

Belize's leading newspaper

Two dead in fatal RTA

A collision between two vans resulted in the death of one passenger in each vehicle.



BELIZE CITY, Mon. Mar. 28, 2022

Police are investigating a fatal road traffic accident that took place on Saturday night between miles 72 and 73 on the Phillip Goldson Highway, and claimed the lives of two persons: a man identified as Steve Grant, and a woman, Ariana Chan, both of whom passed away while receiving treatment at the Corozal Community Hospital. Police have since issued a notice of

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2nd amnesty clinic held up north

by *Khaila Gentle*

ORANGE WALK, Mon. Mar. 28, 2022

This April, Belize's third ever amnesty program, through which permanent residency will be granted to undocumented migrants and registered asylum seekers living in the country, will finally be launched, and in preparation for that launch the International Office for Migration Belize (IOM Belize) has set up a two-day mobile hub in the Orange Walk District, where they will be assisting qualified persons in preparing to apply for the program. According to Miss Diana Locke, the Head of Office at IOM Belize, the mobile hub is a "one stop shop" that provides all the necessary services that will help to make the application process



Diana Locke,
Head of Office at IOM Belize

smoother in April. Those services include compilation of necessary documents, translation, statutory declaration writing, and even assistance in completing the amnesty program's application form.

Orange Walk is the second stop on the mobile hub's tour, with Corozal having been the first. Speaking with local media, Diana Locke shared that IOM is planning on offering the mobile services countrywide for as long as their funding permits.

On day one of the two-day stop in Orange Walk, Prime Minister John Briceño and Minister of State in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade, and Immigration, Hon. Ramon

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Churches continue their anti-cannabis offensive

"The real cost of this bill will not be measured in dollars and cents but rather in the loss of wrecked lives, especially of our youth. I would ask parents if we cannot stand up and say no to this bill, how can we expect our children to say no to drugs?," Father John Robinson said.



Father John Robinson –
Mount Carmel Parish

BELIZE CITY, Mon. Mar. 28, 2022

Last week, a Catholic priest from the Mount Carmel Parish, located in the Cayo district, Father John Robinson, issued a pre-recorded

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Chinese businessman dies in Hopkins fire



(Photo by BBN)

Rainbow Restaurant

BELIZE CITY, Mon. Mar. 28, 2022

At around 1:45 a.m. on March 27, it was reported that the building housing the Rainbow Restaurant on the south end of Hopkins Village was on fire. Firefighters went to the scene, and after they had extinguished the blaze, the motionless body of a man identified as Jing Deng Tan, the proprietor of the establishment, was found inside the structure. Police believe that the fire started inside a room in his apartment, located in a residential section of the premises.

The Police Department's Communications Director, ASP Fitzroy Yearwood, told reporters that one of the tenants in the building was awakened by the smell of smoke and

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Contingency Fund capitalized



Prime Minister John Briceño

BELIZE CITY, Sun. Mar. 27, 2022

The budget debate for 2022-2023 concluded on Friday evening with a final reading of the new budget in the House of Representatives and a last-minute amendment to capitalize the Contingency Fund for the first time in Belize's history. According to Prime Minister Briceño, \$5 million of Government funds will be placed

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Shyne wins



Hon. Shyne Barrow

(See story on page 14)

LOO says the budget is “bogus”

Hon. Moses “Shyne” Barrow stated in the House of Representatives that the \$1.3 billion budget “misprioritizes” funds, but Prime Minister Briceño argued that the LOO’s critiques lack “shame and common sense”.



Hon. Moses “Shyne” Barrow

by *Khaila Gentle*

BELMOPAN, Fri. Mar. 25, 2022

At last Thursday’s sitting of the House of Representatives, members of the House took part in the first portion of a two-day debate over the contents of the 2022-2023 Draft Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure, during which the Leader of the Opposition, Hon. Moses “Shyne” Barrow, referred to the \$1.3 billion budget as one of wastage that neglects the masses. Throughout the course of his hour-long presentation, Hon. Barrow criticized the Government for poor prioritization of public funds in what he referred to as a “bogus budget”—highlighting a lack of focus on poverty alleviation as well as a questionable amount of budget cuts, including an estimated \$10 million cut to the funds allocated for the Ministry of Home Affairs. The

Mesopotamia area representative also took great issue with the proposed \$20 million capitalization of the Central Bank of Belize.

“The problem is inflation. The problem we have is a housing problem. The problem we have is a poverty problem. Those are the problems we have. The Central Bank has had the same capital for the last 40 years. It has not been a problem. You could have taken those 20 million dollars and invested it into education...,” said Hon. Barrow.

In response to this, Deputy Prime Minister Hon. Cordel Hyde told Hon. Barrow that he “should know better,” and went on to point out that the capitalization of the Central Bank is “absolutely necessary.” Hon. Hyde further stated that he considered dismissing much of Barrow’s criticisms — citing the fact that his debate presentation resembled a campaign speech.

During his presentation, the Leader of the Opposition also elaborated on his view that the budget does not take the masses into consideration, pointing out that, despite Government’s proclamation that the economy has been rebounding tremendously, the purported economic growth is not reflected in the quality of life of most Belizean citizens.

“Despite what the SIB says, despite these Shakespearian declarations of a booming economy and this Herculean

recovery—that is not what the Belizean people are saying. And I’m not going to trust the statisticians that you are relying on. I’m going to trust what the Belizean people are saying. And they are suffering,” he said. Hon. Cordel Hyde responded by pointing out that the current administration has had to contend with what it inherited: a broke government.

“The truth of the matter is, Madam Speaker, that the former Prime Minister, and perhaps it was only the former Prime Minister and his inner circle who know what a bucket of slop he was leaving for us. The problem with that bucket of slop, Members, is that we can’t pay to take it out. We have to take it out ourselves,” he remarked. Reiterating his sentiments was the Minister of Education, Hon. Francis Fonseca, who admonished Hon. Barrow for bemoaning the challenges currently faced by the people of Belize while not acknowledging that many of those challenges existed during the UDP administration’s 12-year reign.

On day two of the debate, Hon. Tracy Pantón expressed her own disappointments with the budget, criticizing the government for not allowing a full two-week window (the customary time period) for members to review the estimates.

“Only 1.8% of the budget is allocated to the Ministry of Human Development,” she pointed out, noting—much like Hon. Shyne Barrow before her—that the lack of funding

being provided to such a “key ministry” contradicts the current administration’s description of the budget as fair and inclusive.

At the end of the two-day debate, Prime Minister John Briceño, in his concluding speech, responded to some of the criticisms made against the budget, particularly those made by Hon. Barrow. The Prime Minister called out the Leader of the Opposition, as well as the entire United Democratic Party, for boasting about their consecutive three terms in Government while having done little during that time to tackle issues such as poverty.

“Over those 13 years, his [the member for Corozal North, Hon. Hugo Patt] UDP government spent over 14 billion dollars, more than an average of 1 billion dollars per year. And what does the country have to show for it? Poverty is at a historic high. In 2018, 52% or more, measured by recent estimates. That’s 1 out of every 2 citizens are considered poor. What was the rate in 2008? It was around thirty-four percent. But, your people spent 14 billion, and yet, poverty increased by almost twenty percent. All factual records show that the poverty rate increased from 34% to over 50% during their 13 years in office and after spending 14 billion dollars,” said the Prime Minister, who also remarked that it was difficult to take the Leader of the Opposition’s critiques seriously, because they lacked “shame and common sense”.

Nora Parham pardon put on pause

by *Khaila Gentle*

BELMOPAN, Fri. Mar. 25, 2022

As the month of March, and International Women’s Month, draws to a close, official reports are that the motion to posthumously pardon Nora Parham, which had been introduced at the beginning of the month, has been deferred to a later and as yet unknown date. This new development was revealed towards the end of Friday’s sitting of the House of Representatives when, around the ninth hour of the meeting, Minister of Human Development, Families, and Indigenous People’s Affairs, Hon. Dolores Balderamos Garcia made the announcement.

“Madam Speaker, I move that the motion to seek to move the Belize Advisory Council to advise her Excellency the Governor-General to exercise the prerogative of mercy 2022 be deferred to a further date,” read Hon. Balderamos Garcia.

No reason was given for the delaying of the pardon and the matter was not expounded upon any further in the House.

The motion to exonerate Nora Parham—the only woman ever hanged in Belize—was first mentioned in the House of Representatives in February



Nora Parham (nee Williams)

of this year, when Hon. Dolores Balderamos Garcia made the call for a pardon after having delivered the Domestic Violence in Belize Motion. Then, on March 8, International Women’s Day, an announcement was made that Cabinet had given its approval and support to the motion to pardon Parham. After the announcement was made, however, Hon. Balderamos Garcia, during an interview with *Channel5*, stated that the issuance of approval by the Cabinet did not equate to an official decision and that the completion of the pardoning process hinged on the decision made by the Belize Advisory Council and the Governor-General.

Oliver del Cid becomes Director of National Security

by *Charles Gladden*

BELIZE CITY, Mon. Mar. 28, 2022

Oliver del Cid has been appointed as the nation’s first Director of National Security and head of the National Security Directorate, formerly the National Security Council Secretariat. His appointment was announced via a press release issued by the Office of the Prime Minister on Thursday, March 24.

Del Cid has served as a career public officer for more than 25 years. He has worked as a Foreign Service Officer in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, a diplomat at the Embassy of Belize in Guatemala, Deputy National Security Coordinator, Belize’s Ambassador to Mexico, non-resident High Commissioner to Jamaica, non-resident Ambassador to Haiti, and most recently as Inspector General in the Ministry of National Defence and Border Security.

“The placement of the National Security Directorate under the Office of the Prime Minister and the appointment of a director, the first in more than 20 years, underscores the attention that the Office of the Prime Minister intends to give to national



Oliver del Cid

security matters as the country faces existing and emerging security challenges by taking an all-of-government approach through interagency coordination,” a release from the Government of Belize Press Office noted.

Del Cid holds a Bachelor’s degree in Political Science from Texas State University and a Master’s degree in International Policy and Diplomacy from Staffordshire University.

He also attended the University of Oxford’s Foreign Service Programme as a Chevening scholar and has several times undergone training in national security disciplines throughout the years.



PUBLIC NOTICE

Parking Meters Pilot Project

The Belize City Council's Traffic Department hereby informs the general public of the impending commencement of the:

PARKING METERS PILOT PROJECT as of MONDAY, APRIL 4th, 2022

As we go through this one-year Pilot Project, here's what residents need to know: Starting Monday, April 4th, 2022, those conducting business within the following areas are to make use of the parking meters provided by the Belize City Council. Areas include:

A NEWTOWN BARRACKS from the exit of Ramada by Wyndham Princess Belize City to Midtown Restaurant

A ALBERT STREET from its intersection with Orange Street to its intersection with Dean Street.

To ensure a seamless transitional period, parking meter assistants will be available in these areas to provide assistance to the general public. Likewise, the Council will continue to provide updates through notices and education campaigns within the upcoming weeks to properly sensitize the public on how to use these newly installed devices.

Residents are encouraged to participate in the Parking Meters Public Meeting on April 7th, 2022.

Remember to look out for more information about this project!

Free education program begins this year

"We understand that the greatest antidote to crime and violence is a sound education, not more money for the police" – Hon. Cordel Hyde



Hon. Cordel Hyde and Hon. Francis Fonseca

by **Khaila Gentle**

BELMOPAN, Mon. Mar. 28, 2022

During a sitting of the House of Representatives last week, the Deputy Prime Minister, Hon. Cordel Hyde, revealed that the government's free education program is set to begin this year. According to Hon. Hyde, the initial phase of the program will benefit several Southside Belize City high schools, namely Maud Williams High School, Sadie Vernon High School, Excelsior High School, and Gwen Lizarraga High School. The investments being made in these schools are a part of a cluster of initiatives being put into effect as part of the Government's "Belize Education Upliftment Project," through which GoB, in addition to providing tuition for the students, will address the need for uniforms, books, digital devices, and adequate transportation.

The announcement was made during an address by the Deputy Prime

Minister in the House of Representatives that highlighted the fact that this administration's \$1.3 billion budget is the largest yet, and that with it, the Government will begin to tackle the plethora of "social justice needs" in the country that require attention, including land availability, housing, and free education.

