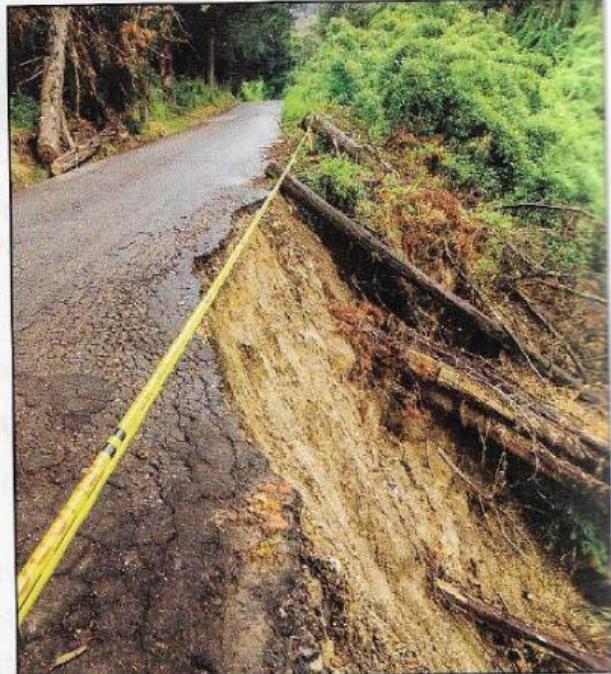


Natural Disasters

From time to time, natural disasters occur in the Caribbean Region. They can result in damage to property and loss of life.

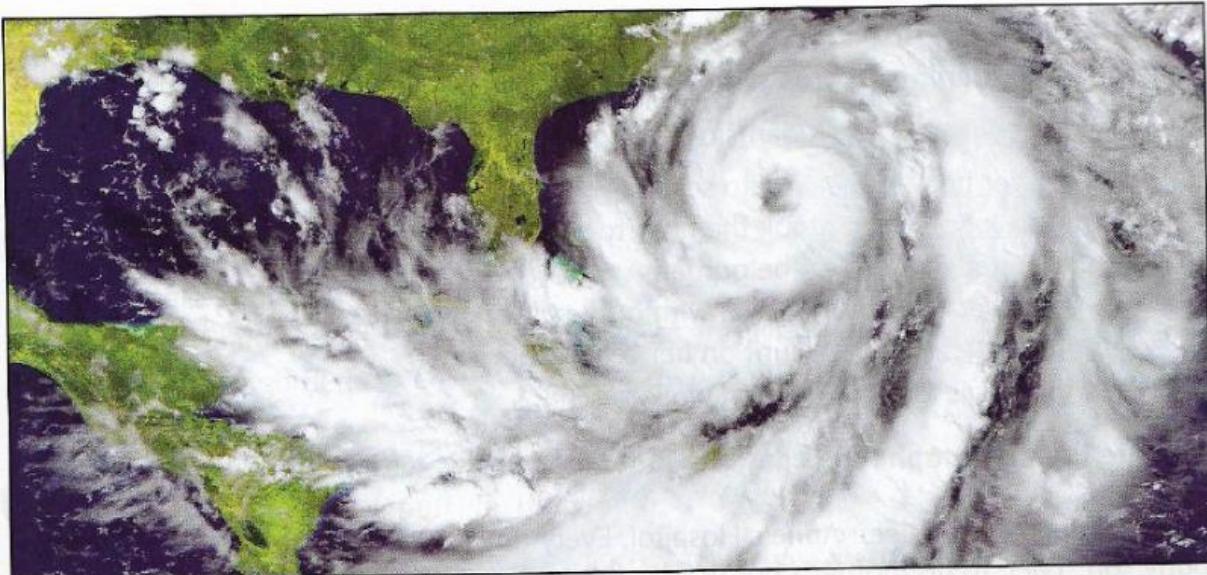
An earthquake is a sudden movement of the Earth's surface. The Earth is divided into great plates which move very slowly. Earthquakes occur when two plates grind against each other. This causes the ground to shake and crack open. The strength of an earthquake is measured by the Richter Scale. Thousands of tiny earthquakes occur around the world each day, but they are so small that their effects are not felt. In an earthquake measuring 2 on the Richter Scale people feel the ground move slightly under their feet but little or no damage is done. Larger earthquakes, measuring up to 4 on the scale, may cause objects to shake and fall off shelves. Earthquakes measuring 5 or more on the Richter Scale damage buildings and roads. An earthquake measuring 7 or above can be very destructive to human life and property.

Landslides are often caused by earthquakes, or by water seeping through the soil or through rocks. Deforestation is one of the main causes of landslides. When trees are cut down, the rain falls on bare earth and makes the soil very



heavy. Then, suddenly, it slides down the sides of hills and mountains. Landslides can block roads and cause damage to crops and homes. They generally occur during the hurricane season.

The Eastern Caribbean lies within the hurricane belt, where hurricanes can occur between the months of June and November. A hurricane is a severe tropical



Satellite photograph of a hurricane in the Caribbean Region.

storm with winds of over 150 kilometres per hour. The strength of hurricanes is measured on a scale of 1–5. Category 1–2 hurricanes cause minor damage to property, but hurricanes in Category 3 and above bring down large trees and cause major damage and loss of life.

During the hurricane season, each hurricane is given a name. In October 2010, Hurricane Tomas, a category 3 hurricane, struck Saint Lucia. Fourteen people lost their lives and millions of dollars' worth of damage was done to property.

The Eastern Caribbean is a volcanic region with a number of active volcanoes, for example the Soufrière Hills in Montserrat. A volcano is a hill or a mountain with a crater through which hot rocks, ashes, mud and gases can escape.

When a volcano is about to erupt, a large amount of steam rises from the crater and forms dense clouds. Soon heavy rain starts to fall, accompanied by thunder and lightning. Then the volcano explodes, sending out molten rock called lava. In a major eruption, the lava can cover whole towns and regions.

ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS IN COMPLETE/FULL SENTENCES.

BEGIN YOUR SENTENCES WITH CAPITAL LETTERS AND END WITH A FULL STOP.

NEVER BEGIN YOUR ANSWER WITH THE WORD 'BECAUSE'.

1. Which natural disasters are described in the article?

2. What is a Richter scale?

3. How often do earthquakes occur?

4. What does deforestation mean?

5. Why do you think most landslides occur during hurricane season?

6. Which category hurricane is most severe?

7. What damage was done in St. Lucia by hurricane Tomas?

8. How do people know when a volcano is about to erupt?

9. Which natural disasters produce similar effects?

10. What can we do to protect ourselves against natural disasters?