

GOV'T RAISES CONCERNS OVER BLACKLISTING

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The inaugural staging of a one-day Agro-Expo spearheaded by the Ministry of Education with the involving of two other ministries has been described as 'an overwhelming' success. *Story on page 5.*

Issues of blacklisting, CIP were raised with Netherlands Ambassador

Senior government officials used the occasion of the visit from the new Netherlands Ambassador to Antigua and Barbuda to raise with him a number of matters critical to the relationship between the Caribbean state and the European Union.

Ambassador of the Netherlands to St. John's, Cornelis Hersback presented his credentials to both Prime Minister Gaston Browne and the Foreign Affairs Minister, E.P. Chet Greene at separate engagements in St. John's on Tuesday.

In their meetings with the Ambassador, both the prime minister and the foreign minister wasted no time in raising the issue of blacklisting against the background that the latest EU publication lists Antigua and Barbuda as one of twelve countries it described as 'non-cooperative'



Prime Minister Gaston Browne speaks with Ambassador of the Netherlands to St. John's, Cornelis Hersback.

in tax compliance. In fact, the meeting between Minister Greene and the ambassador was held at the parliament building where he emphasized that one of the main reasons for the meeting of the House of Representatives was to adopt legislation to meet the EU's requirements.

PM Browne noted that

the size of the Antigua and Barbuda economy was miniscule when compared with economies of larger countries in Europe and North America. "We observe they only pick on small countries, while most money laundering takes place in Europe and North America. We need to have a more collaborative approach to share information as the blacklisting undermines our development," he explained.

In his meeting with the foreign minister two hours later, Minister Greene returned to the theme of blacklisting adding that it is a disincentive to investment. "Rather than making the country more attractive to investment, blacklisting drives away investors at a time when we are emerging from the economic setbacks suffered as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic," he told the ambassador.

On the issue of the Citizenship by Investment Pro-

gramme (CIP), PM Browne urged the ambassador to underscore the importance of such programmes to the economies of Antigua and Barbuda and the other OECS states where they exist. He noted that the EU has threatened to discontinue its visa-free regime following the recent assessment of the CIP programmes.

The prime minister expressed the view that the assessment was punitive. "Up to 60 percent of non-tax revenue comes from these programmes. We need to see greater collaboration and cooperation with the EU on this matter," he suggested. PM Browne requested the ambassador to communicate with his capital expressing the concerns of Antigua and Barbuda noting that like all other countries, Antigua and Barbuda wants to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.



Foreign Affairs Minister, E.P. Chet Greene, left, meets with Ambassador of the Netherlands to St. John's, Cornelis Hersback

Parliament considers measure aimed at removing the country from EU's 'black list'

Government on Tuesday moved the second and third readings of the Money Laundering Prevention Amendment Bill 2024 in the House of Representatives, as it seeks to stave off possible sanctions from the European Union that can come about if immediate action is not taken on matters of concern to the bloc of nations.

Antigua and Barbuda, along with Anguilla, The US Virgin Islands and Trinidad and Tobago are the Caribbean states that have been placed on the EU's Non-Compliant list, the so-called black list, meaning they do not or have not fully met their commitments.

One of the issues to be addressed is the manner in which Non-Profit Organizations transact business, specifically beneficial ownership.

Prime Minister Gaston Browne addressed the matter in the House.

"What they have asked us to do here is to further strengthen the framework so that these NPO's are unlikely to be utilized for money laundering or for terrorism financing.

"It is well-known that globally you have non-profits being utilised for laundering money and



Prime Minister Gaston Browne also for terrorism financing. So, the FATF and the Global Forum have recommended after the last assessment that we make these changes," he stated.

Minimum retention period is another area being addressed. It relates to the opening of bank accounts and the period with which account opening documents should be held.

Antigua and Barbuda has given a commitment of its intention to change its current designation to fully compliant and a collaborative effort is underway involving the Financial Services Regulatory Commission, the Inland Revenue Department, the Organization for National Drug and Money Laundering Policy (ONDCP) and the Ministry of Legal Affairs towards achieving that goal.

Prime Minister Browne has also stressed the need for administrative compliance once the laws are passed.



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New legislation removes tax waiver discretion

The House of Representatives has approved the Revenue Miscellaneous Provisions Bill of 2024.

The Bill removes the discretion of the Minister to waive several of the taxes that are currently on the books.

Giving reasons for the decision, Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and Corporate Governance, Gaston Browne said the government is seeking to reduce the number of discretionary exemptions, which have impacted revenue collection.

“There are three primary taxes here, the Environmental Levy, that will be amended, as well as the Revenue Recovery Charge; you know we had come to parliament and limited the exemptions to 50 percent, we are now saying the RRC should not be waived. There will be no such discretion for the minister to waive any portion of that tax. I am not aware at any point that we had ever remit any part of the Tourism Guest Levy, but in the same vein of protecting government’s rev-

enues, we are also making an amendment to the Tourism Guest Levy of 2021, in which there will be no discretion to waive,” he explained.

He added that there will be continued discretion to waive the customs duty, however, the government will be putting a new reporting mechanism in place. Where the tax is waived, there has to be a report where if the amount exceeds \$10-thousand it has to be reported to parliament and the public accounts committee annually.

