

Harney Motors Ltd will open Antigua's first EV Showroom



4th March, 2024. Harney Motors Ltd, one of Antigua's leading automotive companies, has signed an agreement with the Jamaica-based ATL Automotive Group to become the exclusive dealer for the number one selling manufacturer of new energy vehicles, BYD (Build Your Dreams).



BYD has rapidly expanded its reach and influence in the global automotive industry, particularly in the realm of electric mobility, surpassing Tesla as the number-one-selling EV globally in 2023.

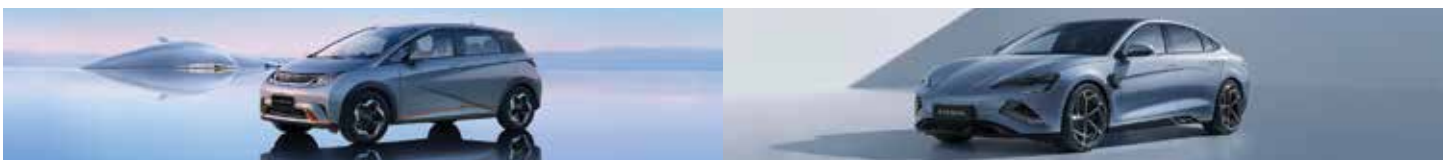
The appointment follows ATL Automotive's direct control of sales and aftersales of BYD in Jamaica, as well as a regional management role in an additional eight other countries.

Adam Stewart, Executive Chairman of the ATL Group, commented, "We are thrilled to finally announce this news. Our own discussions with BYD were ongoing for the better part of a year and a half, so naturally, we were pleased to finally sign on the dotted line with this incredible brand and continue to confirm our trusted dealer partners throughout the region. We're delighted that Harney Motors shares the vision of the BYD brand and its exciting future and will play a key role in its introduction in Antigua."

BYD Antigua is set to open its doors in June 2024, offering a full range of passenger vehicles in its new state-of-the-art showroom which will be located just off of American Road.

Dyna Harney-Barnes, General Manager of Harney Motors, stated, "We are delighted to reveal Antigua's first electric vehicle (EV) showroom and our role as the dealership. This milestone marks a pivotal shift towards a greener, more sustainable future in mobility. We are excited to introduce the various BYD models to the people of Antigua and Barbuda."

The first set of units will be available for test drives from March 2024 and then available for purchase from May 2024.



NO CHANGE IN ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA'S POSITION ON FREE MOVEMENT

Story on Page 2



Former president of the Antigua Trades and Labour Union (AT&LU), Ambassador Wigley George (left), led a field of three persons singled out for special awards at the union's 85th anniversary awards ceremony and luncheon held on Sunday. *Story on page 5.*

No change in Antigua and Barbuda's position on free movement

This press statement is issued to clarify Antigua and Barbuda's position on the movement of all CARICOM Nationals, and to avoid any misinformation or ambiguity on the matter as stated by Observer Media and subsequently carried by other online local news media.

The recently concluded Forty-Sixth Regular Meeting of the Conference of Heads of Government of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) received a report of the critical work being done by the Reconstituted Intergovernmental Task Force (IGTF), established to facilitate negotiations for revisions to the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas (RTC).

The IGTF is presently focused on an immediate directive given by the Heads of Government at their Forty-Fifth meeting, which is to propose amendments to the RTC that will give a legal basis to the free movement of all CARICOM Nationals.

In this process of negotiation, Antigua and Barbuda has signaled that it wishes to maintain its use of the current skills regime, which allows it to focus on addressing labor force de-



Dr. Clarence Henry

mand in the local market.

Antigua and Barbuda currently implements one of the most liberal immigration policies across the region and is considered a forerunner in the integration movement.

Historically, the country practiced an open-door immigration policy while under the leadership of Sir. V. C. Bird, which continued under successive labour party administrations, until the global economic crisis brought on severe challenges which made it impossible to continue. The CSME skills regime was then adopted as a means of allowing the jurisdiction to strengthen necessary human resource capacities.

Antigua and Barbuda's

Ambassador to the Caribbean Community, Dr. Clarence Henry stated that, "the policy is pragmatic and realistic to avoid dislocation of the indigenous population, protecting jobs, and avoiding exacerbation of our economic/fiscal challenges."

While Antigua and Barbuda remains committed to the regional integration movement, it continues to balance its limited resources through a process of managed migration which the current CSME skills regime facilitates.

Consequently, Antigua and Barbuda did not give its consent to the full free movement of all CARICOM nationals, as is being contemplated by other Member States of CARICOM come

March 31st 2024.

Antigua and Barbuda will however signal its readiness to move towards full free movement of all CARICOM Nationals once it is better equipped to adequately accommodate the possible additional inflow of CARICOM Nationals who may intend to reside and work in the country.

It should be noted that work on finalizing the legal amendments to be made to the RTC to facilitate full free movement of CARICOM nationals will be conducted in the coming weeks through the convening of an IGTF meeting on March 7, 2024, a meeting of the Legal Affairs Committee on March 8, followed by a Heads of Government Meeting on March 15, 2024.

It is hoped that the CARICOM Secretariat will undertake a comprehensive public education programme on this matter, once all arrangements have been concluded, to avoid needless confusion on the movement of Community Nationals.

*Issued from the Desk of
Dr. Clarence Henry
Antigua and Barbuda's
Ambassador to the Caribbean Community (CARICOM)*

ABEC: Elections campaign financing law needs overhaul

The Antigua and Barbuda Electoral Commission is making a case for an overhaul of the electoral laws regarding campaign financing as political parties are exploiting loopholes in the law.

In its report on the January 18, 2023, general elections, ABEC noted that reports were submitted by the political parties contesting the elections; the Antigua and Barbuda Labour Party (ABLP), the United Progressive Party (UPP), the Barbuda People's Movement (BPM) and the Democratic National Alliance (DNA).

The report, signed by the late chairman of the Commission, John Jarvis, noted that Section 43 of the Representation of the People's (Amendment) Act of 2001, details the manner in which the law dictates that the reports ought to be structured.

However, the report noted that based on the reports from the political parties there clearly is an issue of the period for which the reports ought to cover.

"Having reviewed the submissions received from the political parties, it was very evident that clarity regarding the commencement date of reporting was an issue since Section 43

of the RPA is silent on the point.

"Consequently, it is reasonable to conclude that most reports were generated following the issuance of the Writ of Elections," it noted.

Based on this, the report suggests that verifying the accuracy of the reports from the parties on the question of election financing was next to impossible.

"It is therefore imperative that this deficiency in the legislation be given necessary attention for redress," the report suggested.

A breakdown of the amounts reported by the political parties are as follows;

2018 General Elections	ABLP - \$2,138,979.00
	UPP - \$1,666,151.00
	BPM - \$19,000.00
	DNA - \$21,000.00
	ABTLP - \$0
2023 General Elections	ABLP - \$988,612.00
	UPP - \$193,500.00
	BPM - \$14,000.00
	DNA - \$0

These figures declined significantly from the 2018 general elections for all the parties.

