

THURSDAY 22ND DECEMBER 2022 | VOLUME 3 ISSUE 246 | WWW.POINTVILLE.AG

CHINA ANNOUNCES MORE SCHOLARSHIPS FOR NATIONALS

Story on Page 2



These buildings, located on Parham main road, are part of the ABLP's candidate for St. Peter, Rawdon Turner's vision for the creation of a Youth Business Hub in the constituency. The units will be handed over to vendors shortly. More buildings are to be constructed at a second location in Parham. Pares village is also part of the development plan and will also receive its own Youth Business Hub.

Local News

China making more scholarships available to Antiguans & Barbudans

The People's Republic of China (PRC) is making available an additional twenty scholarships to nationals of Antigua and Barbuda to pursue tertiary level studies in China.

Announcing the additional scholarships, Prime Minister Gaston Browne said this brings the number of available scholarships offered to ninety-two.

Presently, there are seventy-two nationals pursuing tertiary education at Chinese universities.

According to PM Browne, the PRC's contributions to Antigua and Barbuda's development are substantial.

In educational development, the PRC gifted the Five Islands campus which now houses the University of the West Indies to the government and people of Antigua and Barbuda. This gift became a critical element in strengthening An-

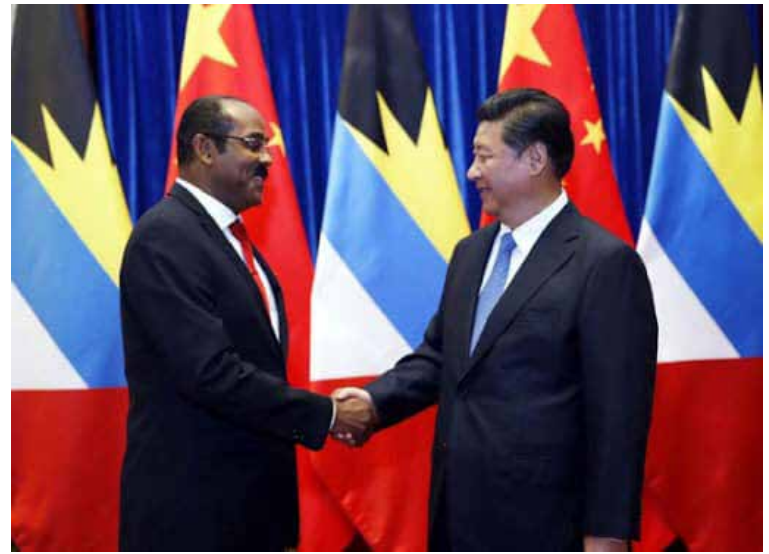
tigua and Barbuda's case to become the home of the University of the West Indies' fifth regional campus.

"It gave us a competitive advantage against the other OECS states vying to get the campus set up in their respective territories. If we did not have that facility, we would not be celebrating UWI FIC today. In fact, there would have been no UWI FIC.

"Truth be told, there were at least two other OECS countries that were ahead of Antigua and Barbuda to get the next landed campus of the UWI.

"So, for this gift, we are eternally grateful," PM Browne remarked on Tuesday at the opening of the Chinese embassy in Marble Hill.

Browne went on to say that the Five Islands facility has paved the way for UWI FIC to advance to the next level as, last week, Saudi



Antigua and Barbuda's Prime Minister Gaston Browne and President of the People's Republic of China Xi Jinping have continued to foster a friendly diplomatic relationship that has yielded tangible benefits for the people of Antigua and Barbuda.

Arabia approved a loan of US\$80 million (EC\$216 million) to expand the campus.

The prime minister said this injection of money will transform the university and the communities that surround it into world class university towns.














The PRC's resident ambassador, Zhang Yanling, said since China began offer-

ing short-term training and government scholarships to Antiguans and Barbudans, many people have taken advantage of the opportunity to pursue advanced studies, which has enabled them to make greater contributions to their country.

She noted too that the Sir Novelle Richards Academy has become the first school to teach Mandarin (Chinese).

This year, the Confucius Institute in Antigua and Barbuda also saw the graduation of its first Mandarin speaking students.

Yanling added that the school's valedictorian was also the best Mandarin speaker in the graduating class this year.

Thu 22 Day		Thu 22 Night	
83°		75°	
Plentiful sunshine. High 83F. Winds E at 10 to 20 mph.	21%  E 16 mph	Mostly clear skies. Low near 75F. Winds E at 10 to 15 mph.	19%  E 13 mph
 Humidity 73%	 UV Index 8 of 10	 Humidity 81%	 UV Index 0 of 10
 Sunrise 6:32 am	 Sunset 5:39 pm	 Moonrise 5:36 am	 Moonset 4:55 pm
 Waning Crescent			

Hotel sector experiencing one of its best seasons ever

The hotel sector, perhaps the most important sub-sector of the tourism industry, is enjoying one of its best seasons ever.

The latest data from the Antigua and Barbuda Hotels and Tourist Association (ABHTA) indicates that October and November have outperformed the same months in 2019, which was previously the country's best year on record for tourist arrivals and attendant hotel occupancy.

According to the ABHTA's statistics, occupancy in



Hammock Cove

October 2022 was recorded at 68.5 percent. This compares with 52.3 percent for the same month in 2019.

In November, occupancy stood at 81.5 percent compared with 69.4 percent in 2019.

There is a caveat, however, as the ABHTA noted that the available room nights are lower than was available in 2019.

It noted that 21,000 room nights are closed in the destination and when adjusted to this fact, the figures for both months would be lower. For October, the percentage would still be higher than in 2019, although the rate for November would be slightly lower.

Industry sources have indicated that December is also on track to break hotel occupancy records.

The ABHTA has also projected that the excellent performance of the hotel sector will continue into the first quarter of 2023. This projection is based on Antigua and Barbuda's available room nights.

More room nights will become available during the first months of the year. Jolly Beach, which opened on 15th December, will add approximately 200 rooms to the mix.



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Saturday	24 th	8:00am	1:00pm

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Local News

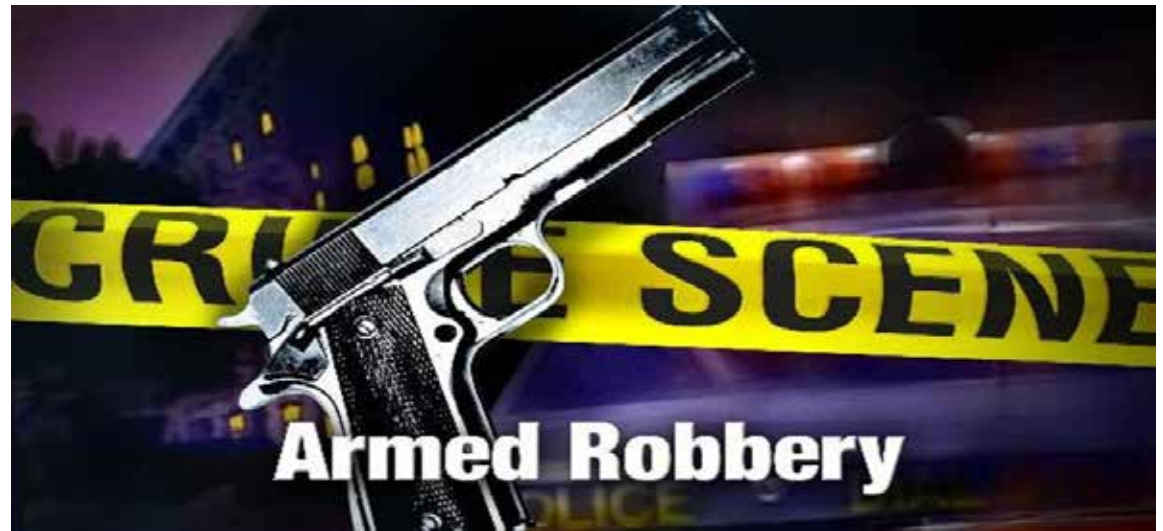


Security guard robbed while on duty

A female security guard was left shaken after she was robbed of her handbag and mobile phone by a gun toting bandit last weekend.

