

Belize's leading newspaper

House supports Domestic Violence Bill

by Khaila Gentle

BELMOPAN, Mon. Feb. 7, 2022

At the first House of Representatives meeting of this year, Hon. Dolores Balderamos Garcia rose to present the Domestic Violence in Belize Motion, a motion that received unanimous support from both sides of the House, and that prompted several area representatives to rise to make remarks to note the importance of the issue.

“...domestic violence is recognized as a widespread international public health and human rights issue, which in all its forms has tremendous physical, mental, and



The first House meeting of 2022

emotional consequences on its victims, children, and other family members, and has far-reaching detrimental social, health and

economic impacts on nations,” said Hon. Balderamos Garcia, the

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Stevedores sign MOU with GOB

The CWU is set to receive \$1.5 million from GOB. It is merely ointment on an amputated limb, says CWU president Evan “Mose” Hyde, but the union has made concessions and commitments in good faith, with the hope that the GoB and PBL will not renege on promises they have made



Evan “Mose” Hyde – President, CWU

by Khaila Gentle

BELIZE CITY, Sun. Feb. 6, 2022

After eight days of industrial action, the most recent standoff

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GOB gets another \$70 million

GoB seeks an additional 70 million dollars to cover expenses leading up to the end of this fiscal year



Prime Minister Hon. John Briceno and Hon. Shyne Barrow, Leader of the Opposition

BELIZE CITY, Mon. Feb. 7, 2022

During last week’s sitting of the House of Representatives, the government of Belize presented its third Supplementary Allocation for this fiscal year, through

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Faber forced out; UDP divided

A UDP national party council voted to activate Faber’s oral resignation by a whisker; Hon. Hugo Patt was elected by council members as interim leader pending a national convention, scheduled for March 27

BELIZE CITY, Mon. Feb. 7, 2022

High tensions flared in the United Democratic Party this weekend at an emergency National Party Council (NPC) meeting triggered by the Hon. Patrick Faber’s refusal to submit a written resignation on Friday, January 31, as he had promised he would do. Over the weekend, the



Hon. Patrick Faber

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Evan “Porque” Mitchell killed in Lord’s Bank



Evan Mitchell, deceased

BELIZE CITY, Mon. Feb. 7, 2022

On Friday night, a long-time employee of the AMANDALA, Evan Mitchell, 49, who is a father of three, including two young children, was killed in a fatal stabbing incident that took place in Lord’s Bank. According to police, Mitchell had been walking to Brother’s Store, where, according to his mother, he had been heading to buy Boledo, when he was ambushed by a man who had been hiding in the bushes on Parks Avenue. A fight ensued between Mitchell and that man, who reportedly is in a relationship with the cousin of Mitchell’s common-law wife, and at some point, the assailant stabbed Mitchell twice in

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Curfew extended in new SI

(See story on page 13)

GOB erecting new infrastructure out west

by Charles Gladden

BELIZE CITY, Mon. Feb. 7, 2022

As part of the “Building Climate Change Resilience and Social Integration of Displaced People in Settlements of Western Belize” Project, the infrastructure in several communities in the western portion of the country will be upgraded. Those communities which will be benefiting from the infrastructural improvements are Billy White, Los Tambos, Santa Familia, Duck Run 1 and Duck Run 2.

The Ministry of Sustainable Development, Climate Change, & Disaster Risk Management, and the International Organization for Migration (IOM), in collaboration with the European Union (EU), are partnering to complete the project.

The objective of the project, which was one of two that were selected from among 70 to receive funding through the Lives in Dignity Grant Facility, is to build resilience among migrant settlements that are vulnerable to climate change while supporting the social integration of displaced people into the larger population.

The general objectives of the project are to support displaced persons in migrant settlements so that they become productive members of their host communities and participate in furthering their common resilience, socio-economic growth, and sustainable development, thereby preventing further displacement.

“This project proposes to build an equipped polyclinic, upgrade the current water system in three



Hon. Orlando Habet, Minister of Sustainable Development, Climate Change & Disaster Risk Management

communities. Rehabilitate and rebuild hurricane shelters and community centres in five communities. Build a drainage system for two communities, equipping all settlements with firefighting and management equipment and providing training in areas that will build capacities and improve resilience,” mentioned Minister of Sustainable Development, Climate Change & Disaster Risk Management, Hon. Orlando Habet, during the launching of the project.

“I believe this grant will be a life-changer for three communities where displaced people have lived for more than forty years without the most basic access to education, to water, and sanitation, to access health services. We all know very well, life in settlements is particularly difficult when those services are not provided or are not sufficient.” said Head of Cooperation, EU Delegation to Belize, Aniceto Rodriguez Ruiz.

The estimated budget for this project is approximately \$2,300,000 US.

Sailboat runs aground on Lighthouse Reef

by Khaila Gentle

BELIZE CITY, Fri. Feb. 4, 2022

The Belize Coast Guard’s (BCG) search and rescue team rescued two Canadian nationals this past Thursday, after their sailing vessel, the *Jolie Brise II*, ran aground on Lighthouse Reef. According to a press release from the Coast Guard, the

search and rescue team responded to a distress call which led them to an area about two nautical miles south of Hat Caye at Lighthouse Reef. There, at around 10:12 p.m., they found the eleven-meter-long sailboat along with its two occupants. The vessel reportedly had about two feet of water in its cabin.

The two Canadians were taken to Half Moon Caye for assistance and later to Belize City, where the Belize Port Authority, the Police Department, the Immigration Department, the Department of Environment, and the Health Department took over the case.

“On Friday 4,



The Jolie Brise II

No proof from Waterloo

“I have personally engaged with the CEO of Waterloo Holdings Limited and two other of their staff in early December in an online virtual meeting where I requested such evidence of the allegation of unethical behaviors of the NEAC members. To date, none has come to my office.”

— Minister Orlando Habet



BELIZE CITY, Mon. Feb. 7, 2022

During Friday’s sitting of the House of Representatives, the Minister of Sustainable Development, Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management, Hon. Orlando Habet, informed the country that Waterloo Investment Holdings, which was denied approval to construct a cruise terminal at the site of the Port of Belize Ltd., has not provided any evidence or additional information of any sort to substantiate allegations made against members of the National Environmental Appraisal Committee (NEAC). In a written correspondence, Waterloo had claimed that some members of the NEAC attempted to solicit bribes from the company, and that those advances were rejected by Waterloo. The company has been claiming that their proposal to construct a cruise terminal at the Port of Belize facilities — which had prompted widespread concern among environmental groups as well as expressions of concern by the Belize Water Services Ltd. — was rejected by the NEAC because they refused to bribe a few committee members.

However, those environmental concerns and BWS’ objections were not highlighted in a release from Waterloo which had stated, “The Board of Waterloo is satisfied that NEAC’s denial of environmental

clearance and the DOE’s rubberstamping of that denial is fundamentally flawed and comes against the backdrop of provable requests for bribes from certain NEAC members.”

The claims were made in the aftermath of the fast-tracked removal of the embattled former Chief Environmental Officer, Martin Alegria, who is set to resign sometime this month, after his approval several years ago of another cruise project at another location (possibly without the green light from the then Cabinet) was called into question.

In reference to the allegations made by Waterloo, which were brought up by newly appointed Leader of the Opposition, Hon. Moses “Shyne” Barrow, at Friday’s House of Representatives meeting on Friday, Minister Habet stated, “Madam Speaker, the allegations are a concern to my Ministry, as they make reference to the integrity of high-level public officers that include CEOs, Heads of Departments and highly trained technical officers and in addition, NGO representatives and a representative from the private sector on the National Environmental Appraisal Committee.”

Minister Habet further outlined, “And so, to further answer the question, the steps taken were to request that these allegations are made in writing and that evidence is produced that can substantiate the allegations. I have personally engaged with the CEO of Waterloo Holdings Limited and two other of their staff in early December in an online virtual meeting where I requested such evidence of the allegation of unethical behaviors of the NEAC members. To date, none has come to my office.”

A letter was sent to Waterloo by CEO in the Sustainable Development Ministry, Kenrick Williams, on December 7 requesting that the company provide the necessary evidence to allow the Department of the Environment to act on the serious allegations brought forward by the company. The tone of the letter, which expressed the ministry’s desire to uncover the truth behind the allegations, was one of great concern, but almost two months later, no response has been sent by Waterloo to date.

Minister Habet thus pointed out at the House meeting that until such evidence is produced, the Ministry’s hands are tied.

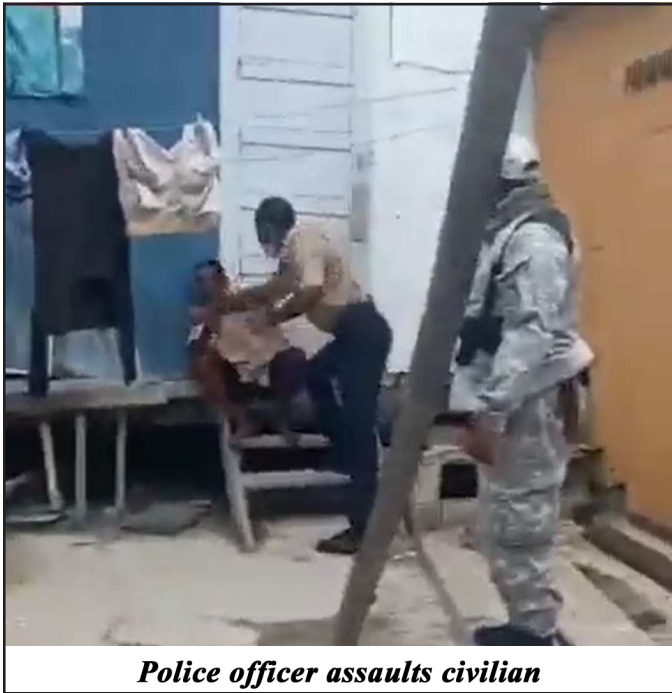
“Madam Speakers, I am certain that the Honorable member from Mesopotamia and once more Leader of the Opposition would agree that until such information is produced, it will be unreasonable, unethical, and unprofessional to pursue to investigate the likes of these professionals,” Minister Habet said.

February at 6:10 a.m., Coast Guard and Belize Audubon Society conducted an initial assessment on the extent of the damage to the reef and vessel,” stated the press release. Based on its assessment, the Coast Guard determined that a salvage operation will be required in order to move the sailing vessel. The operation will be led by the Department of Environment and the Belize Port Authority.

Working closely alongside the Coast Guard during the rescue were rangers from the Belize Audubon Society. Both the rangers and the Coast Guard provided security for the night while the rescued Canadians received assistance on Half Moon Caye, and they continue to maintain security presence for the vessel until it can be moved. The Coast Guard has indicated that they look forward to future joint operations with the rangers.

On-duty cop assaults civilian

Uniformed police officer caught on camera beating civilian



Police officer assaults civilian

questioned by reporters today, the Police Department's Communications Director, ASP Yearwood, did not have much to say, since no official police report on the incident had been made. He is encouraging the victim of the attack to make an official report. "I am not going to comment on something like that, because we need a virtual complaint for me to have an official report. We

that we don't tolerate abuse by police officers. We have seen in the past where police have been charged, have been dealt with, and

some have been dismissed for that kind of behavior,"

Currently, an internal investigation is being conducted.

BELIZE CITY, Mon. Feb. 7, 2022

A video being circulated on social media over the weekend shows a uniformed police officer assaulting a civilian. In the video, the police officer can be seen throwing punches at a man sitting on the steps of a home. As the attack unfolded, another police officer is seen standing nearby and observing the confrontation, but hesitating to intervene.

The incident was captured by an onlooker, who recorded the attack with the video camera of a mobile phone.

The two police officers involved in the confrontation have not yet been identified, and the reason for the attack is yet unknown. When

would want to encourage that victim to come and visit the Professional Standard Branch and make a formal complaint, and then I would be able to further comment on that matter," he said.

When asked if the officer's actions were incriminating, however, Yearwood responded, "That is more than damning, and [as] I said, we at the department don't just turn a blind eye to that type of behavior, but it would be better if we have an actual complaint, and I'm not saying that we will not sanction that officer, but we would want better results, for that person suffered that form of abuse publicly, especially being caught on camera. And we want to explain to the public

Dr. Manza to be new MOHW director

BELIZE CITY, Mon. Feb. 7, 2022

Reports are that Dr. Marvin Manzanero, the former embattled Director of Health Services (DHS), has taken on a new directorship inside the Ministry of Health and Wellness (MOHW) following talks with the newly appointed Health Minister, Hon. Kevin Bernard. Unconfirmed reports are that the good doctor has been appointed as Director of International Cooperation inside the MOHW.

Dr. Manzanero had been sidelined by the current PUP administration after they entered office in November of 2020, shortly before he fell ill with the COVID-19 virus. Following his recovery, he found a locked office and was made aware of an impending transfer by the Government of Belize.

Recently, Health Minister Bernard, who has replaced the



Dr. Marvin Manzanero

erstwhile Minister of Health, Hon. Michel Chebat, indicated that he had been in conversation with Dr. Manzanero, and hinted at his placement in one of the high-level posts created following the abolishment of the office of the DHS, the post previously held by Dr. Manza.

This appointment is likely currently being reviewed by the Public Services Commission, which will hand down final approval. We reached out to Dr. Manzanero for comment, but received no reply.

PM responds to BAS and BCCI



Hon. John Briceño – Prime Minister

BELIZE CITY, Mon. Feb. 7, 2022

During an interview last Friday, Prime Minister Hon. John Briceño responded to letters sent from the business community concerning recent industrial action carried out in the country—most notably at ASR/BSI's sugar-processing mill. In their respective letters, the Belize Agro-Productive Sector Group and the Belize Chamber of Commerce both called out the government of Belize for not using law enforcement to address a blockade staged by cañeros which stalled the start of the sugar crop this

year. The investors have since blamed the government's lack of action as the impetus which encouraged aggrieved persons in the Cayo district to set cane fields belonging to Valley of Peace Farms Ltd. on fire.