"We understand that the greatest antidote to crime and violence is a sound education, not more money for the police—more money to make sure that every single child in this country gets to go to school and complete school. Under the UDP, those billions of dollars that were spent, two thousand kids were dropping out of school yearly, you know—out of standard five and out of standard six and first form and second form primarily. You know why? Because the kids and their parents couldn't pay the fees," said Hon. Hyde.

The Deputy Prime Minister criticized the previous administration for spending millions of dollars on

road contracts while failing to ensure that children could afford to stay in school.

"And then we want to know why crime is through the roof. It will always be through the roof until we make sure that every single child—red or blue—stays in school. Because the kid that stays in school is not going to get caught up with the gangs," he added.

The Deputy Prime Minister's announcement was supplemented by further details about the program, which were provided by the Minister of Education, Hon. Francis Fonseca who, after responding to Hon. Moses "Shyne" Barrow's criticism of the budget, pointed out that the funding allocated to Education is set to increase. He stated that the Capital Budget for Education was increased by \$13 million this fiscal year.

"If you look at the whole picture, you will see that we are adequately funding every sector of the economy. The Capital budget was increased by 13 million dollars," said Minister Fonseca.

Hon. Francis Fonseca has criticized the previous administration for spending millions of dollars on education but making no improvements in regard to the level of accessibility of quality education, with net school enrollments having fallen drastically during their term.

When the current administration had first announced its plans for a free education program, Minister Fonseca stated that the focus of the new plan, and the overall focus for the Education Ministry, would be "course correction."

In addition to increasing funding for education, the Government has also been focusing on curriculum reform, a venture that is being spearheaded by Hon. Dr. Louis Zabaneh, Minister of State in the Ministry of Education, Culture, Science, and Technology. It is focused on improving the curricula at schools and increasing training for teachers. Hon. Dr. Zabaneh rose in support of the budget and spoke on the Ministry's current work to transform the country's education system, particularly by putting greater focus on Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics (STEAM). He also noted that, in total, the Government will be investing somewhere around \$258.7 million in education.

During the budget debate, the Minister of Education also noted that the country is on its way to seeing all schools re-opened for face-to-face learning five days a week, come this summer. He highlighted the importance of having students back in the classroom for the sake of their academic, social, and psychological development.

Berger Field to be refurbished through tripartite partnership

BELIZE CITY, Mon. Mar. 28, 2022

Today, a groundbreaking ceremony was held to mark the start of the refurbishment of the Berger Field on Vernon Street in Belize City. Last November, the Football Federation of Belize (FFB), the Ministry of Sports and Youth, and the Ministry of Tourism signed a memorandum of understanding to move forward with the upgrade of the iconic football field that has been used by many of our past and current local football stars. President of the FFB, Sergio Chuc, in his presentation today, remarked that since the football field is controlled by the National Sports Council, this project will not be supported with FIFA funding.

“Today, the commitment is coming from the Football Federation of Belize, not necessarily from FIFA funding. As you know, we have been doing a lot of projects through FIFA funding, but for those projects that we do, we have to have control of those facilities, we have to have a long-term lease or a title for those properties. We don’t have any lease or any title for this [Berger Field], the National Sports Council has it, but because of the executive we have in place, we have managed to tap into different resources and bring new funding to the federation, and I can confidently state today that through our broadcasting partners that we have signed a contract with and we are about to re-sign, we have identified the funding to put in our one-third, because Minister Mahler is putting in next one third and the Ministry of Sports through the National Sports Council is putting in

their one third,” Chuc said.

Their hopes are that the upgrade of the facility will be completed before the end of this year, and will revitalize sports in that community, where footballers like Deon McCaulay and Ian Gaynair first became familiar with the pitch.

In his statement, the Minister of Tourism, Hon. Anthony Mahler, whose ministry has also partnered in this project, said, “Now, I look around, and other than our local athletes we don’t have many heroes these days – you can’t say we da the heroes, right? The politicians, cause we talk wa pile ah nonsense inna the House all the time, goh off up ata one another, so our athletes are our heroes, our musicians are our heroes. People in those walks of life are our hero, people who put in the time and effort to uplift themselves. So I will say on behalf of my Ministry that we will support the Ministry of Youths and Sports as much as possible.”

He said they made a commitment to the chairman of the Sports Council to relaunch the Belize City Games and the Belize Games and also to launch a cycling tour across Belize. Along with this, there are plans for a fishing tournament, and revitalization of the basketball and football tournament is also in the works, all in an effort to re-spark sports across the country, he said.

“If you want to be great, you have to have discipline. if you want to be great, you have to put in the work; if you want to be great, you have to have the mindset, and so I want to challenge all our young people to be great in school. If you are more



inclined to sport, be great in sports; if you want to be a plumber, be great in being that plumber, but just be great. We’ve been mediocre for far too long in this country and it cannot continue, as we are going to compete on a global scale,” stated Minister of Tourism, Hon. Anthony Mahler.

New Minister of Sports, Hon. Rodwell Ferguson, further said that upon assuming the new portfolio, he promptly met with the executive of the FFB to chart a path forward. He said that he has observed a breakdown in the sporting facilities across Belize City, and he is seeking to address that issue.

“We all have a responsibility for this country, and at some point, we must bridge the gap and work together for the betterment of all. As I look around Belize City, I realize that there

has been a breakdown when it comes to facilities to provide for young people,” he said.

He stated that the additional 2 million dollars allocated in the budget for this coming fiscal year were lobbied for and supported by almost 100 percent of the Cabinet.

“If we are to transform a nation, we have to first touch the base with our young people,” Hon. Ferguson commented.

And while previous plans to upgrade this field have not been put into motion, Sergio Chuc says this time it will come to fruition.

“We are very, very happy that they’ve decided to come onboard and do this project, and we will do it to full fruition. Hopefully by the end of the year it should be completed,” he said.

LIU gets \$2.9 million from GoB

Minister of Home Affairs, Kareem Musa, announced that the Leadership Intervention Unit (LIU) will be receiving \$2.9 million from GoB for projects for at-risk youth in Southside Belize City.



Hon. Kareem Musa, Minister of Home Affairs and area representative of Caribbean

by Charles Gladden

BELIZE CITY, Mon. Mar. 28, 2022

After the Prime Minister’s two-hour budget presentation in the House of Representatives on Tuesday, March 15, members of the House met again last Friday to present a budget report for their respective ministries for the 2022-2023 fiscal year.

During the presentations, the Minister of Home Affairs and area representative of Caribbean Shores, Hon. Kareem Musa, claimed that under the PUP administration the number of murders in the country has

been lowered from what the murder statistics were in previous years under the former UDP administration—except for the year 2020, when the COVID-19 pandemic began, which prompted a nationwide lockdown.

Minister Musa presented a quarterly report drafted by the Joint Intelligence Coordination Center (JICC) that outlined the crime statistics in the country from January 1 to March 24 over the last 4 years.

“[In] 2019 under the United Democratic Party, the number of murders was 38. For 2019, under the UDP the number of murders was 27. For 2020, the very same year that we speak of an anomaly because there was the COVID lockdown in March followed by the 3-months state of emergency in Belize City; [listen to this], under the Leader of the Opposition’s hero, Michael Peyrefitte, murders as of March 24, 2020, stood at 38. And then in 2021, under our administration, murders stood at 22. And today, the murder rate for 2022 is 26,” stated Minister Musa.

The minister went on to throw jabs at the Leader of the Opposition, Hon. Moses “Shyne” Barrow, and his father, former Prime Minister of Belize, Rt. Hon. Dean Barrow, and accused the previous UDP administration of neglecting the youths and residents of Southside Belize City during their term in office.

“I listened yesterday, to the Leader of the Opposition say, that in his opinion I was being set up because our ministry’s budget has been cut. Let me tell the member of [Mesopotamia], Madam Speaker, that set up is what you and your father and your administration did to the residents of Southside Belize City. Instead of investing in the people, you were more focused on building roundabouts and eating tacos. The former administration deliberately neglected, abandoned, and created a dire state of dependency [on] the Southside of Belize City for 13 long years,” stated Minister Musa.

In an effort to mitigate crime on the Southside of Belize City, Minister Musa announced that \$2.9 million will be allocated for the LIU to help

serve at-risk youths in the program, who will be enrolled in life skills programs and will be provided with gainful employment.

“Under the leadership of Mr. William Dawson, the team at the Leadership Intervention Unit, including concerned citizens, educators, pastors, businessmen, and women, we now have 2.9 million dollars dedicated solely to stemming the tide on the gang culture that has ravaged Belizean families and homes. Under this program, Madam Speaker, not only are we providing gainful employment for 300 at-risk youths in our apprenticeship program, but we have enrolled 250 at-risk youths in life skills programs, attending sessions 2 days out of the week, literacy classes, numeracy classes, [and] emotional intelligence. Madam Speaker, there is also a training aspect in small engine repairs, plumbing, and electrical,” stated Minister Musa.

He further stated, “As the pandemic restrictions relax, we will welcome



Belize football fans, patient and long-suffering

“Wi taiyad a ga not’n.” — Dan Man

Sun. Mar. 27, 2022

The last time Belize football fans and citizens countrywide were in a real celebratory mood for our national male team, the Jaguars, was back in 2013 when we clinched a spot in the Concacaf Gold Cup tournament with a 2-1 victory over Nicaragua to take 4th place in the qualifying Central American tournament being held in Costa Rica. Belize’s national team coach at the time was Costa Rican Leroy Sherrier Lewis, now deceased, who was at the time serving his second stint as our national team coach. Since then, it has been a continuing series of heartbreaks and disappointments, as both our male and female national teams, as well as our national club champions have suffered a string of defeats in different Concacaf qualifying tournaments.

Nevertheless, Belize football fans, a number of them at least, have remained hopeful, perhaps more patriotic than optimistic, whenever the Jaguars are scheduled to play an international match, and some seven hundred plus showed up this evening at the FFB Stadium to cheer on the Jaguars in an international friendly against Cuba, who defeated the Jaguars, 3-0.

FIFA and Concacaf have recently (2018) altered the qualifying format for the World Cup, the Gold Cup, Nations League and Champions League club tournaments, in order to give the weaker teams a chance to play more games for their better development before being eliminated. Thus, rather than playing a first round home-and-away series against a selected opponent, and as usually happens, getting dropped out of the tournament after having played only two matches, the new format places the

bulk of weaker teams in groups of five to play a round-robin first round, in which they each get to play at least four matches against four different opponents.

In the most recent Qatar World Cup 2022 Qualifiers, the Concacaf first round involved 6 groups (A, B, C, D, E, and F) of 5 national teams each. Belize was in Group E, where St. Lucia quickly withdrew, leaving Belize, Haiti, Nicaragua, and the Turks & Caicos Islands. The 6 group winners – El Salvador, Canada, Curacao, Panama, Haiti and St. Kitts & Nevis — were then paired off in a draw to play home-and-away knockout series in the second round called the Hexagonal. The 3 victorious teams – El Salvador, Canada and Panama — then advanced to join the 5 highest ranked Concacaf teams, namely Mexico, USA, Costa Rica, Jamaica and Honduras, making it 8 teams in the third round known as the Octagonal.

For the past six months, the Concacaf Octagonal Qualifiers have been a major focus for fans of those 8 national teams who are vying for Concacaf’s 3 guaranteed spots in the 2022 Qatar FIFA World Cup, with the 4th

ranked team then entering a playoff with a team from another regional confederation for one more World Cup berth. But we in Belize are distant spectators. In our first round qualifiers in group E, Belize lost to Haiti (2-0) and to Nicaragua (3-0), and we defeated Turks & Caicos (5-0), to finish in third place in the group; and that was it for Belize’s 2022 World Cup dreams, as only the group winner advances.

For the 8 countries battling in the Octagonal, however, it has been six months of engagement and excitement, hopes and dreams, with the grand prize of a trip to the World Cup hanging in the balance. With 14 matches to be played by each country, 7 at home and 7 away, 14 playing dates were assigned so as not to collide with dates of ongoing individual national competitions. Four (4) games involving all 8 teams were played on each of those dates, which were September 2, 5 and 8; October 7, 10 and 13; November 12 and 16; January 27 and 30; February 2; and March 24, 27 and 30 (that’s to be this coming Wednesday).