The crime was committed on Saturday evening while the Desouza Road woman was on duty at the old Antigua Public Utilities Authority building (Telephone Exchange) on Long Street.

According to reports, at approximately 9pm on 17th December, 2022, the guard was seated on a chair outside of the building



when she was approached by a man who was unknown to her.

Dressed in black cloth-

ing and aiming a gun at her, the bandit allegedly demanded her mobile phone.

She was also relieved of her handbag which contained EC\$230.00, along with her Social Security, Voter Identification and Medical Benefits cards.

The value of the mobile phone is estimated at EC\$900.00

The security guard reported to police that after robbing her, the man ran in an easterly direction.

She described him as being 5ft 5 inches in height and having an Antiguan accent.

No arrest has been made in relation to Saturday evening's incident.

Last week, the Royal Police Force of Antigua and Barbuda issued an appeal for people to exercise heightened awareness to avoid becoming the target of criminals.

They have also highlighted the importance of people always being aware of their surroundings, taking into consideration their personal safety and the safety of others.

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Local News



ACB Caribbean spreads Christmas cheer

On Tuesday this week, ACB Caribbean ensured that more than ninety families in Antigua and Barbuda can have a cheerful holiday.

The financial institution's thirteen year old Christmas Pantry initiative involved the distribution of food packages to vulnerable families.

ACB Caribbean team leader, Andrea Christopher, explained that this year, the initiative expanded to provide for an additional twenty-six families due to its popularity.

"The Christmas Pantry is a charitable initiative of the staff of ACB Caribbean and we've been embarking on this for the past thirteen years.



"Initially, our plan was to reach out to seventy families, however, due to the overwhelming contribution of staff and the bank, we were able to spread joy to 96 families in Antigua, including our sister island in Barbuda," Christopher explained.

She noted that key corporate and private citizens were instrumental in ensuring the

success of the Christmas Pantry.

"We work in partnership with Ms. Koren Norton, who is our Charity Ambassador, and also with Ms. Deon Grannum, Social Services Coordinator at the [Sir Lester Bird Medical Centre].

"They were able to provide us with a list of names of persons who are in need, and also the staff at ABC Caribbean identified persons in their communities who were in need. So that is how we were able to determine the persons who were eligible for packages this year."

Charity Ambassador



ABC Caribbean Team Leader, Andrea Christopher

Norton provided further details on the process of determining how families were selected.

"Over the course of the year, we encounter persons with various vulnerabilities. Persons would have lost their jobs, persons would have been diagnosed with illnesses, persons would have lost the breadwinner at home.

"And so, based on who we've seen during the year, we have an idea who are some of the most vulnerable persons in Antigua and Barbuda."

LETTERS OF ADMINISTRATION FORM P7 Rule 15 THE EASTERN CARIBBEAN SUPREME COURT IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUSTICE ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA (Probate)

**In the Estate of DENISE ROSMOND MCRAE, late
of Herberts, St. John's, Antigua, Deceased**

ADVERTISEMENT OF APPLICATION FOR GRANT SECOND PUBLICATION

TAKE NOTICE that an application has been filed by GORDON ANTHONY MCRAE, of Herberts, St. John's, Antigua for a Grant of Letters of Administration to the Applicant, who is the husband of the deceased, the deceased having died intestate on the 21st day of November, 2021.

Any person having an objection to the grant of Letters of Administration to the Applicant shall file an objection within fourteen (14) days of the publication of this Notice.

DATED the 8th day of December, 2022
CUMBERBATCH & ASSOCIATES
Attorneys-at-Law for the Applicant

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Local News



Rotary Club of Antigua resumes annual children's Christmas party

The Rotary Club of Antigua recently hosted a Christmas party for 150 primary school children.

The party is an annual event organised by the non-profit charity, however this year signalled the

return of the event after a two-year break forced by the pandemic.

The club said that it will return to hosting the customary 500 children in both Antigua and Barbuda next year.

The schools represented were T. N, Kirnon, Green Bay, Five Islands, J. T. Ambrose, Cedar Grove, Bendals, Potters, Pares, Jennings and New Winthorpes.

The children were treated to a day of fun which included face paint-

ing, a bounce castle, games and snacks.

Although Santa did not arrive chauffeured by the Fire Brigade in a fire tender this year, the children were all happy to greet him on foot as he made a grand entrance at Rotary House.

Each child was presented with a gift from Santa.

The Rotary Club of Antigua's motto is "Service Above Self".

The 2022-2023 Rotary International theme is "Imagine Rotary".

NOTICE

The Ministry of Works wishes to inform the general public that they will be carrying out infrastructural work on the Crabb Hill Main Road, which will, unfortunately, result in some delays while traversing this roadway.

We urge all road users to please take note and follow all safety precautions within the affected area.

The Ministry anticipates this interruption will last up until Friday, 23rd December.

We sincerely apologize for any inconvenience this may cause and ask that all road users exercise due care and caution when traveling the roadway.

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

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Energy

Geothermal drilling to begin in Nevis June 2023

CMC - Premier Mark Brantley has announced that the Nevis Island Administration (NIA) will embark on the drilling phase of Nevis' geothermal project in June 2023.

Brantley, who is also minister of public utilities and energy, revealed that the drilling will comprise three production wells and two injection wells at Hamilton.

He said while geothermal in Nevis has been discussed since 2004 and some attempts made to pursue it, this is the closest that they have gotten in terms of its development and harnessing.

Earlier this month, the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) announced

it had approved USD\$17 million for the development of geothermal energy in Nevis – a \$16 million contingent grant for drilling and a \$1 million grant for expert support and capacity.

“This funding is a watershed moment in our geothermal project. After years of pursuing geothermal energy, we can now proclaim with a high degree of certainty that our geothermal ambition is within reach,” Brantley said during his address at the ceremonial inauguration of the new Cabinet of Ministers in the NIA on Sunday.

“This project promises to be transformational for us, our sister St. Kitts and our neighbouring islands. No longer will we be subjected to the whim



Premier Mark Brantley has announced that the Nevis Island Administration (NIA) will embark on the drilling phase of Nevis' geothermal project in June 2023

and fancies of the oil-producing countries. No longer will we be held hostage to fluctuating oil prices. No longer will global conflicts determine the price of our energy supply and cost of living to our people. There can be no question that geothermal energy will secure our energy independence and energy security.”

Speaking on the geothermal project during his recent presentation at the St. Kitts and Nevis budget debate in Basseterre, Premier Brantley said developing this cleaner, cheaper source of renewable energy would create a new industry that has the potential to propel efforts at economic diversification forward and wean the federation off its reliance on Citizenship By Investment (CBI) revenue.