"The Sector views with great concern recent developments in the sugar industry where the failure of government to protect and support private sector investors has led to illegal and damaging events in both the North and West of the country. The sector is concerned that if the law is not enforced, this will lead to a complete halt to investment and possible contagion across other industries and sectors, damaging the investment climate and Belizean economy still further," the letter from BAS stated.

The BCCI in their letter made reference to the days-long blockade and unrest seen at Tower Hill during the impasse between the BSCFA and BSI due to a breakdown in negotiations which should have led to the signing of a new commercial

agreement.

The Chamber stated, "The concept of civil disobedience and the existence of myriad mechanisms for resolving disputes mean that there is no excuse for violence or illegal acts in support of any point of view."

They called on the government of Belize to "establish clear policies and procedures for guidance in having all relevant government entities—including the Police Department – uphold the laws of Belize."

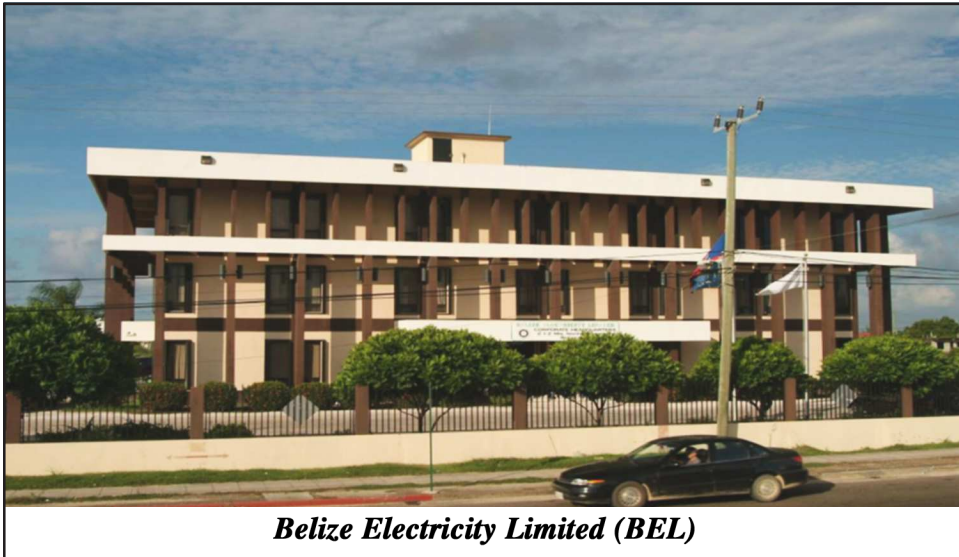
In response to this criticism, the Prime Minister, when speaking to local reporters, said he was disappointed by the letter.

"I'm disappointed that they would write such a letter, because we have had very good working relationships with both the agro-processing groups and the agro producers and the Chamber. But, what did they expect us to do? Send the B.D.F.? I mean, beat up people? What did they want us to do? We continue to try to foster the right economic environment. There are going to be hiccups. There are going to be strikes. That's the right of workers," Prime Minister Briceño said.

In response to the concerns raised by BAS about outdated legislation and a failure on the part of the government to create a suitable environment for investors, the PM responded, "We have sat and spoken to them about these matters, but listen, we inherited a bankrupt country. We inherited an economy that was on its knees; agriculture contracted under the UDP and in one year we turn it around, so the agro-producers suppose to be very happy for what we have done, nuh, but it's life—every you know, you give you want more, and it's natural. I'm not picking a fight with them. I understand their frustrations, and understand that many of these acts have been passed a few decades ago, and now we need to modernize them, and we will look at it, but they can't expect us to drop everything just to look after them," Hon. Briceño said..

He added, "We are working very hard to improve the investor climate and confidence in Belize, and we have been quite successful in that short year, and I would have wished they would have sat down with us and say, ok, come with something concrete as [opposed] to just complaining."

PUC: No electricity rate increase



Belize Electricity Limited (BEL)

by Charles Gladden

BELIZE CITY, Sun. Feb. 6, 2022

On Friday, February 4, the Public Utilities Commission (PUC) announced its final decision after extending its public consultation on the increased cost of power outlined in the Final Draft of the Belize Electricity Limited (BEL) 2021 Annual Review Proceeding (ARP). As reported, the PUC was considering a possible increase in electricity rates from 39.9 cents per kilowatt-hour to 41.58 cents per kilowatt-hour for the next six months of this year.

After reviewing the feedback received through those consultations, the PUC has decided to keep the current Mean Electricity Rate (M.E.R) unchanged at 39.9 cents per

kilowatt hour rather than increasing the rate to 41.5 cents per kilowatt-hour. The rate will remain as is until June 13.

BEL had mentioned previously that they do not support a rate increase at this time, given the strenuous economic conditions brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic, and, according to BEL chairman, Andrew Marshalleck, they had preferred to recover the almost 10 million dollars in the increased cost of power sometime after 2023.

According to BEL, the rate increase projected for this period is due to the increased cost of power purchased during the last few months of last year and a projected increase in the cost of power in the early months of 2022 due to low in-country hydroelectric generation, given scanty rain projections.

PM on defamation bill

BELIZE CITY, Mon. Feb. 7, 2022

On Friday, an initial reading of a new defamation bill was carried out in the House of Representatives. As previously reported, the purpose of the bill is to modernize the country's defamation legislation so that it is applicable to injurious comments made on social media and in online spaces. The Prime Minister, Hon. John Briceño, in an interview following the House meeting, addressed concerns that the new bill may be an attempt by the government to muzzle the media, since no consultation was carried out prior to its introduction. The PM said that consultations on the bill will take place and the bill is in no way designed to infringe on the work of the media.

While the PM chose to direct questions of a legal nature to the Attorney General, he did note, "What I can tell you is this act is an old one. It was done at a time when television was not even available as what we have today—the advent of social media, the internet. You're having access to your phone, where a lot of people not use the internet and social media not to share or exchange information or knowledge, but, in many instances, it's used to hurt people. The Defamation Act addresses none of that, and so we felt that this has to be updated. The media has its own standards, that if you were to say something, that it is not so, then the person that you accuse have the right to go to the courts, but right now, because of social media, who would you go to,

you can't really hold anybody responsible," Hon. Briceño said.

He went on to state that the bill is specifically targeted at rogue social media news sources that purport to be media houses. "These groups that call themselves media outlet when they are not, but they use it just for politics. Politics in itself is okay, but when they use it to hurt people and to detain people just because you can't find them or you can't hold them really accountable, then that has to be changed. In my mind, this is more than anything else what we are attempting to do," the Prime Minister said.

The PM said that consultation on this new defamation law will take place following the first reading and the media will be invited to participate.

"We are only doing the first reading, so now the media will have the opportunity to come to the House committee to be able to sit down and to be able to give your technical expertise. You can look at the bill, and if you see that there are areas that are lacking, where it could be strengthened, we're prepared to do that, and if you believe that there are areas where we can potentially be infringing on the right of the free media or the free press, we use the word 'press' loosely, we are prepared to take a look. This has nothing to do to try to muzzle you, but more importantly to deal with what we have today in the advent of social media," the PM shared.

And in regard to partisan radio and TV shows that have at times engaged in discourse that borders on being slanderous, the PM said they will have to exercise more caution as well.

"Yes, everybody has to be careful—all the radio stations, all the TV stations have to like in everything be careful. Even ourselves, in giving an interview, we have to be careful," he said.

Sleeping man dies in Antelope Street fire

Nicholas Reyes perished in his sleep during a house fire. National Fire Service personnel say that the blaze is being investigated as a possible case of arson



Kenneth Morris, Station Supervisor of the National Fire Service

by Charles Gladden

BELIZE CITY, Fri. Feb. 4, 2022

A resident of Antelope Street Extension died in his sleep during a house fire on Thursday night, February 3. Neighbors of Nicholas Reyes, 56, also known as "Chico," began to smell smoke at around 10:30 p.m. and later realized that Reyes' small wooden home was engulfed in flames. Firefighters arrived at the scene to extinguish the fire and found Reyes' body charred by the blaze.

"During investigations, fire

personnel found that this was more than a fire, as we found the remains of an individual that had succumbed during the fire," said Kenneth Morris, Station Supervisor of the National Fire Service.

When asked by local reporters if the fire was caused by a malicious act, Morris said that it's too early to reach that conclusion, since more evidence must be

gathered to confirm the cause of the blaze. However, the results of an initial investigation suggest that the fire may have been ignited by a fuel load in the house and not something electrical, since there was no electrical connection in the home. The National Fire Service has also ruled out the possibility of candles or a fish coil being the cause of the fire.

"It's too early to tell if it was a malicious act. We need our conclusion based on evidence; unfortunately, there wasn't any evidence to support external use. Looking at the remains of what was

there, the building itself, it could have been the fuel load. We learnt that this gentleman, 56-year-old Mr. Nicholas Reyes, basically lived alone, and he wasn't a troublesome person to the neighbors of the neighborhood, which leads to many questions as to who would want to do harm to this individual, and of course why? His structure in question had no form of electricity, and we did a thorough investigation on the scene and we could've safely ruled out a candle, and of course the near possibility of a fish coil. We will now have to work hand in hand with the police, as we believe this has now evolved into a criminal matter," said Morris.

He added that the victim may have been overcome by the smoke in his sleep before the fire consumed his body. No accelerant was found as the cause of the fire.

"We have a 990 system across the country, that takes you directly to the closest fire station and in Belize City, that 990 can now be accessed by both telephone providers BTL and Smart," Morris shared.

KREM FM

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on the following
frequencies:
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and Independence
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Dangriga Town
Camalote Village
and Caye Caulker



Sitting on a ton of gold – coconut oil

Sun. Feb. 6, 2022

It is said that “out of evil cometh good;” and “our health is our wealth.” And, as the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic slowly declines with the reduced mortality rate from the most recent variant, Omicron, it would perhaps be a wise undertaking if our health authorities would invest some resources in a full investigation of all the methods employed to battle this viral enemy, from those officially approved medicines and procedures in our hospitals, to the various local herbs and therapeutics applied in homes by various citizens, vaxxed and unvaxxed, in trying to prevent or reduce the negative impact of infection from Covid. There may be some useful information garnered from such an exercise, information that could help in saving lives in the future and in reducing the costs to the nation in treating the illness as well as the working/productive hours lost. And even before the next pandemic, a healthier people means a stronger nation, more productive and with less medical costs.

Like the rest of the world, Belize has suffered great losses from the Covid-19 pandemic since March of 2020, both in lives (629) and livelihoods from the slowdown in our economy during temporary shutdowns and reduced nighttime activity due to curfew hours. But in the aftermath of the last huge surge in Covid cases in early January of this year with the arrival of the Omicron variant, the deadliness of the disease has apparently been significantly reduced; and just as is the case when a raging storm begins to dissipate, life is slowly getting back to normal: competitive sporting events are taking place, some students are going back to school, curfew hours have been relaxed, the borders are now being opened, and Covid mortality figures are no longer front-page news in the local newspapers. Of course, we are not out of the woods yet; we still need to get vaxxed, and keep masking, hand sanitizing and social

distancing until the all-clear is given.

Co-morbidities has been the watch-word in most cases of severe Covid illness, and a health census of our population in the aftermath of the pandemic may be a good way to begin preparing our people for the next pandemic that comes along. Has our lifestyle become too sedentary with the proliferation of cable television, social media and cell phone apps? What foods have we been consuming that are adding to these chronic health issues like diabetes, heart disease, cancer and kidney failure? It may take a dedicated effort from our health authorities to try and change our cultural eating habits toward more fresh, locally produced food with less chemical additives and preservatives. The problem for most consumers is that the factory-packaged and canned foods are often very attractive, and being mass produced, they are competitively priced. So, a local shopper will usually purchase imported cooking oil at \$4.00 or \$4.50 a bottle, compared to locally produced coconut oil at \$10.00 or \$12.00 a bottle.

Considering that just about every dish in the Belizean kitchen involves use of some sort of cooking oil, this just might be the big breakthrough, the gold mine that we have been sitting on, that could help to

“keep our dollars at home” while improving our health situation. On every street, and in almost every yard in Belize City, there are coconut trees, and the dry nuts are often discarded because few have the time nowadays to bother husking and chipping, when we can buy a pack of coconut powder imported from Thailand or the Philippines at the local supermarket.

A great physician of ancient times (some say it was the Egyptian Imhotep, others say the Greek Hippocrates) is credited with the saying, “Let your food be your medicine.” While it was discredited in some quarters a few decades ago because it contains mostly “saturated fats” which were thought to be bad for the heart, some modern research has determined that our traditionally produced coconut oil without chemical additives is by far healthier for cooking than any of the cheap imported cooking oils being sold at our supermarkets. So, it would appear that something needs to be done to bring our local coconut oil within the purchasing reach of our struggling poor, so that rather than consuming daily doses of “poison,” they can be cooking with the local cooking oil that also serves as a medicine to help keep them healthy.

Those above “controversial” comments may spark a lively debate among some health professionals; and that is welcomed, rather than their persistent, stoic silence while our people keep losing limbs and dying from preventable lifestyle diseases due to their daily eating habits. Any suggestion that might encroach upon the profits of big companies that produce and sell these products, be they processed food or pharmaceutical drugs, will quickly be met with strong opposition from “their experts.” So be it. Let the conversation begin, and our people can “pick sense from nonsense.”

To start the ball rolling, here are a few selected comments from www.sciencedirect.com:

“...Because of the unique qualities of lauric acid (C:12) present, coconut oil is widely used in soaps and cosmetic manufacturing industries. Lauric acid is known to possess antiviral, antibacterial, and antiprotozoal qualities. It is converted to the monoglyceride monolaurin in the human or animal body. Monolaurin is antiviral, antibacterial, and antiprotozoal. Reports indicate that monolaurin is capable of destroying lipid-coated viruses such as HIV, herpes, cytomegalovirus, influenza, various pathological bacteria, including *Listeria monocytogenes* and *Helicobacter pylori*, and protozoa such as *Giardia lamblia*. It is synthesized in babies from the lauric acid of mother’s milk... The digestibility coefficient of coconut oil is higher (with 91.0% assimilable glycerides) than any other fat, including butter, and so it is digested more rapidly than any other fats. This easy digestibility makes it an essential ingredient for many ghee substitutes...”

