



NEWSLETTER

The Antigua and Barbuda High Commission

ISSUE No.117 January 2007

Prime Minister Spencer restructures his Cabinet

Prime Minister of Antigua and Barbuda the Hon. Baldwin Spencer has announced changes in his Cabinet which he says are designed to ensure that the country's critical imperatives in the delivery of social programmes, infrastructure development, education, public safety, public health care, tourism expansion, national cohesion and good governance, will stay on course, on time, and on budget.

The changes announced by the Prime Minister are as follows:

1. Sports and Youth Affairs move to the Ministry of Education; which becomes The Ministry of Education, Sports and Youth Affairs.
2. Culture, inclusive of the Independence Celebrations, the Community Pride Programme, Carnival and the Environment, now move to the Ministry of Tourism. That Ministry now becomes the Ministry of Tourism, Civil Aviation, Culture and the Environment.
3. The Antigua Public Utilities Authority and Energy move to the Office of the Prime Minister. Minister Trevor Walker will assist the Prime Minister with matters relating to Energy and APUA with a Board that is expected to carry forward government policy and is answerable to the Prime Minister.

The realignment of Cabinet responsibilities is also accompanied by the changes in the responsibilities and deployment of a number of Ministers:

1. Deputy Prime Minister, Willmoth Daniel, retains responsibility for the Ministry of Public Works and Transportation, including the Port Authority.
2. Minister John Maginley is the Minister of Health. 2007 Cricket World Cup will, however, remain with Minister Maginley.
3. Minister Colin Derrick now becomes the Minister of Justice and Public Safety with additional responsibility for the Police and Fire Division.
4. Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs Justin Simon will now have additional responsibility for the Land and Commercial Registries.
5. Minister Winston Williams is now Minister of State in the Ministry of Education, Sports and Youth Affairs with responsibility for Sports and Youth Affairs.
6. Minister Eleston Adams is now Minister of State in the Ministry of Tourism, Civil Aviation, Culture and the Environment with responsibility for Culture and Independence Celebrations.



The Honourable Baldwin Spencer, Prime Minister of Antigua and Barbuda

Inside

- [Cabinet reshuffled \(pages 1 & 3\)](#)
- [Minister Derrick attends global conference \(page 6\)](#)
- [IT staff undergo cutting edge technology training in India \(page 11\)](#)
- [Antigua and Barbuda adds 'Best Beaches Destination' to growing list of accolades \(page 12\)](#)

Continue on page 3

A MESSAGE FROM HIS EXCELLENCY DR CARL ROBERTS, HIGH COMMISSIONER



Dear Readers,

The year 2007 will be a very active period in the history of our nation. It will be a year in which we continue to celebrate historical milestones which should leave indelible marks in the lives of each citizen, supporter and resident of Antigua and Barbuda.

Commencing March we host for the first time Cricket World Cup, with some of the Super eight matches being held at a brand new Sir Vivian Richards Stadium. Then in April/May we celebrate 21 years of Antigua Yacht Regatta and 40 years of Antigua Sailing Week. Both these events point out the significant role that sailing plays in the promotion of Antigua and Barbuda. Finally in July/August we celebrate 50 years of Antigua Carnival.

The Prime Minister has taken note of these important activities in Antigua and Barbuda and to ensure that our Representatives of the government focus on delivering the pledges which the government

has made, has decided to restructure his Cabinet. A report on this is the lead article in this Newsletter.

To prepare the country for the increase flow of visitors, certain special arrangements have been put in place in Antigua and Barbuda and across the region. The first of these is the Common CARICOM Visa which came into effect on the 1st February and will last until the 15th May 2007. Our readers are asked to see the article on page 5.

The second special arrangement is the closer working between Caribbean Star and LIAT (1974) Ltd. This should enable easier travel between Caribbean islands during the period February to May 2007 and could readily become a continued feature of operations well into the future.

The most important special arrangement for our homeland should be the welcome we give to the thousands of visitors to Antigua and Barbuda over the year. As we celebrate each activity let us also make the special effort to place Antigua and Barbuda on the map, to plant the seed of enjoyment, peace, warmth and contentment in the mind of each visitor so that the seed may grow into a full blossoming desire to revisit Antigua and Barbuda and to encourage others to do likewise.

We take this opportunity to wish all our readers peace and success for the New Year while they bond with families and friends. Let us all work together to reduce hatred, help our fellow citizens and make this world a better place to live.

Let us pray for the government and people of our homeland and ask for wisdom and patience to be granted to our leaders especially our Prime Minister whose responsibility it is to develop the Nation and improve the livelihood of each citizen.