He expressed “profound thanks” to the CDB for allowing Nevis to access the funding, and reiterated his government’s gratitude to Prime Minister Dr. Terrance Drew and his Cabinet “for their continued tangible and moral support as we pursue this critical project”.



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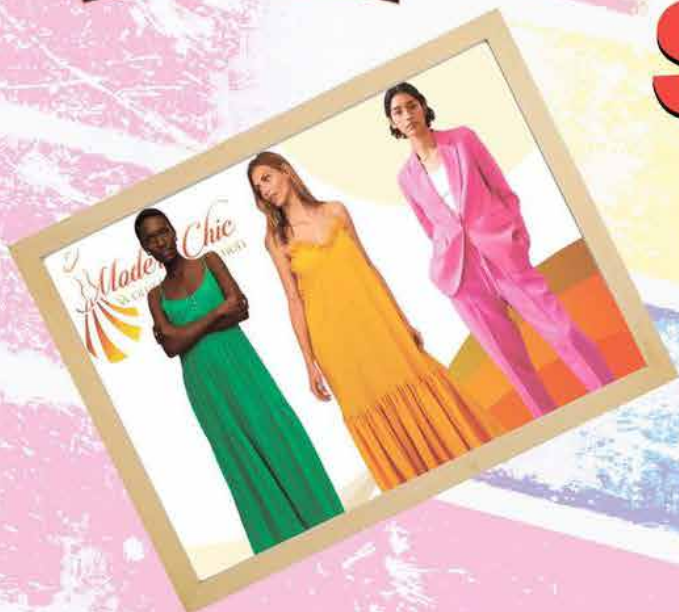
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Relationships

BVI to refer matter of same-sex marriage to a referendum

LOOP - The electorate of the British Virgin Islands will be given the opportunity through a referendum to consider and decide on the question of whether same-sex marriage should be legal.

This has emerged as the territory faces a legal challenge on the matter of same-sex marriage. This will be the first referendum in the history of the Virgin Islands.

Providing the back-



ground for the move in a statement, BVI Premier Natalio Wheatley said: "A case is currently before the

High Court, which could potentially impact the social and religious fabric of our society. A same-sex couple, both Virgin Islanders, were married abroad, and have mounted a legal challenge to have their union legally recognised here in the Virgin Islands."

The BVI Premier went on to state:

If they were to be successful, section 13(1)(c) of the Matrimonial Proceedings and Property Act, which provides that marriage is void unless the parties are respectively male and female, would be declared unconstitutional and, therefore, be null and void. As a result, same-sex marriage would become legal in the Virgin Islands.

The Constitution provides that "every man and every woman of marriageable age has the right to marry and found a family in accordance with laws

cont'd on pg 13



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Relationships

cont'd from pg 12

enacted by the legislature”.

The Matrimonial Proceedings and Property Act is a law enacted by the democratically elected legislature of the Virgin Islands.

Wheatley stated that in response to this legal challenge, the Virgin Islands Government who is the Respondent in this case, through counsel in the Attorney General's Chambers, is vigorously defending the BVI's laws which clearly provide that marriage should be between a man and a woman.

Importantly also, we are defending the ability of the democratically elected legislature of the Virgin Islands to make legislation on this issue.

We believe very firmly that such weighty matters of social and religious significance must not be decided in the courts or elsewhere.

It is our belief that the people of the Virgin Islands must speak clearly and loudly on their views on marriage, and that legislators should be obligated to comply with their wishes. This is the essence of democracy.

He said in a special meeting of the Cabinet of the Virgin Islands held on Friday, December 16, 2022, Cabinet decided to refer the matter of same-sex marriage to a referendum so that the electorate can consider and decide on the question of whether same-sex marriage should

be legal.

This will be the first referendum in the history of the Virgin Islands. This referendum will give all eligible persons the opportunity to defend what they believe to be socially and morally right.

This referendum will also consider the question of whether new legislation should be introduced to provide persons in a domestic partnership with certain legal rights, such as the ability to pass on one's estate to their partner regardless of sex, in intestacy. This approach takes into

account the territory's obligations under the European Convention on Human Rights while protecting the sanctity of marriage.

The BVI Premier said: "It is important to note that as a part of the process, a resolution must be prepared and then considered and voted on in a sitting of the House of Assembly. Once successful, the Governor, in consultation with myself, will affix the date of the referendum. This referendum will be preceded by a portion of time dedicated to educating the population on the subject.

It is important to note that we are not the only Overseas Territory government to face a legal challenge on the matter of same-sex marriage. Both the Cayman Islands and Bermuda also had similar cases very recently."

Wheatley stated that more will be said on this matter in the very near future and ended his statement with the following:

"Let us pray for wisdom and divine guidance as we consider the future of what we want for our beloved Virgin Islands. Have a safe and enjoyable Christmas."



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Culture

Germany returns 20 Benin bronzes to Nigeria, noting 'dark past'

More than 5,000 ancient artefacts are estimated to have been looted from Nigeria by England when it colonised the country

By Chinedu Asadu

AP — Germany returned 20 historic bronze sculptures to Nigeria as part of efforts to address its “dark colonial past,” the German foreign minister said Tuesday.

Annalena Baerbock, Germany’s foreign minister returned the prized cultural artifacts to Nigerian officials in a ceremony in the capital Abuja. The sculptures, known as Benin bronzes, were looted from the West African country when it was under colonial rule.

“It was wrong to steal these bronzes. It was wrong to keep these bronzes and it is long overdue to return these bronzes to their home,” she said at the event.

Cast in brass and bronze with ancient designs, the sculptures were used in rituals to honour the Benin people’s ancestors and rulers.

More than 5,000 ancient artifacts are estimated to have been stolen from Nigeria by England, when it was the country’s coloniser, said Nigerian authorities.

Most of the treasures were stolen from the royal palace of the Kingdom of Benin — now part of southern Nigeria — and some ended up in the custody of other foreign governments including Germany.



Benin bronzes looted in the past and returned to Nigeria are examined during a handing over ceremony in Abuja, Nigeria, Tuesday, Dec. 20, 2022. Germany returned 20 historic bronze sculptures to Nigeria as part of efforts to address what its foreign minister called its “dark colonial past.” Nigeria officials said that more than 5,000 ancient artifacts are estimated to have been stolen from Nigeria, the majority by England, the country’s former coloniser and some by Germany. (AP Photo/Olamikan Gbemiga)

Nigerian authorities have in recent years intensified efforts to get the looted artifacts to be returned. Earlier this year Germany pledged to repatriate more than 1,000 of them in the coming years.

Nigeria is Germany’s second-largest trade partner in Africa and by returning the items it hopes to start a new chapter for future bilateral relations, said Baerbock.

“We see this as a first step. Many bronzes have been looted and stolen, so many will come back,” said Baerbock.

“This step is also important for us because we are dealing with our dark colonial past,” she said.

Nigeria’s Foreign Affairs Minister Geoffrey Onyeama said the nation felt “deep gratitude” to Germany for returning the artifacts. Beyond their aesthetic value they have cultural and spiritual importance to the Nigerian people, he said. He called on England and other countries in possession of other artifacts to return them on moral grounds.

Activists say there needs to be more accountability that goes beyond the return

of the items, such as compensation for the losses incurred by African countries throughout years of looting.

“We are only focusing on the physical objects. What about the digital properties of these works? Who owns those properties? And what is coming with these works?” said Victor Ehikhamenor, a Nigerian artist and advocate for repatriation efforts.