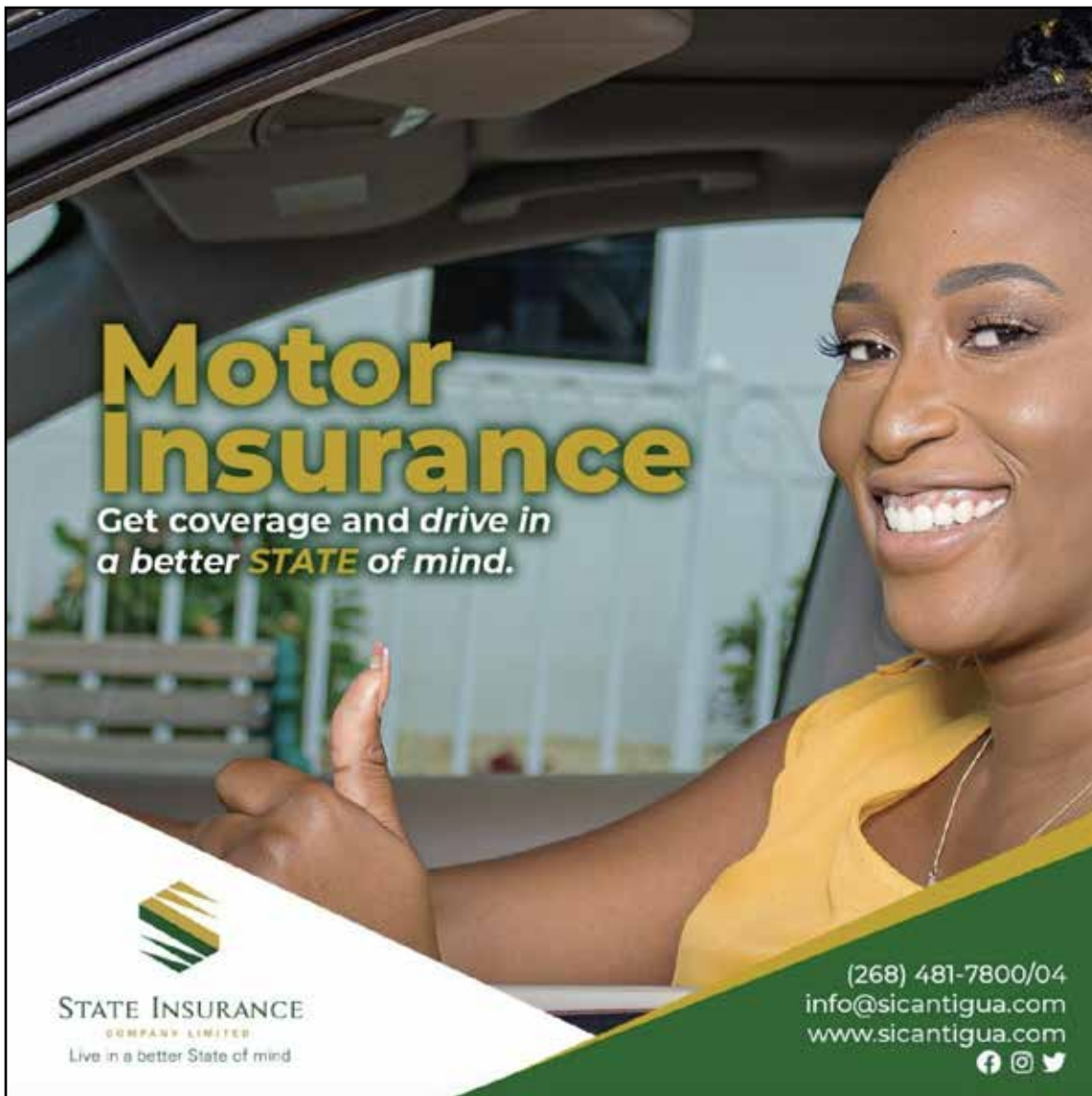
The prime minister told the House of Representatives the adjustments being made are a form of tax transparency.

“It’s part of the strengthening of the fiscal framework of country, to preserve tax collection so that we not only increasing taxes nominally, but we are also making sure that we protect the revenue so that we can continue to grow government’s revenue organically and not to be giving the discretionary waivers to the extent that we have been doing. So discretionary waiver will continue but it’s just that we are limited in the amount that we can give,” he stated.

Opposition MPs have criticized the bill, saying the poorer class in the society will be affected by the adjustments. But the City West MP has dismissed their assertions.

He said they are simply fixing a situation, which has been discovered to be unbalanced.




The prime minister emphasized that there are no new taxes being introduced, only a roll-back of the discretionary waivers that have been granted over the years. He further explained that the government is justified to take these remedial actions citing last year’s figures as example where the government collected \$10 million in taxes but granted \$20 million in waivers. This, he noted, cannot continue.



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Agro-Expo deemed 'overwhelming' success

The inaugural staging of a one-day Agro-Expo spearheaded by the Ministry of Education with the involving of two other ministries has been described as 'an overwhelming' success.

The event was held on Tuesday at the Botanical Gardens and it was aimed at focusing the nation's attention on the impressive work being done by agricultural science students within the education system and the things they are producing and also to make the public aware that agriculture 'is alive and well'.

Education Officer responsible for Agriculture, Nicolette Francis, said the event surpassed all of her expectations. "We had over seven hundred students from pre-school to secondary schools many of whom brought live animals, and agricultural produce for display.

"The success points to the value of

teamwork as this was an undertaking that involved the ministries of education, agriculture and social transformation. This speaks volume to the importance of teamwork, leadership and having a proper structure in place," she observed.

Francis said she was particularly pleased with the enthusiasm displayed by ministry officials, teachers and students and already her team is looking forward to next year when the event will be staged again. "We are going to be meeting shortly as a team to conduct a post mortem and look at ways in which we can make better. For example, I would have loved to see more animals brought to be displayed at the expo," she stated.

The educational officer noted that she was especially happy to see the pre-school children in particular as it is possible that their presence there may have sparked an interest in agriculture among one or more children which would be to the country's benefit in the future.

Another government entity, the Environment Division used the opportunity to distribute more than 100 fruit tree plant.

A backyard gardening competition was held among the schools. This was divided into three categories, pre-school, primary school and secondary



school. In the Pre-School Category the winners were; 1st place: Sir Luther Wynter Pre-School and second place, Villa Pre-school. In the Primary School Category, 1st place went to Old Road Primary and Cedar Grove Primary 2nd place. In the Secondary School Category, 1st place went to Clare Hall Secondary and 2nd place went to the Sir Novelle Richards Academy. Old Road primary was adjudged the overall-winner and received a prize donated by Prime Minister Gaston Browne. As winners in the primary segment, Old Road primary also received a prize from Education Minister, Daryll Matthew.

Senator Shenella Govia, the Parliamentary Secretary in the Ministry of Education, presented the prizes on behalf of the prime minister and the minister of education who were unavoidably absent due to a meeting of the House of Representatives.



Local News



LIAT 2020 moves closer to getting its AOC

The wait for the Air Operator's Certificate (AOC) by the newly established LIAT 2020 is fast coming to an end.

That's the word from the man at the helm of effort to revive an Antigua-based regional carrier, Development Commissioner, Ambassador Daven Joseph, following meetings on Monday between the government and the Eastern Caribbean Civil Aviation Authority (ECCAA).

The ambassador reports that a framework of an agreement was reached with timeline set for meet-



ing certain objectives. "We discussed the issue of LIAT 2020 and the move towards it attaining the AOC and the cooperation between ECCAA and the airline representatives where some deadlines were set and I am happy to report that as long

as we can achieve these targets without any hiccups, the AOC for LIAT 2020 is on its way," he stated.

Ambassador Joseph said he anticipates that the AOC will be in LIAT 2020's hand by the end of the first week in April.

Following the granting of the AOC, the development commission said the next step for the LIAT 2020 will be preparation to operationalize the airline such as hiring of administrative staff, setting up of offices and other related matters.

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Community road programme gathers steam

The Ministry of Works is drawing attention to the ongoing community road work programme where it is carrying out repairs to the roadways.

In a Facebook post on her page, Minister Maria Bird-Browne noted that work within various communities continues on roads, curbs and drains.

The minister expressed her appreciation to ‘our committed teams’ from the Ministry of Works stating that they ‘are doing their best’.



Friday to appeal guilty verdict

Just a few days after hearing he was found guilty of manslaughter, convicted felon Kelly Friday is set to appeal his verdict.

Attorneys representing the 20-year-old shared their intentions to challenge the decision made by the nine-member jury last Friday.

Friday was acquitted of murder

but convicted on the manslaughter charge despite the defense’s assertions that Friday was acting in self-defense during the September 2021 incident at Point Wharf which resulted in the death of his uncle Selwyn Mannix.

The altercation between Mannix and Friday took place on September 11 allegedly stemming from a dispute

over \$50 Friday owed to his uncle.

Witnesses testified that Friday was walking away when Mannix struck him in the head with a 7ft wattle, commonly used in making fishing pots until it broke.