**Dr Carl Roberts
High Commissioner**

Continued from cover page

The Prime Minister also announced that he intends to capitalize on former Cabinet Minister Senator Aziz Hadeed's unmatched experience and acumen in international business and therefore appointed him as Ambassador Extraordinaire and Plenipotentiary, with Ministerial Rank.

Ambassador Hadeed will be the country's point man in international trade and foreign direct investment promotion, merchant shipping and the promotion and establishment of the Caribbean Festival Park.

Mr. Leon "Chaku" Symister, the former General Manager of APUA and Chairman of the United Progressive Party was appointed as Ambassador Extraordinaire and Plenipotentiary.

Prime Minister Spencer also touched on the contentious issue of the landing of a fibre optic cable in his new year's address.

He said the Sunshine Government remains committed to focusing on the liberalization of the telecommunications market and the development of a Regulatory Unit to ensure fairness in a newly liberalized market.

He also said that the operation of a new undersea fibre optic cable will be a significant facet of the government's information technology and telecommunications thrust early in the New Year.

Prime Minister Spencer also announced that his government will move immediately to establish a human resources department within the Royal Police Force of Antigua and Barbuda.

He said that the establishment

of the Human Resources Department within the Police Force will aid in developing, communicating and enforcing policies and practices that reflect standards of acceptable behaviour for members of the force.

He said that chief among the tasks of the Human Resources Department will be the improvement of the individual performances of officers.

The country's leader also applauded the devotion of the countless police officers who discharge their duty to protect and serve all of Antigua and Barbuda with dedication, and beyond the call of duty.

In dealing with the issue of deportees from North America and Europe Prime Minister Spencer said that the Ministry of Social Transformation will be required to focus more particularly on the social displacement needs of these individuals.

He said that the relevant division within the Ministry will work closely with the Police and Immigration Departments and the job search and procurement divisions within the Ministry of Labour.

Prime Minister Spencer pointed out that every assistance will be given by the division within the Ministry of Social Transformation to ensure that deportees are fully integrated into the society and that they lead lives free of crime.

In his New Year Address Prime Minister Spencer also announced that the Petro Caribe initiative is now operational and to date, two shipments of petroleum products have been secured by PDV Caribe Antigua and Barbuda Limited and distributed by the West Indies Oil Company.

He noted that as a result, funds generated from this arrangement with

the Venezuelan Government will be specifically utilized for social and community development projects to be identified by the government.

The Prime Minister said that his government cherishes the excellent bilateral relations and economic cooperation that exist with Venezuela and our other regional and international partners including, in particular, the People's Republic of China, and the Republic of Cuba.

The economic Performance of the country in 2006 was also addressed by the Prime Minister. He said that the past year saw the economy of Antigua and Barbuda being placed on strong economic pillars that resulted in a record 12% growth - the highest growth rate ever achieved in the past 28 years.

It was noted that in the challenging year ahead, the government anticipates even more robust growth.

The Prime Minister said that the unprecedented level of economic growth will continue to be driven by significant expansion in the construction sector and a rebound of the tourism sector.

He also pointed out that in the New Year the government's programme of economic stabilization and adjustment will continue.



LIAT Shareholder Governments' meetings in Antigua on 9th and 10th January 2007

The Honourable Baldwin Spencer, Prime Minister of Antigua and Barbuda, the Rt. Honourable Owen Arthur, Prime Minister of Barbados and Dr. the Honourable Ralph Gonsalves, Prime Minister of St. Vincent and the Grenadines; the major Government Shareholders in LIAT (1974) Ltd, held meetings in St. John's, Antigua with Sir Allen Stanford, sole shareholder and Chairman of Caribbean Star Airline on 9th January 2007 and with LIAT Chairman and top management on 10th January 2007.

The meeting with Sir Allen Stanford involved clarifications and refinements of proposals placed on the table jointly by the LIAT and Caribbean Star Board and Management teams and were subject to close consideration by both parties.

The meeting took place in a spirit of sensitivity and give and take on both sides, but the Prime Ministers were satisfied that Sir Allen understood the critical importance of air transportation to the region and is willing to make suitable accommodation.

The meeting with management covered reports by the three Prime Ministers on the various mandates they accepted at their meeting on 20th December 2006 in Barbados. Progress was achieved as follows:

1. The meeting ratified the terms of the MOU signed by Prime Minister Arthur and Sir Allen Stanford.

2. The terms of the Letter of Intent circulated on 20th December, 2006 will be further considered by LIAT's

legal counsel and the legal departments of the three countries in the coming week with a view to its signature after approval by the Prime Ministers. It is due to be signed by Chairmen Sir Allen Stanford and Jean Holder.