2018 General Elections	ABLP - \$2,138,979.00
	UPP - \$1,666,151.00
	BPM - \$19,000.00
	DNA - \$21,000.00
	ABTLP - \$0

The report of the 2023 was tabled in parliament last week during meetings of the House of Representatives and the Senate.

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Wigley George, two others honoured at AT&LU's 85th anniversary awards ceremony

Former president of the Antigua Trades and Labour Union (AT&LU), Ambassador Wigley George, led a field of three persons singled out for special awards at the union's 85th anniversary awards ceremony and luncheon held on Sunday.

Ambassador George has the distinction of serving the union for 46 years, 29 of which he held the position of president, surpassing even the legendary leader of the Union, Sir Vere Cornwall Bird, as the longest serving president in the union's history.

Current AT&LU President, Bernard DeNully, described Ambassador George as a mentor and showered him with praise for the many years of service he gave to the union.

“Ambassador, Comrade Wigley George, CN, is a giant of a man. He is undeniably worthy of being written in the history books as a man of service to country. With 46 years of service to the Antigua Trades and Labour Union, 29 of those years, Comrade George sat as President. Comrade George is a household name and his sterling contribution to Trades Labour Movement is untouched,” he stated.

DeNully revealed that since he was first elected as a member of the executive of the AT&LU, Amb. George ‘took him under his wings’ by both mentoring and sharing with him his vast experiences as a member of the union representing the interests of



workers.

For his work for and on behalf of the AT&LU, Amb. George was presented with the President's Award.

The award from the

AT&LU General Secretary went to Harold Carter, who at 94, is the last surviving member of the Group of 12 men who took strike action in 1951 and who were im-

cont'd on pg 6



Local News



cont'd from pg 5

prisoned for their action. “Comrade Carter is now the last surviving hero and stalwart of one of the most historic strike actions and demonstration of workers’ resolve and sacrifice in our nation’s history,” the introductory literature stated.

The third person honoured was the General Secretary of the Antigua and Barbuda Labour Party, Senator Mary-Clare Hurst. Her accomplishments as a senator and Leader of Government Business in the Upper House were highlighted as well as her chairmanship of the Antigua Port Authority, the first for a female.

“Under her stewardship, she has led the port re-development project and has started the human re-



source development that is now required to keep pace with the transformation and continued execution of the strategic development of the port as a major play-

er in regional sea transportation services,” the literature noted.

The theme for the 85th anniversary of the AT&LU is ‘Embracing the past as

we create a future building on 85 years of dedication, sacrifice and service’. The event was held at People’s Place on Nugent Avenue, headquarters of the ABLP.

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Antigua and Barbuda, and Brazil ink Air Services agreement

Antigua and Barbuda and Brazil have signed an Air Services agreement as part of efforts to strengthen ties between South America’s largest country and the twin-island state.

The signing took place in St. Vincent and the Grenadines last Friday where both Prime Minister Gaston Browne, and His Excellency Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, President of the Federative Republic of Brazil were attending the Community of Latin America and Caribbean States (CELAC) conference.

The Agreement will



PM Gaston Browne with Brazilian President Lula da Silva.

pave the way for further economic cooperation between the two countries through trade and investment.

President Lula also used the opportunity to announce that Brazil will reopen its Embassy in Antigua and Barbuda, solidify-

ing a commitment to deepening relations between St. John’s and Brasília. The news of the reopening of the Brazilian Embassy was welcomed by Prime Minister Browne who mentioned that Antigua and Barbuda would be seeking to establish a presence in Brazil.

Prime Minister Browne also used the occasion to request support for and extended an invitation to Brazil to attend the upcoming 4th International Conference on Small Island Developing States to be held in Antigua and Barbuda from 27 to 30 May, 2024.

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Antigua and Barbuda, EU discuss blacklisting

Antigua and Barbuda and representatives of the European Union discussed the issue of 'blacklisting', a policy being pursued by the EU to punish countries over what it sees as 'non-cooperation' by Caribbean countries on tax policy.

Antigua and Barbuda is among twelve countries named on the list issued on February 20, 2024.

"The European Union (EU) maintains a list of non-cooperative jurisdictions for tax purposes. These countries have either failed to fulfill their commitments to comply with tax good governance criteria or have refused to do so within a specific timeframe," a EU statement dated February 20 noted.

While attending the just-concluded CELAC meeting in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Prime Minister Gaston Browne held dis-

cussions with EU Rep Brian Glynn Managing Director for Americas in the EU Foreign Service. Those discussions included the issue of blacklisting although no details have emerged from the talks.

The two also discussed the upcoming Small Island Developing States fourth conference slated for Antigua and Barbuda from May 27 to 30.

The EU official said the European Union is excited about the opportunity to participate.

"The EU officials stated their excitement in participating at the 4th International Conference on Small Island Developing States to be held in Antigua and Barbuda from 27 to 30 May, 2024.

They also mentioned that in addition to providing support, the EU would be sending a high-level delegation, where they would launch ad-



PM Gaston Browne with EU Representative, Brian Glynn

ditional support programmes for the Caribbean to highlight their commitment to SIDS4," a statement from the government noted.

Other matters discussed included increased cooperation between Antigua and

Barbuda and the EU.

Accompanying PM Browne were Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Amb. Anthony Liverpool and Senior Foreign Affairs Officer, Kurt Williams.

Tourist arrivals and hotel occupancy on track to better 2019

The year 2024, has entered its third month and the signs are that both tourist arrivals and occupancy this year will surpass the numbers for 2019, the best performing year on record for Antigua and Barbuda tourism.

The latest figures released by the Antigua and Barbuda Hotels and Tourism Association shows that occupancy for January 2024 increased marginally over both 2023 and 2019, the base year.

Hotel occupancy for this January

was 80.8 percent, compared with 79.8 for 2023 and 79.0 percent for 2019.

Arrivals by air were also up slightly for 2024 versus 2019. Overall total for January was 30,690 compared with 30,243 for January 2019. The United States continues its good performance as it was the only source market that recorded an increase, all the others showed declines. With 13,724 arrivals for January, The US market accounts for 45 percent of visitors to the country.

The UK, the second leading source market for Antigua and Barbuda tourism was down from 8,776 visitors in 2019 to 7,812 in 2024.

All other markets recorded declines from 2019 to 2024.

One of the issues affecting arrivals into Antigua and Barbuda is a decline in airlifts into the destination. This has particularly affected arrivals out of the UK as both BA and Virgin have reduced flights into Antigua and Barbuda.