“What other restitution and payments do they have to make for holding these works for a long time and making money from it?” he said.

Dutch slavery apology? Sint Maarten's PM had this response

LOOP - Prime Minister of Sint Maarten Silveria Jacobs has stated that the Parliament and the people of Sint Maarten are not at the stage where they can either accept or deny the statement/apologies of the Dutch leader for The Netherlands' role in slavery and the slave trade.

Jacobs on Monday said: "I address you today with mixed emotions and extend an invitation to openly dialogue on the ways to approach this abrupt and forced apology for 'Slavery

past' by The Netherlands."

She stated:

This is a matter of historic proportions and a dialogue long overdue, which affects and emotes us all. Why mixed emotions, one may ask? Because on one hand, the seriousness of the occasion, if it is sincere, is not lost on me, especially seeing the recent public statements on this topic.

On the other hand, the manner in which we arrive here today, is messy, and exposes many risks in the realisation of true repara-



Prime Minister of Sint Maarten, Silveria Jacobs

tory justice for those impacted by the transatlantic slave trade, the enslavement of our ancestors, and subsequent racism, marginalisation and continued existence of colonialism in the relationship and institutions which still exists within the Kingdom.

She said for this apology today to be sincere, it must come with the realisation that slavery and colonialism have impaired people's economic and social development.

The PM noted financial aid and loans provided thus far by the Netherlands can never be conceived of as part of reparations owed as a result of the expected apology.

Jacobs said reparations and aid as a result of crises are not to be discussed in

the same breath in a sincere apology.

Historically, with regards to exercising our own agency and self-determination within the Dutch Kingdom Structure, we've been in the position to exchange colonial obedience for aid and loans. This was the case after the onslaught of Hurricane Irma in 2017 and the COVID-19 pandemic. I would only hope that a truly sincere apology would include the right to self-determination and agency. When working towards a new decolonial age of equity and equality, one should not be punished for colonial disobedience.

She stated that the Government and people of Sint Maarten will not be placed on the spot to accept or deny the apologies.



St Kitts and Nevis uncovers illegal marriage ring

LOOP - Prime Minister of St Kitts and Nevis Dr Terrance Drew says the authorities have uncovered “a ring” resulting in illegal marriages taking place on the island and raising the possibility that the twin island Federation is being used for human trafficking.

Prime Minister Drew, who is also Minister of National Security and immigration, told Parliament the illegal marriages involved individuals from the Spanish community that allows them to be granted citizenship and voting rights.

“Madam Speaker, I found in my own Ministry a ring, a ring of illegal marriages. Madam Speaker, let me tell you how this ring works because I have it written down here. There is somebody in Santo Domingo who’s charging a lot of money for a visa.

“You pay them for a visa there, they have a connection here. So you buy a plane ticket and you come in with your very expensive visa of which this government is only making 10 per cent. When they come in, Madam Speaker, a husband or wife is waiting for them.”

Prime Minister Drew told legislators that they then get married resulting in the payment of more money.

“From the time they get married, the same day, sometimes in their wedding garments, they [go] for their Certificate of Marriage, after they get the Certificate of Marriage, they get their Certificate of Citizenship and [go into] the Electoral Office for [an] Id. Once they go for their ID Madam Speaker, they are paid a certain sum of money and their name is included on an electoral list to vote,” he said.

Prime Minister Drew said that while it is possible that some of the



marriages are genuine, some of the individuals involved in the marriage ring have been abusing the system, by marrying and divorcing several times to gain money.

“Madam Speaker, I am speaking the truth...I have a box of a few hundred [cases]. I don’t even know where to start, because among them might be real marriages; but because there are so [many] fake marriages among them, you don’t even know where to start, Madam Speaker.

“Thousands upon thousands of dollars; and this is how it works- “You come, you marry, you divorce, you marry again and then you pass on the citizenship here, there and everywhere. That is how it works Madam Speaker. Those persons who are involved in it will say “well [give] me a EC \$3,000 (One EC dollar=US\$0.37 cents) and then they divorce and then they look for another marriage because that’s another quick EC\$3,000.”

Drew said that he had a meeting with the Latino community in SKN and explained to them what the government had identified. He also said that conversations with some of the Spanish nationals proved that there

is no real relationship between them and their marriage partner.

“I went to a meeting with the [Spanish] Community and they have legitimate concerns which we have to address because, as was said, we cannot treat people less than human; but at the same time, every country must have rules, laws and regulations as I said to them.

“Not even in their own country can it be done like that. “You’re asking a married person, “what is your husband’s name? [and they respond] “Well I think- I can’t remember the first name” and [they’re] married. [They were] saying to the AG (Attorney General) or saying to the officials, “well, I don’t know his name; I call him babes.

“I spoke to them directly. I had a meeting with the [Spanish] community, because I said, we’re going to treat people humanely; but I told them, this is what I uncovered and discovered and therefore, we cannot continue that path.

“It’s a whole ring where we were even being questioned to be part of human trafficking. Madam Speaker-

cont’d on pg 17

Two Trinidadians charged with murder of ex-cop

CMC - Two Trinidadian men have been charged with the murder of businessman and former police officer Syed Mohammed who was gunned down outside his home last week.

Marcus Uriah Jacob, a 35-year-old handyman and labourer Daniel Harroo, 28, appeared in the Siparia First Magistrates' Court to answer the charge.

They were also charged with possession of a firearm, possession of a firearm to endanger life, possession of ammunition, and possession



Murder-accused Daniel Harroo - left - and Marcus Uriah Jacob of ammunition to endanger number plates.

Additionally, Jacob has been accused of driving a motor vehicle bearing false

9:15 a.m. on December 12 when a car pulled up next to him and a man armed with a handgun got out. The gunman approached the 46-year-old and shot him several times before driving off.

Police responding to the shooting intercepted a vehicle in which Jacob and Harroo were travelling and one Glock 17 pistol with six rounds of nine-millimetre ammunition was found. The two were arrested as suspects in Mohammed's murder.

Dominica: New Opposition leader sworn in

Parliamentary Representative for the Salisbury Constituency Jesma Paul-Victor has been sworn in as the new Leader of the Opposition in Dominica.

Paul-Victor had successfully contested the Salisbury constituency in the island's December 6 general elections as an independent candidate.

Accompanied by members of her family, she took the oath of office before the President of Dominica, Charles A. Savarin, at the

State House today.

According to GIS Dominica, the Public Relations and Information Arm, Paul-Victor has pledged to work with the government to bring development to her Constituency.

She also disclosed that she would serve an initial 18 months as Leader of the Opposition following which she would give way to the Parliamentary Representative for the Marigot Constituency, Anthony Charles.



Sworn in: Jesma Paul-Victor, Opposition leader of Dominica (Photo credit: Dominica GIS)

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er, people have to be responsible for these things. Our country was going down the drain," Drew told Parliament.

Former prime minister and national security minister, Dr Timothy Harris was not present in the Parliament when Prime Minister Drew made the statement calling on his predecessor to publicly respond to the situation.

UK ambulance workers join widening strike for above-inflation pay

Aljazeera - Unions representing nurses and ambulance workers threaten more walkouts if the government keeps refusing to discuss pay.

UK ambulance workers have gone on strike, widening a dispute with the government over its refusal to increase pay above inflation after recent walkouts by nurses.