With the results from today’s matches, in which Canada dropped Jamaica, 4-0; the USA crushed Panama, 5-1; Costa Rica clipped El Salvador, 2-1; and Mexico edged Honduras, 1-0; the current Concacaf Octagonal standings after 13 playing dates show Canada in the lead and already clinching its World Cup berth with 28 points (+17 goal difference), followed by the USA with 25 pts (+13 gd), Mexico 25 pts (+7 gd), Costa Rica 22 pts (+3 gd), Panama 18 pts (-3 gd), El Salvador 10 pts (-8 gd), Jamaica 8 pts (-11 gd) and Honduras 4 pts (-18 gd). Panama, El Salvador, Jamaica and Honduras are definitely out of the race for the 3 sure spots, but Costa Rica still has a slim mathematical chance.

The final playing date for the Octagonal on Wednesday, March 30, will feature Costa Rica vs USA, Mexico vs El Salvador, Jamaica vs Honduras, and Panama vs Canada. The goal difference being so wide, even a victory by Costa Rica to tie up with 25 pts wouldn’t get them past the USA’s +13 goal difference; but a big win by Costa Rica, along with a big loss by Mexico to El Salvador could see Costa Rica eclipse Mexico’s +7 gd and get through. But the odds are highly against that. However, Costa Rica will still have another chance to gain a World Cup berth via the inter-confederation two-team playoffs.

For our Belizean football fans, all this is a spectacle that we can only dream of one day experiencing. But there is no harm in dreaming, and that should inspire us to achieve. Panama was in our shoes three decades ago, and now they are “punching” with the “big boys”. Until we “arrive,” then, our next best bet is to pick a winner and “ride.” Many Belizeans have been Brazil fans in World Cup games, with citizens of our northern districts having a sentimental favorite in Mexico. Right now, Canada looks the most promising to make our Concacaf region proud at the Qatar 2022 FIFA World Cup.

While Belize is out of the World Cup picture for now, our Senior Men’s team, the Jaguars, are still remaining active, as they prepare for our participation in the Concacaf 2022/23 Nations League tournament, the first round of which is this year between May 30 and June 14. The international friendly played today against Cuba was one of a few practice matches against formidable international opponents that Belize is using to try and be ready to give our best at the Nations League, which is both a pathway to the next Concacaf 2023 Gold Cup, as well as a relegation tournament to position teams in the top bracket, League A, for qualification for the next Olympics and 2026 FIFA World Cup.

Meanwhile, our women are also in an uphill battle, our Senior Women’s national team having lost its first two matches in their World Cup 2022 Qualifier group against El Salvador (6-0) and against Panama (8-0), in February of this year. Their remaining games, against Aruba on April 6 in Belize, and

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Belize football fans, patient and long-suffering

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against Barbados on April 12 in the Dominican Republic are academic, since there is no chance of Belize winning the group in order to advance in the tournament, but will still serve to position the team in the ranking system with possibilities for promotion.

Belize's new Minister of Sports, Hon. Rodwell Ferguson, was in El Salvador to witness those two humiliating losses by our Women's team, and also at the FFB Stadium today, and he has vowed to garner more government support and involvement to see our national teams better prepared to represent our country in the international arena. It is a tall task the minister has committed himself to, as there are systemic issues and attitudes to be analyzed and addressed if we are to lift sports in Belize to the plateau of importance and consequence that will see our teams command the attention and respect we are capable of achieving on the regional and world stage. In football,

specifically, the Football Federation of Belize (FFB) has been well funded by FIFA, and has held many training programs and academic exercises for its officials and coaches; but something is still missing, and it will not be found by directing precious time, energy and resources on electioneering personnel strategies at the expense of a commitment to excellence on the field.

Belizean football fans are extremely loyal to their national teams; and they have been very patient. But winning is in our DNA too, and that patience is wearing thin. "Wi taiyad a lose, FFB!"

FIFA rules don't allow governmental interference in the FFB, although a Memorandum of Understanding has been signed between the FFB and the National Sports Council. However, if president Sergio cannot effectively express the urgency to take our football to where fans can feel proud again, there may soon be a groundswell cry for Minister Rodwell to have some say in the handling of our national team.

VACANCY

An International company is looking for a serious individual who is seeking a challenging and interesting work environment for the post of:

GENERAL MANAGER

The applicant should possess the following skills:

- Fluent in English and Spanish language verbally and orally
- Proven to have experience in Security, Accounting, Finance, HR and Marketing.
- Previously worked for an American company over 5 years
- Age between 30-40
- Excellent Analytical skills
- Excellent leadership and management skills
- Excellent organizational and planning skills
- Possess strong computer skills, proficiency in QuickBooks
- Must be able to function efficiently within a team environment in order to contribute to the success of the company's goals.
- Mature, Responsible & Efficient

Kindly submit your resume with a passport size photograph and police record to:

Attn: Human Resource Manager
P.O. Box 2202
Belize City

- **Deadline for applications is April 4th, 2022.**

BY ORDER OF MORTGAGEE NOTICE OF INTENTION TO SELL

ATLANTIC BANK LIMITED, a company incorporated under the Laws of Belize with its registered office situate at Corner Freetown Road and Cleghorn Street in Belize City hereby gives notice of its intention to exercise its power of sale as Mortgagee under and by virtue of Charges and Deeds of Mortgage between those hereinafter named and the said Atlantic Bank Limited which said Charges and Deeds of Mortgage are registered at the Land Registry and the Land Titles Unit. The Bank will at the expiration of **two months** from the date of the first publication of this notice sell the properties described in the Schedule hereto.

ALL offers to purchase the said properties must be made in writing to **ATLANTIC BANK LIMITED** from whom full particulars and conditions of sale may be obtained.

ALL THAT piece or parcel of being Block 1, Parcel No. 569 situate in Corozal Central Registration Section, Corozal District, Belize comprising 574.3 square yards, TOGETHER with all buildings and erection standing and being thereon, the freehold property of **MARIO PEREZ**.

ALL THAT piece or parcel of land being Block 1, Parcel No. 785 situated in Santa Elena Registration Section, near Santa Elena Border, Corozal District, Belize comprising 1,127.765 square meters, a partially completed three storey concrete structure 26 feet by 48 feet, each floor measuring 1248 square feet TOGETHER with all buildings and erections standing and being thereon, the freehold property of **CARLOS GIBSON**.

ALL THAT piece or parcel of land being block No 11, Parcel No 432, situated in Belize Rural North II Registration Section, Belize District comprising 8.101 Hectare(s), TOGETHER with all buildings and erection standing and being thereon, the freehold property of **REYES PROFOAM SYSTEMS LTD/ SULAMA REYES**.

ALL THAT piece or parcel of land being block No 7, Parcel No 7092, situated in San Pedro Registration Section, Belize District comprising 461.164 square meters, TOGETHER with all buildings and erection standing and being thereon, the freehold property of **REYES PROFOAM SYSTEMS LTD / EDILBERTO REYES JR.**

ALL THAT piece or parcel of land being Block 13, Parcels Nos. 120, 121, 122-, 123 & 124 situated in Sierra De Agua Central Registration Section West of San Felipe Village and along Eastern Side of Section of Booths River, Orange Walk Town, Belize District comprising of 1,546.38 acres, 2,488.03 acres, 1,044 acres, 3.845 acres, 39 acres respectively TOGETHER with all buildings and erection standing and being thereon, the freehold property of **HILLBANK AGRICULTURAL COMPANY LIMITED / DYCK BROTHERS COMPANY LIMITED**

ALL THAT piece or parcel of land being Block 4, Parcel No. 981 situated in Ann Gabourel Registration Section, Trial Farm, Orange Walk Town, Belize District, comprising 823.09 square yards, TOGETHER with all buildings and erection standing and being thereon, the freehold property of **AMADO OLIVERA**.

ALL THAT piece or parcel of land being Block 4, Parcel No. 105 situated in Trial Farm Registration Section, Orange Walk Town, Belize District, comprising 3274.46 square meters, TOGETHER with all buildings and erection standing and being thereon, the freehold property of **EMMANUEL ALEX COWO**.

ALL THAT piece or parcel of land being Block 3, Parcel No. 508 situated in Sarteneja Registration Section, Corozal District, Belize comprising 1,187.79 square yards, TOGETHER with all buildings and erection standing and being thereon, the freehold property of **JAIME SOSA**.

ALL THAT piece or parcel of land being Block 1, Parcel No. 296 situated in San Joaquin/San Maximo Registration Section, Corozal District, Belize comprising 1,365.58 square meters, TOGETHER with all buildings and erection standing and being thereon, the freehold property of **WILBERT P. LINAREZ**.

ALL THAT piece or parcel of land being Block 1, Parcel No. 4013 situated in Corozal North Registration Section, Corozal District, Belize comprising 482.687 square meters, TOGETHER with all buildings and erection standing and being thereon, the freehold property of **LEROY WESTBY**.

Dated this March 11th, 2022

Toledo Maya and the Queen

by Colin Hyde

The modern history of the Maya of the south is different from that of the Maya of the west and north of Belize. You would have noticed that the words of the Alcalde and the Chairman of Indian Creek were much tempered after their initial response on learning of the visit of the Duke and Duchess. The difference between the group and the GOB over the application of land rights has led to ongoing tension, and in the midst of this they weren't prepared for the surprise visit of children of the Crown who are associated with a parcel they are after. Given a day or two to ruminate on the visit, the sage Mayan leaders of the south would never have endorsed a sign telling the Duke and Duchess to stay off our land.

I don't own history, but the fact as I know it is that beginning in the late 1800s, the core of the Maya in Toledo West fled across the artificial border with Guatemala, to the safety of the Crown.

In his *Thirteen Chapters of a History of Belize*, Belizean historian, Assad Shoman, citing the research of American anthropologist Richard Wilk, said European diseases decimated the population of the Maya of Western

Guatemala, that in 1877 the Kekchi lost most of their land, and that by 1930 the Verapaz (the area where they lived) was "virtually a territorial possession of Germany." Shoman says they were virtual slaves, and many fled to Peten and Belize.

The UDP lawyers weren't wrong when they spoke of the Toledo Maya as fairly recent entries, but they were wrong to ignore their very different way of life. Communal living is very different from capitalism, under which the land is privately owned. The traditional Maya don't see the borders the way we do. Aha, lest anyone get the misguided notion that I have capitulated to Sedi Elrington, please understand the context. I use the term "artificial" in the context of the reality of the Maya, not as a description by our former foreign minister who must have forgotten that he was representing a country that was being claimed by a bully neighbor. Technically, Sedi was correct that our western border is not a physical one, but because artificial is a synonym for "fake", hihn noh mi fu yooz dat.

Here in Belize the Maya lived as they preferred, with some interference by colonial authorities to bring them into the modern western world. I have yet

to expose my thoughts beyond "thumbs up" for Brother Jerry Enriquez's book, *To Educate a Nation: The Autobiography of Andres P. and Jane V. Enriquez*. If I remember correctly, there was some flak from a Mayan corner; I think they would have preferred a watered down story from Jerry. The short here is that that became the discussion, and my thoughts about the very important book got pushed back.

The next area where the Maya of Toledo encountered the "modern" Belize/British Honduras was in agriculture. There have been a number of Belize and British-sponsored projects to teach farmers in Toledo agricultural practices that are more environmentally friendly and productive than slash and burn.

"Ambition" is a matter I think we need to talk about. As an introduction, are Africans and Native Americans generally as "ambitious" as Europeans in regard to material things? The wind blew the Europeans unto our shores, their diseases decimated us, and they trickily labeled the voyage as one of discovery. They have been on a roll since.

Hn, this Kriol is not impressed by Russian yachts. This Kriol was depressed when he saw a young lady run out of a shop on Albert Street to gawk at a Hummer. This Kriol does not number among the Belizeans former PM Said Musa said have a tidy appetite for good things (material). I don't care for a lot of modern trappings.

Tacking back to the story, the Maya in Toledo West largely escaped the persecution which erupted into a terrible genocide in the 1970s and 1980s because they were safe in the bosom of the Crown.

Hey, I'm not here about supporting FFI. I'm about explaining a reaction that I believe was a little embarrassing to Mayan elders in the south.

Those pastors need to get smoked out

I propose putting all vocal anti-marijuana-legalization pastors in a room, and then having a tubumbulooking thing loaded with weed pushed through a hole, to smoke them out. After a good hour of smoking them, they can be allowed fresh air. If they haven't gotten any sense, at the least they'll be calm. Pastor Louis Wade really needs to find out why musicians like that thing so much; I had such high hopes in Pastor Robinson and he let me down; well Pastor Santi, he will just say, 'big deal, been there done that'.