Sounds good? Well, as expected, here is a rebuttal from a different source. According to www.hsph.harvard.edu, The Nutrition Source:

• “...The American Heart Association (AHA) issued a scientific advisory statement in 2017 to replace saturated fats (including coconut and other tropical oils) with unsaturated fats. Based on a review of seven controlled trials, coconut oil was found to raise harmful LDL cholesterol levels. The AHA advised against the use of coconut oil, and suggested limiting all saturated fat. For those at risk for or who have heart disease, they advise no more than 6% of total calories from saturated fat, or about 13 grams based on a 2000-calorie diet. One tablespoon of coconut oil comes close to that limit at about 12 grams of saturated fat. (4)...”

The above, with “experts” saying the opposite on the same topic, is probably the reason our health authorities remain mum on this vital issue that sees our people floundering in ill health and obesity.

It would be very interesting to see the results of a community survey in Belize, with one simple question: What type of cooking oil does your household use mostly on a daily basis – (a) coconut oil, or (b) other? (other being any of the others like “1-2-3 oil,” “corn oil,” “soy oil,” “vegetable oil,” “canola oil,” “Wesson oil,” etc.) A follow-up could be, how many household members were hospitalized with Covid?

It has been said that the mark of insanity is doing the same thing over and over and expecting a different result. The health authorities have a pretty good idea of the current state of health of our citizens. So, stay the course? Or do we launch a national coconut oil campaign?



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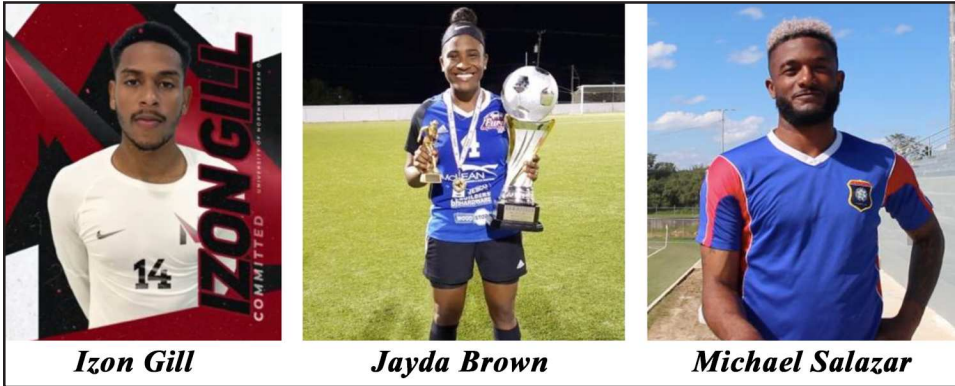
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FFB celebrates new opportunities for 3 Jaguars



Izon Gill

Jayda Brown

Michael Salazar

BELMOPAN, Fri. Feb. 4, 2022

The Football Federation of Belize (FFB) takes this opportunity to congratulate 3 Jaguars who are moving up because of amazing opportunities they've received through football. Congratulations are in order for Jayda Brown, Izon Gill and Michael Salazar!

Through FFB's partnership with Prospect2Player, Izon Gill has been awarded a Full Scholarship to pursue the NAIA program at University of North Western Ohio while participating in their Men's Soccer Program. Izon will be pursuing his Associate Degree in Sports Management. At 22 years, Izon has played with the Senior Men's National Team as a midfielder.

Another athlete who is no stranger is Belize's Senior Women's National Team player and 2021 NAWL top goal scorer, Jayda Brown. Last season, Jayda received the Golden Boot awarded after scoring 15 goals in the season. Jayda currently plays center forward with Jewel Fury FC. At 22 years, Jayda has completed her

Bachelor's (Degree and has officially committed to attending Campbellsville University in Kentucky where she will be doing a Master's Degree in Criminal Justice.

Lastly, we take this opportunity to congratulate National Team player Michael Salazar who has been signed to LA Galaxy of Los Angeles after being scouted at Belize's most recent game against Nicaragua. Worthy of note is that LA Galaxy is the most recognizable Major League Soccer (MLS) club.

The Football Federation of Belize takes this opportunity to congratulate all athletes in their achievements and takes this time to encourage other athletes to continue working towards their dreams.

- press release -

(AMANDALA Sports Ed. Note: From the sports desk, and on behalf of our football family, congratulations, all! Stay safe, and may your journeys be blessed with success!)

Belize National U19 Men's Team called to camp

BELMOPAN, Fri. Feb. 4, 2022

The Belize National U19 Men's Team is starting its training preparations for the UNCAF U19 Championship to be played at the Football Federation of Belize (FFB) Stadium in Belmopan between April 24 to 30, 2022.

The FFB wishes the U19 Men's National Team all the best as they report to camp on February 7, 2022 at 9:00 a.m.

Players called to camp and their home district are: goalkeepers – Isaac Castillo (Belmopan), Earl Dyck (Belmopan) and Jose Hernandez (San Pedro); defenders – Randy Chavarria (Benque), Kenrick Gordon (Belize), Kendale Butler (Corozal), Brandon Rogers (Belize), Zanique Baltazar (Stann Creek), Shamarl Flowers (Cayo), Dwight Brown (Belmopan)

and Edwin Gomez (Mid-South); midfielders – Donovan Quintanilla (Cayo), Calvin Reid (Orange Walk), Stiven Rivera (Belize), Zion Ramos (Stann Creek), Jahmaine Hope (Belmopan), Eldon Reneau (Belize), Jervi Cante (Cayo), Allison Torres (Orange Walk), Tyrese Augustine (Orange Walk) and Kevin Higinio (Stann Creek); and forwards – Shemar Gillett (Belize), Tyrese Moody (Belmopan) and Anwar Cabral (Mid-South).

Technical Staff includes: Head Coach - David Perez Asensio; Assistant Coach - Manuel Poot Can; Goalkeeper Coach - Stanley Reneau; Fitness Coach - Dennis Serano; Equipment Manager - Herbert Trapp, Jr.; Manager - Tyrone Young.

- press release -

FFB Top League 2021-22 Closing Season kicked off over the weekend

BELIZE CITY, Mon. Feb. 7, 2022

A release from the Football Federation of Belize (FFB) on Friday, February 4, informed us of the commencement of its Top League Tournament 2021-22 Closing Season that same weekend, with 3 games scheduled for Saturday, February 5.

Fans had been anticipating the return of Premier League of Belize (PLB) football following some executive election controversies in 2020 that aborted the start of its Opening Season. The FFB stepped into the vacuum and provided a Concacaf representative through hosting a Top League tournament that consisted of 6 teams, 4 former PLB clubs – Altitude FC, San Pedro Pirates FC, Verdes FC and Wagiya FC; and 2 new entrants, Garden City FC (which includes some former Bandits players) and Caesar Ridge

FC, the second place team from Belize District's 1st Division Tournament back in 2019-2020.

According to the FFB release:

"With the reopening of stadiums, fans are advised that there will be protocols that must be adhered to. All fans must be vaccinated and present vaccination card and picture ID upon entry to the stadium. Additionally, fans must wear masks at all times and adhere to social distancing regulations."

Games scheduled for Saturday were: Altitude FC vs Garden City FC at the Michael Ashcroft Stadium; San Pedro FC vs. Caesar Ridge FC at 4:00 p.m. on Sunday at FFB Stadium; to be followed by Verdes FC vs Wagiya SC at 6:30 p.m. also at FFB Stadium.

We will have the results of these games in our Friday issue.

Winter Olympics 2022: Jamaica's bobsleigh team bids to make history

A member of the Jamaican bobsleigh team says he hopes they can record the nation's highest ever placing at a Winter Olympics.

Sheffield Hallam University student Ashley Watson is part of the four-man bobsleigh team competing in Beijing.

For the first time in 24 years a four-man crew will represent the nation, echoing the exploits of the 1988 team who inspired the film Cool Runnings.

Mr Watson said the team's aim was to set records.

Jamaica's debut was at the 1988 Games in Calgary, Canada.

The team, consisting of Devon Harris, Dudley Stokes, Michael White, and Nelson Stokes, crashed out of the event and carried their sled over the finish line, but captured the hearts of fans all over the world.

The 1993 film Cool Runnings was loosely based on their story.

Jamaica's four-man bobsleigh team last qualified for the Winter Olympics held in Nagano, Japan, in 1998, finishing in 21st.



Ashley Watson

The team recorded its best placing of 14th at the Games in Lillehammer, Norway, in 1994.

"This would be a good benchmark to beat to become the best team in Jamaican history," Mr Watson said, adding "there is no point entering a competition without thinking you can get a medal".

Full article can be found at: bbc.com/news/uk-england-south-yorkshire-60271068

First published by BBC Latin America



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IN STUDIO: 280-4299

ON LINE LIVE:

www.krembz.com

3 years later: Patrick and John are politically done, fu now

by Colin Hyde

Only a UDP insider would KNOW if Dean Barrow NEEDED Pere to flex in Port Loyola to cement his position as leader of the UDP.

Barrow could have given Pere his seat in his division, Queen's Square. He didn't. He gave it to his sister, who had zero interest in representing anybody in the National Assembly. We have to believe that Mesopotamia was Barrow's to give. On the surface, that area belonged to Finnegan, but Finnegan owed much of his political career to the Lindos/Barrows.

It isn't likely that Finnegan wanted to block Pere; what's more likely is that Shyne decided he wanted the division, and Finnegan, his uncle, saw so much of himself in the boy, he couldn't tell him no. If Dean was miffed about Pere being blocked in Mesopotamia, a shoo-in seat for the red, Finnegan's mitigation card was Shyne's pedigree. In short, he blocked his benefactors with a horse flying his benefactors' colors.

Before I go on, let's get this straight. In 2018, the 2020 general election wasn't signed, sealed and delivered for the PUP. It should have

been, with the economy languishing and the UDP the perfect testament to one Lord Acton's warning about people who hold power for too long, but those corrupt beasts had shamelessly used every dirty trick to keep their hands on the reins.

They corrupted and controlled every governance system. For nearly a decade, all public hirings came directly through UDP ministers. With the elections drawing near, they gave special tax breaks and holidays, and to make people feel beholden, they timed the handing out of land parcels to take place during the six months leading up to the election. Their devious plans were well laid, until along came Covid. If the pandemic hadn't ended the world as we knew it, the general elections of 2020 would have been a lot closer.

Returning to Mesopotamia, if Barrow blessed Shyne in the division, was he on a guilt trip? There are reports that he and his son didn't have the greatest relationship when the boy was growing up. It's not impossible that Shyne turned all those dreadful screws a child can use to get over a parent, to worm himself into the seat in Mesop.

In the numbers game, we don't

know if Pere needed Port Loyola to get over the hump in the leadership race, and beyond that, post a UDP victory in 2020, we don't know if Pere, to govern, needed Port Loyola added to Mesopotamia and Queen's Square. Ai, these political parties, they are so full of games. We the people must never get so drawn in over the intrigues and the entertainment that we forget fu check wi change. I think we are waiting for this Barrow to explain a lot of things.

George Price didn't bother to write any memoir. His gallery didn't have chairs enough for his acolytes, none of whom could hold back on writing a new adoring chapter to add to his legend. Manuel Esquivel, who really didn't belong in politics, only his wife cared. Ah, many things in her book are Tammy Wynette "standing by her man", but there is substance enough there, exposés to help us understand our past and guide our future. Ah, Said Musa, he was so battered, most of it for loving Ralph so much, that the ink wasn't dry on the ballots that swept him out of office in 2008 before he was putting his own ink on paper to explain what the hell happened, and to dig those traitors who publicized Ralph's numerous transgressions.

Looking at the FACTS, we know for sure that the pretending-to-be-neutral Barrow desperately wanted Pere to win in Port Loyola; and Patrick and John, who were set for a face-off to determine which of them would realize the dream they both had from they were youths, to be leader of the party, saw the unelected Pere out to turn the joust for the title into a dangerous threesome.

Barrow was supporting Pere in Port Loyola, and P & J backed Philip Willoughby, to foil him. It is a fact that Port Loyola was slipping out of UDP control when Pere and Willo faced off to be the standard bearer for the UDP in 2018. The holder of the seat, Boots, had announced his retirement from electoral politics after four consecutive victories in the division. He had won convincingly in 2003 and 2008, but in 2012 there was serious slippage, and in 2015 a third party candidate, Murphy "Jihad" McLaren, respect, got more votes than he, Boots, won by.

Intrigue, intrigue, they were fighting over a seat that would need all the love the UDP could give to get over in 2020. What a thing, eh, for poor bad boy Pere, had he won Port Loyola, only to get battered by Gilroy. Then fu troo, fu troo he would have been a nonviable political candidate. No one would have cared to remember that he'd lost by only a whisker back in 2012 in Freetown.

The visible story in Port was that

Boots, in support of the Barrows, threw his shrinking weight behind Pere, and J & P went for Willo, in a race that also featured Dean Samuels, a name brand for the party, and an unknown party man, AC Castillo. The curtain came up for Willo, 1,034 votes; it came down on Pere, 847 votes, and somebody really has to explain why Samuels, 144 votes, and AC Castillo, 33 votes, were in that race which was a heated battle between the chosen successor of the old king, who was going out to pasture, and two wannabe kings who knew if they played their cards right, one of them would wear the crown.

