

THURSDAY 15TH DECEMBER 2022 | VOLUME 3 ISSUE 241 | [WWW.POINTVILLE.AG](http://WWW.POINTVILLE.AG)

# ABLP GOV'T DELIVERS ON NATIONAL AQUATIC CENTRE

*Story on Page 2*



*On Wednesday, the ABLP administration broke ground for the construction of the Aquatic Centre at Tomlinsons which will, upon completion, house a 25 metre swimming pool compliant with the sport's international standards, and a smaller recreational pool to support the development of national athletes and a healthy lifestyle among the population.*

# Local News



## Ground broken for The Antigua and Barbuda Aquatic Centre

A groundbreaking ceremony was held on Wednesday to signal the start of construction of the promised Aquatic Centre which will be housed at the Sir Novelle Richards Academy in Tomlinsons.

Among those present at the ceremony were Governor General, H. E. Sir Rodney Willaims, Prime Minister Gaston Browne, Minister of Education and Sports, Daryll Matthew, Parliamentary Representative for St. George, Dean Jonas and President of the Antigua and Barbuda

Swimming Federation, Dr. Derek Marshall.

Sports Minister Daryll Matthew said he felt proud of his role in ensuring that this major project gets off the ground.

He also revealed plans for a multi-sport indoor facility.

“It is our commitment to invest greatly in sports infrastructure in Antigua and Barbuda and today is just one of the many others added to the list of complexes and investments the Gaston Browne administration [has undergone].



“I am happy to say it will not stop here as plans are also being worked on to build a multi-sport indoor facility so that sports like volleyball and netball and basketball can improve upon their standard,” Matthew said.

According to the designer of the Aquatic Centre, architect, Chad Knight Alexander, the completed facility will house a 25 metre competition pool, a warm up pool, two spectator stands capable of accommodating 300 people each, administration building, gym, concession areas, changing rooms, bathrooms and laundromat.

The groundbreaking ceremony yesterday heralded the beginning of the final phase of the development of the facility.

Discussions to begin planning its construction began in 2018.

Following intense and involved consultations

with stakeholders, including the swimming federation, the design of the facility and elements to be included were agreed upon.

The Gaston Browne administration has been keen to invest in facilities that will support the development of national athletes and promote sports tourism in Antigua and Barbuda.

When the Aquatic Centre is completed, it will have the capacity to support international events.

In his presentation, Prime Minister Browne noted that the secondary pool will be open to the public for recreational use.

“It will also specifically be used to introduce youngsters and families to water sports, while teaching them the life-skill of knowing how to swim.”

Construction of the facility, according to Minister Matthew, will begin immediately.

### AUCTION NOTICE

<u>REGISTRATION SECTION</u>	<u>BLOCK</u>	<u>PARCEL</u>
ENGLISH HARBOUR	35 2580A	447

Instructed by **ACB MORTGAGE AND TRUST COMPANY LIMITED**, I shall sell by **PUBLIC AUCTION** on Thursday the 15<sup>th</sup> day of December 2022 at 11:00am the above residential property at Piccadilly.

The property is under the ownership of **TESSA V. DONAWA-DANIEL**. The land is a 43,500 sq. ft. (1 acre) plot with an approximate 6,969 sq. ft., 2 storey reinforced concrete building with 4 bedrooms and 3 ½ bathrooms.

The property is in a quiet residential area with a commanding view of the surrounding area.

The Auction shall be held on site.

Details of the Auction may be obtained from **Mr. Trevor Santos, Public Auctioneer** at telephone numbers: 464-7653 and 562-7653.

Dated this the 17<sup>th</sup> day of November 2022

Trevor Santos  
Licensed Auctioneer



## Severance payments commence for former Jolly Beach staffers

More than two years after they began the fight to receive their severance and other emoluments, former employees of Jolly Beach will begin receiving cheques today from their bargaining agent the Antigua and Barbuda Workers Union (ABWU).

In addition to severance, the approximately 500 former employees will also be compensated for their thrift fund contributions, back pay and holiday pay.

Former housekeeping, kitchen and dining room workers are listed for payment today.

On Friday, security, water sports, grounds and maintenance, front office, entertainment and all other departments will receive compensation.

The ABWU confirmed two weeks ago that it received a cheque totaling EC\$12.9 million from the law firm Lake, Kentish and Bennett Inc.

The payment of the workers was made possible through the government's purchase of Jolly Beach at a cost of US\$30 million after the property's previous owners went belly up.

The beneficiaries who will claim payment are asked to present government-issued identification when they visit the union's Newgate Street headquarters.

The payments bring to

an end tumultuous negotiations between the government and the union which saw the ABWU accuse the government of dishonesty when it was announced that the money to cover the workers' payments and union dues had been placed in an escrow account weeks ago.

The government, however, maintained that the delayed payments to the workers was solely the fault of the union which encountered difficulty completing



*Jolly Beach Resort*

the list of beneficiaries, as they had included workers who were ineligible under the arrangements made for severance and other emoluments.

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# Local News



## Government delivers on promise to pay December salaries, wages early

Government workers have started to receive salaries and wages for December.

This signals the Gaston Browne administration's promise to deliver on its financial obligation to government workers by the middle of this month.

On Wednesday, the accounts of hundreds of public sector workers were credited by their banks and other financial institutions.

Government pensioners, meanwhile, began receiving their December emoluments on Tuesday this week.

At Wednesday's cabinet meeting, the executive body reiterated its decision to ensure that all wages, salaries, pension payments and social security recipients will be paid in full by Friday, 16th December, 2022.

On 30th November, the cabinet ensured that wag-

es, salaries, pension and social security payments were delivered in full for that calendar month.

Meanwhile, a government spokesman said negotiations with several trade unions continue.

These negotiations will determine the percentage increase that government workers will receive for the period 2018, 2019 and 2022.

The government paid a five percent increase in

2018 to those entitled, but owes increases to workers for 2019 and 2020.

"Since negotiations will not be completed by 2022, the government is prepared to pay, on or before December 31, 2022, a back pay of one month's salary and wages to all government employees that are eligible.

"The negotiations will continue in the new year so that a precise amount to be paid to each and every government employee can be determined," the spokesman stated.

The government expressed the hope that the negotiations would have been completed in time to make the outstanding payments along with December salaries, wages and back pay before the end of this month.

Also at this week's cabinet meeting, the Minister of Health put forward a proposal to provide the National Solid Waste Management Authority (NSWMA) an amount of \$200,000.00 to cover their outstanding commitments to contracted garbage truck operators and other vendors.

This proposal was accepted by the cabinet who agreed that before the Christmas holidays, truckers and others will receive a portion of the money owed to them.

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## Ambassador Bernard Percival shot in bungled robbery

Ambassador Bernard Percival was shot on Tuesday night in a bungled robbery outside his home.

Based on the information now available, Percival had just arrived at his home in Paynters at about 9pm on Tuesday when the armed attacker accosted him.

The thief relieved Percival of his possessions and made his escape after shooting him.

The items the ambassador was robbed of are not known at this time.

The former government minister, now turned diplomat, was fortunate to escape the attack with his life.

On Wednesday, the

70-year-old spoke with the media and appeared to be in good spirits.

"I am feeling quite fine. I haven't slept since last night, but I am doing alright.

"I don't have any pain. I am very thankful for the response from the public. They have been very pleasant. I am so happy that so



many people have called to express their best wishes for me," Ambassador Percival said.

He was admitted to Sir Lester Bird Medical Centre where he is receiving treatment.

Police are investigating the incident and have appealed to anyone with information to come forward.



Ambassador Bernard Percival

Thu 15   Day		Thu 15   Night	
<b>82°</b>		<b>75°</b>	
19% ENE 11 mph		11% E 10 mph	
Mostly sunny. High 82F. Winds ENE at 10 to 15 mph.		A mostly clear sky. Low near 75F. Winds E at 5 to 10 mph.	
Humidity <b>75%</b>	UV Index <b>8 of 10</b>	Humidity <b>82%</b>	UV Index <b>0 of 10</b>
Sunrise <b>6:28 am</b>	Sunset <b>5:36 pm</b>	Moonrise <b>11:56 pm</b>	Moonset <b>11:55 am</b>
		Waning Gibbous	



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# Local News



## Jane Finch's alleged killer committed to January assizes

The case involving Brittany Jno-Baptiste, the woman accused of killing Jane Finch in October 2021, has been committed to the January 2023 assizes.