Healthcare leaders warned about straining a health system already in crisis as ambulance staff at the state-run National Health Service (NHS), including paramedics and call handlers, walked out on Wednesday.

Thousands of members of the Royal College of Nursing (RCN) in England, Wales and Northern Ireland took to picket lines on Tuesday, just five days after their first strike in its 106-year history.

Unions representing NHS nurses and ambulance workers have threatened further stoppages in the new year if the government keeps refusing to discuss pay.

About 40 staff formed a picket line outside West Midlands Ambulance Services' hub in Longford in central England, standing behind a banner reading: "Our NHS is under siege".

As passing ambulances sounded their horns in support, a Unite union rep-



Members of staff place a banner on the railings outside the Waterloo ambulance station in London [Niklas Halle'n/AFP]

resentative, Steve Thompson, said the walkout was about trying to retain and improve services, as well as pay.

"This is about telling them [the government] that we are not going to allow it [a deterioration in services] to happen. We are not going to roll over.

Employees across the UK economy are demanding salary rises in the face of decades-high inflation – currently running at nearly 11 percent – which is spurring the worst cost-of-living crisis in a generation.

"We want the government to actually wake up and realise that this situation is serious."

Matthew Taylor, the chief executive of the NHS Confederation, urged the public not to panic during strikes on Wednesday.

"It's important to say that if you have a life-threatening emergen-

cy, you must call 999 and the trade unions have made absolutely clear they'll respond to those," he said.

'Immense pressure'

Adrian Boyle, the president of the Royal College of Emergency Medicine, however, said the emergency system had been under "immense pressure" for the last three years.

He called the last year "the worst we've ever seen it" when it came to delays in getting patients into hospital from ambulances due to a lack of beds.

He said accident and emergency departments were expecting people to make their own way to hospital – even those with life-threatening conditions.

"We're expecting people with strokes and heart attacks to turn up at the front door. Now, because of the delays this has already been happening quite a lot anyway," he told Times

Radio.

But the government insists it must stick to more modest increases for public sector workers recommended by independent pay review bodies.

"The best way to help them and help everyone else in the country is for us to get a grip and reduce inflation as quickly as possible," Prime Minister Rishi Sunak has said.

The RCN has criticised the government's stance and accused Health Secretary Steve Barclay of adopting a "macho" negotiating style during recent brief meetings.

It has warned that nurses would take wider industrial action next month if the government "keeps giving our nursing staff the cold shoulder".

Ministers have drafted in 750 military personnel to drive ambulances and perform logistics roles to mitigate the fallout of Wednesday's ambulance strike.

Despite the government's insistence that it will not negotiate, polls indicate most people support nurses, and to a lesser extent other workers walking out.

YouGov polling published on Tuesday showed two-thirds of Britons support striking nurses, with 63-percent support for ambulance staff.

Afghan women weep as Taliban fighters enforce university ban

AP — Taliban security forces in the Afghan capital on Wednesday enforced a higher education ban for women by blocking their access to universities, with video obtained by The Associated Press showing women weeping and consoling each other outside one campus in Kabul.

The country's Taliban rulers a day earlier ordered women nationwide to stop attending private and public universities effective immediately and until further notice. The Taliban-led administration has not given a reason for the ban or reacted to the fierce and swift global condemnation of it.

Journalists saw Taliban forces outside four Kabul universities Wednesday. The forces stopped some women from entering, while allowing others to go in and finish their work. They also tried to prevent any photography, filming and protests from taking place.

Rahimullah Nadeem, a spokesman for Kabul University, confirmed that classes for female students had stopped. He said some women were allowed to enter the campus for paperwork and administrative reasons, and that four graduation ceremonies were held Wednesday.

Members of an activist group called the Unity and Solidarity of Afghanistan Women gathered outside the private Edrak University in Kabul on Wednesday morning, chanting slogans in Dari.

"Do not make education political!" they said. "Once again university is banned for women, we do not want to be eliminated!"

Despite initially promising a more moderate rule respecting rights for women and minorities, the Taliban have widely implemented their interpretation of Islamic law, or Sharia,

since they seized power in August 2021.

They have banned girls from middle school and high school, barred women from most fields of employment and ordered them to wear head-to-toe clothing in public. Women are also banned from parks and gyms.

A letter shared by the spokesman for the Ministry of Higher Education, Ziaullah Hashmi, on Tuesday told private and public universities to implement the ban as soon as possible and to inform the ministry once the ban is in place.

The move is certain to hurt efforts by the Taliban to win international recognition for their government and aid from potential donors at a time when Afghanistan is mired in a worsening humanitarian crisis. The international community has urged Taliban leaders to reopen schools and give women their right to public space.

Qatar and Pakistan, both Muslim countries, have expressed their disappointment at the university ban and urged authorities to reconsider their decision.

Qatar played a key role in facilitating the negotiations that led to the withdrawal of U.S. forces from Afghanistan last year. It called on the "Afghan caretaker government" to review the ban in line with the teachings of Islam on women's education.

Neighbouring Pakistan said its position on the issue of women's education has been "clear and consistent."

U.S. Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken said late Tuesday that no other country in the world bars women and girls from receiving an education.

"The Taliban cannot expect to be a legitimate member of the international community until they respect



Afghan women students stand outside the Kabul University in Kabul, Afghanistan, Wednesday, Dec. 21, 2022. Taliban security forces in Afghanistan's capital city are upholding a higher education ban for women by blocking access to university campuses. The country's Taliban rulers have ordered women nationwide to stop attending private and public universities effective immediately and until further notice. The Taliban-led administration has not given a reason for the ban or reacted to the fierce and swift global condemnation of it. (AP Photo/Ebrahim Noroozi)

the rights of all in Afghanistan," he warned. "This decision will come with consequences for the Taliban."

Abdallah Abdallah, a senior leader in Afghanistan's former U.S.-allied government, described universal education as a "fundamental" right.

"Depriving girls of this right is regrettable," Abdallah said in a Tweet. He urged the country's Taliban leadership to reconsider the decision.

Afghan political analyst Ahmad Saeedi said that the latest decision by the Taliban authorities may have

cont'd on page 20

Deadly California earthquake leaves thousands without power

BBC - Two people have died and tens of thousands of households were left without power after a magnitude 6.4 earthquake rocked northern California.

The tremor, 215 miles (350 km) north of San Francisco, has caused widespread damage to roadways.

"Anything that was on the walls broke off the walls," said JB Mathers, a resident of the coastal city of Eureka.

Authorities have closed several roads and warned the public to brace for aftershocks.

The quake struck at 02:34 PST (10:34 GMT) on Tuesday. It spawned up to 80 smaller quakes between magnitude 4.6 and 2.5, according to the US Geological Survey.

Humboldt County Sheriff's Office said that 11 people had been injured, in addition to the two that died.

The tremor ruptured gas lines, causing leaks. One



building caught fire and was quickly extinguished, while two other buildings collapsed.

By Tuesday evening local time, power was still out for over 32,000 customers, according to tracker Poweroutages.us.

The sheriff's office had said earlier that no tsunami was expected after the quake, which occurred around two miles offshore.

Authorities are still as-

sessing damage. Utility crews say they could take days to restore power in the remote, heavily forested area.

The California Highway Patrol has closed the Fernbridge, a 1,320ft (400m) concrete arch span crossing the Eel River, after discovering cracks in four places, according to CBS, the BBC's partner in the US.

