 1 tbsp fresh parsley chopped
- 1 celery stalk chopped

- ½ white onion finely chopped

- 1 tsp fresh thyme chopped
- 6 cherry tomatoes chopped
- Fresh lime
- Salt and pepper to taste
- Olive oil/tsp of butter



### Avocado Ami

### Amarillo Ceviche

### Anse Chastanet

2 servings, prep and cooking time, 20 minutes

Anse Chastanet has a dedicated vegan menu serving imaginative dishes using locally grown produce. For this ceviche, nothing tempers the heat of chilli peppers than the creamy smokiness of ripe avocados.

### Ingredients:

- 2 avocados
- 12 ripe heirloom cherry tomatoes, halved
- 1 small red onion, thinly sliced
- ½ bunch fresh cilantro, chopped
- 1 tbsp chopped scallions
- 1 medium serrano chilli pepper
- 3 tbsp aji Amarillo chilli pepper paste
- ¼ cup coconut milk
- 3 large limes, juiced
- 1 tspn sea salt



### Saint Lucian Stuffed Bakes

Sandals Grande St. Lucian

4 servings, prep and cooking time, 60 minutes

Chef Niguel Gerald from Sandals Grande St.

Lucian has created this delicious recipe using one of the island's most widely used foods – bakes. Many roadside food vendors will sell these delicious fried dough treats filled with the traditional saltfish or with equally traditional cheddar cheese, but you can also get them



to 30 minutes

2. Add the tomatoes and okra, cover and allow to simmer over low heat for 20 minutes.

3. Adjust seasoning with salt and pepper, then transfer to a fine mesh strainer to drain any excess liquid from the filling.

4. Prepare the Bakes: Add all ingredients to the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the dough hook. (Can also be mixed by hand.)

5. Mix on medium-low speed until a soft



plain or sometimes filled as in this recipe.

### Ingredients:

#### Filling

- 6 ounces green cabbage, shredded
- 1 medium carrot, peeled & grated
- 1 medium red bell pepper, julienned
- ¼ cup diced spring onion
- 1 small onion, sliced
- 1 sprig fresh thyme
- 1 garlic clove, crushed
- 1 teaspoon chopped fresh ginger
- ½ Scotch Bonnet pepper, seeded & finely chopped
- ¼ teaspoon freshly ground allspice



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# Events and Activities National Sports Awards

**T**he National Sports Awards recognizes the extraordinary achievements of Saint Lucia's top athletes, with awards being presented in several categories, including Sportsman and Sportswoman of the Year, as well as Junior Sportsman and Junior Sportswoman of the Year.



Credit: SLAA



Credit: SLAA



Credit: Ministry of Tourism



Credit: Ministry of Tourism



Credit: Ministry of Tourism

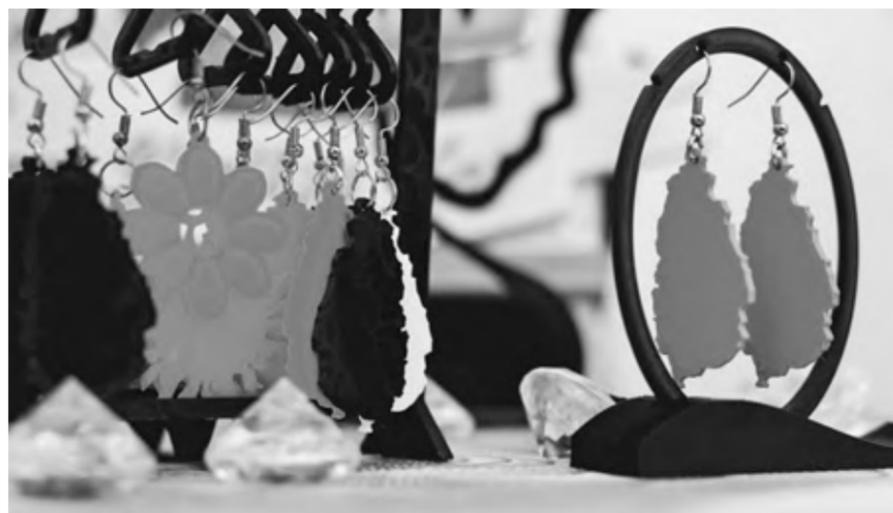
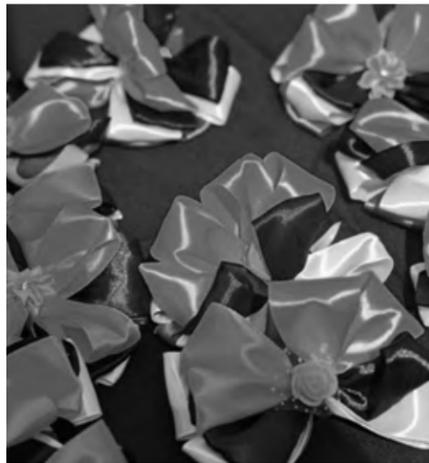
## Saint Lucia Business Expo

**T**he Saint Lucia Business Expo has attracted significant interest from businesses across the island, underscoring the widespread enthusiasm and value placed on this annual showcase.

Building on the success of previous editions, the 2026 expo promises to be a dynamic platform for businesses to present their products and services to a wide audience, while fostering meaningful connections with potential customers, investors, and partners. The lively atmosphere will also include entertainment by talented local artists, enhancing the celebration of Saint Lucia's Independence 47 through a

blend of commerce, culture, and community. (February 20 and 21)

*Photo credits: Export Saint Lucia*



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our island home”

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# Independence Baton Relay

Since its introduction five years ago by Local Government Minister and MP for Central Castries, Richard Frederick, the Independence Baton Relay has become a celebrated nationwide event, fostering community spirit and highlighting the island's legacy of outstanding achievers.



Photo credit: SLHTA



Photo credit: VP



Photo credit: SLHTA



Photo credit: Babonneau SLP



Photo credit: Lisa Jawahir



Photo credit: Lisa Jawahir



Photo credit: SLHTA

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Photo credit: SLHTA



Photo credit: Babonneau SLP



Photo credit: Babonneau SLP

# 47 Looking at how far we've come... Starting from 1979

**A list of events and activities of importance to Saint Lucia from 1979 (when Saint Lucia became independent) to 2001.**

**1979**

In 1979 "Saint Lucia's 1st Laureate" Sir Arthur Lewis Wins the Nobel Prize for Economics

In 1979 there were 77 primary schools and 11 secondary schools with 30,610 pupils being taught by a staff of 194 teachers and 4,879 pupils being taught by 220 teachers respectfully.

In September 1979, the United Nations Security Council recommended to the General Assembly that Saint Lucia become a member of the UN. Upon its admission, Saint Lucia became the

1980, a paper submitted to the Ministry of Education revealed that some 30,000 adults were illiterate in the areas of Marchand, Vieux-Fort, Micoud, Dennery, Anse La Raye, Choiseul, Castries, Soufriere and Canaries. 18,526 persons or 46% of the population between the ages of 25 and 64 years of age. Total number of school enrolments was 36,153 administered by a staff of 1,223. Of the 61 schools, 11 were moderately overcrowded, 38 were seriously overcrowded and 12 were in a critical situation. Illiteracy rate was well over 22%. Drop in the number of qualified teachers was 38%. The CDB granted \$2million for the renovation and expansion of schools.

In October 1980, Saint Lucia



**UNITED NATIONS**

152-member state.

February 22 1979 - Streets and buildings were decorated with the national colours of yellow, blue, black and white. Saint Lucia's flag was first raised on the night of February 28 1967 when the island became a self-governing associated state.

**1980**

became a member of the Pan American Health Organization. The island gained admission during the 27th meeting of the Directing Council of the Organization in Washington.

A major achievement of the Ministry of Health in 1981 was the preparation of a Health Policy and Development Plan for 1981-1985.

This plan aims at providing Health for all by the year 2000 with objectives to: (1) impart knowledge to the community itself. (2) encourage community participation in the formulation and implementation of health care strategies within their competence. (3) use manpower to solve problems appropriate to their levels of competence.

Hurricane Allen struck Saint Lucia on August 3-4 1980 with winds of more than 100 miles per hour, causing extensive damage to property, industries and claiming the lives of 16 Saint Lucians. According to an estimate given by Minister of Planning, Development and Industry, Mr. Micheal Pilgrim costs of recuperation could lie between \$150 million and \$200 million.

**1981**



Photo credit: Carib Journal

**1982**

In February 1982 Justice Monica Joseph had become the first woman to be appointed as a judge in the West Indies Associated States Supreme Court, now known as the Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court. Welcoming Miss Joseph, Queen's Counsel and President of the Saint Lucia Bar Association, Vincent Floissac pointed out that the new judge created history in Saint Lucia because this was the first time in the legal history in Saint Lucia that a lady had adorned the judicial bench. He noted that not too long ago Miss Grace Augustin was denied admission to the Bar because she was a woman.

In May 1982 at the swearing in of a new Cabinet, Miss Magarita Alexander was identified as the Minister of Education.

In June 1982 the multimillion dollar Hess transshipment terminal at Cul de Sac was opened when Prime Minister John Compton turned on the switch to discharge 2 million gallons of crude oil brought in by the super tanker "Saint Lucia." This saw the operation of a transshipment terminal capable of storing more than 5 million barrels of oil. The terminal was opened 5 years after site clearing began in August 1977.

Cont'd on page 46

**Happy 47th Anniversary of Independence to the Government and People of Saint Lucia**  
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# Looking at how far we've come...

## Starting from 1979

Cont'd from page 45

The Hess Oil Terminal was built to meet the highest standards of the oil industry, for the prevention of, and protection against oil pollution. The construction of the Terminal involved the largest earth-moving operation

ever undertaken in Saint Lucia at that time.

In December 1982 the University of the West Indies Primary Health Centre opened at Morne Fortune with the aim of establishing a clinic and laboratories to teach U.W.I. Undergraduates health care, to produce and disseminate educational health material and to undertake research projects that pertain to health care. Unfortunately the University closed its operations here in March 1984, as it would undertake a new location in Grenada. Quite a number of Saint Lucians had already benefitted from a wide range of medical studies while it was in operation in the island. When it moved to Grenada, it still offered Saint Lucians a chance to continue their studies at that location at the same time, while creating opportunities for new students.



### CABLE & WIRELESS

In December 1982, Helen Television System launched a new television system in Saint Lucia when it began test transmissions to the Castries area, with the hope of transmitting local programmes and relays of U.S. television programmes to the entire island.

**1983**

In February 1983 a Texas-based medical group established an offshore Medical School in Saint Lucia. The School, known as the Saint Lucia Health Sciences University, was temporarily housed at the Red Lion Hotel at Vigie. Later, in November 1983, the school, after being renamed the Spartan Health Sciences University, was relocated at New Dock Road, Vieux Fort.

The government of Saint Lucia became a signatory to the UN Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women in 1983.

**1984**

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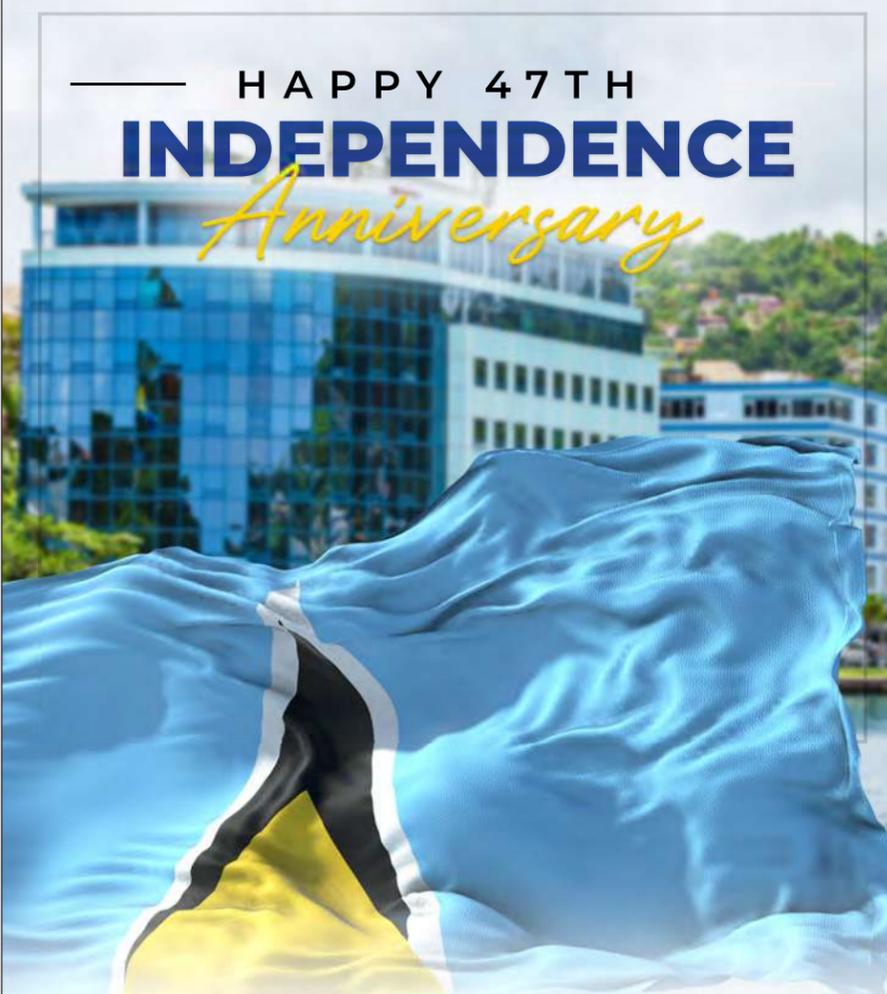
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Plans were underway in January 1984 for the commencement of work on a multimillion dollar Pointe Seraphine project as a tourist centre, which was to be financed by the Caribbean Development Bank. Originally the centre was perceived as a cruise ship tourist facility, but its expansion now facilitated for stay over tourists. The shopping mall allowed Saint Lucians to sell duty free items such as liquor, cameras, souvenirs, clothing, perfumes, jewellery and many more. The project came as an initiative to maximize the benefits of the Tourist Industry, through the generation of tourist expenditure in Saint Lucia.

In February 1984 Cable and Wireless introduced a Telefax Service to Saint Lucians. Cable and Wireless has made notable contributions in revolutionizing the island's telecommunications system, since the operation of their digital exchange, international direct dialing was introduced.

In 1984, the National Youth Council was established to promote the views and voices of young Saint Lucians.

In 1984 the Ministry of Sports conceptualized the formation of sporting activities, with the view of attracting visitors to the island. From this stemmed the beginning of a sporting event named "Aqua Action", which took place at Easter time from then onwards. Aqua Action was made possible through the joint effort of marine oriented organizations and other institutions on the island.

In September 1984 plans commenced for the transformation of the Morne Complex into an institution of higher learning to be renamed the Sir Arthur Lewis Community College and opened in 1985.

In 1984 the Ministry of Education launched an Adult Illiteracy Pilot Project in the communities of La Guerre and Ti Rocher (Micoud) in an effort to alleviate widespread

illiteracy in these areas.

**1985**

In February 1985 Prime Minister John Compton received the keys to the newly built Fisheries Complex at Sans Souci. The Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) funded this project with a cost of some \$6.8 million. The Complex consists of a fish landing terminal and a processing plant and its objectives are generally to improve the quality and volumes of fish caught and marketed and to efficiently obtain foreign currency from exports of the fish.

In March 1985 Saint Lucia staged an International Independence Road Race en route from Castries to Choiseul and back—a distance of 100 miles. Guyana and Trinidad and Tobago took part. Saint Lucia's George Romaine and Daniel Louis captured the first and second place respectively.

In May 1985 through the joint effort of the Saint Lucia National Trust and other international and local organizations, the Maria Islands Nature Reserve and Interpretation Centre was opened at Pointe Sables in Vieux Fort in an effort to preserve the island's natural heritage and also to serve as an information medium and museum.

A football school established by Mr. Stuart Charles was officially opened on November 18 1995.

In 1995, Saint Lucia's presence was felt at Carifesta. Participants included the Piaye Dance Troupe, Chamelion Dancers, La Po Kabwit and the Royal Saint Lucian Police Band.

Saint Lucians were OECs champions in 1995, for various events such as track and field competitions and the male and female body building competitions. Sports personalities included Raymond Daniel, Monica Dudley, Lawrence Stevens and Julian Felix.

The government approved a National Population Policy

Cont'd on page 47

# 47 Looking at how far we've come... Starting from 1979

Cont'd from page 46

Statement in 1985 which, contained specific objectives regarding women in Saint Lucia.

**1986**

Internet advertising comes to Saint Lucia on March 30 1986.

American investor Mr. Arch Marez in 1986 financed the construction of the Rodney Bay Marina which was built at a cost of \$9 million, with the capability of accommodating 140 yachts. It included shopping centres and offered travel lift and workshop facilities. The facility was built at a time when yachting was becoming one of the prime activities of tourism.

Thousands of Saint Lucians welcomed Pope John Paul the Second when he visited Saint Lucia in July 1986. Prime Minister John Compton, Governor General Sir Allen Lewis, Archbishop Kelvin Felix and Caribbean government heads welcomed the Pope at the Vigie Airport. In a programme that he conducted at the Roman Catholic Cathedral, the Pope met with the sick and disabled persons. He communicated to the people in many ways when he spoke a few words on patois saying "Zanfan bon dye pwen kouway mete konfyans ou an bondye" (Children of God take courage put your trust in God).

In July 1986 Saint Lucian-born Flora Hyacinth captured the gold medal in the women's 400 metres hurdles during the Central American games. She also gained a bronze medal in the long jump division.

In August 1986 the Ministry of Education disclosed that hundreds more will get school places in the following academic school year. During the end of the school year's holidays the Ministry of Education spent some \$1,4 million in a programme in which it undertook to expand, rebuild and repair primary and secondary schools around the island. A number of schools have benefitted from this programme-Babonneau Primary School, the Bocage school, the Micoud Primary School, a new school was established in Pierrot, the Morne Repos Primary School, the La Guerre school, the Soufriere Boys Primary School. This programme was locally financed.

The Ministry of Sports, with the assistance of donations from the Private Sector, raised \$1 million to finance the construction of the Vigie Multi Purpose Sports Complex which was completed in August 1986 just in time to host the Regional Netball Tournament, the first event to take place there.

**1987**

**Saint Lucia Olympic Body formed in late January 1987.**

Cable TV "Cablevision" comes to Saint Lucia June 24, 1987.

Pedestrian traffic across the island's two airports cease from June 15, 1987. This action by government came as a result of excessive pressure being brought to near-by airline operators and the Federal Aviation Authority of the United States who threatened to disallow airlines using our airports to land in the U.S. and to disapprove the use of our airports by U.S. based airlines.

\$750,000 Red Cross Centre Opened. The newly constructed Red Cross Headquarters (opened formally in August 9, 1978), "must be available to all those who need help," according to the President of the League of the Red Cross and Red Crescent societies, Enrique de Malta. The headquarters was constructed with a solid structure to enable it to withstand various kinds of natural disasters. Construction commenced in October 1985 when Queen Elizabeth laid the foundation stone during her visit to the island.

**1988**

In February 1988 a \$12 million government office block opened in Conway. Prime Minister Compton said that what Saint Lucians were witnessing was part of a harbour and waterfront development which, began some 15 years ago when government acquired the area for development.

"Turning Point" the national drug rehabilitation centre, was opened in May 1988 to provide vital services to those who fell victim to drugs and alcohol.

In May 1988 Mr. Winston Cenac published a land law book entitled "Coutume De Paris, The Evolution of Land Law in Saint Lucia" to give clearer definition of the attendant laws.

In June 1988 Cable & Wireless opened its Teleport at Sans Souci. The \$10 million station provided voice end data transmissions via digital Eastern Caribbean Microwave system to Saint Lucia.

In 1988 work commences on phase 1 of the West Coast Road Project.

A \$115,000 Rotary Mobile Blood Bank was due in Saint Lucia by August of 1988. This was made possible through the proceeds from a national car raffle.

In September 1988, the Sports Aid Programme

which is responsible for administering youth programmes around the world

For the first time in the nation's history, Saint Lucian's will be able to make deposits, withdrawals and transfers between accounts, 24-hours a day.

June 1991 - Government and opposition pay homage to the late Sir Arthur Lewis, the son-of-the-soil who rose to become an economist of world renown and first West Indian to win a Nobel Prize. Sir Arthur 76, who died in Barbados on June 15, 1991, was described in the most flowery language when the House of Assemblée met Tuesday. As the World famous economist and Nobel Prize winner, Sir William Arthur Lewis, was being laid to rest Saturday, June 22, 1991, the tributes and condolences were deep and moving. Government ensured that the great son-of-the-soil received his last rites with honor and flair. By mid-morning the impressive looking casket bearing the body of Sir Arthur was wheeled into the Castries City Hall to be exposed in the Heart of the city where the people could pay their respects. This was the man who nurtured the University of the West Indies, groomed the Caribbean Development Bank, developed a theory of economic growth, advised British and Caribbean governments, worked towards a Caribbean Federation and won the Nobel Prize for economics. At the Cathedral his work on earth was traced and retraced through the tributes of friends and peers, until his body left for the final fitting resting place - the grounds of the community college on the Morne, named after him.

In 1991 a National Policy Statement on women prepared by the Women's Affairs Division of the Ministry of Community Development was approved by Cabinet together with a five year Plan of Action. In its basic principles, the Policy on Women recognises: the need for an improved image of women in society and the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women, the provision of childcare facilities for working mothers, the establishment of educational facilities for mothers, the development of an economically viable agricultural sector particularly in the rural areas, the encouragement and facilitating of female entrepreneurship through government technical assistance, the need for strict adherence to the UN Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women.