No fret, no serious harm will come to them. All the evidence is that weed is not as strong as it smells, and the likelihood of any adult getting addicted after a single exposure is as close to nil as anything on this earth can get. Hey, I can talk like I have the hayr off that hass tayl eena mi hand because of

research, reading all the readily available literature.

Hmm, going firsthand, in my childhood I got much exposure to secondhand weed smoke from Rick's Bar & Club. But I was not corrupted. I barely ever got sucked into smoking that thing. Really, tolerance was the only lesson I got from the nightly exposure. Different strokes for different folks. I've heard a lot of people like the smell, but on the scale for unhealthy smoke I prefer smoke from Independence cigarettes, kerosene smoke, gasoline in salty air smoke, and my all-time favorite, smoke belched from the exhaust of an old Bedford truck.

Okay, let's get deadly serious. We need to get those pastors in a room and ask them to write on possible good outcomes from legalizing it. We all know that there is no totally bad thing under the sun, so we can lock them in.

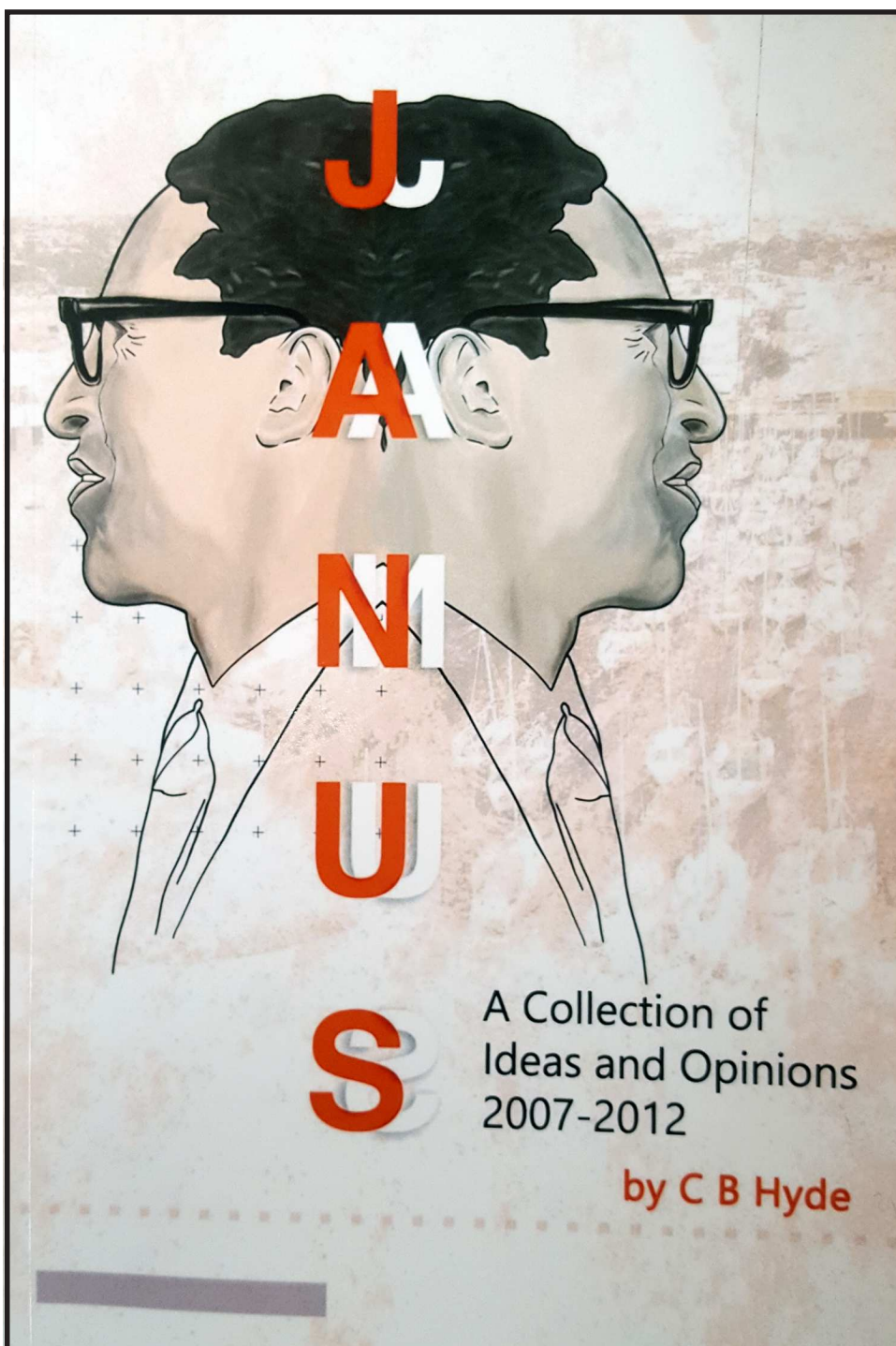
We all know the odds. All men come short of perfection, so incarceration might save a good pastor from a mighty fall. Going for more possible good in locking them up...: pastor gets to study impacts of incarceration, pastor gets to think more about God, pastor gets to meet and console people who were wrongly convicted, pastor gets to win some converts, pastor gets chance to pass mighty test of temper control, pastor makes savings on rent and food, pastor gets some forced exercise (please tell me incarcerated persons in Belize don't loll around all day), pastor could write a book, pastor learns firsthand about the wikidnis of lawyers. Aha, and pastors come to their senses and acknowledge that legalizing weed can't be all bad.

Who's Mr. Pikaros

Congratulations to the organizers of the recent marble tournament. I haven't seen the results, who won the Mister and Miss Pikaros awards, but I must record my respect to them from someone who was never worth a daam but had great admiration for those who were masters of spinning that law.

Every boy in Belize, and a girl, Felice Romero, played back in the day when our country didn't have TV. Felice was my neighbor, and she used to put a big hurt on the sock I filled from the winnings of my older brothers, who were the real deal pikaros. Man, some boys were good. Felice was too, and I was her taffi.

If you get the best writers and the right bets, you can capture people's attention. There's a sport on ice called "curling," where the competitors chase a little disc with something like a broom. Another name for that game might be, "polishing ice". Well heck, they are drawing crowds, and they're even in the Olympics. I can see the district champions, knuckles on the ground—ping.





Aficionados al fútbol de Belize, pacientes y sufridos

“Estamos cansados de tener nada.”— Dan Man

Domingo 27 de marzo de 2022

La última vez que los fanáticos del fútbol de Belize y los ciudadanos de todo el país estuvieron en verdadero humor de celebración por nuestro equipo nacional masculino, los Jaguares, fue en 2013 cuando aseguramos un lugar en el torneo de la Copa Oro de Concacaf con una victoria de 2-1 sobre Nicaragua para tomar el cuarto lugar en el torneo clasificatorio centroamericano que se realizaba en Costa Rica. El entrenador del equipo nacional de Belize en ese momento era el costarricense Leroy Sherrier Lewis, ya fallecido, quien en ese momento cumplía su segundo período como entrenador de nuestro equipo nacional. Desde entonces, ha sido una serie continua de angustias y decepciones, ya que tanto nuestras selecciones nacionales masculinas y femeninas como nuestros clubes campeones nacionales han sufrido una serie de derrotas en diferentes torneos clasificatorios de Concacaf.

Sin embargo, los fanáticos del fútbol de Belize, al menos algunos de ellos, se han mantenido esperanzados, quizás más patriotas que optimistas, cada vez que los Jaguares están programados para jugar un partido internacional, y más de setecientos se presentaron esta noche en el Estadio FFB para animar a los Jaguares en un amistoso internacional contra Cuba, que derrotó a los Jaguares, 3-0.

FIFA y Concacaf modificaron recientemente (2018) el formato de clasificación para los torneos de clubes de la Copa del Mundo, la Copa Oro, la Liga de Naciones y la Liga de Campeones, con el fin de dar a los equipos más débiles la oportunidad de jugar más partidos para su mejor desarrollo antes de ser eliminados. Por lo tanto, en lugar de jugar una serie de primera ronda de ida y vuelta contra un oponente seleccionado, y como suele suceder, quedar eliminado del torneo después de haber jugado solo dos partidos, el nuevo formato coloca a la mayoría de los equipos más débiles en grupos de cinco para jugar una primera ronda de todos contra todos, en la que cada uno puede jugar al menos cuatro partidos contra cuatro oponentes diferentes.

En los Clasificatorios más recientes para la Copa Mundial de Qatar 2022, la primera ronda de Concacaf involucró a 6 grupos (A, B, C, D, E y F) de 5 equipos nacionales cada uno. Belize estaba en el Grupo E, donde Santa Lucía se retiró rápidamente, dejando a Belize, Haití, Nicaragua y las Islas Turcas y Caicos. Los 6 ganadores de grupo (El Salvador, Canadá, Curazao, Panamá, Haití y San Cristóbal y Nieves) se emparejaron en un sorteo para jugar una serie eliminatoria de ida y vuelta en la segunda ronda llamada Hexagonal. Los 3 equipos victoriosos, El Salvador, Canadá y Panamá, luego avanzaron para unirse a los 5 equipos mejor clasificados de Concacaf, a saber, México, EE. UU., Costa Rica, Jamaica y Honduras, lo que los convierte en 8 equipos en la tercera ronda conocida como Octagonal.

Durante los últimos seis meses, los Clasificatorios Octagonales de Concacaf han sido un foco importante para los fanáticos de esos 8 equipos nacionales que compiten por los 3 lugares garantizados de Concacaf en la Copa Mundial de la FIFA Qatar 2022, con el equipo clasificado en cuarto lugar luego ingresando a un desempate con un equipo de otra confederación regional por una plaza más en la Copa Mundial. Pero nosotros en Belize somos espectadores distantes. En nuestras eliminatorias de primera ronda en el grupo E, Belize perdió ante Haití (2-0) y Nicaragua (3-0), y derrotamos a las Islas Turcas & Caicos (5-0), para terminar en el tercer lugar del grupo; y allí terminaron los sueños de Belize para la Copa Mundial 2022, ya que solo avanza el ganador del grupo.

Para los 8 países que luchan en el Octagonal, sin embargo, han sido seis meses de compromiso y emoción, esperanzas y sueños, con el gran premio de un viaje a la Copa Mundial en juego. Con 14 partidos a jugar por cada país, 7 en casa y 7 fuera, se asignaron 14 fechas de juego para no chocar con las fechas de las competencias nacionales individuales en curso. En cada una de esas fechas se jugaron cuatro (4) partidos que involucraron a los 8 equipos, los cuales fueron el 2, 5 y 8 de septiembre; 7, 10 y 13 de octubre; 12 y 16 de noviembre; 27 y 30 de enero; febrero 2; y 24, 27 y 30 de marzo (eso será el próximo miércoles).

Con los resultados de los partidos de hoy, en los que Canadá derrotó a Jamaica, 4-0; EE.UU. aplastó a Panamá, 5-1; Costa Rica superó a El Salvador, 2-1; y México superó a Honduras, 1-0; la clasificación actual del Octagonal de Concacaf después de 13 fechas de juego muestra a Canadá a la cabeza ya asegurando su lugar en la Copa Mundial con 28 puntos (+17 de diferencia de goles), seguido por EE. UU. con 25 puntos (+13 de diferencia de goles), México 25 puntos (+7 de diferencia de goles), Costa Rica 22 puntos (+3 de diferencia de goles), Panamá 18 puntos (-3 de diferencia de goles), El Salvador 10 puntos (-8 de diferencia de goles), Jamaica 8 puntos (-11 de diferencia

de goles) y Honduras 4 puntos (-18 de diferencia de goles). Panamá, El Salvador, Jamaica y Honduras definitivamente están fuera de la carrera por los 3 lugares seguros, pero Costa Rica todavía tiene una pequeña oportunidad matemática.

