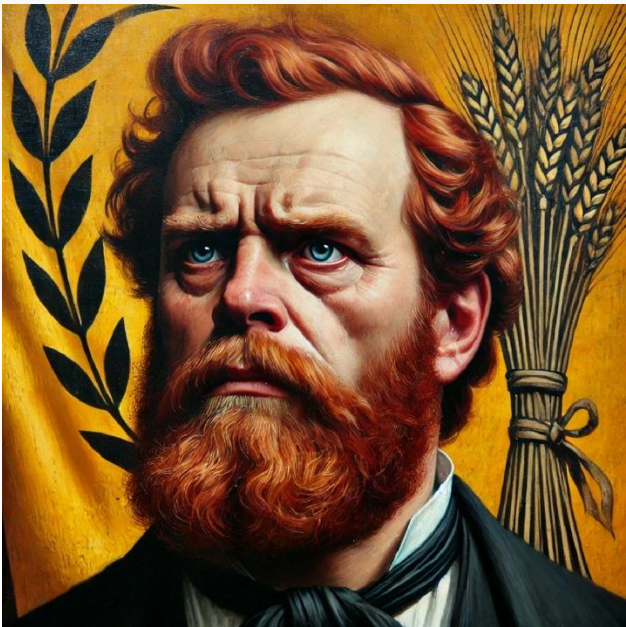


# THE EVERSHROUD GAZETTE

A HEFTY ROLL OF INDEPENDENT NEWS SINCE 723 Y.S.



Chancellor Paxton

## Elijah Paxton Secures Second Term as Chancellor

GAËTAN BOUCHARD

The results of the Caldwell People’s Republic elections have been finalized, with the Caldwell Laborers’ Party securing victory with 34.6% of the vote, ensuring that Chancellor Elijah Paxton will continue to lead for another year. In a speech following the announcement, Chancellor Paxton reaffirmed his commitment to “a future of prosperity, independence, and unity,” emphasizing ongoing efforts to strengthen Caldwell’s agricultural sector and ensure stability in the region. This year’s elections featured competition from various political factions, each advocating different strategies for governance and economic policy.

Final results are as follows:

- Caldwell Laborers’ Party – 34.6%
- Caldwell People’s Party – 18.2%
- Workers' Solidarity League – 12.9%
- Caldwell Agrarian Movement – 9.7%
- Caldwell Farmers' Alliance – 7.5%
- Caldwell People’s Front – 5.8%
- People’s Party of Caldwell – 4.3%

Voter turnout remained high, with election officials praising the strong civic engagement demonstrated throughout the process. However, minor procedural concerns have been raised by opposition candidates, particularly regarding ballot accessibility in rural districts and allegations of procedural irregularities.



## Azure-Silt Border Dispute Continues

EMILIA ZIELKE

Reports from the disputed territories between Silt and the Azurean League indicate another escalation of hostilities, as border skirmishes have resulted in minor casualties on both sides and the burning of several farmsteads. Though both factions have officially denied any declaration of war, concerns continue to mount over the potential for full-scale conflict.

Sources confirm that the clashes occurred near the trade roads west of Lamya, where Azurean patrols and Siltan mercenary bands engaged in a series of confrontations over the past fortnight. While local authorities claim the engagements were small in scale, the destruction of farmland and displacement of civilians have further strained relations between the two powers.

In response to the growing tensions, Prince d’Azure, Artemise Laurent, issued a measured statement from the Azurean capital:

*"The League will not be goaded into reckless action, nor will we stand idly by while our people are threatened. The balance of power in the Isles is delicate, and we must tread with wisdom. Azure remains open to diplomatic resolution, but should force be met with force, we will respond in kind."*

Representatives from silt, meanwhile, have remained largely silent on the matter, apart from a brief communique emphasizing that Silt merely seeks to uphold stability in the region and that any "provocations" should be attributed to Azurean forces.

Independent observers worry that, should further skirmishes continue, the conflict may spiral beyond border disputes and draw both factions into open war.

As tensions simmer, all eyes turn to the coming weeks – will diplomacy hold, or is the Isles' most fragile truce about to break?

More updates as they develop.