3. Progress was reported by Dr. the Hon. Ralph Gonsalves with respect to his mission to Trinidad and Tobago. A resulting proposal by the Hon. Patrick Manning was considered and an amended proposal is being made to Trinidad and Tobago in the context of steps to work towards a long term solution to air transportation issues within CSME.



4. Prime Minister, the Hon. Baldwin Spencer updated his colleagues on his further discussions about the Venezuelan Loan and a Plan of Action has been agreed to advance the matter.

5. It was confirmed that the commercial agreement between Caribbean Star and LIAT 1974 Ltd involving a new combined schedule will enter into force from 1st February 2007 - leading to enhanced service and connectivity for the region. Additionally, this commercial alliance is expected to facilitate intra-Caribbean travel during Cricket World Cup 2007.



6. The Prime Ministers further agreed:

a. The next steps, process and time frame for the creation of a new company to be called "LIAT, The Star of the Caribbean."

b. On a financial package on excellent terms for liquidating LIAT liabilities.

c. Steps to be taken by Zwaig Consultants to negotiate with existing creditors and on the Asset Value of the two carriers.

d. Took note of other negotiations that need to be done.

The Prime Ministers have established a team involving the Chairman of LIAT, Dr. Jean Holder, the CEO of Caribbean Star, Mr. Skip Barnett, the CEO of LIAT Mr. Mark Darby, Director of LIAT Mr. Isaac Solomon of St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Advisor to the Antigua and Barbuda Government Dr. Vincent Richards and legal and financial analysts from Barbados as a General Oversight Committee relating to shareholders on all other negotiations involved.

On 27th February 2007, there will be a special meeting of all LIAT shareholders to be held in Antigua and Barbuda to consider the plans for the merger of both carriers.

Historic agreement makes travel to and between Caribbean countries much easier

The countries of the Caribbean are finally beginning to come together to operate as a single nation and to make travel to and between the various islands and nations much easier than ever before.

All of this has been precipitated by the hosting of the **Cricket World Cup** (CWC), the third largest global sporting event, by ten Caribbean countries and enabling those visitors to move freely between those ten countries during that time as if they were a single country.

This historic agreement which will be in effect between February 1st and May 15th 2007 (to cover the actual dates of March 5th to April 28th for the Cricket World Cup) promises to make travel to and between Caribbean countries much easier for cricket fans, other visitors and Caribbean nationals.

The ten nations participating in this **Single Domestic Space** are Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, St Kitts & Nevis, St Lucia, St Vincent & the Grenadines and Trinidad & Tobago.

This will mean that during the period announced, visitors to these countries, once they have cleared Immigration & Customs at their first port of entry, will be free to travel to and within all of the other nine countries as if they were a single nation. This initiative promises to be a substantial boon for multi-destination travel within the region even for travel for purposes beyond Cricket World Cup.

All of this good news comes, however, with some unintended

consequences. As with the creation of the European Union, some countries that did not require a visa for certain nationals to visit will now require those visitors to obtain a visa.

That is a natural result of the protracted negotiations within the ten countries on their different visa regimes and unfortunately the announcement of the affected countries and their nationals was made only in the middle of December 2006.

There is no question that overall, inconvenience to the travelling public has been minimized as more than 95% of the current visitors to those ten countries will be able to visit without the need to get a visa. The full list of those nationals that will not require a visa is provided below. All other nationals will need to apply for the **Special Caricom Visa** to visit any of the countries in the **Single Domestic Space** between February 1st and May 15th 2007.

Because travel and tourism are so important to the economy of the Caribbean, officials will put an extraordinary number of initiatives in place to facilitate the issuance of visas to those visitors that have been affected. Some of these initiatives include a special web site (www.caricomimpacs.org) for the application of visas including answers to frequently asked questions, a 24 hour hotline to address any concerns, a three day turn around for requests for visas after receipt of complete applications in a processing centre, waiving of visa fees for children of age 12 and under and some special arrangements for emergencies.

This is a major step forward for the CARICOM group of countries to which all of these ten countries belong. CARICOM, a contraction of "**Caribbean Community**", is comprised of fifteen countries but the ten hosting Cricket

World Cup which are in relatively close proximity to each other have agreed to put this new arrangement to the test.

Any further information that is not found at the special web site (www.caricomimpacs.org) may be obtained from any of the tourist boards of the ten countries mentioned either from their web sites or by telephone all of which are listed below.

