

Belize's leading newspaper

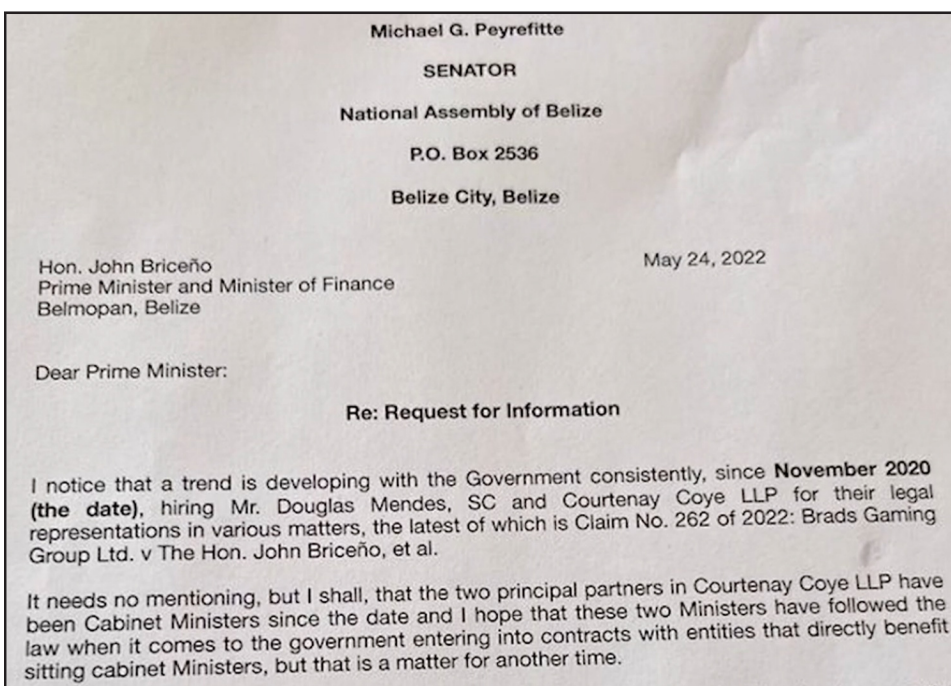
Briceno v Peyrefitte: Pot di cuss kettle

PM Hon. John Briceño and Senator Michael Peyrefitte call each other hypocrites following Peyrefitte's request for a disclosure of the fees paid by GOB to private attorneys. Both parties have engaged in the practice of retaining politically connected legal representatives.

by Marco Lopez

BELIZE CITY, Mon. May 30, 2022
 Senator Michael Peyrefitte has written to Prime Minister Briceño and has evoked the Freedom of Information Act in order to get access to documentation outlining how much money is being paid out to the Briceño administration's go-to legal representatives, Courtenay Coye LLP and Queen's Counsel Douglas Mendez, SC. Prime Minister Briceño, in responding to a question on the matter with a sigh, said that the information is being compiled by the Financial Secretary, Joseph Waight, but not before calling out Michael Peyrefitte for what he refers to as "boundless hypocrisy."

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Cotton Tree man killed; Belmopan teen shot



by Charles Gladden

BELMOPAN, Mon. May 30, 2022
 A Cotton Tree resident was fatally shot on Saturday, May 28, while paying his sister a visit, and at about the same time that the tragic shooting took place, a Belmopan teenager was shot while in the back seat of a moving vehicle.

According to initial police reports,

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Atlantic hurricane season days away, Agatha kicks off Eastern Pacific season



Hurricane Agatha forecast by the National Hurricane Center (NOAA/NHC) Source: NOAA NHC

by Khaila Gentle

BELIZE CITY, Mon. May 30, 2022
 Just a few days ahead of the official start date of the 2022 hurricane season, the formation of the first named storm of the year has had Mexico, and to a lesser extent Belize, remaining vigilant. Agatha, which formed in the Eastern

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Rodeo bull jumps over fence Agric



Bull jumps over rodeo fence at Agric

BELMOPAN, Sun. May 29, 2022
 The rodeo at the National Agriculture and Trade Show is one of the events that draws the largest number of the show's attendees, but when a bull cast off the first cowboy which attempted to mount it and leapt over the fence as the ranchers were trying to wrangle him, the crowds likely experienced a bit more of an adrenaline rush than they had signed up for.

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PM calls Boledo contract a UDP sweetheart deal

BELIZE CITY, Mon. May 30, 2022
 During an interview last Friday, Prime Minister Hon. John Briceño said that the government boledo and lottery contract awarded to Brad's Gaming Company was a sweetheart deal. This was in response to a question posed to him about the recent application for judicial review of his administration's decision to levy additional taxes against the company through the new Lotteries Control (Amendment) Regulation 2022. The PM, in his interview, said that the Belizean people lost nearly 60 million dollars in tax revenue over the last 10 years due to a tax exemption granted

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Hartin “regrets” lying about how Supt. Jemmott was shot



Jasmine Hartin in *One Bullet in Belize* (Discovery Plus 2022)

by Khaila Gentle

BELIZE CITY, Sun. May 29, 2022

In a documentary released on Saturday—exactly one year after the shooting death of Superintendent of Police, Henry Jemmott—Jasmine Hartin admits to lying about what exactly transpired in the moments leading up to the fatal shooting which claimed the high-ranking police officer’s life. Despite expressing regret about having lied, however, Hartin, in the statements she made during the documentary, does not take full responsibility for Jemmott’s

In the Discovery Plus documentary *One Bullet in Belize*, Jasmine Hartin details the events leading up to her “accidental” shooting of Police Supt. Henry Jemmott. While she says she regrets initially lying about who shot Jemmott, she hasn’t fully taken responsibility for the police officer’s death.

death—insisting instead that she did not realise that the police superintendent’s gun was loaded.

According to a report from the *Daily Mail*, Hartin said to an interviewer, “How could I be charged with manslaughter by negligence where I truly thought the weapon was empty?”

In the true-crime documentary by Discovery Plus UK, titled “One Bullet in Belize”, Hartin tells an interviewer that she and the high-ranking police officer had been socializing on a San Pedro pier during curfew hours before the night took a dark turn. In a clip released by the *Daily Mail*, Hartin explains that she was so “in-shock” after having shot Jemmott that she barely remembered what she told police.

According to her, she had been practising loading and unloading the magazine of the Superintendent Jemmott’s gun. The bullets, she said, were beside him. And it was only after she began giving him a shoulder massage that he asked her to hand him the gun

and magazine so he could reload it.

“I lean forward, I pick it up, I am trying to get the magazine out; I am still sitting, he is still sitting. I am using the moon to see and I am pushing to get the magazine out, and it was like it was stuck. I don’t remember touching the trigger at all. Next thing I know, the gun goes off,” she claims during the interview.

As readers will recall, Jasmine Hartin had been arrested in May of 2021 after shooting Henry Jemmott. Police had found Hartin on the pier covered in blood. In the water below was the body of Jemmott, who had sustained one gunshot wound behind the right ear. Hartin’s initial story to police had been that a man passing by in a boat had fired a single shot, hitting the officer.

In the Discovery Plus documentary, she said she regrets having told such a lie.

“I don’t know why I said that,” she stated.

Hartin was eventually charged with manslaughter by negligence and since then has been attending several court hearings accompanied by her lawyer, Richard “Dickie” Bradley. She is set to stand trial before the Supreme Court sometime this year after June 15.

Jasmine Hartin has frequently been the subject of international headlines since the May 2021 shooting death of Superintendent Henry Jemmott. While *The Daily Mail*’s headlines state that Saturday’s documentary is the first time Hartin has given a full account of what transpired that night, she also sat before

cameras to tell her tale late last year. In October 2021, she appeared on *48 Hours* where, while being interviewed by CBS correspondent Peter Van Sant, her tone had been slightly different.

In that documentary, Hartin first claimed that she did not remember telling the police about the man in a boat. Two days after the incident, however, she had admitted to shooting and killing Jemmott. Hartin had also expressed to Van Sant that while she would maintain that Jemmott’s death was an accident, she would “accept any punishment” that came her way.

One Bullet in Belize premiered on the one-year anniversary of Henry Jemmott’s death. And while an international audience logged on to Discovery+ to watch, Jemmott’s family held a memorial service in his honor, which was followed by a Beluria (ninth night).

One of the reasons that Hartin’s case has garnered such widespread attention is her connection to UK billionaire Lord Michael Ashcroft. In addition to having stakes in numerous local businesses, including the country’s largest bank, a media house, and the Port of Belize, Ashcroft—father of Hartin’s ex-partner Andrew Ashcroft and grandfather of her two children—has on at least one occasion been one of the largest single financial contributors to the *Daily Mail*. He has also in the past contributed significantly to both of Belize’s political parties.

Stolen Hilux found in Guatemala



Toyota Hilux stolen from Belize found in Guatemala

BELIZE CITY, Mon. May 30, 2022

The 2016 Toyota Hilux stolen from Cristo Rey Village, Cayo, earlier this month on May 13 was found being driven by 28-year-old Hector Cruz on the Inter-American Highway near eastern Guatemala. Cruz was intercepted by Guatemala Interpol agents in Esquipulas, Chiquimula state, he was driving around 140 miles per hour, and when they ran the vehicle’s chassis number and found it to be in the international theft database, stolen from Belize.

According to the Interpol release the apprehension was done in coordination with Belizean authorities. The vehicle is registered with Cayo plates CYC-42809. Cruz was immediately detained

and handed over to the authorities.

Recently, another daring attempt to steal a high-end Toyota pickup was pick up was foiled by police and caretakers of property in Cayo. The would-be robber bolted towards Guatemala bordered and would eventually make good their escape. Reports are that elements from over the border in Guatemala have been commissioning both locals and Guatemalans to steal high-end pick-ups for resale in that neighboring country.

Police have been actively investigating this ring of vehicle thieves and reliable reports say they have pinpointed some of the individuals possibly involved or with an affinity to carry out crimes of this modus.

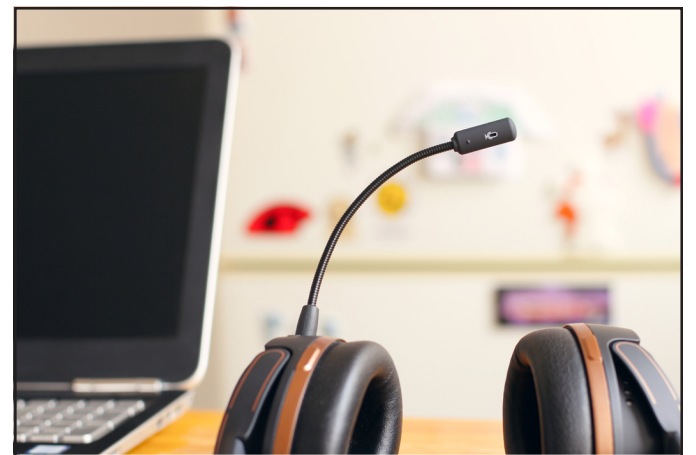
OPM hosts first BPO stakeholder meeting

by Khaila Gentle

BELMOPAN, Mon. May 30, 2022

The uptick in the number of Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) companies in Belize over the past few years has surely been noticed by most persons, and just this week, the first-ever BPO stakeholder meeting, hosted by the Office of the Prime Minister and the Ministry of Investment, was held in the country. According to a press release from the Office of the Prime Minister, representatives from a total of 20 companies were in attendance.

The meeting, said the release, provided an outlet for stakeholders to express concerns, detail challenges and make further policy recommendations to continue stimulating the development of “this vibrant economic activity”. Additionally, both the stakeholders and the Ministry of Investment highlighted the possibility of generating



Approximately 8,000 Belizeans are employed by BPO companies

employment in “higher-tier services” by the BPO companies.

According to the release, the BPO industry is a “priority sector” and a significant contributor to the country’s economy. Currently, approximately 8,000 Belizeans are employed across the twenty-seven BPO companies located in the country.

“Through this forum, government is now able to better understand the needs of the sector and is even more committed to the growth of this export industry,” said the press release.