The Adele School gets \$20,000 for its breakfast programme

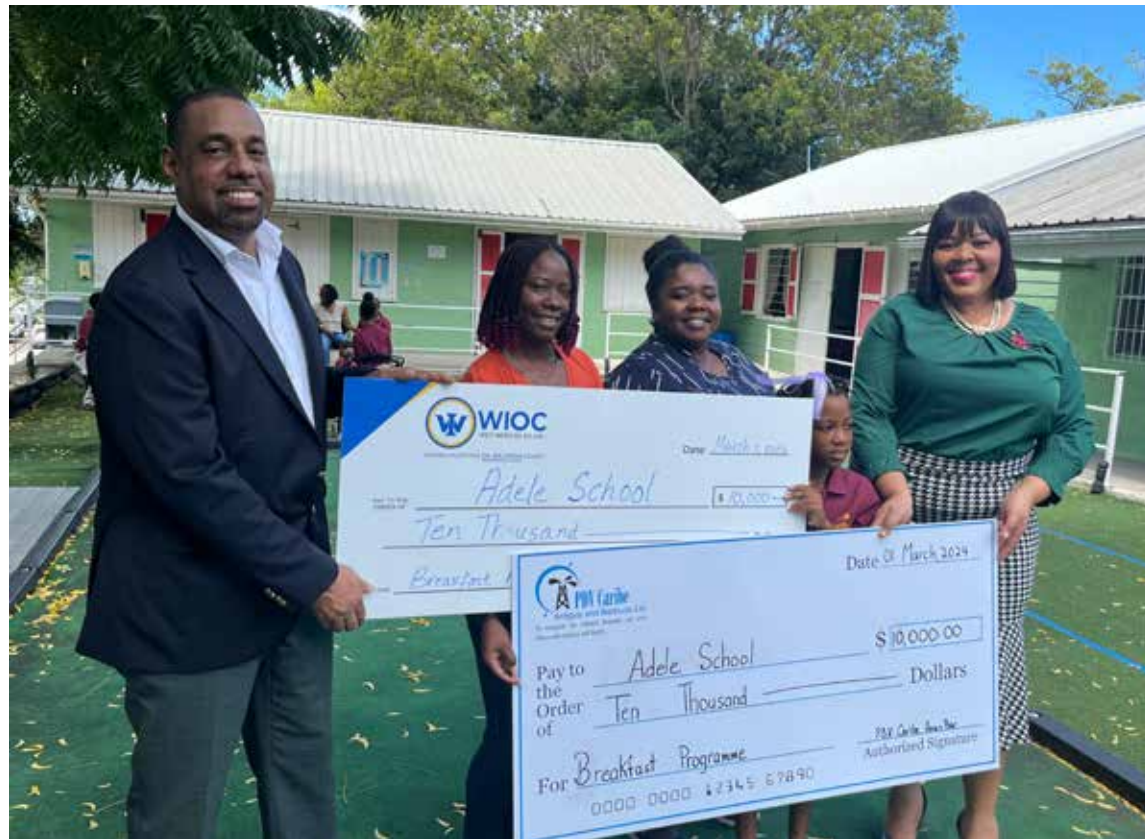
Two corporate entities have made a substantial donation to the Adele School for Special Education to finance its breakfast feeding programme.

The donations were made by PDV Caribe which donated \$10,000.00 and The West Indies Oil Company another \$10,000.00. The money goes towards funding the breakfast programme for the school's 60 students for a period of a year.

"PDV CAB has had a long-standing relationship with the Adele School. In 2008 when we launched the People's Benefit Programme, we reached out to the institution, and applications to the PBP from households with students at the Adele School were fast tracked. Since then, we have continuously approved new students at the Adele School to the People's Benefit Programme," Office Administrator for the programme, Jellette Ralph stated.

She added that when PDV Caribe got wind that the Adele school was in need of financial assistance to fund the breakfast programme, it immediately responded with a positive 'yes'," she explained.

"Our management team determined that it is indeed a worthy initiative and reached out to West In-



dies Oil Company Limited for joint sponsorship. PDV CAB and WIOC have also had a very beneficial relationship and we were delighted that they honoured our request to partner on this initiative," Ralph added.

The Adele School will now benefit from an annual funding of EC\$20,000; that's EC\$10,000.00 each annually from both companies to be disbursed termly.

"We want to express our best wishes to the Adele School and we can only trust that the students will now have a wider variety of nutritious items on the menu to make up the first and most important

meal of the day," she declared.

WIOC Chief Executive Officer, Gregory Georges, said his company was happy to respond to the request from the Adele school because it aligns with its corporate social responsibility.

He noted that WIOC is majority owned by the people of Antigua and Barbuda and as such it has a responsibility to 'give back' to the community.

Georges got emotional during the brief ceremony as he said he easily identified with the goals of the school as he was once the father of a child with special needs.

Deputy Principal at

the school, Jacqueline Azille-Joseph said the overall budget for the breakfast programme amounts to between \$25,000.00 and \$30,000.00 annually. She said the \$20,000.00 is a big boost to the programme and it will allow them to expand on the meals offered at the school.

She explained that the programme was started when it was recognized that several of the students often arrived at school without having breakfast, the most important meal of the day. She said this was because many students are from homes where providing adequately for their children is a constant challenge.



Developers launch high-end housing development at Falmouth

Scores of people turned up last Friday to an ‘open house’ event where the developers of a high-end luxury housing development programme put on display one of several houses they hope to complete over the next few years.

The development – The Beach Houses – is located on four acres of beachfront property on the northern side of Falmouth Harbour and it is being undertaken by Elms Bridge, which is led by real estate developer, Brian Dobbin.

“We are an international property developer and seller company and we develop properties and then find buyers in major cities such as London, Toronto or New York and bring them here. So, we don’t actually sell to people on island necessarily, but we find buyers elsewhere.

“We also do a lot of marketing off-island and we have made a huge financial and personal commitment



to this island. We currently have a team of about twenty persons, most of whom are from Antigua and they comprise an excellent team. I have had offices in many other locations, but the team here in Antigua and Barbuda is among the best,” Dobbin told Point Express newspaper.

In addition to utilizing local staff for much of the work on the property, Dobbin revealed that a lot of the building products are manufactured here in Antigua and Barbuda as well.

“The Beach Houses is a small development of only ten high-end homes and we are selling to international buyers. Already four of the ten have been spoken for and three others also have potential buyers. It’s a pretty good project. COVID-19 interrupted us when we started, so we are a bit delayed, but now everyone one is pleased with the output,” he stated.

Dobbin predicts that the entire project will be completed in 24-30 months. The overall investment will total

approximately US\$30 million. Elms Bridge will also explore other developments in Antigua and Barbuda in the coming years.

Meanwhile, Director of Architecture for the company, Senator Rawdon Turner announced that the company won an award for the Best Residential Development for the Americas at an award ceremony held a little over a week ago in London. “This is a collaboration of several companies, there are Elms Bridge, our lead company, along with Rawdon and Associates as well as a number of local contractors and suppliers who all contribute to the success of what we have on display today. Thus, our doors, windows, bathroom fixtures, concrete roof tiles are among the products that were manufactured and sourced locally,” he added.

Sen. Rawdon spoke highly of the skills of many in the building and supply trade here in Antigua and Barbuda.