This brings to an end a more than year-long wait to determine whether Jno-Baptiste was competent to stand trial after concerns were raised about her mental health following the 66-year-old Canadian woman's murder.

Finch posted a distressed call for help on social media on the night of her death asking for anyone in her network to help her contact the police as her home was being broken into.

Later that morning, the police dis-

covered Finch's home had been broken into and her lifeless body on the ground covered in several wounds.

Until now, Jno-Baptiste had only been charged with burglary, however, that charge has been withdrawn with the more serious homicide charge now laid.

Initially, the consulting psychiatrist who evaluated Jno-Baptiste requested that the court allow her to receive six months of treatment with the expectation that she would be evaluated at the end of this period to determine her competence to answer the charge against her and face trial.

Several factors related to her treatment and evaluation resulted in delays



to this final evaluation being completed and submitted to the court for review.

Finch, who lived in Antigua and Barbuda for several decades, was a resident of Piccadilly and was employed as a tour guide. She was also well known in the country's tight-knit sailing community.

### AUCTION NOTICE

Registration Section: Hodges Bay and Thibous  
Block #: 43 219 7B  
Parcel #: 47, 191, 195, 292, 293, 294, 302, 392, 471, 473, 475, 477, 478, and 483

Instructed by Christopher & Associates (Attorneys for the Chargee), Mr. Michael Freeland (Licensed Auctioneer) shall sell by Public Auction the aforementioned parcels of land with buildings and appurtenances thereupon located in Hodge's Bay in the Parish of St. John's on the island of Antigua and Barbuda which parcels of land substantially comprise the hotel property owned by JSN Development Group Limited and known as the Hodges Bay Resort and Spa; a luxury ocean front hotel and spa that comprises of hotel rooms and common areas to include a swimming pool facility, restaurants, a conference room and spa situated, amongst other amenities and facilities, upon prime lands including a private beach. The parcels of land are located on the north coast within proximity to the VC Bird International Airport and is within 10 minutes of St. John's City.

Auction Date: Wednesday, December 28th, 2022  
Time of Auction: 3:00 pm  
Location of Auction: On site at the hotel in Hodges Bay, St. John's Antigua  
Aggregate Area: Approximately 7.54 acres

For further information, please contact Mr. Michael Freeland at 268-464-6978.





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# Local News



## CHI appeals for help to reduce mosquito infestation

Chief Health Inspector (CHI), Sharon Martin, wants the public to assist her department in helping to significantly reduce the number of mosquitoes in the country.

Speaking specifically to the situation on Antigua, Martin said the recent rainfall, especially during the month of November, created ideal conditions for mosquitoes and a significant spike in the insect's numbers.

"We are all responsible for the explosion in the amount of mosquitoes that are a nuisance and a health risk for many households.

We are therefore launching a public appeal for people in our various communities to join us in ridding the island of the mosquitoes," she urged.

Martin wants homeowners to ensure that there are no areas on their property where water can collect and be used by mosquitoes to reproduce.

"If you see the larvae of the mosquitoes - wrigglers as they are commonly called locally - in the water, take decisive action to destroy them thus preventing them from reaching the adult stage.

"It is quite a simple task

to pour cooking oil into the water. This provides a film coating on the surface of the water making it impossible for the larvae to breathe and eventually die," she remarked.

The CHI explained that the adult, female mosquito needs blood to help with the development of its eggs. Therefore, as soon as it matures, the female mosquito's first task is to seek blood so that it can mate and lay its eggs.

The mosquito is responsible for a number of diseases including yellow fever,



dengue and chikungunya.

In Antigua and Barbuda, the most common mosquito borne disease is dengue fever.

While Martin would prefer that the public make conditions hostile for the mosquito to breed, she said destroying the pest in its larvae stage when the insect is most vulnerable is still preferable to more invasive means of controlling the adult insect.

Once mosquitoes mature, health officials must resort to fogging and other methods to destroy the insect.

"Fogging as a mosquito control method is not a very healthy method to use. It often kills non-target insects such as the honeybees, thereby interfering with someone's sources of income and it is also a source for respiratory issues with some people.

"Those with respiratory illnesses sometimes end up on ventilators or nebulisers after breathing in the chemicals found in the fog created to control the pests," Martin said.

The CHI is urging the nation to take the matter of mosquito control seriously as it is both a personal and a national concern.



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## Netherlands set to formally apologise for 250 years of slavery

By Priyanka Shankar

The apology is set to be issued next week and is expected to redress how the Dutch exploited more than 600,000 people.

In an effort to come to terms with its colonial past, the Dutch government is expected to apologise next week for the Netherlands' role in 250 years of slavery.

The formal apology is set to be issued on December 19 and is expected to redress how the Netherlands exploited more than 600,000 people who worked as slaves in its former colonies.

But groups from former Dutch colonies like Suriname in South America have criticised the Dutch government's whimsical timing in issuing this apology, highlighting that they were not consulted about this date and also felt the decision was made in a haphazard and hurried manner.

They would prefer the apology to be issued on July 1, 2023 – a day which marks the 150th anniversary of the Netherlands abolishing slavery in its former colonies.

But Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte told reporters in the Hague last week that a "significant moment" on this issue will take place on December 19.

Johan Roozer, chairman of the Surinamese National Commemoration of Slavery Remembrance Committee told reporters last week that Rutte probably wanted to stick to this date because of the "changing political situation" in the Netherlands, with far-right Dutch political parties against the apology.

According to local media reports, the government also plans to announce a 200 million-euro (\$212.8m) fund to promote more awareness about the Netherlands' role in slavery and another



Guests arrive for an annual ceremony in Amsterdam that marks the abolition of slavery in its colonies in Suriname and the Dutch Antilles on July 1, 1863 [File: Peter Dejong/AP]

er 27 million euros (\$28.7m) to open a slavery museum.

"All of this definitely gives a form of acknowledgement that finally the country, which is still a democratic monarchy, is ready to talk about the past. Basically, everything that the Netherlands stole from the former colonies, especially Suriname, they carried out through slavery," Colin de Bie, 27, with Dutch and Surinamese roots, told Al Jazeera.

"While this acknowledgement is also a form of investigation to understand what exactly happened in the past, it is also important to question what the next step looking into the future will be," he said.

"Will the government invest in the countries they stole money from? What are their plans to support all the descendants of former slaves who are still struggling?" de Bie, who is based in Amsterdam and works part-time at the Anne Frank House, asked.

"I've been to Suriname myself and I've seen how the Black community,

especially the Creole people who are descendants of Dutch slavery, still suffer from the past. While this apology is the first step, the government should do more," he added.

Dutch slave trade history

The Netherlands' involvement in slavery began in the 17th century when the transatlantic slave trade was already being carried out by other former European colonial powers like Spain and Portugal.

Through the Dutch West India Company (WIC), the Dutch Empire began colonising large parts of land in South America and the Caribbean, and bought slaves from Africa to work on the sugar, cotton and coffee plantations of these lands.

According to a study by Leiden University, "between 1612 and 1872, the Dutch operated from some 10 fortresses along the Gold Coast (now Ghana), from which slaves were shipped across the Atlantic".

The study also highlighted that

*cont'd on pg 10*

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the Dutch role in the transatlantic slave trade involved exploiting about 550,000-600,000 Africans.

Moreover, in the 18th century, today's Suriname and Guyana also became prominent markets from where the Dutch bought slaves.

Meanwhile, the Dutch East India Company (VOC) also began enslaving people in Asia from the 17th century.

A 2008 study by the International Institute for Asian Studies highlighted that the VOC enslaved people mainly from Arakan (today's Rakhine state) and shipped them to Batavia, which was the capital of the VOC and is today's Jakarta, in Indonesia.

In 1863, the Netherlands abolished slavery, becoming one of the last countries to do so. But in places like Suriname, Dutch slavery ended only in 1873 since the law ruled that a 10-year transition period was mandatory, according to Leiden University.