SCAM ALERT at UB

University of Belize
UB
Education Empowers a Nation

THE UNIVERSITY OF BELIZE
Hummingbird Ave., P.O. Box 340, Belmopan, Belize
Tel: 822-3680, ext. 236 | Email: communications@ub.edu.bz
www.ub.edu.bz

May 30, 2022
From UB Management Team

Important Notice - Scam Alert

be paid so that the students can take an entrance exam at the university's Belmopan campus. The university reported that unknown individuals have been "texting students to visit the Belmopan Campus with monies to be able to participate in an entrance exam."

The urgent notice was released early this afternoon and it advises students that those attempts are not a part of the enrollment protocol process, "and as such, students should not comply with those requests." They are also being asked to report any instance of contact to the email, concerns@ub.edu.bz.

BELIZE CITY, Mon. May 30, 2022

The management team of the University of Belize issued an important notice today advising students to report any instance of contact by persons requesting that they bring money to cover the fees which the scammers say must

be paid so that the students can take an entrance exam at the university's Belmopan campus. The university reported that unknown individuals have been "texting students to visit the Belmopan Campus with monies to be able to participate in an entrance exam."

UDP's "OJ" charged for not having vehicle insurance

Police formally arrested and charged Orson "OJ" Elrington for the offense of driving a vehicle not covered by a third party risk insurance.



Orson "OJ" Elrington

by Charles Gladden

BELIZE CITY, Mon. May 30, 2022

Attorney-at-law, Orson "OJ" Elrington, who is also a prominent member of the United Democratic Party and was a UDP standard bearer in the most recent general elections in 2020, was formally arrested and charged on Friday, May 27, by police for driving a motor vehicle without being covered by third-party risk insurance after his vehicle collided with another, after he made a U-turn over the Ambulance Emergency Ramp in front of the Karl Heusner Memorial Hospital. Elrington maintains that the cause of the accident was not the unauthorized turn over the ambulance ramp.

At about 8:30 p.m., police responded to a scene on Princess Margeret Drive and saw a 2009 Nissan Cube SUV parked on the sidewalk on Princess Margaret Drive with the front pointed towards Mercy Lane and the rear towards the roundabout on Coney Drive. The front left headlight of that SUV was broken, and its bumper was damaged. They also saw a 2014 Ford Explorer with

damages to the right rear fender and a broken right headlight.

According to initial police reports, just before 8:15 p.m., 44-year-old Belizean, Sherlock Vernon, was driving his Nissan Cube SUV on Princess Margaret Drive from the direction of the Coney Drive roundabout towards Mercy Lane and was approaching the Ambulance Emergency Ramp when the Ford Explorer driven by 44-year-old Orson "OJ" Elrington, who was heading from the direction of the Karl Heusner Memorial Hospital, made a U-turn over the Ambulance Emergency Ramp into Princess Margaret Drive and collided with Vernon's vehicle according to police.

When police started investigating the matter, they discovered that the insurance coverage for Elrington's vehicle had expired on May 16 of this year. As a result, the Ford Explorer was taken to the Belama Police Station and impounded.

"We all know that crossing doesn't have any exception to anyone—even the police. We have to go around, and you're not allowed to make any U-turn there, not even the Fire Service. That clearly is for the use of ambulance only, and there is a sign there that also indicates that. I don't know, I heard on the news actually yesterday that he refused to sign his acknowledgment form; that's your right. If you refuse to do that, then it's your right, but I know that our officers have already levied charges, and he will have his day in court to answer to them and defend himself against those," stated the Communications Director of the Belize Police Department, ASP Fitzroy Yearwood.

Elrington was offered bail, which he met, and he is scheduled to appear in the Magistrate Court on Friday, June 3, 2022, at 9:00 a.m.



VACANCY

Layout and Design Artist

A vacancy exists at Amandala Press for a Layout and Design Artist, who is competent in Adobe Pagemaker, Photoshop, InDesign and Microsoft Office Suite. The applicant must be serious about his or her work.

Requirements:

- Competency in Adobe Pagemaker, Photoshop, InDesign, Microsoft Word, Publisher, and Excel
- Ability to create advertisements
- Attention to detail and accuracy
- Well organized and has great time management skills
- Ability to multitask, work under pressure and meet deadlines
- Honest, dependable and a team player with excellent communication skills

Applications along with resume and two references must be addressed to the Manager, P.O. Box 15, 3304 Partridge Street, Belize City or emailed to amandalapress@yahoo.com, no later than Friday, June 10, 2022.

Mexican authorities issue notice for Johan Elias



¡AYÚDALE A REGRESAR A CASA!
JOHAN ELIAS FRIESEN
ALERTA: 48/ZS/2022



Fecha de Denuncia: 26/05/2022.
Fecha de los Hechos: 22/05/2022.
Lugar de los Hechos: Chetumal, Municipio de Othón P. Blanco, Quintana Roo.
Edad: 51 años.
Género: Masculino.
Nacionalidad: Beliceña
Tez: Blanca.
Compleción: Robusta.
Cabello: Lacio, castaño claro, corto.
Ojos: Verdes, medianos.
Estatura: 1.82 metros.
Peso: 110 kilogramos.
Señas particulares: Tatuaje en el antebrazo derecho de la silueta de una mujer desnuda, cicatriz recta en el brazo derecho.

QUINTANA ROO, Mexico, Fri. May 27, 2022

The Office of the Attorney General for Quintana Roo has issued an official missing persons notice for 51-year-old Belizean Johan Elias Friesen. Friesen, a Mennonite resident of Guinea Grass Village, Orange Walk, was first reported missing on Sunday, May 22, according to the Fiscalia General Del Estados Quintana Roo (FGE). Some news outlets have

reported that he may have been gunned down in Chetumal, where he was reportedly last seen.

Officials from Quintana Roo are seeking the public's assistance to locate Elias, who is reported to have a tattoo of a naked woman and a scar on his right hand. He has been missing for over one week now. No description has so far been provided of the clothes he was last seen wearing. An investigation continues.

Belize ranks among top 10 nations most reliant on tourism

A study conducted using data from the World Travel & Tourism Council found that tourism generates almost 15% of Belize’s GDP and more than 10% of employment within the country.

by *Khaila Gentle*

BELIZE CITY, Mon. May 30, 2022

The Government of Belize has constantly underscored the fact that Belize’s economy is heavily dependent on tourism, and a recent study conducted by Bounce, a luggage storage app company, has confirmed just that. Using data from the World Travel & Tourism Council, the study found that of the fifty countries most reliant on tourists to build their economy, Belize ranks tenth overall.

The countries were ranked based on how much tourism contributed not only to their GDP (Gross Domestic Product) but also to employment. According to the study, tourism contributes to 14.95% of Belize’s overall GDP. Additionally, tourism workers make up 12.92% of its workforce.

The three countries found to be most economically reliant on tourism are Aruba, the British Virgin Islands, and the Maldives, with tourism contributing

to over a third of the latter two countries’ GDP. The number one most reliant nation, Aruba, also has the highest number of tourism workers, who make up just under 30% of its workforce. Right behind it is St. Lucia, with tourism contributing to 27.30% of its workforce, and the Bahamas, with 26.48% of its workforce being tourism workers.

In regard to GDP specifically, the percentage of Belize’s overall GDP that is derived from tourism is the ninth highest of the countries listed in the report.

The study, published in an article by Bounce titled “Helpful Holidays: The Destinations Where Your Money Goes the furthest”, was reportedly done in an effort to point tourists to the countries that were most severely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic due to the tourism revenue that was lost when most international travel came to a halt.

Of the fifty countries whose

The countries with the highest tourism GDP



Country	% of GDP
1 Maldives	38.92%
2 British Virgin Islands	32.96%
3 Aruba	27.64%
4 Seychelles	25.74%
5 Bahamas	19.23%
6 Vanuatu	18.16%
7 Cape Verde	17.66%
8 St. Lucia	15.61%
9 Belize	14.95%
10 Fiji	14.09%

Photo by Meritt Thomas

economies are most reliant on tourism, at least twelve of them are Caribbean.

OW shooting not drug-related?

Communication Director for the Belize Police Department, ASP Fitzroy Yearwood, has said that last Wednesday’s shooting in Orange Walk has not been classified as drug-related, as more evidence is needed.



(l-r) Reynaldo Marchand, deceased; Nazir Vasquez, shooting victim

by *Charles Gladden*

ORANGE WALK TOWN, Mon. May 30, 2022

The shooting incident which claimed the life of Reynaldo Zemir Marchand, 38, and injured Nazir Vasquez, 31, on Wednesday night, May 25, before 8:30 p.m., is not currently being classified as drug-related, say police.

On that night, Marchand and Vasquez were socializing with a group of men near the junction of Gravel Lane and Staines Alley in front of 501 Shop in Orange Walk when a motorcycle on which two men were traveling drew near to the group and one of the men

fired shots in the group’s direction, hitting both Marchand and Vasquez.

Marchand succumbed to his injuries, while Vasquez survived.

According to Communication Director for the Belize Police Department, ASP Fitzroy Yearwood, however, the shooting isn’t currently being classified as drug-related, as they would need evidence to support that theory.

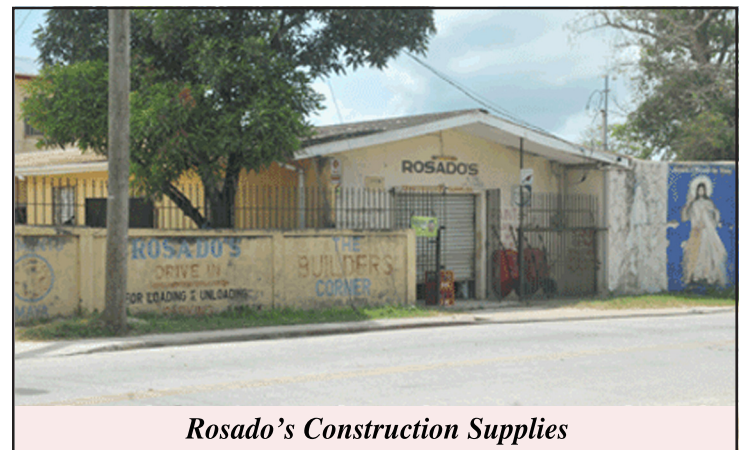
“I don’t know who classified it as a drug-related shooting. In fact, these persons weren’t even approached; they were fired upon by their assailants. For

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Trial starts for alleged killers of Oscar Rosado, Sr.

BELIZE CITY, Tues. May 24, 2022

On Monday, the murder trial of Jose Gomez, 23, and Brandon Hughes, 21, who are accused of fatally shooting 75-year-old businessman Oscar Rosado, Sr., in his



Rosado’s Construction Supplies

hardware store, commenced in the Supreme Court in Belize City. It is being alleged that in 2018 the two men entered Rosado’s place of business, Rosado’s Construction Supplies on Cemetery Road in Belize City, to carry out a robbery, but ended up firing shots that ended Rosado’s life. This trial is being heard by Justice Susan Lamb, and both the accused are being represented by attorney Leeroy Banner.

Original reports indicated that there were in fact three men who had initially entered the establishment. The three reportedly bought two pounds of nails, before leaving the establishment, then returning minutes later. Gomez and Hughes are believed to be two of those men. Rosado’s wife would later tell police that she began to suspect that the men intended to rob the store, and her fears were realized when they pulled out firearms and held her at gunpoint. Oscar Rosado, Sr., who had reportedly been outside of the store preparing a delivery for a customer when he was alerted by his wife, then engaged in a struggle with the gunman, who

demanded his pistol. During that struggle he was shot fatally once in the forehead, but according to his wife, after his death, the men searched his pockets and clothing and took his wallet, but not his gun.

Then, on that early April afternoon in 2018, the robbers fled from the store—reportedly firing up to 17 rounds—some of which were directed at police officers who were pursuing them.

Oscar Rosado, Sr., was killed in front of his son, Oscar Rosado, Jr, and other employees who were working on the compound. And the men said to be responsible for his death were on the lam before being captured and charged by police. In May 2018, a month after the incident, Brandon Hughes was picked up and charged for the murder. More than a year later, in August of 2019, Gomez, a resident of San Antonio Village in Cayo, was detained on a mischievous act charge, and shortly after being arraigned for that minor offense, he was charged jointly with Hughes for the murder of Rosado.



