

*Belize's leading newspaper*

# Home Affairs "retires" Marco Vidal

**ACP Vidal was placed on suspension with full pay following the arrest of four members of his team in connection with the landing of a drug plane last November.**



ACP Marco Vidal

by *Khaila Gentle*

BELIZE CITY, Mon. May. 9, 2022

After five months of being suspended for negligence and administrative failures during his time as head of the Police Department's Commander Operations Strike Team (COST), Assistant Commissioner of Police Marco Vidal will be retiring early. According to reports, the Belize Police Department, after consulting with Vidal's attorney, has accepted the former

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# Belize, Mexico strengthen ties with Prez. Obrador's visit



President of the United Mexican States visits Belize

by *Khaila Gentle*

BELIZE CITY, Sat. May. 7, 2022

The President of the United Mexican States, Andrés Manuel López Obrador,

made his first official visit to Belize on Saturday as a part of his five-day tour of Central America and Cuba. During

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# CCJ judge on GoB-MLA relations: "miracles do happen"



Maya Leaders Alliance v The Attorney General of Belize compliance hearing, May 5, 2022

by *Marco Lopez*

BELIZE CITY, Mon. May 9, 2022  
Last Thursday, the Maya Leaders Alliance (MLA) and the Government

of Belize were back before the Caribbean Court of Justice for the first compliance hearing since the

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# Senior Courts Bill goes to House on Friday



Hon. Magali Marin Young – Attorney General

BELIZE CITY, Mon. May 9, 2022

Last week, following the announcement that the current administration will be introducing a bill which seeks to restructure the upper courts of Belize, the Attorney General, Hon. Magali Marin Young, gave a press briefing on the planned changes. As mentioned, the Chief Justice will be the administrative head of the new High Court, which is to replace the current Supreme Court, and also the Court of Appeal. The government of Belize is

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# Cansino stabbed to death, no arrest yet

**Police are reviewing surveillance footage to piece together their understanding of the events leading up to Emir Cansino's murder in order to hopefully make an arrest. A postmortem exam to determine the cause of Cansino's death takes place today.**

BELIZE CITY, Mon. May 9, 2022

Police are at this time awaiting the results of a post-mortem examination of the body of Emir Cansino, Jr., the 20-year-old who went missing over the Labour Day weekend and whose body was found off the John Smith Road last Thursday in an early stage of decomposition. Initially, media reports

had indicated that Cansino had been shot multiple times, but we understand that he may have been the victim of a brutal stabbing.

This is based on an initial examination conducted on the body by Jose Espat, a trained medical practitioner and close friend of the family. He, along with several search

parties, including a group of Karl Heusner Memorial Hospital nurses who are workmates of Cansino's mother, had been out for two days searching before Cansino's body was found.

Last week, police had reportedly taken various persons they believed to be involved in this killing into custody, but there is no indication if they are still detained. No charges have yet been levied, but surveillance footage continues to reveal to police persons of interest. Unconfirmed reports are that two persons were detained and one more was being sought by police but has not yet been found.

Other footage being analyzed by police shows the suggested path taken by the vehicle believed to have been used to transport Cansino to the remote location where he was later found dead.

The results of a post-mortem examination will indicate whether Cansino was stabbed or shot by his



*Emir Cansino, Jr., deceased*

assailants, and likely, put police on a sure path to making an arrest for this recent murder that has shaken a family to the core.

In a release this evening police announced, "On Monday 9 May, 2022, Dr. Lloyd Ken conducted a Post Mortem examination on the body of Emir Aldo Cansino Jr. At the Conclusion of the Post Mortem Dr. Lloyd Ken certified the cause of death as Hypovolemic Shock due to internal exsanguinations due to stab wounds."

## Belize, Mexico strengthen ties with Prez. Obrador's visit

***During President Andrés Manuel López Obrador's brief visit to the country, Belize and Mexico signed several bilateral agreements—including one that will allow local agricultural products to be exported to Mexico free of tariffs.***

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his brief working visit, López Obrador (or AMLO, as he is often called) took part in numerous bilateral talks with Prime Minister Hon. John Briceño and his delegation and also signed a joint communique with the PM. As a result of one of those bilateral talks, Belize will now be able to export its agricultural products, including cattle, to Mexico free of tariffs.

The trade agreement was made in an effort to increase commercial exchange between Mexico and Belize. Minister of Agriculture, Hon. Jose Mai stated in writing that it was "one of the greatest moments in the history of both nations," noting that the Briceño administration had been seeking reduction of tariffs on cattle since its term began in 2020.

"Today, this announcement on the zero tariffs on agriculture products will radically change the future of agriculture in our nation," wrote Minister Mai.

The president's visit to Belize culminated outside the Laing Building in Belize City, where, following private meetings between delegations from both countries, both Prime Minister Briceño and President López Obrador gave statements to the media.

"Our countries share history, culture, and borders. We have common roots: the Mayan civilization, and the Afro-American and European roots," stated President Obrador.

He also highlighted the fact that Mexico was one of the first countries to establish a diplomatic relationship with Belize post-independence. And after Saturday's discussions, the two nations will see that relationship strengthened.

"Poverty continues to be one of the biggest social problems that we have, or challenges that we have in Belize. Because of the pandemic, poverty went up as high as 60%. And so it is very important for us to find ways how we can work with our people to get them out of poverty. You don't get someone out of poverty by giving them a cheque. You get them out of poverty by creating opportunities, by putting them to work and to find markets for the products that

they produce," stated Prime Minister Briceño.

The Prime Minister also went on to express his joy and his gratitude towards López Obrador and his delegation for their visit, stating that he only wished the visit was longer so that the Mexican president could experience more of the country.

The four-hour working visit also saw the signing of a Letter of Intent for the implementation of the Sowing Life project by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Hon. Eamon Courtenay, and Mexico's Secretary of Foreign Affairs, Marcelo Ebrard Casaubon. The project is expected to benefit rural producers by contributing to food security and job creation through the provision of training as well as the implementation of agro-silvo-pastoral production systems.

Additionally, Mexico has agreed to support the further development of education in Belize through the continuation of the "Escuela Mexico" program as well as to explore the possibility of improving infrastructure and transport between the two countries in an effort to promote tourism and boost economic activity.

President López Obrador's five-day tour began in Guatemala and then saw him travel to El Salvador, Honduras, Belize, and Cuba. While in Guatemala on Thursday, he criticized the U.S government for its failure to assist Central America with developmental aid, especially considering how quickly it rendered aid to Ukraine.

"They are different things and they shouldn't be compared categorically, but they have already approved \$30 billion for the war in Ukraine, while we have been waiting since President Donald Trump, asking they donate \$4 billion, and as of today, nothing, absolutely nothing," he had said.

López Obrador has also previously criticized the U.S for its economic blockade on Cuba and its exclusion of the country (alongside Venezuela and Nicaragua) from the Summit of the Americas—sentiments that were echoed by Prime Minister Hon. John Briceño after his recent visit to the Caribbean nation.

## Home Affairs "retires" Marco Vidal

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Commander of Operations' submitted papers for early retirement. This comes on the heels of an internal investigation of Vidal following last year's arrest of four of his former subordinates in connection with a drug plane landing.

"The investigation specifically into ACP Vidal's involvement or non-involvement in the drug plane landing, there was nothing that was uncovered in that investigation, but I can confirm that we are in talks with his attorney-at-law to have him go on early retirement," Minister of Home Affairs, Hon. Kareem Musa told local media last week.

According to Musa, while there was no criminal wrongdoing uncovered during the investigation, the retirement of Vidal is what's best for the Police Department.

When questioned about the optics of such a high-ranking officer receiving a retirement package, rather than a dismissal, which had once been raised as a possibility depending on the investigation's outcome, the Minister of Home Affairs made the following statement:

"I do believe that it is important for the morale of the department as well as the morale of the Belizean population, because while it is that they may feel that there was some involvement of ACP, in this particular instance you need concrete proof at the end of the day. And so, we have done our part, and again it is a decision that we are making in terms of boosting the morale of not just the department but of the population when it comes to this particular case, so it's not a reward..." he stated.

"If we were to leave the ACP in his

position in the department as such a high-ranking officer, what would the morale be in an instance like that?" he added.

Commissioner of Police Chester Williams spoke with local media about the matter recently, stating that the only thing uncovered during the investigation of Vidal was "administrative failures" on his part.

"When you read the public service or the constitutional public service regulations which deals with the disciplining of public officers, it says that when it comes to a minor infraction that [for] the first one the officer should be written to and not per se take direct disciplinary action against the individual. The infraction that was uncovered would amount to a minor infraction not a major one," said Williams.

The investigation by the Anti-Narcotics Unit found nothing that implicated Vidal—or any other former member of the strike team apart from those who were arrested—in any wrongdoing. It did, however, find Vidal, who once held the third highest position in the Police Department, guilty of administrative failures related to a lack of accountability.

The former Commander of Operations and head of COST was suspended in December of last year following the arrest of four of his subordinates in connection with the landing of a drug plane near Bladen Village in the Toledo District on November 4, 2021. At the time, the Commissioner of Police explained that the fate of Vidal's career—whether he would be dismissed or not—depended on the outcome of the then ongoing

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# Shootout with police at Titanic nightclub

**Kevin Bodden, 27, was injured by police during an attempted burglary at Titanic nightclub.**

by Charles Gladden



*Fitzroy Yearwood, Communication Director of Belize Police Department*

BELIZE CITY, Mon. May 9, 2022

An attempted burglary on Saturday morning at Titanic nightclub, located at Mile 1 1/2 on the Philip Goldson Highway, turned into a shootout between the burglars and police officers, during which one of the robbers was wounded.

At around 5:00 a.m. on Saturday, May 7, police officers responded to a report that the establishment was being burglarized, and when they arrived at the location, four men were seen fleeing from the area. While fleeing the scene, one of the men opened fire at the police officers who were pursuing them, and in retaliation, those officers fired shots, which injured 27-year-old Kevin Bodden.

Despite being injured, Bodden and

his accomplices managed to swim across the Belize River and made it into the Lake Independence area on the other side of the river. However, they were captured by police officers moments later.

Bodden remains in a stable condition at the Karl Heusner Memorial Hospital, and a 17-year-old minor is also in police custody.

The owners the establishment are yet to disclose to police whether anything was stolen from the establishment; however, according to Communications Director of the Police Department, ASP Fitzroy Yearwood, the establishment has been burglarized in the past in a similar fashion by residents of the Lake Independence area.

# FaustTeck remanded to prison

**Fausto Teck, 20, was arraigned for the murder of promising footballer, 19-year-old Chris Rodriguez on Tuesday, May 3.**

by Charles Gladden

SAN IGNACIO TOWN, Cayo District, Mon. May 9, 2022

Fausto Teck, 20, the caretaker of the Norman Broaster Stadium in San Ignacio, who is accused of fatally stabbing 19-year-old football player Chris Rodriguez who had been practicing in the stadium, was arraigned for murder on Friday, May 6, at the Magistrate's Court in San Ignacio, Cayo District.

The incident occurred on Tuesday, May 3, when Rodriguez, a member of the World FC team in Cayo, and his 17-year-old cousin, who were playing football in the Norman Broaster Stadium, were approached by Teck, who asked them to leave because the duo could not present receipts to indicate that they had paid a fee prior to their entry into the stadium.

The young men reportedly decided to leave, but while exiting the facility they encountered Teck standing by the steps. According to Carlos Rodriguez, Chris' uncle, Teck told them "that he's the one that owns that field, and if he wants, he could make them come back, but if he wants, he could make them never come back in that stadium." This then led to Teck being approached by Rodriguez, which led to an argument. It is being reported that video footage of the incident shows Rodriguez



*Fausto Teck - charged with murder*

punching Teck during the argument, after which Teck chased him through the field and stabbed him multiple times in the neck and body.

Rodriguez was rushed to the San Ignacio Community Hospital and subsequently to the Western Regional Hospital in Belmopan, where he passed away at approximately 1:15 a.m. on Wednesday, May 4.

Teck was remanded to the Belize Central Prison until his next court date on August 3.