However, discussions about issuing an apology for Dutch slavery gained momentum after the 2020 Black Lives Matter movement in the United States, according to Dutch-Moroccan politician Salima Belhaj, from the Democrats 66 (D66) political party in the Netherlands.

"The demonstrations in the US, made everyone in the Netherlands including the Dutch government realise that the country has not yet addressed its dark colonial history, which has transitioned into present-day racism in the country. That's when I decided that it was important to start a political dialogue on apologising for the Netherlands' role in slavery," Belhaj told Al Jazeera.

"We began inviting people from former Dutch colonies like Suriname, and gave them a platform to share their past and present experiences," she added.

"Many of these people felt like this was the first time that the Dutch par-

liament was actually keen to hear their stories. They shared stories of their parents, their grandparents and their views on redressing the Netherlands' past actions."

Belhaj, together with a few other Dutch politicians, also went on a trip to visit Suriname, Curacao and Bonaire, to understand what people had experienced during Dutch colonial rule and what an apology would mean to them.

**Good starting point**

After this trip, in October this year, the Dutch parliament supported the decision to issue a formal apology.

Meanwhile, Dutch cities like Amsterdam, Rotterdam, Utrecht and The Hague as well as the De Nederlandse Bank also issued apologies for their role in benefitting from slavery.

"I think this is a good starting point because since the parliament issued its decision, we've had a lot of conversations with people against the decision and those favouring it. This is common in politics and society," Belhaj said.

"But next year will be important because after this apology, the government will hold a lot of events and ceremonies in order to continue the conversation about colonialism," she added.

While the Dutch government and royal family have issued statements about their plans of apologising for slavery and investigating their colonial past respectively, de Bie highlighted that Dutch people have not been educated properly about the country's colonial history and slavery.

"It was basically a few pages in our books where there was information about Dutch colonialism in Indonesia and a few lines about slave trade in Suriname, Curacao, Aruba and other islands. Education was very Eurocentric and didn't dig deep into colonialism," de Bie told Al Jazeera.

**'Black Pete'**

He added that discussions about slavery became more frequent when debates about cancelling "Zwarte (Black) Pete" – the controversial Dutch tradition where children and adults paint their faces with black paint during the December holiday of Sinterklaas – began.

Esmée Stek, 25, based in Utrecht and studying global criminology, shared a similar view.

"I also have Dutch-Surinamese roots and I feel many people who didn't study history in school are also not aware about the country's past," she said.

"In the Dutch education system, there are three levels of education and based on the level, students can choose subjects and courses. So those who opted out of history lessons aren't well versed in the country's colonial history," Stek told Al Jazeera.

"Right now, I feel some Dutch people are also confused about why this apology is being issued because of lack of knowledge. Others feel that since this happened in the past, the blood isn't really on their hands, so an apology isn't their responsibility. But you can't turn a blind eye because understanding the past can help tackle present-day racism in the country," she added.

**'Tolerant' place**

Racism continues to affect people of colour and from minority backgrounds in the Netherlands.

In a 2020 interview with Dutch newspaper Het Parool, United Nations rapporteur on racism Tendayi Achiume said that this continuous discrimination exists because the Dutch still think their country is a "tolerant" place.

She highlighted that the country's education system should pay more attention to the Netherlands' colonial past.

Dutch politician Belhaj said the government has begun remedying the

*cont'd on pg 11*



## Ethiopians file lawsuit against Meta over hate speech in war

By Cara Anna

AP — Two Ethiopians have filed a lawsuit against Facebook's parent company, Meta, over hate speech they say was allowed and even promoted on the social media platform amid heated rhetoric over their country's deadly Tigray conflict.

Former Amnesty International human rights researcher Fisseha Tekle is one petitioner in the case filed Wednesday and the other is the son of university professor Meareg Amare, who was killed weeks after posts on Facebook inciting violence against him.

The case was filed in neighbouring Kenya, home to the platform's content moderation operations related to Ethiopia. The lawsuit alleges that Meta hasn't hired enough content moderators there, that it uses an algorithm that prioritises hateful content and that it acts more slowly to crises in Africa than elsewhere in the world.

The lawsuit, also backed



by Kenya-based legal organisation the Katiba Institute, seeks the creation of a \$1.6 billion fund for victims of hate speech.

A Facebook spokesman, Ben Walters, told The Associated Press they could not comment on the lawsuit because they haven't received it. He shared a general statement: "We have strict rules which outline what is and isn't allowed on Facebook and Instagram. Hate speech and incitement to violence are against these rules and we invest heavily in teams

and technology to help us find and remove this content." Facebook continues to develop its capabilities to catch violating content in Ethiopia's most widely spoken languages, it said.

Ethiopia's two-year Tigray conflict is thought to have killed hundreds of thousands of people. The warring sides signed a peace deal last month.

"This legal action is a significant step in holding Meta to account for its harmful business model," said Flavia Mwangovya of

Amnesty International in a statement pointing out that the Facebook posts targeting its former researcher and the professor were not isolated cases.

The AP and more than a dozen other media outlets last year explored how Facebook had failed to quickly and effectively moderate hate speech in cases around the world, including in Ethiopia.

The reports were based on internal documents obtained by whistleblower Frances Haugen.

*cont'd from pg 10*  
education system.

"Children today are being told a lot more about what happened in the past compared to what I was taught. We are also focusing on broadcasting more television programmes which educate young people about Dutch and European colonialism. Processes have begun but the impact will take time," Belhaj said.

Pathway forward

While the official apology which the Dutch government is poised to issue next week remains contentious with pressure from the far-right and groups from former colonies continuing to push for an apology next year, de Bie hopes just these discussions will steer a change in mindset in the Netherlands.

"After the apology, I would love to see the prime minister actually willing to do something to help the descen-

dants of the enslaved. That would really send a message that the Netherlands has changed and really wants to make amends," he said.

Belhaj also added that this moment of apologising would be an important moment in Dutch politics.

"It would portray that the Netherlands is truly an adult democracy, and is capable of embracing and addressing the dark parts of its history. That is significant," she said.

# Analysis

## When will global gas prices go down to pre-Ukraine war levels?

By Charu Sudan Kasturi

Energy analysts explain why much of the world can expect high prices for at least the next two years.

Nine months after Russian President Vladimir Putin launched his invasion of Ukraine, Britain is preparing for a long recession on the back of sky-high energy prices. France, where President Emmanuel Macron warned in August that the era of “abundance” was over, has witnessed fuel shortages and long queues at petrol stations in recent weeks. Germany’s government has decided to pay energy bills for all citizens and small and medium-sized businesses in December.

As Europe and other parts of the northern hemisphere brace for a difficult winter, there’s one central question on the minds of people around the world: When, if at all, will gas and petrol prices return to pre-war levels? It’s a question that Al Jazeera posed to leading energy economists and analysts.

The short answer: Probably not for the next two years, at the very least.

To be sure, there is some good news: Gas and petrol prices are lower than they were earlier this year. The Dutch TTF, Europe’s benchmark gas price, stood at about \$148 per megawatt-hour on December 11, a sharp drop from a peak of \$338 in late August. The price of a barrel of Brent oil, the benchmark for crude prices, has fallen sharply in recent days, down from a high of nearly \$128 in early August to \$76 on December 11.

The bad news? Gas today still costs more than double what it did at the end of January. And experts don’t expect the price to ease up much more. “In fact, we will absolutely see prices go up again,” said Tom Marzec-Manser,



A worker prepares to pump petrol into a car at a Repsol petrol station in Madrid, Spain, on September 7 [Violeta Santos Moura/Reuters]

head of gas analytics at London-headquartered commodity intelligence service ICIS. “The factors that have brought gas prices down aren’t likely to continue in 2023.”

The steep drop in crude prices, caused by the G7 cap on the price of Russian oil carried by Western-insured ships, isn’t expected to last either: Oil is expected to cost \$92 on average in 2023, according to the United States Energy Information Administration, 30 percent higher than 2021 levels.

Here’s why.

A full tank ... for now

Fearing that Russia might cut off all gas supplies to Europe, the continent has been buying and storing as much gas as it can over the past few weeks. By November, the European Union had filled nearly 95 percent of its gas storage capacity, surpassing its 85 percent target for the end of the year.