"No More Junior Sec. Schools" - September 1991 marked the end of an era in the education system here when junior secondary education introduced in 1973 were phased out. The first junior secondary was established at Entrepot and served as the pilot for six others, which were set up at Corinth, Choiseul, Soufriere, Dennery, Vieux Fort and Micoud.

**1992**

In January 1992 the Ministry of Education appointed a Pre-school Licensing Board to regulate and set standards for the operation of pre-schools.

In January 1992 Saint Lucia received high marks, and was rated number one, in a profile of 21 Caribbean and Latin American countries, based upon current conditions, trends, and actions relating to a series of economic, social and political indicators. The USAID's 1990 performance rating published in its Action Plan for fiscal year 1992-93 also claimed the OECs sub-region 3rd place of 16 in Latin America.

In January 1992 Health Minister Romanus Lansiquot said that work on the Roseau Dam had commenced and the access road leading to the dam was already being constructed then. Persons who lived within the vicinity of the dam site had to be relocated. He also said that the dam would not be in place before 1994. This project cost more than \$100 million.

established its "race against time," a 10k event for the children around the world. In Saint Lucia's participation hundreds of Saint Lucians of all ages gathered near the Courts building on Chaussee Road to run the local end of the "race against time." Sports Aid began in 1986 to assist needy children around the world.

In November 1988 thousands of Saint Lucians participated in a national event, which was established for the first time, in an effort to cultivate a sense of Saint Lucian unity among persons from all walks of life around the island. "Hands Across Saint Lucia" as it was called was a nature trailing event which took place at different forested areas from Micoud to Soufriere, in which persons were expected to hold hands to form a chain. This symbolised that Saint Lucians were on the path to a greater self-reliance and realisation. Although there was some technical difficulty throughout the event, activities continued to bring the people closer together as Father Patrick Anthony of the Roman Catholic Church sang and blessed the occasion with his religious performance. The Cadet Corps was also keenly involved in the event as they tried to restore the unbroken chain when persons began segregating into groups of their own, more so to complete the forest walk.

**1989**

January 1989 - National Cultural Centre goes up - An 800-seat tent costing 1/2 a million dollars is almost ready at the Cultural Complex site at Sans Souci, to host its first performance. The tent, a gift to Saint Lucia from the French government was erected primarily to host cultural shows being held as part of the island's 10th independence anniversary celebrations, but remained after these festivities were over. For years, the Sans Souci site has been earmarked for a cultural complex.

February 22, 1989 "Prince Wooing Our Kids" - Saint Lucia celebrates its 10th independence anniversary with pomp and ceremony in communities throughout the island. The visit of Prince Charles was one of the major highlights of the celebrations. The Prince became an instant hit with Saint Lucian children when he arrived here Monday February 20. On February 21, he was present at the Vigie Airport tarmac where a military parade re-enacted the ceremony that took place at Independence Dock exactly 10 years ago, when the four-color Saint Lucian flag was hoisted to mark the final breaking away from Britain.

"Choc Garbage Dump is Shut Down". The eyesore Choc Garbage Dump was officially closed and a new site at the western end of Ciceron, at the bottom of the hill overlooking the Hess Oil Storage Facility, was opened. As of 6:00 PM Saturday, October 7, it became illegal to dispose of garbage at Choc and the Ministry of Community Development warned that violators would be prosecuted under the litter act.

Moral, environmental and historical concerns were raised in 1989 amidst plans to legalize casino gambling as a possible avenue of fostering growth in the tourism industry. The issue would take centre stage again in 1998. In order to garner public sentiment on gaming, government commissioned a survey, the results of which were released at the end of 1999.

November 1989, "Traffic Lights Go Into Use". The first junction to have this new facility in traffic management was the Vide Boutielle - Choc - Vigie junction, where four sets of lights were installed. The traffic lights project was a \$6 million undertaking by government, which

also involved the installation of 450 traffic signs. Thirteen other junctions were to be served with lights.

"Venner is New ECCB Governor". Outgoing Director of Finance, Dwight Venner, the man who has been credited with pulling Saint Lucia's economy from near collapse in 1981, officially takes up his new position of Governor of the East Caribbean Central Bank on Friday, December 1, 1989.

**1991**

March 1991 - "CIBC Introduces 24-Hour Banking" The Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce has announced the arrival of Saint Lucia's first automated banking machine.

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# 47 The Role of Education in an Independent Nation

From page 36

However, access to quality education is not evenly distributed, with wealthy families able to afford private schools and tutors, while low-income families may not have access to basic educational resources.

### The Role of Public Education

Public education is meant to provide a level playing field for all students, regardless of their socioeconomic background. However, funding for public schools is often tied to local property taxes, meaning that schools in wealthy neighborhoods may have more resources than schools in low-income areas. This can create a significant achievement gap, with students from low-income families facing greater challenges in accessing quality education.

### The Importance of Early Childhood Education

early childhood education is critical in setting the foundation for future academic success. Children from low-income families may not have access to high-quality preschool programs, which can lead to a disadvantage in later years. Investing in early childhood education can help level the playing field and provide all children with the tools they need to succeed in school and beyond.

### The Role of Higher Education

Higher education is often seen as a key driver of economic mobility, with college graduates earning significantly more than those without a degree. However, access to higher education is not evenly distributed, with tuition costs and student debt creating significant barriers for low-income students.

Increasing access to affordable higher education, such as community college and vocational training programs, can help break down these barriers and provide more opportunities for economic mobility.

### The Need for Structural Change

While education can play a critical role in breaking the cycle of economic privilege, it is not a silver bullet. Structural changes are needed to address the root causes of economic inequality, such as policies that support living wages, affordable housing, and access to healthcare. By addressing these broader issues, we can create a more equitable society where everyone has the opportunity to succeed.

Education plays a critical but complex role in economic privilege. While access to quality education can provide individuals with the tools they need to succeed, it is often tied to economic privilege, perpetuating inequality and disadvantage. By investing in early childhood education, increasing access to affordable higher education, and addressing broader structural issues, we can begin to create a more equitable society where everyone has the opportunity to thrive.

Education is a vital component of economic development, as it plays a crucial role in shaping the future of individuals, communities, and nations. Education is not just about acquiring knowledge, but it also instills skills, values, and attitudes that are essential for personal growth and development. Education policy, therefore, is a significant factor in the economic development of any country. - via fastercapital.com

### The Role of Education in Economic Development

Education is a vital component of economic development, as it plays a crucial role in shaping the future of individuals, communities, and nations. Education is not just about acquiring knowledge, but it also instills skills, values, and attitudes that are essential for personal growth and development. Education policy, therefore, is a significant factor in the economic development of any country. - via fastercapital.com

## Sir John Compton: A Life in Politics

Cont'd from page 41

A local newspaper accused him of having an affair with a teenager whom he had misrepresented as his niece in official correspondence.

One year later in October 1993, another crisis.

Banana farmers rioted. Police opened fire. Two demonstrators were killed.

The opposition Labour Party blamed the government calling the response of the John Compton administration

heavy-handed.

Prior to the 1997 election John Compton announced that he was stepping down as Prime Minister and passed the mantle of leadership to a hand-picked successor, Dr Vaughan Lewis, the former Director General of the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS).

Many questioned the decision, and felt they were vindicated when the ruling UWP, with Vaughan Lewis at the helm, suffered its most humiliating defeat ever at the polls in 1997.

It lost all but one seat when the St Lucia Labour Party, also with a new leader in the person of Dr Kenny Anthony, routed it 16-1 at the polls.

Critics of Sir John Compton said he saw the crushing defeat staring him in the face, and set up Vaughan Lewis to face the fire.

But later came rumblings of discontent from within the SLP government.

John Compton, having bowed out of elective politics, watched, waited ...and pounced.

He formed a new alliance with his old UWP (by then with a new leader) and George Odium (Compton's boyhood friend) who had by then been booted out of the SLP, called - The National Alliance.

But as the island moved into general elections of December 2001, the Alliance crumbled under the weight of irreconcilable differences over who would lead the newly formed group into the general elections.

The UWP contested alone and lost, again.

Labour remained in power.

The comeback 'old-timer'?

But John Compton had not yet run out of options.

He would make a political comeback - his last, and perhaps, his most dramatic.

Sir John at age 82, came out of retirement and won the 2006 elections.

In political retirement since the United Workers Party lost the 2001 general elections, Sir John Compton would re-emerge on the political scene to wrest control of the party he founded from Dr Vaughan Lewis, at an historic party convention on March 13th 2005.

He literally went into the party's convention on a 'wave of cheering supporters' much to the chagrin of the Vaughan Lewis camp.

At 82 years old, John Compton (now Sir John) swept the UWP back into office with a handsome 11-6 win over the SLP in December 2006.

He was once again St Lucia's Prime Minister, albeit with a relatively young and inexperienced cabinet.

There was hardly time to settle into office, when trouble began to brew.

China or Taiwan?

At issue was whether the new administration would continue the diplomatic relations with China established under the SLP government, or whether it should re-establish ties with Taiwan.

The Chinese had insisted that on the basis of commitments made by the new administration of Sir John Compton, it was inappropriate for the government to

countenance official visits to the island by Taiwanese government officials.

In April 2007, when Governor General Dame Pearlette Louisy arrived in parliament to deliver the throne speech, there was an air of expectation.

Sir John Compton had earlier in the week announced that the decision as to whether to go with China or Taiwan would be made then.

But on the eagerly anticipated day, no announcement was made to parliament. And on April 30th 2007, Saint Lucia and Taiwan signed a joint communiqué officially establishing diplomatic relations.

However there was word that Sir John might not have been in favour.

Media reports told of a cabinet rebellion against Sir John over the issue, with a so-called super-eight on one side in favour of Taiwan, while Sir John, his trusted ally Stephenson King and another minister, Leonard Montoute, on the other.

Ill health

Shortly after it emerged that Sir John Compton had suffered a series of mild strokes when he went for his regular medical check-up in the United States.

Sir John Compton suffered a series of strokes

A government statement issued on May 10th 2007 said Sir John's check-up had been delayed by the hectic campaign for the 2006 general elections, followed by the swearing in of his new administration and the presentation of the national budget.

Sir John had travelled to the United States on May 1st 2007, with the intention of spending five days overseas, but his doctors advised that he remain for another three days to get the results.

Speculation was rife and the internal and opposition political manoeuvrings began in earnest.

Sir John returned home from the United States clearly weakened by his illness.

After initially responding well to medical treatment, he took a turn for the worse.

On the evening of Sunday 26th August, Sir John was admitted to hospital with breathing difficulties.

When his condition did not improve, he was taken to Martinique for more comprehensive medical care.

There was still no improvement and he was returned to St Lucia the following Wednesday.

Sir John remained on a ventilator until he passed away last Friday night, September 7th. - bbc.co.uk (Last updated: 9/10/07)



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# Independence Lecture

**Key purposes of the lecture include:**

- **Commemoration and Reflection:** Marking the anniversary of independence by reflecting on the journey from colonial rule to sovereignty.
- **Promoting National Dialogue:** Serving as a public forum to exchange ideas, stimulate critical thought, and encourage citizen engagement in shaping the nation's future.
- **Addressing Contemporary Themes:** Focusing on current, relevant themes such as "building a nation through unity, resilience, and creativity" (45th anniversary) or health and well-being (46th anniversary).
- **Cultural and Educational Exchange:** Utilizing guest lecturers—often distinguished academics or regional leaders—to provide scholarly insights into Saint Lucia's history, the legacy of national heroes, and the path to future prosperity.
- **Forging Unity:** Encouraging a shared, cohesive vision for the country across different sectors of society, including the diaspora.

**Past speakers**

Director General of the OECS Dr. Didacus Jules delivered the Independence Lecture as part of the activities for Saint Lucia's 43rd Anniversary of Independence, on Wednesday February 23rd 2022, under the theme 'Building a Nation and Shaping a Society.'

Dr. Jules delivered a riveting assessment of Saint Lucia's journey as it celebrated its 43rd year of Independence, while he delved into recommendations that utilized multisectoral and highly participatory approaches. In his delivery, Dr. Jules highlighted the main characteristics, similarities and differences of



Dr. Didacus Jules

Photo via OECS

a nation and a society in the Saint Lucian (and small states) context, using real world examples in the analysis of Saint Lucia's journey post-Independence.

According to Dr. Jules, "There is an inseparable relationship between building a nation and shaping a society. Both challenges are the responsibility of all but with nuanced obligations to different actors. Because the construct of the nation is in the domain of governance and its remit spans an ideological, territorial and institutional architecture, it sits above the society and establishes the parameters of the potential and the possibilities for shaping the society."

The overarching theme of the lecture also centered around hope, as Dr. Jules made a consistent call to action for all citizens and stakeholders to take responsibility for ushering Saint Lucia into the future.

He continued, "The real beginning of building a nation is to conceive an aspirational idea of the best that we can be, to make that aspiration one that transcends every tribal affiliation within the national space (including the Diaspora) and to systematically pursue that dream."

Before concluding, Dr. Jules outlined an evidence inspired roadmap, inclusive of critical initiatives that ought to be done earnestly in building a nation and shaping a society. These initiatives centered around:

- Defining the vision - Deciding who we want to be
- Institutional Revitalization
- Design of policies/ creation (strengthening) of mechanisms of economic inclusion
- Rethinking Education
- Strengthening Civil Society and the Empowerment of Citizens

As he ended, Dr. Jules reminded the audience that;

"Shaping a society is fundamentally about managing the many tribes that we all inhabit. All societies face the same fundamental challenge of forging an elemental and binding unity out of their diversity." - Info via [pressroom.oecs.int](http://pressroom.oecs.int)

**Vice Chancellor of the University of the West Indies (The UWI) Professor Sir Hilary Beckles gave the feature address in 2023.**

The 2023 instalment scrutinized the legacy left behind by regional champions of nationalism and nationhood and also the historical context of Saint Lucia's and the Caribbean region's pursuit of independence and political separation from the former colonial rulers.

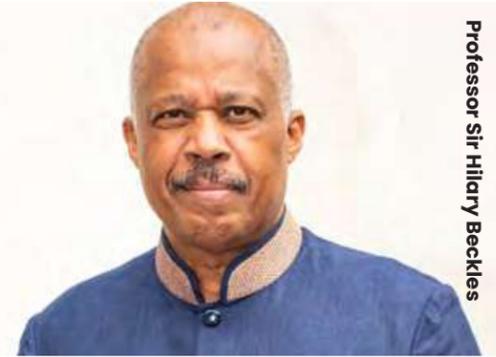


Photo via GOSL Professor Sir Hilary Beckles

Sir Hilary has lectured extensively in Europe, Africa, Asia, and the Americas and has published over 100 peer-reviewed essays in scholarly journals and more than twenty [20] academic books. He has received numerous awards, including Honorary Doctor of Letters from Brock University, the University of Glasgow, University of Hull, and also the prestigious Dr Martin Luther King Jr Award for global advocacy, academic scholarship and intellectual leadership in support of social justice, institutional equity, and economic development for marginalised and oppressed ethnicities and nations.

**Javed Samuel, Cybersecurity Expert**



Photo via [iicom.org](http://iicom.org)

Javed Samuel has been in the cybersecurity field for over two decades working on a range of products for a variety of companies from Fortune 500 companies to startups and the Caribbean. He delivered the 2024 Saint Lucia Independence Lecture on Engineering St. Lucia's Development through Technology Innovation. He has provided support on various initiatives in Saint Lucia such as the AI Global South Summit in October 2024 and keynoted CARILEC's smart grid security workshop in November 2024.

He has worked on several projects within the Caribbean including a digital currency mapping project with CARICOM and DCash with the Eastern Caribbean Central Bank, Biodiversity token project in Trinidad and Tobago. This has included analyzing digital currency usage, modernizing the payment system, and enhancing problem-solving skills. He previously served on the board of SALCC, where he focused on information technology and e-learning initiatives.

His work in the United States has focused on novel cryptographic implementation and design assessments across a range of areas such as open-source cryptography projects, embedded devices, post-quantum cryptography, block-chain ecosystems, smart contract execution environments, authentication mechanisms, encryption tools and custom protocol reviews.

He also devotes significant time to cryptography research across multiple areas and regularly presents at various security conferences.

Javed obtained an MEng and BSc in Computer Science MIT. His MEng thesis was in geometric algorithms: Lower bounds for Embedding the Earth Mover Distance Metric into Normed Spaces. He obtained a Rhodes Scholarship and completed an MSC in Applied and Computational Mathematics at Oxford University. His thesis was on analyzing a mathematical model of the spread of computer viruses: The Fitness Network: Properties and Epidemic Dynamics. - [iicom.org](http://iicom.org)

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# Not one, but two...



Photo via SKN Observer

**Not only did we become independent in the year 1979, but one of our very own Sir William Arthur Lewis won the Nobel Memorial Prize in Economic Sciences. The late Sir Lewis was a Saint Lucian economist well known for his contributions to the field of economic development.**

Arthur Lewis was born in Castries, Saint Lucia, then still part of the British Windward Islands federal colony, as the fourth of five children of George and Ida Lewis. His parents had migrated from Antigua shortly after the turn of the century. George Lewis died when Arthur turned seven, and Ida raised their five children alone. Arthur was a gifted student and was promoted two classes ahead of his age.

Here's Sir Arthur Lewis in his own words...

I was born in St. Lucia on January 23, 1915. My parents, who were both school teachers, had immigrated there from Antigua about a dozen years before. The islands were dissimilar in religion and culture, so our family had some slight characteristics of immigrant minorities.

My progress through the public schools was accelerated. When I was seven I had to stay home for several weeks because of some ailment, whereupon my father elected to teach me so that I should not fall behind. In fact, he taught me in three months as much as the school taught in two years, so, on returning to school, I was shifted from grade 4 to grade 6. So, the rest of my school life and early working life, up to age 18, was spent with fellow students or workers two or three years older than I. This gave me a terrible sense of physical inferiority, as well as an understanding, which has remained with me ever since, that high marks are not everything.

My father died when I was seven, leaving a widow and five sons, ranging in age from five to seventeen. My mother was the most highly-disciplined and hardest working person I have ever known, and this, combined with her love and gentleness, enabled her to make a success of each of her children.

I left school at 14, having completed the curriculum, and went to work as a clerk in the civil service. My next step would be to sit the examination for a St. Lucia government scholarship to a British university, but I would be too young for this until 1932. This job was not wasted on me since it taught me to write, to type, to file and to be orderly. But this was at the expense of not reading enough history and literature, for which these years of one's life are the most appropriate.

In 1932 I sat the examination and won the scholarship. At this point I did not know what to do with my life. The British government imposed a colour bar in its colonies, so young blacks went in only for law or medicine where

they could make a living without government support. I did not want to be a lawyer or a doctor. I wanted to be an engineer, but this seemed pointless since neither the government nor the white firms would employ a black engineer. Eventually I decided to study business administration, planning to return to St. Lucia for a job in the municipal service or in private trade. I would simultaneously study law to fall back on if nothing administrative turned up. So I went to the London School of Economics to do the Bachelor of Commerce degree which offered accounting, business management, commercial law and a little economics and statistics. This training has been very helpful in the various administrative jobs I have had to do, its weakness from the standpoint of my subsequent career (which was then inconceivable) was that it lacked mathematics.

I had no idea in 1933 what economics was, but I did well in the subject from the start, and when I graduated in 1937 with first class honours, LSE gave me a scholarship to do a Ph.D. in Industrial Economics.

In 1938, I was given a one-year teaching appointment which was sensational for British universities. This was converted into the usual four-year contract for an Assistant Lecturer in 1939. My foot was now on the ladder, and the rest was up to me. My luck held, and I rose rapidly. In 1948, at 33, I was made a full professor at the University of Manchester.

Until I went to Manchester, my field of study was industrial economics, and I published a series of articles on the subject culminating in a book in 1949. The leading practitioner of this art at LSE was Professor Sir Arnold Plant, and though he was a laissez-faire liberal and I a social democrat, I am indebted to him both for his incisive no-nonsense criticism and also for supporting me at crucial moments in the Appointments Committee.

My research work has been in three areas: in industrial economics, which I dropped after 1948; in the history of the world economy since 1870, which I started in 1944 and still pursue; and in development economics, which I did not begin systematically until about 1950.

I got into the history of the world economy because Frederick Hayek, then Acting Chairman of the LSE Department of Economics suggested that I teach a course on "what happened between the wars" to give concreteness to the massive doses of trade cycle theory which then dominated the curriculum. I replied to Hayek that I did not know what happened between the wars; to which he replied that the best way of learning a subject was to teach it.

So I lectured on this subject for some years, and published a book on it in 1949. Among the questions that the book did not answer was whether the great depression of 1929 was sui generis, or one of a cycle stretching back into the nineteenth century. This I was determined to find out. However, data for the years before 1914 were sparse and unreliable, and I could not proceed faster than additions to the data and revisions would permit. I spent a lot of time with the data, and, between 1952 and 1957, published a stream of articles on world production, prices and trade from 1870 to 1914. However, I could never get the book done. In 1957, just as I was ready to start, I went off into administration for six years, never touching the subject. I returned to it in 1963, in my new professorship at Princeton University, to find that the four or five researchers of 1952 had now multiplied into a crowd of writers on this subject. I returned to improvement of the data and was just about ready to write my book when I went off to Barbados for four years setting up the Caribbean Development Bank. Returning to Princeton in 1974, I finally published in 1978 my account of growth and fluctuations in the world economy between 1870 and 1914. My Nobel Lecture derives from this sector of my intellectual interests.