Revel without a clause

By Tony Deyal

Even though I no longer go to the horse races, some people still call me a “bookie”. Others call me a “book worm”. They’re so completely off the track that I rail at them.

What I am is a book dragon, and not just an ordinary one like the Komodo, which suffers from erectile dysfunction. I dig reading. I am a bibliophile. My nights before I sleep and my weekends are all booked up.

The advice I got from a librarian was, “Son, believe in your shelf”. I took it up and now have three with a fourth coming to hold my writing only.

While I found out at university that the best college degree to become a successful fiction writer was journalism (especially in Trinidad), despite not being a bookie I do things by the books and not just the book. With the extreme heat that we in the Caribbean are experiencing these days, I came up with a foolproof way to avoid sunburns. Stay inside the house and read all day.

There are a lot of people like me who read past bedtime and sometimes don’t sleep until the next morning when it’s time to go to school or work.

Some have book hangovers. After drinking a lot of coffee (or tea) to finish reading a good book, they are upset because they just

cannot start another one right away.

Interestingly, I often told my daughter what my mother demanded from me when she went by the light switch in my bedroom, “Put down the book and go to sleep. You have to catch the bus in the morning to go to school.” I always answered (and my daughter did the same), “Oh gosh! Just let me finish this chapter first, please. It going too well for me to put down.”

My father was concerned about the cost of electricity, so he just shouted a couple times: “You wasting electricity. You know how much that cost?” Then he came into the room and switched off “the current”.

What he didn’t know is that I had his “torchlight” under my coverlet, and as soon as he left, I said, “Let there be light”, and even though I wasn’t deep into Genesis and the King James Bible, somehow God and I became friends, “And God said, Let there be light and there was light./ And God (and I) saw the light and it was good.”

He even divided the light from the darkness. If there is anything I learnt, no book lover goes to bed alone, and some are lucky to have the Almighty with them as well.

Mark Twain, the American writer and humourist, saw writing as part of the bigger picture. He believed, “Good friends, good books,



Tony Deyal

and a sleepy conscience: this is the ideal life.”

Long before Twain, Marcus Tullius Cicero, a Roman statesman and philosopher, put it bluntly, “A room without books is a body without a soul.” And getting back to my dragons, I have to drag this in from the English-writer Neil Gaiman, “Fairy tales are more than true: not because they tell us that dragons exist, but because they tell us that dragons can be beaten.”

I definitely won’t go so far to try that but will stick wit Groucho Marx, American comedian and actor, “Outside of a dog, a book is man’s best friend. Inside of a dog it’s too dark to read.”

Mark also said, “I find television very educating. Every time somebody turns on the set, I go into the other room and read a book.” Some of the other great authors also make reading as important as writing.

Earnest Hemingway, the American novelist and short-story writer, was clear about where books stood in his life: “There is no friend as loyal as a book.”

C.S. Lewis went for tea the same way I go for coffee, “You can never get a cup of tea large enough or a book long enough to suit me.” But Frank Zappa, the musician and band leader of “The Mothers of Invention”, cut it short and to the point: “So many books, so little time.”

So much for writers reading, but what about the writing and what writers think is the right thing? Essentially, like their writing, they move from what seems to be the ridiculous to the sublime.

Winston Churchill is first on my list with, “From now on, ending a sentence with a preposition is something up with which I will

cont’d on pg 12

Opinion



cont'd from pg 11

not put.” Stephen King found his real horror was, “The road to hell is paved with adverbs.” American comedian and writer Stephen Wright joked: “I wrote a few children’s books. Not on purpose.”

Ruth Rendell, one of my favourite writers of thrillers and psychological murder mysteries, advised those who didn’t know how to get into the book world: “I get a lot of letters from people. They say: ‘I want to be a writer. What should I do?’ I tell them to stop writing to me and get on with it.”

Then one of my humourists, Irving S. Cobb, commented, “If writers were good businessmen, they’d have too much sense to be writers.” American author Jessamyn West spoke for all of us with, “Writing is so difficult that I often feel that writers, having had their hell on earth, will escape all punish-

ment thereafter.”

And the one that is biblically true and without the Lord helping me this time, “If Moses were alive today he’d come down from the mountain with the Ten Commandments and spend the next five years trying to get them published.”

My first newspaper columns were in the Trinidad Guardian and subsequently the Trinidad Express. I then got a scholarship for Carleton University in Canada. Knowing that none of us from the Caribbean were white, and even though I had good Canadian friends in my classes and even taught several, I started my column “Blackadaisical”.

It was very much based on something that US columnist and editor Doug Larson, who had advised people like me that “Wisdom is the reward you get for a lifetime of listening

when you’d have preferred to talk”. He wrote, “If the English language made any sense, lackadaisical would have something to do with flowers.” In my case, it was flour. I had to do my own self-raising, and I did it with books and more books.

And for children, I can tell them to respond as I did when one of my colleagues asked me, “Tony, boy. How many books you read in your lifetime?” My answer was, “I really don’t know. Unless you lick me down now with a big stick or shoot me, I’m not dead yet.”

Tony Deyal was last seen quoting Mark Twain, “I was sorry to hear my name mentioned as one of the great authors, because they have a sad habit of dying off. Chaucer is dead, so is Milton, so is Shakespeare and I am not feeling very well myself.” You can say that again!



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Elon Musk sues ChatGPT-maker OpenAI over Microsoft links

By Liv McMahon

Elon Musk is suing OpenAI, the makers of ChatGPT, arguing it has breached the principles he agreed to when he helped found it in 2015.

The lawsuit - which has also been filed against OpenAI boss Sam Altman - says the firm has departed from its original non-profit, open source mission.

It says instead of trying to “benefit humanity” - as it was set up to do - it is focusing on “maximising profits” for major investor Microsoft.

OpenAI has been approached for comment.

The firm was created with the intention of building what’s known as artificial general intelligence (AGI) - AI that can perform any task a human being is capable of.

It was also set up as a not-for-profit company, meaning it would not aim to make money.

The lawsuit, which has been filed in San Francisco, states it was under these conditions, that Mr Musk agreed to found OpenAI, along with Mr Altman and co-founder Greg Brockman.

He left three years later.

“This case is filed to compel OpenAI to adhere to the Founding Agreement and return to its mission to develop AGI for the benefit of humanity, not to personally benefit the individual Defendants and the largest technology company in the world,” the lawsuit says.

The filing comes after the Wall Street Journal reported on Wednesday that US regulators had begun to probe the ChatGPT creator over whether investors had been misled, following boardroom drama at OpenAI in November 2023.

It saw Mr Altman suddenly ousted



Elon Musk

from the board, before being reinstated at the helm several days later.

The board at the time accused Mr Altman of not being “consistently candid in his communications”, and said as a result they had “lost confidence” in his leadership.

It was a row Microsoft became deeply embroiled in - including an offer to take on any staff who quit OpenAI.