At the same time, Europe witnessed an uncharacteristically warm autumn, reducing the need for heat-

ing in homes and offices, according to Marzec-Manser. High prices until recently likely also made people more conservative about their energy usage, he said. The result: Over the first eight months of the year, Europe consumed 10 percent less gas than in the same period in 2021.

That combination of increased supply and reduced demand is what has helped tame gas prices somewhat, said experts. But while it might help Europe avoid a “severe shortage” this winter, “short, temporary shortages” are still very possible in late winter if new supplies are disrupted, warned Henning Gloystein, the director of energy, climate and resources at Eurasia Group, a political risk consultancy with headquarters in New York.

The current lower “natural gas prices do not imply the region’s winter energy crisis is over,” Gloystein said. “They simply state that Europe’s inventories are virtually full.”

It’s a similar story with oil. For all its rhetoric, Europe has still been

*cont’d on pg 13*



*cont'd from pg 12*

buying Russian crude, said Hari Seshasayee, a fellow at the Wilson Center and an energy analyst. In fact, it spent 260 million euros (\$266m) a day on Russian fossil fuels, predominantly oil, in September, according to the Finland-based Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air, though this is a quarter of the one billion euros (\$1.02bn) it was paying Russia daily in April. India and China have also been buying record volumes of Russian crude.

This has ensured that the demand for oil from other sources, like the Middle East, Africa, Latin America and the United States primarily, has been less than what would have been the case if Russian crude was completely unavailable. "That has kept prices from rising even further," said Seshasayee.

It could all change very soon.

Expect a price rebound

As winter kicks in, experts predict a rise in gas demand in Europe, which, by early 2023 "also means there's a risk of further extreme price spikes", said Gloystein. Already, gas prices have risen by more than 40 percent over the past month.

European gas importers have worked at full pelt to increase the volumes stored for the winter. "This has been made possible in part by deferring non-essential maintenance," he added.

But that, in turn, "means there is a heightened risk of unplanned outages", Gloystein explained. Any such outage would again lead to a price rise.

There's already a key threat emerging on the horizon. On December 5, G7 countries introduced a price cap on Russia's oil exports in a bid to limit the Kremlin's revenue earned through the fuel. But Moscow has warned that it will stop supplying crude to nations that join the price control plan. "If Russian oil really does go off the mar-

ket for many countries, expect prices to rise quite a bit," said Seshasayee. "There simply isn't another source that can completely replace the volumes Russia offers to the world."

The national needs of other major oil exporters might also play a role in keeping prices high. Most major oil exporters, especially in the Middle East and Africa, are also major importers of other essential commodities, such as food grains, said Seshasayee. With the war also raising food prices, these nations aren't going to be keen to work to bring oil prices down, he said. "They need that extra revenue to balance their books."

Yet, the price of Europe's gas or the world's oil might ultimately not be decided in Brussels, Washington or Moscow. It might all boil down to Beijing and Chinese President Xi Jinping.

The China factor

China has long been the world's largest importer of oil. In 2021, it also became the planet's biggest buyer of liquefied natural gas (LNG), overtaking Japan.

But Beijing's COVID-zero policy, under which it locks down entire neighbourhoods and even cities if there's an outbreak of coronavirus cases, has dragged the world's second-largest economy down, suppressing its demand for energy.

"That, ironically, has been a big boon for Europe and the world," said Marzec-Manser. "It has freed up energy supplies that China would have otherwise also been competing for."

Now, following rare protests across the country against the curbs, Chinese authorities have relaxed restrictions in several cities. At some point, the country's economy will start running at full steam. "Once China's demand picks up again, this will create renewed competition in the form of price bidding between Europe and Northeast Asia," said Gloystein.

Oil and gas prices will rise sharply.

Alternative energy sources are crucial

An end to the Russia-Ukraine war would help a little. "It would reduce the geopolitical risk associated with energy transfers and trade, and that itself would calm markets to an extent," said Marzec-Manser.

But even that won't bring prices down to levels the world was used to, said Gloystein. That's because Europe is unlikely to go back to importing significant amounts of Russian gas, worried about depending on Moscow again.

Even if Brussels wanted to go back to business as usual with the Kremlin, major damage to Nord Stream 1 and Nord Stream 2, which are the two biggest gas pipelines from Russia to Europe, in explosions in September has made an energy trade revival between them unlikely.

The only way oil and gas prices can come down to pre-war levels is if new sources, either of fossil fuels or renewable energy, emerge to offer alternatives to the volumes of energy that Russia exports, said experts.

In the best-case scenario, that won't happen for at least two years. Major new projects, like one in Texas funded by Qatar Petroleum and ExxonMobil, and another led by the Abu Dhabi National Oil Company, are not expected to come online until 2024 or 2025. And German think-tank Agora Energiewende reported earlier this year that it could take Europe until 2027 to replace 80 percent of its pre-war Russian gas imports with clean energy.

"Realistically, it could be the second half of the decade before we're able to truly bring prices down," said Marzec-Manser. "That's just the bitter truth."

Every week, this series answers a Big Question on the minds of readers globally, decoding different challenges that affect lives around the world.

# Regional News



## Dominica PM Skerrit names new Cabinet

CMC - Prime Minister Roosevelt Skerrit Monday night announced a 13-member Cabinet, less than a week after his ruling Dominica Labour Party (DLP) comfortably won the general election that was boycotted by the major opposition parties.

The new Cabinet, which was sworn in on Tuesday, includes nine former government ministers, former National Security Minister, Rayburn Blackmoore, who did not contest the election and Melissa Skerrit, the wife of the prime minister, who will be the Minister for Housing and Urban Development.

Skerrit had called the December 6 poll, two years ahead of the constitutional deadline, saying it was important for there to be a re-set of the country's socio-economic policies, while the opposition United Workers Party (UWP) and the Dominica Freedom Party (DFP) urged supporters to stay away from the polls in protest against the lack of electoral reform.

The DLP won the election by a 19-2 margin with



*Prime Minister Roosevelt Skerrit announcing the new cabinet following the December 6 snap general election (CMC Photo)*

the two independents winning in traditional opposition stronghold constituencies of Salisbury and Marigot.

Skerrit in a broadcast on state-owned DBS radio, said he was pleased that the preliminary reports of the several international observer teams and missions, had "given a resounding nod of approval to the open and transparent manner in which these elections were conducted, and the overarching conclusion that the will of the people of Dominica was manifested and determined, fairly".

He insisted that the election was called to "trigger a

national reset" adding "these are not just empty words or a new catch phrase that sounds good when we say it.

The full list of the Cabinet is:

Roosevelt Skerrit – Prime Minister and Minister for Investment and Governance

Dr. Irving McIntyre – Minister for Finance, Economic Development, Climate Resilience and Social Security

Dr. Vince Henderson -Senior Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs, International Business, Trade and Energy

Senator Rayburn Blackmoore -Minister for National

Security and Legal Affairs

Cassani Laville – Minister for Health, Wellness and Social Services

Melissa Skerrit – Minister for Housing and Urban Development

Roland Royer – Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries, Blue and Green Economy

Denise Charles – Minister for Tourism

Fidel Grant – Minister for Public Works, Public Utilities and Digital Economy

Miriam Blanchard – Minister for Labour, Public Service Reform, Social Partnership, Entrepreneurship and Small Business Development

Gretta Roberts – Minister for Culture, Youth, Sports, and Community Development

Cozier Frederick – Minister for the Environment, Rural Modernisation, Kalinago Upliftment and Constituency Empowerment

Octavia Alfred – Minister for Education, Human Resource Planning, Vocational Training and National Excellence

## Trinidad High Court grants injunction to former police commissioner



*Gary Griffith.*

CMC - The Office of Trinidad's Attorney General Tuesday said an appeal will be filed following a High Court ruling that granted former police commissioner, Gary Griffith, an injunction restraining Prime Minister Dr. Keith Rowley from laying any part of a controversial Firearm User's License (FUL) audit report in the Parliament.

"The Office of the Attorney General assures the public that proper process was indeed followed," it said in a statement.