La última fecha de juego del Octagonal el miércoles 30 de marzo contará con Costa Rica vs EE. UU., México vs El Salvador, Jamaica vs Honduras y Panamá vs Canadá. Siendo la diferencia de goles tan amplia, incluso una victoria de Costa Rica para empatar con 25 puntos no los llevaría más allá de la diferencia de goles de +13 de EE. UU.; pero una gran victoria de Costa Rica, junto con una gran derrota de México ante El Salvador, podría hacer que Costa Rica eclipse el +7 de diferencia de goles de México y pase adelante. Pero las probabilidades están muy en contra de eso. Sin embargo, Costa Rica todavía tendrá otra oportunidad de ganar un lugar en la Copa Mundial a través de los desempates de dos equipos entre confederaciones.

Para nuestros fanáticos del fútbol beliceño, todo esto es un espectáculo que solo podemos soñar con vivir algún día. Pero no hay nada malo en soñar, y eso debería inspirarnos a lograrlo. Panamá estuvo en nuestros zapatos hace tres décadas, y ahora están “golpeando” con los “grandes”. Hasta que “lleguemos”, nuestra próxima mejor apuesta es elegir un ganador y apoyarlos. Muchos beliceños han sido fanáticos de Brasil en los juegos de la Copa Mundial, y los ciudadanos de nuestros distritos del norte tienen un favorito sentimental en México. En este momento, Canadá parece el más prometedor para enorgullecer a nuestra región de Concacaf en la Copa Mundial de la FIFA Qatar 2022.

Si bien Belize está fuera de la escena de la Copa Mundial por ahora, nuestro equipo senior masculino, los Jaguares, aún se mantienen activos, mientras se preparan para nuestra participación en el torneo de la Liga de Naciones Concacaf 2022/23, cuya primera ronda es este año entre 30 de mayo y 14 de junio. El amistoso internacional jugado hoy contra Cuba fue uno de los pocos partidos de práctica contra formidables oponentes internacionales que Belize está usando para tratar de estar listo para dar lo mejor de sí en la Liga de Naciones, que es a la vez un camino hacia la próxima Copa Oro Concacaf 2023, así como un torneo de descenso para posicionar a los equipos en el grupo superior, la Liga A, para la clasificación para los próximos Juegos Olímpicos y la Copa Mundial de la FIFA 2026.

Mientras tanto, nuestras mujeres también están en una batalla cuesta arriba, nuestra selección nacional femenina perdió sus dos primeros partidos en su grupo de clasificación para la Copa Mundial 2022 contra El Salvador (6-0) y contra Panamá (8-0), en febrero de este año. Sus restantes partidos, ante Aruba el 6 de abril en Belize, y ante Barbados el 12 de abril en República Dominicana, son académicos, ya que no hay posibilidades de que Belize gane el grupo para avanzar en el torneo, pero aun así servirán para posicionar al equipo en el sistema de ranking con posibilidades de ascenso.

El nuevo Ministro de Deportes de Belize, el Honorable Rodwell Ferguson, estuvo en El Salvador para presenciar esas dos derrotas humillantes de nuestro equipo femenino, y también en el Estadio FFB hoy, y prometió obtener más apoyo y participación del gobierno para ver a nuestros equipos nacionales mejor preparados para representar a nuestro país en el escenario internacional. Es una tarea ardua a la que se ha comprometido el ministro, ya que hay problemas sistémicos y actitudes que deben analizarse y abordarse si queremos elevar los deportes en Belize al nivel de importancia y consecuencia que hará que nuestros equipos capten la atención y el respeto que somos capaces de lograr en el escenario regional y mundial. En el fútbol, específicamente, la Federación de Fútbol de Belize (FFB) ha sido bien financiada por la FIFA y ha llevado a cabo muchos programas de entrenamiento y ejercicios académicos para sus oficiales y entrenadores; pero todavía falta algo, y no se encontrará dedicando tiempo, energía y recursos preciosos a estrategias electorales de personal a expensas de un compromiso con la excelencia en el campo.

Los fanáticos del fútbol de Belize son extremadamente leales a sus selecciones nacionales; y han sido muy pacientes. Pero ganar también está en nuestro ADN, y esa paciencia se está agotando. “¡Estamos cansados de perder, FFB!”

Las reglas de la FIFA no permiten la interferencia gubernamental en la FFB, aunque se ha firmado un Memorando de Entendimiento entre la FFB y el Consejo Nacional de Deportes. Sin embargo, si el presidente Sergio no puede expresar de manera efectiva la urgencia de llevar nuestro fútbol a donde los fanáticos puedan sentirse orgullosos nuevamente, pronto puede haber un clamor general para que el ministro Rodwell tenga algo que decir en el manejo de nuestro equipo nacional.

Installation of the friendship group, "Mexico-Russian Federation"

Permit me, our dear readers of this column, to present to you the following which was published on Youtube on March 23, 2022. It is entitled "En VIVO/ Instalación del Grupo de Amistad México — Federación de Rusia" (Installation of the friendship group Mexico - Russian Federation). I find what the Ambassador of Russia to Mexico, His Excellency, Victor Coronel, said in the Honorable Chamber of

Deputies in Mexico City to be of utmost importance. Part one is as follows:

"Very esteemed, highly respected and very dear Mr. Alberto Anaya Gutierrez. Esteemed deputies, esteemed members of the parliamentary friendship group with the federation, all those present. First of all, I would like to thank all the members of the friendship group for setting up this mechanism, which

for us is a sign of support, of friendship, of solidarity, and it is more important for us this event, this activity, this installation of the group of friendship in these days that are quite complicated, in these complicated times for my country facing not only a special military operation in Ukraine but also a tremendous media war. For this reason, I repeat that I greatly appreciate this gesture, of demonstration, of friendship, solidarity and support. Thank you very much. And if you will allow me a few words, I have to mention on this occasion that our bilateral relationship with Mexico is of a strategic nature and is based on mutual respect of interests. I want to remind you of two things,

1) That this coming December we are going to celebrate the 132nd anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between our countries

2) And another very important anniversary, this year just in a few days on March 31, we are going to celebrate 150 years of birth, of the first woman ambassador in the whole world and the first woman ambassador, for your knowledge, was ambassador of the Soviet Union in Mexico, Alejandra Kollontai, who was here from December 1926 to mid-1927.

"That's why there are so many historical ties that cannot be reiterated. I have to mention that we have extensive experience in bilateral interparliamentary cooperation, as is well aware of in State Duma, and now she is renewing the friendship group with Mexico. And well, recently the deputy showed me a photo album of the parliamentary visit of the Soviet Union to Mexico in 1977. Precisely 45 years ago the parliamentary



by Clinton Canul Luna

delegation of the Supreme Soviet of the Soviet Union was here, and well, this month we celebrate 45 years of that visit. Thank you very much for this sample, this photograph and for this other evidence of the bonds of friendship that have been for dozens, dozens of years.

"Now, I have to take this opportunity to give you a brief comment on what is happening in Ukraine and what our country is going through in these, as I said, rather complicated times. On February 24 of this year, Russian president Vladimir Putin ordered the start of a special military operation whose objectives are the demilitarization and demassification of Ukraine as well as the protection of the population of Donbass and Russia from the NATO military threat... The bloody war against the inhabitants of Donbass has been going on for more than 8 years and all these years we have been asking the world community to fight against the systematic extermination of the population of this region. It is about thousands of people who lost their loved ones daily... Between 13 and 14 thousand people dead, more than 150 children killed, this is the real balance of the war forgotten and completely ignored by the Western media."

(To Be Continued)
fincasolan@gmail.com
 March 26, 2022
 Finca Solana
 Corozal Town

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

The U.S. Embassy Belmopan is seeking eligible and qualified applicants for the following position:

Position Name: Maintenance Mechanic (Generator Mechanic)
Vacancy number: Belmopan-2022-05-R
Closing date: April 1, 2022

Interested applicants must submit their application via the Electronic Recruitment Application (ERA) system, a web-based system. To view and apply for this vacancy, visit the ERA site at: <https://erajobs.state.gov/dos-era/blz/vacancysearch/searchVacancies.hms>

Please visit the Embassy's website for instructions on how to apply via the ERA system: <https://bz.usembassy.gov/embassy/jobs/>

Note 1: Resumes **will not** be considered. Candidates must note all work experience when completing the ERA application. Insufficient or incomplete information will result in an ineligible application.

Note 2: Candidates **must** submit applicable required documentation by the closing date of this announcement. Failure to provide the required documentation will result in an ineligible application.

STATUTORY NOTICE TO CREDITORS

IN THE ESTATE of **ROBERT WILLIAM MCCLELLAN**, deceased of No. 1280 SW 152nd Lane, Ocala, Florida 34473, U.S.A.

NOTICE is hereby given pursuant to Section 36 of the *Administration of Estates Act*, Chapter 197 of the Laws of Belize that all creditors and other persons having any claims and demands upon or against the Estate of **ROBERT WILLIAM MCCLELLAN**, deceased of No. 1280 SW 152nd Lane, Ocala, Florida 34473, U.S.A, who died on the 26th day of May, 2019 and in whose estate Grant of Administration with the Will Annexed has been granted to **BA NOMINEE SERVICES LTD.** of 3 ½ Miles Philip Goldson Highway, Belize City, Belize the Lawful Attorneys of **THERESA BARTON a.k.a THERESA L. BARTON** of No. 106 Commerce Street, No. 107, Lake Mary, Florida 32746, U.S.A, should lodge claims or demands with the said **BA NOMINEE SERVICES LTD.** c/o Balderamos Arthurs LLP, Charter House, Suite 6, 3 ½ Miles Philip Goldson Highway, P.O Box 486, Belize City, Belize on or before the expiration of three months from the first publication hereof **AND NOTICE IS ALSO HEREBY GIVEN** that at the expiration of the said three months the said **BA NOMINEE SERVICES LTD.** shall proceed to distribute the assets of the said **ROBERT WILLIAM MCCLELLAN**, deceased, amongst the beneficiaries entitled thereto, having regard only to claims and demands of which it shall then have had notice.

DATED this 24th day of March, 2022

BALDERAMOS ARTHURS LLP
 Attorneys-at-Law for the Estate of
ROBERT WILLIAM MCCLELLAN

Bar chooses new executive board

BELIZE CITY, Sun. Mar. 27, 2022

The Bar Association of Belize held its annual general meeting last Thursday, March 24, and elected a new executive board. A past president, Senior Counsel Andrew Marshalleck, was nominated and elected to serve for a second time as the president of the Bar. Also, during last week's election, Hector Guerra was elected as the vice president, while Aaron Tillett is now the association's treasurer, and Jose Alpuche is its secretary.

Other newly elected members of the executive board are Payal Ghanwani, Iliana Swift, and Stevanni Duncan Ferrera.



E. Andrew Marshalleck – new president of Bar Association



Santa Elena & San Ignacio Basketball Tournament bounces into Week 2

by Karim Juan

SAN IGNACIO TOWN, Cayo District, Sun. Mar. 27, 2022

The Santa Elena and San Ignacio Basketball Tournament 2022 continued this weekend with 6 games. The games on Friday and Saturday night were played at Falcon Field, and the games on Sunday were played at the Santa Elena Sporting Complex.

The tournament has 8 teams, with

4 teams playing in Group A and 4 teams in Group B. The top team in each group will advance to the semi-finals, while the winner between the #2 and #3 seeds will advance to the semi-finals. The playoffs will tip off on Saturday as the #2 and #3 seeds from each group will battle for a spot in the semi-finals. The semi-finals and finals will be played next weekend, with Saturday, April 9 being the championship night and distribution of awards.

All the regular season games for Group A have concluded, with the undefeated Assassins (3-0) claiming the #1 seed and advancing to the semi-finals, while Venom (2-1) will be the #2 seed and Roots (1-2) will be the #3 seed, with Vikings (0-3) being eliminated. Venom (#2) will play Roots (#3) this coming weekend to see who will advance to the semi-final round.

In Group B, the three playoff spots are still up for grabs, as all 4 teams are 1 game away from clinching a spot to advance to the 1-game elimination playoffs. Below are the playoff scenarios for all 4 teams. The two teams that win on Friday will clinch a playoff spot and the #3 seed will be determined by number of games won as the first tie-breaker, followed by head-to-head wins, followed by point differential.

SHJC Scorpions (2-0) – will clinch the #1 seed for their group with a win on Friday versus 501 Falcons. SHJC Scorpions is the only team in this group that has already secured a spot in the playoffs.

Mora Town (1-1) – will clinch a playoff spot with a win on Friday versus Coast Guard.