Now for development economics. From the middle of the 1930s, I had spent time in the Colonial Office

## Two blessings from 1979

Library reading reports from the colonial territories on agricultural problems, mining, currency questions and the like, and by comparing different territories, had learnt something about the efficacy of different policies. I did some lecturing on this to colonial students at LSE in the 40s, but it was the throng of Asian and African students at Manchester that set me lecturing systematically on development economics from about 1950, following Hayek's rule that the way to learn is to teach.

Half my interest was in policy questions, and here, my knowledge broadened in the 50s and 60s as a result of numerous visits to, and work stints in, African and Asian countries. This half led to my book on development planning published in 1966.

The other half of my interest was in the fundamental forces determining the rate of economic growth. This was the subject of my so-called classic book of 1955, and also the origin of the model to which the Nobel citation refers.

From my undergraduate days, I had sought a solution to the question of what determines the relative prices of steel and coffee. The approach through marginal utility made no sense to me. And the Heckscher-Ohlin framework could not be used, since that assumes that trading partners have the same production functions, whereas coffee cannot be grown in most of the steel producing countries.

Another problem that troubled me was historical. Apparently, during the first fifty years of the industrial revolution, real wages in Britain remained more or less constant while profits and savings soared. This could not be squared with the neoclassical framework, in which a rise in investment should raise wages and depress the rate of return on capital.

One day in August, 1952, walking down the road in Bangkok, it came to me suddenly that both problems have the same solution. Throw away the neoclassical assumption that the quantity of labour is fixed. An "unlimited supply of labour" will keep wages down, producing cheap coffee in the first case and high profits in the second case. The result is a dual (national or world) economy, where one part is a reservoir of cheap labour for the other. The unlimited supply of labour derives ultimately from population pressure, so it is a phase in the demographic cycle.

The publication of my article on this subject in 1954 was greeted equally with applause and with cries of outrage. In the succeeding 25 years, other scholars have written five books and numerous articles arguing the merits of the thesis, assessing contradictory data, or applying it to solving other problems. The debate continues.

Since 1957, I have spent nearly as many years in administration as in academic scholarship. First, a group of six years, 1957-1963, in which I was in turn UN Economic Adviser to the Prime Minister of Ghana, Deputy Managing Director of the UN Special Fund, and Vice-Chancellor (= President) of the University of the West Indies. Then, from 1970 to 1974, I set up the Caribbean Development Bank. These experiences broadened my understanding of development problems, without doing much to deepen it in the scholarly sense.

My wife Gladys was born in Grenada. Her father, who was an Antiguan, and my parents had known each other all their lives. She went to England in 1937 and trained as a teacher. We married in 1947 and have two daughters, Elizabeth and Barbara. My travels have meant much separation, but mutual love has supported the family in all its endeavours. - From Nobel Lectures, Economics 1969-1980, Editor Assar Lindbeck, World Scientific Publishing Co., Singapore, 1992 (nobelprize.org)

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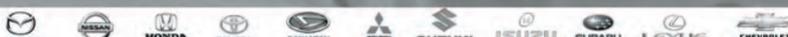
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# On This Day in History...

Gov't unveils Julien Alfred Commemorative Stamp as part of Saint Lucia's 47th Independence Anniversary celebrations



The Government of Saint Lucia proudly unveiled the Julien Alfred Commemorative Stamp as part of Saint Lucia's 47th Independence Anniversary celebrations, marking a significant moment of national pride and recognition.

This historic tribute honours Julien Alfred, whose exceptional achievements, discipline, and commitment to excellence have inspired a nation and elevated Saint Lucia on the world stage. (Photos via Facebook)



## Happy 47th Anniversary of Independence

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### SLUHC Programme officially unveils rebranded identity as part of Independence celebrations

On February 17, as part of Saint Lucia's Independence celebrations, the Saint Lucia Universal Health Coverage (SLUHC) programme officially unveiled its rebranded identity, including a new name, logo, and website, marking a significant advancement in the nation's continued journey toward strengthening and improving health care delivery.

This initiative aligns seamlessly with this year's Independence theme, "Douvan Ansanm; Nourishing Our People, Strengthening Our Nation", which highlights the importance of healthy lifestyles, collective responsibility, and national development. (Photos via SLUHC)



# 47 Looking at how far we've come...

## Starting from 1979

Cont'd from page 47

1992 was a good year for women, as they became increasingly involved in potential economic activity. Following the general elections, which took place in April of that year, four women were appointed to the Senate, including Ms. Lorraine Williams who became the island's Attorney General.

In August 1992 Jones Mondesir compiled a Kweyol dictionary with the aid of Britain's Southwark's Afro-Caribbean Language and Literacy Project. He produced this dictionary as a means of preserving our cultural heritage. Mondesir's work is the conclusion of over 30 years of research. This local educator has single-handedly, quietly and purposefully set out to put this dictionary together. Consider the time when Kweyol was regarded by many to be the language of the "unwashed masses," not being worthy of being heard in school or offices, far less of being the subject undertaking such as a dictionary. Mondesir approached compilation of the dictionary as his life's long work. He began and completed his first draft without the faintest idea of how, when or where it would be published. It was while living in England briefly that he was able to wrap up arrangements for its publication and release, now it can be made available to all Saint Lucia.

In August 1992 the Saint Lucia Transport Board was in the process of reviewing and amending some traffic regulations to maximize their purpose in maintaining order on our roads. Transport Officer Dr. Marlyn Morris was of the view that technological improvements on vehicles and the increasing vehicular traffic rendered many of the laws obsolete therefore the formulation of a policy paper was necessary. Some of the measures being considered are the scheduling of operating times and the distribution of operators on particular routes. Under this system a minibus would be licensed for specific routes. Failure to comply would result in that license being revoked.

October 1992 Derek Walcott was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature.

In October 1992 Windward & Leeward Brewery Limited launched the island's first locally brewed beer "Piton Beer."

**1993**

February 1993 "Sir Allen Lewis Dies" - Saint Lucia's first Governor General, Sir Allen Lewis, died after a short period of illness. Sir Allen who was 84 had a distinguished career in the legal and judicial field and was the first ever Chief Justice of the Associated States. He had two spells as head of state, the first from 1974, which included his appointment as the island's first Governor General when Saint Lucia became independent in 1979. At the time of his death Sir Allen was Chancellor of the University of the West Indies, he was also patron of a number of local organizations. Over a period of 50 years Sir Allen was involved in several areas of public life. Sir Allen was the brother of Sir Arthur Lewis, Saint Lucia's first of two Nobel Laureates.

Track and field maintained a high profile in 1993. Saint Lucia piled up 34 medals and 318 points, the highest among Dominica, St. Vincent and the Grenadines and Grenada in the Windward Island's Track and Field Championships held in St. Vincent. 1993 was also a good year for boxing with the staging of several local and regional bouts. The Domino interest was maintained throughout that year and a team competed in the 4th North American and Caribbean Domino Federation tournament in Barbados. The swim team won 4 medals at the CARIFTA Games. The National Basketball team finished 3rd in the Windward's tournament.

In order to recognize those that have demonstrated outstanding commitment

to excellence the National Service & Hospitality Awards

were first staged in mid-January 1993. The Awards would be renamed Ste. Lisi Par Excellence in 1999 in order to include other sectors that do not fall directly within the hospitality industry, but whose contributions are equally important to the successes of tourism.

"Walcott Gets Saint Lucia's 2nd Highest Honour". Saint Lucia's 1992 Nobel Laureate for Literature, Derek Alton Walcott, OBE, received another award for his outstanding achievements. At a brief ceremony held at Government House Thursday August 26, 1993 Walcott was presented with the island's second highest award, the Saint Lucia Cross (SLC), for outstanding honour and recognition he has brought to Saint Lucia through his literary acclaim, particularly in poetry and the theatre. The Saint Lucia Cross is bestowed on a person who has rendered distinguished and outstanding service of national importance to Saint Lucia. Citizens who have been awarded the SLC are authorized to use the title "The Honourable" before their names. Since winning the Nobel Prize, Walcott has received many honours at both home and abroad. In January Walcott was here for the renaming of the former Columbus Square after him.

"New FRC Building". After 20 years the Folk Research Centre finally moved into a permanent home. The building was officially opened on August 8, 1993. The event was characterized by speeches, folk dancing, steel band music and the sampling of delicacies associated with Saint Lucia's culture.

1993 - "Sir Arthur on New EC\$ Currency". The portrait of Saint Lucia's first Nobel Laureate, the late Sir Arthur Lewis, was featured prominently on a new series of \$100 notes being released by the Eastern Caribbean Central Bank.

"1st Female Police Recruit to Win 'Baton of Honour'". History was made at the Police Training School, La Toc, on Friday December 14, 1993, when a female recruit was announced as the recipient of the Baton of Honour during the school's 16th passing out parade. It was the first time for a female. Delia Lagon bettered a field of 46 to hold aloft the trophy, which is a symbol of police training excellence.

**1994**

The National Commercial Bank in 1994 became the first bank to offer an "island-wide" network of Automated Teller machine service to the public.

The Pigeon Island Interpretation Centre opened in 1994.

In 1994, the fish-landing base at Dennery was constructed and the fishermen of the area were provided with two vehicles, fishing boats and gear.

Tropical Storm Debbie- 1994.

**1995**

A long battle waged by the Saint Lucia Teachers Union ended on January 16, 1995, when the Teaching Service's Regulation 23 of Statutory Instrument 41 of 1977 was finally revoked.

Saluting the nation's first female Parliamentary Commissioner Miss Lawrence Laurent was one of the most talked about achievements for women in 1995.

Introduction of credit cards locally. The dual currency CIBC VISA Card was introduced to Saint Lucians in 1995.

**1996**

The Roseau Dam was commissioned on February 10, 1996.

**1997**

In May 1997, Saint Lucia was elected to Commission on the status of women. The



Commission was established in 1946 to prepare reports on matters concerning the promotion of women's rights in the political,

economic, social and educational fields and to make recommendations to the Council on problems requiring immediate action in the field of women's rights. Lorraine Williams held the Presidency of the Inter-American Commission of Women for one year.

In the General Election of 1997 Miss Menissa Rambally made history in Saint Lucia when she became the youngest parliamentarian at age 21.

dccaribbeanbusinessdirectory.wordpress.com

In 1997, Dame Pearlette Louisy became the island's first female Governor General.

The National Youth Council would be recognised as the official representative of Saint Lucian Youth, when the NYC Incorporation Act was passed in parliament in 1997.

On 4th August 1997 the Vigie Airport was renamed George .F.L. Charles Airport.

1997 saw the advent of a very unusual phenomenon, when a number of land slippage incidents started occurring in various regions around the island. First Bogis, then Morne Du Don and most recently Black Mallet and Maynard Hill. The sudden and unexpected costs in relocating affected residents have been quite high and provided new challenges for disaster preparedness officials.

In September 1997 residents of the south saw the opening of a fertilizer plant and Julian Supermarket in Vieux Fort. In addition, the government of Saint Lucia and China signed their first technical agreement for the establishment of a Free Trade Zone in Vieux Fort.

In November 1997, Prime Minister Hon. Dr. Kenny Anthony announced in his budget speech that the government had confirmed an agreement with the National Insurance Property Development Company of Trinidad and Tobago to play a lead role in the implementation and building of a multi storey car park, new prisons, and a new headquarters for the Ministry of Communication.

**1998**

Nelson Mandela came to Saint Lucia in July 1998 for the 25th Anniversary of CARICOM.

The Saint Lucia Bananas Growers Association Act was repealed in September 1998, paving the way for the Saint Lucia Banana Company and full commercialization of the banana industry.

**1999**

Hurricane Lenny- 1999. Work on the multi-million-dollar Vieux Fort Fisheries Complex began. In September 1999, progress on the construction of the boat storage yard, the administration office, the fish handling shed, the fish market, cold storage facility, work shop and corporation retail outlet, canteen, locker room, public toilet, shower room, ice making plant, and substation were all on schedule.

In December 1999 a 57 million-dollar road tunnel road built at the Cul de Sac bypass was opened to traffic.

**2000**

The Program for the Regularization of Unplanned Development (PROUD) was introduced at the beginning of 2000.

Lady Spice - First Female Calypso Monarch

**2001**

February 21, 2001 - Independence activities rained out. Saint Lucia's 21st birthday, the island would not be spared another brush with disaster. A grand ceremony and celebration that had been planned for months was postponed.

Info via [archive.stlucia.gov.lc](http://archive.stlucia.gov.lc)

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# “One nation and one people”



*Independence monument at the Castries Roundabout.*

This day in history...

**T**he roundabout on the Castries Waterfront looked very different to Saint Lucians heading to the city on October 3, 2019 as it featured a Saint Lucian treasure: the “All-In” sculpture to commemorate Saint Lucia’s 40th Independence Anniversary.

The official revealing took place at a brief ceremony which featured a cultural theatrical presentation highlighting Saint Lucia’s ethnic composition; The

Amerindians, Europeans, Africans and East Indians. In true essence to the theme, four young children representing each ethnic group came together to unveil the new national symbol which will adorn the city for generations to come. The children were accompanied by then Mayor of Castries Peterson Francis. The momentous occasion formed part of the year-long celebration of Saint Lucia’s 40th Year of Independence under the theme “All In - Our Journey Our Future” which focused on celebrating our vast achievements

*Happy 47th Anniversary of Independence*

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in education, culture, sports and agriculture over the preceding decades.

The gravity defying bronze “All In” sculpture stands approximately at twelve feet, six inches tall and nineteen feet wide. Created by internationally renowned master sculptor son of the soil, Jallim Eudovic, the monument took about three months to complete.

Speaking at the unveiling, Eudovic said this piece was created to appear heavenly and to symbolize the heights of our dreams and achievements as a nation. It embodies the ideals of unity that when we come together we become the vessel ourselves, the machinery and the movement.

“All In” also captures our historical and cultural story as it represents the four ethnicities that make up the composition of our citizenry and the fact that we all came by boat.

According to Eudovic, “Time has unified us all. We are no longer slaves or colonizers or indentured laborers, we are one nation and one people. We now sail back into the world in collective stride, the cargo – our culture, heritage and the mighty people who now work from the helm.”

Also speaking at the ceremony was the former Minister with responsibility for Culture and Creative Industries Fortuna Belrose and former Minister with responsibility for External Affairs and Castries Central Representative Sarah Flood Beaubrun.

At the ceremony, former Prime Minister Honourable Allen Chastanet called on Saint Lucians to recognize their greatness:

“There is simply no stopping what we can achieve as Saint Lucians. It is also the reason that

this government continues to call on Saint Lucians to rise up and take control of our destiny, to feel so inspired by the achievements of our outstanding sons and daughters that we begin to change course in our habits, attitudes and thinking and commit to higher principles and ideals of responsibility for our national development.”

Chastanet went on to state: “The decision to install the monument on this site was strategic. This is one of the main entrances into the capital from the north. Right on our waterfront, for all to see. It will be viewed by Saint Lucians and visitors every day as a symbol of our togetherness. Monuments withstand the test of time, outlive their creators and tell the people of a country what was important to their culture that needed to be memorialized.”

He ended with a call to all Saint Lucians to be all in.

“This monument should be a constant reminder of where we have come from, especially during these 40 years of our independence, and where we are headed into the future. And that to succeed, we must be all in. To be successful in tourism, we must be all in. To battle the impact of Climate Change, we must be all in. For us to have a better education system we must be all in. For agriculture to benefit us all we must be all in. In our fight against crime and for security of our nation we must be all in. This monument must be an inspiration to us all, as a people, to realize that in order to succeed we must be all in.” – October 5, 2019



# National Pride and Patriotism

**N**ational pride refers to a deep sense of attachment, loyalty, and love for one's country. It encompasses a pride in the nation's history, achievements, cultural heritage, and values. Patriotism, on the other hand, is the active expression of national pride through actions and behaviors that contribute to the well-being and progress of the nation.

The significance of national pride and patriotism includes:

**Unity and Cohesion:** National pride and patriotism foster a shared sense of identity, belonging, and purpose among citizens. They transcend individual differences and help forge a collective bond that unites people from diverse backgrounds towards a common goal.

**Cultural Preservation:** National pride celebrates the diverse cultural heritage, traditions, and values of a nation. It encourages the preservation and promotion of cultural expressions, fostering a sense of pride in one's roots while embracing the larger national identity.

**Civic Engagement and Responsibility:** National pride and patriotism inspire citizens to actively engage in civic life, participate in democratic processes, and contribute to the welfare of society. They encourage responsible citizenship, including respecting the rule of law, paying taxes, and volunteering for the betterment of the nation.

**Resilience and Sacrifice:** National pride and patriotism motivate individuals to make sacrifices and contribute to the nation's well-being. They inspire acts of service, including military service, public service, and community involvement, promoting resilience and solidarity during challenging times.

**Unity in a Diverse Nation:**

**Strength and Resilience:** Unity harnesses the collective power and resources of diverse communities, promoting cooperation and resilience. It enables the nation to overcome challenges, address societal issues, and achieve common goals.

**Social Cohesion:** Unity fosters social cohesion by promoting understanding, empathy, and respect among different groups. It bridges divides and reduces conflicts based on race, religion, ethnicity, or other differences, cultivating a harmonious and inclusive society.

**Nation Building:** Unity is fundamental to nation-building processes. It encourages the development of inclusive policies, institutions, and systems that benefit all citizens. By embracing diversity while fostering a shared sense of purpose, a strong and unified nation can be built.

**Democratic Values:** Unity strengthens democratic values and institutions. It encourages constructive dialogue, respectful debates, and compromise, leading to better decision-making and the protection of individual rights and freedoms.

**Economic Prosperity:** Unity fosters economic prosperity by leveraging the talents, skills, and perspectives of diverse individuals and communities. Collaboration and inclusion drive innovation, entrepreneurship, and economic growth, benefiting the nation as a whole.

By celebrating diversity, embracing shared values, and encouraging active participation, a stronger and more unified nation can be forged.

While national pride and patriotism are important for fostering unity and a sense of belonging, there can be challenges and difficulties in upholding them. Here are some key factors that can present challenges:

**Diverse Perspectives:** In a diverse nation, individuals may have different interpretations of national pride and varying levels of patriotism. People may identify with different aspects of their identity, such as their ethnicity, religion, or regional affiliations, which can sometimes overshadow a broader sense of national pride. Balancing diverse perspectives and ensuring inclusivity can be a challenge.

**Political Divisions:** Political divisions and ideological differences can undermine national pride and patriotism. Disagreements on policies and the direction of the nation can lead to polarization, with individuals questioning the actions of their government and feeling disconnected from the broader national identity.

**Historical Complexities:** Nations often have complex histories with both triumphs and

darker chapters. Addressing historical controversies and reconciling conflicting narratives can be challenging. It may be difficult for some individuals to reconcile their sense of national pride with the historical injustices or mistakes committed by their country.

**Social Inequality and Marginalization:** In societies with significant social inequalities, marginalized groups may feel excluded or disconnected from the dominant narratives of

national pride. Overcoming systemic barriers and addressing social injustices is crucial for fostering a sense of belonging and ensuring that all citizens can genuinely participate in and contribute to national pride and patriotism.

**Skepticism and Criticism:** In democratic societies, citizens have the right to question and criticize their government and its policies. While healthy skepticism is essential for accountability and progress, excessive criticism and cynicism can erode national pride and patriotism if they become prevalent and overshadow positive aspects of the nation.

To overcome these challenges and uphold national pride and patriotism, it is important to:

**Foster Inclusivity:** Emphasize the shared values and aspirations that unite people across diverse backgrounds. Celebrate and recognize the contributions of all individuals and communities, promoting inclusivity and creating a sense of belonging.

**Promote Education and Dialogue:** Encourage education about the nation's history, values, and achievements, while acknowledging and addressing historical complexities. Open dialogue and respectful discussions can help bridge differences and promote understanding.

**Engage in Civic Participation:** Encourage active civic engagement and participation in democratic processes. This includes voting, community involvement, and constructive advocacy for positive change.

**Encourage National Service:** Promote programs that provide opportunities for citizens to serve their country, such as volunteering, or public service initiatives. Service can instill a sense of pride, duty, and connection to the nation.

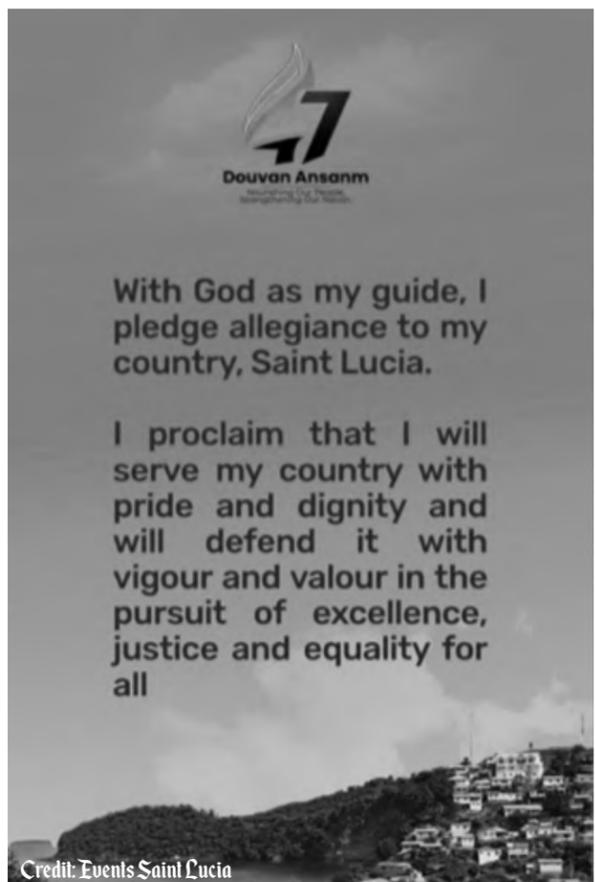
**Address Inequalities and Injustices:** Tackle social inequalities, discrimination, and injustices to ensure that all individuals have an equal opportunity to participate in and benefit from the nation's progress. Creating a just and inclusive society contributes to a stronger sense of national pride.