"The facts are and the evidence demonstrates that Mr. Griffith was informed that consideration was being given as to whether there were persons adversely affected by findings in the  
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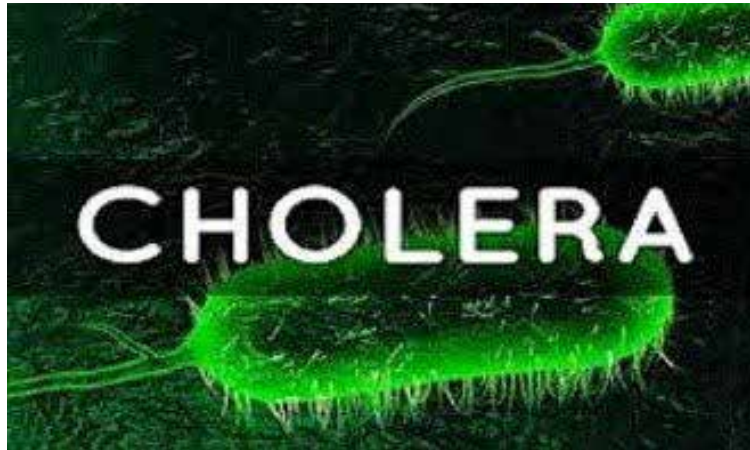


## PAHO donates more than one million doses of cholera vaccines to Haiti

CMC - The Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) says it has provided 1.17 million doses of oral cholera vaccines to Haiti as cases continue to rise in the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) country.

It said the Evichol vaccine was provided by the International Coordinating Group on Vaccine Provision (IGC), which manages the global cholera vaccine stockpile, following a request by Haiti's Ministry of Public Health and Population (MSPP).

Haiti's vaccination campaign is set to start in the next days, initially targeting populations over the age of one year in Cite Soleil, Delmas, Tabarre, Carrefour and Port-au-Prince in the Ouest



Department and Mirebalais in the Centre Department – areas where most of the cholera cases have been reported, to date.

“Haiti has experience in managing cholera, but the fragile security situation has slowed down response efforts, so the arrival of these vaccines is most welcome,” said PAHO's Director, Dr. Carissa F. Etienne.

“PAHO has been working with Haiti since the resurgence of cholera and will continue to support the national authorities to quickly distribute vaccines, monitor cases and provide life-saving care,” said the Dominica-born official.

The World Health Organization (WHO) recommends the use of the oral vaccine in combination with

other measures – particularly water, sanitation, and hygiene interventions – to prevent the spread of the water-borne disease.

PAHO is providing technical and financial assistance to the MSPP to implement the vaccination campaign, including training of health workers, guidance to identify priority communities and potential barriers, deployment of record management tools and risk communication and community engagement activities to encourage vaccine uptake.

“The arrival of oral vaccines in Haiti is a step in the right direction. We are integrating this tool into our national strategy, which in-

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FUL Audit Report, who may not have an had an opportunity to comment and make representations on the matters giving rise to those findings and, if there are such persons, as to what steps ought to be taken to afford those persons an opportunity to comment and make representations prior to the Report or any summary thereof being reported to Parliament.”

The statement said the Attorney General, Reginald Armour “assured Mr. Griffith that there would be no publication authorised by the State or its agencies of the Audit Report or any summary thereof, unless and until all persons affected by findings therein are given that opportunity”.

It said as a result of a ruling by the High Court “the Office of the Attorney

General advises that an immediate appeal is being filed urgently to correct errors made by this ruling”.

Justice Devindra Rampersad in his ruling on Tuesday said “the force of the vehemence born out of this report, and expressed in public as alleged by the claimant, suggests that its premature presentation or production would have far-reaching effects in the public domain.

“The court grants an injunction restraining the seventh respondent from laying an executive summary or any part of the said audit report before the Parliament of Trinidad and Tobago or otherwise publishing any portion of the contents of same”

Griffith had filed the injunction against Rowley, the seventh defendant as well as the members of the National

Security Council (NSC) and an audit committee comprising retired police officers.

The former top cop has asked the High Court to restrain Prime Minister Rowley and his NSC from taking the report to Parliament, challenging the legality of the setting-up of the committee to perform the audit and its investigation. Griffith had also asked the High Court to quash the report or any part of it that concerns him.

In his argument, Griffith said from his experience as a former national security minister he knew neither the prime minister nor the National Security Council had the authority to appoint anyone to investigate the operations of the police service, so he was concerned about the legality of the appointment of the audit committee.

# Regional News



## US Navy hospital suspends care in Haiti after 19 overboard

AP - A U.S. Navy hospital ship docked in south-west Haiti has temporarily suspended medical services after 19 people with the mission fell overboard amid a heavy swell hitting the Caribbean region, officials said Tuesday.

It happened Monday night and involved 12 military personnel and seven civilians with the USNS Comfort who were returning to the ship after caring for patients on land, said Lewis Preddy, a U.S. Navy spokesman.

All 19 were pulled back onto the small boat, which was then lifted by a crane onto the ship. He said the usual process is for personnel to use a water taxi and step onto a ladder to board the ship, but that the heavy surf made that impossible.

He said two people were injured but are expected to recover.

Preddy said officials are figuring out how to continue the mission while ensuring people's safety. The heavy swell is expect-

ed to last until at least the weekend, according to meteorologists.

Rear Adm. James Aiken, commander of the U.S. Naval Forces Southern Command-U.S. 4th Fleet, told The Associated Press that officials are working hard to bring the mission in Haiti back online after it began on Monday.

"The need is extremely great, and we're so excited to be able to provide some care," he said in a phone interview.

Officials said they did not immediately have the number of patients that have been treated so far.

On Tuesday, several hundred Haitians protested the ship's presence in the coastal town of Jeremie, yelling, "Down with the American people! We don't want them here!"

Some demanded that the U.S. government instead visit certain areas in the capital of Port-au-Prince to free neighbourhoods from the control of powerful gangs.



*Police officers block persons as they protest against the arrival of the USNS Comfort hospital ship in Jeremie, Haiti, Tuesday, Dec. 13, 2022. The USNS Comfort is on a humanitarian mission to provide dental and medical services. (AP Photo/Odelyn Joseph)*

In early October, Haiti's government requested the deployment of foreign troops to fight gangs and help end a fuel blockade that has since been lifted after one of the country's most powerful gangs allowed trucks to access a fuel terminal. No international troops have been deployed, but the U.S. and Canada have announced a flurry of sanctions.

Aiken brushed off the small protest in Jeremie on

Tuesday, saying he is focused on the positive.

"There are hundreds of thousands if not millions of people who want us there," he said.

The USNS Comfort has visited Haiti several times in the past decade as the country struggles with a broken health system hit by severe power outages and fuel shortages.

The floating hospital has tended to people with ailments ranging from diabetes to cholera, with an ongoing outbreak killing more than 280 people and infecting more than 14,100 others.

On Monday, Haiti received more than 1.17 million of oral cholera vaccines with help from the Pan American Health Organization.

### **cont'd from pg 15**

cludes surveillance, water and sanitation interventions, social mobilisation, and treatment," said MSPP Director General Lauré Adrien.

"We hope this first shipment will be followed by others so that the vaccine is available to all populations at risk in Haiti," Adrien added.

PAHO said an additional batch of

around 500,000 doses is expected to arrive in Haiti in the coming weeks.

Cholera has spread geographically within Haiti in the past weeks. As of today, the National Department of Epidemiology, Laboratories, and Research (DELAR) reports 1,220 confirmed cases and over 280 deaths due to cholera in eight departments, with over 14,100 suspected cases spread across all ten departments in the country.



## Dutch court rejects challenge to assisted suicide ban

AP - A Dutch court on Wednesday upheld the Netherlands' ban on assisted suicide, a setback for activists who said the prohibition infringes on their right to determine when their lives end.

The Hague District Court rejected the activists' argument that the ban violated the European Convention on Human Rights.

The "right to decide for oneself about one's own end of life is indeed protected" by the convention, the court said in a written statement. "However, this right to self-determination does not go so far that there is also a right to obtain assisted suicide."

Frits Spangenberg, chairperson of the group Cooperative Last Will, which brought the case along with 29 individual plaintiffs, said he was disappointed by the ruling, but vowed to fight on. He said he would study the decision with lawyers before deciding whether to appeal.