Blood and money – the price of life

Sun. May 29, 2022

It has been generally agreed that the law of supply and demand is what has been driving the illegal drug industry, and making it difficult, nigh impossible, for authorities to stamp out the production and distribution of these substances which command a lucrative price on the illegal drug market. If a commodity is in high demand, and the price is good, we can all “bet our bottom dollar” that someone will find a way to supply it to eager customers. So, some have argued, if we can’t stop it, and we don’t have the fire-power to crush the wealthy cartels, then maybe we should just “legalize it”; because it is not just a function of production that has caused the lucrative market prices which empower the cartels, it is the illegality, which erases normal competition and gives them a captive market. So, with open competition, the prices should come down, the cartels will have less money to bribe officials and to finance their private armies, and government could then exert some control on the distribution market, while focusing more of its resources on education and treatment of addicts.

It is a frequent lamentation of our religious leaders, and Bible lessons have repeated, that the “love of money is the root of all evil.” Why, then, persist in keeping the money prize so high, which is what “prohibition” has done, so that those of us with weaker faith continue to fall to this great temptation? If we were truly living in a “land of milk and honey,” where all of God’s children could see a way to earn a decent, honest living, there could be some justification for maintaining the status quo and “just say no”; but in the midst of high poverty, unemployment and malnutrition, are we being “our brother’s keeper” when we advocate to maintain this brutally hard line on a commodity, which by so doing keeps

its money value to such a height, that more and more of our citizens keep falling to temptation, and many to their death in quest of their “pot of gold”?

Well, so much for high pricing leading many to disaster on the illegal drug trail. But there appears to be a current situation where the lure of commodity pricing may have also infiltrated a precious human resource that had formerly been considered both free and priceless; and in this case, the high prices mentioned may actually be a legitimate avenue for unemployed or low-income earners in reasonable health to receive substantial financial compensation for their donated blood. The market forces are irresistible.

While there has been no cry of a current shortage from the Belize National Blood Transfusion Service (BNBTS) Blood Bank, a number of citizens in need of blood for impending surgeries have run into difficulties when trying to find the required units of blood. A caller to Plus TV today complained that, after securing two units of blood for a relative’s surgery, and

this surgery was conducted without needing to use the blood, she was declined access to the same two units when another relative was found in need. And another caller was concerned that, where previously, because of his status as a regular blood donor, he would be guaranteed access to blood in any emergency situation, the new policy may be requiring that he also locate the required units if he runs into need. And this writer is aware of two recent cases in Belize City where the search for donated blood was frustrating, and even an offering of \$50.00 per unit was not met with success.

Blood is life, and while the promotions for blood donation often declare that for every unit of donated blood, three lives could be touched, the current economic crisis may have impacted even this avenue of human weakness, where some potential donors are reportedly now requesting as much as \$100.00 for a unit.

There are market forces at work, and with a limited group of eligible donors, it may not be unreasonable for someone of low income to consider the current high cost of food and the good nutrition required to replenish the body’s resources lost through donation of blood. It may not be a major concern for someone in a higher economic bracket who is eating well every day; but many in our population are living on the margins and may need a greater incentive than the altruistic reward gained from assisting a stranger with the gift of life. For a close relative or friend, most eligible donors might not hesitate; but to become a regular donor to the Bank, more incentive may be needed for some people.

Many people who end up in the hospital and in need of blood fall into the lower economic bracket, and the expense of seeking blood donors for a sizable fee is an added burden. The situation may be complicated by the reduced team of regular volunteer donors since the advent of Covid-19, which may have impacted the health and thus the eligibility of some former donors. According to a BNBTS report, the last we could locate online at www.campusvirtuallsp.org, dated December 10, 2020, since Covid-19 arrived in March there was a “50% decrease in voluntary non remunerated donations.” The report indicated that “most donations were replacement donations,” and that while overall “there was a 20% reduction of blood collection... The BNBTS was able to meet the demand, as most hospitals went into emergency mode.” From the above we are left to wonder what the current situation is with our BNBTS Blood Bank in May 2022, and what can be done to alleviate the urgent need for blood by individual citizens with limited means against market forces that seem to have put a very high price on blood.

In a couple weeks’ time, Belize will join the Pan American Health Organization/World Health Organization (PAHO/WHO) in celebrating their annual World Blood Donors Day on June 14, when the BNBTS will seek to attract new members to its group of regular volunteer donors. Along with the acknowledged personal health benefits to be gained by donating blood, it would perhaps be a helpful boost to the drive’s success, if an attractive figure would be advertised as an option to potential donors, who may or may not accept the token offered on completing their donation of blood. This way, there would be no stigma on those who may need the financial assistance. After all, it is not anybody who qualifies to be a blood donor, even if you are within the age limits of 18 and 65 years. According to the private website www.belmopanonline.com/blood-donation-requirements, to qualify as a blood donor, one must also be declared free from a number of diseases, including: asthma, rheumatic fever, hypertension, goiter, heart disease, stroke, epilepsy (seizures), diabetes, brucellosis, blood disease, cancer, HIV/AIDS. Also barred from giving blood is anyone who “had Hepatitis on or after the age of eleven (11);” “had Malaria in the past two (2) years;” who is “within one year after major surgery, transfusion of blood and blood products, pregnancy, miscarriage, abortion or cesarean-section;” who is “within one week after menstruation;” or who

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BTIA holds 2022 tourism summit



BTIA holds 2022 tourism summit

by *Khaila Gentle*

BELIZE CITY, Thurs. May 26, 2022

The Belize Tourism Industry Association, in partnership with the University of Belize, held its 2022 Tourism Summit at the Best Western Belize Biltmore Plaza this Thursday under the theme “Reimagining Belizean Tourism”. The Summit, which spanned a total of about seven hours, saw various panel discussions on the future of tourism in Belize, including the hotly debated future of cruise tourism.

The keynote speaker of the summit was Mr. Vincent Vanderpool-Wallace, the former minister of tourism of the Bahamas. During his keynote address, Vanderpool-Wallace highlighted the fact that Belize’s tourism industry has been recovering from the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic much more quickly than other Caribbean nations.

Also present was Minister of Tourism and Diaspora Relations, Hon. Anthony Mahler, who sat as a special guest panelist in the discussion “Looking Ahead: What is the Goal and How do We Get There?” alongside the

former Bahamian tourism minister and Mr. Stewart Krohn, president of the Belize Tourism Industry Association (BTIA).

Other topics discussed included “Preparing for Climate Change: Is Beach Tourism an Endangered Species?” and “Belize City Cruise Ports: How Many is Too Many?” The latter topic saw David Gegg, Director of Portico Enterprises Limited and Dr. Dionne Chamberlain Miranda, Lead Consultant at Chamberlain Consulting give presentations on Port of Magical Belize—the proposed port site development that has been sparking public concern and controversy for over a year now.

The afternoon session included presentations and discussions on tourism marketing and branding, with the main panel being led by one of Belize’s PR representatives, Zimmerman Agency.

In attendance at this year’s Tourism Summit was a host of hoteliers, tour operators, tourism stakeholders, BTIA members, and many other interested parties.

Entertainers section in Trade License Bill was worded badly, says PM



Prime Minister Hon. John Briceño

by *Khaila Gentle*

BELMOPAN, Fri. May 27, 2022

On Thursday, May 26, Cabinet decided that it would be deferring any proposed trade license fees for local entertainers while consultations with stakeholders and others in the creative sector continue. Local reporters caught up with the Prime Minister at Friday’s opening of the National Agriculture and Trade Show, where they asked him about that decision. He told them that while those fees have been deferred, the Government is not rolling back the entire Trade Licensing Bill 2022.

“Remember this [bill] has been in the works from probably 2018. That’s not something that we came up with. This is the work of the municipal bodies,” said Prime Minister Briceño.

According to the Prime Minister, the section of the bill that focused on entertainers and sought to levy up to \$200 in taxes on performers both local and foreign, was worded poorly. He told reporters that, in his belief, the intention was never to tax entertainers for every single gig that they perform.

“It was more looking at international entertainers—that they have the ability to be able to tax them,” he noted.

The Prime Minister went on to detail how Minister of Tourism Hon. Anthony Mahler, in working with artists both local and international for the upcoming Belize International Music & Food Festival, felt that the tax for local entertainers, at least, should be put on hold. Instead, the PM says that Government has decided to look into what kind of support it can give to Belize’s young artists.

On Thursday, Cabinet had also stated that it would be consulting with entertainment stakeholders to develop “incentives” for the creative sector.

“The point is, there’s a lot of talent, but now we need to find a way how we can give them support so that they can develop their talent not only for Belize but even for the region and, who knows, internationally. So we felt it is time to hold off on that aspect of the bill and then to sit together with the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Tourism, and others to see how best and what kind of support we can give to our young entertainers for them to be able to improve their talent and to be able to do something with that talent,” the Prime Minister said.

Thursday’s Cabinet brief came just a few days after a number of concerned artists and entertainers attended the House Committee Meeting to voice their dissatisfaction with the Trade Licencing Bill 2022.

“All other recommendations presented at Monday’s House Committee Meeting will be duly considered before the revised bill is presented to the House of Representatives for consideration,” the brief concluded.

Owner of Jacky’s Bakery fined over 10K

Ruihuan He, 52, owner of Jacky’s Bakery and widow of Zi Hui He, who was murdered while taking a morning walk last December, was fined \$10K for employing ten persons without a work permit.

BELIZE CITY, Mon. May 30, 2022

Last Friday, the owner of Jacky’s Bakery, Chinese businesswoman Ruihuan He, 52, pleaded guilty to 10 counts of employing persons without a work permit. She was fined one thousand dollars for each count—a total of ten thousand dollars, and was ordered to pay by December 30, 2022; otherwise she will have to serve six months in prison.

She apologized in her plea to the presiding magistrate, Kara Walter, and explained the financial difficulty she has been experiencing since the death of her husband, Zi Hui He, better known as “Jacky”, last December. He was

murdered on his morning walk while on his way back to the bakery and was found not far from the establishment.

Nine of He’s ten employees were allowed to leave the country immediately without any charges being levied. They included five Salvadorans and four Guatemalans, and they reportedly cooperated with authorities. One employee, Nelson Alexander Gomez Lopez, was charged with one count of failure to present himself upon arriving in the country. Gomez Lopez, a Guatemalan national, was ordered to pay a one-thousand dollar fine plus the cost of court forthwith or spend 6 months in prison.



Blood and money – the price of life

Continued from **Page 5**

is “within twelve (12) months after (receiving) a tattoo.”

Indeed, it is an elite group of healthy Belizeans who qualify to become blood donors, and they should be pampered and treasured. And if they are currently unemployed or in a low-income situation, those individuals should not feel guilty in accepting financial assistance. If the Blood Bank is unable to make blood available to the poor in our hospitals because the regular donor pool is not large enough to suffice, then perhaps a sponsored quota of temporary donors who are given compensation should be considered. After all, if a patient can be refused treatment at a private hospital unless he/she can make a downpayment, why should a potential blood donor be viewed derisively for requesting/accepting compensation?

PC Ack lost his life on what type of motorbike near to a sleeping policeman?

by Colin Hyde

I am certain the brand of the motorbike PC Ack was on when he crashed and died was mentioned in a news story, but it isn't in any of the stories I've checked to get the hard evidence. I am pretty certain it wasn't a Japanese Honda, Yamaha, or Kawasaki. I'm not about plugging sales for Japanese or American bikes. They are very expensive, and most of us can't afford them. It's just about the truth, that they are far more durable, and that I strongly suspect they are also safer to ride.

I don't know what the ratio on the road is between the "cheaper" bikes and the expensive ones. If it is one to one, and if we judge solely by accidents, the cheaper bikes are much less safe. But the ratio isn't one to one. There are more of the cheaper bikes. Someone who has "easier" access to information could please research and tell us the names of the bikes that have been in the last one hundred accidents. The insurance companies/licensing department have the data on the brands and number of each in our country. Also, while they're at it, they should check the tires on bikes that are in accidents, and the design of the bikes, if they are for highway riding, trail riding, or hybrids.

As I said, the Japanese and American motorbikes are very expensive. They cost upwards of 50% more than the other brands. If you're thinking fuel consumption, there isn't any difference between the bikes. Ah, I might be out of line when I say it is my gut sense that the cheaper bikes don't handle all that well on the highways.

Re: another detail about the accident, Inspector Yearwood said that there was no truth to a story that PC Ack was knocked off his bike; instead, it appeared he lost control near to a speed bump. I'm making the call again to our authorities to make those crossings and speed bumps "shine like a house of ill-repute."