501 Falcons (1-1) – will clinch a playoff spot with a win on Friday versus SHJC Scorpions.

Coast Guard (0-2) – will clinch a playoff spot with a win on Friday versus Mora Town and

SHJC Scorpions must also beat 501 Falcons.

Below are the scores from the games played this past weekend.

Friday, March 25

(Group A) Venom (1-1) over Roots (1-1), 63-52. Venom – Joel Montero 18 pts; Elvert “PG” Ariola 12 pts; Johan “Cutto” Bermudez 9 pts. Roots – Zookrani Kwatammani 18 pts; Gregory Buckley 10 pts; Imanta Kwatammani 8 pts.

(Group A) Assassins (2-0) over

Vikings (0-2), 80-42. Assassins – Kyron “Tut” Molina 22 pts; Jamie Carbajal 17 pts; Robert “Jeff” Jeffries 10 pts; Santiago “Dados” Clark 10 pts. Vikings – John Aranda 9 pts; Denmark Lewis 8 pts; Caesar Panti 7 pts.

Saturday, March 26

(Group B) Mora Town (1-1) over 501 Falcons (1-1), 64-57. Mora Town – Ahmad Faisal 16 pts; Raymond Gongora 11 pts; Devon Rochester 7 pts. 501 Falcons – Jason Vasquez 24 pts; Kevin Hamilton 17 pts; Marcel Richards 8 pts.

(Group B) SHJC Scorpions (2-0) over Coast Guard (0-2), 46-43. SHJC Scorpions – Ulrick Humes 18 pts; Karl Williams 9 pts; Raheem Crawford 8 pts. Coast Guard – Jason Ellis 11 pts; Brandon Flowers 9 pts; Rondie Lewis 7 pts.

Sunday, March 27

(Group A) Venom (2-1) over Vikings (0-3), 91-43. Venom – Elvert “PG” Ariola 19 pts; Ryan Duran 17 pts; Dominique Guzman 11 pts. Vikings – Caesar Panti 11 pts; Arnold Frazer 11 pts.

(Group A) Assassins (3-0) over Roots (1-2), 72-56. Assassins – Kyron “Tut” Molina 28 pts; Jamie Carbajal 11 pts; Aaron Allison 8 pts; Ryan “Mentes” Carbajal 8 pts. Roots – Emani Enriquez 22 pts; Gregory Buckley 12 pts; Shelton “O” Defour 11 pts.

All games for this coming weekend will be played at Falcon Field in San Ignacio Town.

Upcoming weekend schedule:

Friday, April 1

7:30 p.m. - (Group B) Mora Town vs Coast Guard

9:00 p.m. - (Group B) 501 Falcons vs SHJC Scorpions

Saturday, April 2

7:30 p.m. - (Group A) Venom (#2) vs Roots (#3)

9:00 p.m. - (Group B) TBD (#2) vs TBD (#3)

Cricket Corner – Western Eagles and the villagers of Rancho Dolores mourn the loss of an icon, Miss Rosita Pook



Peter Young and Rosita Pook

by Peter Young

BELIZE CITY, Thurs. Mar. 24, 2022
Pleasant time of the day to all cricket enthusiasts!

This weekend is a very sad time for the Young, Sutherland and the Pook families of Rancho Dolores as they lay one of their icons, cousin Rosita Pook to rest. One of the most influential women in her beloved village, she had made an everlasting memory of her way of greeting her fellow villagers or visitors that she would come in contact with. She always had food to share, be it morning, afternoon or evening. And, oh boy, she could prepare some tasty meals! She had stood behind Western Eagles cricket club through thick and thin. Although she had migrated to the U.S., she continued to be in tune with games played from friends at home. She was a very outstanding woman in the Belize River Valley as a registered midwife, helping many in the

successful delivery of their babies, and caring for the mothers and newborn till they are well enough to be exposed to the world. A lady of high esteem and compassion, she was well recognized by many, whether they be mother or father. Her passing has affected all who had come in contact with her broad smile and gentle voice. She was one of my favorite cousins that I have loved sincerely. Her remains will be laid to rest on Saturday, March 26, in her village, Rancho Dolores. My family and I send our most sincere condolences to all her wonderful children and loved ones. May her soul find perfect peace with our Maker!

On the game played in Sandhill between Western Eagles of Rancho and Rising Star, the Eagles were victorious, 136 runs to 134, with 5 spare wickets. Congrats, Eagles!

Bye bye! Respect to and for all!

(The picture above was taken a couple months before she died.)

LIU gets \$2.9 million from GoB

Continued from **Page 4**

the return of the GREAT program, Cadet program, and ‘Do Di Rite Ting’ program. These are going to complement the ongoing multisectoral approach to crime-fighting. The GREAT Programme, in particular, is tooled as an evidence-based initiative to deal with gangs and violence prevention. The program’s curriculum, which is US-based, is designed with the hope of immunizing our young against delinquency, youth violence, and gang membership, but it is focused on reaching them at a vulnerable age

before the gang elements do.”

He also made mention of the “Youth to Grow” farm project, using land donated by Dr. Alvaro Rosado. Through this initiative, at-risk youths will be taught to grow their own crops.

Minister Musa additionally announced a basketball tournament to be held on May 7 of this year. He said that so far 14 teams within various communities have already been registered to participate in the tournament, which is being sponsored by Bowen and Bowen in partnership with the Ministry of Youth and Sports.

Cause and ripple effect

by Marco Lopez

A “reaction” is defined as a “force exerted in opposition to an applied force” due to the law of action and reaction; other definitions refer to it as “something done, felt or thought in response to a situation or event.” Newton goes further and says forces exhibit an equal reaction to the initial action. Thinking about it, it’s really common sense, and at times is something dictated by powers outside our human comprehension. Still, I’m always mystified when the historically oppressed living amongst us today are expected to not respond to the stealing of their birthright, and the historical wrongs endured by their forefathers which laid the foundation for the nothingness they have today. We have to go back to the start.

First, let’s make this clear: there is no modern Europe without Africa; before they (Europe) underdeveloped

the greatest continent on earth, they were taught basic hygiene and reintroduced to reading, writing, and arithmetic by the African Moors who ruled over the Iberian Peninsula for 700 years. When Europe was in their so-called “dark ages”, Moors were revitalizing knowledge from the Greeks and Romans (which all derive from Egypt, where they were taught) that led to the Renaissance of the 15th century and eventually the age of exploration, which saw the failed voyager Columbus landing on lands of indigenous tribes who inhabited the region for centuries after crossing the Bering Strait ice land bridge during the last ice age.

There was never a “New World” to discover — some of the greatest civilizations in human history: the Maya, the Inca, and Aztecs, graced these lands now known as Northern, Central, and South America, and the Caribbean islands — but like all things,

those societies faded in time. The idea perpetuated after the European conquest of these indigenous lands — a declaration that they were *terra nullius* (nobody’s land), was sanctioned by the Pope, at the time the Borgia pontiff who was known for his corruption and criminal activity during his tenure, and split the world of thousands of traditional tribes in half, to be shared by Portugal and Spain.

I reiterate all this known history to point out a key factor in the current arguments taking hold in Belize and worldwide, that the so-called founders of the New World *found* no new land, but stole, pillaged, and disenfranchised indigenous people of **their** land, in many instances, exterminating them in the process. These people were living for countless generations in this half of the world, many established before some of the European countries were dreamt of and when those “savages” in tribes were still fighting for a place

in Eurasia. I reiterate all this known history to point out that at one point, the Europeans enslaved their people in a system to develop the land that was stolen, but later found — after trying to enslave the indigenous peoples and even Indians — that the Black African was best suited for the difficult work of nation-building, literally. So Africans were bought — sold, captured, and stolen — from their homeland and taken to the various island colonies where they built those nations, including Belize. It must be noted that they also built the greatest nation of our modern time, the United States of America.

This is important when looking at land rights for the Maya community and all indigenous peoples and reparations for the African diaspora in Belize and across the world, and more importantly when looking at the question of birthright, and how the historical wrongs have caused those people historically oppressed to be left without any inheritance for generations, having to work tirelessly to just survive, while those who have perpetrated the wrongdoing flaunt wealth for generations without shame or making any direct admission of where it came from. Declare your wealth.

If I walk into a jewelry store owned by peace-loving human beings, slaughter them, and take all the gold, that does not make me some kind of great conqueror, or economic innovator; it makes me a thief and a murderer. The truth is, the lands were stolen from the Maya people and the labor of the African enslaved was stolen from those in captivity; on top of that a system was created to systematically entrench in the mind of descendants that this is the way it naturally is, and drove the nail in by forcing on us a white god who conventionally blesses the institution.

“Oh, but this did not happen to me; it was more than 400 years ago, and looking at times past is nonsensical.” To those proponents, I ask, who are you without your ancestors and their struggle? In denying their struggle, you deny your very existence. Each generation has its responsibility, to themselves and to posterity. While this is an undeniable truth, those persons stripped of their humanity by the institution of plunder which was perpetrated by colonialization were also stripped of their opportunity to give their offspring, their generations, the tools and resources needed to improve their existence. This disenfranchisement, along with the ongoing systematic modes of oppression, has caused the generational destitution seen in the poorest societies among us to regenerate also effortlessly, while the wealth of those who have benefitted from their ancestors’ criminal actions continues to multiply without difficulty.

“For every action, there is an equal and opposite reaction. The statement means that in every interaction, there is a pair of forces acting on the two interacting objects. The size of the forces on the first object equals the size of the force on the second object.”
— Newton’s third law.



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N.B. All copies must be signed by a Justice of the Peace

Incomplete applications will NOT be considered.

Applications must be sent to the following address:

Secretary: Mr. Hugo Gonzalez
Board of Management
CEMJC/ESTM
San Roman Village
Corozal District

no later than Friday, April 8, 2022 at 4:00 p.m.



REGIONAL & INTERNATIONAL

Surge in gang killings spurs fear, uncertainty in El Salvador

After a spate of weekend murders, experts question whether the government's 'iron fist' approach will stem the violence.

by Anna-Cat Brigida

EL Salvador, Mon. Mar. 28, 2022 – Aljazeera

The killings of more than 80 people in El Salvador over the weekend have had a chilling effect on the general population and worried human rights defenders already concerned about the government's approach to gang violence and its authoritarian streak.

On Saturday alone, 62 people were murdered – the country's most violent day in 20 years – in a surge of seemingly senseless violence against average Salvadorans that the government has attributed to the MS-13 gang.

The gang is likely aiming to send a message to the government, multiple security experts told Al Jazeera, as part of backdoor negotiations to reduce violence in exchange for privileges that the government vehemently denies are taking place despite mounting evidence.

"It shows the weaknesses of the supposed pact between the government and gangs," said Jose Miguel Cruz, director of research at Florida International University's Kimberly Green Latin American and Caribbean Center and an expert on

El Salvador's gangs.

"What's also clear is that the government does not have complete control of what happens in terms of security. Other actors decide when to exercise violence in total impunity, and in an arbitrary way."

Gang violence

Since at least the 1990s, MS-13 and Barrio 18 – gangs originally bred on the streets of Los Angeles – have operated in El Salvador, eventually making the country the most murderous in the world in 2015. Homicides have been decreasing in El Salvador since then, when more than 6,600 people were murdered in the country of about 6.5 million people.

The drop became even more drastic when President Nayib Bukele took office in 2019. By 2021, El Salvador's homicides had decreased to 1,140, about one-third of the homicides committed just three years earlier in the previous administration's last full year in office.

The results were only comparable to a period years earlier when a truce negotiated between the government and gangs had been reached, so analysts immediately began speculating that Bukele was doing the



same.

Still, Bukele insisted that his security plan, known as Plan Control Territorial, was responsible. The plan has never been made public, and the government has only shared vague details about increasing law enforcement and targeting certain municipalities.

A 2020 report by the International Crisis Group analysed homicide data in the areas where the plan was supposedly implemented and found that it did not support the president's

claim that his programme resulted in the drop in killings. In September 2020, Salvadoran investigative media outlet El Faro also revealed that Bukele's government had negotiated with MS-13 for a reduction in homicides.

Bukele continues to deny the existence of any dialogue with gangs. Yet experts say the events over the weekend further point to the existence of negotiations – and show the danger of making under-the-table agreements.

Roman Abramovich suffered suspected poisoning at talks



Roman Abramovich

Russian billionaire Roman Abramovich suffered symptoms of suspected poisoning at talks in Kyiv earlier this month, sources close to him say.