"I'm not surprised, but I'd hoped for more perspective," Spangenberg said in a telephone interview.

The government did not react to the ruling.

The Netherlands was the first nation to legalize euthanasia. A 2002 law allowed physicians to end



*Campaigners take their hats off in a show of respect for people who took their own lives in The Hague, Netherlands, on Oct. 10, 2022. A Dutch court on Wednesday Dec. 14, 2022 upheld the Netherlands' ban on assisted suicide, in a setback for activists who argue that the prohibition was an infringement of their human rights. (AP Photo/Peter Dejong, File)*

the lives of patients under strict conditions, either by administering a fatal dose of drugs or giving the patient the drugs to take.

Assisted suicide, the practice of someone who is not a physician providing a person with a self-administered lethal substance, remains illegal.

The Hague court said the euthanasia law "properly weighed up the various interests" of "on the one hand the social interest of protecting life and protecting vulnerable persons,

and on the other the interest of those seeking assisted suicide."

But it noted that the conditions that must be met for a physician to perform euthanasia mean "not everyone who considers their life complete will be able to receive assisted suicide."

Spangenberg said that finding "does not do justice to the daily misery of a growing group of people. It is cruel, inhumane and cowardly."

He said the court was

"very focused on euthanasia options, which are good, but so bureaucratic and only applied in the case of hopeless medical suffering with a lot of bells and whistles and conditions."

Another organisation, the Dutch Association for a Voluntary End of Life, also criticised the decision, saying in a statement that it upheld a "situation in which the government deprives its citizens of the right to die with dignity at their own discretion."

# As Tigray calms, Ethiopia sees growing conflict in Oromia

AP - As one deadly conflict in Ethiopia begins to calm, another is growing, challenging a government that's eager to persuade the international community to lift sanctions and revive what was once one of Africa's fastest-growing economies.

Even as Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed attends the U.S.-Africa summit this week to promote last month's peace agreement between his government and authorities from the country's Tigray region, the larger region of Oromia appears increasingly unstable.

Africa's second most populous country, with 120 million people, is again wrestling with deadly tensions between ethnic groups and their armed allies. Both the Oromo and Amhara ethnic groups, the country's largest, allege killings and blame the other. With telecommunications often cut and residents often fearing retaliation if they speak out, the death toll in the violence in Oromia is unknown.

Speaking to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity out of fears for their safety, several residents of Oromia described deadly attacks in recent weeks.

One witness in the region's Kिरामु district said his father and cousin were among at least 34 people killed since Nov. 24. He blamed soldiers under the control of the Oromia regional government, saying he saw their uniforms.

"It all started with a confrontation between a single local militia and members of the Oromia special forces," he said. "The special forces killed the militia who was a member of the Amhara community, and then a week-long killing followed." He estimated that hundreds of people have since fled the area.

An ethnic Oromo resident of Kira-



*Ethiopia's Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed speaks at a final campaign rally at a stadium in the town of Jimma in the south-western Oromia Region of Ethiopia, June 16 2021. Even as Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed attends the U.S.-Africa summit this week to promote last month's peace agreement between his government and authorities from the country's Tigray region, the larger region of Oromia appears increasingly unstable (AP Photo/Mulugeta Ayene, File)*

mu, however, accused an Amhara armed group known as the Fano of attacking and killing civilians and said he had seen more than a dozen bodies and buried four of them on Nov. 29.

"This militia group is killing our people, burning villages and looting everything we own," Dhugassa Feyissa told the AP. "They shoot at anyone they find ... be it public servants, police officers or teachers."

The Oromo and Amara have lived together for years, he said, but they had never seen fighting like this before.

The deputy administrator of the Gidda Ayanna district, which also has seen some of Oromia's worst violence in recent weeks, also blamed the Amhara Fano fighters.

"Civilians in our area are being killed, displaced and looted. This group is heavily armed, so it is no match for farmers who are defenceless," Getahun Tolera said, noting that his district now

hosts some 31,000 people who fled nearby districts. "We are still going house-to-house and discovering bodies."

Ethiopian federal government officials declined to comment on the killings in Oromia and have not yet openly spoken about them. The prime minister last week said only that some "enemies with extreme views" were trying to destabilise the country, without giving details.

Ethiopian security forces, Oromo insurgents and Amhara militia are all battling each other in Oromia, Ethiopia's largest region, said William Davison, an analyst with the International Crisis Group.

"Amid an intensifying government struggle against the rebels, all three have targeted civilians, particularly ethnic Amhara, which has led to an increase in violence by Amhara militia claiming to be defending their communities," he said.

As Ethiopian federal security forces battle the Oromo Liberation Army, which the government has called a terrorist group, Oromo and Amhara residents and their armed allies also fight each other over grievances old and new.

Amhara settlers first moved en masse to Oromia in the 1980s during a famine in northern Ethiopia. They lived peacefully there until the past three years. The OLA split from an Oromo political organisation and reportedly began targeting Amhara, at times as revenge for its losses to government forces. Amhara militia reportedly began targeting Oromos, and regional security forces became involved.

Oromos are Ethiopia's largest ethnic group, followed by the Amhara, who have dominated the country's politics for generations. Many Oromos were ju-

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## US couple charged with 'torture' of their foster child in Uganda

AlJazeera - Neighbours sounded the alarm over the 10-year-old boy who was 'constantly' abused between 2020 and 2022, police said.

An American couple in Uganda has been charged with "aggravated torture" of a 10-year-old boy in their care, police said.

Nicholas Spencer and his wife, Mackenzie Leigh Mathias Spencer, both aged 32, were charged on Friday and remanded to Luzira Prison, a maximum security facility on the outskirts of the capital Kampala, police said in a statement on Tuesday.

They were due to appear in court for a bail hearing on Wednesday.

The couple have three Ugandan children with them under foster care, including the victim, police said.

The charges allege that they "constantly tortured"



*The couple are foster parents to three Ugandan children*

the boy between 2020 and 2022, with neighbours sounding the alarm for the child who attended a school for children with special needs in Kampala.

When police raided the house, they found CCTV footage.

"Our team of investigators established, that the couple kept the victim bare-foot, and naked throughout

the day, would occasionally make him squat in an awkward position, with his head facing the floor and hands spread out widely, he spent his nights on a wooden platform, without a mattress or beddings and was served cold meals from the fridge," the police statement said.

"We believe, the victim could have endured more severe acts of torture, away

from the camera," it added.

The police statement urged social workers to constantly monitor the well-being of vulnerable children and those in foster homes, saying: "What happened to the victim, in the last couple of years, probably could have been prevented, if they had closely monitored the well-being of the foster children."

The couple arrived in Uganda in 2017 to volunteer at a United States-based non-profit in the town of Jinja before moving to Naguru, an upmarket Kampala suburb, to work at a start-up, police said.

In 2020, the US government filed criminal charges and imposed economic sanctions against a US-based adoption ring that placed Ugandan children who were not orphans with families in the US.

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bilant when Abiy, who identifies as Oromo, became prime minister in 2018. But that excitement has changed to frustration with the growing violence.

Rallies protesting the killings have been held in some communities in recent days. Last week, the government-appointed Ethiopian Human Rights Commission said "hundreds" of people had been killed in a "gruesome manner" in the past four months across 10 zones in the Oromia region, and it confirmed the presence of government forces, Amhara militia and the OLA in areas where repeated killings occur.

"The deliberate attacks against ci-

vilians in these areas are made based on ethnicity and political views ... with the assertion that one supports one group over the other," the commission said, urging the federal government to take urgent action.

Opposition parties also are speaking up. The Ethiopian Peoples' Revolutionary Party, All Ethiopia Unity Party and Enat Party called for more security for the affected communities, and a senior Ethiopian official from the opposition National Movement of Amhara asked the federal government to intervene.

"The totality of us have become a country that shows no strong aversion to a continued bloodshed of innocents,

wherever it may happen," Belete Molla said in a Facebook post earlier this month.

Another prominent political figure, Oromo opposition politician Jawar Mohammed, earlier this month asserted that at least 350 people had been killed and over 400,000 displaced "just in the last 48 hours" in the KIRAMU, HORO GUDURU, KUYU and WARA JARSO areas of Oromia.