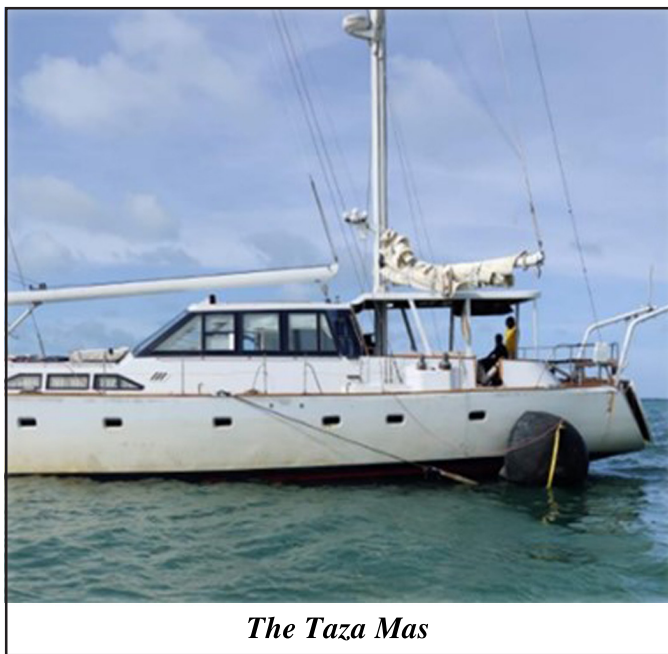
# Boat runs aground near Moho Caye

by Khaila Gentle

BELIZE CITY, Fri. May 6, 2022

The Belize Port Authority (BPA) has commenced operations to remove a vessel that grounded near Moho Caye this past week. According to a press release from the BPA, the marine vessel known as the *Taza Mas* was moved some 200 meters east of the location where it had run aground with the aid of lift bags.

Currently the Port Authority is awaiting additional equipment in order to continue its salvage operation "to ensure that it does not pose a threat to private properties and navigation."



*The Taza Mas*

Moho Caye is a small island located 12 miles east of Placencia. It remains to be seen whether any of the coral reefs that surround the island were damaged by the grounding of the vessel.

# Fisherman charged for Seine Bight murder

**27-year-old fisherman, Kendale Flores, was arrested and charged for murdering 32-year-old Ernest Staine in January 2022.**

by Charles Gladden

SEINE BIGHT, Stann Creek District, Mon. May 9, 2022

Kendale Flores, a 27-year-old fisherman, has been formally arrested and charged for the murder of 32-year-old Ernest Staine in Seine Bight Village, Stann Creek District that occurred on January 30, 2022.

According to police, Flores' arrest was the result of a joint investigation which was carried out by Placencia CIB and Dangriga CIB, following which the case file containing all the evidence they had gathered was sent to the office of the Director of Public Prosecution (DPP), Cheryl Lynn Vidal, for her review and recommendations.

The murder occurred at about 12:35 a.m. at Gee Pee's Bar in Seine Bight. Staine had been socializing with Alrick



*Kendale Flores, formally arrested and charged for murder*

Munnings and the owner of the establishment in a shed when Flores allegedly approached them armed with a 9mm pistol and fired several shots at them. Munnings was hit first, then Staine.

Munnings was transported to the Placencia Polyclinic for medical attention and was later transferred to the Southern Regional Hospital. However, Staine died at the scene of the shooting.

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## CCJ judge on GoB-MLA relations: “miracles do happen”

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submission of the government’s version of the Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) protocol, and the Implementation Road Map that will guide the implementation of communal land rights for the Maya people. These documents were submitted by GoB despite the explicit rejection of, and opposition to, their contents by the MLA and TAA (Toledo Alcaldes Association), the recognized representatives of the Maya people in this case, and have since been reviewed by two expert witnesses by order of the CCJ.

In last week’s proceedings, the court pressed the parties to meet and discuss the recent documents and to make efforts to salvage some type of mutual trust that will be key to ensuring the process can move forward. This admonition from the court was given after submissions were made by the MLA’s lead attorney, Leslie Mendez, who pointed to certain actions by the government that, in the view of her clients, undermined their ability to negotiate on behalf of the Maya people and stymied the implementation process.

“We have filed reports in this matter to update the court, and I am sure that, at least from our position, your honors can deduce that we consider the state of this process to be rather in a state of chaos at the moment,” Mendez stated. She went on to tell the court that ever since the Briceño administration took office, the MLA and TAA have observed an “increased interest” in the internal affairs of the Maya people.

Mendez added, “We saw that the Commissioner and the Ministry were exhibiting an insistence in choosing who the representatives of the Maya people are. Once again for us, and the experts agree, that it is not for the government to act as an arbiter of legitimacy among the community as to who their representatives are.”

The Maya Land Rights case was brought to the courts by the Maya Leaders Alliance and the Toledo Alcaldes Association, who, during the hearing of the matter, were the primary legal representatives of the Maya people in their quest for communal land rights, along with approximately 22 others. Recently, the government’s representatives and certain Maya interest groups have questioned the legitimacy of the MLA and TAA as the collective representative of the Maya people. The government attempted at the compliance hearing on Thursday to have Sarstoon Temash Institute for Indigenous Management (SATIIM) enter into the proceedings, but the court quashed that attempt.

“I think it was announced that one of the other Maya groups, SATIIM, would want to enter these proceedings. We have looked at that, and I can tell you upfront that is not what we are going to entertain. Because it’s not a procedure where you can intervene; that period is long behind us. It is just about an implementation of a decision between the parties that are before us; no other parties can interfere”, the

presiding judge at the CCJ, Justice Jacob Wit, said.

The request for an additional expert witness to be entered into the proceedings was also rejected by the presiding panel.

The court in this compliance hearing stressed the need to “lower the temperature” following fiery statements from MLA counsel that accused the government of threatening the sustainability and stability of the process by attempting to choose who the legitimate representatives of the Maya people are, a decision that, according to Mendez, is not theirs to make.

“We saw that the Commissioner and the ministry were exhibiting an insistence on choosing who the legitimate representatives of the Maya people are, once again, and the experts agree that it is not for the government to act as an arbiter of legitimacy among the community as to who their representatives are. It is not for the government who the winners and losers are among the community, and we see that is in fact what is happening,” said Mendez, who further remarked that the government’s decision to give clout to other organizations purporting to represent the Maya peoples amounts to an upending of the process shepherded by the MLA/TAA for 7 years.

“This sort of attack is not new. It is not new that we see challenging the legitimacy of traditional leaders. In fact, we would say that it is rooted in biases and prejudices that really just reflect the vestiges of colonialism in our communities,” Mendez said. She further stated that the attempt is a blatant sign of bad faith.

“The government knows very well with who it’s negotiating, and it cannot pretend now that 7 years later, that that issue is in any way challenged or unsettled,” Mendez said.

The court also noted that they cannot choose the entities which will represent the Maya people, and pointed out that since the onset of the process, including the efforts in court to obtain a consent order from the CCJ, they have been represented by the MLA and TAA.

“We also have to recognize that although the representation of the Maya people is an important issue, it is an issue that the court cannot decide. I think all parties agree with that, so whether or not the Maya people can come to some conclusion...up to now they have been represented by the MLA and the Toledo Alcaldes Association, and if they want to change, that is up to them, but these are the two groups that are before us. And it is also a fact that they are the appellants, and of course, when we look at the implementation of a consent order, we have to realize that as we are a court of law, there is *res judicata* between the parties. And so the TAA and the MLA are parties in the process, and for that fact alone they cannot be ignored,” Justice Wit explained.

New lead counsel for the government in this compliance hearing, Andrew Marshalleck, stated that they disagree with the allegation submitted by the MLA legal team but have no intention

## PM says NTUCB “does not understand”



Prime Minister Hon. John Briceño

by Khaila Gentle

BELIZE CITY, Thurs. May. 5, 2022

The Prime Minister has made public statements to justify his administration’s decision to award a contract to the Belize Bank for the use of its e-wallet services as the medium through which employers will be paying for temporary work permits online—a decision that has been criticized by the National Trade Union Congress of Belize (NTUCB), which has pointed to the fact that the government could have used the e-wallet services provided by the National Bank of Belize through its NBB Pay platform.

Several entities had been bidding for the contract—including Digi, Smart, Heritage Bank, and the National Bank of Belize.

Prime Minister Hon. John Briceño stated that the government is simply trying to make it easier for citizens to make payments. During an interview on Thursday evening, Briceño stated, “What we have to do, we have to give our citizens the opportunity to have any service. We’re not giving a monopoly to one—or to the Belize Bank. All of these different services including the National Bank and BTL, we are going to use those services. But if you do not have an account with the National Bank and you have an account with Belize Bank, then how can we make it easier for you as a citizen to make your payments to the Government of Belize? We need to make it easy for people to pay and I wish that the NTUCB that they would think out things carefully and clearly before they speak out,” said the Prime Minister.

Hon. Briceño further told local media that he wishes the NTUCB would “think out things carefully and clearly before they speak out” and also said that it’s unfortunate that they do not seem to understand business—a refrain previously deployed by the Prime Minister when a \$3.3 million contract for the provision of Microsoft software

to get into further disputes on those matters, stressing that rebuilding confidence between the parties is the immediate concern.

“While there is an immediate jurisdiction, what the court cannot do is to order the parties to have trust and confidence in each other in that [inaudible] process. That is something that has to be cultivated by the parties

was given to Speednet’s SMART, instead of the nationally owned Belize Telecommunications Limited.

Shane Reneau, a representative for the NTUCB that is on the National Bank’s board, spoke on the Congress’ position while on the *Wake Up Belize Morning Vibes* talk show last month. According to Reneau, the NTUCB believes that whenever a state-owned entity can provide a service that the Government is seeking, the tender should be awarded to that entity.

“It is time for us to start building ourselves instead of building others. These private entities—the profits generated from these private entities does not go to our Consolidated Revenue Funds. Those go to private entities’ pockets,” Reneau had said.

Notably, the privately owned Belize Bank, which is reportedly owned by Lord Michael Ashcroft, is currently viewed by a number of local trade unions as an entity that has been complicit in the undermining of trade unions and the labor movement in the country, due to its affiliation with the Port of Belize Ltd. (also supposedly owned by Ashcroft-affiliated entities), which has brought a lawsuit against the members of the Christian Workers Union (CWU) in what many see as an attempt to punish them for industrial action carried out by the union earlier this year.

As an expression of solidarity with the union, and in condemnation of what they see as an attack on trade union activities in Belize, both the Belize National Teachers Union and the Public Service Union have closed their accounts at the Belize Bank and taken their business elsewhere.

The PSU stated in a press release that the actions of the Belize Bank-affiliated Port of Belize LTD. to freeze a payment of \$1.5 million to the stevedores who belong to the CWU was, “financial and legal harassment of the CWU, its President, and members by the proprietors of the Port of Belize Ltd (PBL) and it condemned the actions of the Port of Belize Limited as “a threat to all workers and an attacked on the Belizean trade union movement...intimidation and retaliation against workers who choose to collectively bargain in order to better protect their rights when faced with injustice.”

It also reasoned in the release that its decision to seek financial services at other banking institutions in the country, “increases competition in the banking sector, resulting in lowers service fees, better interest rates, and improved banking services for the Union, while its general membership benefits from lower banking service and lower interest rates on loans and mortgages.”

and nurtured and protected by them. That is, of course, not helped, or assisted any with allegations of bad faith, with the kinds of disputes that have been raised, it, from my perspective, I’m new to this; I just started reading the papers to see how best to navigate to a successful

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# Believe in Belize! from Silk Caye to FFB

BELIZE CITY, Mon. May 9, 2022

Our football executives and technical officials of the Football Federation of Belize (FFB), who are authorized with FIFA funding as the official football representatives of the nation of Belize, have a slogan which they use in response to frustrated fans lamenting the repeated losses in international competition. They say fans should “believe in the process” and understand that the process takes time, as young players are being taught the right things, and soon will be able to demonstrate their new skills and talents in regional competition. But they have been saying this for some years now, and fans are getting impatient; just like the tour guides and citizens of Placencia got fed up with the lack of official action to address the dwindling land mass of Silk Caye and decided on an organic Belizean approach to save the island. Perhaps it is time that we all begin to “believe in Belize” by designing our own solutions to major problems that confront us, rather than looking outside for “experts” and “consultants” and “foreign coaches” to tell us what is good for us.