Mr Musk had said in a post on X - formerly Twitter - that he was “very worried” by the situation.

His lawyers now say in this lawsuit that these “stunning developments” highlight Microsoft’s increased influence over the company.

“Its technology, including GPT-4, is closed-source primarily to serve the proprietary commercial interests of Microsoft,” it says.

Microsoft’s initial \$1bn backing of OpenAI in 2019 came shortly after the AI firm - previously operating as a non-profit - announced a new “capped profit” structure which would allow investment in it.

Microsoft’s investment swelled to a multi-year, multi-billion partnership

in January 2023 following the launch of OpenAI’s chatbot, ChatGPT.

The partnership is now being examined by UK, EU and US regulators.

To understand some of the context behind this, it’s useful to know a little about a philosophy several tech billionaires including Elon Musk are said to be fond of: it’s called effective altruism.

It has very lofty ambitions around identifying the world’s most pressing problems and trying to solve them (this is a very basic explanation - but you can see why it helps if you’re a billionaire). It’s not about personal or indeed commercial gain.

If OpenAI was founded with that principle at its core, you can see why Mr Musk, and indeed some of the firm’s senior figures, were disgruntled when a few years later it launched a profit-arm.

Indeed there were some whispers around the time that Sam Altman was dramatically fired that the board was concerned about the growing power of the profit-making division.

If this does ever come to court, it

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Haiti violence: Gangs free 4,000 inmates in mass jailbreak

By Henri Astier

Armed gangs have stormed the main prison in Haiti's capital Port-au-Prince, releasing many inmates.

The vast majority of about 4,000 men held there have now escaped, a local journalist told BBC News.

Among those detained were gang members charged in connection with the 2021 killing of President Jovenel Moïse.

Violence in Haiti, the poorest country in the Americas, has worsened in recent years. Gangs aiming to oust PM Ariel Henry control 80% of Port-au-Prince.

The latest upsurge in violence began on Thursday, when the prime minister travelled to Nairobi to discuss sending a Kenyan-led multinational security force to Haiti.

Gang leader Jimmy Chérizier (nicknamed "Barbecue") declared a co-ordi-



Port-au-Prince has descended into violence in recent days.

nated attack to remove him.

"All of us, the armed groups in the provincial towns and the armed groups in the capital, are united," said the former police officer, who is thought to be behind several massacres in Port-au-Prince.

A wave of shootings left four police officers dead and five injured. The French embassy in Haiti advised against travel in

and around the capital.

Haiti's police union asked the military to help reinforce the prison, but the compound was stormed late on Saturday.

On Sunday the doors of the prison were still open and there were no signs of officers, Reuters news agency reported. Three inmates who tried to flee lay dead in the courtyard, the report said.

One volunteer prison worker told the Reuters journalists that 99 prisoners - including former Colombian soldiers jailed over President Moïse's murder - had chosen to remain in their cells for fear of being killed in crossfire.

Violence has been rife since President Moïse's assassination. He has not been replaced and elections have not been held since 2016.

Under a political deal, elections were to be held and the unelected Mr Henry was due to stand down by 7 February, but that did not happen.

In January, the UN said more than 8,400 people were victims of Haiti's gang violence last year, including killings, injuries and kidnappings - more than double the numbers seen in 2022.

cont'd from pg 13

could be an epic battle of two tech titans, neither of whom particularly needs a financial win.

It could become a fight between ideology and the real world, or ultimately a battle for supremacy between two men who have extraordinary global influence.

The lawsuit also alleges that details about the design of OpenAI's most recent AI model, GPT-4, were kept secret.

"On information and belief, this secrecy is primarily driven by commercial con-

siderations, not safety," it says.

Mr Musk announced his own AI start-up called xAI in July 2023, citing its mission as being to "understand reality".

It developed Grok, its own chatbot with "a little humour", to try and rival the likes of ChatGPT in November that year.

Mr Musk's lawyers say, among other desired outcomes of the lawsuit, they want OpenAI to be ordered to continue making information relating to its AI developments available to the public.

Microsoft declined to comment.

US applauds engagement with CARICOM to counter firearms trafficking

CMC - The Joe Biden administration in the United States has applauded the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) for its collaboration in countering firearms trafficking.

The US Department of State noted that United States Ambassador to the United Nations Linda Thomas-Greenfield led a US delegation to Guyana to participate in the US-Caribbean Community Dialogue held recently.

The department said Thomas-Greenfield's engagement built on US Vice President Kamala Harris' April 2022 meeting with Caribbean leaders, the Vice President's June 2023 engagement of Caribbean leaders in The Bahamas, and US Secretary of State Antony Blinken's participation in the 50th Anniversary of CARICOM in July 2023 in Trinidad and Tobago.

The State Department said activities stemming from recent US efforts in the region include the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act (BSCA), signed into US law in July 2022, which "dramatically increased criminal penalties for straw purchasers and US-sourced firearms trafficking".

Provisions under the "Stop Illegal Trafficking in Firearms Act" assign further penalties for smuggled firearms or ammunition out of the United States, with the



intent to promote transnational organized crime, the State Department said.

It said that, on February 1, Haiti's 400 Mawozo gang leader Joly Germine pleaded guilty to his role in a gunrunning conspiracy that smuggled firearms to Haiti in violation of US export laws, and the laundering of ransoms paid for US hostages to the gang in 2021.

The State Department said his former girlfriend, Eliande Tunis, pleaded guilty to the same 48-count indictment.

It said Jocelyn Dor, a Haitian citizen also affiliated with 400 Mawozo, was sentenced to 60 months in prison on February 28 for her role in a firearm smuggling scheme between the United States and Haiti.

On February 26, Elieser Sori-Rodriguez was sentenced to 57 months in prison for smuggling firearms from the United States to the Dominican Republic.

In July 2023, the State Department said the US De-

partment of Justice named a Coordinator for Caribbean Firearms Prosecutions to elevate firearms trafficking and prosecutions and help implement the provisions of the BPSA.

The State Department said the coordinator has since attended an Association of Caribbean Chiefs of Police meeting, travelled to Jamaica and met with Jamaica's Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, and met with the CARICOM Implementation Agency for Crime and Security Leadership.

The department said the coordinator will travel to Trinidad and Tobago this spring to meet with host nation counterparts, Caribbean officials at the CARICOM Crime Gun Intelligence Unit, and US law enforcement partners at Embassy Port-of-Spain.

Partnering with the CARICOM Crime Gun Intelligence Unit (CGIU), the State Department said US Homeland Security Inves-

tigations initiated an inter-agency, multijurisdictional surge operation to target illicit firearms being trafficked from the United States to the Caribbean.

Through collaboration with Caribbean partners, the State Department said Operation Hammerhead has, to date, resulted in seizures of 339 firearms, 26,495 rounds of ammunition and over 400 magazines.

In 2023, the State Department said the US Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (ATF) supported training for 270 Caribbean police officers on firearms investigations, including familiarisation training on Privately Made Firearms (Ghost Guns) and 3D-printed firearms.