"The government needs to quit pretending as if nothing is happening," Jawar said in a Facebook post. "The conflict is fast becoming a communal war involving civilians. If not contained soon, it will likely spread to other parts of the two regional states and beyond."

# Sports News



## Morocco World Cup wins stir mixed feelings in Western Sahara

AP - After the final whistle of every match Morocco won in its history-making World Cup run, crowds poured out of homes and cafes in the biggest city of Western Sahara, celebrating for hours.

The revellers included some Sahrawi people, members of an ethnic group that has sought independence for Western Sahara since Morocco annexed the disputed territory in 1975. Other Sahrawis rooted for Morocco's defeat on the soccer field or refused to take part in the celebrations.

They accuse Moroccan authorities of increasingly cracking down on independence activists, and of tout-ing the World Cup team's success in Qatar to distract the population from economic challenges.

But the presence of some Sahrawi fans cheering for Morocco in the streets of Laayoune illustrates the unifying power of the first Arab or African team to advance so far in the world's biggest sporting event. Morocco's national team, known as the Atlas Lions, faces defending champion France in Wednesday's semifinal.

Al-Salik Al-Yazid, a young Sahrawi in Laayoune, said "the historic success of the Moroccan national team" has created a collective feeling of "overwhelming joy that included all Arabs and Africans, despite the con-



Moroccans celebrate their World Cup victory against Portugal in the Morocco-administered Western Sahara city of Laayoune, Saturday, Dec. 10, 2022. (AP Photo/Nouredine Abakchou)

stant discontent with the Moroccan state."

He called it a sign of gradually shifting mindsets among younger Sahrawis who grew up under Moroccan rule and under a 1991 cease-fire that ended a 16-year conflict between Moroccan forces and Algeria-backed Polisario Front independence fighters.

"With the growth of generations merging and coexisting in one common environment, it has become natural to find Sahrawi individuals celebrating the victory of the Moroccan national team," Al-Yazid said. "Many Sahrawis have overcome the problem of identity caused by decades of political struggle."

However, a long-promised referendum on the territory's future never took place. Low-intensity hostil-

ities have reignited, leaving the truce at risk of unraveling in Morocco-controlled Western Sahara.

Sahrawi people make up a minority of the estimated population of 350,000 in the territory, a Colorado-sized region rich in phosphates and fishing grounds. The rest, following nearly a half-century of resettlement efforts, are mainly Moroccans. Other Sahrawis live in the sliver of Western Sahara ruled by the Polisario, or in refugee camps in Algeria.

On World Cup game nights, the atmosphere is festive but complex.

In past tournaments, Sahrawis generally supported the Algerian team. Activists accused Moroccan police of violently suppressing celebrations of Algerian victories. Algeria didn't qualify for this year's World Cup.

When Morocco played Spain last week, some Sahrawis welcomed Morocco's win and others wore T-shirts supporting Spain, the Western Sahara's former colonial ruler. Some threw stones at people celebrating the Moroccan victory.

Mohamed El-Yousefi, a Moroccan resident of Laayoune, said he understands the resentment, calling it "closely linked to the conflict in the desert."

Some Sahrawi people, he said, rejoice in good faith, and others "hate everything that comes from Morocco."

"Happy Moroccans also sometimes fall into the trap of politics and chant phrases such as 'We won out of spite against the enemy' in reference to Sahrawis who are dissatisfied with Morocco's victory," El-Yousefi said.

*cont'd on pg 21*



## Warriors' Green says Bucks fan 'threatened' him; fan tossed

AP - A fan was ejected following a complaint by Golden State Warriors star Draymond Green during a game at Milwaukee on Tuesday night, and the Bucks said they were investigating the incident and consulting with the NBA.

The fan said "some threatening stuff to my life," Green said.

Golden State's Stephen Curry was shooting free throws with 5:19 left in the third quarter when Green spoke with a game official, repeatedly pointing toward a man sitting a few rows off the opposite baseline.

The official conferred with security personnel at Fiserv Forum, and the fan was escorted out. Earlier in the period, the fan and Green had exchanged words.

"I was this close to really going back and diving all the way in, but just went back and told the official. And when I told the official, he said, he's got to get out of here," Green said.

"You just hope it gets to the point to where these leagues can work with legislators to implement laws, because that's the only thing that's going to ultimately correct the issue, is if



Golden State Warriors' Draymond Green shoots past Milwaukee Bucks' Brook Lopez during the first half of an NBA basketball game Tuesday, Dec. 13, 2022, in Milwaukee. (AP Photo/Morry Gash)

you know something real is going to happen to you," he said.

After Milwaukee's 128-111 win, the Bucks said in a statement: "Under the referee's discretion, we are investigating the situation and we are conferring with the NBA

The 32-year-old Green scored two points and had six rebounds and seven

assists in the loss. He is averaging nine points, six rebounds and seven assists for the reigning NBA champions.

Two weeks ago, Green was fined \$25,000 by the NBA "for directing obscene language toward a fan." The situation occurred during the fourth quarter of Golden State's loss at Dallas on Nov. 29.

### cont'd from pg 20

Sahrawi independence activists say it's not possible to separate the Moroccan team from the Kingdom of Morocco itself.

The team represents the Royal Football League and by extension the monarchy, "which for us is the cause of the tragedy of our people through its forceful occupation of Western Sahara," said Mubarak Mamine, a Laayoune-based Polisario Front

activist.

"Football is a tool used by the Moroccan regime to divert the attention of the Moroccan people from their basic issues, especially in light of the deteriorating economic and social conditions in the country," Marmine said.

Morocco denies there is an armed conflict in what it calls its "southern provinces," and has grown increasingly assertive in defending

its claim over the Western Sahara in recent years.

The kingdom received a major boost – and independence activists suffered a major blow – when the United States in 2020 recognized Morocco's sovereignty over the territory in exchange for Morocco normalising ties with Israel.

Morocco's climb up the World Cup ladder has taken fans everywhere by surprise, including in Western Sahara.

Sports journalist Balfater Abdel-Wahhab said the celebrations he covered in Laayoune were unlike any the city had seen.

"All the masses in the city of Laayoune came out" as Morocco beat rival after rival to make it to the semi-final. He called it a "wonderful celebration of sportsmanship, decorated with national (Moroccan) flags and traditional (Sahrawi) desert costumes."

# Sports News



## Lionel Messi says final will be last World Cup game for Argentina

BBC - Argentina captain Lionel Messi says Sunday's final will be the last World Cup game of his career.

The 35-year-old forward scored his fifth goal of Qatar 2022 and helped set up two others in Tuesday's 3-0 semi-final win over Croatia.

Playing in his fifth World Cup, Messi has never won the game's biggest prize.

"I am very happy for finishing my journey in World Cups in a final, to play the last game in a final. That is really very gratifying," he said.

"Everything I lived in this World Cup has been emotional, seeing how much it has been enjoyed in Argentina.

"There are a lot of years from this year to the next one. I don't think I will be able to do that. To finish this way is brilliant."

Argentina will play France or Morocco, who meet on Wednesday at 19:00 GMT, in the final,



*Lionel Messi*

when Messi is set to make a record 26th appearance in a men's World Cup.

The 2026 World Cup will be held in the United States, Canada and Mexico.

Messi has won the Ballon d'Or - awarded to the world's best player - a record seven times and been named Fifa Best Men's Player once.

Other honours include four Champions Leagues,

11 top-flight titles and Copa America glory with Argentina in 2021.

The World Cup is the one glaring omission, Argentina having lost to Germany in the 2014 final in Brazil.

"We are going to do our best, as we have done up until now, so that this time it really happens - we really win it," said Messi, who retired from international duty in June 2016 before reversing his decision two months later.

"I have been enjoying it the past few years, being with the national side. I am really enjoying everything that is happening to us.

"To get the Copa America, to reach the World Cup with 36 games unbeaten, and to finish all that trajectory in a final is just incredible.

"I hope the people in Argentina enjoy themselves and what we are doing. They shouldn't doubt we are giving absolutely everything."

Messi, who plays for French giants Paris St-Germain, is one of only six men to have appeared in five World Cups, along with German Lothar Matthaus, Portugal's Cristiano Ronaldo, and Antonio Carbajal, Andres Guardado and Rafael Marquez of Mexico.