There appeared to be some gains in an UNCAF (Central American Union) U18 football tournament in Costa Rica in 2019, where Belize garnered Silver. A year previous to that, Belize had placed last in the 2018 U19 UNCAF tournament held in Honduras. Most recently, with our two new FIFA-approved stadiums in Belmopan, Belize got a chance to host the biennial 2022 UNCAF U19 (the 2020 UNCAF U19 was cancelled due to Covid-19), but we promptly fell back into last place, despite

the addition of a not so highly rated invitee, Puerto Rico, from the Caribbean into the tournament this year. The FFB was able to deflect the harsh criticism from some quarters with the legitimate argument that Belize endured almost two years of inactivity in football competition due to Covid, and so we are currently in a catch-up mode with the rest of countries who continued playing football.

Nevertheless, having been able to witness our National U19 team perform in four games at home over the recent week-long UNCAF U19 tournament, drawing once and losing three times, a number of veterans, including some 1970s Belizean legends who were guests of the FFB at the El Salvador game that Belize lost 5-1, were not impressed with our Belize team’s performance. And it was not just the scores that concerned them. The team’s game was not solid, to put it mildly. The fact that it was Belizean coaches that had led the Belize U18 to Silver in 2018, while a foreign head coach led the team to the dismal showing in 2022, has prompted quite a few fans to question the wisdom of

investing large sums on foreign coaches, when our local coaches have done as well or better.

Another FFB argument, offered by executive Marlon Kuylen on Krem’s WUB show last Monday, that our team is currently in the process of learning a new system (interrupted by Covid) developed by an American coach that has proven enormously successful in top level competition in the U.S., is little comfort to frustrated football fans. For all the FIFA funds invested in training of coaches and officials over the years, in building nice stadiums for hosting international games, it seems that everything is in place except the product that we put on the field in our national colors. Some fans have questioned the recruitment process, if the best talent is being selected from across the country without any favoritism entering the process. There have been rumors in the past of very talented players from impoverished backgrounds not being able to meet the travelling requirements for FFB tryouts; others have been rejected due to discipline issues. Understanding players’ backgrounds and being able to communicate with them in their “language” is sometimes an important asset for a successful coach, and is perhaps why Costa Rican Leroy Sherrier Lewis (R.I.P.) achieved the greatest success with a Belize selection to date.

The problem with “believing in the process” for Belizean football fans, is that time is passing by, every year a crop of young players is getting older, but the process seems to be taking too long to bear fruit. Already, the U18 group that won Silver in 2019 are now in the U23 or senior category.

Development is a continual process, and our primary school football program has been such an absolute disaster for years, that it is really amazing that there have still surfaced a few highly talented and skilled young players to form our national U17 or U19 teams. What that proves is that, despite the woeful lack of structure and support in our primary-school-age program, Belize still has an abundance of football talent. And the heroes are the many neighborhood and community activist coaches who volunteer their time and limited expertise in coaching youth teams in neighborhood marathons, or taking them on the road to play games in the rural villages or in other districts. But they are often ill-equipped for the task, and the tournaments are way too short.

Recently, the National Sports Council, which has for years taken on the responsibility of conducting the primary school football tournaments, has partnered with the FFB in trying to upgrade the skills of coaches and improve the primary and high schools competition formats. Amazingly, there have been annual primary school competitions where certain schools declined participating, while others played a regular season schedule of as little as 5 games, with only group winners going a few games more in the playoffs. How can youth football develop with such few games played?

In decades past, mid-1970s and before, primary school football used to be a raging cauldron of youth competition enthusiastically supported and attended by parents and other adult fans. And the teams were usually coached by volunteer senior players who contributed the best of their playing experience and knowledge to the youngsters, and were intimately involved when primary school games were taking place in the evenings after school, beginning around 4:15 p.m.

“Progress brings problems,” and on the road to Independence and thereafter many changes occurred that drastically affected the primary school program. For starters, the games are played much earlier now, from 1:15 p.m. to 4:15 p.m., while the adult working hours, following the trend of Belmopan, end later in the evening, with most departments and

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## Boris Becker gets two and a half years in prison



**Boris Becker and his girlfriend arrived at court in London on Friday for his sentencing.**

PHOTO: MARK THOMAS/ZUMA PRESS

LONDON - Former top-ranked tennis player Boris Becker was sentenced to two and a half years in prison after being found guilty of concealing hundreds of thousands of dollars in assets after he was declared bankrupt.

The six-time Grand Slam winner appeared for sentencing at London's Southwark Crown Court on Friday after being convicted on four charges under the U.K.'s Insolvency Act earlier in April.

The German tennis star, 54 years old, also was found guilty of concealing debt, removal of property and two counts of failing to disclose estate. He denies the charges.

Mr. Becker's lawyer didn't respond to a request for comment.

During the trial, the court heard that Mr. Becker was declared bankrupt in June 2017 in London's High Court following a petition from private bank Arbuthnot Latham & Co.

As part of the bankruptcy ruling Mr. Becker was required to disclose all of his assets.

He was found guilty of removing property totaling close to 427,000

pounds, equivalent to \$449,000 from his bankruptcy estate, failing to disclose ownership of a property in Leimen, Germany and ownership of 75,000 shares in technology company Breaking Data Corp.

Mr. Becker was acquitted on 20 further counts, including charges that he failed to hand over several awards, including an Olympic gold medal and two Wimbledon trophies.

Mr. Becker was one of the best-known stars of the 1980s and 1990s, winning 49 titles, six Grand Slams and earning more than \$25 million in prize money during his career, according to ATP Tour data.

Judge Deborah Taylor told Mr. Becker that he has shown no remorse. "While I accept your humiliation as part of the proceedings, there has been no humility," she said, according to the Associated Press.

Mr. Becker will have to serve at least 15 months before being eligible for release.

(from pg. A9, THE WALL STREET JOURNAL, Sat./Sun., April 30 - May 1, 2022)

## Believe in Belize! from Silk Caye to FFB

Continued from Page 5

businesses opening until 5:00 p.m. daily. These are some of the most critical formative years of young players; but they play to miniscule audiences of a few schoolmates given special permission to witness the games, while most adult footballers with great knowledge and skills to impart to the youngsters are themselves occupied on their jobs during this time. As a result, often the youths are assisted by a zealous citizen who does not have good football credentials; and thus an opportunity is lost for the best football habits, skills and discipline to be properly nurtured and developed.

Time is passing by, erosion continues, bad habits become entrenched, and all the foreign coaches have run up against the same problem, which makes "believing in the process" seem futile to frustrated football fans, as the situation at Silk Caye appeared to Belizeans in the south. Like those stalwart citizens did last weekend at Silk Caye, perhaps it is time for the FFB to begin "believing in Belize" and engage our homegrown football legends to help develop our own Belizean football system, utilizing all the foreign expertise, but mixing it with our Belizean flavor and style, so that others will have their hands full figuring out how to deal with us. And for sure, that plan will have to begin with the fundamentals, which is our primary school football program.

## Manhunt continues for Christon Rocha

**Christon Rocha is wanted by the police for stabbing his ex-common-law wife on Easter Sunday in Placencia Village**

by Charles Gladden

BELIZE CITY, Mon. May 9, 2022

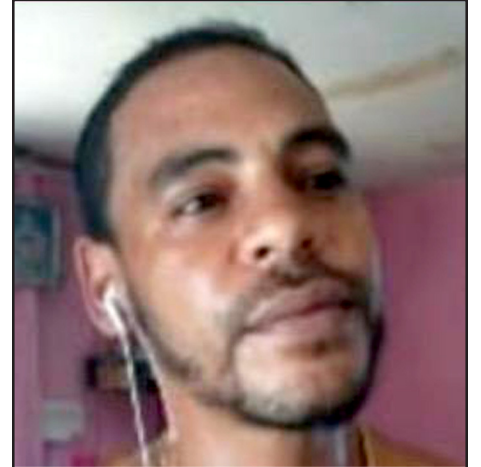
Over the last three weeks, police have been on a manhunt for Christon Rocha, a Honduran national of Dangriga Town who stabbed his ex-common-law wife, Vanessa Reyes, 38, in the face with a knife during the Easter holiday in Placencia Village, Stann Creek District. So far, they have not been able to locate him.

Back on Sunday, April 17, Reyes and Rocha were having an argument, and moments after the dispute ended, Rocha returned with a knife and proceeded to inflict injuries on Reyes' face.

Since then, Reyes, who fears that Rocha might take her life, has been seeking refuge in a safe house and has been unable to go to work or see her children.

According to the Communications Director of the Belize Police Department, ASP Fitzroy Yearwood, the Police Department is currently conducting a countrywide search for Rocha and has dispatched his picture to law enforcement personnel in neighbouring countries.

"To be very honest, we have a countrywide hunt for him. We keep sending the posters to our counterparts



**Christon Rocha, wanted**

at the borderline of this country. We have conducted several searches based on tips that he was believed to be on a certain island, and I'm telling you that the search continues for him, because this is not a case that we can take lightly. If those persons on that morning didn't intervene and stop him from carrying out what I fear would have been a fatal incident, then we would have been investigating a murder at this time," said ASP Yearwood.

"... We know at the Police Department, we have to touch base with Interpol whenever it concerns a foreigner. In my original release I can recall saying that he's a Honduran, and we have asked for the assistance from our neighbouring countries' law enforcement entities, and like I said, if he resurfaces in Honduras, I am certain that our counterparts will notify us immediately and we will know what to do when that occurs," continued ASP Yearwood.

## New Justice of Appeal sworn in



**Justice Arif Bulkan**

by Khaila Gentle

BELMOPAN, Mon. May 9, 2022

At a virtual ceremony held today, Justice Arif Bulkan was sworn in to Belize's Court of Appeal by Governor-General H.E Dame Froyla Tzalam. Both the Governor-General and Attorney General Hon. Magali Marin

Young, who was also present for the ceremony, congratulated Justice Balkan on his appointment, with Dame Tzalam adding that she was impressed with the quality of experience that the new Justice of Appeal brings to Belize, calling it an asset to the country's justice system.

Justice Bulkan previously sat as a justice on the Court of Appeal bench in Guyana. For many years, he has served as an advocate for human rights, having worked in defending the rights of marginalized persons, including indigenous peoples, LGBT+ persons and persons living with HIV/AIDS. He has also provided pro bono training and education on human rights issues in Guyana, Belize, and Trinidad and Tobago.

"We think it is a plus for Belize that he honours us in joining our bench, and I certainly look forward to reading his judgments, which I am sure will enhance our jurisprudence," said Attorney General Marin Young.

**Our email address for news, letters and articles is editor\_amandala@yahoo.com**

# What was Jesus thinking?

by Colin Hyde

There are these spots in the Good Book before and after the Gospels that make you go 'whoa! What's this here?', but if you are a sober one, you won't get tripped up by triflings; you just put them away and trod on. Bah, if you're the picky type you can hit a block when you hear of people living hundreds of years. My, 13 years a child and 687 years an adult. Think about those people who get all nostalgic about their glorious childhood years. But Grampa, that was 500 years ago!

Aw, I bet the prophet's editor was a lazy so and so, or maybe the prophet thought there was no fuss about hyperbole in the context of the greater message. Hmm, if we could have determined our gifts, only the men might have asked for such longevity. If human beings lived to a ripe seven hundred years, that means an old-times woman could have "dropped" more than 600 children. Ouch, some of these modern ones don't want to carry any! Before you believe something, you should think it over. My, my, we have had them underfoot for 6,000 years. It is for sure they would have rebelled long before if they had a train 600-children long behind them.

Whoa there, some ehm, brave men

are fighting tooth and nail to deny women the precious freedom. Afghanistan is very wicked. I see they have passed a law that the father or brother of an uncovered woman will go to jail. Everybody is getting smart, and the Afghans are giving the true definition of wisdom. Sending a man to jail because his liberated woman dares to expose her pretty face is advanced thinking.

