

Belize's leading newspaper

# Fatal RTA: PM's driver knocks down cyclist

*Edwin Hill, who is Prime Minister Hon. John Briceno's driver, reportedly knocked down a cyclist while driving near Biscayne Village. The man, not yet identified, has since succumbed to his injuries. Police are now awaiting a directive from the DPP.*

BELIZE CITY, Mon. July 18, 2022

Police are currently engaged in an effort to identify the victim of a recent road traffic accident that took place on Sunday night a little after 7:00 p.m. somewhere between Miles 24 and 25 on the Philip Goldson Highway. The driver of the vehicle was identified as Edwin Hill, a well-known PUP supporter and Prime



Edwin Hill

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## Senate supports Amnesty Bill

*Almost 5,000 migrants from across the country have already scheduled their appointments for the 2022 Amnesty Program.*

by Khaila Gentle

BELMOPAN, Mon. July 18, 2022

One of the bills brought from the House of Representatives to the Senate this Monday was the Belizean Nationality Amendment Bill 2022.

The Bill seeks to facilitate the implementation of Amnesty 2022—the program for irregular migrants which is expected to begin in August of this year—by allowing for

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## Murder in Bella Vista, Toledo

by Charles Gladden

BELLA VISTA, Toledo District, Mon. July 18, 2022

Police are investigating the mysterious death of 20-year-old Randy Adomay Xol of Bella Vista, Toledo District, whose body was found with several stab wounds in the neck area at a location between Miles 43 and 44 on an unnamed street near a junction with the Southern Highway. A knife that



Randy Adomay Xol, deceased

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## PM: LOO "sings" for Waterloo supper

BELIZE CITY, Mon. July 18, 2022

A question posed by the Leader of the Opposition, Hon. Moses "Shyne" Barrow, during Friday's sitting of the House of Representatives that seemed aimed at pushing the government to expedite approval of the Waterloo Investment Holdings' cruise terminal project—despite considerable environmental and community concerns surrounding the project—has been referred to by Prime Minister Hon. John Briceño as an effort by Hon. Barrow to sing "for his supper". Barrow



Moses "Shyne" Barrow, Leader of the Opposition

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## 10% salary cut reinstated



Teacher protesting salary cuts in 2021

BELIZE CITY, Mon. July 18, 2022

An act to reinstate full wages for public officers went through three readings in the House of Representatives last Friday with bipartisan support. Today, the act was passed in the Senate, also with the

support of Opposition senators. While the government made this decision to reinstate the 10% of public officers' salaries that had been deducted as part of a cost-saving effort within just a year

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# Cannabis referendum to cost \$5M

*The government of Belize has estimated the cost of the upcoming referendum on the legalization of cannabis to be about 5 million dollars.*

BELIZE CITY, Mon. July 18, 2022

The Government of Belize has allocated BZD \$5 million dollars to cover the cost of the upcoming referendum on the legalization of cannabis triggered by the Church. During Friday’s sitting of the House of Representatives, Prime Minister Hon. John Briceño presented, as a part of a BZD \$68.7 million budget supplementary appropriation, the \$5 million dollar allocation to cover the expenses involved in organizing and carrying out the referendum, including logistics costs and other costs to be incurred by the Elections and Boundaries Commission.

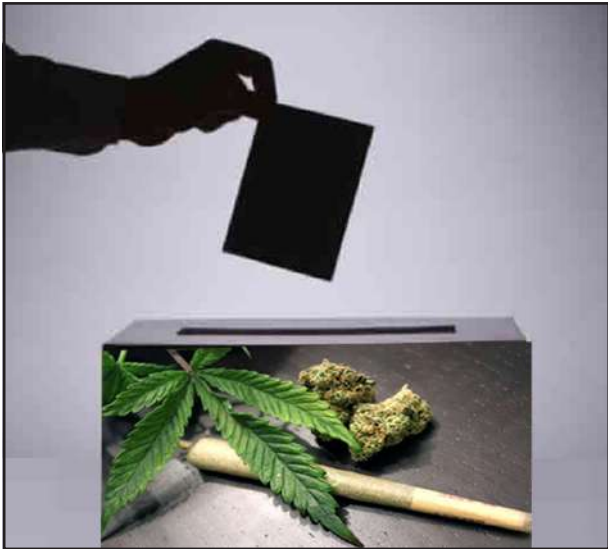
“In accordance with the requirement of the Referendum Act, a referendum now must be held no later than September 4<sup>th</sup>. Now, in full support of this democratic process, we must now fund the cost of the referendum, including all costs of the Elections and Boundaries Commission—, logistics and organization costs. It is estimated that this will amount to \$5 million dollars, so that we now hereby seek the authorization of the supplementary appropriation of such sum”, stated Hon. Briceño at the House meeting on Friday.