Antigua Tourist Board -
Tel: 268-462-0480
www.antigua-barbuda.org/

Barbados Tourism Authority -
246-427-2623 www.barbados.org

National Development Corporation (Dominica) - 767-448-2045 -
www.dominica.dm

Grenada Board of Tourism -
473-440-2279
www.grenadagrenadines.com

Guyana Tourism Authority -
011-592-223-6351/6352
www.guyana-tourism.com

Jamaica Tourist Board -
876-929-9200/19
www.visitjamaica.com

St. Kitts Tourist Board -
869-465-4040
www.stkittstourism.kn

St. Lucia Tourist Board -
758-452-4094 - www.stlucia.org

PM Spencer establishes Bicentenary Anniversary of the Abolition of the Slave Trade Committee

Prime Minister the Hon. Baldwin Spencer has announced the establishment of a committee to

organize celebrations in honour of the Bicentenary Anniversary of the Abolition of the British Empire Atlantic Slave Trade.

In his New Year's Address to the nation, Prime Minister Spencer outlined his intention to appoint the committee which will be tasked with organizing activities to include education and awareness programmes concerning the Bicentenary celebration and the question of Reparations.

The Committee is chaired by Mr. Dorbrene O'Marde and includes Ermina Oshoba, Ambassador Anthony Liverpoole, Ambassador Joan Underwood, Senator McKenzie Frank, Mr. Alister Thomas, Ras King Frank I Francis, Icilma Cornelius, Said Greene, Youth Ambassador Cleveroy Thomas and Veronica Yearwood.

Ambassador Leon Chaku Symister is the convener of the Committee.

Prime Minister Spencer said that by commemorating the dismantling of the institution of slavery Antigua and Barbuda will be honouring the memory of those who died as a result of one of the worst acts of violation of human rights in the history of humanity, including through exposure to the horrors of the Middle Passage and in revolt against and resistance to enslavement.

He said that it is important that as a nation we reflect on the institution of slavery which was at the heart of profound social and economic inequality, hatred, bigotry, racism and prejudice, which we must ensure does not affect us again as a people.

The event will be celebrated on March 26, 2007.



Minister Derrick attends Global Conference in Geneva

Senator, the Hon. Colin Derrick represented Antigua and Barbuda at the Third Global Conference on Combating Counterfeiting and Piracy at the International Conference Centre, in Geneva, Switzerland from 30th – 31st January, 2007.

The Conference was hosted by the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO), and was organized in co-operation with the Steering Group of the Global Congress on Combating Counterfeiting and Piracy.

The Global Conference was co-organised by WIPO, Interpol and the World Customs Organisation (WCO), in co-operation with international non-governmental organisations. Co-ordination with certain inter-governmental organisations and the private sector to combat counterfeiting and piracy activeness, formed part of the mandate of the Advisory Committee on Enforcement of WIPO.

The Congress was a high level forum for shaping future enforcement strategies and actions, as well as providing opportunities for dialogue and interaction between government ministers and policy makers, business leaders, senior law enforcement officials and other stakeholders from inter-governmental and non-governmental organisations.

One of the major highlights of the Conference was the release of the report on the Economic Impact of Counterfeiting and Piracy.



Senator the Honourable Colin Derrick, Minister of Justice and Public Safety

During the Conference, several topics were discussed. These included: **“Enhancing Co-operation and Co-ordination”** which focussed on the latest developments on the collaborative efforts between private and public sectors as well as between governments.

The Conference also touched on the topic of **“Promoting Better Legislation and Enforcement”** which revealed new legislative initiatives aimed at combating counterfeiting and piracy. Rounding up the topics are **“Building Capacity and Focusing Resources for Results”** which dealt with progress in building capacity and capabilities and **“Raising Awareness”** which was the forum for unveiling the latest efforts and success stories in raising the awareness of consumers about piracy and counterfeiting.

PM Spencer expresses sadness at passing of National Security Advisor



Mr Alec Vanderpool

Prime Minister the Hon. Baldwin Spencer expressed great sadness at the untimely passing of National Security Advisor and Director of the Office of National Drug Control and Money Laundering Policy (ONDCP) Mr. Alec Vanderpool.

"The news of Alec's death has rocked my very being. Alec was a tremendous asset to the government of Antigua and Barbuda and performed his duties with unwavering dedication and sincerity. He will be greatly missed," said the Prime Minister.

"To Alec's wife Margaret and the Vanderpool family, I wish to assure you that you are constantly in my thoughts and prayers. On behalf of my wife and I and the government of Antigua and Barbuda I extend profound sympathy and urge you to rely on prayer and divine intervention at this time which can only assuage such a loss," concluded Prime Minister Spencer.

Mr. Alec Vanderpool, who

was Antigua born, spent fifteen years in Metropolitan Police Service in London, and eleven years in Special Branch at Scotland Yard.

He also served in the British Army in the Corps of Royal Engineers and has worked as an airline security coordinator at London's Heathrow Airport.