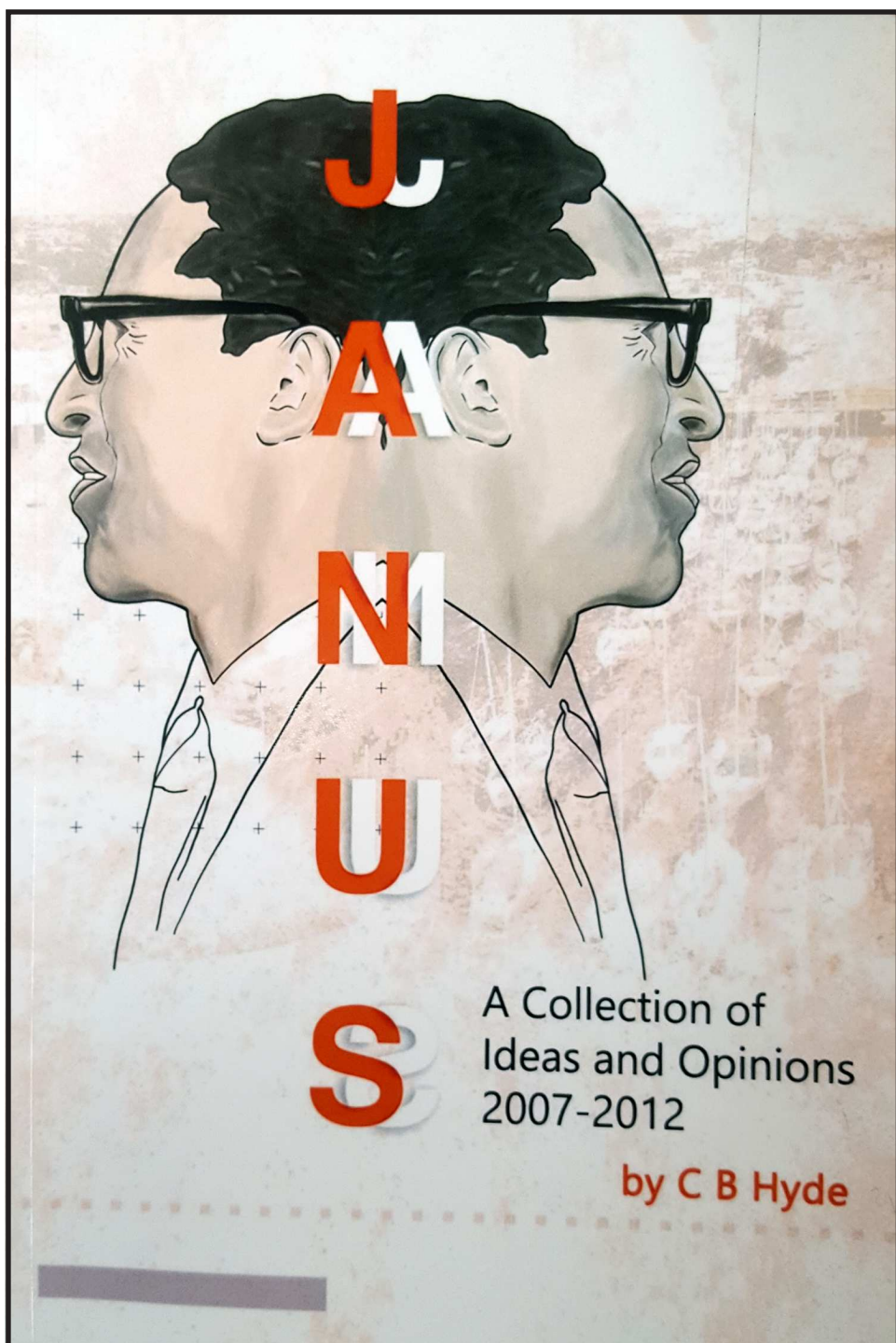
Putting aside Pere's claim that dirty PUP votes helped elect Willoughby, two years after 2018 we saw the conquerors, P & J, vying for the title of UDP leader at the Civic Center. Let's push the pause button to get in this question, before we get into the nasty revenge: before the Port Loyola showdown, was Barrow already imagining the possibilities with Shyne if Pere geh dang? Okay—pause again—Barrow really has to tell his story.

Yap, the date was set for Patrick to meet John for the title. Barrow said he was neutral, but the other Barrows backed John. Sista Barrow, a professional backroom worker, did her thing from where she works best, and Shyne, a professional mudslinger, absolutely assassinated Patrick's character.

Ooh, this thing oozed drama. Just before the showdown Barrow went on air and said that if a certain new piece of dirt stuck on John, win, lose or draw he would have to go, out the door. John wins, the dirt sticks, goodbye John. You've heard about knocking down two birds with one stone. John, from Port Loyola glory, is gone, and Patrick, from Port Loyola glory, is so sullied no one could imagine him having the face to enter another race for leader of the UDP.

Those two wanna-bes in total disgrace, the UDP set about finding a new leader. The first choice, Mr. Patt, almost from the minute he was floated as a possible heir he showed to the entire world that he's a hot head, that hihn noh ready fu this. The torch then fell to Mr. Figueroa, and he showed some sobriety, but no enthusiasm. Please tell me that Sedi's name was in the hat. Barrow has a lot to pay for. For 13 years he set up Sedi in areas where he could earn only wrath, and all the while Sedi had all the answers to our poverty and backwardness.

Wa, am I out of space already? Perdón, but I'm not keeping you in suspense, because you also know the end of this story. Hasta martes, for the rest of the col in the tamale.





Sentados sobre una tonelada de oro – aceite de coco

Domingo 6 de febrero de 2022

Se dice que “del mal sale el bien”; y “nuestra salud es nuestra riqueza”. Y, a medida que el impacto de la pandemia de Covid-19 disminuye lentamente con la reducción de la tasa de mortalidad de la variante más reciente, Omicron, tal vez sería una buena idea que nuestras autoridades sanitarias invirtieran algunos recursos en una investigación completa de todos los métodos empleados para luchar contra este enemigo viral, desde los medicamentos y procedimientos aprobados oficialmente en nuestros hospitales, hasta las diversas hierbas y terapias locales aplicadas en los hogares por varios ciudadanos, vacunados y no vacunados, para tratar de prevenir o reducir el impacto negativo de la infección por Covid. Puede haber alguna información útil obtenida de tal ejercicio, información que podría ayudar a salvar vidas en el futuro y reducir los costos para la nación en el tratamiento de la enfermedad, así como las horas de trabajo/productivas perdidas. E incluso antes de la próxima pandemia, un pueblo más saludable significa una nación más fuerte, más productiva y con menos costos médicos.

Al igual que el resto del mundo, Belize ha sufrido grandes pérdidas por la pandemia de Covid-19 desde marzo de 2020, tanto en vidas (629) como en medios de subsistencia debido a la desaceleración de nuestra economía durante los cierres temporales y la reducción de la actividad nocturna debido al toque de queda. Pero tras el último gran aumento de casos de covid a principios de enero de este año con la llegada de la variante Omicron, la letalidad de la enfermedad aparentemente se ha reducido significativamente; y tal como ocurre cuando una tormenta embravecida comienza a disiparse, la vida está volviendo lentamente a la normalidad: se están llevando a cabo eventos deportivos competitivos, algunos estudiantes están regresando a la escuela, las horas de toque de queda se han relajado, las fronteras ahora se están abriendo y las cifras de mortalidad por covid ya no son noticia de primera plana en los diarios locales. Por supuesto, aún no estamos fuera de peligro; todavía tenemos que vacunarnos y seguir usando mascarillas, desinfectando las manos y distanciandonos socialmente hasta que se dé el visto bueno.

Las comorbilidades han sido la consigna en la mayoría de los casos de enfermedad grave por covid, y un censo de salud de nuestra población después de la pandemia puede ser una buena manera de comenzar a preparar a nuestra gente para la próxima pandemia que venga. ¿Se ha vuelto demasiado sedentario nuestro estilo de vida con la proliferación de la televisión por cable, las redes sociales y las aplicaciones para teléfonos móviles? ¿Qué alimentos hemos estado consumiendo que se suman a estos problemas de salud crónicos como diabetes, enfermedades cardíacas, cáncer e insuficiencia renal? Puede ser necesario un esfuerzo dedicado de nuestras autoridades de salud para tratar de cambiar nuestros hábitos alimenticios culturales hacia alimentos más frescos y producidos localmente con menos aditivos químicos y conservantes. El problema para la mayoría de los consumidores es que los alimentos envasados en fábrica y enlatados suelen ser muy atractivos y, al ser producidos en masa, tienen un precio competitivo. Por lo tanto, un comprador local generalmente comprará aceite de cocina importado a \$ 4.00 o \$ 4.50 por botella, en comparación con el aceite de coco producido localmente a \$ 10.00 o \$ 12.00 por botella.

Teniendo en cuenta que casi todos los platos en la cocina beliceña implican el uso de algún tipo de aceite de cocina, este podría ser el gran avance, la mina de oro en la que hemos estado sentados, que podría ayudar a “mantener nuestros dólares en casa” mientras mejoramos nuestra situación de salud. En todas las calles, y en casi todos los patios de la Ciudad de Belize, hay palos de cocos, y los cocos secos a menudo se desechan porque hoy en día pocos tienen tiempo para molestarse en descascarar y astillar, cuando podemos comprar un paquete de coco en polvo importado de Tailandia o Filipinas en el supermercado local.

A un gran médico de la antigüedad (algunos dicen que fue el egipcio Imhotep, otros dicen que el griego Hipócrates) se le atribuye el dicho: “Que tu alimento sea tu medicina”. Si bien fue desacreditado en algunos sectores hace algunas décadas porque contiene principalmente “grasas saturadas” que se pensaba que

eran malas para el corazón, algunas investigaciones modernas han determinado que nuestro aceite de coco producido tradicionalmente sin aditivos químicos es mucho más saludable para cocinar que cualquiera de los baratos aceites de cocina importados que se venden en nuestros supermercados. Por lo tanto, parece que se debe hacer algo para que nuestro aceite de coco local esté al alcance de nuestra gente pobre en apuros, de modo que en lugar de consumir dosis diarias de “veneno”, puedan cocinar con el aceite de cocina local que también sirve como un medicamento para ayudar a mantenerlos saludables.

Los comentarios “controvertidos” anteriores pueden provocar un animado debate entre algunos profesionales de la salud; y eso es bienvenido, en lugar de su silencio persistente y estoico mientras nuestra gente sigue perdiendo extremidades y muriendo de prevenibles enfermedades de estilo de vida debido a sus hábitos alimenticios diarios. Cualquier sugerencia que pueda invadir las ganancias de las grandes empresas que producen y venden estos productos, ya sean alimentos procesados o medicamentos, se encontrará rápidamente con una fuerte oposición de “sus expertos”. Que así sea. Dejemos que comience la conversación, y nuestra gente podrá ver lo que tiene sentido o no.

Para comenzar, aquí hay algunos comentarios seleccionados de www.sciencedirect.com:

“...Debido a las cualidades únicas del ácido láurico (C:12) presente, el aceite de coco se usa ampliamente en las industrias de fabricación de jabones y cosméticos. Se sabe que el ácido láurico posee cualidades antivirales, antibacterianas y antiprotozoarias. Se convierte en el monoglicérido monolaurina en el cuerpo humano o animal. La monolaurina es antiviral, antibacteriana y antiprotozoaria. Los informes indican que la monolaurina es capaz de destruir virus recubiertos de lípidos como el VIH, herpes, citomegalovirus, influenza, varias bacterias patológicas, incluidas Listeria monocytogenes y Helicobacter pylori, y protozoos como Giardia lamblia. Se sintetiza en los bebés a partir del ácido láurico de la leche materna... El aceite de coco tiene un coeficiente de digestibilidad superior (con un 91,0 % de glicéridos asimilables) que cualquier otra grasa, incluida la mantequilla, por lo que se digiere más rápidamente que cualquier otra grasa. Esta fácil digestibilidad lo convierte en un ingrediente esencial para muchos sustitutos del suero de mantequilla...”

¿Suena bien? Bueno, como era de esperar, aquí hay una refutación de una fuente diferente. Según www.hsph.harvard.edu, The Nutrition Source:

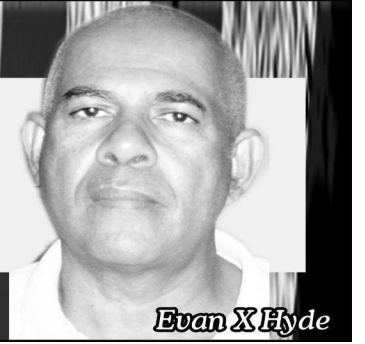
• “...La Asociación Estadounidense del Corazón (AEC) emitió una declaración de asesoramiento científico en 2017 para reemplazar las grasas saturadas (incluidos los aceites de coco y otros aceites tropicales) con grasas no saturadas. Según una revisión de siete ensayos controlados, se descubrió que el aceite de coco eleva los niveles dañinos de colesterol LDL. La AHA desaconsejó el uso de aceite de coco y sugirió limitar todas las grasas saturadas. Para las personas en riesgo o que tienen enfermedades del corazón, recomiendan no más del 6% del total de calorías de grasas saturadas, o alrededor de 13 gramos según una dieta de 2000 calorías. Una cucharada de aceite de coco se acerca a ese límite con aproximadamente 12 gramos de grasa saturada. (4)...”

Lo anterior, con “expertos” diciendo lo contrario sobre el mismo tema, es probablemente la razón por la que nuestras autoridades de salud se mantienen calladas sobre este tema vital que ve a nuestra gente tropezando con problemas de salud y obesidad.

Sería muy interesante ver los resultados de una encuesta comunitaria en Belize, con una simple pregunta: ¿Qué tipo de aceite de cocina usa su hogar principalmente a diario: (a) aceite de coco u (b) otro? (siendo cualquiera de los otros como “aceite 1-2-3”, “aceite de maíz”, “aceite de soya”, “aceite vegetal”, “aceite de canola”, “aceite Wesson”, etc.) Un seguimiento podría ser, ¿cuántos miembros del hogar fueron hospitalizados con Covid?

Se ha dicho que la marca de la locura es hacer lo mismo una y otra vez y esperar un resultado diferente. Las autoridades de salud conocen bastante bien el estado de salud actual de nuestros ciudadanos. Entonces, ¿mantener el rumbo? ¿O lanzamos una campaña nacional de aceite de coco?