During the fight, Friday is said to have retaliated by punching and then stabbing Mannix, causing him to fall

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Statistics Division distances itself from recruitment drive link

The Statistics Division has issued a public statement warning members of the public about what it considers a 'suspicious link' posing as an authentic link issued under its auspices.

In the statement, the Division wants members of the public to be mindful when attempting to access its official site for information regarding the ongoing recruitment drive ahead of the National Census slated for this year

"It was recently brought to the

Division's attention that there is a link circulating on social media posing as a job listing for the Census 2024.

However, the Division says it has not issued any such link and is asking individuals to desist from sharing the link and if received do not click on the link, instead, delete it immediately," the statement urges.

The Statistics Division recently launched a recruitment initiative to fill several positions for the upcom-

ing 2024 National Population and Housing Census.

Interested individuals are invited to visit the Division's website at www.statistics.gov.ag, scroll to the bottom of the page, click on the title, 2024 Population and Housing Census Recruitment Form, and apply.

The Division is in search of at least 600 workers to successfully and efficiently conduct Census 2024, for further information persons can call the office at 562-7492.

Antigua and Barbuda celebrates World Theatre Day

World Theatre Day (WTD) is an international observance since 1962 which is celebrated yearly on March 27th. It is a day that is dedicated to promote the art form of theatre across the globe.

This day is a day of celebration for those who can see the value and importance of the art form.

Theatre which is a branch of the Performing Arts (music, theatre, dance), acts as a wake-up call for

governments, politicians, institutions to recognise its value to the people and its potential for economic growth.

Theatre Arts is the centre of the cultural expressions of our Caribbean people. It reflects every aspect of our lives as people of African descent intertwined with European and other races. Hence, our unique Caribbean culture is formed.

Theatre Education benefits are numerous and pow-

erful and exist across the student populations, age levels, and learning environments.

Some of these are: it builds creativity, encourages team work and collaboration, improves writing and public speaking skills, builds empathy and connects with community, enhances communication skills, encourages team building and conflict resolution, builds self-confidence and self-esteem, provides understand-

ing of cultural values in lives, improves motivation, reduces stress, it enhances verbal and non-verbal expression of ideas, and develops listening and observation aptitude.

These skills which form the basis of many career paths and the myriad of opportunities.

The theme for this year is "Theatre and a Culture of Peace".

Let us stand together in solidarity with our fellow artists and practitioners, and let us work tirelessly to ensure that theatre continues to thrive for generations to come.

*Submitted by
Caryl Edwards-Lewis
Education Officer:
Performing Arts
Ministry of Education,
Sports and Creative Industries*

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to the ground.

The attorneys argued that there have been several misdirections to the jury and it is on those specific grounds that they will appeal.

The handling of the jury deliberations, the conclusion to determine the cause of Mannix's death, and conflicting witness accounts of the day's event were outlined.

Wendel Alexander explained to another

media house that the jury was called to return a verdict after six hours of deliberation, an action he described as "irregular" citing that the normal time to return a jury after deliberations is four hours.

Friday has already spent three years in custody since being accused of killing his uncle. According to Alexander, the matter may well have to be settled by the Court of Appeal or by the Privy Council.

He is set to be sentenced on April 19.



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The complex climate truth about home-grown tomatoes

By Chris Baraniuk

As spring gets underway, it's the ideal time to start growing veg at home. To make the most difference for the climate, some crops are especially worth growing.

You can tell these allotments have been here, on the Isle of Dogs in London, for a long time. Some of the sheds are former air raid shelters. "There's a lot of that still here from the war," says Paula Owen, a relatively recent arrival who has maintained her own plot for the last 10 years. "A lot of people make do and mend."

There are raised beds made of repurposed scaffolding boards. No heavy machinery. And hazel sticks for propping up tomato and bean plants. Somewhat incongruously, the giant glass and steel towers of Canary Wharf, London's shiny financial district, perforate the skyline to the north. But next door is a city farm, says Owen: "You can hear pigs and donkeys."

Owen and many like her see their allotments or urban gardens as low-impact, low-carbon contributions to their local community. A place where you can grow your own food, with no need for plastic packaging or planes that bring in produce from abroad. And so she was surprised



There are many benefits to growing your own fruit and veg at home (Credit: Getty Images)

to see reports of a study published in January 2024 that suggested urban agriculture in the US and Europe is on average six times as polluting, in terms of carbon emissions, as conventional, commercial agriculture.

One form of urban growing not included in the study was backyard or home garden veg growing. For collective gardens such as community-run gardens, specifically, the research suggested they were the most carbon-intensive of all – at 0.81kg of carbon dioxide equivalent (CO₂e) per serving on average, versus 0.07kg of CO₂e for conventional agriculture. Meanwhile, individual gardens – one person's allotment plot – were somewhere in between at 0.34kg of CO₂e. Owen

says she found the study "thought-provoking" but it left a sour taste. "It's a bit like David and Goliath," she says. "Why are they picking on the small guys?"

She wasn't alone in having that reaction. As news of the study spread, social media was awash with prickly comments from gardeners disgusted at the idea that their much-loved veg patch could be harming the planet. PhD candidate Jason Hawes at the University of Michigan, lead author of the study, has received all kinds of comments about the work. He's had some "not so happy" emails, he confesses, but also conversations with gardeners genuinely interested in how to reduce the carbon intensity of what they do.

Hawes rebuffs insinua-

tions from some on social media that the study was funded by commercial agricultural firms: "I can say unequivocally that that is not true." The paper lists funding sources as public institutions in multiple countries, for example the National Science Foundation in the US and the Economic and Social Research Council in the UK.

Hawes also grows his own veg at home in Tennessee. "At the end of the summer when we have way too many tomatoes, we'll make salsa," he says. "This paper was written by a bunch of folks who think that urban agriculture is really important."

What's the data, then, behind their seemingly disturbing results? To quantify the carbon footprint of con-

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ventional agriculture, the researchers scoured academic literature to find data on the five most-consumed fruits or vegetables in multiple countries. They considered things such as fertiliser use and the proportion of these crops typically flown in to a country rather than produced domestically.

For urban agriculture, gardeners across 73 small sites in the UK, US, Germany and Poland were tasked with keeping diaries or logging their methods and the infrastructure they use – such as raised bed materials. The urban agriculture category did not include vertical farms, which tend to be very energy intensive.

The results for conventional agriculture, relying on a huge range of data sources, were conspicuously narrow – everything settled on or around 0.07kg of CO₂e per serving. Hawes says that this is actually unsurprising, given the economic pressures on the industry, which force it to be highly efficient.

However, he accepts that it is “reasonable” to critique this comparison of urban and conventional agriculture samples, given that the samples for each are of such different sizes.

Also, to be clear, while the sample of 73 urban gardening sites related to 73 specific locations, the sample numbering 250 for conventional agriculture actually related to life cycle assessments, some of which may span multiple farms.

The wider context to all of this is that roughly 5% of global greenhouse gas emissions come from the commercial production of crops grown for human consumption. Emissions from small-scale urban growers is almost certainly a tiny fraction of that – though they would also produce a far smaller total volume of food.