He was appointed National Security Advisor on September 1, 2004.



The High Commission joins with Antigua and Barbuda citizens in mourning the loss of two Beloved Sons of the Soil

Condolences were expressed by the High Commissioner, H.E. Dr Carl Roberts to the families of two Antigua and Barbuda's well-loved citizens, Senator Francis (Frankie) Nunes and Mr Alec Vanderpool, National Security Advisor and Director of the Office of National Drug Control and Money Laundering Policy (ONCP).

In his expression of sympathy, the High Commissioner likened each of the gentlemen above to a "flower" which brings delight to the hearts of their parents.

When speaking of Senator Nunes, the High Commissioner expressed the view that it warmed [the] heart to recall the life of service of this well-loved son. His parents

must indeed be proud, and so should they, for Senator Nunes chose to serve his country and did so with such distinction. It is a choice which he wished more persons of integrity would make for our beloved nation.

In his expression of sympathy to the parents of Mr Vanderpool, the High Commissioner stated:-

"The Good Lord, however, reminds us that everything including life is in the hands of the Heavenly Father. He waters the rose tree like the lilies of the field, providing it with what's needed to produce its splendour on display. But he also reminds us that we must trust him for our tomorrows. The splendour of the flower does not last forever. We are invited to trust our Saviour for the time when our roses will never fade and we will enjoy the company of our Lord with our loved ones at our side in a field of many flowers.

May your faith be strengthened to endure your loss while you call to mind the words that we must mourn "as though there is no hope". Trust in him and he will indeed be your source of comfort. Your son may no longer be in your physical presence but he will never be forgotten. He will always be in your hearts".

Antigua and Barbuda is a state which God has blessed with many wonderful gifts (both land and friendly people). We must learn to preserve these gifts for generations to come.

Gambling Subpoenas on Wall Street

By **ANDREW ROSS SORKIN** and **STEPHANIE SAUL**

Published: January 22, 2007

The Justice Department has issued subpoenas to at least four Wall Street investment banks as part of a widening investigation into the multibillion-dollar online gambling industry, according to people briefed on the investigation.

The subpoenas were issued to firms that had underwritten the initial public offerings of some of the most popular online gambling sites that operate abroad. The banks involved in the inquiry include HSBC, Credit Suisse, Deutsche Bank and Dresdner Kleinwort, these people said.

While online gaming sites like PartyGaming and 888 Holdings operate from Gibraltar and their initial public offerings were held on the London Stock Exchange, companies that do business with them and have large bases in United States have come under scrutiny by regulators in Washington.

None of the biggest United States banks like Goldman Sachs or Citigroup underwrote the initial public offerings in London, in part because of the legal ambiguity of the sites; they are illegal in the United States, but still accessible to residents.

The subpoenas, earlier reported by The Sunday Times of London, appeared to be part of an indirect but aggressive and far-reaching attack by federal prosecutors on the Internet gambling industry just two weeks before one of its biggest days of the year, the Super Bowl.

Unable to go directly after the casinos, which are based overseas, they

have sought to prosecute the operations' American partners, marketing arms and now, possibly, investors.

The prosecutors may be emboldened by a law signed by President Bush last October that explicitly defined the illegality of running an Internet casino. Even before that law, the Unlawful Internet Gambling Enforcement Act, was adopted, the government said that Internet gambling was illegal under a 1961 provision.

These offshore casinos, typically based in Costa Rica or Antigua, allow American bettors to use their home and office computers to place wagers on a range of contests.

Millions of Americans participate; more than half of all bets placed to major offshore casinos are from residents of the United States.

The prosecutors' efforts have already taken a toll in the last two years on offshore casinos, most notably with the arrest last year of David Carruthers, the chief executive of an Internet sports book, BetonSports. The company is based in Britain and has operations in Costa Rica, but Mr. Carruthers was detained at the Dallas airport while travelling through the United States.

The arrest led to BetonSports' decision to stop taking bets from the United States, crippling its business.

Several weeks later, agents of the Port Authority of New York arrested Peter Dicks, the chairman of Sportingbet, which offers online sports betting and, like Mr. Carruthers's company, trades on the London Stock Exchange. Mr. Dicks was arrested at Kennedy Airport.

Last week, a British online money transfer business, Neteller, said it would cease handling gambling transactions from United States customers because of regulatory uncertainty.