To advance firearms trafficking prosecutions in the United States, the State Department said ATF "conducted extensive domestic training on applying anti-trafficking provisions in the 2022 Bipartisan Safer Communities Act (BSCA) to disrupt and dismantle international trafficking schemes."

On February 13, 2024, the State Department said Homeland Security Investigations and the Government of Haiti signed a Memorandum of Cooperation to formally establish the Haiti Transnational Criminal Investigative Unit (TCIU),

cont'd on pg 17

Burkina Faso says 170 dead in village 'executions'

By **Natasha Booty**

Some 170 people including women and children have been "executed" in attacks on three villages in Burkina Faso, a public prosecutor has said.

Aly Benjamin Coulibaly appealed for witnesses to help find those who attacked Komsilga, Nordin and Soro.

Separately, the army warned of the increased risk of attacks by Islamists, "including attacks on urban centres".

The country's army seized power in 2022, but more than a third of Burkina Faso is controlled by insurgents.

Mr Coulibaly said he had launched an investigation into the village attacks in Yatenga province on 25 February.

The AFP news agency reported that dozens of women and children were



The army chief is also warning soldiers to stay vigilant for large-scale attacks among the dead.

It was not known which group was behind the attacks.

They are not believed to be related to other recent violence - attacks on a church as well as a mosque and army bases - elsewhere in the country.

On Friday, the country's army chief warned soldiers to stay vigilant due to an increased risk of suicide attacks by militants.

He said there were also

"fears of a series of large-scale attacks" against security forces in cities.

Humanitarian workers say Burkina Faso is one of the world's most-neglected crises.

Years of rampant insecurity has forced more than two million people from their homes, and the UN estimates that a quarter of all children under five have stunted growth resulting from hunger.

The military seized

power two years ago promising to win the battle against rebels, yet the violence continues.

"The epicentre of terrorism has now conclusively shifted out of the Middle East and into the central Sahel region of sub-Saharan Africa," said the Institute for Economics and Peace earlier this week.

The Sahel includes Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger among other nations.

cont'd from pg 16

"which will facilitate the exchange of information between law enforcement partners in the United States and Haiti, and enhance cross-border investigative capabilities to prosecute those involved in transnational criminal activities."

TCIUs are multi-discipline units comprising vetted foreign law enforcement, prosecutors, and customs, immigration and intelligence officials that share information and operational activities, the State Department said.

It said this complements the work of existing TCIUs in the Caribbean, located in Jamaica and the Dominican

Republic.

In advance of the 2023 holiday season, the State Department said US agencies "surged resources" to screen outbound cargo from the United States to the Caribbean via freight forwarders at the Miami River.

"Caribbean partners advised US law enforcement counterparts that firearms traffickers take advantage of the annual surge in US-Caribbean shipping to hide firearms and firearms components in 'blue barrel' shipments bound for the Caribbean," the State Department said.

It said it is "proud to have partnered

with St Lucia to make its forensics lab a Regional Centre of Excellence, working toward laboratory accreditation under the International Organisation for Standardisation."

The State Department said this project is part of a US\$2.2 million United States investment in strengthening Caribbean forensics capabilities.

"The Regional Centre of Excellence will enable St. Lucian law enforcement and regional counterparts to collect and analyse crime scene evidence in the region, ensuring that criminals can be arrested, tried and convicted more quickly, with scientific evidence," it said.



Much of the worst weather has hit communities living at higher elevations.

Massive blizzard hits California and Nevada

By Ali Abbas Ahmadi

A massive blizzard is continuing to batter parts of California and Nevada in the western United States.

It has shut major roads and ski resorts in the two states, and left more than 15,000 customers without power.

The snowstorm is especially severe in the mountainous Sierra Nevada region, with wind gusts reportedly reaching 305km/h (190mph).

People have been warned of a “high to extreme avalanche danger” there, including the greater Lake Tahoe area.

A power cut map shows nearly 15,000 customers in California and more than 1,000 in Nevada and without electricity.

A 75-mile (121km) stretch of the Interstate 80 highway was shut on Saturday. The California Highway Patrol

Office in Truckee, close to the border with Nevada, said on X/Twitter that “emergency personnel and tow trucks had a difficult time getting to motorists due to blizzard conditions.”

The mountain areas were worst hit by the storm.

More than 3m (10ft) of snow was expected at higher elevations, a US National Weather Service meteorologist said on Saturday, which could create “life-threatening concern” for those living near Lake Tahoe.

Several ski resorts around the lake closed on Friday and remained shut on Saturday. Some hope to reopen later on Sunday.

“It’s snowing pretty hard out there, really windy, and power is out to about half the town,” Thomas Petkanas, a bartender at Alibi Ale Works in Incline Village, near Lake Tahoe,

told the Associated Press news agency by phone.

“We’re one of the few spots open today,” he added.

Yosemite National Park was closed on Friday, and visitors were asked to leave by noon. It will remain closed at least until Sunday afternoon, and possibly even longer depending on the weather conditions.

Weather forecasters have urged people to remain where they are over the weekend, warning it could take significant time to dig commuters out of the snow if they got stuck in the storm.

Some other parts of the US continue to experience extreme weather.

Wildfires are raging in Texas, where firefighters are struggling to contain the massive blaze amid difficult weather conditions.

LaFond flies to Dominica's first world athletics gold medal

GLASGOW (Reuters) - Thea LaFond needed just two attempts to win triple jump gold at the world indoor championships on Sunday and become Dominica's first global champion in athletics.

The 29-year-old soared 15.01 meters on her second attempt, the best jump in the world this year, and with victory all but locked up was able to pass on her remaining four jumps.

"This feels absolutely surreal," LaFond said. "I'm the only athlete here from my country and I have the gold medal. We're just a little island with a population of 70,000 people, so this one is for my people, all of my people."

Cuba's Leyanis Perez Hernandez leapt 14.90 for silver, while Ana Peleteiro-Compaore of Spain won bronze with a mark of 14.75.

Hamish Kerr of New Zealand cleared a world leading 2.36 meters to win the men's high jump gold, improving on his bronze from the 2022 world indoor event.

American Shelby McEwan won the silver with a jump of 2.28, and reigning indoor champion Woo



The Commonwealth of Dominica's Thea LaFond celebrates after winning the women's triple jump final at the World Athletics Indoor Championships at the Commonwealth Arena, Glasgow, Scotland, March 3, 2024. (Reuters)

Sang-hyeok of South Korea was third, also clearing 2.28 but with more foul jumps.

LaFond's previous best results were a Diamond League win in 2022 in Paris and Commonwealth Games silver and bronze medals.

"My country is small but mighty. I came here with the expectation and the

goal of jumping 15 meters," she said.

"I am hoping that this inspires the next generation of young Dominica athletes to just go for it.

"I am hoping that for some kid watching this on their phone, on the TV, or on the live stream, this lights a little flame in their heart that can drive them to something amazing."