The female form, every man who is not a card-carrying member of the UNIBAM glories in it, but not all of us clamor for all this beach exposure. The first man who dyed his daughter's undies and sent her to bathe in it was a, a...hmm, I know I need to be more careful with my words. Hooray for the girls who told the Olympics they feel uncovered playing beach volleyball in the bottom piece. A not too short little shorts is damned exciting, while the bikini panty scants into the, ehm, not so modest. Okay, I'm in trouble.

I say, it's pure Afghanistan devil genius! Don't harm the women; let the poor dad or lover rot in jail. Only rarely will women gang up and fight to save a man. That probably only happens in politics.

In for a penny, in for a pound, I believe the young man's mother was suggesting that He go around the

corner to buy a few quarts of wine. The story I have from *The Gideons* version is there were 6 stone water pots holding 2 or 3 firkins apiece! Just like you, I got excited when I saw WINE, and completely ignored quantity. That's because most of us never heard of a firkin.

The amount of fermented berry juice that was made wouldn't have slipped us if we'd read the story in the New International Version (NIV). In John 2: 6-7 the NIV says: "Nearby stood six stone water jars, the kind used by the Jews for ceremonial washing, each holding from twenty to thirty gallons. Jesus said to the servants, 'Fill the jars with water'; so they filled them to the brim."

Like the 700 years thing, we won't sink a beautiful story because the writer didn't cross check his numbers. My gosh, there's something very special about a man who fed the people, and gave them wine to drink when they ran out of it at the party! What was Jesus thinking? Fill dehn jars till they run over, Braa!

### Some little facts about the caffeine drug

Jesus warned about hypocrisy, and in that vein coffee drinkers who are ferocious in their advocacy against weed need to check themselves a little. Coca and marijuana were legal all over the world, until the overzealous Americans and some other Europeans decided they should be illegal. Coffee is legal all over the world. But if you check the stats it is as much a drug as the other two.

I don't do coca, I've never seen the leaf; and I don't smoke weed. I like the taste of coffee, but I seldom drink it, because it is too stimulating. I don't like that coffee keeps me up at nights. Exercising late, eating fish for supper and drinking coffee make for much tossing and turning when I'm in bed.

Many people who work in offices do coffee to keep them from sleeping at their desks. I know that some people who work in the fields do weed to ease pain, and to dull the bother of mosquitoes, sandflies and batl aas. I understand the Incas chew coca leaves to alleviate altitude sickness, and as a stimulant.

BBC News said the Minister of Culture in Bolivia claimed the Pope, a rootsi brother, had requested some coca leaves to chew on when he visited that country in 2015. The story said the Vatican hadn't commented on the Pope's desire to share in the Bolivian sacrament, and if he did he didn't say. Coca to the South Americans living in the Andes was a blessed herb from God to His people in that part of the

world, until the all mighty Americans came along and made it illegal.

There are cannabis and coca varieties that have less "drugs" in them than some coffee berries have. The story on coffee is that the Robusta variety has twice the caffeine of the Arabica. Brothers and sisters, dose makes poison. Understandably, people in authority had to take a second look at coca after wise men started concentrating the alkaloid in it to make cocaine.

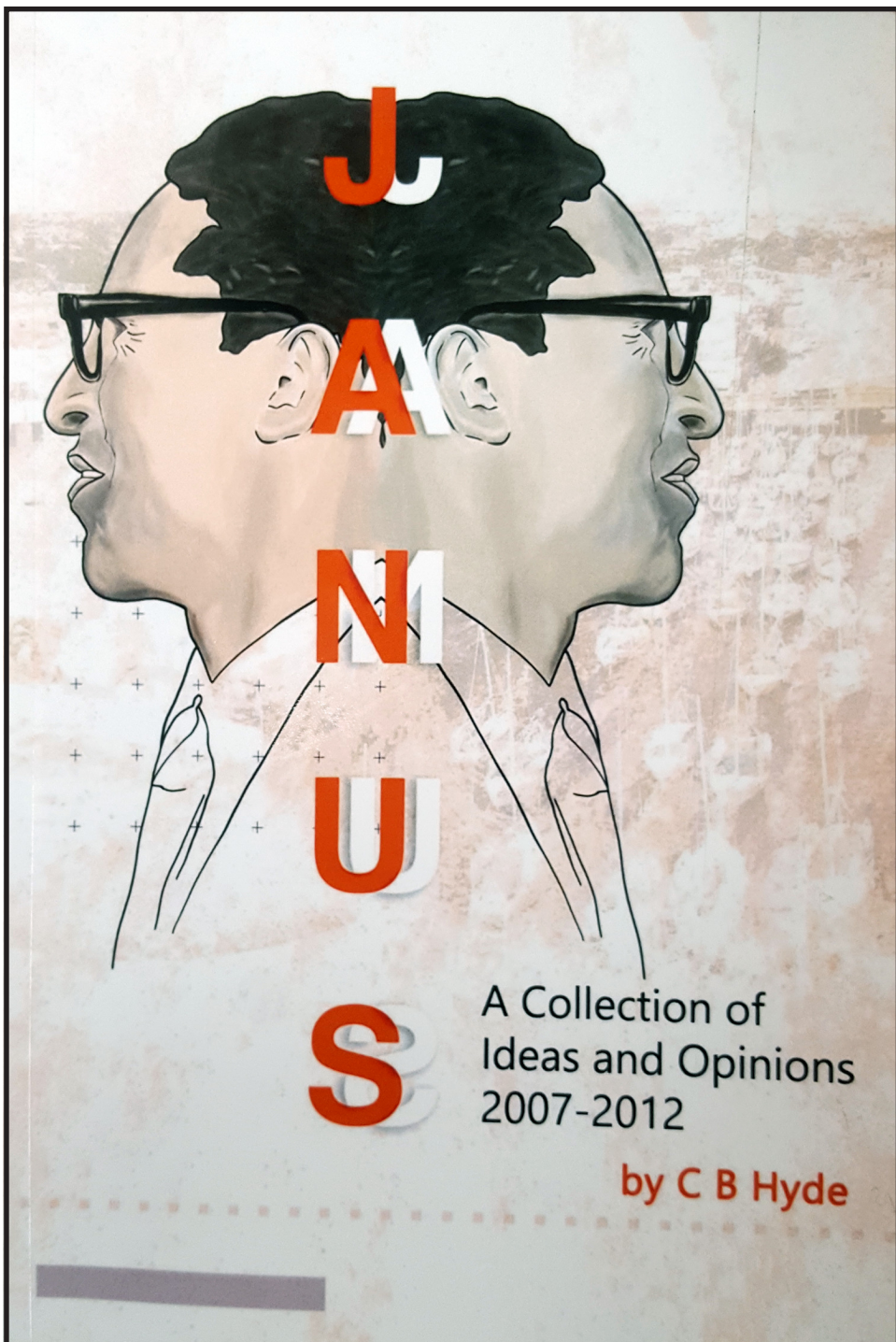
Don't take your eyes off coffee. There's a local story that a popular young man had a heart attack and died after consuming a couple energy drinks. Generally a single can of energy drink should be safe, but these things are loaded with sugar and caffeine. There are people who are vulnerable, so youngsters especially should be advised to proceed with caution.

*BetterHealth* says caffeine can cause an increase in heart rate, a rise in body temperature, dizziness, and headaches. *BetterHealth* says a 250ml cup of instant coffee has 80-120mg of caffeine, there is 160mg in 250mls of some energy drinks, and consuming 400 milligrams of caffeine in a day is considered safe. Red Bull has 80mg in a 250ml can. That makes Red Bull look safe, but we shouldn't forget the tons of sugar in many of these energy drinks.

There are concentrated caffeine powders that are extremely dangerous. *Everyday Health* says: "That white powder [you're snorting] might be a deadly dose of caffeine, not cocaine. Overdosing on powdered pure caffeine can kill you, the FDA warns." *BBC News* says a 29-year-old personal trainer, Tom Mansfield, collapsed and died in 2021 "after taking caffeine powder..." The postmortem showed Mansfield had 392mg of caffeine per liter of blood, the equivalent of drinking about 20 cups of coffee. His death was ruled as a misadventure. The report said Mansfield miscalculated the dose of the caffeine booster and died of caffeine toxicity.

Okay, some will holler that no one gets addicted to caffeine. That's not true. Some will argue that caffeine doesn't affect anyone's work production, but guys who work in the bush will tell you that weed enhances their work production too. Some will holler that caffeine doesn't drive anyone to commit murder, but the Rastafarians will tell you they're a cool breed.

All I'm saying to you is to think for yourselves. Say no to hysteria. There are people who need their weed as much as you need your caffeine and my breed needs our little drink. Let common sense rule in Belize, not rabid American propaganda.



**AMANDALA**  
the newspaper with the greatest circulation in Belize!



## ¡Crean en Belize! de Cayo Seda a FFB

CIUDAD DE BELIZE, lun. 9 de mayo de 2022

Nuestros ejecutivos de fútbol y funcionarios técnicos de la Federación de Fútbol de Belize (FFB), que están autorizados con fondos de la FIFA como representantes oficiales de fútbol de la nación de Belize, tienen un eslogan que utilizan en respuesta a los fanáticos frustrados que lamentan las repetidas pérdidas en partidos de competencia internacional. Dicen que los fanáticos deben "creer en el proceso" y comprender que el proceso lleva tiempo, ya que a los jugadores jóvenes se les está enseñando las cosas correctas y pronto podrán demostrar sus nuevas habilidades y talentos en la competencia regional. Pero han estado diciendo esto desde hace algunos años, y los fanáticos se están impacientando; al igual que los guías turísticos y los ciudadanos de Placencia se cansaron de la falta de acción oficial para abordar la disminución de la masa terrestre del Cayo Seda y decidieron adoptar un enfoque beliceño orgánico para salvar la isla. Tal vez sea hora de que todos comencemos a "crear en Belize" diseñando nuestras propias soluciones a los principales problemas que enfrentamos, en lugar de buscar "expertos" y "consultores" y "entrenadores extranjeros" para que nos digan lo que es bueno para nosotros.

Parecía haber algunas ganancias en un torneo de fútbol sub-18 de la UNCAF (Unión Centroamericana) en Costa Rica en 2019, donde Belize obtuvo la plata. Un año antes de eso, Belize había quedado en último lugar en el torneo UNCAF Sub-19 de 2018 celebrado en Honduras. Más recientemente, con nuestros dos nuevos estadios aprobados por la FIFA en Belmopán, Belize tuvo la oportunidad de ser anfitrión para la UNCAF Sub-19 bienal 2022 (la UNCAF U19 2020 se canceló debido a Covid-19), pero rápidamente volvimos al último lugar, a pesar de la adición de un invitado no tan altamente calificado, Puerto Rico, del Caribe en el torneo de este año. La FFB pudo desviar las duras críticas de algunos sectores con el argumento legítimo de que Belize soportó casi dos años de inactividad en la competencia futbolística debido a Covid, por lo que actualmente estamos en un modo de ponernos al día con el resto de países que continuaron jugando fútbol.

Sin embargo, después de haber podido presenciar el desempeño de nuestro equipo Nacional Sub-19 en cuatro juegos en casa durante el reciente torneo UNCAF Sub-19 de una semana de duración, empatando una vez y perdiendo tres veces, varios veteranos, incluidos algunas leyendas beliceñas de la década de 1970 que fueron invitados de la FFB en el juego de El Salvador que Belize perdió 5-1, no quedaron impresionados con el desempeño de nuestro equipo de Belize. Y no fue sólo las puntuaciones lo que les preocupaba. El juego del equipo no era sólido, por decirlo suavemente. El hecho de que hayan sido los entrenadores beliceños los que llevaron al Sub-18 de Belize a la plata en 2018, mientras que un entrenador en jefe extranjero llevó al equipo a la pésima actuación en 2022, ha llevado a muchos fanáticos a cuestionar la sabiduría de invertir grandes sumas en entrenadores extranjeros, cuando nuestros entrenadores locales lo han hecho tan bien o mejor.