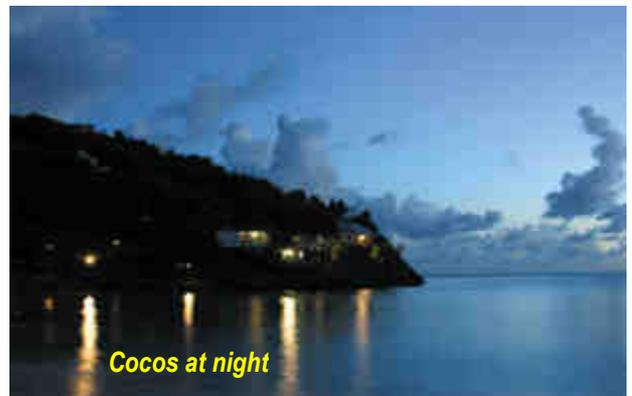
"It appears that the Department of Justice is waging a war of intimidation against Internet gambling," said I. Nelson Rose, a professor of law at Whittier Law School in Costa Mesa, Calif., who is an expert on Internet gambling law.

Another lawyer, Lawrence G. Walters of Altamonte Springs, Fla., said the development was disconcerting because the prevailing wisdom had been that investment in a company that is legal and licensed in its jurisdiction was not grounds for prosecution.

"It would be the first time that that kind of liability has been imposed," Mr. Walters said.

But he cautioned that the subpoenas could be part of a government fact-finding effort and might not signal a plan to prosecute banks.

Matt Richtel contributed reporting.



Taj Hotels Resorts and Palaces express interest in Antigua and Barbuda

Asia's largest and finest group of hotels, TAJ Hotels Resorts and Palaces, a subsidiary of the Tata Group has expressed its desire to invest in Antigua and Barbuda with the construction of an upscale hotel facility.

This was revealed by the Group's COO and Senior Vice President - Mergers, Acquisitions and Development Mr Rajiv Gujral during a luncheon meeting on Sunday with Prime Minister the Hon. Baldwin Spencer and the Antigua and Barbuda delegation visiting India.

Mr. Gujral said that the vision of the Chairman of Tata Trust, Ratan Tata is to consolidate their position not only in India, but also in other parts of the world. He noted that from their research, Antigua and Barbuda presents the ideal opportunity, infrastructure and climate to invest.

Prime Minister Spencer said he welcomed the interest the group has in Antigua and Barbuda and pointed out that the government is willing to commence work immediately to move the process along.

The Prime Minister during the meeting outlined that a conglomerate such as the Taj Hotels Resorts and Palaces is the ideal company the government is seeking to attract to further boost the country's high-end aspect of the tourism industry.

Mr. Rajiv Gujral said that his company is prepared to bring to Antigua and Barbuda during the months of April and May a group of families totaling one hundred on a retreat with the aim of creating an awareness of the Antiguan experience in order to promote the island.

Apart of the Tata Group of companies, India's premier business house, Taj Hotels Resorts and Palaces comprises 57 hotels in 40 locations across India with an additional 18 international hotels in the Maldives, Mauritius, Malaysia, Australia, UK, USA, Bhutan, Sri Lanka, Africa, and the Middle East.

Over the years, Taj has won international acclaim for its quality hotels and its excellence in dining, business facilities, interiors, and world-class, personalized service.

In India, Taj is recognized as the premier hospitality provider, spanning the length and breadth of the country, and gracing important industrial towns and cities, beautiful beaches, historical and pilgrim centres, and wildlife destinations.

The Meeting with the Taj Hotels Resorts and Palaces grouping was facilitated by Commodore A. Cherian VSM, (Retd.), who is related to the Ashe family in Antigua. Commodore Cherian has been designated by Prime Minister Spencer as the Point of Contact to propel the process.



The Antigua and Barbuda delegation with Prime Minister Singh

India to Conduct Health and Information Technology Feasibility Studies in Antigua and Barbuda

The Government of India has agreed to conduct feasibility studies in the areas of health and information technology with the aim of assisting the government of Antigua and Barbuda in establishing a central sewage system and computer access centres across the country.

This agreement was reached between Prime Minister the Hon. Baldwin Spencer and Prime Minister of India His Excellency Dr. Manmohan Singh during a meeting in New Delhi last week.

Prime Minister Spencer said that Antigua and Barbuda and India has excellent working relations and his meeting with the Indian Prime Minister further strengthened the cooperation. He noted that the feasibility studies will give both governments a better understanding of the levels of assistance that will be needed to establish the sewage system in St. John's and complete the computer access centres expansion programme.



During the meeting, agreement was also reached on the government of India conducting a review of the relationship between the American University of Antigua College of Medicine and Manipal University in India, with the aim of providing assistance to strengthen the relations.

Prime Minister Manmohan Singh during the meeting with Prime Minister Spencer said that his government values the relationship with Antigua and Barbuda and the Caribbean and that there are areas that can be developed.

Prime Minister Spencer said that his government is seriously examining ways in which it can establish a more direct diplomatic link with the government of India. He said that the country must look at having a presence in India.