From the Publisher



Evan X Hyde

“After much thought, I have decided to continue publishing and editing the AMANDALA newspaper as long as I can. AMANDALA will move in the direction of being a community newspaper rather than a political organ. How long we will survive is, of course, up to you, the people. I also want to do some writing otherwise. By and large, the years have been good ones. I will not answer the post-election rumours and accusations. Only time will be the judge, and you will know this was a brother that was sincere to you, the people.”

— from AMANDALA no. 251, Friday, November 8, 1974. (Reproduced on pg. 55 of FEELINGS, 1975)

As a young man, I considered myself a revolutionary personality, in the sense that I was challenging the most powerful institutions in this country. I knew there were certain leadership roles I could never play, because I suffered from a terrible airplane phobia, and it was clear to me that one could never be any really relevant leader of people unless one was prepared to fly to different parts of the region and the world.

As fate would have it, leadership of the United Black Association for Development (UBAD) was thrust upon me when the first leader of the organization, one Lionel Clarke, gave up the position after just a few weeks and went to New York City, where he has apparently resided ever since. I have never seen him or heard of him again from that time, early 1969. (UBAD was founded on February 9, 1969, split at the top in early 1973, and was formally dissolved in early November of 1974.)

After UBAD was dissolved, I apparently became attractive as a potential ally to the ruling People's United Party, which had come under serious pressure in the October 1974 general election and the December 1974 Belize City Council election from the relatively new United Democratic Party (UDP), which had been formed in early 1973 out of a coalition among the People's Development Movement (PDM), the National Independence Party (NIP), and a so-called, and leaderless, Liberal Party.

The reason I became attractive as a potential ally to the PUP, with whom I had been fighting from the time they charged me and the late Ismail Shabazz with seditious conspiracy in February of 1970, was because the 1974 general election suggested, based on my performance as the sole UBAD candidate, in the hotly contested Collet constituency, that there was a bloc of voters (about 4 per cent), whose loyalty was to those concepts for which UBAD and I had stood. (Before

1978, you had to be 21 years old in order to vote in Belize.)

After three or four private meetings between myself and PUP Deputy Premier, Hon. C. L. B. Rogers, I basically became a PUP ally. I ran the streets of Belize City with Hon. Rogers' no. 1 general, the late Ray Lightburn, and I regularly ate at Ray's mom's home, his mom being the late, legendary Lucille Eusey.

In mid-1977, the PUP decided, with Senator Said Musa being the most prominent investor, to become business partners with AMANDALA. The PUP investment enabled AMANDALA to acquire the offset printing technology which would enable us to compete with THE REPORTER, whose owner, Harry Lawrence, had been a founding member of the Liberal Party and was a leader of the UDP.

The PUP leadership then brought pressure on me to become a candidate for their slate in the upcoming Belize City Council election, scheduled for December of 1977. Remember, in December of 1974, the PUP had lost the City Council for the first time ever, to the UDP. This was a UDP victory which could be considered

almost sensational.

I had a couple good friends in the PUP slate who urged me to accept a candidacy, even though I had publicly resigned from electoral politics in 1974. Against my better judgment, I finally relented and ran as a candidate for the PUP's so-called “Dynamic Nine.” I was humiliated in that election. The UDP won all nine CitCo seats, and I ran last out of all the candidates.

So then, that is when I decided that the way I would contribute to my city and country was by job creation, with the newspaper being our only business at the time. We're talking about more than forty years ago. Incidentally, children were allowed to sell newspapers in those days when AMANDALA became Belize's leading newspaper in 1981.

The collating section of our newspaper then produced the core of the championship Kremandala Raiders basketball team, and it was that basketball team, I think, which enabled our second major business, KREM Radio, to survive some rough times after we began broadcasting in 1989. (In memory of James Wilfred Gordon. Peace and love.)

And so, all the preceding has been by way of introducing you to the fact that Kremandala suffered a tragedy this week when one of the newspaper collators who has been with us for almost three decades, Evan “Porque” Mitchell, was stabbed to death in Lord's Bank on Friday evening.

At the time, the chief of our collating section, Charles “Bigga” Myles, who has been with us from the middle 1980s, had himself been temporarily hospitalized at KMH. When Porque was brought into KMH emergency, Bigga was informed of the tragedy, and made contact with my second daughter, Jacinta, who runs the newspaper these days.

Jacinta called me on Friday night. I was at home recovering from hernia surgery which had been performed on Tuesday at Belize Health Care Partners.

There are Belizeans out there who have built Kremandala over the decades and to whom we must feel personal gratitude. Perhaps all you may have heard about is yours truly, but ours is not a one-man show. It never was.

Power to the people.

FROM THE PUBLISHER en Español

“Después de pensarlo mucho, he decidido continuar publicando y editando el periódico AMANDALA tanto como pueda. AMANDALA se moverá en la dirección de ser un periódico comunitario en lugar de un órgano político. El tiempo que sobreviviremos depende, por supuesto, de ustedes, el pueblo. También quiero escribir otras cosas. En general, los años han sido buenos. No responderé a los rumores y acusaciones postelectorales. Solo el tiempo será el juez, y ustedes sabrán que este fue un hermano que fue sincero con ustedes, el pueblo”.

— de AMANDALA núm. 251, viernes 8 de noviembre de 1974. (Reproducido en la pág. 55 de FEELINGS, 1975)

De joven me consideraba una personalidad revolucionaria, en el sentido de que estaba desafiando a las instituciones más poderosas de este país. Sabía que había ciertos roles de liderazgo que nunca podría desempeñar, porque sufría de una terrible fobia a los aviones, y tenía claro que uno nunca podría ser un líder del pueblo realmente relevante a menos que uno estuviera preparado

para volar a diferentes partes de la región y el mundo.

Por azar del destino, el liderazgo de la Asociación Negra Unida para el Desarrollo (UBAD por sus siglas en inglés) se me impuso cuando el primer líder de la organización, un tal Lionel Clarke, renunció al cargo después de unas pocas semanas y se fue a la ciudad de Nueva York, donde aparentemente ha residido desde entonces. Nunca lo he vuelto a ver ni he oído hablar de él desde ese momento, a principios de 1969. (UBAD se fundó el 9 de febrero de 1969, se dividió en la parte superior a principios de 1973 y se disolvió formalmente a principios de noviembre de 1974.)

Después de la disolución de UBAD, aparentemente me volví atractivo como un aliado potencial para el gobernante Partido Unido del Pueblo, que había estado bajo una fuerte presión en las elecciones generales de octubre de 1974 y las elecciones del Concejo Municipal de Belize de diciembre de 1974 por parte del relativamente nuevo Partido Demócrata Unido (UDP por sus siglas en inglés), que se había formado a principios de 1973 a partir de una

coalición entre el Movimiento de Desarrollo Popular (PDM por sus siglas en inglés), el Partido de la Independencia Nacional (NIP por sus siglas en inglés) y el llamado Partido Liberal, sin líderes.

La razón por la que me volví atractivo como aliado potencial del PUP, con quien había estado peleando desde el momento en que me acusaron a mí y al finado Ismail Shabazz de conspiración sediciosa en febrero de 1970, fue porque las elecciones generales de 1974 sugirieron, en base a mi desempeño como el único candidato de UBAD, en el muy disputado distrito electoral de Collet, que había un bloque de votantes (alrededor del 4 por ciento), cuya lealtad era a los conceptos que UBAD y yo habíamos defendido. (Antes de 1978, uno tenía que tener 21 años para poder votar en Belize.)

Después de tres o cuatro reuniones privadas entre yo y el Viceprimer Ministro del PUP, el Honorable C. L. B. Rogers, básicamente me convertí en un aliado PUP. Recorrí las calles de la Ciudad de Belize con el general número 1 de Rogers, el finado Ray



Mexican journalists shocked with surge in targeted killings

by Wil Grant

TIJUANA, Mexico. Sat. Feb. 5, 2022 (BBC new)

Lourdes Maldonado López had been driving her car with a clear plastic sheet over the rear windscreen for almost a year. The glass had been shattered by a gunman's bullet in March.

"We knew finances were tight, but I had no idea things were that bad," says Sonia de Anda, bursting into tears at the memory of her friend's patched-up red Dodge vehicle. "If she had come to us, we might have been able to help."

On that occasion, the bullet was only



A man holds photos of Lourdes Maldonado López during a protest to demand justice in Mexico City (Getty images)

a warning, fired through the gate of her narrow residential street in the border city of Tijuana.

However, last month a gunman caught up with her. She was murdered as she arrived at her home one night. Shards of glass are still scattered across the driveway.

Maldonado López was the third of four journalists killed in Mexico in January, in what was the most violent month for journalists in the country in almost a decade.

The painful irony for many of her colleagues is that she was supposedly under the protection of the state. She had been assigned a bodyguard and a panic button had been fitted in her home.

Yet neither of them would stop her from being assassinated in her own front garden.

"The government's protection scheme was broken from its very inception," says Sonia de Anda, who remains an adviser to it despite her misgivings.

"It was designed without any recommendations from

journalists. Rather, it was put together under pressure from international human rights groups to create one, and it was just improvised. They made it up as they went along."

Part of the problem, she explains, is that the law in Mexico is open to interpretation as to who is an at-risk journalist and what support they are entitled to.

It fails to take into account the specific threats against someone such as Maldonado López, who had deep fears for her own life over her entanglements with the former governor of Baja California state, Jaime Bonilla.

So deep were her concerns, in fact, that she took them to the president himself. In 2019, she travelled to Mexico City to confront President Andrés Manuel López Obrador about the risk she felt she was running over a legal dispute she was in with Mr Bonilla.

"I fear for my life," she told the president live on television at one of his daily morning news briefings. Her fears would prove horribly prophetic.

Mr Bonilla has denied any involvement

with her murder. An investigation into the crime is under way.

At her funeral in a cemetery in Tijuana, the press easily outnumbered the relatives, while the recital of the Lord's Prayer was almost drowned out by the buzz of a news agency's drone.

Some journalists were there to cover the murder of one of their own, others were there to grieve. But it has left the entire profession in Mexico in shock.

"What happened with Lourdes is something that happens very often," said Jan Albert Hoosten of the Committee to Protect Journalists, as we stood at the graveside.

"Journalists tell the authorities that they're in trouble, they tell them that they're receiving threats, but more often than not, the response by the Mexican government is simply silence. Nothing is done about it."

Full article can be found at: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-60227982>

First published by BBC Latin America

How do young Ukrainians and Russians feel about another war?

While tensions between Moscow and Kyiv reach boiling point, young people on both sides of the border hope for peace.

by Victor Jack

7 Feb 2022 (Al Jazeera)

War is increasingly on Vitaly Kolschitzky's mind.

The 27-year-old Ukrainian, who grew up in Sumy, 50km (30 miles) from the Russian border, is mentally preparing for the worst-case scenario as war fears mount – putting some money aside and buying long-lasting food and clothing, just in case.

"I wish I did not have to say this, but I think war is likely," he told Al Jazeera by phone. "Young people are really afraid."

As tensions between Russia and Ukraine reach boiling point, young men from the two formerly united Soviet states are unenthusiastic about the prospect of fighting in a large-scale conflict.

High-level talks involving all sides of the conflict – Ukraine, Russia, the United States and European leaders – have failed to ease tensions.

Western powers fear Moscow may be preparing to attack Ukraine, given it has massed more than 100,000 troops and military equipment at the border. Russia denies it has any designs on Ukraine, and instead accuses NATO of undermining the region's security.

Russian President Vladimir Putin has called on NATO to heed his security demands – chief among them blocking

Ukraine from membership – but the alliance has refused his request, meaning the crisis remains deadlocked.

Kolschitzky, who regularly meets young Ukrainians across the country as head of Ukraine's Youth Parliament, said that 2014 – when Russia annexed Crimea – was a turning point.

Not one person "wasn't touched by it" he said, referring to the deadly war eight years ago.

He lost a primary school friend to the conflict in Donbas.

"If there were many points of view before, every year more young people consider Russia an enemy," he said.

Kolschitzky believes that more young men are now ready to take up arms if necessary.

Ukraine would likely need to conscript recruits if war broke out as its army stands little chance against Russia should a land invasion go ahead.

Sasha Ivanitski, an 18-year-old from Kyiv, said many young people would consider fleeing if war broke out.

"Half of young people don't seem to care while others are debating, 'Where can I go where there will be no war?'" he said.

Full article can be view at : <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/2/7/not-worth-fighting-for-young-ukrainians-and-russians-shun-war>

First published by Al Jazeera

Forest fire rages across Kenya national park

Forest rangers and volunteers battled flames and strong winds on Sunday to stop a fierce fire raging across Kenya's Aberdare national park for nearly 24 hours.

The blaze broke out on Saturday night, according to an official working for Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS), the government body in charge of national parks, who said the fire was "moving very fast".

"It is on the grasses, it is spreading and very windy," the official told AFP on condition of anonymity, explaining that he was not authorised to speak to media.

"We have mobilised the community and staff around and today they have really tried their best... it is only that they were overwhelmed."

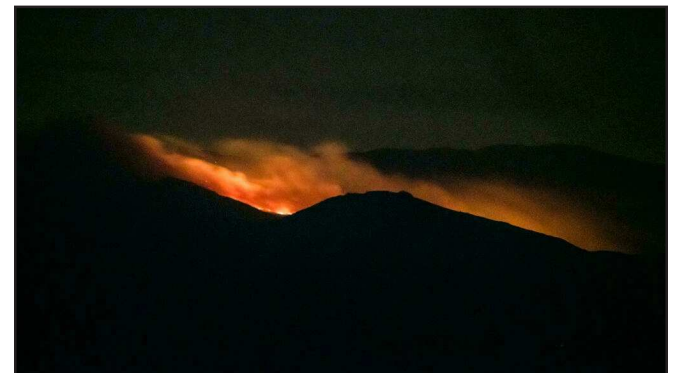
The park's name was etched in history when Britain's Elizabeth II, then a princess on a visit to Kenya, received news of her father's death while staying at the Treetops hotel, a remote game-watching lodge built high into a tree in the Aberdare forest.