**Emphasize Common Goals and Values:** Highlight the common goals, values, and achievements that bring citizens together. Emphasize shared aspirations, such as freedom, equality, and prosperity, to foster unity and a collective sense of pride.

By recognizing and addressing these challenges and actively working towards inclusivity, dialogue, and social progress, it is possible to uphold national pride and patriotism in a meaningful and inclusive way.

**- Article (excerpt) by Chibuisi Ikechukwu via vocal.media**

## A Reminder of Who We Are



A reminder of who we are, and what we owe this country and each other: pride, dignity, vigour, valour, and a commitment to excellence, justice and equality for all.

Say the National Pledge with intention this morning.

Best wishes to the Government and People of Saint Lucia on the observance of our nation's 47th Anniversary of Independence from the Management and Staff of the **SERVICE STATION LTD. (Redit)**

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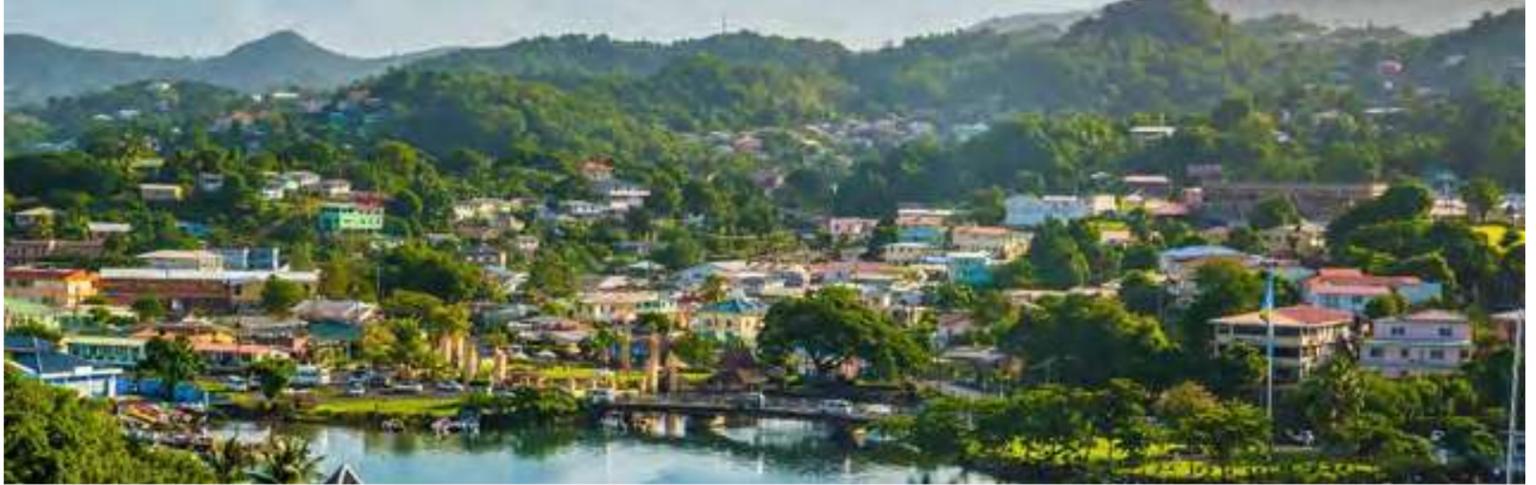
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# Time to Set Saint Lucia on a More Progressive Path

**S**aint Lucia is a unique destination which speaks volumes of its culture and its people who are rooted with an undeniably acute sense of hard work, dedication, pride and an infinite passion for the good times.

At first glance, it is quite compelling to note that this small 238sq. ft. sub-regional state boasts two Nobel Laureates, and as well distinguished



scholars and professionals in various fields of work at home and abroad. Not forgetting too, the countless number of vendors or hucksters that line up the city streets and its environs to eke out a daily living, hustling and bustling and most times with a hearty disposition.

A notable distinction is that the island celebrates activities year round, beginning with some of its major national events at the start of the year with the Nobel Laureate Festival (January), Independence Day observance (February) and culminates with the National Day festivities (December). Interspersed between these months is a wide range of dynamic, colourful, artistic and cultural presentations that take in Jazz, Carnival, Creole Heritage Month and other events.

This has led to a tourism 'honcho' labelling the destination as a 'Festival Country'.

This small island state is well known for its glamour and gaiety and the fun times that spread across the country, month after month within each year. Like many fun-loving people from the Caribbean, Saint Lucian party-goers

and revellers are likened mostly to the fun-goers from Trinidad & Tobago, Antigua & Barbuda and other regional territories.

Taking a deeper view into the characteristics that defines this sub-regional state, it is quite puzzling to wonder, how can a people who are so intrinsically given to 'having a good time' and rollicking in the memorable and fond moments that they share with their country men and women, in another breath or 'in the blink of an eye' resort to such dastardly criminal behaviours?

It is quite distressing that after more than 40 years, since the island gained its Independence from Britain, that some people have not and some are still unable to grasp the essence of the 'Lucian-ness' or Caribbean vibes that makes this region, something and somewhere special in global circles.

Do some people ever take time to reflect on the long, tedious, stressful and yet sometimes rewarding journey that the island has been through over the past decades?

Despite the hardships the country has

these 'gun toting' bandits are inflicting on citizens of the land.

There must be some form of remedial measure to help curb this incessant violence that has resulted in countless lives being lost, and mostly involving young people, primarily within the age range of 18 to 24 years old.

Take for instance, the triple murder in Dennery, (last year), where at least four young persons lost their lives to brazen gun violence.

Lamenting about the sad and sordid state of affairs in the country, and taking the youngsters interest at heart, the grandmother of one of the young females appealed to the young people, the need to "stop the violence ...and if you have problems with somebody to do something differently."

It's a telling statement coming from one of the elders in the society which can be regarded as a timely reminder that there are still some 'mentors' in the community and taking heed of the words of caution from the elders, if followed diligently can help nurture a more friendly, cooperative and productive country.

Though this plea has been reverberated over and over again, undoubtedly, there is still room for advocacy from other persons in the society; from the churches, civil society groups, law enforcement officers, educators, social activists and other like-minded persons to play a role in helping to curb this incessant, devious behaviour patterns.

**By Reginald Andrew**

*N.B. This article was published in 2023. Now that you've read it, compare it to today's situation. Have we improved since?*

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endured in the past and compounded with the social and economic challenges that we have had to face lately, over the past decade or so, isn't there something of substance or valour that citizens can cherish or at least be grateful for?

Like many other societies, Saint Lucia too has its social ranks and status that is bestowed upon or earned by respective persons, dependent on the individual's respective field of work or commitment towards a worthy cause.

Many persons have gone before and endeavoured to pave a pathway towards progress and productivity in the land; and now with the new buzzword 'Sustainable Living' becoming a phenomenal process towards earning a livelihood, there is still much scope and prospects for everyone to participate and contribute in any small measure towards 'Nation Building' and helping the country get back on a more solid footing.

How then, can we as citizens in the global happenings of this New Millennium stand back or sit idly by without so much as giving a fleeting glance or thought to the reckless, selfish, and traumatizing degradation that

BEST WISHES TO THE GOVERNMENT AND PEOPLE OF SAINT LUCIA AS WE CELEBRATE

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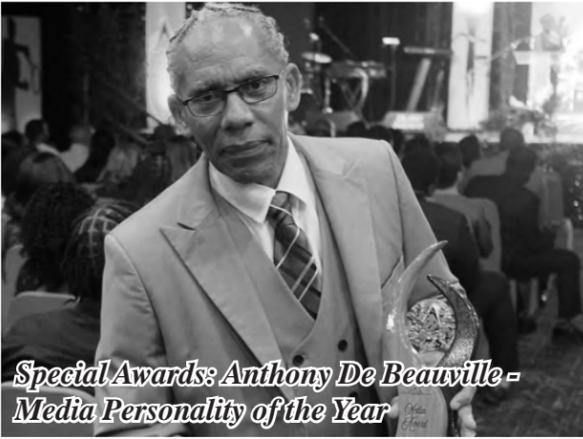
# Celebrating Independence: Sports Personalities of the Year

As part of the celebrations for Saint Lucia's 47th Independence Anniversary, a major highlight was the hosting of the 44th National Sports Awards on February 14 at the Royalton Hotel.

In addition to honoring the remarkable achievements of our top athletes throughout the year, the event also recognized other noteworthy performers who showcased exceptional grit and determination, helping to keep the nation's flag flying high.

The VOICE Sports presents a pictorial overview of some of the distinguished sports personalities featured at the event:

Recognition Awards:



*Special Awards: Anthony De Beauville - Media Personality of the Year*



*Sapphire Parks - swimming*



*Brian Charles - SLAF*



*Destinee Cenac - Female Student Athlete of the Year*

*Notable Achievements - Record Breakers: Kayla Polius - Top Junior Female Footballer ...*



*De Andre Calderon - Top Table Tennis player*



*Senior Male Beach Volleyball Team - Recognition of Winning Teams*



*Lifetime Achievement Awards: Francis "Fano" George - Lifetime Commitment to Sports ...*

*La Clery FC - SPFL Tier 1 Champions*



*Senior Female National Volleyball Team*



*Destinee Cenac - Female Student Athlete of the Year*

*Ackeem Auguste - Male Sportsman of the Year*



*Senior Male Cricket Team*



*Gros Islet Knights - SPL Champions*



*Lyndon Cooper - Vice-President CONCACAF, CFU President, SLFA President - Commitment to Development of Local and Regional Football*

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# North vs South: Where To Stay In Saint Lucia?

By K. Williams, T. Thompson & W. van der Hoop.

**Isle of beaches, hills and valleys, Saint Lucia is known for many things, including its world-acclaimed Pitons, dynamic people, and iridescent beauty. Though many travelers can easily choose Saint Lucia out of the sprinkling of Caribbean islands for their holiday in the sun, most have a hard time deciding what part of the island is best for their vacation.**

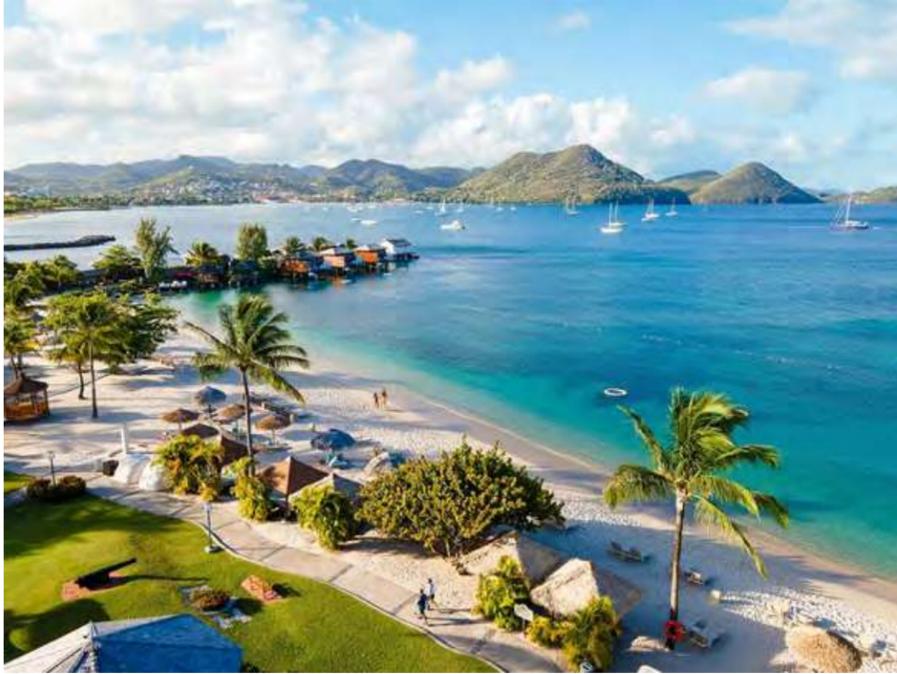
nightclubs, and some of the island's best hotels and all-inclusive resorts. A holiday in the north of Saint Lucia is perfect for travelers looking for excitement mixed in with understated Caribbean charm.

All things considered though, you're bound to have a dreamy vacation wherever you decide to stay in Saint Lucia, though tweaking your plans so you stay in the area that most appeals

to you is well worth the effort.

**Saint Lucia, up north: the 'most happening' part of Saint Lucia**

north offers many attractions, including some of the best beaches, plazas and shopping malls, restaurants, bars and more. Northbound from the airport, you may spot some of these attractions, which can help shape your perception for what else is in store. In the extreme north, you'll find Rodney Bay Village, which is a small, touristy area ideal for travelers who want all conveniences in one place, including a beautiful beach. That beach is known as Reduit Beach, or the Ramp, and it is the most popular beach in the north of the island. If you decide to spend a day on the golden shores of Reduit, you'll be able to indulge in various watersports, like jet skiing, water tubing, water skiing, and more. Food also won't



Even though Saint Lucia is one of the smaller islands of the Caribbean, there are two very distinct regions of the island travelers can choose from when booking their stay: the north, and the south. The two areas are separated by winding roads, fishing villages, and plenty of lush greenery, and each makes a very good case for itself in terms of where to spend the most time.

Once you arrive to Saint Lucia, you may hear phrases like "up north", or "down south". This

In the south, travelers can experience a holiday of leisure which is ideal for people who don't mind low key evenings by the resort bar, quiet dinners, and moonlit walks on the beach to round up their day. In the north, be prepared to be at the center of everything, in a super convenient zone with restaurants, bars,

differentiation is a normal part of everyday jargon, and it serves well to understand this ahead of navigating the island. Areas that fall into the northern category in Saint Lucia include Cap Estate, Rodney Bay, Gros Islet, Castries, and other communities in that vicinity (we'll discuss the south later). As the capital city, Castries draws many visitors wanting to get an authentic feel of Saint Lucia. Fortunately for those who seek, Castries delivers – the often-bustling city center is filled with personality, and you'll either find things in frenetic mode (during the week), or cool and quiet, like on Sundays, and public holidays.

be too far out if you get hungry, as restaurants like Spinnakers are located right on the beachfront, with lots of other options to choose from on the Rodney Bay strip.

Rodney Bay is one of the best parts of Saint Lucia to stay. At night, the Village lights up with lots of activities, particularly on weekends. Bars and clubs turn up the music, and people dance until the wee hours. Those looking to escape the crowds can find a few casual and quieter bars in Rodney Bay, as well as in the nearby Rodney Bay Marina where you'll find pizza and sushi spots, and other highly rated restaurants and outdoor/patio setups.

**Expert tip:** The lively Sandals Grande St. Lucian is located in Rodney Bay, right on a beautiful long stretch of beach. Drink unlimited cocktails and eat as much gourmet food as you want in one of the 12 restaurants on-property. It's all included in your stay! The best part? Guests of Sandals Grande St. Lucian get free access to all amenities and restaurants of Sandals Regency La Toc and Sandals Halcyon Beach further down south. Transfers in between these all-inclusive resorts are included!

Still further north is Gros Islet, famous for the Friday Night Street Party. If you've never been to a Caribbean street party before, this is definitely a great place to start, and the party is bumping

Castries is especially popular with cruise ship visitors, as the island's main cruise ship dock is located there. Excursions of cruise visitors, however, are not usually limited to Castries when in the north; some travelers head with groups to the outskirts of Castries, where there are amazing views of the Castries harbor and environs, while others head further north, if time permits.

Even outside of the city, the north of Saint Lucia is where all the action happens, which makes it not so surprising that many big name hotels and all-inclusive luxury resorts in Saint Lucia have properties in this area. Aside from choice of accommodation, the

every Friday night. The main attractions in Gros Islet are the music, the food, and the opportunity to socialize and enjoy 'freeing up' Saint Lucian style.

Around the corner from Gros Islet, you'll find Pigeon Island, and higher up the road, Cap Estate. Pigeon Island is home to Saint Lucia's premier national park, which is known for its pirate and war related history, and beautiful beaches on the inside.



*Cont'd on page 59*

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# North vs South: Where To Stay In Saint Lucia?

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While in the park you can explore the naval ruins or trek up to the fort, which promises spectacular views, all the way out to Martinique on a good day. On Pigeon Island, which is connected to the mainland by a causeway, you'll find more beaches, restaurants and bars, lots of room to explore, and some of the finest resorts on the island, like Sandals Grande St. Lucian Beach Resort & Spa. Love golf? Tee off at Cap Estate for some of the best golf in Saint Lucia!

All of this to say, there's no going wrong with choosing to stay in the north of the island during your Saint Lucia vacation. The convenience of this area makes it one of the best parts of Saint Lucia to stay in for a hassle-free vacation, where all you need to think about is making the most of your time in paradise.

**Saint Lucia, down south: secluded and close to nature**

The south of Saint Lucia encompasses areas like Soufriere, Choiseul, Laborie, Micoud, Vieux



Fort, and other communities in that vicinity. Starting in Vieux Fort (where most international travelers land at Hewanorra International Airport) and heading east or west towards the north, you'll find that each community has its own personality, and things visitors can discover during their stay. Soufriere is the most popular destination for travelers looking for a southern Saint Lucia experience, much due to attractions like The Pitons, Sulphur Springs, and other popular tour stops. Hotels and resorts in Soufriere, however, tend to be in the pricey category, which isn't necessarily good news for the budget conscious. Fortunately, though, there are other guest houses or bed and breakfast type accommodations which can be enjoyed by travelers watching their wallet.

Honeymooners looking for a more secluded experience, will enjoy stays in the south of the island, particularly on the south western coast, as they can really get away, and sink into their holiday in Saint Lucia, a destination that has received numerous World Honeymoon Destination of the Year awards. Experienced travelers too will appreciate this area, for its less than conventional opportunities for exploration, and seclusion, if desired.

Looking for a romantic honeymoon in Saint Lucia? Splurge on a romantic butler-suite at one of the Sandals all-inclusive couples-only resorts in Saint Lucia. You won't be disappointed!

Beach wise, aside from the more popular beaches in the south, like Sandy Beach, and Anse Chastanet beach, there are plenty of small and hidden beaches which are worth a visit, if you can find an experienced local guide to take you there. The sand at some coves and beaches in the south tends to be a little darker, or even silvery, due to its volcanic nature. This gives it a unique look and feel and compels most to rub the sand over their skin for a mineral packed exfoliation experience they can boast about!

Nature lovers who visit or stay in the south will love places like The Diamond Botanical Gardens where hiking is possible amid the flora and fauna, as is dipping into a refreshing waterfall. In the south you'll find many natural springs,

mineral baths, and things of that nature. You'll also find some of the best dive spots, and other popular attractions.

Scuba tip: Guests of any of the three Sandals Resorts in Saint Lucia, dive for free during their stay (max. two tanks a day)! Top-of-the-line equipment and professional staff members—it's all included in your stay.

**North vs South Saint Lucia: which area is best for me?**

No matter where you stay in Saint Lucia, you're bound to have an incredible vacation; the island is just so beautiful all around! Depending on the kind of holiday you prefer however, you may be better off staying in the north, or the south of the island. Repeat visitors often find themselves choosing to stay in the area they explored less on previous trips.

When it comes down to deciding the best part of Saint Lucia to stay, the south is best for adventurous and active travelers, who want to be close to some of the exciting natural attractions available in the south, including

the famous Piton climb, waterfall explorations, trips to therapeutic mineral baths, and more. Of course, you can always explore these from the north; it takes about one hour, or an hour and a half to get from north to south in Saint Lucia (depending on whether you're travelling on the east or west coast).

The north of the island is best for travelers who want to be part of the action; people who like to reconnect with nature during the day, but want to eat out, have a drink, and join the fun at night. The north is the place to be if being at the center of it all in Saint Lucia is part of your vacation aspirations.

In either case though, whether you stay in the north or south, you'll easily be able to plan day trips to other parts of the island, or hop on a catamaran or sailboat, both of which promise amazing views of the north and south by sea.

Tip: Whether you stay in the north or south, keep in mind that all beaches in Saint Lucia are open to the public, even those with resorts nearby.

Activities not to miss regardless of where you stay in Saint Lucia

**Climbing the Pitons**

**Located: South of Saint Lucia, excursions available from the North.**

Life in Soufriere seems to revolve around the Pitons, in a good way. This southern trademark adds an intangible magic to the environment, and as you navigate the main areas in the town, it seems as though you can spot them from almost every vantage. The Piton charm touches the entire community of Soufriere, and even the nearby Choiseul where Petit Piton can be found. Gros Piton is in Soufriere, and climbing tours are available on a regular basis. Petit Piton is the steeper of the two, and expert guides are highly recommended for travelers interested in taking up this challenging climb.

**Trek through Pigeon Island National Park**

**Located: North of Saint Lucia, excursions available from the South.**

Pigeon Island National Park is the go-to for anyone who loves being out in the sunshine, surrounded by greenery, waves crashing to the

melodious rhythm of the Caribbean. All of this added to a historic site where you can explore the ruins, and climb forts, and you're set for a pretty packed day. A tour of the National Park is a cool family activity, though many couples choose to spend time, or even wed in the park which has great backdrops for amazing wedding photos. To find out more about Pigeon Island, read our post, Pigeon Island, Saint Lucia: A Gorgeous Slice of History.

**Explore the natural wonders of Soufriere**

**Located: South of Saint Lucia, excursions available from the North.**

Saint Lucian hospitality is the hallmark of southern communities like Soufriere, though people in most parts of the island are friendly, and more than happy to come across visitors to the island. If you visit the town of Soufriere, be sure to visit the popular sights and attractions, including the Diamond Falls and Botanical Gardens, New Jerusalem Mineral Baths, Sulphur Springs, and of course the Pitons.