JSS and SNRA claim two-run wins in schools' cricket

Jennings Secondary School (JSS) and Sir Novelle Cricket Academy (SNRA) both snatched two-run wins in the latest round of matches in the 30-over competition in the Under-15 Division of the Ministry of Sports Schools' Cricket Championships.

Jennings Secondary

achieved the feat against All Saints Secondary at the Mack Pond playing field in All Saints, while Sir Novelle Richards Academy secured their win against Clare Hall Secondary in Clare Hall.

Jennings- batted first and scored 113 for five off 19 overs. Estan Hill struck 31. Malkiel Moses captured

three for 24, and Neon Joseph picked up one for 11.

In reply, All Saints Secondary School was dismissed for 111 in 17.5 overs, with Neon Joseph getting 23.

Akez France grabbed five for 14, Dmique Allen took two for 16, Innka Wilson had one for 13, and Ozi-

ah Robertson got one for 18.

Sir Novelle Richards Academy made 82 for six off 17 overs against Clare Hall Secondary. There was a contribution of 34 extras, including 22 wides and 10 byes.

Cheldon Charles, who top-scored with 25, was

cont'd on pg 20

LeBron James becomes first player to score 40,000 points

LOS ANGELES (Reuters) - LeBron James on Saturday became the first NBA player to score 40,000 career points, hitting a scoop layup off the glass in the second quarter of the Los Angeles Lakers home game against the Denver Nuggets.

James, who entered the game needing nine points to reach the milestone, used a spin move to create separation from Denver's Michael Porter Jr. and put the ball in with his left hand as the all-time scoring leader continues to put his record further out of reach.

The sold-out crowd in downtown Los Angeles roared with approval when James made the highly-anticipated shot to reach 40,000 points and gave him a standing ovation when he went to the bench at the next break.

The four-time champion "King James" became the league's scoring king just over a year ago when he passed Lakers great Kareem Abdul-Jabbar.

The 39-year-old is the oldest player in the NBA,



Los Angeles Lakers forward LeBron James, right, scores as Denver Nuggets forward Michael Porter Jr., defends, becoming the first NBA player to reach 40,000 points in a career, during the first half of an NBA basketball game Saturday, March 2, 2024, in Los Angeles. (AP)

but continues to produce at an elite level in his 21st season, where he is on track to average about 25 points per game.

On Wednesday, James scored 19 points in the fourth quarter to overcome a 21-point deficit to the Clippers as the 10th placed Lakers fight for a playoff spot in the crowded Western

Conference.

Drafted into the league as a teenager, the Akron, Ohio, native has more than delivered on the massive expectations put on his broad shoulders at a young age. A versatile forward, he helped usher in the era of position-less basketball, winning four titles with three different teams, four

MVP awards and four Finals MVP awards.

James has a player-option for the 2024-25 NBA season, which gives him the power to decide whether to stay with the Lakers for another year or become an unrestricted free agent.

So far, he has refrained from committing to the Lakers beyond the current season.

In January, James was among the 41 names listed in USA Basketball's player pool for the Paris Olympics. James has not played for Team USA since he won a gold medal at the 2012 London Olympics.

cont'd from pg 19

one of only three batsmen to reach double figures. Nathalje Mannix made 12, and Shawn Harris got 10.

Jordan Castello snapped up three wickets for seven runs, and Leo Warne claimed two for 18.

In reply, Clare Hall Secondary was

dismissed for 80 in 15.1 overs. There was a contribution of 46 extras, including 36 wides. Deontae Nathaniel, who made 19 off 15 balls, was the only batsman to reach double figures.

Shawn Harris captured four for 14, Rohan John took two for 11, and Shaun Balgobin picked up two for 24.

Wins for Wadadli Elite and Flyers in ABBA's Division II League

Wadadli Elite and EZ Fit Flyers II claimed their second wins in the Antigua and Barbuda Basketball Association's (ABBA) Division II league on Saturday night.

Wadadli Elite secured their second win in three encounters by romping to an 86-70 victory over Old Road Daggers in the opening game of Saturday's double header at the JSC Sports Complex.

Devante Carter produced 19 points, eight rebounds, eight assists, and six steals; Orion Seraphine scored 15 points and grabbed eight rebounds; Aiden Christian converted 14 points and claimed 10 rebounds; and Floyd Tonger had 13 points and 16 rebounds for the Wadadli Elite.

Braulio Lopez produced a game-high 26 points with nine rebounds and eight steals, and Kedar Clarke had 18 points and 10 rebounds for the Old Road Daggers, who lost for the second time in as many games.

EZ Fit Flyers II won for the second time in as many games via an 87-55 drubbing of Lava Smoke Shop Lower Ottos Warriors in Saturday's second encounter.

Donte Trimmingham had 24 points, 18 rebounds, and seven assists; T-Shawn Lewis converted 21 points and snatched seven rebounds; Javonte Daley produced 11 points and seven assists; and Harry Rashaun chipped in with nine points and 14 rebounds for the Flyers II.

Faisal Obeidat and Victor Osbourne each had 12 points, and Ariel Quallis chipped in with eight points for the Lower Ottos Warriors, who lost for the first time in two games.

The Northside Stingerz and the Potters Steelers also recorded wins in ABBA's Division I League.



Northside Stingerz recorded their third win in as many games by coasting to a 72-55 victory against Kennedy's Club Ottos Full Throttle.

Keroi Lee sank 22 points and claimed 21 rebounds; Kareem Edwards converted 17 points and snatched six rebounds; and Devonte Carter had 14 points, five rebounds, and five assists for Northside Stingerz.

Leroy Percival scored 14 points and grabbed nine rebounds; Akeem Davis produced 13 points and eight rebounds; and Warren Bogle converted 10 points for the Ottos Full Throttle, who lost for the second time in three games.

Devorn Benjamin shot a game-high 18 points as the Potters Steel-

ers claimed their second win in four games by crushing All Saints Slam 94-53.

Felix Hamilton sank 16 points and snatched five rebounds; Ammiel Williams converted 11 points; Cohen Desouza had 10 points, 13 rebounds, and seven assists; and Marlon Charles and Humroy Wright each chipped in with 10 points for the Steelers.

Keady Martin scored 16 points and grabbed eight rebounds; Judah Ferris converted 11 points; John Rolland Jr. claimed 18 rebounds and sank 10 points; and Sergio Symister chipped in with 10 points and seven rebounds for the All Saints slam, who lost for the third time in four games.