Both leaders also had extensive discussions on the CARICOM Single Market and Economy, the DOHA negotiations and cricket in particular the exploits of Sir Vivian Richards who is a household name in India.

Attending the meeting with Prime Minister Spencer were Education Minister the Hon. Bertrand Joseph, President of the American University of Antigua School of Medicine Neil Simon and Communication Director Maurice Merchant.

Antigua and Barbuda and India pledge to forge stronger ties

Antigua and Barbuda and India have pledge to work more closely on international issues and those relating to the development of their peoples.

Prime Minister the Hon. Baldwin



Prime Minister Spencer being greeted by Indian Minister in the Ministry of External Affairs Anand Sharma

Spencer and Minister of State in the Ministry of External Affairs of India Anand Sharma both held discussions on a wide range of areas during a dinner meeting in New Delhi.

Prime Minister Spencer took the opportunity to continue discussions with the Indian minister on a number of issues that were raised during the NAM Summit held recently in Cuba. These include assistance in Information Technology and a sewage project.

Also attending the Meeting with Prime Minister Spencer were Education, Sports and Youth Affairs Minister the Hon. Bertrand Joseph, President of the American University of Antigua Mr. Neil Simon and Dean of the University Dr. Majiid Pathan, who are in India advancing cooperation with Manipal University.

The country's leader said that the meeting with the foreign minister was successful as a number of issues were hammered out, one being the extension of tour of duty of Indian experts attached to the Ministry of Finance.



Antigua and Barbuda to participate in Conference for the normalization of the International Whaling Commission

Antigua and Barbuda's Commissioner to the International Whaling Commission, Ambassador Anthony Liverpool is of the opinion that there is a need for the IWC to operate according to its mandate of ensuring the proper management of whale stocks.

Ambassador Liverpool's statement comes a few days before the commencement of a Conference for the Normalization of the organization in Tokyo, Japan from February 13 to 15, 2007.

According to Ambassador Liverpool who will be a part of Antigua and Barbuda's delegation at the conference, "the hosting of this conference forms part of a resolution passed at the IWC 58th Annual General meeting held in St. Kitts in June 2006, calling for the organization to declare its commitment to normalizing its functions based on the terms of the International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling (ICRW) and other international laws."

He further stated that the Normalization Conference will therefore seek to discuss and make recommendations for the IWC to resume functioning as a resource management organization.

Issues relating to principles of sustainable use of marine resources, science based approach to conservation and management and respect for cultural diversity will also be discussed.

Ambassador Liverpool was quick to point out that the current stalemate within the organization is not conducive for open and honest discussions on matters pertaining to the overall use of whale resources through the introduction of scientific based management systems. "It is therefore hoped that the hosting of a forum outside of the normal IWC Annual General Meeting would encourage more open and free discussions leading to a reduction of conflict and the seeking of solutions for the future functioning of the IWC," he said.

The International Whaling Commission (IWC) was established by the 1946 International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling (ICRW) whose purpose is to "provide for the proper conservation of whale stocks and thus make possible the orderly development of the whaling industry".

Senator the Honourable Joanne Massiah, Minister responsible for the Marine Resources and Agro Industries will be Antigua and Barbuda's other representative at the Conference.

Information Technology (IT) Staff undergo cutting edge technology training

Three young Antiguan professionals attached to the Government's Information Technology Centre are in India undergoing intensive training in the use of cutting edge technology.

Charrissa Simon, Andre Johnson and Raymond Imhoff are in India attending certified courses in Web Application Development using JAVA technologies and in JAVA Web Design Network using Windows 2000.



Minister Mansoor (second from left) with Charissa Simon, Andre Johnson and Raymond Imhoff

Minister of State with responsibility for Information Technology, Hon. Dr. Edmond Mansoor said that the Government of Antigua and Barbuda is collaborating with the Government of India to augment the human resource capacity at the IT Centre.

"These young Antiguan will be exposed to cutting edge training that will make the Government's IT Centre assemble the building blocks for the utilization of other technologies. The Ministry is placing a very significant focus on the professional development of its trained cadre of network and software engineers at the IT Centre", Minister Mansoor says.

"The opportunity for the professional improvement of each person at the IT Centre is pivotal to the IT Centre's capacity to offer full e-government services. We are currently preparing the electronic platform for a full roll out of e-government in 2007. This includes the deployment of technology in every Government run primary and secondary school", Dr. Mansoor added.

Under the Government's Community Technology Programme,

primary and secondary schools and the surrounding communities will benefit both from the deployment of computerized technology and from training in the use of computerized technology.