**Deep sea diving**

There are many great locations for scuba diving in Saint Lucia, including the Soufriere Marine Reserve which features an abundance of colorful reefs and tropical fish, and other dive sites off the northwestern coast of Saint Lucia. Most dive sites can be accessed by boat and from shore, with many people reporting more sightings going by way of the shore. Snorkelers can check out beaches like Smugglers Cove, Anse Cochon and Anse Chastanet for great shallow water views.

**Exploring the Vender's Arcade in Castries**

**Located: North of Saint Lucia, excursions available from the South.**

Add some spice to your life or pick some up at the Vender's Arcade – this is your go-to place for all things local. This means that you can visit the Arcade if you want to find a bottle of that zesty pepper sauce, local cocoa stick, pure coconut oil, souvenirs, and things of that nature before leaving the island.

**Anse Mamin**

**Located: South of Saint Lucia, excursions available from the North.**

Anse Mamin is one of the rare black sand beaches in Saint Lucia, and it's an absolute hidden gem with most people who've been there raving about how clean and quiet the beach is.

Cont'd on page 60

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# North vs South: Where To Stay In Saint Lucia?

Cont'd from page 59

There was once a sugar plantation in this area, so once you're done taking in the seaside views and enjoying the beachside restaurant, you can spend the rest of the day exploring the area which now features trails you can navigate by foot, or by mountain bike.

### The Cathedral

Located: North of Saint Lucia, excursions available from the South.

The Minor Basilica of the Immaculate Conception in Castries, also known as The Cathedral, is an attraction many people make a point of visiting while in Saint Lucia. Most are pleasantly surprised when they get inside the Cathedral, as the outside appears a bit worn, but the inside, quite the opposite. Even when there's no service

underway, you'll find locals and tourists scoping the murals and stained-glass windows, praying, and otherwise exploring this historic church. The Cathedral is one of the largest churches in the Caribbean, and once there, you can learn about Catholicism in the region.

### Secret Beaches

Located: North of Saint Lucia.

Who doesn't like



finding a hidden beach that is as secluded as it is breathtaking? Discoveries like this are common in Saint Lucia, as there are many beaches off the beaten track that are worth visiting. One of these is

Cas En Bas Beach are other less populated beaches that are perfect for a relaxed and quiet beach day.

Insider tip: Looking to stay at a resort near the best beaches in Saint Lucia? All three Sandals properties in Saint Lucia including Sandals Grande Saint Lucian Beach Resort & Spa, Sandals Halcyon Beach and Sandals Regency La Toc boast gorgeous beaches that are away from the crowd. Visit one resort, get access to all three!



Sincere congratulations to the Government and People of Saint Lucia on the occasion of the

# 47<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY of INDEPENDENCE

Douvan Ansanm: Nourishing Our People, Strengthening Our Nation

Malabar beach, a beach hidden in plain sight, located near the Vigie Airport in the north. There's a hotel near the beach, but it is open to the public. Anse La Voute, Grand Anse, and

### Catamaran Tour

One of the best ways to explore Saint Lucia is by sea; this gives you a renewed perspective, and not to mention a fun day out. Catamaran tours usually leave from the Rodney Bay Marina, Marigot Bay, or Castries and you can choose whether you want a full or half day tour, or a romantic sunset cruise. - Article (excerpt) and photos via sandals.com



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# Peru's leader José Jerí ousted over 'Chifa-gate' scandal, as presidential 'curse' strikes again

Gerado Martin - Reuters

**THE various political blocs will now meet to agree a list of candidates for President of Congress, for a legislative vote on Wednesday that will determine the next interim president.**

Jerí, 39, assumed the presidency in October after becoming Speaker of Congress when President Dina Boluarte was impeached. Boluarte had led the executive branch since the 2022 impeachment and arrest of Pedro Castillo, who served for a year and a half.

Jerí has been accused of misconduct after holding off-the-radar meetings with Zhihua Yang, a Chinese businessman who holds a state-granted concession for one of his companies.

Jerí has denied any wrongdoing and said the meetings were "circumstantial." He has also denied that the businessman had requested any kind of favor or support from him.

The first meeting, held at a Chinese restaurant in Lima on December 26, sparked controversy after images showed the president entering the establishment wearing a hood. Jerí had another meeting with Yang on January 6 at a Chinese goods store, where he arrived wearing sunglasses. Neither of these meetings was registered in the presidential records.

Last month, the 39-year-old interim president acknowledged the meetings took place and apologized for how they had been conducted.

"I admit my mistake and publicly apologize for entering the way I did, hooded, and for how this has given rise to suspicions and doubts about my behavior and generated the creation of all kinds of unreal stories, which have no basis whatsoever," he said.

CNN has reached out to Yang and the presidential office for comment.

The scandal has fueled tensions over one of Peru's biggest

challenges: how to balance relations between China, one of its largest trade partners, and the US, which has warned Lima over China's growing influence.

Last week, the US Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs said it was "concerned" about reports that Peru could be powerless to oversee one of its largest ports, Chancay, which it said was managed by "predatory" Chinese owners.

"We support Peru's sovereign right to oversee critical infrastructure in its own territory. Let this be a cautionary tale for the region and the world: cheap Chinese money costs sovereignty," the bureau said.

Jerí is just the latest in a long line of the country's presidents and former presidents who have found themselves embroiled in scandal, in what some commentators have referred to as the "curse" of the Peruvian presidency.

Since the turn of the millennium, no fewer than seven presidents have been brought to trial or faced legal challenges relating to allegations of corruption or human rights abuses. An eighth shot himself dead when police were closing in.

Peru's notorious political instability is often traced back to the presidency of Alberto Fujimori, who was ousted in 2000 after a scandal involving his intelligence chief and convicted on charges of corruption, embezzlement and human rights violation.

Since then, the political careers of most of Fujimori's successors have also ended in disgrace.

Alejandro Toledo, who was elected president after Fujimori, was sentenced to more than 20 years in prison for receiving millions in bribes from the Brazilian construction company Odebrecht. Then came Alan García, who died from a self-inflicted gunshot wound in 2019 as police closed in as part of an investigation also linked to Odebrecht.

Ollanta Humala and Pedro Pablo Kuczynski were also ensnared in the Odebrecht scandal, while Martín Vizcarra was



Peruvian President Jose Jeri testifies before a congressional committee to address undisclosed meetings with a Chinese businessman, in Lima, Peru, on January 21, 2026.

ousted on the grounds of "moral incapacity" – accused of taking bribes during his time as governor. Pedro Castillo was taken into custody for the alleged crime of rebellion and dismissed by Congress after attempting to dissolve it and set up an emergency government, while Boluarte was impeached due to "permanent moral incapacity" following a series of scandals.

All those accused and convicted have rejected the accusations against them.

Peruvians are expected to head to the polls on April 12 for a general election.

## Chinese automakers want to come to US. They could be here fairly soon

Chris Isidore & John Liu - CNN

**CHINESE cars could be at an American dealership sooner than you think, and that's good news for US consumers.**

Chinese car companies make more vehicles than anyone else on Earth and export more as well. But high tariffs and hostile US-China trade relations have kept them out of the American market.

That's likely to change, according to experts, with Chinese autos hitting US showrooms in the next five to 10 years.

"The ambition is there," said Lei Xing, an independent auto analyst and former chief editor of China Automotive Review magazine, even if companies have to build factories here rather than ship cars here from China.

He said multiple Chinese automakers have shown "readiness to come to the US, to build in the US."

That would be helpful for American car buyers. Greater competition means more choices, especially for EVs, which in turn should lower prices. But it would also squeeze the profits and market share of the car companies already selling in the US, likely affecting the nearly 1 million people who work for them.

Chinese cars shipped to America come with a 100% tariff, by far the highest tariff rate for any import. But President Donald Trump, a critic of most Chinese products, recently seemed welcoming of Chinese brands if they build plants in the US.

"If they want to come in and build the plant and hire you and hire your friends and your neighbors, that's great. I love that," he said in a speech last month at the Economic Club of Detroit. "Let China come in."

Asked about the administration's willingness to let Chinese automakers enter the US market, a White House official told CNN last week that "the administration supports all investment into the United States as long as our national and economic



Workers on the assembly line for electric vehicles at the BYD factory in China. The automaker is one of several major Chinese automakers expected to make a move to sell cars in the United States

security is not compromised."

China automakers take the lead

Any Chinese entry into the market could further cement the country's industry dominance.

China produced one-third of all cars worldwide last year, with more than 8 million of those exported to other markets around the globe, according to the China Association of Automobile Manufacturers. That's up 30% compared to 2024. China eclipsed Japan as the world's largest exporter of vehicles in 2023.

China is particularly competitive when it comes to electric vehicles. Chinese automaker BYD overtook Tesla last year as

the largest electric car company worldwide and Ford this week in global sales.

Building a car factory the US could take several years, but leading experts agree that most Chinese carmakers are already eyeing the US market.

"It's no secret that every automaker in the world looks at the United States market as the ultimate arena for triumph," said Michael Dunne, an auto industry consultant who has been involved in Western automakers' efforts in China since the 1990s.

That's because American consumers are wealthier and buy bigger, more expensive vehicles — meaning it's more profitable than anywhere else, he added.

Dunne said the average price of a car exported from China last year was about \$19,000, while the average price of a new car sold in the United States is around \$50,000.

BYD and other leading Chinese automakers did not respond to questions from CNN about their plans for entering the US market.

But it doesn't mean that they haven't already dipped their toes in.

Volvo, owned by Chinese automaker Geely, built a plant in South Carolina in 2015.

The plant, currently undergoing a \$1.3 billion expansion, could serve as a beachhead for Geely to start building cars from its Zeekr and Lynk & Co. brands in the US. Geely's global communications chief Ash Sutcliffe hinted as much in an interview with Autoline last month.

Geely already sells a limited number of Zeekrs to Waymo, the autonomous vehicle unit of Google parent Alphabet.

Geely is the Chinese car company that's best poised to enter the US, said Xing. "I think we'll have an announcement on that in the next 24 to 36 months."

## Mexican president challenges UK asylum given to woman accused of corruption

Associated Press



Javier Duarte with Karime Macías in 2018. He is in jail in Mexico and she is believed to be living in Belgravia, London.

**THE Mexican president, Claudia Sheinbaum, has said her government will send a formal letter of complaint to officials in the United Kingdom after the wife of a former governor wanted for allegedly pilfering £4.8m of public money was granted asylum in Britain.**

Karime Macías, ex-wife of jailed former Veracruz governor Javier Duarte, is wanted for extradition to Mexico for allegedly siphoning millions from the state welfare office, but has reportedly spent the last few years in London.

"How can a woman accused of fraud and corruption be granted asylum?" Sheinbaum asked. "Today we are sending a letter with this position."

Neither the British embassy nor Macías' lawyer responded

to a request for comment. The Home Office said it does not comment on individual cases. Macías' asylum in the UK was first reported by Mexican news outlet N+.

Macías was first lady of Veracruz from December 2010 to October 2016, when her husband resigned amid allegations of organised crime and embezzlement. He was alleged to have siphoned away billions of pounds from state coffers.

At the time, Duarte and Macías' alleged crimes came to embody the graft that has plagued Mexico for years, and was particularly rampant during the government of then-president Enrique Peña Nieto. Mexico remains one of the most corrupt countries in the world, with Transparency International recently ranking it as 141 out of 182 countries.

After his resignation, Duarte fled the country, but was arrested six months later in Guatemala. He was jailed in Mexico on money laundering and criminal conspiracy charges. Mexican prosecutors recently requested to extend his sentence on charges that he embezzled £215,000 from a state fund that was supposed to support children and the elderly.

While serving as first lady, Macías reportedly enjoyed the use of a 15-acre, \$9.7m ranch called El Faunito, where the walls were decorated with paintings by Latin American masters such as Rufino Tamayo and Fernando Botero.

She was also head of the state welfare office, where she is alleged to have awarded contracts worth millions of pounds to shell companies. Authorities later found a warehouse filled with goods belonging to the couple, including Macías' notebooks.

On Tuesday, Sheinbaum displayed a page from one of those notebooks where Macías had written "I deserve abundance" over and over again.

Macías disappeared from view shortly after her husband's capture. In 2018, a Mexican judge issued an arrest warrant for Macías, accusing her of embezzlement. Days later, Duarte's successor, Miguel Ángel Yunes, presented the findings of a months-long surveillance effort, alleging she was living a life of luxury in London.

According to Yunes' investigation, Macías had a home in Belgravia, one of London's wealthiest neighbourhoods, less than a mile from Buckingham Palace. Macías reportedly spent at least £60,000 a month, and attended a "face gym" to strengthen her facial muscles.

The day the findings were released, Interpol reportedly issued a red notice for Macías' arrest, although she does not currently appear on the agency's wanted list.

Macías was detained by British authorities in October 2019 but she was released after paying £150,000 to face the extradition charges on bail. She also agreed to wear an ankle monitor.

In 2022, Westminster magistrates court ruled in favour of her extradition to Mexico but Macías' legal team filed several appeals to halt the process, according to local news reports, alleging that the case against her had expired, a fact that the Mexican foreign ministry had not shared with British authorities.

Macías had also filed an asylum petition with the British government, alleging that she was the victim of political persecution by the Mexican government. According to news reports, the disgraced first lady was granted asylum in the UK last year.

As well as condemning the British government's ruling, President Sheinbaum also questioned how Macías was able to live in one of the world's most expensive cities.

# If US Secretary Rubio attends CARICOM Summit - Let It Mark a Reset – Not a Reckoning

**IF U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio accepts the invitation to attend the CARICOM Heads of Government meeting in St Kitts and Nevis from 25 to 27 February, his presence should be treated as consequential. It would offer an opportunity to recalibrate the relationship between the United States and the fifteen Member States of CARICOM that has never been broken — but now requires deliberate renewal.**

The U.S. and the Caribbean Community are not strangers testing first principles. Geography binds us. Trade sustains us. Security concerns connect us. Migration links our families. For decades, cooperation between Washington and Caribbean capitals has been steady, pragmatic, and grounded in mutual interest.

Secretary Rubio has spoken forcefully about sovereignty, economic resilience, border control, and the dangers of surrendering national agency to external forces. Caribbean leaders understand that language instinctively.

Our region's modern history is rooted in claiming our legal entitlement to sovereignty, building viable economies out of colonial inheritances, and defending democratic institutions in societies small in size but firm in conviction.

There are no communist political movements steering CARICOM governments. There are no ideological crusades underway in the Caribbean. Our politics are practical. Across administrations and across party lines, Caribbean governments have pursued market-driven economies tempered by social responsibility. We rely on private enterprise, welcome investment, and maintain deep commercial ties with the United States, which remains our largest trading partner.

With the exception of Guyana and Trinidad and Tobago, whose energy exports alter the arithmetic, the United States enjoys consistent trade surpluses in goods — and substantial commercial advantages overall — with most CARICOM member states.

American goods fill Caribbean ports. American companies operate profitably in our economies. American visitors enjoy our tourism industries. Cooperation in drug interdiction and in combating organized crime has been structured and ongoing under the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative. These are not the markers of strained relations. They are the foundations of a long partnership.

Yet strain has emerged, and it must be acknowledged honestly if recalibration is to occur.

One present source of tension is U.S. migration policy regarding refugees and deportees. Every CARICOM country has consistently accepted the return of its own nationals deported from the United States. We have cooperated in verifying nationality, issuing travel documents, and facilitating lawful repatriation. That cooperation is not in dispute.

The unease arises when small states are asked to accept — and bear the cost of maintaining — persons who are not their nationals. For large countries, absorbing additional populations may be an administrative challenge. For small island and coastal states with limited fiscal space, small land mass, and tightly interwoven social systems, the impact can be magnified. Integration involves housing, health services, education, employment, community stability, and — above all — security vetting in environments that do not possess the investigative reach of larger nations.

The issue, therefore, is not unwillingness to cooperate. It is proportionality. It is capacity. And it is risk.

Secretary Rubio has argued that the United States must strengthen its own resilience by securing supply chains, reinforcing borders, and deepening cooperation with reliable partners. The Caribbean is not a distant theatre in that strategy; it is America's immediate neighbourhood.

A stable, economically viable, and security-aligned CARICOM reduces irregular migration pressures, strengthens maritime domain awareness in a region through which illicit trafficking flows. Further, it offers trusted nodes for supply-chain diversification close to U.S. shores. Therefore, investment in Caribbean resilience is not charity. It is strategic depth. In a world in which major powers contest for influence, proximity and partnership still matter.

If progress is to be made on migration cooperation, it must be built on clarity and reciprocity — clear legal frameworks, strict vetting standards, limited and manageable numbers, and arrangements that do not leave small states with open-ended financial or social obligations. Sustainable cooperation cannot rest on imbalance.

Climate policy presents another area where careful conversation is required. Caribbean countries do not contribute significantly to global emissions. Yet we endure intensifying hurricanes, coastal erosion, and climate-related disruption at levels that threaten our economic survival.

For us, resilience is not ideology. Energy diversification is not dogma. It is existential necessity. Any recalibration between Washington and CARICOM must recognize that for CARICOM states, climate adaptation and economic growth are inseparable objectives.

On matters concerning Venezuela and Cuba, Caribbean governments share a common interest in stability in the hemisphere. Disorder and economic collapse do not respect boundaries. But Caribbean states are also guided by a longstanding commitment to sovereignty — a principle of international law that small states regard as essential to their security. In any event, durable outcomes in the Americas are achieved not through destabilization, but through predictable, lawful processes that reduce instability rather than amplify it.

If Secretary Rubio meets CARICOM in St. Kitts, the most constructive conversation will not revolve around pressure. It will revolve around alignment.

The United States seeks secure borders, resilient supply chains, and stable neighbours — and it has them in CARICOM. For its part, CARICOM seeks economic growth, climate resilience, and security against organized crime. Clearly, the U.S. and CARICOM objectives are not contradictory. They are complementary.

Expanded cooperation on maritime security and intelligence-sharing would strengthen both American and Caribbean safety. Structured labour mobility pathways could meet workforce needs in the United States while supporting development in Caribbean economies. Resilient regional supply chains could integrate Caribbean production rather than bypass it. Transparent, mutually agreed migration frameworks could remove uncertainty and build trust. Meaningful support for climate adaptation and energy resilience would reinforce

stability in America's immediate neighbourhood.

None of this requires either side to abandon its principles. It requires both sides to apply them with balance.

The Caribbean does not seek confrontation with the United States. Nor does it seek dependency. What it seeks — and has always sought — is partnership rooted in mutual respect and mutual benefit.

If Secretary Rubio attends the CARICOM Summit, our leaders should be pragmatic, forward-looking, and prepared for empathetic and candid engagement. The moment calls for statesmanship.

# US Kinetic Strikes in International Waters Through Operation Southern Spear – Legal Commentary

**THE United States has carried out at least 38 lethal strikes against suspected drug trafficking vessels in the Caribbean and Eastern Pacific since September 2025, resulting in over 133 casualties. The most recent operation took place on February 13, 2026. Prime Minister Pierre addressing reports that those killed were St. Lucian nationals, stated "the government is actively engaging through established diplomatic and security channels to verify the facts. We will communicate confirmed information to the public promptly and responsibly."**

A 'suspect' is a person to be arrested; a 'target' is a problem to be eliminated. By invoking the laws of armed conflict to justify strikes against drug cartels, the Trump administration has reclassified the flow of narcotics from Latin America through the Caribbean as an act of war. This shift designates drug cartels as unlawful combatants in a non-international armed conflict and individuals as narco-terrorists, allowing for the use of lethal force based on affiliation rather than imminent threat.

The administration reframes cocaine and fentanyl shipments as military logistics, traffickers as combatants, and the entire criminal enterprise as irregular warfare rather than organised crime. This permit strikes against individuals based on their affiliation with a hostile force, without requiring proof of immediate danger. By moving from a civilian due process paradigm to one governed by military necessity, these operations may be shielded under doctrines such as the state secrets privilege and qualified immunity, significantly limiting judicial oversight and public accountability.

The US asserts that these measures are essential for safeguarding national security and preserving stability in the Western Hemisphere. The administration is now confronting legal proceedings in court, including wrongful death lawsuits that allege the government conducted unlawful extrajudicial killings in breach of both domestic and international law.

The Legal Framework: Non-International Armed Conflict (NIAC) Designation

When a conflict is classified as a NIAC, the governing legal framework transitions from peacetime human rights law, which regulates law enforcement activities such as arrest and prosecution, to international humanitarian law—the laws of war. This shift fundamentally changes the rules of engagement, replacing policing standards with combat-oriented rules aimed at neutralising opposing forces.

In November 2025, the US Department of Justice asserted that the strikes targeting Tren de Aragua were "ordered in accordance with the laws of armed conflict and, as such, constitute lawful orders".

Two key judicial precedents are relevant in this context: Hamdan v. Rumsfeld, Secretary of State (2006, US Supreme Court), which established that armed conflicts with non-state actors can constitute NIACs regardless of geography, and Prosecutor v. Tadić (1995, ICTY), which set the threshold for NIAC as "protracted armed violence between governmental authorities and organised armed groups".

The Court's reasoning in Hamdan centered on the legal status of the parties rather than geographic location: an armed conflict is "international" when it occurs between states, and "non-international" when it involves a state and a non-state actor, regardless of where hostilities take place.

The Tadić decision focused on the intensity and organisation requirements: the violence must be sufficiently intense and sustained to distinguish it from sporadic criminal acts, and the non-state group must possess sufficient organisational structure to conduct coordinated military operations.