Hawes confirms that his and his colleagues’ study did not consider the carbon footprint of a customer driv-

ing to a shop to buy fresh produce, nor the packaging that might be used for some fruit and veg in a retail environment. However, a generic value for emissions associated with supermarkets was included.

Hawes emphasises that the lowest carbon-intensities in the study were associated with a handful of highly sustainable urban agriculture sites and that this part of the analysis reveals that, by recycling materials for garden infrastructure, using the same equipment for many years, and avoiding synthetic fertilisers, it is possible to grow your own veg and have an extremely low carbon footprint.

Crops such as tomatoes and asparagus, which, in conventional agriculture, may be flown long distances or require energy-intensive greenhouse facilities, are especially good options for gardeners who want to grow their own while reducing their carbon footprint.

Still, Sally Nex, author of the book *How to Garden the Low-Carbon Way*, says she was “massively frustrated” by the study and news reports about it.

“The problem is the headline that people take away from it,” she says. “It puts people off growing their own vegetables.”

She argues that many gardeners are keen to re-use, re-purpose and re-cycle, make their own fertiliser with plants such as nettles or comfrey, and use “no dig” methods to disturb the soil as minimally as possible, which helps lock carbon in the ground. Mulching, adding compost or wood chip to garden beds, for example, has the same effect.

A new generation of gardeners is emerging, asserts Nex. People who are sharply aware of the climate crisis and our fragile environment. “It’s a sea change happening in gardening,” she says. “The old ‘peat, pesticides, plastic’ model is dying away.”

Nex advises saving seeds from your plants to use during the next growing season in order to reduce as much as possible reliance on resources from outside. Veg growers could even lobby their local garden centres and ask them to stop selling compost containing peat, since harvesting this material from carbon-rich peatlands is highly unsustainable, Nex says. The UK government has promised to ban sales of garden compost containing peat by the end of 2024, though Nex notes that legislation to this effect is yet to be introduced to parliament. Plus, a ban on certain other peat-based garden products has been deferred to 2030.

One point made by Owen is that there are many broader benefits of allotment-style gardening. It provides a community hub: “People will get together, they’ll have tea and cake.” One of the Isle of Dogs plots is maintained by a local school, she says. Another is used by patients in the area with various health issues – they spend time on the allotment as a nature-based intervention designed to improve their wellbeing.

A 2024 study analysed the biodiversity impacts of 39 community gardens in Munich and Berlin, in Germany, and found that these gardens were havens for threatened plant species as well as pollinators, especially wild bees.

The paper by Hawes and his colleagues does mention social benefits but he acknowledges that it leaves out other things, such as the virtues of taking ownership of one’s food supply – otherwise known as food sovereignty. Hawes insists the study is not intended to demonise urban agriculture.

The findings simply highlight the task at hand: “Urban agriculture, like many other things, needs to be planned and designed to be efficient in terms of carbon.”

Donald Trump media firm soars in stock market debut

By Natalie Sherman

Shares in Donald Trump's media company soared as the firm made its formal debut on the stock market.

Shares surged past \$70 in early trade, giving the firm a market value of more than \$9bn. They ended the day at about \$58, still up more than 16%.

The long-awaited moment will inject more than \$200m into Trump Media & Technology Group and hands the former president a stake worth more than \$4bn.

Analysts say that is far more than the firm's performance warrants.

Trump Media's Truth Social, a Twitter-like service, brought in just \$3.3m in revenue in the first nine months of last year and lost nearly \$50m.

It says 8.9 million accounts have been created since the platform launched to the general public in 2022 as an alternative to mainstream sites such as Facebook, but it is not clear how many are active.

By comparison, the recently-listed Reddit currently has a market value of about \$11bn. It boasts more than 70 million users and brought in \$800m in revenue last year.

Kristi Marvin, chief executive of SPACInsider, compared Trump Media - which trades under the ticker DJT for Mr Trump's initials - to a meme stock, in which prices are untethered from the business prospects.

Interest in Trump Media has also been fuelled by individual investors, as opposed to Wall Street firms, many of them apparently Trump supporters.

"Everybody expected to trade a little bit crazy today, which it has," she said. "The real question is how does it trade a week from now, two



weeks from now and nobody really knows."

The deal to list Trump Media was first announced in 2021.

The move was accomplished via what is known as a SPAC, a merger with a publicly listed shell company, Digital World Acquisition Corp, which was expressly created to buy a company and take it public.

The deal was delayed by government investigations and other hurdles, but regulators cleared it earlier this year and Digital World shareholders voted in favour last week.

Ahead of the listing on the Nasdaq exchange, Trump Media officials called it a "pivotal moment" for the firm - and the wider media landscape.

"As a public company, we will passionately pursue our vision to build a movement to reclaim the Internet from Big Tech censors," said Trump Media chief executive Devin Nunes, a former congressman.

"We will continue to fulfil our commitment to Americans to serve as a safe harbour for free expression and to stand up to the ever-growing army of speech suppressors."

The debut comes at a critical mo-

ment for Mr Trump, who has been scrambling for cash to pay legal penalties and owns more than half of the firm's shares.

He is currently barred from selling his holdings for at least six months, making it difficult for him to tap the windfall immediately.

The company's board, which is stocked with allies including one of his sons, could potentially change that rule, but analysts have said they think that would be unlikely to happen immediately.

If Mr Trump were to sell a significant chunk of his shares, it could hurt the share price.

Investors face other risks as well, tied to Mr Trump's political fortunes and his 2024 presidential campaign.

A loss might be expected to hurt the share price, but a win could have the opposite effect, especially if it generated further demand from buyers hoping to curry favour with Mr Trump, said Michael Ohlrogge, a law professor at New York University.

However, Prof Ohlrogge said the current share price is "far, far elevated above what anyone would consider its fundamental value".

Corina Yoris: Venezuela's opposition candidate blocked from election

By Vanessa Buschschlüter

Venezuela's main opposition coalition says its candidate has been blocked from July's presidential election.

The opposition Unitary Platform (PUD) said it was unable to access the electoral council website to register its candidate, Corina Yoris.

It is the latest setback for the PUD, whose leader, María Corina Machado, has been barred from running for office.

Polls have suggested that if the election was free and fair, Ms Machado could beat President Nicolás Maduro.

President Maduro had no problems registering his candidacy for a third consecutive term in office.

He celebrated with a rally in the capital Caracas, where he was cheered by supporters wearing the red colour associated with his socialist PSUV party.

Twelve people from a variety of small parties were also able to file candidates - some are aligned with the government and none of them is thought to be a serious challenger to President Maduro.

One of those who was able to register was the governor of the state of Zulia, Manuel Rosales, from the Un Tiempo Nuevo (A New Era) party.

He surprised many by putting himself forward at



Corina Yoris was nominated as the PUD's candidate on Friday but has been unable to register.

the last minute, seemingly without the knowledge of the PUD coalition of which Un Tiempo Nuevo forms part.

Asked if the opposition PUD would now rally around Mr Rosales, Ms Machado responded simply: "My candidate is Corina Yoris."

Ms Machado argued that by blocking Ms Yoris from registering, President Maduro had effectively "chosen" who he would run against. "They're not [free] elections, if the regime chooses the candidates," she said.