The Chelsea FC owner - who has now recovered - reportedly suffered

sore eyes and skin peeling.

Two Ukrainian peacenegotiators were also said to have been affected.

The Wall Street Journal reported claims the alleged poisoning was orchestrated by hardliners in Russia who wanted to sabotage the talks.

The conditions of Mr Abramovich and the Ukrainian negotiators, who include Ukrainian MP Rustem Umerov, have improved since the incident on 3 March, the paper

quoted sources as saying.

A source close to Mr Abramovich told the BBC he had suffered symptoms of suspected poisoning. They said he had now recovered and was continuing with negotiations to try and end the war in Ukraine.

Earlier on Monday, Mr Umerov tweeted that he was "fine" and urged people not to trust "unverified information".

The incident casts light on Mr Abramovich's reported role as a broker in talks between Ukraine and Russia. The exact nature of his position is unclear, but a spokesperson for the oligarch has previously said his influence is "limited".

On Sunday, President Zelensky said Mr Abramovich had offered him help to de-escalate Russia's invasion of the country.

The Russian billionaire travelled between Moscow and Kyiv for several rounds of talks at the start of the month. He reportedly met President Volodymyr Zelensky during the trip, but the Ukrainian leader was not affected and his spokesman had no information about the incident.

The investigative journalism group Bellingcat said Mr Abramovich and the negotiators suffered symptoms "consistent with poisoning with chemical weapons".

The symptoms included "eye and

skin inflammation and piercing pain in the eyes", Bellingcat reported.

Meanwhile, an unnamed US official was quoted by Reuters as saying that intelligence suggested the sickening of the men was due to "environmental" factors, not poisoning.

Mr Abramovich has since been seen in public, being pictured at Israel's Tel Aviv airport on 14 March.

Mr Abramovich was sanctioned by the EU and UK earlier this month over his alleged links to Russia's President Putin, which he denies.

But Mr Zelensky has reportedly asked the US to hold off from sanctioning Mr Abramovich, arguing he could play a role in negotiating a peace deal with Moscow.

The Kremlin has said Mr Abramovich played an early role in peace talks but the process was now in the hands of the two countries' negotiating teams.

The two sides are set to meet in Istanbul on Tuesday for their first face-to-face peace talks in more than two weeks.

Reparations? Don't hold your breath.

It seems that these days everyone affected by slavery and colonialism is calling for, or rather demanding, reparations. This is most obvious in what was once called the British Caribbean, and in the United States. The clamor for reparations has been given new life by the visit of the future king of England to the former colonies. There has also been a call for all members of the Commonwealth to

declare themselves republics, as was done by Barbados, in November of last year. The latter will be much easier to achieve than the former, for various reasons—the most important being that slavery was abolished almost 200 years ago. A friend of mine mentioned that the Jewish people got reparations from Germany because of the pain and suffering and death and dispossession, during and before

WW2. Yes they did, but they were alive and fought in court for those paybacks for their suffering. I believe that the late Dr. Goscinski, I hope I didn't misspell his name, who came to Belize after the war, received reparations for his, and his family's, suffering during the war.

The majority of white people in America, whether liberals or conservatives, Democrats or Republicans, will tell you that they aren't responsible for what their ancestors did, that they didn't own slaves, or profited from that most egregious enterprise. That we black people are just looking for handouts, instead of working to achieve the American dream, whatever that is. In other words, we don't owe you anything. Let bygones be bygones and let's move on! This mindset is the same in France and Belgium and Spain and the Netherlands, and in all the other colonial countries. I'm sure William and his father Charles, and all those in power feel the same way. Might makes right, and all those subjugated darkies be damned!

In Belize, as in all colonized countries, the Europeans depleted our lands of all their natural resources, and became great world powers on the backs of our ancestors! They built great cities, industries, infrastructures, armies, on the backs of the ignorant, less-than-human-in-their-eyes, natives of the lands that they plundered, raped,

and left desolate of their riches, and richness! Subverted our ancient cultures for their more "advanced" lifestyles! And now, in their eyes, we are audacious enough to demand some payment for all that they did to us, instead of for us? For civilizing us? We, ungrateful people of color!

If we do get reparations, it won't be because we are asking or demanding it! We don't have the power nor the incentives to make the colonial masters acquiesce to our demands. It has to be a long fight, without gloves, educating the Europeans on why and how the injustices of their ancestors have impacted us. From giving us a white god, absolute garbage, to having them realize how debilitating and degrading the effects of colonialism have been on us. That we were deprived of our histories, our birthrights, our cultures, our wealth, and our humanness! Unless we strip it all down to the bare and naked reality of the brutality and savagery we, as people of color, experienced, and are still suffering from, and the aftereffects of the genocidal nature of colonialism, we won't get anywhere. We are just blowing in the wind!

"O judgement! Thou art fled to brutish beasts, and men have lost their reason!" *Julius Caesar*, by William Shakespeare.

Glen

GoB and UB collaborate to carry out a family needs survey

BELIZE CITY, Mon. Mar. 28, 2022

Today, the Government of Belize issued a statement informing residents of the Southside of Belize City that teams would be in their area to conduct a Family Needs Assessment Survey, starting today. According to a release issued by the Department of Youth Services today, the Ministry of Youth, Sports and Transport, the Ministry of Home Affairs and New Growth Industries, and the University of Belize have collaborated to carry

out the survey, which is being done in an effort to understand the day-to-day needs of the families living on the Southside.

The release adds that the data will be used to "tailor" interventions to address some of the needs identified. The survey will take place over a period of two weeks, and the Department of Youth Services is asking for participation and guaranteeing that all information received will be highly confidential.

2nd amnesty clinic held up north

Continued from Page 1

Cervantes, were in attendance. The Prime Minister was given a tour of the facility, and he then spoke briefly with local media, whom he told that he expects anywhere between 30,000 and 40,000 persons to apply for the amnesty program. He also spoke on the importance of the program, which has not been conducted since 1999.

"Well, what happened is that when we were first in government in 1999, we saw the need to be able to have all of these people that are living 'in the shadows,' as we would say—they are not part of the formal system. And we felt that it was important to get them to become legal in the country. And once they become legal in the country, it makes it so much easier for them to be able to get a social security, for them to open a bank account, to be able to work, and also to stop the exploitation, because a lot of unscrupulous business people would take advantage of them because they don't have their papers," he said.

The Briceño administration first announced its amnesty program for 2022 back in December of 2021, noting that the program seeks to embrace the key principles of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals. The significant increase in migration, both legal and illegal, across the globe and especially in the Americas has been attributed to civil unrest as well as lack of employment opportunities in countries throughout the region. When it comes to Central American and CARICOM countries, many migrants have been fleeing from violence, whether gang-related or political, or leaving their homes in search of a

better quality of life. Many of the persons being granted amnesty are persons who have already been working in—and contributing to—the country. By becoming documented, the chances of these migrants being taken advantage of—in the form of human trafficking or poor working conditions, for example—are lessened.

"Fast forward to today, now twenty two years later, we're finding out that we're in the same situation as we were before. So the Minister of Immigration, Minister Courtenay and his Deputy Minister Ramon Cervantes came to Cabinet and said, 'you know, we're facing this issue,'" stated the Prime Minister.

Once the amnesty program is over, however, the Government is planning on tightening immigration policies—which is why IOM's Diana Locke is hoping that as many persons as possible take advantage of the program when it is launched in April. Her advice to those who wish to apply but aren't sure how is simple: reach out.

"If you need to, don't be afraid—go into the Immigration office and ask them questions. Reach out to people in the community, people that you know. The area representatives have been very active in terms of assisting people so they can go to their offices and ask for help," she said.

Apart from visiting IOM's mobile hub, those wishing to seek assistance in completing the application process for this year's program can visit any of their countrywide hubs, including the YWCA in Belize City, the Child Development Foundation in Belmopan, the Red Cross Office in San Ignacio and Humana People to People Belize in Bella Vista.

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YEAR/MODEL	-	2017 Toyota 4Runner "SR5"
BODYSTYLE	-	4 drs. SUV
ENGINE TYPE	-	V-6 cyls. 4.0L MPI
TRANSMISSION TYPE	-	Automatic Transmission 2WD
VIN / MODEL NUMBER	-	JTEZU5JRXH5154473
REGISTRATION NUMBER	-	BZ-C-42042
MILEAGE	-	Not Reported – Electrical system is inoperable

Shyne wins

(From page 1)

BIRDS ISLE, Belize City, Sun. Mar. 27, 2022

UDP chairman Hon. Michael Peyrefitte dismissed all entreaties and ignored heated demands for a recount of the contents of even one of the 3 ballot boxes used shortly before 4:00 p.m. today at a UDP leadership convention held at Birds Isle, and proceeded to declare Hon. Moses “Shyne” Barrow the winner of the fourth such leadership convention to be held by the UDP, and their third new party leader, in just the last 25 months.

The freshman Mesopotamia area representative, but two-time Leader of the Opposition in the House of Representatives, bested Hon. Tracy Pantón, the 2-time area representative for the Albert constituency, by the razor slim margin of 257 votes to 254, and further controversy and potential chaos was quelled when she issued a graceful concession statement within half an hour of the declaration.

In subsequent interviews, the new UDP leader in turn declared his respect and even admiration for his opponent, calling her campaign determined.

There were either 8 or 9 abstentions from the list of 520 delegates, one of whom was the previous leader of the party who was being replaced, long-time Collet constituency area representative Hon. Patrick Faber, who was still in the United States wrapping up family affairs following the death and interment of his oldest brother.

Hon. Faber had been elected the UDP’s deputy party leader on May 30, 2016, but lost his bid to become longtime UDP leader Rt. Hon. Dean Barrow’s successor on February 9, 2020, when he secured only 227 votes at a UDP leadership convention, while 342 votes were cast in favor of his opponent, (a total of 569 votes cast) Hon. John Saldivar, who was forced to resign from the leadership post within days of winning the nomination following a campaign finance scandal.

At a subsequent election on July 13, 2020, Hon. Faber won by 19 votes, receiving 286 votes to Hon. Saldivar’s 267 votes (Hon. Wilfred Elrington received 10 votes and there were 4 rejected ballots), from a total of 567.

On July 11, 2021, although 290 UDP delegates had signed a petition demanding a recall of Hon. Patrick Faber as leader, only 257 of the 483 delegates (53%) who voted at a recall convention triggered by that petition were in support of the recall—falling short of the two thirds needed.

Today’s election became necessary following Hon. Faber’s resignation 2 months ago following allegations of domestic abuse.

The decreased number on the voting delegate list reflects the loss of offices by candidates of the party in the last municipal and general

elections, the recent but short-lived change in the leadership, and resignations without replacements from the ranks.

Despite the concession by their candidate, the Hon. Tracy Pantón’s campaign continues to complain of bias exhibited by UDP chairman Hon. Michael Peyrefitte, who refused to even consider holding an election for a slate that included the first and second deputy leader offices, which is constitutionally overdue, since those posts were last filled respectively by Hon. Hugo Patt and former Belize Rural Central area representative Hon. Beverly Williams, who were elected on February 9, 2020, for a 2-year term.

They allege he not only handled some of the ballots himself, which is considered a no-no and a break in accepted protocol, but also brought in a complete stranger to administer the election. Peyrefitte though, the Barrow campaign contends, nonetheless had to sign all the ballots in full view of all interested participants, and while he may have been pro-Barrow, he was assisted by Albert August, who is a former chairman of the party and was an open Hon. Tracy Pantón supporter.

The Hon. Tracy Pantón’s campaign further asserts that whereas the now leader-elect had at first agreed to a recount of the controversial box from Polling Station 3 P-Z which they allege was miscounted as 95-84 in favor of candidate Hon. Shyne Barrow, ensuring his 3-vote victory, the chairman defied and rebuffed both candidates’ campaigns.

Hon. Barrow reportedly won the first box, Polling Station 1 A-E 90-85, but Hon. Pantón reportedly won the second box, Polling Station 2 F-0 71-84, and led by 8 going into the count of the third and final box.

Some of Hon. Pantón’s campaign surrogates are publicly alleging that the other campaign indulged in open vote-buying, and their complaints of voters bringing their phones and taking pictures of their completed ballots were ignored by the UDP chairman.