On January 20, 2025, the US administration designated the Venezuelan criminal organisation Tren de Aragua as a Foreign Terrorist Organisation and a Specially Designated Global Terrorist. In the corresponding Presidential Order, the group is described as possessing "complex adaptive systems, characteristic of entities engaged in insurgency and asymmetric warfare" and conducting "campaigns of violence and terror" that are "extraordinarily violent" and "threaten the stability of the international order in the Western Hemisphere".

The Order further states that such organisations "operate both within and outside the United States" and "present an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security, foreign policy, and economy of the United States", declaring a national emergency to address these threats.

This language of the Presidential Order echoes the legal frameworks established in both the Hamdan and Tadić cases. It satisfies Hamdan by emphasising the transnational nature of the organisation and its status as a non-state armed group. It meets the Tadić intensity threshold through references to "campaigns of violence and terror" and "extraordinarily violent" conduct—framing the activity as protracted and sustained rather than sporadic criminal violence. The organisational requirement is addressed by describing "complex adaptive systems" and "extraterritorial command-and-control structures", suggesting the hierarchical capacity to conduct coordinated military operations across multiple jurisdictions.

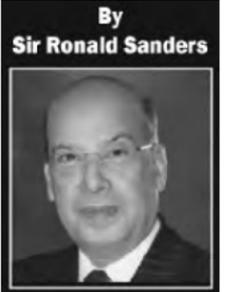
Expansion of the 2001 Authorisation for Use of Military Force (AUMF) since 9/11

The AUMF empowered the President to employ force against "those nations, organisations, or persons [the President] determines planned, authorised, committed, or aided the terrorist attacks that occurred on September 11, 2001". Since its enactment in 2001, four successive administrations have

The United States and the Caribbean have cooperated for generations — in trade, in security, in disaster response, and in shared democratic values. That record is solid.

The meeting in St. Kitts offers the chance to strengthen their cooperation for a new era.

That opportunity should be seized.



By  
Sir Ronald Sanders

incrementally broadened the scope of the AUMF beyond its initial targets.

The current administration's classification of cartels as narco-terrorist entities represents a strategic endeavour to bring organisations such as Tren de Aragua within the legal framework of the AUMF. This approach indicates an acknowledgment that the operational scale and threat level posed by such groups may surpass conventional law enforcement method and traditional interdiction (boarding, seizure of evidence, and arrest). Advocates of this strategy contend that traditional interdiction efforts intercept only a fraction of maritime drug trafficking operations, whereas the systematic destruction of vessels and the targeting of personnel establish a more robust deterrent effect.

Broader International Law Implications

The strikes have implications that extend beyond the immediate legal proceedings. Critics contend that applying the rules of NIAC to criminal organisations establishes a precedent that other states could invoke to justify the use of lethal force against domestic groups they deem threatening. This approach risks blurring the long-standing distinction in international law between law enforcement operations and acts of war.

Furthermore, these activities highlight unresolved questions concerning maritime jurisdiction. They are carried out in international waters without explicit legal authorisation under the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, a treaty that the US has not ratified. This situation creates a legal grey area.

Conclusion and Pending Litigation

The strikes test the boundaries of international law as nation states address non-traditional threats to national security by: (1) an expansion of Hamdan and Tadić to cover drug cartels; (2) status classification becoming ambiguous when individuals are viewed simultaneously as criminals, combatants, and terrorists; and (3) doctrines like state-secrets privilege restricting courts' ability to review executive decisions.

Families of victims killed in the strikes have filed lawsuits, alleging violations of international law and human rights. The relatives of Trinidadian nationals Chad Joseph and Rishi Samaroo claim both were killed in an incident off the coast of Venezuela in October 2025, while Colombian fisherman Alejandro Carranza in a strike off Colombia on September 15.

The Courts will determine whether the lethal strikes were lawfully conducted within the context of an armed conflict or should instead be governed by law enforcement standards; whether the individuals targeted qualified as legitimate military combatants or were entitled to protection as civilians; and whether the use of deadly force was legally justified in the absence of arrest alternatives.



The Procrastinator's  
Library

By Kerwin Eloise

# Its Not An Easy Road .... As We Enter Year 47

**BUJU Banton once sang "it's not an easy road, and many see the glamor and the glitter and dem think a bed of rose, mi say who feels it knows" an apt description of Saint Lucia's progress as we head into year 47 of independence**

With the ever-recurrent Douvan Ansam as part of our annual theme it stands to question the paths before us and how best we can navigate the increasing socioeconomic and geopolitical pressures pinning us down. Let's talk about the US strikes in our waters and WASCO.

CARICOM and its leaders often hail Cuba as a leader, a pioneer, a radical in their stance against American imperialism and hegemony, but the sad reality of the situation is that none of them have the strength or desire to want to be another Cuba. None are willing to stand for the rights of their citizens and take the heat like Cuba did, and truly do what we want them to? Are we willing to give up access to American goods and Western culture and trappings? I wouldn't stand to be a hypocrite and say I am, but greater ideals are to be expected from myself and others and especially our leaders.

With the Americans running roughshod in our waters, with impunity, as they continue to deal with the drug problem by destroying the alleged supply chain. But are they? Have they provided evidence other than the murky, drone surveillance videos over TikTok and Facebook? None of us as CARICOM citizens or leaders would be allowed to act in such a manner in the American sphere of influence before being pulled up and facing its wrath.

Does might make right? For some it is the only argument as they are quite eager to believe that our people were engaged in nefarious activities and deserving of death without trial.

Cont'd on page 13

# CARICOM Leaders to Address Worrying Issues at Historic 50th Summit

## Chronicles of a Chronic Caribbean Chronicler

By  
Earl Bousquet



**CARIBBEAN Community (CAICOM) Heads of Government will gather in Saint Kitts and Nevis (SKN) next week, for the historic 50th Regular Meeting of the Conference of Heads of Government, scheduled for the twin-island Federation's capital, Basseterre, from Tuesday to Friday (February 24 to 27).**

The major four-day parley takes place five months ahead of usual mid-year July 4 summit, the last hosted July 6-8 2025 in Jamaica.

### Worrying Developments

To be hosted by SKN Prime Minister Terrance Drew, next week's summit follows several recent worrying regional and international developments with serious implications for Caribbean sovereignty and security, immigration and visa issues, medical and health matters, as well as education.

Some leaders are also especially worried by the continuing bombing of fishing boats in Caribbean waters by the US military, resulting in increasing numbers of deaths.

The latest US attack (in mid-February) on outboard-motored fishing boats (that Washington claims were engaged in trafficking drugs to the US) have taken three lives, suspectedly including two brothers missing from Saint Lucia.

But there's no indication yet, who was the third person killed.

The deadly attack took place near Saint Vincent and the Grenadines (SVG), but neither Prime Minister Dr Godwin Friday, nor neighbouring Saint Lucia's Philip J. Pierre, have been informed officially (up to press time).

Yet, the US Armed Forces Southern Command (SOUTHCOM) has publicly acknowledged the latest killer strike, indicating it was part of three (including two in the Pacific) that took 11 lives, taking the total number killed in similar circumstances to 140.

### More Questions...

Prime Ministers Pierre and Friday are heading to the summit with more questions than answers.

The US is claiming it's killing so-called 'Narco-terrorists', in defense of its 'national security interests'.

But the strikes leave no evidence, leaving families of the dead in mournful uncertainty, with no proof whether the missing men are dead -- or (hopefully) still alive.

### Venezuela

This first regional summit since the January 3 US operation against Venezuela and abduction of its President Nicolas Maduro and First Lady Cilia Flores will also look at that action's long-term implications and continuing effects.

CARICOM and Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) leaders issued careful statements after the shocking, surprising early-morning attack that took the lives of over 100 Venezuelans and 32 Cubans.

### Cuba

The summit will also discuss the situation facing Cuba, after CARICOM Opposition Leaders issued a related joint statement Thursday (February 19), following the latest US naval embargo blocking oil shipments to the island's 11 million people.

Washington has also threatened to impose tariffs against any nation that attempts to assist Cuba, while Russia and Canada have evacuated thousands of citizens stranded there.

### Haiti

Haiti is also on the agenda for Basseterre, now that its controversial Interim Presidential Council's mandate expired on February 7, 2026.

Saint Lucia's former Prime Minister Dr Kenny D. Anthony is expected to present the latest report from CARICOM's Eminent Persons Group (EPG), which he leads -- and expected to call for urgent return to presidential and parliamentary elections.

### Diplomatic 'Warnings'

But before and since January 3, US diplomats have been seen and heard as publicly threatening regional governments, through clear warnings of consequences for disregarding Washington's new interventionist expressions of regional intent.

Barbados recently complained about having signed an Agreement with Washington against its will; and The Bahamas was loudly told by the resident US Ambassador that Washington opposes a deal the government has already signed with a China construction firm to build an urgently-needed new national hospital.

Prime Minister Pierre last week called for his CARICOM colleagues to "be proactive" and to collectively discuss common threats and united responses.

It's expected, however, that with the restrictive 'Unanimity' clause now replaced by 'Majority Rule', there's more chance of CARICOM adopting as united a position as possible, on some issues of common concern.

### Collective Concerns

CARICOM leaders remain understandably collectively concerned about implications of current US policies on the

region under President Trump since his return to the White House in January.

But, some member-states have already signed on dotted lines, while others are negotiating possible direct deals with Washington.

### Extraordinary

Next week's extraordinary regional summit also comes with increasing concern among leaders about the implications of some of the demands on Caribbean governments by Washington.

The US pressures (before and since January 3) include:

- National governments being diplomatically forced to consider termination of long-standing bilateral health agreements with Cuba
- Demand for termination of the Bahamas Government's contract with the Chinese firm
- Forced Caribbean acceptance of unwanted immigrants whose applications for asylum in the US have been rejected -- and will be deported to some neighbouring Caribbean states; and
- OECS member-states with Passports-for-Sale programs being forced to abandon them, under threats of new visa entry restrictions

Passport Sales Competition?

SVG doesn't have a Citizenship by Investment (CBI) program, but the new Friday administration is interested in starting one.

However, Washington and Brussels have made it clear they oppose these Caribbean programs -- seen as competing for the same rich immigrants seeking other passports.

The Caribbean states are also seen on both sides of The Atlantic as offering similar high-value passports for sale for only around US \$100,000, while the 'Golden Visas' offered by the US and EU states are valued up-to US \$1 billion.

### Reparations

But it's CARICOM's 12-year-old quest for Reparations from Europe for Slavery and Native Genocide that seems to be the major Agenda item that'll attract most agreement among the worried leaders in Basseterre.

They'll discuss the CARICOM Reparations Commission (CRC) Revised 10-Point Plan (TPP) for Reparatory Justice, which outlines the ultimate objectives of the joint regional call.

SKN's National Reparations Committee (NRC) is organizing a related summit event on 'Reparations: Financing Justice -- Advancing Caribbean Development' -- an hour-long briefing the leaders are also invited to.

Meanwhile, Surinam's new President Dr Jeniffer Geerlings-Simons and SVG's PM Friday will be attending their first summit since taking office last year.

# How prepared are we for the wars coming tomorrow?

**BASED on the fact that most large countries in the First World are now stockpiling weapons and topping-up their military budgets to grater heights, that should tell us that in the near future there is a possibility that there will be major global conflict.**

And considering the fact that every major country is in preparation mode, then, there is no doubt in my mind that the Third Amageddon War spoken about in the Bible is in the making.

One thing for sure is that more people will die than in the First and Second World Wars put together, based on the types of weaponry that exist today.

The COVID pandemic showed us how human existence is not protected by the system and the calamities of tomorrow are being perpetrated today by financial interests and obtaining power, by any means, over all mankind.

Despite who pushes the button or who are the aggressors, the bottom line is there are sectors in our society, and in this world, that have no regard or respect for human life.

The time has arrived when independence or sovereignty matters not. There are no more safe zones or areas of peace and life is dictated by philosophy and ideology, by those who are extremely wealthy and feel that they, and only them, should have the power to dictate what is or should be.

The big question is: how prepared are we? Or, what can we do to survive these perilous and unpredictable times?

How do we continue to feed or clothe ourselves, or stay healthy, with all these problems and possibilities? Who will fight our battles? Who will stand in our corner, or on our side? Who will represent us?

Our only resource is human. We have no military might,



By  
Carlton Ishmael

or the economic means, to live independently, which leaves us like sitting ducks. There is nowhere to go and nowhere to hide and no means of defending ourselves.

Praying to God is not the answer, because this is Man's World and God is detached from this equation. There were times when we revolted, or forced the Abolition of Slavery, but that era is far-gone and we have become vulnerable and more defenseless.

We are at the mercy of world leaders and have no olive branch to hold on to. After the destruction, a few will inherit the earth, but the many would have all perished.

What can or should we do? That is the big question and for me the answer is blowing in the wind.

Will or can the powers that be change their intentions, realizing the gross damage that will be done globally? That's a question you must answer for yourself, because I can only give my views. But I am not in a position to advise.

In other words, I am nobody in the scheme of things, but possibly I am only a messenger putting you on your guard, because nothing is worse than being caught unprepared or not being aware.

The tings and times at hand only show signs of destruction and we humans can only wait and murmur not.

Such is our predicament. Such is our uncertainty. Such is the proposed end. Glory be to all mankind, for the majority have no answers against the might of the minority but powerful and the rich and famous elites, especially when they play the race card and use Christianity to prop up their arguments.

After 47 years of Independence, this is the stage we're at, but then, we have nobody to blame but ourselves for always believing on a system that has never cared about us, because it was never built for us.

Enjoy our independence celebrations, but while doing so let's also ask ourselves how much longer we can just sit here waiting and watching while the First World starts preparing to continue fighting their wars in our Third World.

We must really start waking-up from our deep slumber.

# Its Not An Easy Road .... As We Enter Year 47

Cont'd from page 12

This from the very people who believe in the rule of law and due process. Ah perhaps when it comes to others, they perceive it as necessary but not to themselves. We must impress upon our leaders the need to stand firm in the face of this hijacking of norms and demand evidence beyond a shadow of a doubt that the persons killed are indeed narco-smugglers or cartel affiliates before we cheer the removal of what we claim to be bad elements from our society.

Whilst many fear the potential for climate change and the possibility of us becoming climate refugees, the stark reality is that the impacts of climate change are already here. WASCO's inability over a series of governments to provide regular, uninterrupted flow of water to all areas of the island during the dry season has become a recurrent issue.

Year after year the cry of water leakages, water turbidity, old ancient pipes and a seeming lack of awareness of the location of many of their pipes continue to be burdensome for most. The hard truth is that perhaps a consideration of increased water rates or tariffs may be the sole avenue out of the continued bedlam of water woes we experience. To ensure a fully operational WASCO that can fund capital projects, that is not a burden on the public purse and needs to engage in structural improvements, our natural aversion to paying more needs to be swallowed.

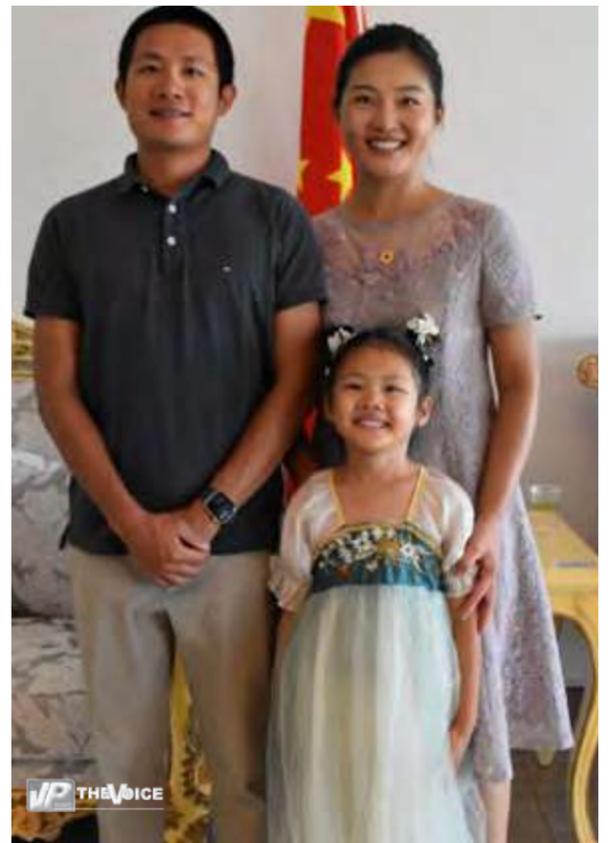
Many citizens have to rely on water storage- an alternative we should all seek- but with limited space for many to place tanks or the fact that the lengthy periods often outpace water supply is a critical spoilsport in the plan. To say nothing of those communities where WASCO does not service who often have to rely on rainwater harvesting and are left without any support during this dry period, be it standpipes or trucked in water. Imagine this in 2026. The furor over WASCO says much about our need to move together, some care not a whit because they experience no water lulls whilst others who have WASCO borne water have nary a care for those who don't.

We are not foolish to think that independence means we will not bow to internal or external pressures. However, at near maturity we must have a firmer backbone to stand forth and demand due respect and accountability deserving of a people moving together.

# Around The World



Photo Caption : Earl Bousquet-President of the Saint Lucia-China Friendship Association (SLCFA), Dr. Kenny Anthony-Former Prime Minister of St. Lucia, Llieff Escalona-Venezuelan Ambassador to St. Lucia, Stanley Hu-China Representative in St. Lucia, Yenielys Linares – Cuban Ambassador to St. Lucia



Mr. Popo-Huang, Ziyi Mo and Daughter

**AS China ushered in the new year many around the world joined in the celebration in welcoming the Year of the Horse.**

The Saint Lucia-China Friendship Association (SLCFA) last Sunday, led by its President Earl Bousquet, gathered at the former Chinese Embassy to commemorate the occasion alongside local friends, Chinese national residing here and the rest of two billion marking the start of their new year.

Among those gathered were Mr. Popo-Huang and his wife Ziyi Mo and their young daughter who sailed on their refurbished monohull from the far east to eventually land in St. Lucia. The Chinese family sent sail from Singapore, through the Indian Ocean, past the Maldives and Seychelles to the African continent. From Tanzania, they sailed to Cape Town, across the Atlantic Ocean to their first Caribbean stop, Grenada. They are expected to spend a few weeks here

planning and setting the course for the next journey which will ultimately conclude in Singapore or China.

The Horse, for China and other parts of Asia, is a symbol of Bravery, Energy, Freedom, Loyalty, Perseverance, Speed and Strength, much of which were spoken about on the day.

The recent developments in Venezuela and subsequently Cuba formed part of the conversation. While China's official representative in St. Lucia Mr. Stanley Hu spoke on the issues, it was Dr. Kenny Anthony who drove home the point that Caribbean countries should be cognizant and appreciative of the relationship with friends like China, Venezuela and Cuba. Dr. Anthony explained that much of what we enjoy in St. Lucia came because of the hand of friendship extended by one of these countries. "Just as we live ordinary lives and we know how to tell each other thank you and respect what we do for each other, then it's also the way we expect

countries to behave. It saddens me in this environment that has emerged that I do not see the Caribbean people being given advice where Cuba is concerned. I have not heard a collective thank you to Cuba." Dr. Anthony was adamant that China had a heavy load to carry in respect of the stabilization of the future and that Venezuela, like Cuba, was owed a great debt of gratitude.

Also at the event were the ambassadors of Venezuela and Cuba.

## US "100% committed" to Mohameds extradition as Ambassador says justice must be served

### Guyana Chronicle

**UNITED STATES Ambassador to Guyana Nicole Theriot on Wednesday affirmed that Washington remains "100 % committed" to pursuing the extradition of indicted businessman Nazar Mohamed and his son Azruddin, noting that the request was formally signed by U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio late last year.**

Speaking on the sidelines of the Guyana Energy Conference at the Marriott Hotel in Georgetown on Wednesday, Ambassador Theriot emphasised that the matter remains a priority for the U.S. authorities, even as the judicial process unfolds in Guyana.

"I want to make it incredibly clear that the US is 100% committed to seeing this through. It is incredibly important to us that these proceedings continue and that a decision is ultimately made," the Ambassador told News Room.

While acknowledging that delays can occur in complex legal matters, she noted that the United States remains resolute in its pursuit of the extradition request, which was formally signed by U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio late last year.

"There have been a lot of delays, including today. That's understandable. That happens in cases, but let me just tell you, the US government does not spend 10s of 1000s of US taxpayer dollars to request extradition if we're not serious. We want to see this happen, and we want to see justice served, both for the Guyanese and the US people," Theriot stated.

The Ambassador further stressed that while the United States is closely monitoring the matter, it remains respectful of Guyana's judicial independence.

"I think that we have to be respectful of the Guyanese judicial system, and this is the ball is in your court, as they say. And so, we are content to wait and see what happens. I have every faith that things are going to proceed and the right decision will be made. We're watching from afar. We're not interfering, but we're very, very interested in the outcome, and we're fully committed to seeing this through," she added.

Azruddin Mohamed and his father, Nazar Mohamed, have been indicted by a federal grand jury in the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Florida on 11 criminal charges, including wire fraud, mail fraud, tax evasion and money laundering.



The United States has requested that the Mohameds be extradited to face those indictments, with extradition proceedings currently pending before the Georgetown Magistrates' Court presided over by Magistrate Judy Latchman.

The matter has seen several adjournments, with the defence raising a series of applications and procedural issues, which prosecutors have argued are contributing to delays in advancing the case.

Parallel to the magistrate's court proceedings, aspects of the

extradition challenge have also engaged the High Court and Appeal Court, where related applications and legal questions have been ventilated as the defence seeks various forms of relief. These legal manoeuvres have effectively slowed the pace of the committal process, even as the requesting state continues to press for the proceedings to move forward.