Ms Machado, 56, made headlines in October when the notoriously divided opposition united behind her. She received more than 90% of votes in a primary election organised by the opposition.

The primary was denounced by the government of President Maduro as ille-

gitimate and Ms Machado and members of her Vente Venezuela party have been targeted by the authorities since her overwhelming win.

Several regional campaign officials have been jailed over the past months.

And only last week, arrest warrants were issued for her campaign manager and eight other staffers, who have been accused of taking part in a conspiracy to overthrow President Maduro.

María Corina Machado herself had a ban which prevents her from running for public office confirmed by the Supreme Court, which is stacked with government loyalists.

President Maduro, who has been in power since 2013, has withstood international pressure to allow Ms Machado to run in the presidential election scheduled for 28 July.

He told his supporters

last month that "we're going to win by hook or by crook, we're going to win, always".

With the deadline for the registration of candidates fast approaching and Ms Machado's ban still in place, the PUD on Friday picked Corina Yoris to replace her.

Ms Yoris, an 80-year-old academic, is relatively unknown even in opposition circles. The fact that she is a newcomer to politics was seen as an asset by the coalition, which argued that this made it harder for her opponents to discredit her.

Even so, she has already had to rebut allegations that she was born outside of Venezuela, which would have made her ineligible for the presidency.

When it came to registering her candidacy by the deadline set for Monday evening, however, the opposition coalition hit a wall.

In videos uploaded to social media, the PUD showed how they repeatedly tried and failed to log into the electoral council website to register Ms Yoris's candidacy.

An in-person request filed at the electoral council for an extension to the deadline was rebuffed.

Ms Yoris said that her rights as a Venezuelan citizen had been "violated" by being blocked from registering.

Death threats, security concerns hinder creation of council in Haiti

By Bert Wilkinson

Fresh turmoil involving a transitional presidential council that will be responsible for choosing Haiti's new leader triggered a flurry of meetings with Caribbean leaders and officials from the US, Canada and France, officials said Monday.

The council has yet to be sworn in given concerns over the security of its members, among other things, a regional official who was not authorised to talk to the media told The Associated Press on condition of anonymity.

The official is based in Guyana, which serves as headquarters for the regional trade bloc known as Caricom that is helping create the transitional council.

The delay in establishing the council comes as gangs continue to launch attacks across Haiti's capital. Since February 29, gunmen have burned police stations, opened fire on the main international airport that remains closed and stormed the country's two biggest prisons, releasing more than 4,000 inmates.

Scores of people have been killed, and more than 33,000 people have fled the capital of Port-au-Prince as a result of the attacks.

On Sunday, the newest person chosen to represent the EDE/RED — one of several Haitian political par-

ties and groups with a seat on the nine-member council — stepped down, forcing the council to scramble to replace her. Dominique Dupuy, a UNESCO ambassador, said in a video statement that she resigned, in part, because she became the target of political attacks and death threats.

In a statement posted Monday on X, formerly Twitter, the Montana Accord, a group of civil society leaders that also has a seat on the council, said it supported Dupuy and her family "at a time when she is being persecuted and threatened."

"Society must remain vigilant about all political manoeuvres based on fear and terror," it said. "It's time for us to stop the violence."

Dupuy was quickly replaced, bringing the council back up to its full nine members, seven of which have voting powers, but they have yet to be sworn in.

It wasn't immediately clear when the council would be formally announced, with another meeting scheduled Monday between its members and officials with Caricom.

Officials are hoping gang violence will subside once the council selects a new leader for Haiti and appoints a council of ministers. Prime Minister Ariel



Youth take cover after hearing gunshots at a public school that serves as a shelter for people displaced by gang violence, in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, Friday, March 22, 2024. (AP Photo/Odelyn Joseph)

Henry has said he would resign when the council is created.

While gang violence has somewhat subsided in recent days, gunmen set fire to a large, open-air garage in downtown Port-au-Prince on Sunday.

"A lot of people have lost everything," attorney Joseph James said. "We couldn't save anything."

On Monday morning, mechanic Elidor Samuel rummaged through the scorched Earth in hopes of finding some belongings that might be salvageable.

"All my tools have been burnt," he said. "What am I going to do now?"

Romain Le Cour, with Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime, said in an analysis posted Monday that "rather than all-out war, the gangs seem to be pursuing a strat-

egy of maximum pressure, consisting of attacks interspersed with lulls."

He said that research by the Swiss-based civil society organisation suggests the strategy may not be a decision taken solely by gang leaders, but possibly the result of relationships "that still bind them to their political bosses, who could be setting fluid red lines without renouncing the use of violence for political ends."

Le Cour joined others concerned about the delay in finding new leadership for Haiti.

"The inability to make the presidential transitional council operational bears witness to the conflicts running through the Haitian political arena, while each passing day consolidates the power of guns and of politico-criminal brokers," he said.

Lost power, a mayday call and the crash that brought down a Baltimore bridge

By the time the crew of the Dali, a massive 948ft (289m) container ship realised what was happening, it was already far too late.

The vessel - at the very start of a 27-day journey from the port of Baltimore to Sri Lanka - completely lost power after leaving the port and was hurtling at speed towards the city's iconic Francis Scott Key Bridge.

It was the middle of the night and the crew onboard were pitched into further darkness when the ship's lights suddenly went out.

The vessel was dead: there were no electronics and - crucially - no engine power. They were adrift but powerless to stop what was happening.

Multiple alarms rang out as the crew ran unsuccessful tests in a desperate attempt to fix the issue and regain power.

The local pilot onboard the vessel frantically gave orders, telling the crew to steer the rudder hard to port and drop anchor to keep it from drifting starboard.

While an emergency generator is believed to have kicked in, the ship never regained the use of its engines.

The pilots were left with no choice. Shortly before 01:40 AM local time (0540 GMT), they issued a mayday call warning authorities that a collision was imminent.

"There's a ship approaching that has lost their



steering," an official with the Maryland Transportation Authority can be heard saying in radio traffic recorded not long after. "Until you've got that under control, we've got to stop all traffic."

Maryland Governor Wes Moore later hailed the crew as "heroes" and said that their quick response "saved lives" because authorities were able to stop the flow of vehicle traffic onto the bridge in the two minutes between the call and the collision.

It did not, however, stop what happened two minutes later when the Dali slammed into a concrete column on the 1.5-mile (2.4km) bridge, which quickly collapsed, piece by piece, into the dark, cold waters of the state's Patapsco River.

At least six people - all believed to be members of a road crew working on the bridge - remain missing.

They are the subject of a massive search and rescue effort in the area which has been complicated by cold and cloudy weather.

Local media has reported that the missing workers are citizens of Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador. The BBC has not independently confirmed this and has contacted consular authorities for comment. All 22 crew on the ship were Indian - the country is a major player in the global seafaring industry.

The dramatic destruction of the bridge - which opened 47 years ago - left many in the city, including Governor Moore, shaken.

"This is a place that is a normal commute route for 30,000 Marylanders every single day. To hear the words 'the Key Bridge has collapsed' is shocking. It's heartbreaking," Mr Moore said at a news conference on

Tuesday.