This hefty outlay is being categorized as a Capital II expense, and will ultimately be shouldered by taxpayers. During an interview following the House meeting, PM Briceño said that even if the majority of voters indicate support of cannabis legalization in the referendum, his administration will address any potential corresponding banking risks before the full rollout of the industry.

“As Minister of Finance, we did present a paper to Cabinet, presenting to say that the banking community is still a bit concerned and is asking us not to proceed until those banking issues have been addressed, so we have agreed to, that we have already agreed that this law will not be enacted until we have found a way of how is it that we are going to address the corresponding banking that the banks have, so that was not going to go into place immediately,” PM Briceño said.

The PM went on to assert that the prohibition of the production/sale of marijuana, despite the decriminalization of the personal use of small amounts of it, has empowered criminal groups willing to operate outside the law to meet the market demand for cannabis.

“What we have done is that we have empowered the criminals, because the criminals, or the gangs, they are the ones that control the marijuana and sell it to us, the Belizean people, so when you have it in your possession and it’s under 10 grams, it’s legal, they can’t



do you anything, but where do you get it?” PM Briceño said, adding that the idea behind the legalization of cannabis is to control the cultivation and sale of the commodity, remove the criminal elements from the equation, and earn revenue for the government during the process.

“We want to assure the Belizean people that we are not going [to] risk, the umm, corresponding banking relations that our banks have and that whenever we enact it, it will either be: (a) That we have already addressed those issues or (b) That it is not going to contaminate the fund or the revenues that our banks have when they are doing their banking transactions with international banks.”

PM Briceño also said that his administration has considered possibly asking the churches to permit a delay in the referendum until such matters pertaining to the legislation are worked out before putting the vote to the Belizean people—which would also delay the spending of \$5 million that he said could be otherwise used to address other needs of Belizeans, such as food and education.

“I’m prepared to speak with them, but we can’t hold it back anymore. It is out of our hands,” PM Briceño said.

# Efforts to modernize Belize’s legislation continue

*Bills for amendments to the Libel and Defamation Act and the Married Persons Protection Act were presented in the Senate and received extensive support from its members*

by Khaila Gentle

BELMOPAN, Mon. July 18, 2022

At the sitting of the Senate today, efforts to modernize the country’s legislation continued with the presentation of two Bills brought from the House of Representatives—the Defamation Bill 2022 and the Married Persons Protection Amendment Bill 2022.

The Defamation Bill 2022 seeks to repeal the current Libel and Defamation Act in order to make way for new provisions relating to cases of defamation. According to the Leader of Government Business, Hon. Eamon Courtenay, the goal is to ensure the country has a modern Defamation Act. Not only does it abolish the distinction between libel and slander, said Hon. Courtenay, but it also removes the requirement for persons to prove special damages to bring a claim of libel. Most importantly, though, the Bill will give the media some layer of protection when disseminating information.

“Part 3 of the Bill provides a comprehensive code for a person who is accused of making a libelous or slanderous statement to have an opportunity to resolve that claim or that dispute outside of the court in order to try to make amends by giving an apology and, where necessary, damages,” explained Senator Courtenay.

A part of that comprehensive code is the improved scope of defenses settled in the bill, including the defense of fair comment and the defense of innocent dissemination, both of which are important for the media.

“With the law as it currently stands, if the *New York Times* were to libel Senator Willoughby and the *Belize Times* were to report and repeat that here, he would be able to sue both the *Belize Times* and the *New York Times*.



Leader of Government Business, Hon. Eamon Courtenay

So even though the newspaper will say ‘I’m merely repeating what has been said,’ the newspaper at home would still be liable,” said Hon. Courtenay.

With the introduction of the defense of innocent dissemination, however, local media houses would be protected to an extent in such a situation.

“So, it’s an improvement to assist the media in repeating what is said in other publications,” added the Senator.