Despite the delays and ongoing legal challenges, the U.S. Ambassador expressed confidence that the judicial process will ultimately run its course and yield a definitive ruling on the extradition request.

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# THE VOICE

## Weekend

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# DROUGHT!

**Stan Bishop**

Six weeks since it officially announced that the island would experience drought-like conditions, the Water and Sewerage Company (WASCO) says it is seriously monitoring the situation.

Drought-like conditions are now affecting many Caribbean countries, accounting for huge losses in revenue in the agriculture and other sectors.

Reports from WASCO officials indicate that the quantity of water at the John Compton Dam – which supplies the north of the island with most of its water needs – is at an all-time low. The dam, from which nearly nine million gallons of water is pumped daily, has been depleting at a rapid rate since an unusual weather pattern between October and December last year recorded just about 40% of the rainfall authorities usually expect.

WASCO has since curtailed the capacity of water it usually pumps from the dam and has issued several appeals to the general public to desist from wasting water amidst the crisis. The company has also embarked on rationing water to its consumers, with supply being temporarily affected to customers.

Moreover, government authorities are reinforcing the point of water conservation, announcing some days ago its intention to go after those who fail to comply with the water conservation measures. The following is a release from the Ministry of Agriculture earlier this week.

**WHEREAS**, it is enacted by Section 10 of the Water and Sewage Act No. 14 of 2005 that if the Minister for Agriculture acting on the advice of the Water Resources Management Agency is satisfied that by reason of an exceptional shortage of rain, or contamination of water, a serious deficiency of supplies of water exists or is threatened, considers a water related emergency is necessary, he may cause a declaration to that effect to be made.

**AND WHEREAS**, it is considered by the Minister for Agriculture acting on advice of the Water Resource Management Agency that the water management practices mentioned and described in the schedule hereto should be adopted for the proper management of potable water.



A view of the depleted John Compton dam, the island's principal water reserve. PHOTO: Isabelle Sankar

**NOW THEREFORE**, it is hereby declared by the Minister for Agriculture acting in accordance with the advice of the Water Resource Management agency, that upon the Second Publication of this Declaration in the Gazette, the water management practice mentioned in the schedule hereto shall be adopted to manage and conserve potable water.

**Schedule 1**

THE WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AGENCY

HEREBY GIVES NOTICE that with effect from February 24, 2010, the WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AGENCY PROHIBITS in all areas of the island of Saint Lucia served by drought-affected water supply systems,

a) the use of water supplied by or obtained through, the pipes of WASCO for and watering of gardens, lawns, grounds and farms;

b) the use of water supplied by or obtained through, the pipes of WASCO for supplying of ponds, or swimming pools or for use other than normal domestic services such as drinking, cooking, washing, bathing and sanitation;

c) the use of water supplied by or obtained through, the pipes of WASCO for non pressure and pressure washing of houses using a hose or watering or washing roadways, pavements, paths, vehicles, garages or out rooms;

d) the use of water supplied by or obtained through, the pipes of WASCO by major contractors, for concrete, and block making.

e) the use of water supplied by or obtained through, the pipes of WASCO by major contractors for construction, by plants making concrete and,

f) the tampering of WASCO infrastructure to divert or abstract water from its network.

g) the use of water supplied by or obtained through, the pipes of WASCO to fill leaking storage tanks and overflowing tanks,

h) any purpose which may require the use of a considerable or excessive quantity of water.

FURTHER, enforced by WASCO with the support of the police such prohibition shall remain in effect until further notice and while such prohibition is in effect, no person shall use or cause or permit to be used any water supplied by or obtained from the pipes of WASCO for any of the purposes specified in this notice.

A person who contravenes a provision of an Order made pursuant to sub-section (1) (b), (c) or (d) commits an offence and upon summary conviction is liable to a fine of not less than three thousand dollars or to imprisonment for a term of not less than six months or to both and to a further fine of not less than fifty dollars for each day during which the breach continues.

# Order of Saint Lucia

Her Excellency the Governor-General as Chancellor of the Order of Saint Lucia, on the advice of the Prime Minister has been pleased to make the following appointments to the Order of Saint Lucia in respect of Independence Day, 2010 :

The Saint Lucia Cross (SLC)

**Dr. Winston Clive Victor Parris, SLMM, CMG**  
(For outstanding contribution in the area of medicine)

The Saint Lucia Medal of Honour (Gold) SLMH

**Mrs. Sylvesta Amos-Serieux**  
(For dedicated and long service to the community in the area of co-operatives and the teaching service)

The Saint Lucia Medal of Honour (Silver) SLMH

**Peterson Mathurin**  
(For bravery in hazardous circumstances)

The Saint Lucia Medal of Merit (Gold) SLMM

**Primus Joseph Hutchinson**  
(For contribution to broadcasting and the creole language)

**Clement Springer-Williams**  
(For contribution to our folk culture, particularly in music)

**Ms. Jane Bourne**  
(For long service in the field of Education and to the Girl Guide Movement)

The Saint Lucia Medal of Merit (Silver) SLMM

**Rowan Michael Robert Seon**  
(For contribution to the arts and culture)

**Mrs. Theresa Paula Hinkson**  
(For contribution to the arts and culture)

**Mark Phillip**  
(For contribution to the arts and culture)

The Saint Lucia Les Pitons Medal (Gold) SLPM

**Ms. Elvina Phillips-Raveneau**  
(For contribution to the Health Sector and for dedicated Community Service)

**Miss Margherita Alexander**  
(For long and meritorious service to Saint Lucia)

**Msgr. Theophilus Anthony Joseph**  
(For long and meritorious community service in the area of scouting and pastoral work)

The Saint Lucia Les Pitons Medal (Silver) SLPM

**Mrs. Mary Hermina St. Hill**  
(For long and meritorious public service in the field of education and community work)

**Mrs. Cynthia Hodge-Calixte**  
(For long and dedicated community service)

**Mrs. Paula Valerie James**  
(For dedicated and meritorious community service)

The Saint Lucia Les Pitons Medal (Bronze) SLPM

**Julius Adjodha**  
(For long and dedicated community service)

THE PUBLIC SERVICE LONG SERVICE AWARD

Her Excellency the Governor-General has been pleased to award the Public Service Long Service Award in respect of Independence Day, 2010 to the following persons :

St. Lucia Public Service

Miss Emma Gloria CHARLES  
Mr. Anthony DONALD

St. Lucia Teaching Service

Mr. Michael BLACKMAN  
Mrs. Cynthia Marilyn Edward-Satney

Royal Saint Lucia Police Force

ACP Pancras Alison Cyprian ALBERT  
Superintendent George DETERVILLE

Saint Lucia Air and Sea Ports Authority (Ports Police)

Inspector Francis CHARLERY

Saint Lucia Fire & Emergency Services

Divisional Officer Olens CHARLES  
Sub Officer Joseph DELAIRE

Bordelais Correctional Facility

Mrs. Virginia LESMOND-JOSEPH  
Mr. Robert JOSEPH

**INSIDE**

DRIVE AWAY

**CANELLES**  
GRANDE INDEPENDENCE

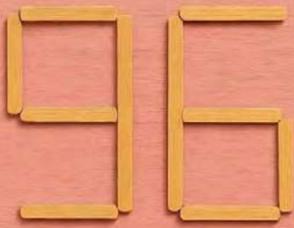
FREE AFTER 3

**INSIDE**

**WHO WILL FALL FIRST?**

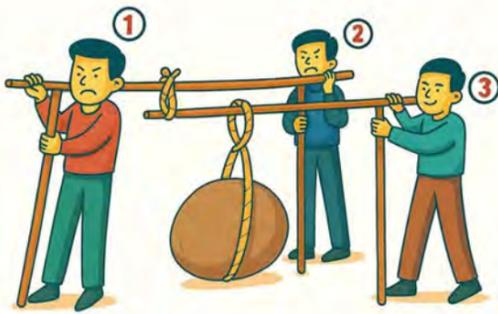


A number that is greater than this



by moving only one stick

Which of these three is lifting the heaviest weight?



**WORD SEARCH**

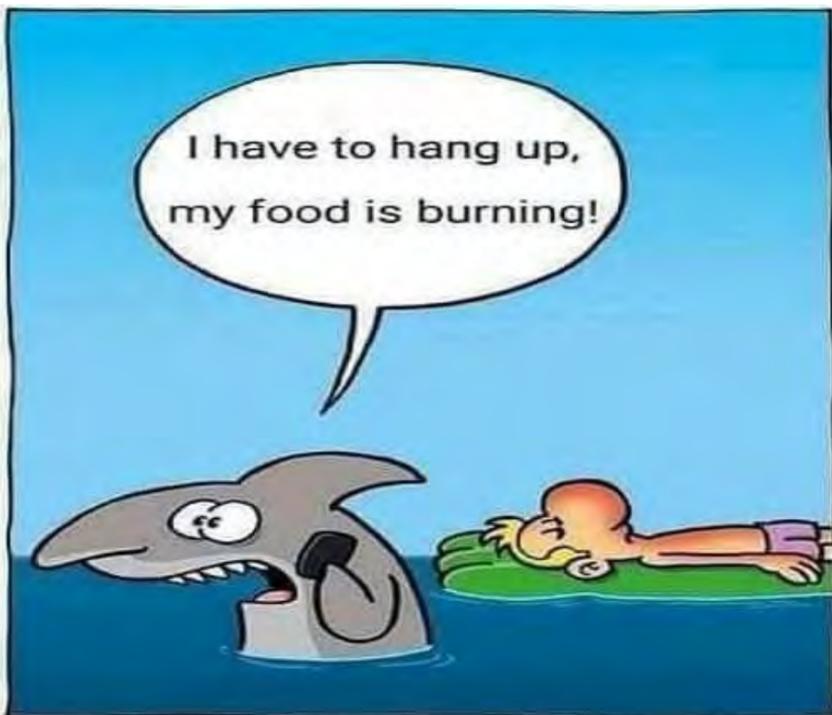
**World Currencies**

Find and circle all of the world currencies that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell a secret message - a John Paul Getty quotation.

R M A R I P M E L O K I N A R U F I Y A A I  
 I O F I T A K A D Y O T E U C R D E H R C T  
 A S G B L A R U P E E O W N C E R A O A A H  
 L M N N U A C Z K Y T L S N C C I I T L T A  
 Y A O I B S Y R L I E H H W U P P A B O A B  
 P R D M E O O I G O I N E S U A B I K T P N  
 O D W N A O L G R L T N K R R O D A K U O O  
 U A E E N U N I L G K Y E I D E U N L W N R  
 N R N R U I T I V W U R L R N M L A A B E A  
 D I I N R O N A A I C A O A H C A W K I O N  
 N A L A O G F N V N A C R N E S Z K R M R A  
 Y Y Y U K G Z Y A O D N R A A A T Y O E D A  
 U R S Y H A D R D L O E O E N T E A N T A N  
 R Y H A T N F O O R A N D S D I U T E I L C  
 H A N R A A L G T A N A M R E L Q V E C A O  
 R I V K Y L I L A N G E N I U P I E A A S L  
 B E F I A V E G N E T T N I R O F U N L I O  
 I A A R L L N L I O U G U I Y A G O G O N N  
 R U B L E O D I O M U R T L U G N O R U E L  
 L D I N A R B A A A L A T D I R H A M R S L

- |              |           |            |               |
|--------------|-----------|------------|---------------|
| AFGHANI      | GOURDE    | MANAT      | RIYAL         |
| ARIAYRY      | GUARANI   | METICAL    | RUBLE         |
| BAHT         | GUILDER   | NAIRA      | RUFYAA        |
| BALBOA       | HRYVNIA   | NAKFA      | RUPEE         |
| BIRR         | KINA      | NEW CEDI   | RUPIAH        |
| BOLIVAR      | KORUNA    | NEW DONG   | SHILLING      |
| BOLIVIANO    | KRONA     | NEW KIP    | SOM           |
| COLON        | KRONE     | NEW SHEKEL | SUCRE         |
| DALASI       | KROON     | NGULTRUM   | SYLI          |
| DENAR        | KUNA      | OUGUIYA    | TAKA          |
| DINAR        | KWACHA    | PATACA     | TALA          |
| DIRHAM       | KWANZA    | PESO       | TENGE         |
| DOLLAR       | KYAT      | POUND      | TOLAR         |
| DRAM         | LEMPIRA   | PULA       | VATU          |
| ESCUDO       | LEONE     | QUETZAL    | WON           |
| EURO         | LILANGENI | RAND       | YEN           |
| FORINT       | LIRA      | REAL       | YUAN RENMINBI |
| FRANC        | LITAS     | RIAL       | ZLOTY         |
| GOLD CORDOBA | LOTI      | RINGGIT    |               |

**CARTOON CORNER**



**TONGUE TWISTER**



The shortest and hardest tongue twister:  
 Try saying "toy boat" five times in a row

FROM FRONT PAGE

# GROS ISLET POLICE DIVISIONAL HEADQUARTERS: A SIGNIFICANT MILESTONE ACHIEVEMENT

Amidst changing trends in criminal activity, the National Security Minister stated, "We are in a completely different national security environment, and the police must be equipped and trained to handle the issues at stake. It is imperative that the police take their roles seriously."

He asserted that the men and women who protect the country deserve adequate and effective facilities to carry out their duties.

Minister Norbert emphasized the critical role of police within the constituency and lauded the construction of what he called "the most modern police station in the region."

He encouraged the officers to utilize the facility as a "beacon of hope" for the community.

Everistus Jn Marie, Chairperson of NIPRO, said that the facility was completed on time despite challenges such as supply chain issues and weather conditions. He proudly mentioned that the project remained within the budget of \$35,838,999.56, employing nearly 100 workers.

He explained that the project was conducted under a BOLT Agreement between the Government of Saint Lucia and NIPRO, a subsidiary of the National Insurance Corporation.

"This funding source reflects NIC's commitment to the social and economic development of Saint Lucia. NIC is dedicated to nation-building and providing social protection and financing for the country's infrastructure through NIPRO," he concluded.

## Grand Independence Anniversary Celebrations Underway: Douvan Ansanm - Nourishing Our People, Strengthening Our Nation

SAINT LUCIA is all set to celebrate its 47th Independence Anniversary with an impressive lineup of events scheduled for February 22, 2026, under the theme "Douvan Ansanm: Nourishing Our People, Strengthening Our Nation."

The National Planning Independence Committee and community organizers have been hard at work to ensure a memorable celebration.

Key Activities and Events:

- Official Flag Raising Ceremony: On Saturday, February 21, at multiple locations, including Gros Islet, Castries, Soufriere, and Vieux Fort, starting at 6:00 p.m.

- Independence Day Rally: The focal celebratory rally will take place on Sunday, February 22, at 2:00 p.m. at the Micoud Playing Field.

- Independence Drags: Experience thrilling racing action on February 22-23 at The Base, Vieux Fort.

- Commemorative Stamps: The government launched stamps featuring celebrated athlete Julien Alfred to honor national pride.

- Cultural & Family Events: Join us on February 22 for a Family Fun Day at Fond Doux Eco Resort, celebrating local culture.

- Diaspora Celebrations: The Saint Lucia Association of London will host a 47th Anniversary celebration at Porchester Hall on February 21.

The celebrations aim to promote unity, pride, and national development. Setting the tone was the Baton Relay event, which has gained popularity across the island. Kicking off in the East Castries constituency led by Prime Minister Philip J. Pierre, the relay will conclude in Canaries on February 21 as part of the Independence Day festivities.

Additional Highlights:

- Military Parade: On February 22, at 10:00 a.m. at the Micoud Playing Field, honoring service, discipline, and national pride.

- National Independence Rally and Independence Showcase: Engage in the festivities in Micoud later that same day.

Other Noteworthy Events:

- Around the Island Walk: February 21
- Independence Gospel Concert: February 21 at Odsan
- Documentary: Saint Lucia - The Wild Side: Screening at Caribbean Cinemas February 21.
- Seafood Fest: Castries Fisheries Complex on February 22
- Prime Minister's Independence Cup (Cricket): February 22 to 29

Leading up to the grand Independence Day celebrations, several events were held, including:

- Legacy Calypso Show: February 7
- 44th National Sports Awards: February 14
- Launch of UHC Name and Logo: February 17
- Fête Majwe Kweyol Sent Lisi- February 17
- Praise & Worship Ecumenical Service: February 20 in Micoud
- National Colors Day: Celebrated island-wide on February 20

Join us in commemorating this significant milestone in our nation's history!



# Kwéyòl App by Taiwanese Innovator a Boost for Saint Lucia's indigenous language

TODAY, February 21, nations worldwide are observing International Mother Language Day – and in Saint Lucia, a new Kwéyòl-English Online Dictionary is ready for use by Saint Lucians (and everyone else).

The initiative, by young Taiwanese creator Jimmy Chiu -- an intern attached to the Taiwan Technical Mission (TTM) in Saint Lucia -- is about to be launched nationwide.

It's been tried and tested and the technical know-how is being shared with locals to ensure its smooth running as a useful communications tool for visitors and locals alike

The new App is the latest in continuing efforts, over decades, by Saint Lucia's Monsignor Patrick Anthony Folk Research Centre (FRC) and other entities, to elevate the Kwéyòl language to writing and reading status.

Their efforts over time have resulted in the island's Mother Tongue being taught and certified by universities in France (including neighbouring Martinique) and is also recognized by the University of the West Indies (UWI).

The FRC was responsible for the first efforts to develop a Kwéyòl vocabulary.

However, members of its predecessor -- the Study and Action Group (SAG) -- conducted Kwéyòl literacy classes at various locations on the island, including at Her Majesty's Prisons (The Royal Gaol) on Bridge Street in Castries.

Among the early teachers of Adult Kwéyòl Literacy classes islandwide were then Fr Patrick Anthony (now Monsignor), school principal Pearllette Louisy (now Governor General Emeritus) and Dr Didacus Jules (now Director General of the OECS), among many others.

The late educator Jones Mondesir published the largest local Kwéyòl Dictionary in the early 1980s and others were added over time.

The language is being kept alive today, but by a dwindling number of Saint Lucians.

The Taiwan App comes at a time when there's even-greater need for better understanding of the Kwéyòl language in Saint Lucia and how it differs from others elsewhere, including Haiti.

Cultural performances keep the language alive, but over the decades since independence there's been a noticeable decline in attention paid to speaking and teaching the language.

Prime Minister Philip J. Pierre has made its development a key aim for his administration, from 2021 when he first took office.

Kwéyòl is also going to school here (figuratively), as the Curriculum Development Unit of the Education Ministry continues planning how to start formally teaching students to speak in their national tongue at the island's infant schools.

Taiwan's Ambassador to Saint Lucia, Nicole Su, in an exclusive VOICE interview, shed light on the background to how the App came to be.

Ambassador Su recalled that on January 20, 2026, her embassy and the FRC jointly hosted a technical workshop, where Mr Chiu demonstrated how the dictionary works and guided participants on how the system can be maintained.

Currently, the Kwéyòl-English Online Dictionary contains 10,552 words and the ambassador's hope is that local Kwéyòl language specialists can collaborate to expand, update and correct entries, over time.

She says, "The preservation of culture and language relies only on us."

Speaking ahead of the island's 47th Independence, the ambassador explained:

"In Taiwan, we are facing the threat of the disappearance of many of our indigenous languages, so we know how important it is to collaborate to strengthen educational resources, and empower local communities to keep their language alive."

According to Ambassador Su, "Many of our local indigenous languages have unfortunately died because of deliberate suppression during the colonial time, as well as certain autocratic government policies."

As such, she said, "Extra efforts have been made to preserve those which still have a chance."

The ambassador feels: "Language is the expression of culture and once the language dies, the culture would eventually disappear."

"That was a harsh lesson we had in Taiwan," she added.

According to the diplomat, "In Taiwan, many of our local indigenous languages have unfortunately died because of deliberate suppression during the colonial time, as well as certain autocratic government policies."

"So, extra efforts have been made to preserve those which still have a chance."

She continued, "Although here in Saint Lucia you're not facing such challenges, it is still worth an effort to use modern technology to preserve it."

"We must face the past, good or bad," she advised, "so that we can move on (I mean, in terms of Taiwan's sad history...)"

According to the Ambassador, "Taiwan is a multi-culture country. The Dutch, Spanish, British, Chinese and Japanese were in Taiwan for a period of time."

"However, our indigenous people belong to the 'Austronesian' people, who've long been in Taiwan, for thousands of years."

"Many of the tribes unfortunately have vanished," she said, but there are at least 16 different tribes currently officially recognized.

Ambassador Su revealed that "Extra efforts, including the school curriculum, are being introduced in Taiwan schools, so that younger generations could still learn properly their Mother Tongue -- "similar to the efforts here, which is why it triggered me to have that Kwéyòl dictionary digitalized."

The dictionary is web-based, so it can be used on a computer, or cell phone.

According to Ambassador Su, "The technical aspects are using lowest burden on memory, so that people with different types of cell phones can also access it."

She also noted that "Although here in Saint Lucia you're not facing such challenges, it is still worth an effort to use modern technology to preserve it."

Encouraging knowledge of history, she said: "We must face the past, good or bad, so that we can move on (I mean, in terms of Taiwan's sad history...)"

It's the Ambassador's hope that it can be expected that the app created by the Taiwan innovator will be put to work fully and freely for Saint Lucia.

Meanwhile, an official handover ceremony for the new online dictionary, in Saint Lucia's Mother Language, is expected in the near future, so that the project can be formally celebrated and recognized by all local stakeholders.

The App will also be a useful tool for overall Kwéyòl education, culture and tourism.