"For over 47 years, it is all that we've known."

What exactly led to the loss of power on board the Dali remains unclear.

Jennifer Homendy, the chair of the National Transportation Safety Board said that investigators would now seek to examine data from a voyage data recorder.

"It's a critical piece of our investigation," she said, adding that for now, the probe remains "about people".

"It's about families and addressing the needs of those that were impacted."

As the sun rose over Baltimore on Tuesday warning, residents of the diverse and strongly working-class areas near the bridge expressed shock at the scene they had woken up to.

"I felt it...the whole house shook," John Flansburg, who lives near the wa-

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ter told the BBC. "Today's not going to be a good day. A lot of tragedy."

Another area resident, Darlene Irwin, said that she first knew there was a problem when she heard a "rumbling sound".

Hours later, the scale of the destruction became apparent when she looked out her window at the Patapsco River. The massive cargo ship, carrying at least 3,000 containers, was wedged between the debris of the collapsed bridge.

By then, the entire area had become the scene of a massive search and rescue effort, with police boats criss-crossing the river and police and Coast Guard helicopters flying overhead.

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"To see it now in the daylight," Ms Irwin said, "It is just tragic."

While officials have repeatedly stressed that their focus remains on the search for the missing, experts have warned that the incident could also have a significant impact on the port of Baltimore, one of the busiest on the US east coast.

Maryland Senator Ben Cardin told reporters that the re-opening of the waterway would be "critical" for the US economy.

The port is a key regional hub for goods ranging from steel and aluminum to agricultural equipment, and is used by car-makers including Gener-

al Motors and Honda. Data from the Maryland Port Administration shows the port handled at least 750,000 vehicles last year.

"This will disrupt vessel schedules and strain handling capacities at other ports such as Philadelphia and Norfolk," said Mirko Woitzik, global director of intelligence for Everstream Analytics, which provides supply-chain services.

"[This could] lead to spillover congestion and delays that could last month."

Speaking at the White House on Tuesday, US President Joe Biden - who said he'd commuted over the bridge "many, many times" between his home state of Delaware and Washington - vowed to "move heaven and earth" to re-open the bridge.

"We're going to spend all the federal resources they need as we respond to this emergency," he said. "And we're going to rebuild that port together."

Mr Biden added that 15,000 US jobs "depend on that port."

Officials have so far declined to comment on any potential timeline for that to happen.

Authorities say that, for now, they are fully focused on the search and rescue operation.

Mr Moore, for his part, said only that the recovery process "will not be short". Baltimore, he acknowledged, was facing a "long road" after the collapse.

This is not the first time the Dali has been involved in an incident.

According to Vessel Finder, a tracking website, the ship was involved in another collision in the Belgian port of Antwerp in 2016. There were no injuries or significant damage reported at the time.

As night fell on Tuesday, the ship and its load of 3,000 containers remained on the Patapsco River, its nose stuck between the mangled debris of the bridge it brought down in seconds.

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Displaced Palestinians were reportedly killed in an overnight Israeli air strike on a building in Rafah.

Israel says UN resolution damaged Gaza ceasefire talks

By David Gritten

Israel says Hamas's rejection of a current proposal for a Gaza truce deal with Israel shows the "damage" done by the UN Security Council resolution demanding an immediate ceasefire.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office said Israel would not surrender to what it called the Palestinian armed group's "delusional demands".

They include an end to the war and the complete withdrawal of Israeli forces.

The US called the Israeli statement "inaccurate in almost every respect".

A state department spokesman insisted that Hamas's response had been prepared before the Security Council vote on Monday.

The Israeli military meanwhile said it had confirmed that the deputy leader of Hamas's military wing, Marwan Issa, was killed in a strike on a tunnel complex beneath Nuseirat refugee camp about two weeks ago.

"We have checked all the intelligence," spokesman Rear Admiral Daniel Hagari said. "Marwan Issa was eliminated in the strike."

Hamas political official Izzat al-Rishq said he had "no confidence" in the Israeli claim and that the group's military leadership would have the "final say".

Rear Admiral Hagari described Issa as the group's "number three" and "one of the organisers" of Hamas's attacks on southern Israel on 7 October, when about 1,200 people were killed and 253 others taken hostage. More than 32,400 people have been killed in Gaza since then, including 81 people in the past 24 hours, according to the Hamas-run health ministry.

Israel reacted furiously after the UN Security Council adopted for the first time a resolution calling for an immediate ceasefire in the war in Gaza following months of deadlock over the issue.

Fourteen council members, in-

cluding the UK, voted in favour of the text, which also demanded the unconditional release of all remaining hostages and an urgent expansion of humanitarian aid deliveries.

The US - Israel's closest ally and military supporter - criticised the resolution for failing to condemn Hamas for the 7 October attacks.

But in a sign of its increasing frustration at the way Israel is conducting the war, the US abstained, saying it fully supported the key objectives.

In protest, Israel cancelled a planned visit by an Israeli delegation to Washington to discuss its planned ground offensive in the southern city of Rafah, where more than a million people have sought shelter. The US has warned that a full-scale assault could cause a humanitarian catastrophe.

Later, Hamas put out a statement rejecting the latest truce plan put forward by mediators from the US, Qatar and Egypt at indirect talks in Doha.

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The group said it was sticking to its original demands for “a permanent ceasefire that would lead to a full withdrawal” of Israeli forces from Gaza and the return of displaced Palestinians to their homes.

On Tuesday morning, the Israeli prime minister’s office said Hamas’s stance “clearly demonstrates its utter disinterest in a negotiated deal and attests to the damage done by the UN Security Council’s resolution”.

“Israel will not address Hamas’s delusional demands,” it added. “Israel will pursue and achieve its just war objectives: Destroying Hamas’s military and governmental capacities, release of all the hostages, and ensuring Gaza will not pose a threat to the people of Israel in the future.”

But US state department spokesman Matthew Miller rejected the criticism.

“That statement is inaccurate in almost every respect and it is unfair to the hostages and their families,” he told reporters in Washington.

“The description of Hamas’s response that has been aired in the public is all from news reports. It’s not the actual substance of the response. I can tell you that response was prepared before the UN Security Council vote, not after it.”

Qatar’s foreign ministry spokesman, Majed al-Ansari, told a news conference in Doha that the indirect talks “are ongoing, they have not stopped”.

“There is no timetable for negotiations, but we are continuing with our partners in mediation efforts,” he said, adding that they were currently taking place “at the level of technical teams”.

However, Israeli media and Reuters news agency cited Israeli officials as saying that Israel had recalled its negotiating team from Qatar after 10 days of talks.

Hamas’s political leader, Ismail

Haniyeh, said during a visit to Iran - which arms and funds the group - that the resolution showed Israel was experiencing “unprecedented political isolation”.

During a week-long ceasefire in late November, 105 hostages were freed in return for some 240 Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails.

The latest deal rejected by Hamas reportedly proposed a six-week pause in the fighting and the release of 40 of the hostages still being held by Hamas in exchange for as many as 800 Palestinian prisoners.

There was no indication of a let-up in the war on the ground in Gaza, with the latest Israeli air strikes reportedly killing dozens of Palestinians.