Otro argumento de la FFB, ofrecido por el ejecutivo Marlon Kuylen en el programa WUB de Krem el lunes pasado, es que nuestro equipo se encuentra actualmente en el proceso de aprender un nuevo sistema (interrumpido por Covid) desarrollado por un entrenador estadounidense que ha demostrado un enorme éxito en la competencia de alto nivel en EE.UU., es poco consuelo para los frustrados fanáticos del fútbol. A pesar de todos los fondos de la FIFA invertidos en la formación de entrenadores y oficiales a lo largo de los años, en la construcción de bonitos estadios para albergar partidos internacionales, parece que todo está en su lugar excepto el producto que ponemos en el campo con nuestros colores nacionales. Algunos fanáticos han cuestionado el proceso de reclutamiento, si se selecciona al mejor talento de todo el país sin ningún favoritismo en el proceso. Ha habido rumores en el pasado de jugadores muy talentosos de entornos empobrecidos que no pueden cumplir con los requisitos de viaje para las pruebas de la FFB; otros han sido rechazados debido a problemas de disciplina. Comprender los antecedentes de los jugadores y poder comunicarse con ellos en su "idioma" es a veces un activo importante para un entrenador exitoso, y es quizás la razón por la cual el costarricense Leroy Sherrier Lewis

(QEPD) logró el mayor éxito con una selección de Belize hasta la fecha.

El problema de "crear en el proceso" para los fanáticos del fútbol de Belize es que el tiempo pasa, cada año una cosecha de jugadores jóvenes envejece, pero el proceso parece estar tardando demasiado en dar frutos. El grupo Sub-18 que ganó Plata en 2019 ya está en la categoría Sub-23 o sénior.

El desarrollo es un proceso continuo, y nuestro programa de fútbol en la escuela primaria ha sido un desastre tan absoluto durante años, que es realmente sorprendente que todavía hayan surgido algunos jugadores jóvenes altamente talentosos y capacitados para formar nuestros equipos nacionales Sub-17 o Sub-19. Lo que eso prueba es que, a pesar de la lamentable falta de estructura y apoyo en nuestro programa para niños en edad escolar primaria, Belize todavía tiene una gran cantidad de talento futbolístico. Y los héroes son los numerosos entrenadores activistas comunitarios y vecinales que ofrecen voluntariamente su tiempo y experiencia limitada para entrenar equipos juveniles en maratones de vecindad, o para llevarlos de gira a jugar en las aldeas rurales o en otros distritos. Pero a menudo están mal equipados para la tarea y los torneos son demasiado cortos.

Recientemente, el Consejo Nacional de Deportes, que durante años asumió la responsabilidad de realizar los torneos de fútbol en las escuelas primarias, se asoció con la FFB para tratar de mejorar las habilidades de los entrenadores y mejorar los formatos de competencia en las escuelas primarias y secundarias. Sorprendentemente, ha habido competencias anuales de escuelas primarias en las que ciertas escuelas se negaron a participar, mientras que otras jugaron un calendario de temporada regular de tan solo 5 juegos, y solo los ganadores de grupo jugaron algunos juegos más en los playoffs. ¿Cómo puede desarrollarse el fútbol juvenil con tan pocos partidos jugados?

En décadas pasadas, a mediados de la década de 1970 y antes, el fútbol de la escuela primaria solía ser un caldero furioso de competencia juvenil apoyada y asistida con entusiasmo por los padres y otros fanáticos adultos. Y los equipos solían ser entrenados por jugadores veteranos voluntarios que aportaban lo mejor de su experiencia y conocimiento de juego a los jóvenes, y estaban íntimamente involucrados cuando los juegos de la escuela primaria se llevaban a cabo por las tardes después de clases, comenzando alrededor de las 4:15 p.m.

"El progreso trae problemas", y en el camino hacia la Independencia y después se produjeron muchos cambios que afectaron drásticamente el programa de la escuela primaria. Para empezar, los partidos ahora se juegan mucho más temprano, de 13:15 horas a las 4:15 p.m., mientras que el horario de trabajo de los adultos, siguiendo la tendencia de Belmopán, finaliza más tarde en la noche, y la mayoría de los departamentos y negocios abren hasta las 5:00 p.m. diariamente. Estos son algunos de los años formativos más críticos de los jugadores jóvenes; pero juegan para audiencias minúsculas de unos pocos compañeros de escuela con permiso especial para presenciar los juegos, mientras que la mayoría de los futbolistas adultos con gran conocimiento y habilidades para impartir a los jóvenes están ocupados en sus trabajos durante este tiempo. Como resultado, a menudo los jóvenes son asistidos por un ciudadano entusiasta que no tiene buenas credenciales futbolísticas; y, por lo tanto, se pierde una oportunidad para que los mejores hábitos, habilidades y disciplina del fútbol se cultiven y desarrollen adecuadamente.

El tiempo pasa, la erosión continúa, los malos hábitos se arraigan y todos los entrenadores extranjeros se han topado con el mismo problema, lo que hace que "crear en el proceso" parezca inútil para los frustrados fanáticos del fútbol, como les pareció a los beliceños la situación en Cayo Seda en el sur. Al igual a lo que hicieron esos leales ciudadanos el fin de semana pasado en Cayo Seda, tal vez sea hora de que la FFB comience a "crear en Belize" e involucre a nuestras leyendas del fútbol local para ayudar a desarrollar nuestro propio sistema de fútbol beliceño, utilizando toda la experiencia extranjera, pero mezclándola con nuestro sabor y estilo beliceño, para que otros tengan las manos ocupadas descifrando cómo lidiar con nosotros. Y seguro, ese plan tendrá que comenzar con lo fundamental, que es nuestro programa de fútbol de la escuela primaria.



# Russia's nuclear POSEIDON



by Clinton Canul Luna

The following, our dear readers of this column, I find to be of much interest, for the reason that, as I have mentioned before, the analysis is from an American who expresses what he knows publicly, not only to the Americans of the United States, but also to the world on the issues that are prominently featured in the news. Part 1 of Chris Sander's "BIOBIDEN TIMELINE SINCE 1991 | RUSSIA'S POSEIDON NUCLEAR", which was published on the American News

Network's YouTube page on May 6, 2022, is as follows:

Today, I'm going to go over several things... I'm actually going to go over a few news points first. Behind me, you're going to see Poseidon, and Poseidon is the new war weapon of Russia. It is a 200-kiloton bomb, and it's a world killer, and they have 30 of them. They're spread out all over the place, and I'll tell you about them, and they're very scary. And between May

2nd and May 6th, 39 Ukrainian facilities were hit overnight... As I said, thermobaric bombs were used, and then Chechen soldiers, Muslim Chechen soldiers, went in. There's even more of them now because of Eid Mubarak. So, it is completely controlled by Putin, and again, the west continues this phony narrative day in and day out... Russia threatens the world with this bomb right here behind me. This is the Poseidon.

Now the information on this has been skewed. A lot of people don't know about it. But what I'm going to tell you is that it has a nuclear power plant on board of it. So it actually can circle the world like three or four times. What I believe the Soviets are doing is they're actually going around with their submarines, and they've laid these on the floors of the the oceans. There was a Soviet sub that was spotted between Ireland and basically off the coast of Wales, and all of that and basically, it was dropping these nuclear submarines on the ground, because then, the Russian defense came out with their two-phase strategy on how they would take over and totally annihilate Great Britain within 212 seconds.

Now, what you see here was when they did the fifty-kiloton bomb, the

shockwave went around the world three times, and that was only fifty-five, 50 mega tons, 50 to 55 mega tons. This new bomb is four times bigger than that. The Poseidon. So, they heard the shockwave three times around the world, with the fifty-five, 50 to 55. Now, what they want to do is create a tidal wave, and in this tidal wave, because they've added cobalt into the nuclear detonator. It's even more radioactive. It's going to make a radioactive wave that's going to be higher, just as high as, you know, the Freedom Towers. This is like a demonstration here in New York as far as how big the wave would be. Now, going to say I don't think the people of New York have to be afraid of this, because if you really study the world and jet streams, it's the west coasts that have to be concerned.

(To Be Continued)  
[fincasolan@gmail.com](mailto:fincasolan@gmail.com)  
 May 8, 2022  
 Finca Solana  
 Corozal Town

## Digi security guard dies in motorcycle collision

by Charles Gladden

BELIZE CITY, Mon. May 9, 2022

Sidion Solano, a 39-year-old Nicaraguan security guard who worked at Belize Telemedia Limited's Digi enterprise, lost his life after the motorcycle he was riding hit the back of 33-year-old Derwin



Sidion Solano, deceased

John Maibith's motorcycle as they both were traveling in the direction of Ladyville on Thursday night, May 5.

According to police, at about 8:45 p.m., Maibith and Solano were

Please turn to

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### CONTRACT AWARD INFORMATION – CONSULTANCY SERVICES

#### THIRD WATER (SOUTH AMBERGRIS CAYE WATER AND SEWERAGE EXPANSION) PROJECT – BELIZE

#### IMPROVING COMMUNICATIONS AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

##### 1. Summary of Scores:

Names of Shortlisted Consultants	Country	Technical Proposal Scores						Financial Proposal Prices		Final Rank
		Specific Experience (10%)	Methodology, Workplan & Organisation and Staffing (40%)	Key Experts (40%)	Knowledge Transfer (5%)	National Experts Participation (5%)	Total (100%)	Submitted Price (USD)	Evaluated Price (USD)	
UWI - Arthur Lok Jack Global School of Business	Trinidad	8.20	35.10	28.70	4.10	4.00	80.10	\$89,635.00	\$95,324.00	1
Herald Media Partners Ltd.	Barbados	5.60	25.68	22.10	3.42	2.00	58.80	Financial proposal was not opened	Financial proposal was not opened	Not Applicable
C2M2C2	Jamaica	Not evaluated - C2M2C2 is a sole proprietor and therefore could not be considered						Financial proposal was not opened	Financial proposal was not opened	Not Applicable
Mott McDonald	UK	Did not submit proposal								

- Name of Successful Consultant:** UWI – Arthur Lok Jack Global School of Business
- Final Awarded Price:** USD \$95,324.00
- Commencement Date of Contract:** April 11, 2022
- Duration of Contract:** Ten (10) months
- Summary Scope of Contract:** The overall objective of the consultancy is to enhance capacities of Belize Water Services to improve internal and external communication, public education, social outreach and stakeholder engagement. Social inclusion and gender- responsiveness are two cross-cutting elements of this consultancy.

**Note:** Selection Method: Quality-Based Selection (QBS)  
 Minimum Technical Proposal Score required to open Financial Proposal: 80

## Statutory Notice to Creditors

IN THE ESTATE of EDWARD ARTHUR LAING, Deceased, of Belize City, Belize.

NOTICE is hereby given pursuant to Section 36 of the Administration of Estates Act, Chapter 197 of the Laws of Belize that all creditors and other persons including the beneficiaries and kin having any claims and demands upon or against the Estate of Edward Arthur Laing, late of Belize City, Belize, who died on the 11<sup>th</sup> day of September, 2001 in whose Estate a Grant of Administration (De Bonis Non) has been granted to Nyasha Rufaro Laing of Belize City, Belize District, Belize to lodge any claims or demands in writing to Reyes Retreage LLP of #122 Eve Street, Belize City, Belize, Lawful Attorneys for the Administratrix of the Estate Edward Arthur Laing on or before the expiration of three months from the first publication hereof and notice is also hereby given that the expiration of the said three months the said executors shall proceed to distribute assets of the said Edward Arthur Laing, deceased amongst the beneficiaries entitled thereto, having regard only to claims and demands of which they shall then have had notice.

Dated the 29<sup>th</sup> day of April, 2022.