Rhino Ark, a conservation charity in Kenya, said on Twitter that it had deployed helicopters to conduct aerial surveys of the area to estimate the extent of damage to the forest cover.

The Mount Kenya Trust, a body set up to conserve the country's forests, said Sunday that a team had "headed up to help with the bushfires in the Aberdares.

"They will camp and hit the fires at first light," it said on Twitter.

The park lies some 100 kilometres (60



miles) north of the capital Nairobi.

Located in the Aberdare mountain range, the park is home to spectacular waterfalls and lush bamboo jungles as well as a variety of wildlife including leopards, elephants and critically endangered black rhinos.

The Aberdares are the third highest mountain range in Kenya, reaching a summit of just over 4,000 metres (over 13,100 feet).

In recent days, concern has grown over a contentious proposal before parliament which could allow politicians to determine if public forest can be carved out and handed over to private interests.

The amendment to the Forest Conservation and Management Act – reforms passed after decades of rampant land clearing – has roused significant community anger and sparked fears that it could result in unchecked logging and environmental destruction.

Published by AFP news



by Wellington C. Ramos

RELEVANT ISSUES IN BECOMING A PARTY LEADER OR PM IN BELIZE

first elected to the Belize City Council in 1947 and had only lost one election in his entire political career in 1946 when he first ran for office in this council. When the Legislative Council was first established in 1954, he won the election and was elected continuously up until his defeat in 1984.

The United Democratic Party also defeated the People's United Party by a landslide of 21 to 7 seats, and their Leader Manuel Esquivel became the new Prime Minister of Belize. Due to George Price's loss, the party elected Florencio Marin Sr. as the leader of the People's United Party in the House of Representatives while George Price retained his post as the leader of their party.

A question that is lingering in my mind that we have no clear answer for is: What if Manuel Esquivel, the leader of the United Democratic Party, had lost his seat, while his party gained the majority of seats — who was going to become the Prime Minister of Belize? At that time, the deputy leader of the party was Curl Thompson, but the Constitution states that the elected members of the party should choose from among themselves who they want to be their prime minister.

The same problem would have existed if the PUP had won the majority of seats while George Price lost his. Under our Constitution, there is no direct vote to elect our Prime Minister. The Leader of the party that wins the

most seats in the House becomes the Prime Minister.

All political parties have their constitutions, but they should not be in conflict with the country's constitution, because they open up themselves to a constitutional court challenge. Patrick Faber stated publicly that he was going to resign as the leader of the party in the House of Representatives and leader of the party effective January the 31st 2022, when his letter of resignation was going to be submitted to his party.

According to the news, he has yet to submit his letter of resignation. Whether he submits the letter or not, his public declaration of resignation should be accepted. If the party allows him to retract his public resignation, it will damage the party severely.

It will also make most Belizeans believe that the United Democratic Party is in chaos and confusion and not fit to lead our country. This is an image that their party cannot afford to have at this time, when they are recovering from a landslide defeat and our people and nation are experiencing difficult times.

Hon. Shyne Barrow was reappointed as the new leader of the United Democratic Party recently, based on the constitutional requirement of the country of Belize. Hon. Tracey Panton is saying that his appointment is in violation of the UDP party's constitution and that she is thinking about challenging his ascension to the post.

It will be interesting to see how the court would decide on this matter if she was to bring this matter to them. I am of the opinion that she will not challenge it, because it is tedious, costly, might not be worth the challenge, is a huge gamble, and the party is planning a party leadership convention soon. The UDP are planning a closed convention to elect a new party leader in the month of March, but only members of the House of Representatives and National Assembly are qualified to run for this office.

A potential leader who is qualified to run in this upcoming convention, whose qualifications were accepted in the last leadership convention that was held, is Darrell Bradley, but nothing has been heard from him yet. If he decides to run, he will be challenging Hon. Tracey Panton and Hon. Shyne Barrow, who was the leader of his party who appointed him to become a Senator.

This can lead to tension and the possibility of him losing his Senate seat if he loses the leadership race. He can also split the delegates and change the outcome of the race. However, if he wins, he will have to win a seat in the House of Representatives to become Prime Minister of Belize, because he was not elected.

Currently, he is the standard bearer for Caribbean Shores, a tough constituency to win, where Hon. Kareem Musa is the current representative. With all this being said, our government should consider amending the Constitution to say that the leader of the party that garnered the most seats in the House of Representatives shall become the Prime Minister of Belize. They can also consider amending the Constitution to state that the Prime Minister shall be elected separately from the other members of the House of Representatives by a direct vote from all the citizens.

This amendment will give the Belizean citizens the opportunity to vote for the best Belizean person they think has what it takes to become the leader of their political party and Prime Minister. For this recommendation to be effective, the buying and selling of votes by any individual, group or political party, must become a felony with imprisonment of not less than five years attached to the crime. The selling and buying of votes is the greatest threat to our democracy and is the main cause of a corrupt political system.

Those who are convicted of this crime, will be disqualified from assuming or running for future political offices permanently. If enacted into law, this provision will also avoid a constitutional crisis in our country. In a case where the leader of a political party that wins the most seats in the House of Representatives loses his or her seat, he or she can still become Prime Minister of our beloved country, Belize.

According to **Articles 37 (1), (2)** and other related articles of the Belize Constitution, nobody can become Prime Minister of Belize unless that person is elected as a member of the House of Representatives. Due to this provision, the United Democratic Party (UDP) has a clause in their constitution, which states that a person cannot become the leader of their party unless this qualification is met. It does not make sense for new political parties in Belize, to have this clause in their party's constitution, because they are trying to get elected themselves for the first time.

The first prime minister and leader of a party to lose his seat in a general election was the late George Price when he was defeated by the late Derek Aikman in the Freetown Division in 1984. That was a shock not only to the members of the People's United Party (PUP) but to most of the people in the country of Belize.

This is because George Price was

FROM THE PUBLISHER *en Español*

Continúa de página 9

Lighburn, y regularmente comía en la casa de la madre de Ray, su madre siendo la finada y legendaria Lucille Eusey.

A mediados de 1977, el PUP decidió, con el senador Said Musa siendo el inversionista más destacado, convertirse en socio comercial de AMANDALA. La inversión del PUP permitió a AMANDALA adquirir la tecnología de impresión offset que nos permitiría competir con THE REPORTER, cuyo propietario, Harry Lawrence, había sido miembro fundador del Partido Liberal y líder del UDP.

Luego, los líderes del PUP me presionaron para que me convirtiera en candidato para su lista en las próximas elecciones del Concejo Municipal de Belize, programadas para diciembre de 1977. Recuerden, en diciembre de 1974, el PUP había perdido el Concejo Municipal por primera vez en la historia, al UDP. Esta fue una victoria UDP que podría considerarse casi sensacional.

Yo tenía un par de buenos amigos en la lista del PUP que me instaron a aceptar una candidatura, a pesar de que había renunciado públicamente a

la política electoral en 1974. En contra de mi buen juicio, finalmente cedí y me postulé como candidato por el llamado "Dinámicos Nueve PUP". Fui humillado en esa elección. El UDP ganó los nueve escaños de CitCo y yo quedé último entre todos los candidatos.

Fue entonces cuando decidí que la forma en que contribuiría a mi ciudad y país sería creando empleos, siendo el periódico nuestro único negocio en ese momento. Estamos hablando de hace más de cuarenta años. Por cierto, a los niños se les permitía vender periódicos en aquellos días en que AMANDALA se convirtió en el principal periódico de Belize en 1981.

La sección de recopilación de nuestro periódico entonces produjo el núcleo del equipo campeón de baloncesto, Kremandala Raiders, y fue ese equipo de baloncesto, creo, lo que permitió que nuestro segundo gran negocio, Radio KREM, sobreviviera algunos tiempos difíciles después de que comenzamos a transmitir en 1989. (En memoria de James Wilfred Gordon. Paz y amor.)

Y así, todo lo anterior ha sido a modo de presentarles el hecho de que Kremandala sufrió una tragedia esta

semana cuando uno de los recopiladores de periódicos que ha estado con nosotros durante casi tres décadas, Evan "Porque" Mitchell, fue asesinado a puñaladas en Lord's Bank el viernes por la noche.

En ese momento, el jefe de nuestra sección de recopilación, Charles "Bigga" Myles, que ha estado con nosotros desde mediados de la década de 1980, había estado hospitalizado temporalmente en KMHM. Cuando Porque fue llevado a la unidad de emergencia de KMHM, Bigga fue informado de la tragedia y se puso en contacto con mi segunda hija, Jacinta, quien dirige el periódico en estos días.

Jacinta me llamó el viernes por la noche. Estaba en casa recuperándome de una cirugía de hernia que se había realizado el martes en BelizeHealth Care Partners.

Hay beliceños por ahí que han construido Kremandala durante décadas y a quienes debemos sentir gratitud personal. Tal vez solamente hayan escuchado acerca de su servidor, pero el nuestro no es un espectáculo de un solo hombre. Nunca lo fue.

¡Poder al pueblo!



Strong Black Women Are Allowed to Have Depression, Too

Share on Pinterest

I'm a Black woman. And often, I find I'm expected to possess unlimited strength and resilience. This expectation puts immense pressure on me to uphold the "Strong Black Woman" (SBWM) persona you often see portrayed in pop culture.

The SBWM is the belief that Black women can handle anything that comes their way without it having an emotional impact on them. The SBWM prevents Black women from showing vulnerability and tells us to "get over it" and "get it done" regardless of the mental and physical toil.

Until recently, it's safe to say that society has paid little attention to the mental health needs of African-Americans. But both Black communities and non-Black communities have contributed to the problem.

Recent research suggests that this group is 10 percent more likely to struggle with serious mental health issues than non-Hispanic whites. Along with a higher potential for issues, Black Americans also report some of the lowest Trusted Source levels of mental health

treatment. Cultural components like stigma, systemic components like income inequality, and stereotypes like the SBWM all play a role in the low levels of treatment among Black Americans.

Black women deal with many unique societal factors that could affect mental health. As a Black woman who deals with anxiety and depression, I often feel "weak" due to my emotional fragility. But as I grow more in my understanding of mental health, I've realized my struggle doesn't negate my strength.

And, more importantly, that I don't always have to be strong. Expressing vulnerability takes strength. I accept this today, but it's been a long journey to get here.

'Black people don't get depressed' I knew I was unique early on. I've always been creative and have always been in constant pursuit of knowledge. Unfortunately, like many other creatives throughout history, I often find myself dealing with depressive spells. Since childhood, I've always been prone to extreme sadness. Unlike for other children, this sadness would often occur suddenly and unprovoked.

At that age, I had no understanding

of depression, but I knew it was abnormal to suddenly switch from feeling extremely extroverted to isolated. I didn't hear the word depression for the first time until I was much older.

It didn't take long to realize it wasn't a word I was expected to identify with.

After realizing that I might have depression, I faced a new struggle: acceptance. Everyone around me did their best to prevent me from identifying with it.

And it was most often followed by directions to read the Bible. I've heard "The Lord wouldn't give us more to deal with than we can bear" more times than anyone should hope. Within the Black community, if you feel bad for too long, you're told it's something you need to work harder to pray out of you. So, I prayed.

But when things didn't improve, I was faced with even more negative feelings. The ideal that Black women



don't struggle with universally *human* emotions perpetuates the idea that we're impenetrable.

And pretending we're superhuman is killing us, argues Josie Pickens in her article "Depression and the Black Superwoman Syndrome." Striving to meet this ideal, I found myself — again — defined by the stereotype of what it does and doesn't mean to be Black.

Full article can be found at: <https://www.healthline.com/health/black-women-are-allowed-to-have-depression-too#Acceptance-in-counseling>

First published by Healthline.com

Finding Food Freedom: Ditching Diet Culture and Learning to Trust Your Body's Cues

"Food freedom" — it's a complex term, with definitions ranging from ditching diet culture and restrictive diets to attaining good health and food security through growing your own foods.

It's marketed as an approach to address eating disorders for some and as a way to promote intentional weight loss for others.

However, in the health and wellness space, it's an emerging, revolutionary concept that challenges societal norms of dieting and the thin ideal.

It is championed by passionate health professionals and game-changers, such as Shana Spence (@thenutritiontea). Spence is a registered dietitian who takes a non-diet, weight-inclusive approach to health.

She uses her platform to redefine what "health" means — distinct from the diet industry's often-unattainable standards.

Another powerful and passionate food freedom champion is Dr. Kera Nyemb-Diop (@black.nutritionist), who has created a space that emphasizes body respect, eating without guilt, and reclaiming your cultural food heritage as an integral part of your healthy lifestyle.

In this article, we explore food freedom, explain what intuitive eating and mindful eating are, and discuss what roles — if any — they may have in the pursuit of intentional weight loss.

What is food freedom?

The food freedom framework has various definitions and applications, including but not limited to:

- freedom from industrial food production
- an approach to strengthen food sovereignty
- gastronomy — the science of understanding historical cultural foods and their impact on human health
- a spiritual journey to overcome "food addiction"
- a liberating part of weight loss programs such as Whole30

In other contexts, food freedom refers to ditching dieting culture and restrictive diets by giving yourself permission to enjoy all foods in moderation (unless allergies or medical needs prevent you from eating certain foods).

In that application of food freedom, practitioners see food as more than just fuel. They seek to build a positive and judgment-free relationship with all foods, where guilt is not considered an ingredient in the eating experience.

This view of food freedom encompasses intuitive eating and mindful eating, two philosophies that cultivate self-trust around food choices and reject unnecessary restrictions.

Intuitive eating and mindful eating are often used to support recovery

from eating disorders such as anorexia nervosa and bulimia nervosa, chronic mental illnesses that negatively affect nutritional status and your relationship with food

Overall, food freedom can help people overcome diet culture or introduce flexibility for intentional weight loss.

Because the varied and overlapping marketing of the term "food freedom" may lead to some confusion, context matters. This article will focus on food freedom as a non-diet approach to health and nutrition.