Palestinian media and local health officials said at least 18 people, including nine children, were killed in a strike on a residential building on the outskirts of Rafah. They said the home in the Musabah area belonged to the Abu Naqira family and that dozens of displaced people had been sheltering there.

In northern Gaza, members of the Abu Hasira family told Reuters news agency that about 30 people had been killed in a strike on a family compound near Gaza City’s al-Shifa hospital.

Israel’s military said on Tuesday morning that it had struck 60 targets over the previous 24 hours, including “terror tunnels, terrorist infrastructure, and military structures in which armed terrorists were identified”.

It added that Israeli forces were also “continuing to conduct precise operational activity in the al-Shifa hospital area”, eight days after they began a raid targeting Hamas and Islamic Jihad fighters it said had regrouped there.

Palestinians and aid groups say the fierce fighting is endangering patients, medics and displaced civilians trapped inside with few supplies. The military said 175 “terrorists” have been

killed and that no civilians have been harmed.

Also on Tuesday, Gaza’s Hamas-run government media office said 18 Palestinians had been killed while trying to collect aid that was airdropped over northern Gaza, amid warnings of an imminent famine there.

Twelve people drowned when they went in the sea to retrieve food packages, according to a statement. The other six were trampled to death in “stampedes” when other aid packages landed on the ground, it said.

The statement provided no further details about the incidents. However, video footage appeared to show the drowning of at least one person after an airdrop off a beach near the northern town of Beit Lahia on Monday.

The Pentagon said three of the 18 bundles of aid airdropped by US aircraft over northern Gaza on Monday had parachute malfunctions and fell into the water, but could not confirm if anyone was killed, Reuters reported.

In another development, the family of Israeli hostage Uriel Baruch was informed by the military that he had been killed and that his body was being held by Hamas, according to the Hostage and Missing Families Forum.

The 35-year-old father of two was injured and kidnapped during the attack on the Supernova music festival on 7 October.

Meanwhile, a female hostage who was released in November told the New York Times that she was sexually assaulted at gunpoint by a guard in Gaza.

Amit Soussana, 40, is the first former hostage to say publicly that she was sexually abused in captivity, according to the newspaper.

Earlier this month, a UN team said it found “clear and convincing information” that hostages had been subjected to sexual violence and that there were «reasonable grounds to believe that such violence may be ongoing».

Jamaica women beat Leewards to secure regional white-ball double

Jamaica's female cricketers officially secured the 2024 CG United Super50 Cup and Cricket West Indies (CWI) T20 Blaze double with an eight wicket win over the Leeward Islands in the final round of the T20 Blaze at Warner Park in St. Kitts on Monday.

The Jamaicans restricted the Leeward Islands to 124 for five off their 20 overs after winning the toss and choosing to bowl.

Captain Amanda Edwards led the way with 35 off 25 balls, and Divya Saxena made 26. Chedean Nation picked up two for



Players of the Jamaica women's cricket team.

21.

Jamaica then achieved victory at 127 for two with 10 balls to spare. Jamaica's successful chase was led by Captain Stafanie Tay-

lor, who hit an unbeaten 48, and Rashada Williams, who struck 39 not out.

Full Scores: Leeward Islands 124-5 off 20 overs (Amanda Edwards 35,

Divya Saxena 26; Chedean Nation 2-21). Jamaica 127-2 off 18.2 overs (Stafanie Taylor 48 not out, Rashada Williams 39 not out; Shawnesha Hector 1-23).

Fearless Crew end Spanish Heat 2 unbeaten run in ABBA's Second Division

Jim Nance Jan Serve Fearless Crew ended the unbeaten run of Spanish Heat 2 in the Antigua and Barbuda Basketball Association's (ABBA) Second Division League on Monday night.

The Fearless Crew claimed their fourth win in five games by snatching a narrow 68-66 victory against the Spanish Heat 2 in the second game of a double header at the JSC Sports Complex.

Ricky Willock converted 17 points; Ronel Gomez had 13 points, eight assists, and six rebounds; Ryan Shepherd sank 12 points and grabbed 11 rebounds; and Delano Scotland scored 10 points and snatched six rebounds for the Fearless Crew.

Gabriel Perez sank 19 points and claimed nine rebounds; Jesus Em-



manuel produced 18 points, 14 rebounds, and seven steals; and Irvin Suarez had 13 points and five assists for the Spanish Heat 2, which lost for the first time in five games.

The Wadadli Elite returned to

winning form, romping to an emphatic 72-51 victory against the Honourable Daryl Matthew Ottos Clippers in the first game of Monday's double header.

Devante Carter sank 16 points to lead the Wadadli Elite to their third win in six games.

In support, Orion Seraphine sank 14 points and grabbed 11 rebounds; Tajahron Davis also scored 14 points and claimed seven rebounds; and Aiden Christian converted 11 points and snatched seven rebounds for the Wadadli Elite.

Amare Browne shot a game-high 32 points and grabbed six rebounds, and Alvin Titus scored eight points and claimed eight rebounds for the Ottos Clippers, which lost for the fifth time in six games.

Sports News



Strictly Business and Survivors suffer losses at start of softball cricket competitions

Just one week after soaring to great heights to capture the titles in the Antigua and Barbuda Softball Cricket Association's (ABSCA) 10 overs competition, both male and female champions came crashing down to earth by losing their matches during the opening round of another contest.

Rackaman Construction Strictly Business, which



Ashfield Weatherhead cracked 55 to lead Grill Box Buckley's 3J's to victory against Lee's Landscaping 300.

won the recent Everyday Store 24/7 Limited/Alva Joseph ABSCA men's 10 overs competition, was beaten in their opening match in the We the People (WTP) 98.5 FM ABSCA 30 over Male Competition on Sunday.

Bryson's Shipping and Insurance Bullets defeated Rackaman Construction Strictly Business by two wickets in the competition, which is hosted by the ABSCA along with its corporate sponsors, Everyday Store 24/7, Alva Joseph, Natural Construction, Enforcers, and Goody's Taxi Services & Tours.

Strictly Business won the toss and batted, scoring 170 for seven off 24 overs. Kerry Mentore slammed 65, and Melvin Charles hit 48.

Vaughn Charles bagged two for 15, Kimani George claimed two for 31, and Deran Benta had two for 42.

In reply, the Bullets achieved victory at 172 for eight off 24 overs. Deran Benta hammered 76, and Tasillo Allen cracked 55. Melvin Charles captured four for 36, and Kerry Mentore picked up two for 45.

Dredgers and Grill Box Buckley's 3J's recorded wins in the other opening round matches in the men's 30-over contest.

Dredgers beat Construction Solutions PMS by nine wickets (based on run rate).

PMS made 152 off 26.1



Deran Benta had two for 42 and hit 76 to lead Bryson's Shipping and Insurance Bullets to their victory against Rackaman Construction Strictly Business.

overs, with Vishal Gobin getting 52 and Malinga Bruney hitting 50. Brent Bloodman produced a remarkable return by grabbing seven wickets for just six runs, and Loy Weste picked up two wickets for 28 runs.

