

# Polling day set for April 28

Countdown to general election in T&T:



Prime Minister Stuart Young PHOTO BY ABRAHAM DIAZ



UNC leader Kamla Persad-Bissessar



COP leader Prakash Ramadhar

GAIL ALEXANDER SENIOR POLITICAL REPORTER

It's official—the general election in T&T will be held on April 28.

That's the date announced by the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) at 3.50 pm yesterday for T&T's next general election.

Word came a day after new Prime Minister Stuart Young was sworn into office on Monday.

The announcement of the date, which had been mentioned in a political column in the Guardian last Saturday and several times before, has put an end to the speculation that had been ongoing since last year about when the general election would be held.

The date will arrive four months ahead of the official end of the term of the current 12th Parliament on August 27.

The Parliament was expected to be dissolved at midnight last night.

The OPM's announcement was headlined: "Prime Minister Young Calls General Election—28 April 2025."

The release stated: "Prime Minister the Hon Stuart R Young, SC, has advised Her Excellency Christine Kangaloo, ORTT President of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, to dissolve Parliament with effect from midnight on Tuesday, 18 March 2025, in accordance with Section 68 of the Constitution."

The Prime Minister has also advised the President that, "In accordance with Section 33 of the Representation of the People Act, Chap. 2:01, Writs of Election for the 2025 General Elections are to be issued on the 18th day of March 2025 and are to fix Friday 4 April 2025 as Nomination Day and Monday 28 April 2025 as Polling Day."

The announcement was Young's second action as Prime Minister after appointing his Cabinet on Monday. Later that day, a strategy meeting involving the PNM party and government officials was held.

Young had been hinting since last year that the election was drawing closer. The PNM began announcing candidates last August, concluding last week Monday.

When concluded, Young said the "battle lines had been drawn and the PNM had joined the battle."

The same was said by former PM Rowley last Sunday when the PNM launched their candidates for all 41 constituencies at Woodford Square, Port-of-Spain. The event was also held to bid farewell to Rowley, whose resignation became effective that day. Rowley had announced on January 3 that he would resign from the position.

Last Sunday's candidate presentation at Woodford Square bore all the hallmarks of a general election launch, including addresses by Rowley, Young, and other speakers.

#### Rowley as PNM political leader in election

Rowley didn't reply yesterday to Guardian Media queries on the election date, his possible input in planning the date, or his role in the PNM's election organisation. Young, as well as PNM campaign manager Rohan Sinanan and general secretary Foster Cummings, did not answer either.

Rowley posted on his Facebook last Sunday: "While my term of office as political leader of the PNM legally runs until 2026, it is my intention to vacate this position at the earliest in consultation with the leadership of the movement ..."

Top PNM officials pointed out that Rowley had not yet resigned as political leader, and the party, in the election setting, couldn't have a leadership election. "Therefore, it looks like Dr Rowley remains political leader at this point."

#### PNM had no choice, UNC ready—Kamla

Opposition Leader Kamla Persad-Bissessar said yesterday, "We've been calling for an election; we welcome this date, and we're prepared and confident of winning.

We have the work to do, but we're prepared to do that work. Our independent polling shows we're poised for victory.

"The PNM's MPs failed to do what they should have done to protect T&T from being gifted to a select group of Young's financiers.

Therefore, the electorate now has to provide that protection.

“Mr Young has been a one-day Prime Minister and he’s been gifted with a lifetime pension of \$87,000 monthly for the rest of his life—a golden handshake from his godfather, boss Rowley,” said Persad-Bissessar.

The election date is also the PNM’s way of running away from legal action the UNC was contemplating. “They got wind of the fact we were planning to file a no-confidence motion in the Parliament, so they dissolved the Parliament.

“Further, the Auditor General’s latest re-port was due to be laid in Parliament on April 30, so whatever those contents are, they’ve run away from. I’m sure there were many things in that to cause concern.”

She added, “Young also hurriedly called the date to pre-empt UNC’s impending legal action regarding his illegitimate and illegal anointing as Prime Minister. Young and the PNM fully well know that his appointment is illegal and unconstitutional. His appointment would have been shown to be unconstitutional in the courts, and he’d then have been forced to face a PNM internal election before the election.”

Persad-Bissessar added, “Penny Beckles would have decimated him in any internal election ...”

Persad-Bissessar said that since last year, UNC’s nominations have been on, and screening was completed recently.

The UNC’s Coalition of Interests with the OWTU and PEP has so far announced 11 candidates out of the 39 Trinidad seats UNC is contesting—San Fernando West, San Fernando East, Toco-Sangre Grande, Arouca-Lopinot, Trincity-Maloney, St Joseph, Chaguanas East, Barataria-San Juan, La Horquetta-Talparo, La Brea, and Point Fortin.

Persad-Bissessar said more will be announced this week.

UNC, COP talks finalising

Persad-Bissessar told Guardian Media that arrangements between the UNC and the Congress of the People (COP) are being finalised this week. This follows COP leader Prakash Ramadhar’s statements that COP had reached out to the UNC to discuss its desire to contest several seats.

On the election date, COP leader Ramadhar said, “On 28 April, T&T will have an opportunity to decide whether it wishes to be led by propaganda or performance, whether it wishes to have a better future or to allow ten years of failure to go into 15 years.”

Citing T&T’s legacy of fair elections, Ramadhar added, “I look forward to an election that is without undue events and for people to come together to preserve the present and prepare a future for our children.

“An election is a very important thing with consequences. We cannot allow emotions to rule or loyalties that failed us in the past to continue. There’s little time with much work to be done—we’ve done it before, and we’ll do it again. Together as a people, we’ll make T&T a better place,” Ramadhar added.