**REYES RETREAGE LLP**  
Attorneys for Nyasha Rufaro Laing  
Administratrix of the Estate of  
Edward Arthur Laing

## VACANCIES

### METHODIST PRE & PRIMARY SCHOOLS

Applications are invited to fill the following vacancies:

**Administrative Vice Principal - Silk Grass Methodist School**

**Administrative Principal – Burrell Boom Methodist School (Temporary)**

**Administrative Vice Principal – Burrell Boom Methodist School (Temporary)**

Qualifications: Bachelor’s Degree in Education with ten years teaching experience

Trained Teacher with a Certificate in School Leadership and ten years teaching experience

**Temporary Teachers – Belize District, Stann Creek District, Toledo District and Corozal District**

Application letters with resumes, two letters of reference and copies of credentials should be forwarded to:

General Manager

Methodist Schools

75 Albert Street, Belize City

Email: [schoolmethodist@yahoo.com](mailto:schoolmethodist@yahoo.com)

**Deadline: May 25, 2022 at 4:00 p.m.**

## Belizean authorities on the lookout for MS-13 runaways



**MS-13 crackdown in El Salvador / Chester Williams — Commissioner of Police, Belize**

BELIZE CITY, Mon. May 9, 2022

The Republic of El Salvador has arrested thousands of citizens — men, women, and children, in a nationwide crackdown against the Mara Salvatrucha criminal enterprise better known as the MS-13, after President Nayib Bukele declared a state of emergency in the aftermath of three days of violence that left 87 persons dead. The president blames the MS-13 gang directly for the tragic series of murders. Since then, Salvadoran police have announced that they have captured those who ordered the killings, but human rights lawyer, Zaira Navas from the group Cristobal says the detained persons have lost their right to defense.

This is due to a provision in this 30-day state of emergency that allows for the detainees to be held for 15 days without being provided a defense attorney or going before a court of law.

In Belize, authorities are on high alert for absconders running away from Bukele’s rigid stance against the MS-13 group known for their violence and criminal enterprise across Latin America.

During an interview this weekend, the Commissioner of Police, Chester Williams shared that Belizean authorities continue to be on high alert along the

border when asked about the possibility of more MS-13 members setting up shop in Belize.

“We continue to be on high alert along the borders. As a matter of fact, we have intensified our border presence with members from MIT ensuring that the unofficial border areas, particularly in the West, are covered by police officers, and we have our operation in that area with police, Immigration, and Customs, and so they are on high alert to make sure that if any of those persons are to come, we can intercept them. I can tell you again, yesterday we intercepted another one of those persons from the Salvador area and is fleeing what is taking place in Salvador,” said Commissioner Williams.

So far, reports are that three persons believed to be members of the MS-13 gang were found in San Ignacio, cohabiting with family members. Commissioner Williams said that there is no indication if the families of the men, who have since been arrested and remanded by police, are involved in gang activity. Commissioner Williams said that while there is a small presence of MS-13 gang members within Belize, their activity is not significant within the country.

## Digi security guard dies in motorcycle collision

Continued from **Page 9**

riding on separate motorcycles near Mile 4 of the Philip Goldson Highway when Solano’s motorcycle collided with the back of Maibith’s motorcycle, causing both men to lose control of their bikes.

Solano was hurled off his motorcycle and against a lamppost, and it appears that the impact of the hit was so forceful that his helmet was

shattered and he suffered severe head injuries which caused his death on the scene. Maibith, on the other hand, received several injuries to the body and was transported to the Karl Heusner Memorial Hospital, where he was treated before being released.

Maibith was served with a notice of intended prosecution.

Solano had been employed as a security officer at Digi since August of 2021.



can be heard on the following frequencies:  
96.5FM in Belize City, Punta Gorda Town, Santa Elena, Cayo and Carmelita Village;  
91.1FM in Ladyville and Independence;  
101.1FM in Dangriga Town, Camalote Village and Caye Caulker

# AI

I have often wondered who would've suffered "the slings and arrows" if in 1969, Evan X Hyde and his band of troublemakers, including Rufus X, and the rest of those misfits hadn't introduced a new movement within the psyche of Belize. Making mischief and arousing curiosity in the minds of a very laid back, submissive society, submissive to the demands of a colonial system that taught us to play along, to get along. Raising alarms in the political sphere, already afraid of the upheavals to come, branding these heroes as communists, black panthers, and every conceivable negative description they could invent, to try and discourage the growth of an unstoppable phenomenon. Who would have stepped in? I can't think of anyone, any other organization that would've have taught us roots culture, revolution and chaos, to bring changes to the way we saw ourselves. If not for them we'd probably be like the British Virgin Islands, or Bermuda, playground for the rich and famous, and still dependent on our saviors from across the seas. They played a critical role in preparing us for the advent of independence!

The word "AI", is derived from the people of color in Africa and Central Asia, who developed the alphabet, algorithms, algebra, arithmetic, astronomy! I'm talking about beginning around 2500 B. C., into the 7th century. Not recently, by recently I mean, in the last 1000 years. The Egyptians, the Babylonians, now Iraq, and Central Asia are responsible for most of the scientific advancements we enjoy today. Europe was still in the very dark ages, very dark, filled with superstitions, savagery, and ignorance, and that includes Greece, which in some quarters is credited for illuminating the world. Such hogwash!

The Europeans, once they found their footing, referred to us, people of color, as savages, as they raped and pillaged the world, especially the now Third World, of its riches. Seriously? Everything that made it possible for them to become prosperous was because of the established works of science, mathematics and literature of people of color, the savages!

I really don't know why the first true thinkers and inventors didn't rule the world; they could have. But I believe that it was because of their humanity, their respect for the universe that was, then. They didn't have the savagery of the Europeans in their mindset, to just take and destroy and rule everything they saw and could conquer. In a historical rewrite, the Europeans took credit for everything. Their stories are about glorious victories, unbelievable scientific discoveries, about conquests and bringing light into the world. Africa, the dark continent! The Middle East, the Americas, saved and enlightened by the Europeans! If it weren't so tragic, it would be funny. As far as they were concerned, there were no AIs.

If not for UBAD, who would've stepped into the breach and suffered "the slings and arrows?" It's a question that I don't believe can be answered. We must never forget where we came from, or how our legacy was stolen, and how we became marginalized, became slaves, less than, when once upon a time we were the true kings, the teachers, the enlightened ones, in every true sense! Savages? We don't know no stinking savages! Admiral, Alcoser, Alamilla, Guadalajara, all Arabic names! You can call me AI!

- Glen



## EUROPEAN UNION

DELEGATION TO JAMAICA, BELIZE, THE BAHAMAS, TURKS AND CAICOS ISLANDS AND THE CAYMAN ISLANDS

# The European Union of the Future

Traditionally, May 9 is observed as Europe Day, because it is the anniversary of the signing of the historic Schuman Declaration in 1950, which is the foundation of peaceful cooperation and good neighbourly relations in Europe. The cornerstone of the Declaration, calling for the establishment of a 'European Coal and Steel Community' (ECSC), committed the founding members: France, West Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Belgium and Luxembourg to pool the management of coal and steel. These were the most essential ingredients for war at that time. The underlying idea was not only to avoid any future war on the European continent but also to make it 'materially impossible'.

The ECSC was not just one of the first post-war 'supranational' institutions, it kick-started the very long and complex process of building the European Union we know today. The process has been incremental, with various

and alternating phases of enlargement and deepening. We were six when we started and with 27 now, we have become a unique economic, monetary, banking and political Union. In addition, we are well on the way to forming a defence 'Union', a process that started already in 2009 and which became even more pertinent in light of Russia's military aggression on Ukraine. We remain imperfect and we are often challenged, but we have gradually become a key player on the international scene.

The motto of the European Union is 'United in Diversity'. We are 450 million people, we have 24 official languages, some of us used to be part of the same country and some of us fought against each other. We have different religions and different cultures, we eat different foods and live in different ecosystems. With all this diversity, it is hard to overstate that we could never have achieved what we did without embracing a common set of values. While the world continues to evolve, the binding glue that keeps us together is our strong belief in democracy, the rule of law, freedom, equality, human dignity and human rights. These values are not exclusive to the European Union but are enshrined in many other post-war multilateral endeavours, not least among them, the United Nations.

Unfortunately, in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, competing visions and agendas are more and more at play. They challenge our most fundamental values, our binding glue. Thus, this year, Europe Day is all about the Union of the future: a Union reaching out to those countries that share the same beliefs. These are countries that can be brought together to speak out with strength, such as what we witnessed on March 2, when 141 Member Countries of the United Nations strongly condemned Russia for its unprovoked brutal invasion of a peaceful country, Ukraine. This act of aggression is likely to figure in future history books as the most blatant violation of our post-war international rules-based order.

Our values and global challenges strengthen the European Union's intention to reach out, to establish alliances and to call for more, not less, multilateral governance and rules-based international cooperation. In this spirit, we are intensifying efforts to build and strengthen partnerships with like-minded countries such as Belize and other CARICOM countries. These States have not hesitated to speak out to defend their values in multilateral fora. They believe, just like the European Union, that keeping silent when confronted with challenges of this magnitude is not an option. Might does not make right, only the international law does.

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## Live Life Basketball Tournament returns

**The Minister of Home Affairs and the Commissioner of Police believe the return of the tournament to the old capital will aid in quelling rivalries within certain zones in the city.**



**Kareem Musa, Minister of Home Affairs**

by Charles Gladden

BELIZE CITY, Mon. May 9, 2022

On Saturday, May 7, the Sprite Live Life Basketball Tournament resumed in Belize City, and it is being seen as a way to draw teens in high-crime areas of the city away from criminal activity, while imparting life skills to them.

The goal of the organizers of the mini-tournament is to bring youths who reside in the feuding areas within the city together in an activity that will enable them to bond through their shared love of basketball.

Minister of Home Affairs, Hon. Kareem Musa, believes that through initiatives such as the Live Life Basketball Tournament gang rivalries can be subdued.

“I think that what has been missing from the crime conversation for a while. We look at crime as a police issue only, and I think that is where we’ve been making a mistake for all these decades, and it really should be more inclusive. We should have more stakeholders at the table, and we have done that through the Leadership Intervention Unit, but it’s not through sporting programs or social programs

or education. We have to create opportunities for these young men, and so that is what this entire multi-sectoral approach is about,” said Minister Musa.

Commissioner of Police, Chester Williams also sees the basketball tournament as a form of conflict resolution to end the gang rivalries.

“You can’t compare this to a state of emergency. You spoke about them being in conflict and not having enough conflict resolution. Don’t you think that having these rivaling groups on a basketball court, playing against their rival group isn’t some kind of effective conflict resolution? It’s a way for them to come together and see how they could understand each other and see, you know what, we might have a difference in the circumstance in terms of where we live and the color we support, we have many things in common that we can focus on. Here we are on the basketball court together and we’re coexisting,” noted COMPOL Williams.

A total of 140 participants from 15 teams based in Belize City, Ladyville and Hattieville have been participating in the mini-tournament.

## FFB calls National U17 Men’s Team to camp

BELMOPAN, Wed. May 4, 2022

The Belize National U17 Men’s Team is starting its training preparations for the CONCACAF U17 Men’s Qualifiers to be played at a venue to be announced. The Qualifiers are scheduled to take place from the 23rd to 31st August, 2022.

The players are to report to camp on the specific dates as follows:

May 7 & 8 - goalkeepers & defenders  
May 14 & 15 – goalkeepers & midfielders

May 21 & 22 – goalkeepers & attackers

The Football Federation of Belize (FFB) wishes the National U17 Men’s Team all the best as they report to camp on their respective dates at 9:00 a.m.

## Orange Walk Mundialito 2022 begins June 19

by Alex Palacio

ORANGE WALK TOWN, Thurs. May 5, 2022

The Orange Walk Mundialito 2022 begins June 19, 2022, one week after the Orange Walk Football Association (OWFA) 1st Division Amateur Tournament being sponsored by Hon. Kevin Emmanuel Bernard.

\*So far 9 teams have confirmed their participation in O.W. Mundialito 2022. They are: San Estevan (Uruguay); Orange Walk Central (Mexico); Louisiana (France); Palmar (Spain); Chunox (Italy); Yo Creek

(Argentina); Louisiana Area (Germany); Ladyville Rising Stars (Ghana); All About USA).

One more space is still available. For further information, contact Wilson “Chato” Perez at 614-2775.

### AWARDS FOR MUNDIALITO TOURNAMENT

First Place - \$1,000.00, team trophy and individual medals.

Second Place - \$600.00, team trophy and individual medals.