In the city of Fortuna,

power was out and shattered glass littered the pavement.

People in the area have been told by authorities to boil their water, due to the possibility that pipes have been contaminated by groundwater.

On Saturday, a smaller 3.6 magnitude earthquake struck the San Francisco region, waking up thousands of people in the early hours and causing minor damage to infrastructure.

cont'd from pg 19

closed the door to winning international acceptance.

"The issue of recognition is over," he said. "The world is now trying to find an alternative. The world tried to interact more but they (the Taliban) don't let the world talk to them about recognition."

Saeedi said he believes most Afghans favour female education because they consider learning to be a religious command contained in the Quran.

He said the decision to bar women from universities was likely made by a handful of senior Taliban figures, including the leader Hibatullah Akhundzada, who are based in the southwestern city of Kandahar, the birthplace of the Taliban movement.

He said the main centre of power is Kandahar, rather than the Taliban-led government in Kabul, even if the ministers of justice, higher education and so-called "virtue and vice" would also have been involved in the decision to ban women from universities.

U.N. experts said last month that the Taliban's treatment of women and girls in Afghanistan may amount to a crime against humanity and should be investigated and prosecuted under international law.

They said the Taliban actions against females deepened existing rights violations — already the "most draconian globally" — and may constitute gender persecution, which is a crime against humanity.

The Taliban authorities have rejected the allegation.

World Cup 2022: How Argentina's chaotic celebrations unfolded

By Katy Watson

BBC - Argentina may well be waking up from its biggest ever hangover - at least if the number of revellers on the streets of Buenos Aires on Tuesday is anything to go by.

There's no denying Argentina desperately wanted to bring the World Cup trophy back home. The strength of feeling after every match during the tournament was testament to that, the dedication of fans to celebrate every goal scored.

The pride of Argentinians is multi-layered. Yes, it's their third World Cup win and that's an achievement in itself, but it was more personal than that - in Lionel Messi they have a footballing star now rivaling their God-like Diego Maradona. How dare he not take home the only trophy he was missing - they wanted it for Leo.

But this is a country that also needed some uplifting - a chance to dream, to smile, to have some fun. Argentina has been facing an endless economic crisis and with soaring inflation, every day gets harder. The tournament was a chance to switch off and kick back - and wow, did they do that.

"We have suffered so much through these past years," one Argentinian told me. "It's the first time we have something to cel-



Argentina's World Cup winners had to abandon an open-top bus parade in Buenos Aires and instead took a helicopter ride over the millions of ecstatic fans partying in the streets

ebate."

Sunday's celebrations were immense - a spontaneous party in the centre of Buenos Aires, replicated across the country. But Tuesday's celebrations overshadowed them by a long way. It was, says the country's media, the biggest party in the nation's history.

"Today the people don't care whether they eat or not," said another reveller. "If people are happy and joyous, the money doesn't matter. People are happy to spend it today."

With an estimated five million people on the streets of Buenos Aires, they started early - Even by 8am there were dozens of people dressed in their Messi 10 shirts, already having a kip on the park

benches, before the event.

It didn't take long to realise few people would actually ever see the parade pass by - a small bus carrying the team versus an entire nation clamouring to see them. But that mattered very little to the majority of Argentines - this was about enjoying the sun, a public holiday and the moment - Argentina's moment.

With so many people crowded around the Obelisk in the centre of Buenos Aires, it became clear the parade was never going to be able to pass through the thick crowds. No matter, when the parade changed route, the people ran to them. When the fighter jets did a fly-past, revelers cheered. They cheered again when the team abandoned the bus and took a

helicopter to wave to the fans from afar.

The team was the reason for the partying, but in a way it was just the spark - the fiesta flame kept burning and will for a while yet.

This is a deeply proud, yet troubled country. Argentinians are always teased for claiming to be more European than their South American counterparts. But this victory over France made them deeply proud of being South American. That was contagious and has brought the region together - even if it's brief, it's welcomed.

And like all good parties, they usually end in chaos - the over-excited fans jumping on the team's bus, the drunk Porteños and the piles of litter made that abundantly clear.

Why Qatar 2022 was also Africa's World Cup

By **Oluwashina Okeleji**

Tournament was an indication of the continent's growth in global game, with Morocco's run crowning impressive displays by African teams.

Aljazeera - On Sunday night, inside Lusail Stadium, Lionel Messi finally completed the gauntlet of football and, in doing so, delivered Argentina's first World Cup victory in 36 years.

However, that was not the only story of triumph to tell about the 2022 FIFA World Cup in Qatar.

Enter Morocco.

The Atlas Lions may have fallen short of a podium finish but, in reaching the last four, they went farther than any African nation had ever managed and won the hearts of millions around the continent and beyond. And in the process, they proved they can go toe to toe with any top opponent.

"African teams no longer fear that other teams can run them over," Radhi Jaidi, former Tunisia international and Esperance manager, told Al Jazeera.

Homegrown coaches

Twelve years after South Africa became the first country from the continent to host the World Cup, it is entirely justified to brand Qatar 2022 also as Africa's World Cup, all things considered.

On the field, the continent posted its best-ever statistical performance, with every African team recording a victory, including Cameroon stunning Brazil, Tunisia beating France and Morocco defeating Belgium. And off the field, African teams' supporters also stole the show – from the relentless drumming and dancing of the Senegal and Ghana contingent to the thunderous chanting and clapping of their Morocco and Tunisia counterparts.

And there was more: For the first time, all five representatives from the continent were led by local managers.

While the link could be seen by



some as coincidental, the contrast between this tournament and the 2018 edition – in which two of the five teams were managed by African coaches, but none made it past the group stage, and between them, won just three matches in total – is impossible to ignore.

For a continent that, over the years, has made a habit of paying handsome sums to expatriates on short-term contracts, the achievement of Morocco's Walid Regragui could lead to an awakening.

"The success of Morocco is very important for the continent and other local coaches, too," Jaidi said.

"It's a great message to have a local manager succeed," he said, adding that qualified homegrown coaches should be allowed to compete at the highest level," he added.

"Employing a foreign coach is always seen as an opportunity by those in charge at the federations to sell the narrative that they've appointed someone advanced who will take the nation to the next level."

While Jaidi is eager that African coaches be afforded more trust, he also believed they must raise their level by obtaining the required qualifications and exposure.

"African coaches must strive to be the best in modern football, be the ones

to help the players progress to the next level, but before they get a chance to work with the players they need to progress themselves. They must learn how modern football works, because it's not just tactics on the pitch but a lot of other aspects."

A bigger picture with 2026

With Qatar 2022 already in the past, attention will now shift to whether African teams can build on their Qatar performances in the next edition of the tournament, which will be contested by 48 teams.

The expansion means the continent will have at least nine teams playing at the 2026 World Cup in the United States, Mexico and Canada, with the possibility of a 10th representative should an African team make it through an intercontinental playoff.

This presents both a challenge and an opportunity, as historically Africa has suffered from under-representation on the global stage.

"Tournaments like the World Cup are very competitive and big, but if things are put in place and players arrive in the tournament in great conditions, I think Africa can make a great impact," former Morocco, Nigeria and South Africa coach Philippe Troussier told Al Jazeera.

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“Morocco have challenged other African countries to fight for the trophy instead of trying to celebrate small progress. This will change the face of African football and teams forever.”