Perhaps, though, Hon. Pantón lost the contest because 4 other voters they were sure would have voted for her, as well as Hon. Patrick Faber, did not attend and so did not vote. Those are Carlos Perdomo, who is also out of the country; Reuben Campos, who is reportedly very ill; Giovanni Alamilla (Pickstock Division Leader), who is traveling with the Olympic Torch; and Arlette Bevans, who was refused an alternate despite a sudden death in her family.

Steve Perrera, a member of the Central Executive Committee as the party’s legal representative, arrived after the poll had closed at 2:00 p.m. and was not allowed to vote, but the Barrow camp did not object when Roosevelt Blades inexplicably voted a few minutes after the 2:00 p.m. deadline. They are satisfied that a recount, and even disallowing a

Contingency Fund capitalized

Continued from Page 1

in the Contingency account to pay for any unforeseen expenses in this coming fiscal year.

“It’s important at least for historical records to point out that we made an amendment on Capital II, to increase Capital II by \$5 million, and the \$5 million is for us to fund the Contingency Fund. The Contingency Fund is referred to in the Constitution, and it has never been put in place, so for the first time in history, a PUP government is setting up a Contingency Fund, so if there is an emergency we can take monies from there without anybody trying to make any accusations of not following the process”, PM Briceño said.

The government has made this move to capitalize the fund at a time when the representatives of stevedores employed by the Port of Belize are locked in a legal battle with their employer, which has used a judicial review application to block an ex-gratia payment that was

purported extra ballot in the Polling Station 2 Box, would not change the ultimate outcome of the election.

In subsequent media appearances, Hon. Barrow has pledged to reform the party’s antiquated system of appointed delegates by transforming it to elections, perhaps like the PUP’s constituency committee format. The party’s Central Executive Committee, though, must first meet, then the National Party Council, and as of press time those convocations had not yet been scheduled.

The Central Executive Committee must urgently determine what is to be done with existing vacancies and anticipated vacancies such as those for the posts of National Campaign Manager/National Coordinator and the Secretary General, which are currently held by Roosevelt Blades and Carol Babb respectively, both Hon. Patrick Faber appointees. The former served as Hon. Pantón’s national manager and was asked to resign by Hon. Shyne Barrow two weeks ago, while reliable reports are that the latter will tender her resignation on Tuesday.

Vacant executive posts such as for the four Regional Leaders, the Rules Committee Chairman (a position last held by the recently deceased Sir Manuel Esquivel) and the National Youth Director need to be filled, but it is expected that there will be further contention, as the competition for the party’s standard bearer posts begin in earnest within the coming months, starting with John Saldivar versus Khalid Belisle in Belmopan.

But first the party collectively must figure out how best to contest and secure some victories in the village council elections scheduled to start in 2 months. As former UDP chairman Doug Singh once famously declared, winning is a political party’s raison d’être.

granted to those workers by the government. The \$1.5 million payment was allotted for the stevedores as compensation for hardships and financial losses they have suffered as a result of the privatization of the Port of Belize, and as part of an effort to persuade the stevedores to end a strike that was ongoing at the time.

The lawyers for PBL, however, filed a last-minute judicial review application just as the payment was about to be made, claiming that parliamentary approval was not received prior to the granting of the \$1.5 million payment.

The House of Representatives recently passed a supplementary appropriation bill to approve the payment, which has since been passed by the Senate, but PBL, through its lawyers, has seemingly switched its legal argument, and is now claiming that the payment should have come from the Contingency Fund, an account which was established just 6 months ago, and which has just undergone its first capitalization.

The case goes back to the court in a two-day session on May 10 and 11 of this year.

Two dead in fatal RTA

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intended prosecution for the drivers of the two vans involved in the head-on collision, which caused injuries to as many as 16 persons, a police report says.

According to reports, a van with a Dangriga license plate, whose driver has not yet been identified by police, attempted to overtake another vehicle somewhere between Miles 72 and 73 on the Philip Goldson Highway and slammed head-on into a van with a Corozal license plate.

Reports are that 13 persons were in the van with the Corozal license plate, all of whom were reportedly returning home from a church service. Three persons are said to have been in the next vehicle. The male victim, Steve Grant, was reportedly in the van with the Dangriga license plates, while Ariana Chan was a passenger of the van from Corozal.

A police investigation of the accident continues. A full report has not yet been issued by the Police Department’s press office.

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Churches continue their anti-cannabis offensive

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statement warning that legalization of the cultivation, use and sale of marijuana is akin to “clandestine production of and trafficking in drugs”. The Catholic Church in Belize has not been as vocal in its condemnation of the proposed establishment of a cannabis and hemp industry in Belize as the National Evangelical Association of Belize, and its churches and leaders, have been. In response to queries about what the position of the Catholic Church is on the matter, Father Robinson said that the church’s stance is outlined in the Catechism.

“I address you today because of a grave concern that will negatively affect Belize in the near future if the Cannabis and Hemp Control & Licensing Bill 2022 is passed. This bill would legalize the growth, production, distribution, and sale of marijuana throughout the entire country of Belize. People have asked if the Catholic Church has a position on this bill. The answer is yes, and the position can be found in the Catechism of the Catholic Church, which is the official teaching of the church. I quote: ‘the use of drugs inflicts very grave damage on human health and life. Their use, except on strictly therapeutic grounds, is a grave offense.’” Father John Robinson said.

A vast number of persons who live in Belize adhere to the Catholic faith. While this is the view shared by Father Robinson, a collective position has not been released by the Catholic Church on the cannabis debate.

Father Robinson touched on the implications that legalizing marijuana in Belize could have, in his view. “Legalising marijuana does not change the immorality of drug use. That which is immoral harms both the person and society. What legalizing marijuana will do is set up a contradiction between God’s law and man’s law, increasing its use throughout the country, including among youth. It will lower the moral standards of the country, it will increase violence throughout Belize. It will impact tourism, making Belize less family-friendly. The black market will actually grow, and other drugs will be more abundant and available. It will increase corruption

within Government. It will increase addictions. It will produce health complications for many Belizean users,” said Father Robinson.

During the 31st International Drug Enforcement Conference, the Argentinian pontiff, Pope Francis, said that “drug addiction is an evil” and warned against the legalization of recreational drugs at the time amid moves in Denver, Colorado, and Washington, DC, to proceed with legalization of cannabis use. (Both states have since legalized cannabis along with 37 others where medical use is legal, and 18 where cannabis can be used recreationally.)

In his remarks, Pope Francis said, “To think that harm can be reduced by permitting drug addicts to use narcotics in no way resolves the problem.” He added, “Attempts, however limited, to legalize so-called ‘recreational drugs’ are not only highly questionable from a legislative standpoint, but they fail to produce the desired effects.”

He called for other social ills to be addressed before the door is opened for the use of cannabis.

“Substitute drugs are not an adequate therapy but rather a veiled means of surrendering to the phenomenon,” the Pope said. “No to every type of drug use. It is as simple as that ... But to say this ‘no,’ one has to say ‘yes’ to life, ‘yes’ to love, ‘yes’ to others, ‘yes’ to education, ‘yes’ to greater job opportunities. If we say ‘yes’ to all these things, there will be no room for illicit drugs, alcohol abuse, or other forms of addiction,” he added.

It must be noted that marijuana is not explicitly mentioned in the Catechism, according to Jesuit priest, Father Peter Ryan, a theology professional at Sacred Heart Major Seminary in Detroit. He noted that paragraph 2291 of the Catechism touches on the use of drugs outside the therapeutic setting. Quoting from the Catechism as Father Robinson did, Father Ryan shared an article published on Catholicnews.com that stated, “It [the Catechism] says the use of drugs inflicts very grave damage on human health and life — it means the use of it when it’s not warranted.” He added, “Their use, except on strictly therapeutic grounds, is a grave offense, (as is) clandestine production of and trafficking in drugs or scandalous practices.”

Pope Francis disagrees with the argument that marijuana can be used as an adequate therapeutic alternative to in-the-lab pharmaceuticals, and a recent study from the Massachusetts General Hospital seems to concur with him. The research released in a March 18, 2022 summary states, “A new study shows that using cannabis products to treat pain, anxiety, and depression failed to improve these symptoms while doubling the risk of developing the addictive symptoms of cannabis use disorder (CUD). People seeking cannabis to treat symptoms of anxiety and depression were at the greatest risk of CUD. Contrary to evidence-based medicine, people with medical marijuana cards choose their own products and dosing, suggesting the need for better controls over dispensing use, and professional follow-up of these patients.”

Father Robinson said that he has seen the negative effects of legalization firsthand. “I traveled through California recently, one of the richest places in the world, in a place that legalized recreational marijuana back in 2016. It is now unrecognizable, with homeless people living in the streets, in parks, along train tracks. Many or perhaps most of them are addicted to drugs. I pray that our leaders will reconsider this bill. The real cost of this bill will not be measured in dollars and cents but rather in the loss of wrecked lives, especially of our youth. I would ask parents if we cannot stand up and say no to this bill, how can we expect our children to say no to drugs?” he said.

On Friday, the NEAB staged a brief protest in front of the National Assembly and voiced its support for the position of the Catholic Church. In a statement released to the public, the NEAB remarked, “the National Evangelical Association of Belize and its associate churches nationwide express our full endorsement to the statement released by the Catholic Church against turning Belize into a marijuana republic, with doors wide open to cartels in the drug trade.”

During a recent interview, Lance Lewis, former president of the NEAB, stated, “We think that there are many other ways of getting money for the economy. We have agriculture, we have so many things going—tourism, that we do not need to plant a product that we are unsure of the effects, because I’ve seen what it has done in places like Colorado, United States, wherever. It has destroyed communities, it might have brought in money, but that money is at a high price and that price is the price of life. We are looking at others in Mexico; the cartels have moved into various parts of Mexico taking control, and people who are in that will want to get more, and if Belize opens the door, they will come in and for sure we will be destroyed.”

While the churches continue to issue these dire warnings, the recent data as of 2021 shows that the legalization of marijuana has neither caused violent crimes to soar nor plummet. The study, entitled, “The Effect of State Marijuana Legalization: 2021 update”, states that both those who posited that legalization would decrease crime in the US and those who said that it would increase it – were wrong.

“Most state trends track the U.S. trend leading up to legalization, with the graphed difference essentially flat. Post legalization, trends in many states, tracked the national trend while violent crime in Maine and Nevada decreased by 90 and 178 crimes per 100,000 compared with the national trend post legalization. The violent crime rate in Alaska and Massachusetts increased post-legalization by 152 and 57 more than the national trend. Overall, violent crime has neither soared nor plummeted in the wake of marijuana legalization,” stated the study.

In addition to this, this study states, “Previous studies have suggested a link between medicalization of marijuana and a lower suicide rate, particularly among demographics most likely to use marijuana (males age 20–39).”

It adds, however, “Conversely, certain studies suggest excessive marijuana use may increase the risk of depression, schizophrenia, unhealthy drug abuse, and anxiety.”

The study touched also on the economic benefits of legalization in states like Colorado. “Colorado usually collects more than \$20 million a month. In 2020, the state collected a total of \$387 million. The California government collects more than \$50 million a month. You can find similar stories in other states that have legalized,” it noted.

Recent data from the group Leafly suggests that the blooming marijuana industry created 77,000 jobs in 2020 alone.

While the great cannabis debate rages on, we in Belize, have passed the first legislation in the House of Representatives needed to fully roll out the cannabis industry at home. The bill, read for a third time last Friday, now goes to the Senate to be rubber-stamped – and awaits the final readings of the accompanying legislation, the Cannabis Regulation and Licensing Bill.

The churches, however, are seemingly unwavering in their offensive and have now joined forces. The Evangelicals and Catholics are calling for a referendum on the matter, but would prefer that the proposed legalization be fully discarded.

“I would want to say the time has come for us to ask the government to please desist from going further on this bill. Drop it and drop it now!” Pastor Lance Lewis said.

Chinese businessman dies in Hopkins fire

Continued from Page 1

called the authorities after being unsuccessful in reaching Tan, the landlord of the apartment complex. According to reports, Tan lived alone in his apartment, which, as previously mentioned, is believed by National Fire Service investigators to be the location

where the fire started.

Tan’s body has since been transported to the Southern Regional Hospital, where he was pronounced dead, and a postmortem examination of his remains will soon be conducted. Police have noted that although he was found motionless, they did not observe any burn or other injury on his body.

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