### IN THIS EDITION

**ALE PRICES VOLATILE** PG. 2

**AZURE STRIKES SILK DEAL** PG. 3

**FALLOW MYSTERY RESURFACES** PG. 4



FINANCE

MARKET VOLATILITY ACROSS THE ISLES  
*THE EXCHANGE REPORT*

KONRAD HANNO

**AZURE** – Prices across the Isles shifted as traders reacted to tightening supply chains and shifting demand. Grain saw sharp gains, with Caldwell reporting a 5.3% increase and Azure climbing 7.2%. Buyers are securing shipments early amid concerns over supply chain disruptions. Merchants operating through Ald Margraeve, however, noted only a 1.6% rise.

Luxury goods posted another 3.1% decline, with slower bulk orders in Azure and Silt. Analysts suggest buyer hesitation rather than market collapse, as collectors and aristocrats grow cautious. "There's no fire sale happening," said commodities analyst Kasara Vell, though some traders see an opportunity. "If you can hold onto inventory, this could be a temporary dip."

Blackleaf finally stabilized, with Caldwell posting a 0.3% shift and Azure holding steady for the first time in six cycles. "We're back to normal patterns," said Tymon Wexley, a Siltborne trading house representative. Others disagree, pointing to enforcement crackdowns in key ports that could limit future supply.

Iron remains curiously flat, despite increased forge activity. Fungus exports out of Duskhaven held strong, driven by sustained demand in alchemy and medicine. Ale remains volatile, particularly in Azure and Caldwell, where traders continue to exploit short-term arbitrage plays.



Merchants rarely buy goods in bulk in these uncertain times.



The result of a crackdown in Mong Vinaya



*Artist's impression of the road past Holgren*

BLACKLEAF CRISIS KILLS YOUTH

*I Lost My Boy to Blackleaf – A Mother's Grief*

ELIAS JANE

Jornath – In a modest home on the outskirts of the city, Ylva Santoso sits by the hearth, hands wrapped around a cup of tea gone cold. Her voice is steady, but her eyes flicker toward the empty chair across from her.

"My Bibbin was a good boy," she says. "Always had his nose in books. Said he wanted to see the world someday." Bibbin Santoso, seventeen, was found lifeless in an alley behind a tannery six months ago. The official cause was exposure, but his mother believes otherwise.

"It was blackleaf," she says. "I didn't see it at first. Thought it was just a bit of smoke now and then, nothing serious. I never thought my son would –" She pauses, her breath catching. "He told me it helped him think. Made things clearer. But then he stopped eating. Stopped sleeping."

She says he grew restless, disappearing for days at a time. Sold his books first, then his tools. Eventually, his coat.

"They say it was an accident," she murmurs. "But I know better. He was gone long before they found him." She reaches for an old wooden flute on the mantle – Bibbin's flute, one of the few things he left behind.

"I just wish I had seen it sooner," she says, voice barely above a whisper. Outside, the city carries on. The market hums, ships unload cargo, traders argue over price. Somewhere in it all, another boy takes his first pipe of blackleaf.

Refugees Flee West as Oghren Villages Empty

TATE PEMBROKE

**DUSKHAVEN** – The disputed southern slopes of the Oghren Range are emptying as entire villages flee westward toward Duskhaven, braving soaking rain and treacherous roads in search of shelter. "They come in starving, hypothermic—many don't make it," said a Duskhaven official overseeing relief efforts. "But we take them in. Someone has to."

Azure, Sylfaene, and Holgren have refused to grant asylum, citing strained resources and security concerns, though they continue to provide food and supplies along the migration routes. Duskhaven, already burdened, struggles to accommodate the influx, with growing fears of disease and hunger as numbers swell.



PUBLIC OPINION

Adventurers Guilds: Solution or Problem?

NIKO MELQART

The rise of adventurers’ guilds across the Evershroud Isles has been hailed as both a boon to security and a menace to stability. Nowhere is this more evident than in Azure, where the Azurean Adventurers Guild has rapidly expanded, offering contracts ranging from bandit suppression to monster culling—and, some say, mercenary work thinly veiled as public service.