The origins of food freedom as a concept

Food freedom as a therapeutic approach for eating disorder recovery grew out of the need for non-pharmaceutical treatments that emphasize behavioral changes, such as a positive body image and healthy eating attitudes.

A 2017 study demonstrated that dieting — accompanied by body dissatisfaction and the pursuit of thinness — increases the risk of developing bulimia nervosa, binge eating disorder, and purging disorder.

Even dieting among inherently lean individuals increases their risk of developing anorexia nervosa.

The multibillion-dollar diet industry promotes the "thin ideal" with

unhealthy weight management behaviors, potentially encouraging disordered eating patterns that can contribute to the development of eating disorders.

There's evidence that dieting doesn't help those who are seeking long-term weight loss, either.

Weight regain within 1–5 years is common among chronic dieters, and approximately 33% of dieters regain more weight than they initially lost.

Dieting restrictions contribute to disordered eating. Food freedom, on the other hand, seeks to combat this.

Food freedom as a mindfulness-based practice may address disordered eating, including emotional eating and binge eating disorder. It can also help you avoid eating in response to external cues, such as the sight or smell of foods, when you're not physically hungry.

In particular, intuitive eating is associated with improved psychological well-being and physical health and fewer dietary restrictions.

Full article can be found at : <https://www.healthline.com/nutrition/what-is-food-freedom-getting-started-weight-loss-and-tips#background>

First published by Healthline.com

Curfew extended in new SI

(From page 1)

Along with the opening of land borders and sea ports, the new Statutory Instrument extends the curfew and establishes a travel insurance requirement for tourists

by Khaila Gentle

BELMOPAN, Mon. Feb. 7, 2022

The most recent Statutory Instrument (SI)—no. 22 of 2022—which was published in the *Gazette* on February 5 and is set to come into effect on February 7, has extended the current curfew until March 6. As a result, Belizeans will still be expected to be in their homes from 11:00 p.m. to 4:00 a.m. from Sunday to Thursday and from 12:00 p.m. to 4:00 a.m. on Fridays and Saturdays.

“For the purposes of preventing, controlling, containing, and suppressing the spread of the infectious disease COVID-19 and maintaining peace and public order, a curfew is hereby imposed commencing on February 7th, 2022, and ending on March 6th, 2022 at 4:00 a.m.,” states the SI.

SI 22 also includes an amendment to regulations regarding the opening of land and sea ports, stating that every land port and seaport will reopen on February 7, 2022. The operating hours will be 6:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. for seaports and 6:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. for land borders.

As was previously reported by the Ministry of Health, the SI also notes that every person (other than foreign tourists) entering Belize through any land or sea port will be tested by the Ministry for COVID-19. If that person is returning to Belize on the same day that they exited the country, however, they will be exempt from testing.

For those leaving the country, proof of vaccination, whether through a vaccination card or the



Ministry’s Health Pass Vaccination App, will be required. This applies to all Belizean nationals and permanent residents above the age of twelve, persons holding temporary status (such as temporary employment permit, dependent’s permit, or student permit), and resident diplomats.

The SI further specified that “A person entering Belize through the Belize Northern Border shall enter through the Chactemal Bridge only.”

Additionally, the SI makes amendments to the entry requirements for foreign tourists, stating that as of February 15, every tourist entering Belize through the airport or any land port will be required to purchase travel insurance either before or upon arrival to Belize. According to the Belize Tourism Board, the cost of said travel insurance will be \$18 per person. The Statutory Instrument notes that permanent residents, persons holding a temporary status in Belize, qualified retired persons, foreign nationals with long-stay status, airline crew and personnel, cruise ship passengers and crew, visiting nationals whose stay does not exceed one day, and any other category of persons determined by the Belize Tourism Board, are exempt from this.

GOB gets another \$70 million

Continued from Page 1

which it sought an additional 70 million dollars to cover unpaid and recurrent expenses incurred by GoB. Of note, 23 million dollars of that amount is being sought to cover costs inside the Ministry of Health and Wellness; this is following Hon. Michel Chebat’s departure from the Ministry at the Prime Minister’s request.

In response to the government’s request for the additional funds, the newly appointed Leader of the Opposition, Hon. Moses “Shyne” Barrow, accused the current administration of gross fiscal mismanagement.

“The last House meeting, they ask for money for the Ministry of Health. The Minister has since been fired,

and I can see why, and I am saying to the Prime Minister, this has to stop, this is fiscal hemorrhaging, fiscal bleeding. You set a budget in April, and we understand that things happen and you have to come back, and I appreciate that you come back to the House and you tell us what it is you’re going to spend, but what I don’t appreciate is the gross mismanagement, the negligence, because I will refrain from saying pocket and hustle. I will not accuse anyone of that, but I will say that it is mismanagement, it is negligence, it is incompetence, it is a dire lack of talent. Questions have to be asked when you come into this House and you’re asking the taxpayers to front another 23 million dollars for the

Please turn to Page 14

The Global Problem-Solving Paradox

by António Guterres

As Secretary-General of the United Nations, I spend much of my time speaking with world leaders and taking the pulse of global trends. It’s clear to me that we are at a defining moment in international relations. Global decision making is plagued by gridlock – and a fundamental paradox lies at the heart of it.

On the one hand, many of today’s global leaders recognize our common threats – COVID, climate, the unregulated development of new technologies. They agree that something needs to be done about them. Yet that common understanding is not matched by common action.

Indeed, divides keep deepening.

We see them everywhere: in the unfair and unequal distribution of vaccines; in a global economic system rigged against the poor; in the utterly inadequate response to the climate crisis; in digital technology and a media landscape that profit from division; and in growing unrest and conflict around the world.

So if the world agrees on the diagnosis of these common problems, why is it unable to effectively treat them?

I see two fundamental reasons.

First, because foreign policy often becomes a projection of internal politics.

As a former Prime Minister, I know that despite good intentions, international affairs can be hijacked by domestic politics. Perceived national interests can easily trump the larger global good.

This impulse is understandable, even if it is wrong-headed in instances where solidarity is in a country’s self-interest.

Vaccines are a prime example.

Everyone understands that a virus like COVID-19 does not respect national borders. We need universal vaccination to reduce the risk of new and more dangerous variants emerging and affecting everyone, in every country.

Instead of prioritizing vaccines for all through a global vaccination plan, governments have acted to safeguard their people. But that is only half a strategy.

Of course, governments must ensure the protection of their own people. But unless they work simultaneously to vaccinate the world, national vaccination plans could be rendered useless as new variants emerge and spread.

Second, many of today’s global institutions or frameworks are outdated or simply weak and the necessary reforms are impeded by geo-political divides.

For example, the authority of the World Health Organization is nowhere near what is required to coordinate the response to global pandemics.

At the same time, international institutions with more power are either paralyzed by division – like the Security Council – or undemocratic – like many of our international financial institutions.

In short — global governance is failing at precisely the moment when the world should be coming together to solve global problems

We need to act together in the national and global self-interest, to protect critical global public goods, like public health and a livable climate, that support humanity’s wellbeing.

Such reforms are essential if we are to deliver on common aspirations for our collective global goals of peace, sustainable development, human rights and dignity for all.

This is a difficult and complex exercise that must take into account questions of national sovereignty.

But doing nothing is not an acceptable option. The world desperately needs more effective and democratic international mechanisms that can solve people’s problems.

As the pandemic has taught us, our fates are tied. When we leave anyone behind, we risk leaving everyone behind. The most vulnerable regions, countries and people are the first victims of this paradox in global policy. But everyone, everywhere is directly threatened.

The good news is that we can do something about our global challenges.

Problems created by humanity can be solved by humanity.

Last September, I issued a report on these issues. [Our Common Agenda](#) is a starting point; a roadmap to gather the world together to tackle these governance challenges and reinvigorate multilateralism for the 21st century.

Change won’t be easy, nor will it happen overnight. But we can begin by finding areas of consensus and moving in the direction of progress.

This is our greatest test because so much is at stake.

We are already seeing the consequences. As people start to lose trust in the ability of institutions to deliver, they also risk losing faith in the values that underlie those institutions.

In every corner of the world, we see an erosion of trust and what I fear is the emergence of a twilight of shared values.

Injustice, inequality, mistrust, racism and discrimination are casting dark shadows across every society.

We must restore human dignity and human decency and respond to people’s anxieties with answers.

In the face of growing interconnected threats, enormous human suffering, and shared risks, we have an obligation to speak up and act to put out the fire.

António Guterres is Secretary-General of the United Nations.

Evan “Porque” Mitchell killed in Lord’s Bank

Continued from Page 1

the head with a sharp object. Upon being stabbed, Mitchell immediately lost consciousness and was rushed to the Karl Heusner Memorial Hospital, where he was reportedly placed on life support, but on the following day he passed away.

Police are now trying to piece together the information they’ve gathered about what took place in order to send a file to the Director of Public Prosecution, Cheryl-Lynn Vidal, who will recommend what charges are to be levied against the assailant, who has since been detained by police. Unconfirmed reports are indicating that the man who caused Mitchell’s death has been identified as Jerome Swift, who is a mechanic from the same community.

Today, we spoke to Mitchell’s older sister, who informed us that this attack which claimed her brother’s life had actually been preceded by a prior confrontation between Mitchell and his assailant

earlier that afternoon. That earlier fight had reportedly erupted when the common-law husband of Reneshia Ortis, who is the cousin of Mitchell’s common-law wife, allegedly hit Mitchell’s common-law wife in the chest with a bottle—which prompted Mitchell to retaliate in defence of his wife.

Later, Ortis was walking in the company of Mitchell and his common-law wife when a second attack occurred that would end Mitchell’s life. Reports are that Mitchell was walking ahead of the ladies when the assailant pounced on him.

Evan Mitchell, or “Porque”, as he was affectionately known at *Amandala*, has worked with us for almost 30 years as a newspaper collator. He will be remembered as a jovial and humble spirit—something also noted by his sister. We here at AMANDALA express our deepest condolences to the family and friends of Evan Mitchell. May he rest in peace.

GOB gets another \$70 million

Continued from Page 13

Ministry of Health. What is going on?” Shyne outlined.

He had also pointed, prior to his comments, to fiscal mismanagement by former Minister of Health, Hon. Michel Chebat, as the reason that the government had to seek additional monies to cover expenses. However, during an interview following the House meeting, Prime Minister Briceño said, “Minister Chebat had to make some tough decisions when he went in there to try to fix it. I mean, we had millions of dollars in this one year alone of the payment that we are doing for medicine. Currently over 5 million dollars is only for payment that Pablo Marin left; we have to be paying those bills. Secondly, because of the pressures in setting up the budget, if I remember right, they needed about 20 million dollars for medication, especially because of COVID of the testing. I mean, we are doing tens of thousands of testing, something that the UDP was not doing, but I think only 9 million dollars approved, so now they are coming back to Finance to say, well we have to get these medicine. The other day we were running out of testing, and that is why then we have these new appreciation, when it comes to the Ministry of Health,” Hon. Briceno said.

One line item in the supplementary allocations schedule for the Ministry of Health and Wellness listed 15.5 million dollars for Materials and Supplies (Pharmaceuticals and Consumables) and 7.37 million dollars for Contracts and Consultancy for NHI and Hemodialysis. In total, 26.5 million dollars has been allocated to the Health Ministry.

Also listed in these supplementary appropriations is a 20-million dollar capitalization of the Central Bank. In explaining the reasoning behind this decision, the PM said, “The government proposes to capitalize the Central Bank to the sum of 20 million

Hon. Kareem Musa, the representative for Caribbean Shores and Minister of Home Affairs, rose to address—and condemn—the common perception that domestic violence “happens all the time” and is thus “normal”. He also commended *7News*’ Jules Vasquez, host of the *Uncut* talk show, for standing up for a domestic violence victim, Dr. Shanikka Arnold, a move which resulted in his interview with Hon. Patrick Faber being cut short and which was criticized by many.

At the end of the discussion, a division was called on the motion, and support for it was found to be unanimous. Hon. Dolores Balderamos Garcia also took the time to call for the posthumous pardoning of Nora Parham, the first and only woman in Belizean history to have been executed. She was hanged for murdering her partner, Ketchell Trapp. Parham, who was a victim of domestic abuse and had constantly complained of her partner’s behavior to police, was accused of throwing gasoline on Trapp which led to him being set on fire.

dollars to proactively fortify the balance sheet of the Central Bank as regulator and protector of our financial system and to bolster the bank’s commitment to monetary and financial system stability. The Central Bank of Belize takes some risks, but they are not profit-driven. Their main objectives are maintaining the fixed exchange rate and stability of the finance system.”

He went on to say, “As the chief regulator, the bank acts as the lender of last resort for the domestic banks but finds themselves in financial difficulty or unable to attain adequate liquidity in the inter-bank market. As we all know, the forbearance measures introduced by the Central Bank to temporarily ease the financial challenges faced by many businesses arising from the severe contraction of the economy have come to an end as of the end of December 2021. There is, accordingly, an increased likelihood of nonperforming loans in the system. To prepare for the possible effects of the scenario, the fortification of the Central Bank is imperative in order for the bank to effectively perform its core and non-core functions.”

The PM further pointed out that the Central’s Bank total capital and reserves amount to only 1.3 percent of GDP, while other Caribbean countries report an average of 2 percent.

“This proposed 20-million-dollar capitalization of the Central Bank brings this ratio near to the regional average by increasing it by 1.8 percent, but more importantly it will serve to protect the bank against future losses and enable the bank to meet its mandate of maintaining, monitoring, and financial stability in these challenging times,” the PM said.

Also on the list is 2.5 million dollars for the “Blue Bond Conservation Fund Agreement.” Readers would recall the row made by UDP chairman Hon. Michael Peyrefitte over an additional 15 million dollars sought by the government to cover the cost of this agreement. The PM said the funds were being allocated to start to “pay” for the Blue Bonds.

The government has also allocated around 2.4 million dollars for National Defence and Border Security, 3.1 million dollars toward the replacement of the Haulover Bridge; and funds toward the repair of the damaged stretch of road on the Philip Goldson Highway. Around 1.5 million dollars is being set aside for scholarship and support funds for local and international students and around \$750K for the purchase of vehicles.