Third Place - \$400.00 and team trophy.

\*There will be Best Goalkeeper, Goleador, MVP and Fair Play awards.

## Week 6 scores from NSC 2022 Recreation & Wellness Basketball Tournament

BELIZE CITY, Mon. May 9, 2022

The National Sports Council (NSC) Sports Competition for Recreation and Wellness Basketball Tournament continued on Friday night, May 6, with 3 games from Group B in Week 6 of the tournament at the Marion Jones Sports Complex in Belize City.

In the opener on Friday, Bowen & Bowen “Belikin Bruwers” crushed Central Bank, 57-21. Top scorer for “Belikin Bruwers” was Jerome Gakpe with 14 points, while Central Bank was led by Devon Wade with 6 points.

In game 2, National Sports Council “Valley” defeated K.H.M.H. “Injectors,” 74-65. High man for NSC “Valley” was Stephen Baizar with 23 pts, while Godfrey Arnold had 10 pts for KMH “Injectors.”

And in the nightcap, BWS won a close encounter, 66-62, over Department of Youth Services (DYS). Travis Bernardez top scored for BWS with 23 pts, while Raheem Thurton led all scorers for DYS with 24 pts in a losing effort.

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

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

Upcoming Week 7 games in Group A:

Friday, May 13

6:00 p.m. – Digi vs Belize Healthcare “Shooting Stars”

7:15 p.m. - Belize City Council “Dragons” vs Belize Defence Force “Snipers”

8:30 p.m. - Customs & Excise Department vs Belize Tax Services “Kollectaz”

U17 Men’s players called to camp and respective region (Stann Creek – scr; Belize – bze; San Pedro – snp; Orange Walk – owk; Belmopan – bmp; Benque - ben; Cayo – cyo; Corozal – czl; Mid-South – mds; Toledo – tol):

May 7 & 8: goalkeepers – Carlos Palacio (scr), Edward Humes (bze), Gerrardo Reyes (snp) and Donie Pott (owk); defenders – Brandon Rogers

# Havana explosion kills dozens

*A deadly explosion in Cuba has claimed the life of over 30 persons. One Belizean med student that was present at the scene told AMANDALA that the building, Hotel Saratoga, has been left “completely in shambles.”*

by *Khaila Gentle*

HAVANA, Cuba, Mon. May 9, 2022

A massive explosion at Hotel Saratoga in Havana, Cuba, this past Friday has killed at least 30 persons, injured dozens, and left several missing. Those among the dead include at least four minors, a Spanish tourist, and one pregnant woman.

On the morning of Friday, May 6, the explosion, believed to have been caused by a gas leak, blew the outer walls of the luxury hotel off, burying workers from inside the building as well as passersby outside and shattering the windows of numerous nearby structures. By late Saturday, most pedestrian traffic in nearby areas had resumed, but more than 48 hours after the blast, rescue teams were still hard at work searching for victims.

AMANDALA spoke with Sean Escobar, a third-year medical student at Hospital Universitario “General Calixto Garcia” in Cuba, who was among the first responders to the tragic incident. Escobar, who is also an advanced cardiovascular medic and former EMT, along with several other students, joined paramedics heading to the scene to render assistance.

Escobar described the atmosphere inside most hospitals near the scene as

chaotic and disorganized at first, with patients suffering from injuries varying in severity flooding in. And at the site of the tragedy, the scene was a gruesome one. He recalled having seen persons with detached limbs, blunt force trauma, head injuries, damaged eardrums, and many others who had fainted. And the building itself had been extensively damaged.

“There were no side walls,” he stated, describing the state of destruction that the newly remodeled hotel now lay in, adding that some parts of the building are still crumbling. Despite the chaos of it all, however, Escobar said that the response to the tragedy was impressively quick and large-scale.

On Monday, May 9, the Cuban Presidential Office tweeted that a total of 15 adults and 5 children were at that time hospitalized following the blast, and the death toll stood at 35.

The explosion also damaged several neighboring structures, including Calvary Baptist Church, which has reported “several collapsed or cracked walls and columns,” according to CBS News, and the Marti Theater, a historic neoclassical theater built in 1884.

Hotel Saratoga was one of Havana’s luxury hotels. With a total of 96 rooms, the five-star hotel had been under renovation after two years of closure and



*Hotel Saratoga before the blast*

was set to reopen this week. Now, according to Escobar, the hotel sits “completely in shambles.”

Friday’s blast is believed to have had a severely negative effect on the island’s already faltering tourism industry that has been significantly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Russia-Ukraine war, and the US-imposed economic blockade on the country.

The President of Mexico, Andrés Manuel López Obrador, visited the country this past weekend as part of his recent five-country tour. Lopez Obrador has previously criticized the US government for the sanctions that it has imposed on Cuba.

On Monday, CARICOM issued a statement regarding the deadly explosion, expressing profound sorrow

at the loss of lives.

“CARICOM is confident that the renowned resilience of the Cuban people will enable them to recover from this disaster and we stand in solidarity with the Government and people of Cuba at the difficult time,” stated the Secretary-General of CARICOM, Dr. Carla Barnett.

Prime Minister Hon. John Briceño, who is also the current Chair of CARICOM, also shared a message of solidarity with the people of Cuba, stating that he was pleased to know that doctors and students from Belize were among some of the first to respond to the scene of the tragedy.

“That shows their gratitude and therefore that of the Belizean people to the Cuban people who have given them so much,” he said.

## PAHO Establishes High-Level Commission on Mental Health and COVID-19

*Commissioners will prepare recommendations to accelerate action on mental health in the Region, following the devastating effects of the pandemic*

Washington, DC, 6 May, 2022 (PAHO) – Dr. Carissa F. Etienne, Director of the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), today launched the High-level Commission on Mental Health and COVID-19. The commission will prepare guidelines and recommendations to reduce the impact on mental health caused by the pandemic, and the related suffering in the population of the Region.

The commission’s work will focus on five key areas: recovering from the pandemic and promoting mental health as a priority; the mental health needs of vulnerable populations; integrating mental health into universal health coverage; financing; and promoting the prevention of mental health conditions.

“We must seize the opportunity afforded by the pandemic to address long-standing weaknesses in mental health services and strengthen them for the future,” said Dr. Etienne, thanking the commissioners for their work and commitment. “Now is the time to build better mental health in the Americas,” she emphasized.

The High-level Commission on Mental Health and COVID-19 is chaired by Epsy Campbell Barr, Vice President of Costa Rica, and co-chaired by Néstor Méndez,

Assistant Director General of the Organization of American States (OAS). It is also made up of leaders of health organizations, civil society, academics, and people with direct experience in the subject.

The Commission Chair said that the mental health and well-being of millions, especially women, have been “severely affected” by the pandemic, confinements, school closures, telecommuting and care for family members. Campbell Barr called for “urgently addressing mental health” and “taking steps to prevent and respond to domestic violence, including mental health services for survivors.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had devastating effects, and many are expected to be long-term. A scientific dossier published by the WHO reported that the global prevalence of anxiety and depression increased by 25% in the first year of the pandemic.

APAHO analysis also noted that one-third of people who suffered from COVID-19 in the Region were diagnosed with a neurological or mental disorder, while another study conducted with the support from PAHO (COVID-19 HEalth caRe wOrkErS Study—HEROES) showed that, in 2020, between 14.7% and



22% of health personnel in the Region presented symptoms of depression.

Calling the work of the new Commission “timely, relevant and urgent,” Méndez of the OAS noted that “a comprehensive plan of action for the recovery of COVID-19 must include the prioritization of mental health with a human rights perspective and taking into account the particular situation of women.” He also indicated that this is “an opportunity to bring about a cultural shift that can move us away from stigmatization and lead us to more inclusive and open conversations to build better mental health systems again.”

The countries of the Americas have

made significant efforts to meet growing mental health needs during the pandemic. However, the historically low priority given to the issue—with insufficient funding and underskilled human resources—has hampered the ability to respond adequately.

The commissioners will prepare a report with key evidence-based recommendations to improve mental health in the Americas and to transform mental health systems and services following the COVID-19 pandemic. The report is expected to be completed in the last quarter of 2022.

Published by PAHO

# Senior Courts Bill goes to House on Friday

Continued from Page 1

thus requiring that applicants for that position have experience sitting on both the Supreme Court and Court of Appeal. There is no indication if the acting Chief Justice, Michelle Arana, has applied for the post. She has sat as a judge of the Supreme Court since 2006, and as Registrar of the Supreme Court and Court of Appeal before being appointed acting CJ.

Attorney General Hon. Magali Marin Young noted during her press briefing that while she is not in the position to say whether or not CJ Arana (ag.) qualifies for the post, a clear benchmark has been set by Prime Minister Briceño, who will make the final decision.

“The Prime Minister has asked me to put together an interview panel with

senior members of the Bar and members of the Bar executive, and they will be conducting those interviews and a selection process hopefully simultaneously with this enactment so that going forward we will have a Chief Justice going forward in this role,” Hon. Marin Young explained.

So far, the ministry has received 8 applications for the post of Chief Justice after advertising for the position with a clear indication of the government’s intention to carry out this restructuring and the requirement of experience in both upper courts. AG Young said that both the office of Chief Justice and the office of the president of the Court of Appeal are currently occupied by persons who were given acting appointments in anticipation of this restructuring of the judiciary, as outlined in the PUP’s Plan

Belize manifesto.

The government had previously announced its intention to create a judicial complex in the Lake Independence area of Belize. While this goal will take years to come to fruition, the government will move the upper courts into what was the National Bank of Belize building, said AG Marin Young.

“We currently have gotten used to the entire three floors of what was the National Bank building. The Court of Appeal is to be relocated to the ground floor of that building, and the High Court is to have use of the second and third floors of that building. So the additional officeholders, there will be space for the additional officeholders on the second and third floors of that building. That’s in the short term; the long term is to build a judicial complex in the Lake Independence area, and in fact, the Prime Minister’s office has been working on getting a project done to get that judicial complex, but that will take more than a year. That may take two to three years, so for the short term we’ve gotten the full use of what was the National Bank Building,” she said.

Attorney General Marin Young said that it is expected that the cost of hiring additional officeholders to assist the Chief Justice will be included in the 2023/2024 budget estimates. In addition to the new judges, the office of Masters of the Courts will also be added

to aid judges in presiding over pre-trial proceedings and preparing the parties for full trial, which would be heard at the time by the respective judge.

“Your High Court judges will be able to focus on the substantive trials, and the master will hear the case management, will hear the application for injunctions. The master takes up the case all the way to pre-trial and then the judge focuses on trial and judgment. So, with the addition of complement of the office of the master, we believe that we will be assisting with the workload for a member of the High Court. Expenses, as I’ve explained to you, we will have to advertise all these positions once the bill is enacted into law, and the Judicial and Legal Services Commission then sits and determines who would qualify for these respective positions, and of course, the Ministry of Finance will have to put together a budget for us to employ all these additional officeholders,” AG Marin Young outlined.

She said that so far they have held consultations with some union members, the Chamber of Commerce, the Belize Business Bureau, the office of the DPP, and Crown Counsels connected to that office, among other officers of the court who will be directly affected by the change.

The bill goes for its introductory reading at the House of Representatives this Friday, May 13, 2022.

## Home Affairs “retires” Marco Vidal

Continued from Page 2

internal investigation. It was stated that the main reason for his suspension was to ensure there was no interference in that investigation.

In regards to Vidal’s purported administrative failures, it had been reported that the former senior officer had failed to keep check of his team members’ activities. Investigations had found that several vehicles that were being used daily by Vidal’s team had not been acquired using the required protocols. There had also been failure to account for the usage of ammunition handed out to COST members for their daily operations. Notably, some rounds of that ammunition were reported to have been found at the scene of the drug plane landing back in November.

“We have seen where, as the Commander of Operations and the person who was in charge of the COST

team, that he [Vidal] could have done certain things to prevent what happened and he did not. So administratively, he will be held accountable for those,” Police Commissioner Chester Williams had explained at a police press conference prior to Vidal’s suspension.