Sports News



Belmont FC beat Freemans Village in Second Division football league

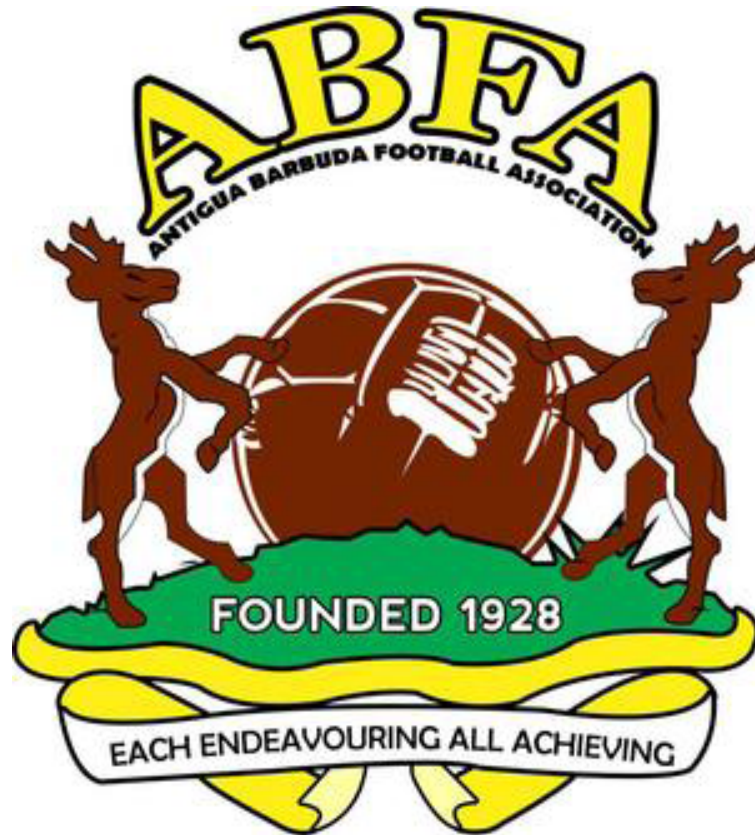
Belmont FC overcame a two-nil deficit to snatch a 3-2 victory against host Freemans Village in the latest round of matches in the Antigua and Barbuda Football Association's (ABFA) Second Division.

Goals by Melik Charles in the 12th minute and Kahlique Kellman in the 33rd minute gave Freemans Village a two-nil halftime lead in the encounter at the Freemans Village playing field.

But Belmont FC scored three goals in the second half to turn the match around and secure their seventh win of the season. Shaquille Barthley reduced the deficit with a 56th-minute conversion.

Conroy Browne scored Belmont FC's equalizer by converting a penalty kick in the 79th minute, and Jamal Spencer completed the comeback by scoring the team's winning goal in the 82nd minute.

The win lifted Belmont FC to 22 points from 12



games, while Freemans Village remain leaders of the Second Division on goal difference with 27 points after suffering their second loss in 11 matches.

Sanje Carr scored twice to lead Blackburn Palace to a 4-2 victory against TAMO FC at the Princess Margaret

School playing field.

Carr had conversions in the 56th and 63rd minutes after Diondre Harrigan converted a penalty kick in the 10th minute, and Jadyne Coates scored in the 50th minute for Blackburn Palace.

Kevin Paul scored in the 15th minute, and Carlus Ste-

phens had a 75th-minute conversion for TAMO FC.

Their fifth win in 13 matches carries Blackburn Palace to 19 points, while TAMO FC remains on 10 points after suffering their sixth loss in 10 matches.

Urlings won by default against Celtics, who failed to show up for their encounter at the Urlings playing field. The result allows Urlings to advance to 19 points from 11 games, while the Celtics remain on six points from 11 matches.

The encounter between Sea View Farm and Young Warriors was not played because only two match officials showed up for the game at the Sea View Farm playing field.

It means that Sea View Farm will remain in fourth place with 25 points from 11 matches, while the Young Warriors will remain second from the bottom of the standings with three points from 10 games.

cont'd from pg 23

qualifying spot and booked their place in the contest that will be hosted in the cities of Irapuato and Celaya, in the State of Guanajuato, Mexico.

It will feature the participation of the 12 best Concacaf Under-20 men's national teams.

The 2024 Concacaf Under-20 Championship will begin with a group stage of 12 teams, including the six highest-ranked teams according to the Concacaf Under-20 rankings and six that qualified through the just-ended qualifying phase.

The six best-ranked teams are the United States of America (1), Honduras (2), Mexico (3), Panama (4), Costa Rica (5), and the Dominican Republic (6).

At the conclusion of the group stage, where each team will play three games, the top two finishers in each group and the two best third-place finishers will advance to the quarter-finals.

The knockout stage will include eight teams, starting with the quarter-finals, followed by the semifinals and final, where the new regional champi-

on will be crowned.

In addition, the four semifinalists of the tournament will guarantee their participation in the 2025 FIFA Under-20 World Cup.

The competition's 25 matches will be divided into two venues, Estadio Sergio León Chávez in Irapuato and Estadio Miguel Alemán Valdés in Celaya.

The official draw, where the 12 participating teams will be divided into three groups of four, will take place in April 2024 at the Concacaf headquarters in Miami, Florida, USA.

Benna Boys fail to qualify for Concacaf Under-20 Championship in Mexico

Antigua and Barbuda's Benna Boys have failed in their bid to qualify for the Concacaf Men's Under-20 Championship in Mexico later this year.

Antigua and Barbuda, which hosted Group B of the Concacaf Men's Under-20 Qualifying Tournament at the ABFA Technical Center from February 23 to March 2, missed out on booking their spot in Mexico when the Benna Boys lost one-nil against El Salvador in their final encounter on Saturday.

Christopher Guardado scored the lone goal of the match in the 57th minute to give El Salvador the victory and qualify as group winners, thus advancing to the Concacaf Men's Under-20 Championship in Mexico from July 19 to August 4.

Their third win in four matches allows El Salvador to finish at the top of the five-team Group B round-robin contest with 10 points, while Antigua and Barbuda's Benna Boys finished in third place with six points.

Earlier on Saturday, Su-



The players, coaching staff, and management staff of the Antigua and Barbuda national men's under-20 football team that participated in Group B of the Concacaf Men's Under-20 Qualifying Tournament at the ABFA Technical Center from February 23 to March 2. (ABFA)

riname hammered the bottom team, the Turks and Caicos Islands, 7-2 in their final outing.

Their third win in four matches allows Suriname to finish second in the group with nine points, while the Turks and Caicos Islands lost all four matches to end in the cellar without a point.

Guyana, the other team that contested the group, finished their campaign second from the bottom with four points from their four matches.

The competition was nicely poised for an exciting finish on Saturday after the penultimate round of matches at the ABFA Technical Center on Thursday.

Guyana ended their campaign by claiming their only win of the Group B contest with a 2-1 victory against the Turks and Caicos Islands, and Suriname suffered their first loss in the competition when they were beaten 3-0 by El Salvador.

Prior to Thursday's

matches, Guyana and the Turks and Caicos Islands were already eliminated from advancing as group winners to the Concacaf Men's Under-20 Championship in Mexico.

But El Salvador, Antigua and Barbuda, and Suriname all had the chance of claiming the only qualifying spot from the Group B competition going into the final two matches on Saturday.

In the end, it was El Salvador that took the sole

cont'd on pg 22