In total, an additional \$33,222,728 is being allocated to cover recurrent expenditure, while additional Capital 2 expenditure amounts to \$29,965,247, and Capital 3 expenditure adds up to \$7,162,319 in this most recent proposed supplementary appropriation, which altogether amounts to \$70,350,294.

House supports Domestic Violence Bill

Continued from Page 1

Minister of Human Development, Families, and Indigenous People’s Affairs.

Minister Balderamos Garcia noted that, according to the Belize Crime Observatory, at least 60% of domestic violence cases registered during 2020 were the result of intimate partner violence. She further noted that from January 2021 to November 2021, 2,155 reports of domestic violence were made to the police—78% of which were made by women.

The motion, recommended by Cabinet, called for the House to:

1. Denounce and condemn domestic violence, in all its forms, as a crime and a violation of fundamental human rights;

2. Support the call for additional resources to further strengthen the interventions, safeguards, and public awareness required to effectively address domestic violence in Belize;

3. Undertake legislative review aimed at filling gaps and putting in the necessary reforms for the response to domestic violence;

4. As national leaders, take a zero-tolerance position with regard to domestic violence;

5. Prioritize domestic violence as a national issue of significance and pledge to take individual and collective actions to end this plague in our constituencies.

The Leader of the Opposition, Hon. Moses “Shyne” Barrow, was the first to express his support of the bill. “We have discussed this matter in length, and we agree a hundred million percent with this motion. Domestic violence should be condemned; gender-based violence should be condemned, and the entire House will unify to condemn domestic violence,” he stated. The newly instated

leader also recommended that the House go further than what was stipulated in the motion by taking steps to implement a House committee responsible for looking into allegations made against members of parliament regarding not just domestic violence but any other instance of misconduct.

Hon. Barrow took the opportunity to speak on accusations made against him, and said that since the alleged incident he has apologized not only to his wife but to all the women in his family, including his daughter, for “even being remotely involved in such allegations.”

Also in agreement was the Albert area representative, Hon. Tracy Panton, who called the issue of gender-based violence a national epidemic.

“According to the global average, 1 in 3 women have experienced physical and/or sexual violence at some point in her lifetime,” she stated, and she went on to point out that in CARICOM nations as many as 1 in every 2 women has been a victim of such incidents. Hon. Panton also emphasized her view that bringing the motion to the National Assembly was the right decision at the right time.

Orange Walk East representative, Hon. Kevin Bernard, remarked that domestic violence has become, what he called, a “crime of convenience.”

“Many of us speak out when it is convenient for us and remain silent or make excuses when it is one of our own. Madame Speaker, we recently saw that over the last few days with some of our friends on the other side,” he said.

“We should all rise, to support the member for Belize Rural Central. If not, none of us will ever have the moral authority to speak of domestic abuse, because then we will all be part of the problem,” he added.

GOB, CWU sign new MOU

Continued from **Page 1**

between the Christian Workers Union (CWU) and the Port of Belize Ltd. has been temporarily resolved with the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the union and the Government of Belize. The MOU, signed on February 3, outlines several conditions to be met by both parties, including—and most notably—the Government’s agreement to make a payment of 1.5 million Belize dollars to the CWU as compensation to the stevedores, who, according to Hyde, have lost an estimated \$30 million in future earnings and retirement benefits due to the GoB-sanctioned transfer of sugar-loading operations to the Big Creek Port. This written agreement followed the Essential Services Arbitration Tribunal’s issuance of directives to the Port of Belize Limited (PBL), which included instructions that the receivership negotiate with the stevedores on a sugar redundancy package and re-designate the status of some stevedores so that they are able to access certain employment benefits. One day after that ruling by the tribunal on Friday, January 28, the CWU stevedores returned to work—an act of good faith that hinges on the hope that PBL will follow through on what it has been instructed to do.

On the other hand, the 1.5 million dollar payment to be issued by the government on or before February 28, is the Government’s compensation to the stevedores for the hardships that they have suffered since the port’s privatization. In comparison to the losses suffered by the stevedores due to a series of decisions that have resulted in the decimation of their earnings and the weakening of their job security, the settlement sum, which, when shared among more than a hundred stevedores, will amount to about \$10,000 per stevedore, is being seen by some as just a token. Hyde had expressed his hope that it is a gesture that indicates GoB’s recognition of the harm caused to this group of workers by a series of decisions it has made. But, although the Government has not explicitly taken responsibility for the plight of the stevedores, the MOU does acknowledge that their struggles have been a direct result of the privatization of PBL.

The agreement, signed by the president of the CWU, Evan “Mose” Hyde; the Minister of Public Utilities, Energy and Logistics, Hon. Michel Chebat, and the chairman of the Belize Port Authority, Major Lloyd Jones, outlined the terms on which the CWU has agreed to accept the payment, including the immediate return of the stevedores to work.

President of the Christian Workers Union, Evan “Mose” Hyde, when interviewed by reporters following the signing of the MOU, said, “The essence of the agreement is that the Government, acknowledging that privatization has had an impact on our members, offered an ex-gratia payment initially, and we countered, with due respect, to the offer that if we were going to have some sort of spirit of reconciliation, then we wanted it to be a very encompassing agreement.”

“We understood that one of the issues at the time was that our members were not at work. Our members went back to work on Friday. But the matter of Government’s offer was still not resolved. We countered by widening the scope of the MOU. Besides being offered a financial sum, which we have now accepted at a mil and a half—one million five hundred thousand—we also asked for the matter of our members who were teargassed and rubber-bulleted, who have initiated processes for claims, and who have medical certification of injuries that

they received that day, for there to be a commitment to settle,” he added.

Under the MOU, the Government of Belize has agreed to begin negotiations regarding compensation to all the stevedores who were injured during their peaceful protest on July 22, 2020, by the Belize Police Department. It was, in Hyde’s words, a “grotesque act”, when unarmed stevedores were fired upon with rubber bullets and tear-gassed by GSU officers while they were protesting against the unceremonious firing of PBL employees via WhatsApp. It is still uncertain which person or entity, at the highest levels, had called for such force to be used, since it is being said that the deployment of the officers was not GoB-sanctioned. The scenes of the incident, and of bloodied, injured workers, which were later seen on video were deeply disturbing, and according to the union president, there is at least one of the eleven union members who were injured who now has physical impairments and is only able to do his work at PBL through the assistance of fellow stevedores.

The Memorandum signed by the CWU further specifies that the Government of Belize is to amend the Belize Social Security Act, which contains a legislative loophole that places the stevedores at a disadvantage (due to the uneven distribution of their work hours) and has long been a concern of theirs. Though it was not outlined in the MOU, Hyde also informed the media that the Ministry of Natural Resources has agreed to look into the availability of lands for the workers, many of whom do not have land of their own. He made reference to one stevedore who over the years had submitted applications to the Lands Department in an effort to obtain a piece of land 16 times—to no avail.

And while the 1.5 million dollars from GOB is an attempt at reconciliation, said Hyde, it is still merely “ointment on an amputated leg” and does not cover what the CWU members have lost. In addition to the two decades of struggle and turmoil that the stevedores have faced under a privatized PBL, the workers have, as previously mentioned, also seen their salaries cut in half as a result of sugar-loading operations being transferred from the Belize City Port to Big Creek Port in Independence Village. Back in 2006, the Government signed an MOU agreeing that the loading of dry goods, sugar included, would not be transferred from PBL to Big Creek due to the significant financial impact that it would have had. Despite this, the Government of Belize still gave Belize Sugar Industries (BSI/ASR) the green light to move its operations down south.

“I think it’s important to take this opportunity to say that stevedores have already; we describe it as they’ve lost a financial leg,” Hyde said. “When we do the math, our members have lost out on future earnings. When we put together direct earnings and then retirement benefits, we’re looking at near 30 million dollars,” he said.

But despite the payment being, in the context of how much has been lost by the stevedores, a relative drop in the bucket, Hyde commented that the gesture is still significant to the union members, especially because they are aware that the 1.5 million is “the people’s money. It’s not the employer’s money” and because the government has at least acknowledged the workers’ plight.

After Friday’s House of Representatives meeting, Prime Minister Hon. John Briceño spoke to local media on the matter. During the interview, he said that many of the issues brought up by the Christian Workers Union should have been addressed years ago.

“We believe it’s best to just put this to an

end. It is something that needs to be corrected. And we felt that instead of having this fester and continue every now and again to flare up—because at the end of the day when these things happen, it costs everyone, including the consumers—as a responsible government we said, you know, let us deal with it once and for all,” he remarked.

The PM further noted that the CWU has agreed to present a detailed account of how the \$1.5 million payout from GoB will have been disbursed, including receipts, names, and social security numbers, within 90 days. He also noted that, although some matters have been, in his view, settled, one of the issues to be further discussed is the working hours of the stevedores and the continuous offloading of the ships.

“On the way that they [the stevedores] offload the ships, the practice has been—and this is a practice that has been going on for decades and it’s difficult to break a practice—that one group of workers, one gang of stevedores, would offload a ship and when they get tired they go home and rest and come back to finish that ship. Maybe 20, 30 years ago that was okay, but in today’s time when you have to get everything moving and you’re working in an almost 24/7 economy, you can’t leave a ship idle there until that group of workers can come back to work,” he said. A part of the agreement, said the PM, is that now while one gang of stevedores rests, another will come to the port to finish the offloading.

In regards to the relationship between the stevedores and the Port of Belize Limited going forward, CWU president “Mose” Hyde said that achieving peace and stability is their end goal. “With this MOU, I believe what it has done is to create a bit of space for us to find the flexibility to create that stability,” he said.

Within that space, there are still many pressing matters that must still be addressed, including the stevedores’ hours of work, the sugar redundancy package, and several other issues. Hyde said that the members of the

union have tried to avoid shutdowns and that it is something they do not want and to which they have resorted only as a last resort.

“Obviously, it’s a dysfunctional, distrustful, toxic relationship, but we still have to find a way to exist, where what it is we provide at the port is attractive to the people we both depend upon to make the food,” said Hyde. He also called on those who were quick to criticize the actions of the CWU to recognize their efforts in reaching an agreement and to encourage PBL to meet them halfway. On many occasions, the union has struggled to get PBL to dialogue with them regarding matters that affect the livelihoods of the stevedores and, by extension, over a hundred families on the Southside of Belize City. He pointed out that it is important that those entities which so readily blamed the stevedores for the shutdown, hold the Port of Belize Ltd. accountable and make an effort to ensure that it fulfills its commitments and does what it has said it will do.

“These are hardworking, real human beings that represent a historical value to the community around them. And that value has been taken down. And all we’re trying to do now—all we’re left to do—is to preserve what is there,” he noted.

“And we need everybody. We need the Government. We need the stakeholders, the Chamber, we need everybody to understand, listen. It is in our interest, not just stevedores’ interest, it is in all our interest, it is in the community’s interest, it’s in Belize’s interest that what’s left there, that one last leg that is there for stevedores remains. You cannot destroy that. And we are here saying to you, we are committed to doing our part. Then you’ve got to do your part too,” he went on to say.

Hyde also stressed that the highest priority for the Government of Belize should be creating an environment at the Port of Belize Ltd. that works for all parties and making an effort to recognize the economic value that the stevedores’ earnings bring to the Southside.

Faber forced out; UDP divided

Continued from **Page 1**

NPC voted to activate Faber’s oral resignation by, reports say, the narrowest of margins. The Opposition is now a house divided, with almost half of the NPC voting in opposition of the activation of the oral resignation made by Faber. Over the weekend, former UDP senator and party faithful, Orson “OJ” Elrington called the party a “dictatorship”. Reports are that Hon. Hugo Patt, who is currently the deputy leader of the UDP, has been voted in as interim leader of the party pending a national convention to elect a new leader.

On Friday, a leaked e-mail exchange between Patrick Faber and UDP chairman, Michael Peyrefitte, confirmed Faber’s refusal to resign as party leader after he received an email informing him that the Central Executive of the party had given him until noon on Friday to submit an official letter. When that hour arrived, no letter had been submitted. Faber in fact decried his second ouster from Parliament which took place early last week, once again by Hon. Moses “Shyne” Barrow. Barrow was sworn in as Leader of the Opposition last week with little fanfare, but Faber stated in a subsequent e-mail that this move had caused him to feel “uneasy”, and he classified those UDP parliamentarians eager to take over the leadership reins of the party as “hungry vultures”

As a result, Faber refused to submit a written resignation—pointing to what he

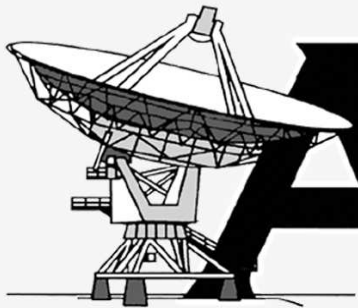
viewed as a wrestle for power within the party as his justification, but he made it clear that it was not his intention to remain leader of the party “beyond a national convention.” In response, UDP chairman Michael Peyrefitte held a national party council on Saturday, and reports say that Faber only lost by 1 or 2 votes at most, after the question of whether or not Faber’s January 24 address should be accepted as his formal resignation was put to the NPC.

Following the meeting on Saturday, attorney OJ Elrington, a high-profile member of the UDP, commented on social media, “We now have a dictatorship in the UDP. The D is no longer for Democratic but rather Dictatorship.”

It’s worth noting that, in his correspondence, Faber had urged the NPC to hold votes for all executive offices within the party and not just the party leader post.

While Faber acknowledged that his egress was imminent, he said that he could not sit by and watch his beloved party be devoured. So, while by all indications this is the end of Faber’s leadership of the UDP, there is yet no indication that he will wholly withdraw from party affairs, despite not being present at last Friday’s House meeting.

The UDP is now planning to elect a party leader on March 27. At this time, the two contenders in the race are the current Leader of the Opposition, Hon. Shyne Barrow, and Albert area representative, Hon. Tracy Panton.



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