Case Number :SLUHCV2024/0094

THE EASTERN CARIBBEAN SUPREME COURT  
IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUSTICE  
SAINT LUCIA

FILED  
HIGH COURT  
SAINT LUCIA

Claim No. SLUHCV2024/0094 Submitted Date:16/02/2026 19:15

Between: Filed Date:17/02/2026 08:30

(1) HERMAN BECK Fees Paid:12.00  
(2) HELEN BECK (Nee Noble)

Claimants and  
STEWART TITLE EASTERN CARIBBEAN LTD.  
Defendant

NOTICE OF HEARING

To: STEWART TITLE EASTERN CARIBBEAN LTD. whose last known address was Unit 3, Lamar Building, Bridge Street, Castries, in the State of Saint Lucia.

TAKE NOTICE that on the 6th day of August, 2025 Judgment in Default of Acknowledgement of Service was entered against you in the High Court of Justice Saint Lucia, in Claim Number SLUHCV2024/0094 by Herman Beck and Helen Beck (nee Noble). The matter is scheduled for hearing on the 4th day of May, 2026 at 9:00 a.m. before Master Yuri Saunders for Assessment of Damages at the High Court Office of Justice, La Place Carenage, Jeremie Street, in the city of Castries, St. Lucia.

AND the Claim Form, Witness Statement and Submissions for Assessment of Damages and all other supporting documents can be viewed at the High Court Office at La Place Carenage, Jeremie Street, Castries, St. Lucia or at the Chambers of Colin Foster, Rodney Bay, Gros Islet, by appointment.

IF YOU DO NOT ATTEND THIS HEARING an Order may be made in your absence.

Dated 16th day of February, 2026

COLIN FOSTER  
Legal Practitioner for the Claimants

The Court Office is at La Place Carenage, Jeremie Street, Castries, Telephone: 468-7500, Fax: 468-7543 Email: stluhco@eccourts.org. The Office is open between 9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. Monday to Thursday and between 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. on Fridays and closed on Weekends and Holidays.

This Notice is filed by: Colin Foster's Chambers, whose business address is: Rodney Bay, Gros Islet, P.O. Box GM1101, Castries, St. Lucia Tel. No. 287-3387, e-mail: fosterandco@hotmail.com and whose address for service is: c/o Fraser & Company, Cyprian House, Top Floor, #56 John Compton Highway, Sans Souci, Castries.

# Team Saint Lucia Set to Compete in CONCACAF Men's Under-20 Qualifiers

IN preparation for the 2026 CONCACAF Men's Under-20 Qualifiers, the Saint Lucia Football Association (SLFA) Inc. has announced a strong team to represent the island.

Saint Lucia has been placed in Group C alongside Antigua & Barbuda, the British Virgin Islands, Dominica, and the Dominican Republic, with all matches scheduled to take place in Costa Rica.

Saint Lucia will kick off its campaign against Antigua and Barbuda on February 23rd, followed by a match against the Dominican Republic on February 27th. The team will then face Dominica on March 1st, concluding the group stage with a final match against the BVI on March 3rd, 2026.

The tournament features six groups, with the group winners advancing to the next round, scheduled from July 25 to August 9.

The 2026 CONCACAF Men's Under-20 Qualifiers, running from February 23 to March 4, 2026, will be held at various venues across Central America and the Caribbean.



This tournament is crucial, serving as the qualification pathway for the FIFA U-20 World Cup 2027, where teams will compete for a chance to participate in the global finals.

The competition structure includes group

stages followed by knockout rounds, featuring national teams from North America, Central America, and the Caribbean.

The top-performing teams will advance to the final phase of the CONCACAF U-20 Championship, which determines the con-

ederation's representative at the World Cup.

Team Saint Lucia departed the island on February 20th. The squad is as follows:

Goalkeepers: A'Dee Germe, Daunte Saul, Tyrell Vidal

Defenders: Malik Louis, Mekhi Phillip, Rohan Vitalis, Alfred Hippolyte, Aunarje Maxwell, Joshua George, Michael Justin

Midfielders: Alex Devaux, Kallis Monde-sir, Kevin Blackstock, Edric Popo, Marcus Paul, Dervaj Edward, Dashawn Walter

Forwards: Niyel Fontenelle, Eymani Butcher, Messiah Pinel, Edric Popo

The technical team includes:

- Stephen Regis – Team Administrator

- Miran Louis – Head Coach

- Jamil Joseph – Assistant Coach

- Dwight Francis – Assistant Coach

- Bernard President – Goalkeeping Coach

- Selva Wilson – Physical Trainer

- Adele Pierre – Physiotherapist

- Mandisa Moncherry – Team Doctor

Best of luck to Team Saint Lucia in the qualifiers!

[R.A.]

## VFCSS Triumphs Over SJC in Under-19 Volleyball Tournament

ON Monday, the Vieux Fort Comprehensive Secondary School (VFCSS) secured a remarkable victory against defending champions St. Joseph's Convent (SJC) in the Department of Youth Development and Sports Under-19 Volleyball Tournament, held at the Beausejour Indoor Facility.

SJC commenced their title defense impressively by taking the first set 25-16. However, VFCSS showed resilience, rallying from a five-point deficit midway through the second set.

With determination and teamwork, they edged past the defending champions, winning the set 25-20 and setting the tone for a thrilling conclusion. Fueled by their momentum, VFCSS dominated the third set, clinching the match with a score of 15-8.

In another match, last year's finalists, Sir Arthur Lewis Community College (SALCC), bounced back impressively, defeating Soufriere Comprehensive Secondary School (SCSS) in straight sets, with scores of 25-15 and 25-18.

The final match of the day was a nail-biter, featuring Vieux Fort Post-Secondary (VFPS) and

Micoud Secondary School (MSS). MSS took an early lead by winning the first set 25-22, in a contest that could have gone either way.

During the break, VFPS regrouped and came back strong, winning the second set 25-19 to force a decisive third set. The final set was a rollercoaster, with both teams exchanging leads.

Ultimately, Micoud Secondary held their nerve, clinching the victory with a score of 18-16.

The action continued on Wednesday, February 18, at the Vigie Multi-Purpose Sports Complex (VMPS) with the following matches in the male division:

- Game 1 (Group A): Sir Arthur Lewis Community College vs. Castries Comprehensive Secondary School

- Game 2 (Group A): Soufriere Comprehensive Secondary School vs. Vieux Fort Comprehensive

- Game 3 (Group B): St. Mary's College vs. Micoud Secondary

School fans are eagerly looking forward to another day of exciting volleyball action!



MSS takes on VFPS in an action thriller -photo credit: MYDS

## Tapon House Triumphs at 121st St. Mary's College Sports Meet

TAPON House celebrated a resounding victory at the 121st St. Mary's College Sports Meet, successfully defending their title for the fourth consecutive year with a remarkable score of 858 points.

The excitement from their supporters resonated throughout the field during this outstanding performance.

Presentation House showed commendable effort, securing the second position with 713 points, while Abercombie House fought hard to achieve third place with 677 points. Rodney House demonstrated resilience, finishing fourth with 603 points, underscoring that every house made its presence felt in the competition.

The athletes captivated the audience

across five divisions: Seniors Division 1 and 2 (17 and older, and Under 17), Intermediate Division 3 (Under 16), Intermediate Division 4 (Under 15), and Juniors Division 5 (Under 14).

Spectators were on the edge of their seats as competitors raced in events including the 150m, 200m, 300m, 400m, 600m, 800m, 1200m, and 1500m races, in addition to the exhilarating 4x100m, 4x300m, 4x400m relays, and the medley relay (1x100m, 1x200m, 1x300m, 1x400m). Each finish ignited cheers, chants, and a sense of house pride among the crowd.

The Tug O' War event added a layer of drama, with Tapon House overpowering Presentation House in the finals with a 2-0

victory. In earlier rounds, they narrowly defeated Rodney House 2-1, while Presentation House dispatched Abercombie House 2-0. For third place, Rodney House triumphed decisively over Abercombie with a 2-0 win.

Minister for Education, Youth Development, Sports and Digital Transformation, Kenson Casimir, was in attendance and offered words of encouragement to the athletes, urging them to continue their hard training in preparation for the upcoming 2026 Island Champs set for March 22.

A highlight of this year's event was the reintroduction of cycling, showcased for the

first time in years as part of an exhibition. This initiative injected fresh energy into the program, with aspirations for cycling to become a permanent fixture by 2026.

Leading the cycling reintroduction were Cyril Mangal, President of the Saint Lucia Cycling Association, and Chester Forde, both proud former students of St. Mary's College and national cyclists. Their leadership and enthusiasm laid the groundwork for the exciting return of cycling.

As the college looks forward to the track and field qualifiers and the Island Champs next month, the momentum from this year's meet is sure to carry forward.



Cyclists competing on the tracks-photo credit: MYDS



photo credit: MYDS



Tapon House recorded its fourth consecutive title victory -photo credit: MYDS

# Frangipani House Clinches SISSS Inter-House Sports Meet Championship

ON February 12, the Frangipani House, donned in their traditional blue attire, triumphed at the 2026 Sir Ira Simmons Secondary School (SISSS) Inter-House Sports Meet, amassing an impressive total of 831 points.

The annual event took place at the Daren Sammy Cricket Ground (DSCG) in Beausejour, benefiting from ideal weather conditions. In her address to students, teachers, and parents, the school principal, Mrs. Belizaire, expressed her joy: "This is one of my happiest days at Sir Ira Simmons. Each year, I look forward to this occasion when you can showcase your sporting abilities. I encourage you to feel excited and happy, and to give your best for your house."

She emphasized the competitive spirit of the day: "Today is a championship — boy against boy, girl against girl. In other words, the best athlete will win today, and the best house will win today."

Mrs. Belizaire further reassured all participants, stating, "If one house emerges victorious, it does not mean the others should feel discouraged. Together with my vice principal and



Photo Credit: MYDS



Photo Credit: MYDS

all your teachers, I want to assure you that we are incredibly proud of you. We are proud that you are here today to compete, to support your house, and to support your school."

The athletes competed in three divisions: Under-14, Under-16, and Under-18 for both boys and girls. The events included a variety of races: 80m, 100m, 200m, 400m, 600m, 800m, 1000m, 1200m, 1500m, as well as the highly anticipated relay races: 4x100m, 4x300m, and 4x400m.

Frangipani House entered the DSCG with an initial lead of 439 points from field events, road races, and fun sports, holding a narrow lead over Cassia, which secured 427 points.

Ultimately, Frangipani widened their lead by 392 points to clinch the championship title, finishing with a total of 831 points. Cassia finished in second place with 767 points, followed closely by Flamboyant with 758 points, while Calabash secured fourth place with 655 points.



Photo Credit: MYDS

## KINGSMEN CONFIRM LAUNCH OF CPL FRANCHISE IN JAMAICA



PHOTO BY CPL.COM

Sunday, February 22, 2026		
English Premier League		
<p>10:00 AM - Peacock</p> <p><b>Crystal Palace</b> (7-7-9)</p> <p><b>Wolverhampton Wanderers</b> (1-5-17)</p>	<p>Selhurst Park London, England</p> <p>Tickets as low as \$79</p> <p>Line: CRY -155 O/U: 2.5</p>	<p><b>Crystal Palace</b> Squad Stats Fixtures</p> <p><b>Wolverhampton Wanderers</b> Squad Stats Fixtures</p>
<p>10:00 AM - NBCSN/Peacock</p> <p><b>Nottingham Forest</b> (7-4-12)</p> <p><b>Liverpool</b> (10-6-7)</p>	<p>The City Ground Nottingham, England</p> <p>Tickets as low as \$334</p> <p>Line: LIV -125 O/U: 2.5</p>	<p><b>Nottingham Forest</b> Squad Stats Fixtures</p> <p><b>Liverpool</b> Squad Stats Fixtures</p>
<p>10:00 AM - USA Net/Tele</p> <p><b>Sunderland</b> (8-9-6)</p> <p><b>Fulham</b> (10-4-9)</p>	<p>Stadium of Light Sunderland, England</p> <p>Tickets as low as \$119</p> <p>Line: SUN +170 O/U: 2.5</p>	<p><b>Sunderland</b> Squad Stats Fixtures</p> <p><b>Fulham</b> Squad Stats Fixtures</p>
<p>12:30 PM - USA Net/Tele</p> <p><b>Tottenham Hotspur</b> (7-7-9)</p> <p><b>Arsenal</b> (15-5-3)</p>	<p>Tottenham Hotspur Stadium London, England</p> <p>Tickets as low as \$199</p> <p>Line: ARS -180 O/U: 2.5</p>	<p><b>Tottenham Hotspur</b> Squad Stats Fixtures</p> <p><b>Arsenal</b> Squad Stats Fixtures</p>
Saturday, February 21, 2026		
English Premier League		
<p>11:00 AM - Universo/Peacock</p> <p><b>Aston Villa</b> (14-4-5)</p> <p><b>Leeds United</b> (6-8-9)</p>	<p>Villa Park Birmingham, England</p> <p>Tickets as low as \$129</p> <p>Line: AVL -115 O/U: 2.5</p>	<p><b>Aston Villa</b> Squad Stats Fixtures</p> <p><b>Leeds United</b> Squad Stats Fixtures</p>
<p>11:00 AM - Peacock</p> <p><b>Brentford</b> (10-3-10)</p> <p><b>Brighton &amp; Hove Albion</b> (7-9-7)</p>	<p>Gtech Community Stadium London, England</p> <p>Tickets as low as \$136</p> <p>Line: BRE +105 O/U: 2.5</p>	<p><b>Brentford</b> Squad Stats Fixtures</p> <p><b>Brighton &amp; Hove Albion</b> Squad Stats Fixtures</p>
<p>11:00 AM - Peacock</p> <p><b>Chelsea</b> (10-7-6)</p> <p><b>Burnley</b> (3-6-14)</p>	<p>Stamford Bridge London, England</p> <p>Tickets as low as \$303</p> <p>Line: CHE -450 O/U: 3.5</p>	<p><b>Chelsea</b> Squad Stats Fixtures</p> <p><b>Burnley</b> Squad Stats Fixtures</p>
<p>1:30 PM - Universo/Peacock</p> <p><b>West Ham United</b> (5-5-13)</p> <p><b>AFC Bournemouth</b> (7-9-7)</p>	<p>London Stadium London, England</p> <p>Tickets as low as \$93</p> <p>Line: WHU +150 O/U: 3.5</p>	<p><b>West Ham United</b> Squad Stats Fixtures</p> <p><b>AFC Bournemouth</b> Squad Stats Fixtures</p>
<p>4:00 PM - Universo/Peacock</p> <p><b>Manchester City</b> (14-4-5)</p> <p><b>Newcastle United</b> (9-6-8)</p>	<p>Etihad Stadium Manchester, England</p> <p>Tickets as low as \$113</p> <p>Line: MNC -210 O/U: 3.5</p>	<p><b>Manchester City</b> Squad Stats Fixtures</p> <p><b>Newcastle United</b> Squad Stats Fixtures</p>

**KINGSMEN Sports Enterprise** has officially confirmed its entry into the Republic Bank Caribbean Premier League (CPL) with the launch of a new franchise based in Jamaica, marking a significant new chapter for cricket on the island and a major commitment to sustainable economic growth, cultural celebration, and elite sporting development.

Backed by a new US-based investment group with a proven record in sports infrastructure, technology, and community development, the Kingsmen franchise has been structured not as a short-term sporting venture, but as a long-term partnership with Jamaica and its people. The ownership group has recently invested in a team in the Pakistan Super League and plans to help build sports tourism, local enterprise participation, and year-round economic activity tied to cricket and entertainment in Jamaica.

"Our vision for Jamaica goes far beyond match days," said Fawad Sarwar, Group President of Kingsmen Sports Enterprise. "This franchise is designed to act as an economic engine -creating employment, supporting local businesses, and positioning Jamaica as a global hub for cricket, culture, and sportainment."

The new franchise is expected to generate significant direct and indirect economic impact, driven by hotel occupancy, local staffing, vendor partnerships, and expanded tourism during and beyond the CPL season. The team will prioritize Jamaican suppliers,

service providers, creatives, and event partners to ensure investment circulates within the local economy.

Central to the Kingsmen approach is a deep respect for Jamaican identity and culture. The franchise will embrace CPL's reputation as the "Biggest Party in Sport," integrating music, food, fashion, and community celebration into the matchday experience.

Crucially, Kingsmen has also committed to building a development bridge for Jamaican cricketers, linking grassroots programs to professional pathways at home and abroad. Investment in academies, coaching, data-driven scouting, and youth engagement will ensure local talent remains central to the franchise's long-term success.

"This is about creating opportunity," Sarwar added. "Opportunity for young Jamaican cricketers, for entrepreneurs, for artists, for hospitality workers, and for communities that see cricket as both heritage and future."

The launch of the new Jamaica-based franchise aligns with Kingsmen Sports Enterprise's broader global cricket strategy, combining world-class infrastructure, elite player development, and community-first investment models. In Jamaica, that strategy will be executed with a clear promise: the team will belong to the island, its culture, and its people.

Further details on team identity, community initiatives, and launch events will be announced in the coming months ahead of the 2026 Caribbean Premier League season.

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# THE VOICE

## Weekend

21 FEBRUARY, 2026

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# WEST INDIES MEN SECURE SUPER EIGHT SPOT WITH THREE CONSECUTIVE VICTORIES

**THE West Indies Senior Men's team continued their impressive start to the ICC T20 World Cup with a commanding nine-wicket victory over Nepal on Sunday at the Wankhede Stadium in Mumbai. The result marked their third consecutive win, maintaining a perfect record in the tournament, which is being hosted across India and Sri Lanka.**

The victory also ensured that the Caribbean side became the first team to secure a place in the Super Eight stage, achieving the milestone with one group match remaining against Italy in Kolkata on Thursday, February 19.

Thursday's match against Italy ended with a 42-run win for the West Indies featuring a 5 run knock from Captain Shai Hope. West Indies put 165 for 6 on the board but Italy was all out by the 18th over with 123 on their name. Heading into the tournament, the West Indies were pre-seeded as the second-ranked team in their group. As a result, they will retain their seeding for the Super Eight regardless of which team tops their group.

Drawn in Group C for the group phase, the West Indies are scheduled to face India, South Africa, and Zimbabwe in the Super Eight.

The Caribbean side will begin this stage on February 23 against Zimbabwe at the Wankhede Stadium, followed by South Africa in Ahmedabad on February 26, before concluding the Super Eight stage against India at Eden Gardens in Kolkata on March 1.

The second round of the tournament will feature two groups of four teams, competing in a round-robin format. The top two teams from each group will then advance to the knockout stage.

On Sunday, the West Indies were at their clinical best in romping to the comprehensive win against Nepal.

After inserting the Asian outfit, pacers Matthew Forde and Jason Holder along with spinner Akeal Hosein had Nepal rocking at 23 for 4 just outside the powerplay.

Holder improved his tally of wickets to seven in three matches with man of the match figures of 4 for 27 to be in top five wicket takers of the tournament so far.

Nepal were restricted to 133 for 8 with four other bowlers: Hosein, Forde, Roston Chase and Shamar Joseph all taking a wicket apiece.

In pursuit, the West Indies eased their way to 43 without loss with scintillating stroke play from captain Shai Hope and Brandon King.

King departed for an attacking 22, but that paved the way for an eye-catching unbroken 91 run second wicket stand between Hope and the team's leading scorer in the tournament to date, Shimron Hetmyer.

Hope hit five fours and three towering sixes in his 61 and crossed 1500 T20I runs in the process while Hetmyer hammered four fours and two sixes in his 46 from 32 balls.

Hetmyer's tally is now at 133 runs in three innings at an impressive average of 66.50.

The West Indies have found several match winners in the

previous encounters with Hetmyer leading the way with a blistering half century of 64 against Scotland to secure a 35-run win.

Romario Shepherd bagged his second international hat-trick in four months to reduce Scotland and close out the win which kick started the campaign.

In the team's second encounter against England, Sherfane Rutherford blasted a career-best 74 from 42 balls to lift the team to a comfortable 30-run win over the arch-rivals. Gudakesh Motie also spun a web with 3 for 33 to

secure the crucial points ahead of the Nepal clash.

Captain Shai Hope emphasised the team's focus on maintaining momentum while keeping sight of the ultimate goal.

**"When we got on the plane to come here, that was the first step, and we all want to lift the trophy but there is a process to get there by playing our best cricket and peaking at the right time and growing as a strong unit."**  
 Hope said.

## CELEBRATING THE LOVE, CELEBRATING GOLF

**GOLF Saint Lucia Inc., formerly the St. Lucia Golf Association, hosted its annual Valentine's Day Tournament: Three Guys and a Doll. In this tournament the Doll (the female golfer player) takes responsibility for selecting her male golfers and for the attire of the team.**

The day's competition was not simply about the competition but having fun, socializing, comradery, togetherness and gaining bragging rights. This year 18 teams participated, with the Dolls putting much effort into dressing their guys as can be seen in the photos below: Best Dressed Team

Without our sponsors the day would not be possible. Our main sponsors were La Cantina Wines and M Motors for the

second year. Our other sponsors, M&C Drugstores, who continue to provide the chocolates to our winning teams, Ian Louis, Edit Duty Free, Sandals Golf & Country Club and Daren Sammy.

The winning teams were:

1st Place - Simone Skinner (Doll) and Anselm Mathurin, Jermaine Hunte, and Rolfe Phillips. 2nd Place - Ms. Kim, Ed Lewis, Jeremiah Jonas and S. Richelieu

3rd Place - Debra Ross, Romanus Inglis, Victor Charles and Cliff Alcide

Thanks to our sponsors and our golfers. All monies raised from this tournament go towards supporting our junior golf program.