The main reason why it is essential to put glossy paint on these crossings and speed bumps has to do with life in Belize. A driver on our highways needs to key on what is directly in front of them because the roads are two-lane. You have to key on the road in front of you because they are known to surprise with holes, and key on the shoulders of the road because they can be very bad. You also have to be on the lookout for bicyclists and pedestrians, and for mountain cows, pigs, sheep, dogs, cats, and horses. Periodically you should elevate your eyes to look for signs, but with so much potential for trouble on the road, sometimes you forget.

You can give me some points for looking at the road. If I didn't drive that way, one incredible day I could have knocked down 3 bicyclists. One of the careless cyclists might have been drunk, one was a girl who was just learning to ride, and one guy might have been too untrained to know that a baggy long pants and an uncased

bicycle chain is a disaster about to happen.

I think Emory King wrote a book titled, *Hey Dad, This Is Belize!* There are people who are hell-bent on bringing States to Belize. They drive our highways and streets as though all the vehicles are in mint condition, as though the roads have no holes and all the curves are perfectly balanced, and as though they have no responsibility for anything or anyone on the side of the road.

Police Minister, Kareem, said at PC Ack's funeral that he was the first in his village to join the ranks of the police. He was serving our country in the police ranks just six months when he died, tragically. Man, his precious life went just like that. We can't bring him back, but we can try and protect others. Find out why that accident happened. Was the young officer speeding or tired and sleepy? Was he riding a bike that wasn't exactly highway worthy? Was that sleeping policeman not sufficiently marked?

There are signs on the highways indicating curves, road obstacles ahead, and crossings/speed bumps. They don't do a good enough job for the latter. Those crossings and sleeping policemen on the highways must also be brightly painted.

The power of criticism

I read a piece on the weekend about the wife of popular American sports commentator, Skip Bayless, who is known to get his kick pointing out the flaws of LeBron James, the NBA all-time great. The article I read about Bayless's wife didn't run into her views on LeBron's basketball skills, but it was interesting to hear her say she thinks the guy is wonderful, and that she never discusses him with her husband because their views don't jibe.

Whenever Mr. Bayless says something bad about LeBron, it's headline news in the US media, so I'm well up to date with his criticisms. My fascination with Bayless's cutting evaluation of Mr. James is how his words have impacted the on-court performance of the player. Mr. Bayless created a rivalry between LeBron and Michael Jordan, and LeBron responded by trying to be a better Mike.

The facts are that Jordan wasn't a natural shooter, but he worked hard and developed a pretty decent shot. Because of his athleticism, he was able to create space, and quite a few of his critical shots went down. The story LeBron's game told when he came into the NBA was that he idolized Magic Johnson, a player who got his joy from creating space for his teammates. Mr. Bayless made it so that LeBron focused on his long-distance shooting.

Shooting is not the natural space for heavy hands, but thanks to Bayless's barbs, heavy-handed LeBron worked his butt off, put in the energy and became more than adequate. Over the years LeBron has hit quite a few clutch shots too, and this has helped his ranking

greatly. Bah, most fans only see the glitter of the points. This Skip Bayless guy made LeBron great in their eyes.

No councilor appointment for me

I wanted to put in a plug for Norman "Lomi" Neal, the independent candidate in our village council election, but I wasn't sure if I would be helping or hurting him, so I held back. I'm a man without a gang. If you want to know why my friendship circle is small...okay, let me just say a "snowball has a better chance in hell" than me winning a popularity contest, because while I try not to be rash, I'll tell you what I think needs to be said.

Lomi was our most dynamic candidate. On the matter of serving youth, he's cut from excellent cloth. Lomi's mom was one of the leaders of Camalote softball for decades, and she was a church leader, a women's

group leader, and perennial village councilor. Lomi has the same passion for service.

I heard that some PUP said all he cares about is sports. Well, Faada once switched evening mass to morning in the village, so we could have our games. Lomi lost. No complaints — Camalote chose my wife's cousin, Derrick Parham Banner, to lead again. And I lost the opportunity to serve as an appointed councilor, as I did when Lomi's mom was alive, and on the council.

Ehm, not all of us fu win

The PUP did a little tweak to their campaign slogan, after dehn win. It's now everybody fu win, who neva win big over the 13 years between '08 and 2020. Hmm, if that's really so, then all 3rd parties, non-aligned, and poor reds should be in for a share of the kingdom too. I hope so.

CARICOM backs down—headed to Summit of Americas

Prime Minister Briceño, CARICOM Chairman, announced that some CARICOM members, including Belize, will be attending the upcoming Summit of the Americas in Los Angeles following a split decision within the regional body.

BELIZE CITY, Thurs.
May 26, 2022

During a press conference yesterday, Prime Minister Hon. John Briceño announced that after much discussion, CARICOM has

decided to allow member states who desire to attend the upcoming 9th Summit of the Americas to do so. This is following the regional body's initial decision to boycott the hemisphere-wide summit in response to the United States of America's refusal to invite Cuba, Venezuela, and Nicaragua, its ideological adversaries in the region, to the high-level meeting. Other Latin American countries threatened to be no-shows at the conference, and while all indications from PM Briceño pointed to Belize standing firm on its principal position to not attend, he announced that ours is one of the CARICOM member states who have indicated that they will be in Los Angeles, where the event is being held, in early June.

The PM was very guarded in his remarks on the matter, alluding to some "low-level" talks between the United States and Cuba as a win for the island nation. It was likely a reference to an announcement this week by the Biden administration of its decision to remove some additional sanctions against Cuba that had been imposed during the Trump presidency—thus allowing increased remittances and travel to the country, although the original blockade imposed on the country remains in full



IX SUMMIT OF THE
AMERICAS
LOS ANGELES • 2022

effect. "At least there is a win", PM Briceño said, repeating his verbal denunciation of the illegal blockade. While PM Briceño said yesterday that only seven CARICOM member states agreed to attend the Summit of the Americas, reports are that 13 of the 14 member states are California-bound, according to a senior Caribbean national official and a Washington-based Caribbean adviser who has been involved in talks on the issue.

We know that Briceño has said that the US has been on an all-out offensive to ensure that the member states in the Caribbean Community attend the 9th Summit following their principled stance first agreed on in San Pedro, Belize, earlier this year at the CARICOM Heads of Governments meeting.

Sources say the only Caribbean country holding out is Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. A May 11th letter from Prime Minister Ralph Gonsalves called on CARICOM leaders to boycott the meeting.

Last week, the Biden administration said a representative from Cuba "could" receive an invitation. It is unlikely, however, that Venezuela, and Nicaragua will be recipients of such an invitation at this late stage.



Sangre y dinero: el precio de la vida

Domingo 29 de mayo de 2022

Se ha aceptado en general que la ley de la oferta y la demanda es lo que ha estado impulsando la industria de las drogas ilegales y ha hecho difícil, casi imposible, que las autoridades eliminen la producción y distribución de estas sustancias que tienen un precio lucrativo en el mercado ilegal de drogas. Si un producto tiene una gran demanda y el precio es bueno, todos podemos "apostar nuestro último dólar" a que alguien encontrará la manera de suministrarlo a los clientes ansiosos. Entonces, algunos han argumentado, si no podemos detenerlo y no tenemos el poder de fuego para aplastar a los cárteles ricos, entonces tal vez deberíamos simplemente "legalizarlo"; porque no es sólo una función de producción la que ha provocado los lucrativos precios de mercado que potencian a los cárteles, es la ilegalidad, que borra la competencia normal y les da un mercado cautivo. Entonces, con la competencia abierta, los precios deberían bajar, los cárteles tendrán menos dinero para sobornar a los funcionarios y financiar sus ejércitos privados, y el gobierno podría entonces ejercer algún control sobre el mercado de distribución, mientras concentra más recursos en la educación y el tratamiento para adictos.

Es un lamento frecuente de nuestros líderes religiosos, y las lecciones bíblicas lo han repetido, que "el amor al dinero es la raíz de todos los males". ¿Por qué, entonces, persistir en mantener tan alto el premio del dinero, que es lo que ha hecho la "prohibición", para que los que tenemos la fe más débil sigamos cayendo en esta gran tentación? Si realmente estuviéramos viviendo en una "tierra de leche y miel", donde todos los hijos de Dios pudieran encontrar una manera de ganarse la vida decente y honestamente, podría haber alguna justificación para mantener el statu quo y "simplemente decir no"; pero en medio de la alta pobreza, el desempleo y la desnutrición, ¿estamos siendo "el guardián de nuestro hermano" cuando abogamos por mantener esta línea brutalmente dura sobre una mercancía, que al hacerlo mantiene su valor monetario a tal altura que cada vez más de nuestros ciudadanos siguen cayendo en la tentación, y muchos hasta la muerte en busca de su "olla de oro"?

Bueno, tanto por los altos precios llevando a muchos al desastre en el camino de las drogas ilegales. Pero parece haber una situación actual en la que el atractivo de la fijación de precios de las materias primas también puede haberse infiltrado en un valioso recurso humano que antes se consideraba gratuito e invaluable; y en este caso, los altos precios mencionados en realidad pueden ser una vía legítima para que las personas desempleadas o de bajos ingresos con una salud razonable reciban una sustancial compensación financiera por su sangre donada. Las fuerzas del mercado son irresistibles.

Si bien no ha habido ningún grito de escasez actual del Servicio Nacional de Transfusión de Sangre de Belize (BNBTS por sus siglas en inglés) del Banco de Sangre, varios ciudadanos que necesitan sangre para cirugías inminentes han tenido dificultades al tratar de encontrar las unidades de sangre requeridas. Una persona que llamó a Plus TV hoy se quejó de que, después de asegurar dos unidades de sangre para la cirugía de un pariente, y esta cirugía se realizó sin necesidad de usar la sangre, se le negó el acceso a las mismas dos unidades cuando se encontró que otro familiar las necesitaba. Y a otra persona que llamó le preocupaba que, donde anteriormente, debido a su condición de donante de sangre regular, se le garantizaría el acceso a la sangre en cualquier situación de emergencia, la nueva política puede requerir que también ubique las unidades requeridas en el caso de que las necesite. Y este escritor está al tanto de dos casos recientes en la Ciudad de Belize donde la búsqueda de sangre donada fue frustrante, e incluso una ofrenda de \$50.00 por unidad no tuvo éxito.

La sangre es vida, y aunque las promociones para la donación de sangre a menudo declaran que por cada unidad de sangre donada, se podrían tocar tres vidas, la crisis económica actual puede haber impactado incluso esta vía de debilidad humana, donde algunos donantes potenciales ahora solicitan como hasta \$100.00 por unidad.

Hay fuerzas de mercado que están en juego, y con un grupo limitado de donantes elegibles, puede ser razonable que alguien

de bajos ingresos considere el alto costo actual de los alimentos y la buena nutrición necesarios para reponer los recursos del cuerpo perdidos a través de la donación de sangre. Puede que no sea una gran preocupación para alguien en un nivel económico más alto que come bien todos los días; pero muchos en nuestra población viven en los márgenes y pueden necesitar un incentivo mayor que la recompensa altruista que se obtiene al ayudar a un extraño con el regalo de la vida. Para un pariente cercano o un amigo, la mayoría de los donantes elegibles podrían no dudar; pero para convertirse en un donante regular del Banco, algunas personas pueden necesitar más incentivos.

Muchas personas que terminan en el hospital y necesitan sangre se encuentran en el nivel económico más bajo, y el gasto de buscar donantes de sangre por una tarifa considerable es una carga adicional. La situación puede complicarse por el reducido equipo de donantes voluntarios habituales desde la llegada de COVID-19, lo que puede haber afectado la salud y, por tanto, la elegibilidad de algunos donantes previos. Según un informe del BNBTS, el último que pudimos ubicar en línea en www.campusvirtualesp.org, con fecha 10 de diciembre de 2020, desde que llegó el Covid-19 en marzo hubo una "disminución del 50% en las donaciones voluntarias no remuneradas". El informe indicó que "la mayoría de las donaciones fueron donaciones de reemplazo" y que, si bien en general "hubo una reducción del 20 % en la recolección de sangre... El BNBTS pudo satisfacer la demanda, ya que la mayoría de los hospitales entraron en modo de emergencia". De lo anterior, nos queda preguntarnos cuál es la situación actual con nuestro banco de sangre BNBTS en mayo de 2022, y qué se puede hacer para aliviar la urgente necesidad de sangre de los ciudadanos individuales con medios limitados contra las fuerzas del mercado que parecen haber puesto un gran alto precio sobre la sangre.