According to Hon. Courtenay, extensive consultations were undertaken in the forming of the bill.

“The House Committee had met, and a significant number of amendments were proposed. They were virtually all taken onboard and brought into the bill. So what is before you is a bill that is the product of substantial consultation and contribution by the media and others,” he stated.

Senator Janelle Chanona rose to highlight the importance of revisiting the Defamation Act in the future if need be, especially considering that technology and information are rapidly evolving.

Also presented in the Senate today was the Married Persons Protection Amendment Bill 2022, which seeks to remove the fault grounds on which a person can file for judicial separation and replaces such grounds with incompatibility as the primary basis for separation.

When it was first introduced in the House of Representatives, Minister of Education, Culture, Science, & Technology, Hon. Francis Fonseca explained that the Bill is being introduced to update the country’s laws as they relate to judicial separation “to meet the needs of an ever-evolving society” and to remove any discriminatory provisions against women that are currently present in the law.

“It removes archaic and offensive language to modernize the law,” said the Minister.

As with the Defamation Bill, the Married Persons Protection Amendment Bill was not met with any objection in the Senate.

## LETTERS TO THE Editor

### Teacher thanks Belize Post Office

Editor  
Amandala Newspaper  
3304 Partridge Street  
Belize City

July 17, 2022

Dear Editor,

Sometimes we fail to acknowledge the hospitality of those who provide essential services to us. I am talking about the Belize Post Office (BPO).

A few weeks ago, my wife visited the BPO in Belize City and returned

home with some very encouraging observations. She was touched by her extraordinary welcome and moved by how she was treated — with dignity and courtesy. She was so overwhelmed by her experience.

I salute the Belize Postal Service (Belize City branch) on their professionalism. I hope that their hospitality would serve as a beacon to the other service providers who may not be providing that type of hospitality to their clients.

A retired teacher

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# Belize wins silver in the 19th Central American U21 Women's Volleyball Championship tournament

**Belize loses to an undefeated Guatemala team in five sets in the gold medal championship games. Four Belizean players won five individual awards.**

by Charles Gladden

BELIZE CITY, Mon. July 18, 2022

After being undefeated for the duration of the Central American U21 Women's Volleyball Championship tournament, the Belize U21 Women's Volleyball team suffered a crucial loss at the tournament at the hands of the Guatemalan team, who went undefeated for the tournament's entirety.

Before the championship game on Saturday, July 16, Team Belize was the clear favorite to win the gold medal, as they had won all of their games within three sets, while the Guatemalan women's team also won all of their games, but within five sets.

However, Belize lost its first set in its match against Guatemala with a score of 19 - 25. But they were able to bounce back in the second and third sets with a score of 25 - 20 and 25 - 20, and were able to ignite the home base with energetic cheers. However, they were unable to sustain the momentum and lost the remaining two sets with a score of 19 - 25 and 11 - 15.

Captain of Belize's U21 Women's Volleyball team, Sofia Solano, remarked after the game, "I mean, a lot of us are disappointed. We really wanted gold, [and] I think we have wanted it for so long, and it was right there, and I feel like we were all disappointed that we didn't get it. But on the other hand, we did fight extremely hard; we gave it our all on the court; we pushed point by point, and in the end, Guatemala got the best of us, but we did try our best and put a lot of effort [into] the court... the fourth and fifth sets were a bit difficult for us because you factor in being tired. You factor in a lot of pressure from the fans, but I think we did have that mental strength to



Belize's U21 Women's Volleyball team wins silver



Individual Awards



Guatemala wins Gold

power us through those sets at least and give it our all as well."

At the end of the tournament, four Belizean players were awarded five out of twelve awards. Fatoumata Camara won the Best Spiker and Best Receiver awards, while Gareth Bruce also received a Best Spiker award and Iman Safa was named Best Setter. Solano was named Best Libero of the tournament and told AMANDALA that it was a surprise to be given this award.

"It was a surprise for me, honestly, because I feel like I could've done a lot much better in this tournament, and I think the Guatemala game allowed me to really try to push harder and get more touches and get more digs and things like that. I honestly do feel happy. Of course, I am still disappointed, because I want our team to win gold, and for me the team over everything, the team over individual awards. But of course, I am grateful [and] I am satisfied," she said.