In reply, Dredgers reached 71 for one in 12.2 overs when the match ended. Mervin Higgins struck 48 not out, and Fazal Nurdeen made 13 not out.

Dredgers were awarded victory by virtue of having a higher aggregate than PMS off the same number of overs. PMS scored 68 runs at the same stage in their innings.

Grill Box Buckley's 3J's trounced Lee's Landscaping 300 by 125 runs. 3J's won the toss and batted, scoring

260 for eight off 30 overs. Denley Thomas hammered 99, Ashfield Weatherhead cracked 55, and Dequan Martin hit 31 not out. Denfield Weatherhead took three for 57.

In reply, 300 was dismissed for 135 in 29.4 overs, with Charles James hitting 88. Steve Martin claimed three for 31, Gregson Merrick snapped up two wickets for five runs, and Randino Turner grabbed two wickets for three runs.

Wayne's Electrical Services Survivors, who captured the title in the recent Enforcers ABSCA Female 10 overs contest, were beaten in their opening match in the St. John's Co-operative Credit Union ABSCA 15 overs competition.

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John Hughes beat Willikies in Premier Division League

John Hughes snatched a one-nil win against the Willikies Warriors in the Antigua and Barbuda Football Association's (ABFA) Premier Division on Monday night.

Terrence Thomas scored the only goal of the match in the 31st minute of the encounter at the ABFA Technical Center.

Their sixth win in 14 matches allows John Hughes to move up to seventh place by advancing to 19 points.

Willikies will remain in 10th place with 14 points after suffering their fifth defeat in 13 matches.

Real Blizzard also secured victory in one of two matches in the ABFA's Second Division on Monday.

Jahquan Hunte scored twice as Real Blizzard came from behind to claim a 3-1 win against TAMO FC at the New Winthropes playing field.

Hunte had conversions in the 25th and 75th minutes, and Andre Henry scored in the 56th minute for Real Blizzard. Jaheim Grant scored in the 24th minute for TAMO FC.

Real Blizzard will remain in 13th



place after securing their fifth win in 14 matches to advance to 18 points. TAMO FC will remain in 14th place with 14 points after slumping to their seventh loss in 13 matches.

West Ham and Belmont FC fought to a 2-2 draw in the other Second Division encounter at the Princess Margaret School playing field.

Anderson Herbert converted a penalty kick in the fourth minute to put West Ham ahead. Zamaal Greene

scored an equalizer in the 16th minute, and team mate Nyah Michael gave Belmont FC a 2-1 lead with a 24th-minute conversion.

Dale Burton ensured West Ham secured a share of the points by scoring his team's equalizer in the 74th minute.

Belmont FC will remain in ninth place after securing their third draw in 16 matches to advance to 24 points. It was also the third draw in 14 matches for West Ham, which will remain in 15th place by moving on to nine points.

The ABFA's Second Division will continue with four matches today (Wednesday) at 4:15 pm.

ABAYA will host Freeman's Village at the Parham playing field, and the Celtics will entertain the Young Warriors at the Radio Range playing field in Ottos.

Sea View Farm will clash with Soccer Academy at the ABFA Technical Center, and English Harbour will take on Blackburn Palace at the English Harbour playing field.

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Bryson's Shipping and Insurance Bullets defeated Wayne's Electrical Services Survivors by 20 runs. The Bullets made 86 for four off their 15 overs. Lana Thomas struck 31 not out, Jamella McClure made 17, and Marian Smith hit 15 not out. Sherilyn Watkins captured two for 21.

In reply, Survivors were restricted to 66 for five off 15 overs. Desiree Welsh-Humphreys hit 23, and Stacey Bright made

16 not out. Mary Browne snapped up three wickets for seven runs.

Alzzari and Sharon Joseph Flyers and Goody's Taxi Service & Tours Jennings Rockets won the other opening round matches in the St. John's Co-operative Credit Union ABSCA 15 over Female Competition.

The Flyers beat the Potters Uprising Serpents by 10 wickets. The Potters Uprising won the toss and batted, scoring 81 for four off 15 overs.

Nolia Elvin slammed 46 not out, and Gail Jobe hit 16 not out. Akeda Francis picked up two wickets for nine runs, and Monique Titus claimed two for 18.

The Flyers achieved victory by scoring 82 without losing a wicket in 11.2 overs. Gaynell O'Garro hammered 43 not out, and Sevely Ireland hit 38 not out.

Goody's Taxi Service and Tours Jennings Rockets defeated Rackaman Construction Strictly Business by seven wickets.

Strictly Business was restricted to 51 for seven off 15 overs, with Simone Aspinall getting 10 not out. Ann-Marie Parker took two wickets for five runs, Chemique Benjamin claimed two for 12, and Pauline Shaw had two for 15.

The Jennings Rockets cruised to victory at 52 for three in 11 overs. Chemique Benjamin and Kushana David each made 16. Rosemarie Davis captured two for 11.

Dr. Shallow lauds strides made by CWI

Cricket West Indies (CWI) president Dr. Kishore Shallow lauded the collective strides made by the regional governing cricket body over the 2022-2023 period, and also expressed delight about the prospects to come from the upcoming ICC Men's Twenty20 (T20) World Cup.

Shallow's comments followed the unveiling of CWI's Annual Report and Audited Financial Statements for the fiscal year 2022-2023, after the Annual General Meeting (AGM), which was held at the Coolidge Cricket Ground, home of CWI, in Antigua on Saturday, March 23.

CWI recorded revenues of US\$62.3 million and net income of US\$14.25 million for the year ending September 30, 2023.

"As we look back on the past year, I applaud the tremendous progress we have achieved together. The credit is yours, as through our unified efforts, we have made much progress. I am equally confident that our journey promises even greater rewards if we maintain this path," Dr. Shallow said.

He also expressed enthusiasm about the T20 World



Delegates who attend the Cricket West Indies Annual General Meeting, which was held at the Coolidge Cricket Ground in Antigua on Saturday, March 23, 2024. (CWI Media)

Cup, which will be jointly hosted in the Caribbean and United States, as he highlighted its potential economic impact of over US\$300 million for the Caribbean.

"The excitement around hosting the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2024 resonates with us at Cricket West Indies. This is a remarkable opportunity for the Caribbean.

"CWI stands ready and well-positioned to make the region and cricket world proud of a magnificent spectacle in June," Dr. Shallow added.

Reflecting on the finan-

cial year in review, Chief Financial Officer, Antiguan Kebra Nanton acknowledged the continued strengthening of CWI's financial position.

"We are delighted to announce further significant improvements in our financial standing as we continue the transformational change in our organisation. Having successfully reversed the deficit of over US\$2 million, which was over US\$23 million in 2021, we now record a surplus of US\$12 million," Nanton stated.

"Furthermore, our forecast for the end of 2024 antic-

ipates our surplus exceeding US\$20 million. This achievement lays a solid foundation for our sustainability over the next four years. By fortifying our financial position through increased retained earnings, we have bolstered our ability to navigate future challenges," she declared.

CWI's financials underwent rigorous auditing by Grant Thornton, Antigua.

The interactive Annual Report also includes sections on cricket, fan engagement, and an honours list showcasing accomplishments over the year.