Dentro de un par de semanas, Belize se unirá a la Organización Panamericana de la Salud/Organización Mundial de la Salud (OPS/OMS) para celebrar su anual Día Mundial del Donante de Sangre el 14 de junio, cuando el BNBTS buscará atraer nuevos miembros a su grupo de habituales donantes voluntarios. Junto con los reconocidos beneficios para la salud personal que se obtienen al donar sangre, tal vez sería un estímulo útil para el éxito de la campaña, si se anunciara una figura atractiva como una opción para los posibles donantes, quienes pueden aceptar o no el regalo de agradecimiento ofrecido al completar su donación de sangre. De esta manera, no habría estigma sobre aquellos que puedan necesitar la asistencia financiera. Después de todo, no es cualquiera quien califica para ser donante de sangre, incluso si está dentro de los límites de edad de 18 y 65 años. Según el sitio web privado www.belmopanonline.com/blood-donation-requirements, para calificar como donante de sangre, también debe ser declarado libre de una serie de enfermedades, que incluyen: asma, fiebre reumática, hipertensión, bocio, enfermedades del corazón, ataque cerebral, epilepsia (convulsiones), diabetes, brucelosis, enfermedades de la sangre, cáncer, VIH/SIDA. También se le prohíbe donar sangre a cualquiera que "tuviera hepatitis a los once (11) años de edad o después"; "tuvo Malaria en los últimos dos (2) años;" que tiene "menos de un año después de una cirugía mayor, transfusión de sangre y hemoderivados, embarazo, aborto espontáneo, aborto o cesárea"; que tiene "menos de una semana después de la menstruación"; o que tiene "menos de doce (12) meses después de (recibir) un tatuaje".

De hecho, es un grupo élite de beliceños saludables que califican para convertirse en donantes de sangre, y deben ser mimados y atesorados. Y si actualmente están desempleados o en una situación de bajos ingresos, esas personas no deben sentirse avergonzados al aceptar asistencia financiera. Si el Banco de Sangre no puede hacer que la sangre esté disponible para los pobres en nuestros hospitales porque el grupo de donantes regulares no es lo suficientemente grande como para ser suficiente, entonces tal vez debería considerarse una cuota patrocinada de donantes temporales que reciben una compensación. Después de todo, si a un paciente se le puede negar el tratamiento en un hospital privado a menos que pueda hacer un pago inicial, ¿por qué un posible donante de sangre debe ser visto con desdén por solicitar/aceptar una compensación?



May 18 2022

Press Release

The Public Sector Workers Trust (PSWT) was created via an agreement between the Public Service Union, Belize National Teachers' Union and the Government of Belize to create projects for those individuals whose increments were frozen from 1995 to 1997. The Trust has launched its first project which is the Preventative Healthcare Project, which aims to provide a complete range of modern diagnostic tests to all its beneficiaries, inclusive of laboratory tests and a consultation with a physician to discuss the test results. For beneficiaries who opt not to access these services, an alternative option is a health care credit which provides a specific sum to their preferred medical provider to defray costs of services and medication.

The PSWT has now signed agreements with the Belize Healthcare Partners, Belize Medical Associates and Northern Medical Specialty Plaza.

All beneficiaries of the PSWT who would like to access the project to contact the PSWT at 223-7799/223-2877/ 673-7798 to set an appointment. A list of beneficiaries has been published on the PSWT website at <https://pswt.org.bz/new-publications/#>. Beneficiaries are asked to kindly review the list to determine if their names are there to access the service. In the event that a beneficiary's name is not on the list certified documents must be submitted to the office of the PSWT for verification before these services can be accessed.

Finally, the health project will be extended to the western and southern part of the country on a phased basis.

Ends

FOUR STEPS TO ACCESS PSWT HEALTH CARE

1. Check PSWT website at <https://pswt.org.bz/new-publications/#>. to ascertain if name if on the list
2. If name is on list, call PSWT Offices at 223-7799/223-2877/ 673-7798 to schedule appointment to obtain the required forms
3. After obtaining forms, visit the medical provider of your choice
4. If name is NOT of the list, certified documents are to be provided to the Trust Office including but not limited to an employment declaration provided by the Belize Social Security Board, years of service document signed by management/ ministry or any other documentation that provides proof you were working with GOB during the period 1995-1997.

A: NGO Crescent, Belize City
T: 223-7798 • F: 223-0977
E: publicsectorworkerstrust@gmail.com

Request for Expression of Interest



HYDRAULIC ENGINEER CONSULTANT

Institution: Ministry of Economic Development
Country: Belize
Project: Resilient Rural Belize Programme
Loan No.: 2000002301
Deadline for Submission of Proposals: June 10, 2022 at 3:00PM.

Project Background:

The Government of Belize (GOB), with financing from the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the Green Climate Fund, has embarked on a six-year Programme, Resilient Rural Belize (RRB), which aims to minimize the impacts of climatic and economic events on smallholder farmers while supporting sustainable market access for their produce. The Programme will help farmers employ climate resilient agricultural practices and technologies; integrate profitable smallholder participation into the development of select vegetable, fruit, and honey value chains; and support smallholder production capacity through investments in public and private climate resilient infrastructure and in the strengthening of small holder farmer Producers Organizations and relevant GOB Departments.

Scope of Service:

Under the direct supervision of the Programme Manager, the Hydraulic Engineer Consultant will be responsible for the Integrated Water Resource Management and allwater related investments under the Climate Resilient Rural Infrastructure (CRRIA) component and those irrigation and drainage investments as identified in the Producer Organization business plan under Component 1. The Hydraulic Engineer Consultant is expected to abide by the Programme Implementation Manual (PIM), and regulations and procedures for supervision of design and civil works as per the applicable legislation of Belize. The Consultancy will span two years.

Duties and Responsibilities:

Some duties and responsibilities of the Hydraulic Engineer Consultant is as follows:

- Lead the implementation of an Integrated Water Resource Management under the Climate Resilient Rural Infrastructure (CRRIA) component.
- Investigate existing irrigation systems and water management systems in the different project areas and develop irrigation maps describing locations or routes of irrigation facilities such as water resources, irrigated areas, canals, and pumping stations. Assess irrigation efficiency of subprojects and incorporate measures to improve efficiency in design with consultants.
- In cooperation with the PMU's relevant staff, participate in information workshops and sensitize rural communities about the component, its objectives, eligibility criteria, and application and selection procedure.
- Assess whether the proposed irrigation, drainage, or water catchment works are required or whether other, more appropriate structures may be more suitable for Producer Organizations.
- Prepare engineering designs for small scale irrigation and drainage works identified under the programme for PO farms.
- Develop Terms of Reference (TOR) for the development of engineering designs for specific irrigation and drainage works proposals selected for funding and implementation under the different Matching Grant Fund Agreements.

(The complete list of duties and responsibilities are outlined in the Terms of Reference)

Academic Qualification and General Experience:

The Hydraulic Engineer Consultant must possess.

- A minimum of a BSc. in Hydraulic Engineering, Irrigation Engineering or related field.

Specific Experience:

The Hydraulic Engineer Consultant must possess the following experience:

- Demonstrate experience in at least two (2) projects similar in nature to that being implemented (irrigation, drainage, water catchment etc.). *Experience with projects funded by an international funding agency would be an asset.*
- A minimum of one (1) year experience in engineering design, design review, and its related aspects for small-scale irrigation and drainage systems. *Specific experience in irrigation works supervision would be an asset.*
- At least two years' experience in developing irrigation and drainage.

Reporting:

The Hydraulic Engineer Consultant will work closely with the Civil Engineer and other technical members of the Resilient Rural Belize Programme Management Unit but will report directly to the Programme Manager.

Individual Consultants interested in receiving the **Request for Expression of Interest (REOI)** document for this consultancy should register their interest by sending an e-mail (with subject: **Request for REOI-Hydraulic Engineer Consultant**) to the Procurement Officer at nvernon.RRB@med.gov.bz giving full contact details of the Consultant. This will ensure that the Consultants receive updates regarding this consultancy.

The REOI must be delivered to the following address on or before **June 10, 2022, at 3:00PM** (Local time). Consultants also have the option of submitting their REOI electronically using the File Request Link: <https://bit.ly/3sqgbdQ>

Attn: Nadia Vernon
 Procurement Officer
 Resilient Rural Belize Programme
 Ministry of Economic Development
 National Agriculture Showgrounds
 Hummingbird Highway
 Belmopan, Belize

Belizean-American Kara Young up for a Tony

Born to Belizean parents in Harlem, the first-generation American actress has been nominated for a Tony Award, which recognizes excellence on the Broadway stage.



The cast of Clyde's on Broadway opening night (l-r): Edmund Donovan, Ron Cephas Jones, Uzo Aduba, Kara Young, Reza Salazar (Source: Playbill)

by Khaila Gentle

BELIZE CITY, Mon. May 30, 2022

American actress Kara Young, born to two Belizean parents, has been nominated for a Tony Award in the category of Best Featured Actress in a Play for her role in the Broadway show *Clyde's*. Young acted alongside Emmy Award winners Uzo Aduba from Netflix's *Orange is the New Black*, Ron Cephas Jones from shows *This is Us* and *Luke Cage* as well as actors Edmund Donovan and Reza Salazar.

Clyde's, written by two-time Pulitzer Prize-winner Lynn Nottage, is about a truck stop sandwich shop that offers its formerly incarcerated kitchen staff a shot at redemption.

"Even as the shop's callous owner tries to keep them under her thumb, the staff members are given purpose and permission to dream by their shared quest to create the perfect sandwich," states a synopsis of the play.

Prior to her Broadway debut, Kara Young played a wide-range of roles, including "an aspiring poet in Stephen Adly Guirgis's *Halfway Bitches Go Straight to Heaven*," a white gay couple's troubled daughter in Jeff Augustin's "The New Englanders," or a lesbian teen crushing on a certain screen star in C.A. Johnson's "All the Natalie Portmans", according to the *New York Times*' Elisabeth Vincentelli.

In *Clyde's*, Young plays the role of Letitia, a young mother who had been imprisoned for stealing medication for her sick daughter.

Kara appeared on *Color Blind* Multimedia's *Dialogue with the Diaspora* back in 2020, where she spoke about her heritage and her experiences navigating America as a black, Caribbean woman.

"There's so much pride being a Caribbean woman, being a Belizean woman, you know; my grandfather is one of the pioneers, I believe, in technology in Belize, David Jenkins, and the fact that he made television available to poor people at one point in Belize is such a huge part of my existence, because I am now in this industry, and I feel like that's sort of an intrinsic thing I carry with me," she said.

Jenkins, who was also a photographer for AMANDALA, was an electrical engineer who for a one-time fee unscrambled television signals for poor

Belizeans when access was limited to "pay per view" schemes. It has been said that Jenkins opened access to television, which had once only been available to the wealthy.

Born and raised in New York City, Kara Young briefly attended Gettysburg College in Pennsylvania, after which she went to the City College in New York and then the New York Conservatory for Dramatic Arts.

Shortly after her Broadway debut, Young began work on Amazon Prime Video's *I'm a Virgo*, created by Boots Riley, who also wrote and directed the 2018 satirical comedy movie *Sorry to Bother You*.

In her 2020 interview with *Color Blind*, Young had this to say to Belizeans both creative and otherwise:

"Express, express, express—be creative, even if you're not a creative. Attempt to be creative, because it's something that comes from you. It's not in a book. It's from you, and it's important, and it's intrinsic, and it's ancestral," she stated.

UDP maintains "kill the bill" stance

BELIZE CITY, Mon. May 30, 2022

Following Cabinet's announcement that it would be deferring fees for local entertainers while consultations continue, the United Democratic Party is demanding that the Government of Belize throw out the entire Trade Licensing Reform Bill. In a press release issued on Monday, the opposition party stated that Cabinet's decision only addresses one of many issues surrounding the bill.

"Entertainers make up just a fraction of the thousands of small business owners threatened with a sentence of death by taxes from this overreaching bill," said the release.