During his interview with local media last week, The Commissioner did note, however, that one could not blame the issuing officer for what the members of the strike team did with the ammunition they were equipped with, highlighting the fact that strike team members often have large quantities of ammunition due to the uncertainty of the nature of their work.

“The issuance of those ammunitions could easily be justified. Yes, it shows now in hindsight that perhaps they were using it for the wrong reason. But the issuing officer at that time would not know, so we can’t kill di man for that,” he said.

## FFB calls National U17 Men’s Team to camp

Continued from Page 12

(bze), Kenrick Gordon (bze), Dylon Gongora (bmp), Jahlique Lopez (bmp), Javier Tobar (bmp), Carlos Martinez (ben), Christian Yacab (ben), Carlos Segura (ben), Ivor Martinez (cyo), Keanu Fernandez (cyo), Amid Flores (czl), Alexis Mendez (czl), Emir Chan (czl), Nolbert Crawford (czl), Kanye Leslie (mds), Jocel Bulnes (snp), Beandre Wity (snp), Clay Flores (scr), Jaheim Menz (scr), Darren Villafranco (tol) and Vallen Nunez (tol).

May 14 & 15: goalkeepers – Carlos Palacio (scr), Edward Humes (bze), Gerrardo Reyes (snp) and Donie Pott (owk); midfielders – Stiven Rivera (bze), Kenyon Smith (bze), Lyndon Flores (bze), Jaymion Cacho (bze), Allen Umana (bmp), Zylin Flowers (bmp), Naitan Pastrana (bmp), Julio Cantun (ben); Patricio Guerra (cyo), Roy Cano (cyo), Dylan Robateau (czl), Carson Torres (mds), Daniel Cadle (mds), Eliel Solarez (mds), Jahleel Noralez (snp), Josue Valle (snp), Ernest Flores (scr),

Ozil Martinez (scr), Arlen Mendoza (scr), Sharlon Martinez (tol), Diego Chan (owk) and Diandre Canul (owk).

May 21 & 22: goalkeepers – Carlos Palacio (scr), Edward Humes (bze), Gerrardo Reyes (snp) and Donie Pott (owk); attackers – Flayden Carter (bze), Dixon Gamboa (bze), Keffer Perteau (bze), Jaime Velasquez (cyo), Adrian Lobos (cyo), Austin Lisbey (cyo), Bernard Jacobs (czl), Miguel Canizales (mds), Santiago Makin (mds), Primitivo Martinez (snp), Steven Almendarez (snp), Edward Reyes (snp), Jeremy Myvette (tol), Alex Gamboa (tol), Jalen Flores (tol), Samuel Miranda (bmp), Jayden Lennan (ben), Jose Iglesias (ben), Erandy Tzul (owk), Emir Rodriguez (owk), Ronaldo Westby (owk) and Harrison Roches (scr).

Technical Staff: Head Coach - John George; Assistant Coach - Nicholas Ara; Goalkeeper Coach - Stanley Reneau; Fitness Coach - Dennis Serano; Equipment Manager - Herbert Trapp, Jr.; Manager - Tyrone Young.

-press release -

## CCJ judge on GoB-MLA relations: “miracles do happen”

Continued from Page 4

conclusion—the steps that need to be taken to comply with the consent order. And frankly, coming up with an allegation of the nature and a dispute of that nature makes it neigh impossible to reach the end of the road here, so we need to get back to rebuilding the relationship and reestablishing if possible the trust and confidence in each other in pursuing the steps that need to be taken to achieve the objectives that we all agree must be achieved,” Marshalleck said in his opening statements to the court.

Justice Wit, the presiding judge, agreed and pointed out that the purpose of the hearing was to ensure compliance with the consent order.

In his remarks, Justice Wit said, “I think all present would agree that we have to lower the temperature maybe and get back to a more practical working relationship between the parties, because that relationship has to be maintained whether some like it or not.”

The court received opinions from two experts on the FPIC protocol and the implementation map submitted by the government of Belize to ensure those documents comply with the consent order, Justice Wit noted.

“I can say this about the point of the jurisdiction of the court, of course. This is unknown territory in a way, but we are here to see if there is compliance with the implementation of the consent order; that is what this is about. That is why the court asked the experts when we are talking about the FPIC protocol

to see what was on the table, and what the government concluded was in occurrence with that consent order. Because that is what we are checking. Now it doesn’t mean that it couldn’t be better or that certain things could be changed, but the idea is that in the end, the FPIC protocol is in compliance with the consent order,” Justice Wit outlined.

The two experts presented extensive assessments of the wording of the draft FPIC protocol submitted by GoB, and ultimately the parties were ordered to meet to discuss the FPIC protocol and the Implementation Road Map submitted by the government. They are to give a report on the result of that meeting, which is scheduled to take place in the next two weeks or so, before a date for the next compliance hearing is set.

The court, despite the seemingly sweltering tone of the proceedings, stated that they consider the submission of the FPIC and the Implementation Road Map documents from the government as a sign of progress, calling it a “huge step forward.”

The parties are asked to hopefully agree on a roadmap, considered the heart of the process, and to report back to the court if an urgent concern is raised or if some agreement is reached. Justice Winston Anderson even suggested that the parties release a joint communiqué following the meeting as a sign of renewed confidence between each other, to which the presiding judge replied, “yes, well you never know, miracles do happen...and it should not really be a miracle... but we will see how thing goes.”

# REGIONAL & INTERNATIONAL

## Ukraine bid to join EU will take decades says Macron

Mon. May 9, 2022 (BBC)

It will take decades for Ukraine to be accepted into the European Union, France's Emmanuel Macron has said.

In a speech to the EU's parliament in Strasbourg, he instead suggested

Ukraine could join a "parallel European community" while it awaited a decision.

This would allow non-EU members to join Europe's security architecture in other ways, said President Macron.

His words came as fierce fighting continued in the eastern Donbas region, where Russia is trying to make gains.

A senior US defence official characterised the Russian advance as "single-digit kilometre kind of progress". A Ukrainian leader in the Luhansk region said serious battles were taking place.

Ukraine began the process of applying to join the EU in February this year, four days after Russia's invasion.

"We all know perfectly well that the process to allow [Ukraine] to join would take several years indeed, probably several decades," Mr Macron said.

He added: "That is the truth, unless we decide to lower the standards for accession. And rethink the unity of our Europe."

Mr Macron said a "parallel European community" should be considered instead, rather than suspending the EU's strict membership criteria to fast-track Ukraine's application.

He said it would be "a way of anchoring countries which are geographically in Europe and share our values".

His comments came shortly after European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen announced the EU's executive would be publishing its initial opinion on Ukraine's bid for membership in June.

Kyiv officials confirmed on Monday that Ukraine had submitted the second part of its EU membership application to Brussels.

It normally takes years for countries to negotiate EU membership, with candidates having to prove that they meet multiple criteria - from respecting democracy and the rule of law to having a robust enough economy.

Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky has suggested the EU use a special procedure to grant Ukraine immediate membership of the bloc, but this has not happened.

Later on Monday, the French president made his first foreign visit since re-election to Berlin, for talks with German Chancellor Olaf Scholz on the EU's response to the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

Speaking at a press conference before the meeting, Mr Scholz said Russia's war of aggression had made co-operation



Mr Macron (L) later joined German leader Olaf Scholz in Berlin

between Paris and Berlin even more important.

"This is something that shocks us but also welds us together because we must act together," he said. "It cannot be the case that borders in Europe can be moved around with violence."

The EU is trying to agree a sixth package of sanctions on Russia, including a phased ban on imports of oil, with longer delays for some landlocked states in Central Europe.

However, Hungary has refused to back the oil embargo, describing it as an "atomic bomb" for its economy. Ms von der Leyen travelled to Budapest on Monday in an attempt to resolve the deadlock.

After talks she said that "we made progress, but further work is needed".

First published by BBC news.

## James bus and pick-up truck collides; one dead

BELIZE CITY, Mon. May 9, 2022

One person is dead following a road traffic accident that occurred late this evening on the Hummingbird Highway. Reports are that a James Bus and a pickup truck collided, resulting in the death of an occupant of the pickup, unconfirmed reports say. No reports of any fatalities or major injuries from the bus passengers were noted. The crushed pickup and a James bus



RTA on Hummingbird Highway

hitched off the road could be seen in an eye-witness video released this evening.

## Two travelers die in Belize's waters

BELIZE CITY, Mon. May 9, 2022

Since Friday, police received two reports of foreigners who drowned while on separate tours in Belize's waters. On Friday, May 6, US-national Celeste Lee Bondurant Bell, 62, and her husband along with other tourists and guides went night diving over the barrier reef. Reports are that she didn't resurface with the group and a moment later was seen motionless floating in the water. She was rushed to the mainland where CPR was performed but was pronounced dead by 8:05 at

the Caye Caulker Poly Clinic police reports say.

Yesterday, on Sunday, May 8, a 64-year-old man was also pronounced dead following a diving trip to Turneffe. Michael Williams Coli, a citizen of the United States, also reportedly went down and did not resurface from his dive in the sea near Turneffe, tour guides went into prompt action to rescue Coli, retrieving his body and putting him on the vessel where CPR was administered but to no avail, he remained unresponsive.

Police observed his body in the Agressor 4 at the Radisson Fort George Marina where he was lying motionless in the back of a Coye funeral home hearse reports say.

In both instances, the body displayed no signs of injury or foul play.

## Ecuador prison riot: More than 40 inmates killed

Ecuador. May 9, 2022 (BBC) At least 43 inmates have been killed in Ecuador's latest deadly prison riot, the public prosecutor has said.

A fight broke out between rival gangs Los Lobos and R7 at a prison in Santo Domingo, some 80km (50miles) east of the capital Quito.

Ecuador is battling a wave of gang violence, and has recently seen its most deadly prison riots in history.

Parts of Ecuador are under a state of emergency because of the rising crime that has shocked the country.

A total of 108 inmates escaped the prison during the riot and remain missing, the local police chief says.

An additional 112 prisoners made it out before being recaptured, he added.

Scores were injured in the riot, but the exact number is still unclear.

Ecuadorian newspaper El Universo reported that, according to the National Police Commander Fausto Salinas, the incident was triggered by a brawl involving the transfer of an inmate



A wounded inmate is moved from a truck to a waiting ambulance by paramedics

known as Anchundia into the prison. He had been one of the ringleaders who had caused a previous prison riot in April, the paper said.

Pictures from outside the prison show bloodied inmates being carried from trucks to waiting ambulances. As news of the riot spread throughout the community, many relatives gathered outside the facility, distraught and desperate for news.

President Guillermo Lasso sent his condolences to the families of those who died, and said it was the "unfortunate result of gang violence".

Ecuador's Interior Minister, Patricio Carrillo, wrote on Twitter that the government is working "to overcome the problems of the prison system, but it is complex to find quick solutions in

an environment of... violence".

Nearly 400 inmates have now been killed in six separate riots since February 2021.

One of the worst was in September, when 119 inmates were killed at a prison in Guayaquil in western Ecuador. Less than two months later, at least 68 prisoners died in fresh fighting at the same prison. The riots are particularly brutal, with some prisoners hacked to death, or beheaded with machetes.

Last month a 60-day state of emergency was declared in three western provinces - Guayas, Manabí and Esmeraldas - in response to the violence. Bellavista Prison is not in these areas.

President Lasso, who took office in May last year, has blamed drug trafficking for Ecuador's crime problems. The Andean country is used as a transit route for cocaine smuggled from neighbouring Peru and Colombia, and the powerful Mexican drug cartels are said to operate through local gangs.

He has promised to boost the police force and pardon inmates who were convicted of minor crimes to ease overcrowding in prisons, but critics say he has lost control of the situation.

First published by BBC news.



# 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
- \* 1<sup>st</sup> 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 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue,  
Corozal Town
- \* Xiomara Alcala c/o Corozal Farmer's Supplies  
# 99 - 5th Avenue, Corozal Town
- \* Elena Castaneda WE Store Gabriel Hoare  
Market #A8 6th Avenue, Corozal Town

## INDEPENDENCE

- \* G N J Mart

## PUNTA GORDA

- \* King's Texaco
- \* NJV Pharmacy

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