After the disappointing loss for Belize's U21 team, Solano mentioned that there will be another upcoming tournament in Honduras at the U23 level, which will begin in a week, and the majority of the members on the U21 team will be participating in it as well.

"I think most of us are going to stay and train for that, and we're going to basically for the next couple of days be working on that. It's a higher age group, it's U23; this is U21, so it will be a bit more difficult, but it gives us an opportunity to work hard again and represent our country," she said.

Belize won silver in the Central American U21 Women's Volleyball Championship tournament in 2018, and in 2019 they also won silver at the U18 and U23 levels.

# Fatal RTA: PM's driver knocks down cyclist

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Minister Hon. John Briceño's driver. When interviewed by the media this morning, Commissioner of Police Chester Williams said that, following the incident, Hill was taken to the Ladyville Police Station, where he fully complied with police.

A file is being put together by investigators and will be passed on to the Director of Public Prosecution (DPP), Cheryl-Lynn Vidal, who will determine if any charges will be brought against Hill.

"Presently investigators are putting the

file together, recording statements from witnesses, and we will be sending the file to the Director of Public Prosecutions for her determination," Commissioner of Police, Chester Williams said.

According to COMPOL Williams, Hill was reportedly driving his private motor vehicle from Belize City in the direction of Orange Walk when the victim, who was riding a bicycle, reportedly swerved toward Hill's vehicle. The COMPOL further said that Hill could not avoid hitting the man, since traffic was coming from the opposite direction.

"The cyclist was hit, and was transported to the Karl Heuser Memorial Hospital, where he later succumbed to his injuries," COMPOL Williams said. While he could not place blame on any of the parties at this time, since the DPP's determination is pending, COMPOL Williams did remark, "Like I said, the cyclist, based on what investigation is showing so far, is that the cyclist was the one who swerved in the path of Mr. Hill's oncoming vehicle. But we are not going to say at this time who is at fault. We are going to put the file together, and then we sent it to the DPP, and then she will make that determination."

COMPOL Williams said that, while many believe that extra leniency will be

afforded to Hill because of his political affiliation, he will be dealt with like any other person who finds themselves in a similar situation. He said that no special treatment will be given to Hill on account of his role as the PM's driver.

"We would normally not arrest somebody right away unless there is a clear indication that the driver is at fault, or in situations where drivers would refuse to cooperate in giving blood or urine sample to test if they were under the influence," COMPOL Williams said.

Hill will remain free to drive until any decision barring him from doing so is handed down by the courts.



# PM: LOO “sings” for Waterloo supper

*PM Briceño stated at a House of Representatives meeting on Friday that Waterloo Investment Holdings Limited has not submitted critical pieces of information, without which there can be no issuance of environmental approval by the NEAC.*

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seized an opportunity at the House meeting to ask what the government was doing to “find solutions to the problems stalling the Waterloo port proposal project”—a question that, Prime Minister Briceno pointed out, could easily have been presented to the Minister of Sustainable Development rather than in the House, where the most critical national issues are addressed. The expansion of the Port of Belize proposed by Waterloo Investment

Holdings – reportedly a Lord Michael Ashcroft-owned company — to create a cruise and cargo docking facility, was rejected by the National Environmental Appraisal Committee (NEAC) in December of 2021.

At the time of the rejection of the proposal, a reason for the denial was not released to the public, although there had been numerous expressions of concern about the potential impact of the project from environmentalists, community members and even the Belize Water Services Ltd. It was later

reported that the NEAC received an amended proposal from Waterloo which is still being reviewed. But during Friday’s sitting of the House of Representatives, Prime Minister Briceño, in response to the question posed by the Leader of the Opposition, said, “In the most recent update to Cabinet, (the NEAC), indicated that some critical information from the applicant remain pending and with absence to that information, approval or disapproval could not be given.”

There has been speculation by the Prime Minister that the government’s lack of intervention in the process in order to guarantee approval of the project—despite the efforts by two other developers to construct cruise facilities within a small geographical area—has prompted acts of spite by the owner of Waterloo, who is said to be Lord Michael Ashcroft. In reference to rumors that Lord Achcroft might be supporting the churches in a referendum process that could derail government’s attempt to create a cannabis industry, Prime Minister Briceño said, “He is a Belizean citizen and he has a lot of money, and if he wants to support the church to spite us because we have not given him clearance on the NEAC, I mean, that’s his right. The point that I made is that there is a process under the NEAC that a company has to go through. The Port of Belize, Waterloo, when they were doing their presentation to NEAC, there was some extra information that was being asked of them, and they refuse to provide it, and it is because of that refusal then the NEAC decided that at that time they would not.”