According to the UDP, the Government of Belize is more concerned with "saving face" than they are about protecting the small businesses, like food stalls, fruit

Is Biden precipitating the Taiwan conflict?



by Clinton Canul Luna

Taiwan is an island in the western Pacific Ocean that lies roughly 100 miles off the coast of southeastern China with Taipei in the north, which is the seat of the government of the Republic of China (ROC, Nationalist China). Prior to the 1600s, Taiwan was self-governing, although there was no central ruling authority. It was a colony of the Netherlands for about 40 years in the early to mid-17th century and was subsequently independent again for about two decades. China had recognized the geostrategic importance of such an island and started a rapid modernization of Taiwan which introduced the first rail transports in 1891 during its late Qing era. However, in 1895, during the first Sino-Japanese War, the Qing dynasty went into conflict with Japan, which represented a divisive defeat for the Qing rulers because, in addition to losing prestige, they were forced to cede the island of Taiwan, thus beginning the rule of the empire of Japan. Under the rule of the Nationalist Party, or Kuomintang (KMT), led by Chiang Kai-shek, the Republic of China had to contend in the early 1930s and then during World War II with the advances of the Empire of Japan, as well as also with the growing power of the Chinese communists led by Mao Zedong.

In 1945, following the Japanese defeat, the Republic of China regained the island of Taiwan, which China had lost in a previous war with the Japanese. But four years later, in 1949, the Kuomintang was defeated in a bloody civil war on the mainland by the Communist Party army. The US government, an ally of the Kuomintang during World War II, did not initially recognize the legitimacy of the Communist government in mainland China. On the contrary, it continued to give political support to Taipei. The member countries of the UN, however, recognized in 1971 the legitimacy of the People's Republic of China, including its

permanent seat on the Security Council, which until then had been occupied by Taipei. Nonetheless, Taiwan will continue to have the support of the United States of America as far as the western empire is willing to go. The aforementioned is just a brief history of Taiwan. Permit me, our dear readers of this column, to present to you the following which was published by WION, which is an Indian multinational English language news channel headquartered in New Delhi. It is owned by the Essel Group and is part of the Zee Media network of channels. According to Indian news magazine *The Week*, the channel covers global news and current affairs from an Indian perspective. The name WION is an abbreviation for, 'World is One News'. This following analysis can be found on YouTube. It was published on May 25, 2022 and is entitled, "Gravitas: Is Biden precipitating the Taiwan conflict?". It is as follows:

"Now, here's a question. Is the Quad or a member of the Quad precipitating this tension? I'll tell you why I asked this. First, let me play out a little conversation for you. It happened here in Tokyo earlier this week:

Reporter: *You didn't want to get involved in the Ukraine conflict militarily for obvious reasons. Are you willing to get involved militarily to defend Taiwan if it comes to that?*

President Joe Biden: *Yes.*

Reporter: *You are?*

President Joe Biden: *That's the commitment we made.*

This is U.S. president Joe Biden telling the world that his country is committed to defending Taiwan militarily. Meaning, if China invades, the U.S. will defend Taipei. "There is a commitment", he says. There is no such commitment. America's ties with Taiwan are governed by something called the Taiwan Relations Act. It was adopted in 1979 and this act does not require Washington to send military to

Taipei. So, what does it do? It asks America to ensure that Taiwan has the resources to defend itself, but Biden here is giving Taiwan clear security guarantees. What does military involvement mean? Is it sending troops or just arms? President Biden did not clarify, just like he did with Ukraine. Keep the pot boiling with professions of commitment and fuel the fire. The question is why? Why is Biden pulling another Ukraine? Why is he adding to the tension in the Taiwan Strait? China views Taiwan as its renegade province just like Russia views Ukraine as an extension of itself. Interestingly enough, the U.S. acknowledges this, in the Chinese case at least. On paper, the U.S. backs the one China policy, and yet their president talks about military intervention, their White House says there's no change in policy. Is this confusion by design or default?

Either way, China is not amused. "We urge the U.S. to avoid causing grave damage to bilateral relations. China will take firm actions to safeguard its sovereignty and security interests." This is how Beijing reacted. China is accusing the U.S. president of playing with fire. Experts are accusing Biden of straying from America's 'strategic ambiguity'. That's what they call their Taiwan policy, by the way. 'Strategic ambiguity'. Keeping their policy deliberately vague and keeping China guessing, along with everyone else. Will America intervene or will it not? The White House never really spelt it out, and now their president is saying an emphatic yes.

Reporter - *Are you willing to get involved militarily to defend Taiwan if it comes to that?*

President Joe Biden - *Yes.*

In doing what he's doing, who is Biden helping? Taiwan or China? Taiwan, for one, has been quick to thank him. What about China? Experts fear that China could use these statements as a pretext to raise

tensions. They've been making military maneuvers, practicing the invasion of Taiwan and China, may be just waiting for an excuse to strike. Biden may have handed them that on a platter, but what's in it for him? Americans are tired of far away wars. Taiwan, of course, does not want a war. Even Biden's own administration is not backing him. This is the third time he has committed to interfering in Taiwan and the third time the White House has backtracked. Headlines like these have become frequent, so we're back to where we started. Whose interests is Joe Biden serving by making these statements on Taiwan? Perhaps his own, both personal and political. Biden had voted in favor of the Taiwan Relations Act. Senator Biden was in favor of American support to Taiwan and President Biden needs a foreign policy win desperately. America's hasty exit from Afghanistan has been criticized globally. The Biden administration is also being called out for provoking Russia. Most of the countries outside the west have chosen not to side with America, on Ukraine or for that matter be party to American sanctions. That war in Europe is becoming a stalemate, a frozen conflict. The Iran deal has not happened, the trade war with China has not ended. Back in America, mid-terms are around the corner. Biden's party is not poised to win. So what does he do? Look for a foreign policy win or a distraction at the very least. WION is now available in your country. Download the app now and get all the news on the move.

fincasolan@gmail.com

May 28, 2022

Finca Solana

Corozal Town

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

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

Position Name: Gardener
Vacancy number: Belmopan-2022-13
Closing date: June 8, 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.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

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

Position Name: Custodial Supervisor
Vacancy number: Belmopan-2022-12
Closing date: June 8, 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.



SSBA Elections set for Tuesday, June 7

SAN IGNACIO/SANTA ELENA, Cayo District, Fri. May 27, 2022

The San Ignacio & Santa Elena Basketball Association (SSBA) will be having their elections on Tuesday, June 7. Elections will be held at the Victor Galvez Resilience Center in San Ignacio Town at 7:00 p.m.

The Executive Committee consists of the following roles: President, 2 Vice Presidents, Secretary General, Treasurer/Finance Office and three Executive Committee Members. The SSBA is a non-profit organization and all Executive roles are therefore served on a fully voluntary basis.

Full slates of candidates to fill all positions may be submitted but nominations for individual roles will be accepted. Nominations can be sent via email to ssbabasketball@gmail.com or nominations can be made at the meeting. The general public is invited to witness the elections but only local team representatives of the Association may cast votes. All retiring officers of the Executive Committee shall be eligible for re-election. Any person in the San Ignacio and Santa Elena towns can be nominated for any of the roles listed above.

-press release -

FFB calls Belize National U17 Men's Team to camp

BELMOPAN, Mon. May 30, 2022

The Belize National U17 Men's Team is continuing its training preparations for the CONCACAF U17 Men's Qualifiers to be played from 23rd to the 31st August, 2022.

The Technical Staff have selected twenty five (25) players to continue training preparations.

The Football Federation of Belize (FFB) wishes the National U17 Men's Team all the best as they report to camp on Friday, June 3, at 3:00 p.m.

Players called to camp and their respective teams and regions (Stann Creek – scr; Belize – bze; San Pedro – snp; Mid-South – mds; Toledo – tol; Belmopan – bmp; Corozal – czl; Orange Walk – owk; Cayo – cyo; Benque – ben) are as follows: **goalkeepers** – Carlos Palacio (Wagiya SC, scr), Edward Humes (Kelly Street FC, bze), Gerrardo Reyes (Sea Warriors FC, snp) and Orlando Jackson (Mid-South lite, mds); **defenders** – Clay Flores (New Site FC,

scr), Sharlon Martinez (Chuck and Ducks FC, tol), Javier Tobar (Roaring Creek United, bmp), Alexis Mendez (Concepcion Consentidos FC, czl), Kenrick Gordon (Ladyville Rising Stars, bze), Jahlique Lopez (Roaring Creek United, bmp), Brandon Rogers (HUWSC, bze) and Dylon Gongora (Roaring Creek United, bmp); **midfielders** – Diego Chan (Caribbean Rum, owk), Daniel Cadle (501 Spartans, mds), Stiven Rivera (Ladyville Rising Stars, bze), Steven Almendarez (San Pedro FC, snp), Kenyon Smith (Stars Academy, bze), Naitan Pastrana (Napoles FC, bmp) and Zylin Flowers (Roaring Creek United, cyo); and **attackers** – Jaheim Menz (Georgetown Ibayani, mds), Arthur Flores (Medina's FC, bmp), Dixon Gamboa (Warriors FC, bmp), Santiago Makin (501 Spartans, mds), Keffer Perteau (Stars Academy, bze) and Jayden Lennan (Z Boys FC, ben).

-press release -

Week 9 scores from NSC Recreation & Wellness Basketball Tournament 2022

BELIZE CITY, Mon. May 30, 2022

Here are the scores from Friday night's Week 9 games in the National Sports Council (NSC) 2022 Recreation & Wellness Basketball Tournament being played at the Marion Jones Sports Complex in Belize City. Twelve (12) teams are participating in the competition, 6 in Group A and 6 in Group B, with 3 games being played each Friday in alternate groups. Games last Friday, May 27, were in Group A.

In the opener, Belize City Council "Dragons" defeated Customs & Excise Department, 70-65. Top scorer for the

"Dragons" was Devin Daly with 21 pts; while Glency Lopez led all scorers with 24 pts for Customs & Excise in a losing effort.

Game 2 was a blow-out, as Belize Defence Force "Snipers" crushed Belize Healthcare "Shooting Stars", 71-45. Michael Myvett was high man for the "Snipers" with 13 pts, while "Shooting Stars" was led by Aaron Johnson with 16 pts.

And in the nightcap, Digi clipped Belize Tax Services "Kolletaz" in a

Please turn to **Page 13**

Verdes Rebels headed for relegation at Week 8 of NAWL Opening Season

BELIZE CITY, Mon. May 30, 2022

The double round-robin Qualifying phase of the National Amateur Women's League (NAWL) 2022 Opening Season is nearing completion, and with Week 8 games this past weekend, Group A's Verdes Rebels remain winless and in grave danger of relegation in the Closing Season. Meanwhile, Group B's Bay City FC remains perfect, with 0 goals conceded to date, but must also prevail in the playoffs to secure the Group B championship and advancement up to Group A in the Closing Season. (See Standings below.)

With 1 game rained out, only 3 of the 4 scheduled Week 8 matches were played over the weekend.

On Saturday afternoon, May 28, at the M.A. Stadium in Independence, (A) host team Rumberas FC grabbed the 3-1 victory over Verdes Rebels. Quinah Caliz (18' & 71') and Ashley Rodriguez (55') shook the net for Rumberas; while Nyersha Obando (61') tallied for Verdes Rebels.

Meanwhile, at the Ricalde Stadium in Corozal, (B) Bay City FC maintained their winning ways with a 3-0 shutout of visiting Cayo Dreamers. Bay City goals were by Darina Tzul (15' & 81') and Kaite Jones (30').

Then on Sunday afternoon, May 29, at the Norman Broaster Stadium, (B) it was the visiting Wagiya United SC coming away with a big 7-1 win over Santa Elena Strikers. Sharing the scoring for Wagiya were Jaelin Cacho (11'), Jessie McLaughlin (14' & 78'), Tenechia Zuniga (30', 43' & 84') and Rainelie Moss (83'); while the lone goal for Santa Elena was by Sharine Baki (89').

The other Sunday afternoon game, at the M.A. Stadium in Independence between (A) Sagitun Girlz FC and San Pedro Pirates was postponed due to inclement weather making the field unplayable.