Supporters argue that the guild provides an essential service. City guards are overstretched, and local militias lack the training to handle growing threats. “The guild steps in where governments fail,” says Renalt Greaves, a retired soldier turned

quartermaster. “Without us, roads would be impassable, and villages would fend for themselves.”

Yet critics suggest that unchecked adventuring has created as many problems as it solves. Unlike city watchmen or noble retinues, adventurers operate without centralized oversight. Reports of guild-sanctioned raids, excessive collateral damage, and adventurers disregarding local law have grown.

Meanwhile, the influx of foreign sellswords and drifters from Xondar and Zhi-La has led to an underclass of financially dependent newcomers, many of whom arrive in Azure seeking a fortune but end up trapped in poverty. “They flood into the guild,

hoping for work,” says Lord Erwin Marell, a merchant in Azure, “but most don’t make it past grunt contracts. They live in the slums, waiting for jobs that don’t come.”

With independent contracts, foreign clients, and private backers, the line between protector and profiteer blurs. The guild remains indispensable, but as its power grows, so do concerns about its influence.

Is the guild a safeguard against lawlessness, or just another force for hire? For now, the only certainty is that there’s always someone willing to pay.



A typical adventurer’s guild hall: a run-down hostel in the slums.

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OVERSEAS TRADE

Smooth Sailing: Azure to Secure Zhi-La Silk Trade Deal

BAYU SURYA

AZURE – In two weeks, representatives from Azure and Zhi-La will finalize an exclusive trade agreement granting the Azurean League sole access to Zhilan silk, effectively cutting off other factions from direct procurement. The signing will take place at the Zhilan Embassy in Azure, with Prince Artemise Laurent and Beryl Adelaide, Marquise de Jornath, in attendance.

This agreement positions Azure as the only political entity able to import silk without intermediaries, forcing rivals to purchase through Xondaran traders at inflated prices. Silt has refused to comment on the deal, but

trade officials in Caldwell have already expressed concern over its impact on domestic markets.

With no Sovereign on the Brine Throne and no election expected in the coming years, other factions have demanded representation. Cindy Lee Greene of the Caldwell Laborers’ Party will attend on behalf of Caldwell, while Soren Jarvi, Duskhaven Ealdorman, will represent Margraeve-Duskhaven.

Azurean officials have hailed the agreement as a diplomatic triumph, securing an essential luxury good and deepening ties with Zhi-La. Critics, however, warn that the deal could further destabilize inter-island trade, concentrating wealth and



influence in Azure while leaving others at the mercy of Xondaran intermediaries.

The signing will mark a decisive shift in the Isles’ economic and political balance, with long-term consequences yet to unfold.



ONGOING INVESTIGATION

Fallow Disappearance: New Development or 20-Year Old Mystery?

LATIFA ALBRECHT

**FALLOW** – When Ida Thamus, the well-loved tavern keeper of the Bent Keg, vanished last month, it rattled the small freehold of Fallow. But for many locals, the fear ran deeper than just the loss of a familiar face.

It was the townsfolk who first approached Constable Wilbur Hasp, urging him to look beyond Ida’s case and into the past. Twenty years ago, Fallow suffered a string of disappearances—eleven people gone without a trace. A traveling merchant, a farmhand, even a magistrate sent to investigate. No bodies, no suspects. Then, suddenly, it stopped. Until now...

“I was just a boy when it happened,” said Harlan Weaver, a farmstead owner near the Bent Keg. “My uncle left one night to check the fields. Never came back. And we never talked about it again.”

The details are disturbingly familiar. Like Ida, the missing left no signs of struggle, no indication they had even planned to leave. Some vanished from their homes, doors locked behind them. Others were last seen walking the roads, only to never arrive at their destinations. The old magistrate’s horse was found grazing in a field—its rider was never seen again.

The official investigation into Ida’s disappearance remains open but fruitless, much like those two decades ago. But the people of Fallow don’t need an official ruling to know what’s happening. Whispers of figures in the mist, distant voices in the fields, and animals avoiding certain places have all returned.

What took them then may have returned, according tot he locals. And the people of Fallow seem certain they are running out of time before it takes another.

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