While African teams' successes in Qatar suggest there is scope for improvement in North America in 2026, Jaidi insists there is still work to do if the continent is to deliver on its potential.

“We all need to learn from what Morocco did to get to this level,” he said, citing among others the North African nation's commitment to developing local coaches – 20 of the 23 recipients of the inaugural Confederation of African Football Pro Licence coaching diploma in June were Moroccan.

Continued Jaidi, “Providing great infrastructures around the clubs and national level to get to where they are now, a great federation, one of the world's best training centres of football, scouting of local and diaspora talents.

“Their success is not by chance or accidental, it's been planned and programmed and part of the result is the success in Qatar – and they continue to build on this.”

Former Wolves and Nigeria midfielder Seyi Olofinjana, who recently held the technical director role at Swiss club Grasshopper Zurich, was of the same view.

“There needs to be a way, desire and deliberate plan on the part of the federations that is then disseminated to the players,” he told Al Jazeera.

“Morocco was a joy to watch because they've managed to merge their plans with a proven manager and players ready to play without lacking the overall knowledge of the collective goal.”

Another likely factor in Africa's unprecedented success in the Middle East was the composition of their squads. More than 40 percent of the players named as part of the rosters of the five representatives were born outside Africa, a factor which Jaidi believed played a part in levelling the playing field in Qatar.

For Troussier, the fact that African teams featured a number of foreign-born players was also advantageous.

“Most of these players are educated from the beginning; a player born in Germany, France, Italy and in the Netherlands, they play automatically at a different level, they share time with high-level coaches, high-level players, technical programmes and automatically when they come back to the country, they bring a strong experience,” he said.

The Frenchman, however, stressed that local growth should not be neglected.

“These players will help improve the team, but the federations must also prepare, develop a programme and strategy that can help improve the country's football,” he said.

It is this merging of approaches that Morocco – whose World Cup squad featured 14 players born outside the country – benefited from, according to Olofinjana,

“It's evident that there's a culture of what it means to play for Morocco from the players, technical staff and even the supporters,” he said. “You could sense that there's an element of what it meant to wear the Moroccan shirt.

“The country has created a sense of the importance of representing Morocco. Ahead of the coming World Cup, Morocco has shown the rest of Africa that it is very possible to reach the semi-finals, and even the final of the tournament.”



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Sports News



Phoenix Suns & Phoenix Mercury set for record \$4bn sale

BBC - Billionaire Mat Ishbia is closing in on a deal for the Phoenix Suns and Mercury in an agreement that will value the franchises at \$4bn (£3.3bn).

Mortgage executive Ishbia has made a deal in principle with Robert Sarver, who is selling after being suspended for racist and sexist behaviour.

"Both teams have an incredibly dynamic fanbase. I have loved experiencing the energy of the Valley," said Ishbia.

The deal would be a record for the purchase of an NBA team.

Ishbia's investment in a controlling stake in the Suns and WNBA side the Mercury values the franchise at \$4bn, more than the \$3.3bn price tag that Joe Tsai's deal put on the Brooklyn Nets and Barclays Center in 2019.

Ishbia played college basketball at Michigan State and was a fringe player in the team's NCAA Championship win under the long-serving coach Tom Izzo in 2000.

"Basketball is at the core of my life, from my high school days as a player to the honour of playing for Coach Izzo and winning a national ti-



The Suns are currently fourth in the Western Conference after losing out to the Dallas Mavericks in the Conference semifinals last year

tle at Michigan State University," he added.

Ishbia's arrival in the sport was welcomed by NBA great Magic Johnson, who also played for Michigan State, although in a different era.

"All of the other 29 NBA teams better watch out because Mat's a winner!" Johnson wrote.

Ishbia said in November that he was considering a bid to buy American football's Washington Commanders after he lost out in the bidding for

fellow NFL side the Denver Broncos in August.

Current Phoenix owner Sarver was fined \$10m and suspended from basketball for a year in September after an investigation into claims of racism and misogyny found he had "engaged in conduct that clearly violated common workplace standards".

He announced he was looking to sell the franchise shortly after, saying it was "the best course of action for everyone".

Andy Murray: Scot in good shape but wary of one 'big injury' ending career

By Kheredine Idessane

BBC - Andy Murray says he is one "big injury" away from calling time on his career, but that he is currently in the best shape he has been in for some time.

The three-time Grand Slam champion, 35, had hip surgery in 2018 and 2019.

And, while 2022 has

been disappointing, a training block with coach Ivan Lendl in Florida has convinced him he is fit enough to compete at the top level.

"If my body is in good shape and I'm still able to compete consistently, I'll keep playing," Murray said.

"But I can't look so far in advance with the age I'm at and with the issues I've

had. If I was to have a big injury, I probably wouldn't try to come back from that."

Murray played 45 singles matches in 2022, winning 26 and reaching finals in Stuttgart and Sydney to reach an end-of-year ranking of 49.

His best run in a Grand Slam was reaching the third round of the US Open,

where he lost in four sets to Matteo Berrettini.

The former world number one will be part of the Scotland team taking on England in the Battle of the Brits in Aberdeen over the next two days.

Murray will face Jack Draper on Wednesday and Dan Evans on Thursday, *cont'd on pg 25*

Masters 2023: LIV golfers allowed to compete at Augusta National

BBC - Players who have signed up to the controversial LIV Golf circuit will be allowed to play at the 2023 Masters, Augusta officials have confirmed.

LIV players, which include previous Masters champions Phil Mickelson and Dustin Johnson, have been suspended indefinitely from the PGA Tour.

But Masters chairman Fred Ridley said the event's focus was to bring together "a preeminent field of golfers".

He said: "We will invite those eligible under our current criteria to compete."

The 87th Masters will take place at Augusta National in the United States from 6-9 April.

American Scottie Scheffler won the iconic Green Jacket this year, finishing three shots clear of Northern Ireland's Rory McIlroy. They are players who have both been vocal in their support of the PGA Tour.

The emergence of LIV Golf, a Saudi-backed break-away tour offering huge sums of money to players,



Sergio Garcia, Dustin Johnson and Patrick Reed are among LIV golfers who will be eligible to play at The Masters in 2023

has caused deep divisions in the sport.

Fronted by Australian former world number one Greg Norman, the project has promised to shake up the golfing landscape and has lured some of the biggest names in men's golf.

As well as Mickelson and Johnson, the likes of Bryson DeChambeau, Brooks Koepka and Patrick Reed were also swayed to leave the PGA Tour.

There was another significant defection when Australia's Cameron Smith

- last year's Open champion and world number two - became the highest-ranked player to join LIV.

A 14-tournament LIV Golf league - with a prize fund of \$405m (£336m) is scheduled to start in 2023 but will not compete with the four majors or international team events, say event organisers.

"Regrettably, recent actions have divided men's professional golf by diminishing the virtues of the game and the meaningful legacies of those who built

it," Ridley said.

"Although we are disappointed in these developments, our focus is to honour the tradition of bringing together a preeminent field of golfers."

Future changes to the Masters' invitation criteria will be announced in April, Ridley added.

R&A chief executive Martin Slumbers said in July it was "not on the agenda" to ban LIV players from next year's Open but also did not rule out changing the championship's entry.

cont'd from pg 24

before teaming up with brother Jamie - who has arranged the event - to play Joe Salisbury and Neal Skupski.

After that, the two-time Olympic gold medallist is targeting improved performances at the Grand Slams next year, starting at the Australian Open in January.