Nat'l Amateur Women's League 2022 Opening Season								
Standings at Week 8, Sunday, May 29, 2022								
GROUP A	GP	W	D	L	GF	GA	Diff	Pts
Jewel Fury FC	6	4	1	1	13	3	10	13
Rumberas FC	6	3	2	1	9	3	6	11
Sagitun Girlz	6	3	1	2	11	11	0	10
San Pedro Pirates	6	2	1	3	6	11	-5	7
Verdes Rebels	6	0	1	5	6	17	-11	1
GROUP B	GP	W	D	L	GF	GA	Diff	Pts
Bay City FC	7	7	0	0	56	0	56	21
Cayo Dreamers	6	4	0	2	21	9	12	12
Wagiya United SC	6	3	0	3	21	13	8	9
Santa Elena Strikers	6	1	0	5	3	47	-34	3
Corozal United Warriors	5	0	0	5	1	33	-32	0

Upcoming Week 9 schedule:

Saturday, June 4

3:00 p.m. – (A) San Pedro Pirates vs Rumberas FC – Ambergris Stadium

3:00 p.m. – (A) Jewel Fury vs Verdes Rebels – Isidoro Beaton Stadium

3:00 p.m. – (B) Wagiya United SC vs Corozal United Warriors – Carl Ramos Stadium

3:00 p.m. – (B) Cayo Dreamers vs Santa Elena Strikers – Norman Broaster Stadium



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REGIONAL & INTERNATIONAL

Far-right Israeli attacks highlight 'Jerusalem Day' reality

Ultra-nationalist Israelis violently confronted Palestinians both during and after the 'flag march' on Sunday.



Far-right Israelis harassed and attacked Palestinians in Jerusalem's Old City throughout the 'flag march' [Ammar Awad/Reuters]

by Zena Al Tahhan

Published On 30 May 2022 23:05 May 2022 (ALJAZEERA)

"Jerusalem Day" and its accompanying 'flag march' came and went in occupied East Jerusalem's Old City, but, despite Israeli authorities breathing a sigh of relief that it did not trigger wider confrontations between Israel and the Palestinians, particularly Hamas in Gaza, the reality was a day of violence in which ultra-nationalist Jewish Israelis attacked countless Palestinians, many times under the eyes of Israeli police.

At least 81 Palestinians were wounded on Sunday by Israeli forces and far-right Jews in Jerusalem during and after the flag march, which marked the day Israel illegally occupied and annexed the city's eastern half in 1967. Most Jewish Israelis view it as the day Jerusalem was "unified".

The Palestinian Red Crescent told Al Jazeera that injuries during the day-long rally had been caused by rubber-coated bullets, beatings, pepper spray, and one case of live ammunition. At least 28 Palestinians were transferred to hospital for treatment.

Israeli police said that five of its officers were lightly injured.

At least 70,000 Israelis participated in the annual march, which has been

described as a "racist" and "fascist" rally in and around the Old City of Jerusalem, and specifically passed through the Muslim Quarter, where shops were largely shuttered in preparation.

The march included the waving of Israeli flags and the singing of nationalistic songs, as well as the chanting of slogans such as "death to Arabs" and "may your villages burn down," including in the Old City's Muslim Quarter.

During the march, far-right Jews were witnessed assaulting Palestinian residents, as well as medics, and local and international journalists.

In one incident filmed and shared widely on social media, a Jewish man attacked and pepper-sprayed an elderly Palestinian woman in the face, causing outrage.

As she was carried out for treatment through the Old City's Damascus Gate, another demonstrator used pepper spray against a young Palestinian, and then another pulled out a pistol and aimed it at journalists at the scene.

Full article can be found at: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/5/30/far-right-israeli-attacks-highlights-jerusalem-day-reality>

First published by Aljazeera

'TikTok King', 77, challenges ex-rebel for Colombia's top job



Gustavo Petro (left) running against 77-year-old Rodolfo Hernández

by Vanessa Buschschlüter

COLOMBIA. Mon, May 30, 2022 (BBC News)

Colombians have voted for change.

Voters in Colombia, who have never before elected a left-wing leader, overwhelmingly cast their ballots for ex-rebel Gustavo Petro.

But while Mr Petro secured a 12-percentage-point lead over his nearest rival, he did not gain the 50% needed to win outright.

He is joined in the second round by 77-year-old businessman Rodolfo Hernández, whose savvy campaign on social media proved an unlikely success with voters.

Both candidates have promised to change Colombia and shake up its politics, which for decades has been dominated by a small and powerful elite in the capital, Bogotá.

But with the candidates' backgrounds and policy proposals poles apart, voters will have to decide what kind of change they want before they cast their ballots in the run-off election on 19 June.

Rodolfo Hernández: The surprise contender

When the campaign for the presidency started, millionaire construction magnate Rodolfo Hernández was little known outside of Bucaramanga, the city where he served

as mayor from 2016 to 2019.

At first, his videos on social media platforms like TikTok caused amusement and he was thought to stand little chance against his better-known rivals.

For months, opinion polls suggested the run-off would be between Gustavo Petro, the left-wing contender who has led in the polls from the start, and the conservative candidate, Federico "Fico" Gutiérrez.

After all, Mr Gutiérrez was running for a coalition of conservative parties and had all the resources and political experience of those parties at his disposal.

Rodolfo Hernández, on the other hand, is standing as an independent candidate.

But with Colombians disenchanted with politics as usual, the factors which should have hampered Mr Hernández's campaign, ended up boosting it.

As an independent, he did not compete in a party primary, meaning he had less media exposure than the other candidates.

He also did not hold traditional rallies and shunned TV debates, instead communicating with his followers via short messages on TikTok.

His followers on the social media platform soon grew to over half a million and his videos have had more than four

million likes.

He also won the sympathy of many Colombians when he was asked in one of his few TV appearances about his daughter.

Juliana Hernández was 23 when she was kidnapped in 2004 by the National Liberation Army (ELN), the smaller of Colombia's two main left-wing rebel forces.

Rodolfo Hernández says that the ELN demanded a ransom of \$2m but that he refused to pay, arguing it would put the

rest of his family at a higher risk of kidnapping.

Juliana, a law student, was never heard from again and is presumed dead.

Despite his daughter's kidnapping, Mr Hernández has said that if he became president, he would be willing to include the ELN in a peace agreement which the Colombian government signed with the larger of the two Colombian rebel groups, the Revolutionary Armed

Briceno v Peyrefitte...

Continued from ▶ Page 1

"I am sometimes lost for words when people like Senator Michael Peyrefitte would ask these questions, because their hypocrisy knows no bounds. I do not remember him crying out when the affiliates of the Barrow administration ... and others that are closely linked to the [former] Prime Minister back then were being back million of dollars. I don't remember Michael Peyrefitte at any time screaming, you know, why is it that we are paying these people millions of dollars," Briceno commented.

At that time, Peyrefitte was Attorney General, and he recalls the PUP's constant offensive against Barrow and Williams—with claims of that law firm benefitting from the enormous payout from the government during the UDP's 13-year reign. He claimed that the firm was never retained by the government, and reciprocated Briceño's claims with accusations of hypocrisy against this current administration.

"What we are saying is that they made a lot of noise about it. They said that so much was wrong about it, and so now, they promise that it was so wrong, that they would be different, that they would do things so differently, and you have a case now where you have not just one member of Cabinet, but two members of Cabinet. One, the de facto Prime Minister, who is the Foreign Minister Eamon Courtenay, and two the Minister of State for Finance, who would be the one paying his own law firm for work to be done on behalf of the government," Peyrefitte said in an interview recently.

His letter states that the trend in the hiring of the two legal representatives started back in November 2020, and led up to this most recent matter before the courts involving the new tax on the boledo contract held by Brad's Gaming Company. Why the UDP Chairman decided to table this request for information at this juncture, given the accusations made by PM Briceño against the former Prime Minister Dean Barrow and his son, Anwar Barrow, about their possibly having some vested interest in the boledo contract, is yet to be seen.

What we do know is that the UDP wants to know exactly how much has been paid to Courtenay Coye LLP and Douglas Mendez for legal work done for the government, and how much more is owed to the legal representatives. That latter amount would include what is being paid for their representation in the most recent boledo tax case.

While, as pointed out by Peyrefitte, the Constitution allows for this type of activity under certain circumstances, this current administration, while they were the Opposition, had said they would be different.

"How much is being paid? It does not matter that you say that you believe previous people used to do it. You said you would be different, you said you wouldn't do this; members of your current administration used to rail hell about this in Parliament about this. Your hypocrisy must be exposed, and people have a right to know how their money is being spent," Peyrefitte said.

The PM said that the information will be sent as requested. He noted, however, that the money is being spent because of what seems to have become a key tactic of the UDP: saddling the present administration with legal challenges in order to "tie their hands," says the PM.

He outlined, "As I said, we have nothing to hide. We believe that the UDP, taking out all of these cases simply to try to tie our hands, and we need to put our best defense possible. It is no secret that Courtenay and Coye is considered the best, the best, I repeat, law firm. Michael Peyrefitte's law firm can't clean their shoes, so what— did he expect us to hire him to defend us against his boss, his party leader Dean Barrow? Please, man, we have to be real. Now, they have asked for the information, and we are going to make the information available."

He said that the listed information will also show the Belizean people that his administration is spending all of this money on trumped-up UDP lawsuits.

"The UDP continues, and the former Prime Minister continues to take out case after case against the government ... I guess he has nothing to do." Briceño said.

Week 9 scores...

Continued from ▶ Page 12

close one, 36-33. Top scorer for Digi was Kyle Young with 13 pts, while Ron Nicholson scored 11 pts for the "Kollectaz".

Week 10 – Group B games schedule:

Friday, June 3

6:00 p.m. – BWS vs Bowen & Bowen "Belikin Bruwers"

7:15 p.m. – Department of Youth Services vs National Sports Council "Valley"

8:30 p.m. – Central Bank vs K.H.M.H. "Injectors"

GROUP A	GP	W	L
Belize Healthcare "Shooting Stars"	5	1	4
Belize Tax Services "Kollectaz"	5	1	4
Belize Defence Force "Snipers"	5	2	3
Digi	5	3	2
Belize City Council "Dragons"	5	5	0
Customs & Exercise Department	5	3	2

GROUP B	GP	W	L
Department of Youth Services	4	1	3
K.H.M.H "Injectors"	4	2	2
National Sports Council "Valley"	4	3	1
Central Bank	4	0	4
BWS	4	3	1
Bowen & Bowen "Belikin Bruwers"	4	3	1

Cotton Tree man killed; Belmopan teen shot

Continued from ▶ Page 1

at about 9:00 o'clock on Saturday night, Ranulfo Alvarez, 38, went to visit his sister at her home in Cotton Tree, but she had gone to church and thus wasn't at home. While he was leaving his sister's home, however, approximately four gunshots were heard in the area by the neighbors, and as a result, Alvarez's family members, who live near to where the incident occurred, came outside to see what was happening and saw him bleeding.

He was then rushed to the Western Regional Hospital in Belmopan and later to the Karl Heusner Memorial Hospital in Belize City, where unfortunately, at around 1:40 a.m., he succumbed to his injuries while receiving treatment.

Police have yet to arrest or charge the triggerman who is responsible for ending Alvarez's life, but several persons have been detained for questioning.

"Well, from what the investigators have relayed to me so far, it's a dark area. We do have some challenges, but hopefully we know it's a close-knit family area. Hopefully, someone will break through and give us something that would help us bring some closure to this family," said Communications Director of the Belize Police Department, ASP Fitzroy Yearwood.

According to ASP Yearwood, no possible motive has yet been determined by police for the murder of Alvarez.

"Well, that [hasn't] been indicated to

me, but I know that the police are examining all different angles. For you to be visiting a house that you always visit and then for you to meet your untimely demise, it clearly indicates that someone had something against you," noted ASP Yearwood.

At about the same time that Alvarez was murdered, a teenager from Belmopan, Henry Osorio, 19, was shot while in the backseat of a moving vehicle.

Reports have indicated that Osorio was with two females in a green Altima car heading in the direction of Constitution Drive from the Hummingbird Highway and was seated in the back seat when they heard a loud bang and Osorio later noticed that he was shot.

The driver of the vehicle transported Osorio to the Western Regional Hospital, where he is listed in a critical condition.

ASP Yearwood told reporters that the investigation of the shooting will be difficult, because it is hard to determine whether Osorio, or someone on the side of the road, was the intended target.