A mobile IT classroom, fully equipped with high speed computers and high speed Internet access, will be commissioned shortly.



**Lieutenant Colonel Edward H. Croft
Temporary Head of ONDCP**

Lieutenant Colonel Edward H. Croft to temporarily Head up the ONDCP

On 23rd January Prime Minister and Minister of National Security the Honourable Baldwin Spencer announced that Vice Chief of Defence Staff of the Antigua and Barbuda Defence Force Lieutenant Colonel Edward H. Croft has been placed in charge of the Office of National Drug Control and Money Laundering Policy ONDCP for the

The country's leader said that Lieutenant Colonel Croft's appointment is designed to facilitate continuity in operations at the ONDCP following the sudden passing of its Director Alec Vanderpoole on 22nd January.

The Prime Minister said that the country's Attorney General, acting on his instructions, met the Staff of the ONDCP and introduced Lieutenant Colonel Edward Croft as the individual who would manage the affairs of the institution.

Lieutenant Colonel Edward Croft, who has served as Director for Exercise Tradewinds Exercise 2002 in Antigua and is a member of the Local Security Committee for CWC 2007, holds an MBA in Business Administration with Distinction from the University of the West Indies.

During his 27 years in the Antigua and Barbuda Defence Force, he has served as contingent Commander of ABDF Troops during Operations Grenada in 1995 and was appointed Operations officer for the National Emergency Operations Centre during the aftermath of Hurricane Hugo in 1989 until 2000

Antigua and Barbuda adds 'Best Beaches Destination' Award to a growing list of accolades

The twin island nation of Antigua and Barbuda has been named 'Best Beach Destination' at the first Luxury Travel Reader Awards. The award was presented on Friday 12 January at an exclusive lunch held in (Hammersmith,) London. The Luxury Travel Reader Awards recognises excellence across the world, making this a much coveted prize.

His Excellency Dr Carl Roberts, High Commissioner for Antigua and Barbuda, attended the event to receive the award on behalf of his country. Speaking afterwards he commented: "We are proud and delighted to receive this award which recognises the beauty of our islands' beaches. With 365 beaches, one for every day of the year, we can offer something to suit every visitor's wish. Our commitment to keeping our beaches unspoilt stands us in good stead for many years to come."

Carol Hay, Director of Marketing for the UK & Europe at the Antigua and Barbuda Tourist Office, speaking of the Tourist Office's plans for 2007 said: "We are actively targeting the family market for this summer and, with so many of our beaches being in sheltered coves, this makes it an ideal holiday destination for young children. In addition, Antigua and Barbuda is now a leading destination for weddings and honeymoons, something we have actively promoted and, with the choice of marrying on a beautiful secluded beach and the top class wedding services we offer, it is easy to see why."

This award follows on from a hugely successful year for Antigua and Barbuda in 2006 when the islands saw off strong competition to be voted by editors of www.expedia.co.uk as Number One in the 'Top 10 Beach Destinations' list. The list also included three other Caribbean islands, making Antigua and Barbuda the top islands of choice for a holiday in the Caribbean. www.expedia.co.uk also listed Antigua's Jolly Beach Resort 6th in its list of 'Top 10 Family All-Inclusive Hotels'.

Along with two awards for best beach destination, Antigua and Barbuda has also been awarded 'Best Wedding Island of the Year' for the second year running in the 12th annual International Caribbean World Awards. The award was presented at a lavish ceremony at

the Four Seasons Hotel in London on 9 November. The International Caribbean World Awards recognise excellence in travel throughout the Caribbean region and are voted for by the magazine and its readers.

In addition to this prestigious award, 2006 saw many more accolades streaming in for Antigua and Barbuda. The sister island nation has been voted 4th in the American Express Travel 'Top 10 Wedding Destinations' list, up from the 8th spot last year, and has entered the 'Top 10 Honeymoon Destinations' list in 5th place.

Carlisle Bay came in second place in the 'Americas & Caribbean' section of the 'Overseas Leisure Hotels' category and scored highest with *standard and comfort of accommodation* overall. Carlisle Bay also featured in the second annual Condé Nast Traveller Gold List in the 'Best for Rooms' section.

At the recent World Travel Awards 2006, held in Turks & Caicos, Blue Waters Hotel won 'Antigua and Barbuda's Leading Hotel', Sandals Grand Antigua Resort & Spa secured 'Antigua and Barbuda's Leading Spa Resort' and Jumby Bay was named 'Antigua and Barbuda's Leading Resort'.

Antigua and Barbuda also received two nominations for 'Best UK Based Tourist Office promoting an Island' and 'Best Travel Agent Training Programme' in Selling Long Haul's 2006 Travel Awards, a leading UK trade publication.