Currently leading the Golden Boot race in Qatar alongside France's Kylian Mbappe, Messi became the first Argentina player to score in four World Cups and also became their record World Cup scorer with 11 goals.

He made his Argentina debut at the age of 18 in 2005 and has scored 97 goals in 172 games.

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## Brathwaite speaks after 3 wins, 2 draws, 2 defeats in Test year

Captain Kraigg Brathwaite didn't hide his disappointment at the end of the two-match series against Australia, but remained encouraged that the team can continue to grow in the Test match arena.

West Indies were handed a heavy defeat in the pink ball Test match at Adelaide Oval on Sunday, but the skipper said he believed the result was a learning curve, which would serve the side well in important contests next year.

The series defeat meant West Indies closed the year with a record of three wins, two draws and two defeats in Test cricket for 2022. West Indies lost the opening Test in Perth by 164 runs last week – their first Test defeat of the year following series



*Kraigg Brathwaite*

triumphs over England in March and Bangladesh in June, when they went unbeaten.

“Obviously [the] pink ball is always different – under lights is always tough and at times a little tougher. We needed] a little better judgement at times. We have

a lot of Test cricket to play next year so we have to look ahead,” Brathwaite said.

“In a year, you want to win every game – you don’t want to lose – but I think losing is a part of the game. Obviously this loss was a bit disappointing in how we didn’t show the fight [re-

quired].

“I was pleased with the first Test in Perth despite it being a loss. We saw guys fighting, and to carry a strong Australia team into the last day was a decent effort.

West Indies took the opening Test against Australia deep into the final day at the Perth Stadium, when Brathwaite made a stand-out century, but the visitors were less competitive in the day/night affair in Adelaide.

“I still think it was a good year for us. As I said, it’s important to learn from this experience.

“We have South Africa next year in March after Zimbabwe and we know there are kind of similar conditions in South Africa, so it is important we show that experience.”

## Spanish Heat maintain hot start in second division basketball

Galaxia Bar Spanish Heat have maintained their impressive start to their campaign in the Antigua and Barbuda Basketball Association’s (ABBA) Second Division.

Spanish Heat surged to their third win in as many games by recording an emphatic 85-49 victory over the Honourable Gaston Browne Pointvill Ballers in the first game of a Zone 2 double-header at the JSC Sports Complex on Tuesday night, 13th December.

Steven Matthew converted 24 points and had seven steals, Jesus Emmanuel scored 23 points and snatched

10 rebounds, Antonio Cruzdehaa sank 12 points and grabbed nine rebounds, while Kelvin Pimentel produced 10 points and 12 rebounds for Spanish Heat.

Devon Christian scored 12 points and pulled down seven rebounds, while Najee Simon and Khalid Shabazz each contributed 11 points for Pointvill Ballers.

Caribbean Pharmaceuticals Supplies Fearless Crew1 secured their second win in three outings by pulling off a 69-58 victory over the Honourable Daryll Matthew Ottos Clippers in the

second game on Tuesday evening.

Ralph Spooner scored 21 points and grabbed 15 rebounds, D’eonte Knowles also converted 21 points and Carlos Rodriguez chipped in with 14 points for Fearless Crew1.

Jason Phillip shot a game-high 25 points and snatched 10 rebounds, Jules Frederick scored 14 points and team sponsor Daryll Matthew grabbed 13 rebounds and sank nine points for Ottos Clippers but could not stave off their team’s third loss in as many encounters.

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## Wings claim fourth place finish in Willikies FC's Under-16 contest

CPTSA Wings had to settle for a fourth-place finish in an Under-16 Boys' competition that was hosted by the Willikies Football Club as part of its Fun Day, which was held in honour of the late Mitchum "Muffie" Hughes, at the community's playing field on 9th December.

The competition was won by New Evolution Academy who defeated SAP 4-0 in the final. Willikies FC captured third place.

Wings, SAP, Jennings, Earthquake, New Evolution Academy, Generation Next, Empire and Willikies participated in the event in which the eight teams were equally divided into two zones.

Wings contested Zone A along with Willikies, Jennings and Generation Next, while New Evolution Academy, Empire, SAP and Earthquake competed in Zone B.

The top two teams at the end of the round-robin group matches advanced to the semi-finals.

In the preliminary contest, Wings won two of



*The CPTSA Wings finished fourth in the Under-16 Boys' competition that was hosted by the Willikies Football Club as part of its fun day at the community's playing field on 9th December, 2022. (Photo courtesy CPTSA Wings Sports Club)*

their three matches to finish second behind unbeaten Group A winners Willikies.

Wings prevailed 1-0 against Generation Next in their opening game, thanks to a goal scored by Aijalon Joseph.

Joshua Lake then scored twice and Naheem Donaldson netted once to give Wings a 3-1 victory over Jennings. However,

Wings lost 1-0 to hosts Willikies to emerge with six points and second in their group which was won by the host team with nine points.

SAP won Zone B and New Evolution finished second in the group to advance to the semi-finals.

Wings also suffered a 1-0 loss against SAP, while New Evolution defeated Willikies in the semi-finals.

Several players received individual awards for their outstanding performances in the tournament.

Jose' "Neymar" Arias of SAP was named the

Most Valuable Player of the tournament.

Arias also took home the top goal scorer award, while his teammate Kayeem Hughes claimed the Best Defender award.

Keno Goodwin of Willikies FC captured the Best Goalkeeper award, while his teammate Xarik Richards was named the Best Midfielder of the tournament.

The fun day was held to recognize Hughes, who was one of the architects of the inaugural Willikies Village League in the late 1970s and 80s. He managed a team called Cologne that was a perennial contender in the league.

### *cont'd from pg 23*

The second division will continue with a Zone 2 double header at the JSC Sports Complex this evening, Thursday, 15th December.

Cuties Ovals Young Guns will tackle the Honourable Gaston Browne Pointville Ballers in the first game at 6:45 pm, while Flyers2 will clash with Young Warriors Ballers in the second encounter at 8:30 pm.

## Swetes claim first win in Premier Division



Roy Gregory, center, scores the winning goal for Swetes during their Premier League's encounter against SAP FC at the ABFA's Technical Centre at Paynters on Tuesday, 13th December, 2022. (Photo courtesy ABFA)

Swetes recorded their first win in the Antigua and Barbuda Football Association's (ABFA) Premier Division League on Tuesday, 13th December.

Swetes snatched a 2-1 victory over SAP at the ABFA's Technical Centre at Paynters.

Roy Gregory hit a late winner, scoring in the 87th minute to secure Swetes' first victory in three matches.

Azinho Solomon had scored in the 43rd minute to give Swetes a 1-0 half-time advantage. But the lead was short-lived as five minutes after the interval, SAP drew level via a Tyrique Tonge's 50th minute conversion.

The scores stayed level for the next 37 minutes and the game appeared to be drifting to a tame draw until Gregory's intervention stole all the points for

Swetes.

The result left SAP still in search of their first win of the season as the former premier league champions slipped to their second loss in three matches.

There were wins as well for Young Warriors and Attacking Saints in the ABFA's second division on Tuesday.

Young Warriors pulled off a 4-2 victory against ABAYA at the Mack Pond playing field.

Rueben Rubel scored all four goals for Young Warriors as they secured their second win in three matches. Zidane Smith netted both goals for ABAYA who remain winless after three encounters.

Attacking Saints recorded their second win in three outings by romping to a 3-0 victory over FC Master Ballers at the Mack Pond playing field.

Andre Ephraim, Ronaldo Fenton and Devonta Geron each converted once for Attacking Saints.

Action in the national domestic football league programme will continue with four matches in the first division today, Thursday, 15th December.

Bendals will host Police at the Bendals playing field at 5 pm, while the other three matches are slated to kick-off at 4:20 pm.

Potters Tigers will entertain John Hughes at the Potters playing field, Young Lions will host Green City at the Old Road playing field and Fort Road will welcome Garden Stars at the Fort Road playing field. Old Road will clash with Tryum in the premier division at the ABFA's Technical Centre at 7 pm tomorrow, Friday, 16th December.