"Our investigators have a challenge, and [as] I said, they didn't see anyone, but they heard the bang, and we're praying for his speedy recovery and maybe he could shed some light to us. We don't know if it's a random shooting, because probably someone that was on the side of the road or maybe in the bushes. So it's a challenging investigation so far," said Yearwood.

Rodeo bull jumps...

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Yesterday afternoon at the show grounds, shortly after the rodeo show started, the very startled bull jumped over the right-side fence barrier and began to run away from the corral, and cowboys, and into the crowds. Those in the crowd immediately began to run away, and at one point the bull came face to face with one of the vendors at the trade show before charging. Luckily, the man moved out of the seemingly frustrated animal's way without sustaining any apparent injury.

All this chaos was live-streamed on Facebook and stirred a flurry of discussions on social media. While the comments of many had a comedic overtone, many maintained that the lack of serious oversight which led to the bull escaping the corral could have caused serious injuries to attendees. An estimated 18,000 persons were in attendance yesterday at the show grounds, and a large number of persons viewed the rodeo.

The bull was secured shortly after its escape and, up to this point, no injuries have been reported, fortunately. All indications are that this

is a first in "Agric" history. This is the first show in two years, following the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in the country, and it also marks the 50th anniversary of the National Agriculture and Trade Show.

On social media, the NATS committee thanked all Belizeans for their attendance at, and participation in, the National Agriculture and Trade Show 2020. We have reached out to the chairperson of the NATS committee for an official comment on the escape of the bull and measures being taken to avoid another such occurrence but have received no reply yet.

A released issued late this evening from the Ministry of Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Enterprise stated, "There were no major incidents reported in connection with the event. The bull's escape from the rodeo arena on Sunday was regrettable. The ministry is grateful that no one was seriously injured; the animal was quickly captured by the rodeo team and returned to its pen with no further issues."

The event is nonetheless being considered a huge success.

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UDP maintains “kill the bill” ...

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peddlers, and online stores that saved the country from economic collapse during the COVID-19 pandemic. The party also noted that, combined with inflation, the newly proposed taxes would lead to the financial ruin of many small business owners and entrepreneurs.

In an interview with local reporters this past weekend, Prime Minister Hon. John Briceño stressed that, while fees for entertainers would be deferred—a decision made after several performing artists voiced their concerns at last

Monday’s House Committee Meeting—the Government was not planning on doing away with the entire Trade Licensing Bill 2022.

“The village roadside peddlers, food vendors, online sellers, landscapers, couriers, seamstresses, fruit stall owners do not have the organization to unify and make presentations in the formal legislative process. However, their survival is no less important. They do not have the platform, microphone and amplifiers of those in the entertainment industry; however, their concerns are being registered loud and clear in the streets,” added the UDP.

Atlantic hurricane season days away, Agatha kicks off ...

As Mexico prepares for hurricane Agatha in the Eastern Pacific, experts and forecasters have warned of an above-average hurricane season for the seventh year in a row.

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landfall on the west coast of Mexico late Monday. The cyclone could also potentially impact tropical weather developments in the Caribbean later this week as its remnants cross over into the Atlantic.

Agatha strengthened from a tropical storm into a hurricane at 6:00 a.m. local time on Sunday and continued to rapidly strengthen until it became a Category 2 storm with winds of over 85 mph later in the afternoon. Shortly after, an advisory from the NOAA National Hurricane Center warned of the possibility of locally heavy rains across much of southern Mexico as well as the Yucatan Peninsula, Guatemala, and Belize throughout the week. The NHC has also warned that the Pacific hurricane could potentially bring dangerous coastal flooding as well as mudslides and flash flooding to several parts of Mexico.

As rainfall in Belize increases, the National Meteorological Service has issued a flood watch for low-lying and other flood-prone areas.

After Agatha passes across Mexico’s mountainous terrain, its remnants have a 30% chance of reforming in the Caribbean within the next five days. If it does so, it will spawn the first named storm for the Atlantic this year: Alex.

“A large and complex area of low pressure is expected to develop across Central America, the Yucatan Peninsula, and the southwest Gulf of Mexico in a few days, partially related to the remnants of Hurricane Agatha from the eastern Pacific,” said the National Hurricane Center in its Tropical Weather Outlook update on Sunday.

“Some gradual development is possible within this system in the far southwest Gulf of Mexico by mid-week or in the northwest Caribbean by the latter part of this week,” it added.

According to reports from hurricane experts, Agatha may very well be a record-breaking storm in more ways than one. Not only is it the first named storm for the 2022 hurricane season, but its early formation is a sign of an active season this year.

Just last week, on May 24, the NOAA’s Climate Prediction Center

announced that it is expecting an above-average 2022 Atlantic Hurricane Season, citing the ongoing La Nina and above-average temperatures in the Atlantic Ocean as main contributors. This would be the seventh above-average hurricane season in a row.

According to the NOAA, around 14 - 21 named storms are expected for this year, with a potential 6 - 10 becoming hurricanes. Of those, 3 - 6 are predicted to be major hurricanes (Category 3 and above) with winds of 111 mph or higher.

Ronald Gordon, Chief Meteorologist at the Belize National Meteorological Service, spoke with local reporters about the outlook for this year’s hurricane season.

“To put that into perspective, a normal year, using the average over the baseline period from 1991 to 2020, consists of fourteen named storms, seven hurricanes and three major hurricanes,” he stated.

Gordon also highlighted the fact that the predictions made for storm formation in the Atlantic by the NOAA include the North Atlantic, the Caribbean Sea and the Gulf of Mexico. The predictions, he noted, don’t indicate where those storms will go and how many will make actual landfall.

Phillip Klozbach, hurricane researcher from Colorado State University, told the *Washington Post* that Hurricane Agatha is the earliest hurricane to have formed in the Eastern Pacific since Hurricane Andres in 2015. Additionally, if Agatha makes landfall as a hurricane, which it is expected to do, it will become the third-ever Eastern Pacific hurricane to do so in May. And if it touches land with maximum sustained winds of more than 100 mph, which is also likely, it will become the strongest storm from the Eastern Pacific to ever make landfall this early in the hurricane season, wrote Jeff Masters, a meteorologist for Yale Climate Connections.

In preparation for the hurricane season, Ronald Gordon has advised the public to turn to official sources such as NEMO and the National Meteorological Service for updates. He also said that persons in the country should have a hurricane plan, including a potential route for evacuation, prepared.

OW shooting not drug-related?

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us to classify something [like] that, we would need to have something as proof. We’re currently trying to establish [the] motive, but like I said, it’s not a classification from the Police Department,” he said.

“... Whether you’re the intended target or not, he was fired upon, and as a result of these gunshots, he succumbed to his injuries. When it comes to murder, no bullet has a name on it, and unfortunately, if the family is saying that, I cannot contest their belief. Here at the Police Department, we need to investigate every murder, whether or not the victim was the intended target,” ASP Yearwood further said.

Vasquez’s father is well-known in the community in Orange Walk, where he is viewed by many as a member of the criminal underworld following his arrest a few years ago in connection with the trafficking of crystal meth. Following the shooting, police declared an Emergency Defence Mode within the area to prevent any act of retaliation.

“To prevent any further fatality, we went into what you refer to as an ‘Emergency Defence Mode,’ but the

bottom line is to prevent retaliation. We know that a shooting of this nature, and based on who the victim was, we believe we would have had some form of retaliation, and to prevent any further loss of life, we rolled out our operations, and it is working so far. And we hope that we could apprehend these assailants quick enough to prevent any further loss,” stated ASP Yearwood.

It was indicated that Vasquez was not cooperating with police in their efforts to carry out an investigation, which has further sparked concerns about possible acts of retaliation by persons who might choose to act outside the law.

“If they do that, we are prepared to deal with that. Whether or not he wants to cooperate with us, that doesn’t stop us from investigating. The investigators believe that they know enough to try to make some form of apprehension if these assailants are found. Whether or not they want to take the law into their own hands, we are prepared to deal with them if that happens. We cannot stop you from your emotions. Here we protect life and property, and we try to maintain law and order,” said ASP Yearwood.

PM calls Boledo contract a UDP sweetheart deal

Continued from ▶ Page 1

by the Barrow administration.

“We’ve noticed that the government and the people of Belize are foregoing millions of dollars in taxes, and it is not right for a small group of people to be able to get away with that. We are estimating that the 12.5% tax, which is what everybody is paying; we would be able to collect an additional 6 million dollars; in 10 years imagine, you give up 60 million dollars,” Prime Minister Briceño shared.

In addition to pointing to the fact that this small fortune has boosted the profits of Brad’s Gaming Group as an enterprise, he also suggested that persons close to the former Prime Minister Dean Barrow are benefiting. He went on to question why former PM Barrow is representing the company and why his son, Anwar Barrow, was present at the first Zoom hearing.

“You question why is it that the former prime minister is defending this

case, and why is it that his son, Anwar Barrow, is paying so much attention to this case that he logged on to the first hearing of that case...,” PM Briceño said.

The younger Barrow’s name had been mentioned multiple times in connection with the awarding of the Boledo contract to Brads in the House of Representatives by Cayo South area representative Julius Espot.

Prime Minister Briceño, despite the fact that his government is saddled with yet another lawsuit, says that he believes that they are doing the right thing.

“We know that we are doing the right thing. We believe that everybody should pay their taxes, because with the taxes we help uplift our young people, education, health, fighting COVID, investing in Belize, so we believe, we are convinced that we are doing the right thing,” Hon. Briceño said.

The government of Belize is represented by Douglas Mendez and the law firm Courtenay & Coye.

‘TikTok King’, 77, challenges ex-rebel for Colombia’s top job

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Forces of Colombia (Farc) in 2016.

How such an agreement would come about after previous attempts at negotiation with the ELN failed is not clear.

Mr Hernández has also said that he backs the peace agreement reached with the Farc, even though he voted against it in a 2016 referendum.

The main thrust of his campaign has been his anti-corruption message. On Sunday, he said that the “nation of honesty” had won. “Today the cliques which thought they could govern forever

have lost,” he added.

However, he has given very little detail as to how he plans to fight corruption and his critics have pointed out that he himself has been accused of corruption.

He has vehemently denied any wrongdoing, even going as far as slapping a local council member who had accused him of being involved in a corruption scandal.

Full article can be found at: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-61631964>

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Sales Agents

BELIZE CITY

- * Puma Roundabout
 - * Puma, 2 Mls.
- * Shell Service Station, C.A. Boulevard
 - * Community Drug Store
- * William Supermarket, C.A. Boulevard
 - * Fuel Logistics/Bel-China
 - * Puma Freetown
 - * Cambranes
 - * J & K Supermarket
- * Twin Supermarket, 5526 St. Thomas Street
- * Tow Tow Grocery Store, Mahogany Street
- * Julie Wong Store, Belama (by police station)
 - * JB's Store, Mahogany Street
- * 88 Shopping Center, C.A. Boulevard
 - * Freetown Drug Store
- * Publics, Philip Goldson Highway
- * Buca Shell, Philip Goldson Highway
- * James Brodie & Co., Albert St., and Philip Goldson Highway
 - * 1st Choice Pharmacy
 - * Save-U Supermarket

PLACENCIA

- * Placencia Office Supplies

LADYVILLE

- * Puma Service Station
- * Shell Service Station
- * Low's Supermarket

ORANGEWALK

- * One Stop Service Station
 - * People's Store

BENQUE

- * Eduard Cambranes
6 Diaz St., Benque

CAYO

- * Amini Habet
C/o Shell Service Station
San Ignacio
- * Venus Store

BELMOPAN

- Dakers Stationery & Books
 - * Hydes Mini Market
- * First Choice Variety Gift Shop
 - * Shell Service Station
- * Medicare Plus Pharmacy

STANN CREEK

- * Xaibel Service Station
 - * S & S One Stop
C/o Uno Belize
- * St. Vincent Convenience Store

COROZAL

- * Aguilar Car Care Products # 60 4th Avenue,
Corozal Town
- * Xiomara Alcalá c/o Corozal Farmer's Supplies
99 - 5th Avenue, Corozal Town
- * Elena Castaneda WE Store Gabriel Hoare
Market #A8 6th Avenue, Corozal Town

SAN PEDRO

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- * G N J Mart

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- * King's Texaco
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