"I spent three weeks in Florida, getting my body right and getting some work done on my game and it went really well," he said.

"I'm certainly in better shape than I was. A lot of work was done in the gym, trying to build up my endurance and my stamina a bit and I'm hoping that's going to help me next year.

"I wasn't happy with how last season went - certainly the last six months or so from a physical perspective - but my ranking still went from 125 to 50 in a year. I'm hoping that this year, with the work I've done, things will continue to improve and I'll still be motivated to get out there and compete."

Sports News



Flyers2 maintain unbeaten run in ABBA's second division

Flyers2 are still unbeaten in the Antigua and Barbuda Basketball Association's (ABBA) Second Division League.

Flyers2 secured their third win in as many encounters by soaring to an emphatic 88-43 victory over the Honourable Gaston Browne Pointvill Ballers in the second game of a Zone 2 double-header at the JSC Sports Complex on Tuesday night.

T-Shawn Lewis scored 16 points and grabbed 12 rebounds; Jevonte Daley

also contributed 16 points with seven rebounds and seven assists; while Andre Edwards, Sadiq Phillip and Shamar Joseph each chipped in with 10 points for Flyers2.

Khalid Shabazz scored nine points and snatched seven rebounds for the Honourable Gaston Browne Pointvill Ballers, who suffered their third loss in four appearances.

Cuties Ovals Superiors recorded their second win in four appearances by romping to an 87-58

victory over the Honourable Daryll Matthew Ottos Clippers in the first game of Tuesday's double-header.

De-Longe Jules shot a game-high 34 points and had six steals, Amare Browne scored 15 points and Judah Ferris chipped in with 10 points, six rebounds and six steals for Cuties Ovals Superiors.

Jason Philip sank 15 points and pulled down seven rebounds, Michael Gunthorpe converted 11 points and grabbed 15 re-

bounds, while Jules Fredericks scored nine points and snatched six rebounds for the Honourable Daryll Matthew Ottos Clippers who lost for the fourth time in as many encounters.

Wadadli Elites2 and the Honourable Gaston Browne Pointvill Ballers will clash in the first game of a Zone 2 double-header at 6:45 pm today.

The Honourable Daryll Matthew Ottos Clippers will take on Young Warrior Ballers in the second game at 8:30 pm.

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GNFC's youth football league to resume next January

The Annual Youth Football League, which is hosted by the Generation Next Football Club (GNFC) will make a return to Antigua and Barbuda's sporting calendar next year.

The Gomez/Netherlands Insurance Youth League, which was started in 2015, was brought to a halt in 2020 by the emergence of the Covid-19 Pandemic.

But President of the Generation Next FC Ricky Santos said the league, which provides competition for boys and girls at various age group levels from Under-7 to Under-17 years old, will be resuming sometime in January, 2023.

Santos said the league is geared towards helping to address the need for more youth football competitions for the youngsters in the twin-island state.

"From time to time, a lot of the clubs do have tournaments, but it's weekend tournaments. Not that I am knocking it, but it's not

enough football if we are going to do it so and that is why we started the Gomez/Netherlands Insurance Youth Football League," Santos stated.

"First of all, we have the secondary school league that is going on presently and that usually runs from September to December and then we have the primary schools' competition that is held after that.

"Now in January 2015, we (GNFC) started a youth football league, which is based on a home and away basis even though all the matches are played at one location. So each team play its opponents twice. So we start with the Under-7s through to the Under-17s and there is a female division within there too.

"That programme runs from January to the end of May and every weekend, every Saturday, we play matches. The last time we had it was just before Covid and we had 64 teams throughout the various age



President of the Generation Next Football Club Ricky Santos. (File photo)

divisions."

Santos also indicated that the participating clubs are not required to pay any fees to take part in the Gomez/Netherlands Insurance Youth Football League.

"I should say, because we have good sponsors at Kenneth A. Gomez &

Sons, Netherlands Insurance, AS Bryden and Milo and Nestle brands, none of the clubs have to pay to enter the league. There is no cost for it because all of the costs are covered by the sponsors," Santos said.

"So they are basically playing for four and a half months, every weekend they will be playing matches across the various divisions and they will be playing one another twice.

"So you are looking at an average of 18 matches for each team in each division that will be played over a four-and-a-half-month period and they also have the school league."

cont'd from pg 28

twice, converting a penalty in the 6th minute and netting his second in the 20th minute.

Daniel Bryan then scored his team's third and final goal in the 33rd minute to give police a 3-0 halftime lead. Jahquane Richards scored a consolation goal for JSC Progressors by converting a penalty in the 61st minute. It was the second loss in four matches for JSC Progressors.

The first division will continue with four more matches today.

Lion Hill will meet Bolans at the Golden Grove playing field at 5 pm, while Bendals will clash with Green City at Bendals at the same time.

Fort Road will tackle Young Lions at the Old Road playing field at 4:20 pm, while John Hughes will face West Ham at the Princess Margaret School playing field.

Jennings United maintain perfect run in second division

Jennings United recorded the largest margin of victory by any team thus far this season in the Antigua and Barbuda Football Association's (ABFA) Second Division on Tuesday, 20th December.

Jennings United maintained their perfect start to their campaign by romping to a 9-0 victory over Young Warriors in the first game of a double-header at the ABFA's Technical Centre at Paynters.

Striker Daryl Massicot had a four-goal haul and Shaquille Watkins scored a hat-trick to propel Jennings United to their fourth win in as many matches in the second division.

Massicot scored in the 4th and 11th minutes to give Jennings United a 2-0 halftime lead. He then scored his other two goals in the 52nd and 56th minutes as Jennings United had seven conversions in the second half to totally dominate the one-sided affair.

Watkins achieved his hat-trick by scoring in the 66th, 70th and 87th minutes. The other goals were scored by Diogenes Mauricio in the 76th minute and Jerry Williams in the 80th



Jennings United recorded the largest margin of victory by any team thus far this season in the Antigua and Barbuda Football Association's (ABFA) Second Division on Tuesday, 20th December. (Photo courtesy Jennings United FC)

minute. It was the second defeat in four matches for Young Warriors.

Attacking Saints also kept their unbeaten run intact by claiming their third win in four outings with a 4-1 victory over ABAYA at the Mack Pond playing field in All Saints.

Malone Joseph gave Attacking Saints a 1-0 lead with a 22nd minute conversion and Joshua James scored an equalizer for ABAYA in the 34th minute as both teams ended the first half deadlocked at 1-1.

But Attacking Saints scored three unanswered

goals in the second half to take control of the match. Tinoy Andrew scored in the 55th minute to give Attacking Saints a 2-1 lead.

Kerrin McKenzie netted in the 74th minute and Rashawn Martin wrapped up Attacking Saints' victory with an 80th minute conversion.

It was the third loss in four matches for ABAYA who are still seeking their first win in this season's second division league.

Tuesday's other second division affair between Real Blizzard and English Harbour ended in a 1-1

draw at the New Winthropes playing field.

Richard Brissette put English Harbour ahead with a 31st minute conversion, but Clive Ambrose scored in the 41st minute to equalize for Real Blizzard.

Police recorded their second win in four encounters in the first division by pulling off a 3-1 win over JSC Progressors in the opening game of Tuesday's double-header at the ABFA's Technical Centre.

All three goals for police were scored in the first half. Terrel Richards scored

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