At the time of the rejection, Waterloo principals made an allegation that NEAC members had approached them in an attempt to seek bribes and that their rejection of the overtures is what led to the ultimate denial of their project. Those allegations were never substantiated. Waterloo ultimately opted to resubmit an application for review in an attempt to move forward from what it described as a “chaotic” three-year process.

Now, according to the PM, the process is once again stalled because of what he said is key information that has not been provided by the company as a part of this most recent addendum. At the time of the initial rejection of Waterloo’s proposal, the company had said that they had spent more than \$5 million, and, in fact, as much as \$10 million, in developing its plans for the project. The company, which carried out a second consultation exercise after environmental concerns were raised by environmental groups and the Belize Water Services Ltd., due to the proposed offshore dumping of dredged material that would be generated by the project, later proposed on and near-shore solutions instead.

The company has suggested that the disposal of such dredged material was the only pending matter to be

addressed, but during an interview in late December, Minister of Sustainable Development Hon. Orlando Habet said, “...some of that information is missing, as to where all that material will be placed. If there are ten, for example, and you [are] showing me eight, where is the other two cubic meters? So, I think some of that. As I said, I don’t know all the details, but it doesn’t sound like they have provided all the information asked for.”

So, the parties are once again at this juncture, and there is no indication if Waterloo Investment Holdings has submitted the additional information being sought by the NEAC. The PM said that until that information is handed down, a decision cannot be made by the NEAC on the Port of Belize expansion and cruise terminal project.

“Once again, the government’s position is simple: the law requires a NEAC approval for a project of this nature, and magnitude. No less than the health of the Belize Barrier Reef is at stake. The approval process is therefore squarely a matter between the applicant and the NEAC. Government will not prejudice this process one way or the other,” Prime Minister Briceño told Hon. Barrow.

“If they get their clearance, of course, they’re going to get the support of the government, because we need to modernize the port for cargo, and also there is a need for a cruise terminal, so it’s not that we are against the project. It’s simply that we can’t do anything by law until it passes the NEAC,” PM Briceño further said.

Interestingly, an editorial featured in last Tuesday’s edition of the *Amandala*, stated, “... It is no secret that Ashcroft’s Belize Bank has been the receiver, for almost a decade, for the Port of Belize, and that he has publicly joined all plans for undertaking necessary repairs and modernizing of the port facilities with his desire to also turn it into a modern cruise tourism facility – Waterloo. And the history of Ashcroft in Belize has been: what Ashcroft wants, Ashcroft gets.... There are major environmental concerns, especially with respect to our Barrier Reef, involved with realizing the planned Waterloo Cruise Port facility; but the tried and proven Ashcroft formula seems to be: money can solve every problem. So, Belize’s “Blue Bond” recently made us an international star at the UN Oceans Conference (See *Amandala* page 13 of Friday, July 8, 2022.) So what? ... He hired the best he could find in Belize and secured top flight E.I.A. consultants from abroad... So, there is a Barrier Reef concern? .... So what if the Port Coral (Stake Bank) guys think that Waterloo’s approval will spell a death knell to the viability of their project?...”

The editorial also noted that Ashcroft could also “choose to throw his ‘weight’ behind the Opposition.”

## Senate supports Amnesty Bill

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amendments to the Belizean Nationality Act Chapter 161 of the Substantive Laws of Belize (Revised Edition 2020).

Leader of Government Business, Senator Eamon Courtenay rose to present the Bill and outlined the Government’s position as it relates to the Amnesty Program:

“There are tens of thousands of persons in Belize who have either come here irregularly or came here regularly and have become irregular. These persons are in Belize, and for all intents and purposes have made Belize their home; however, they remain irregular. Like in any country, they’re fearful of coming to the Immigration Department to seek to regularize their status. They are fearful that if they do so, they will be arrested, deported, or arrested and charged or suffer some consequence—fined perhaps,” he stated.

Amnesty 2022 is expected to benefit up to sixty thousand irregular migrants living in Belize. That includes persons who have fled from neighboring Central American and Latin American nations either in fear of gang-related violence or in search of better employment opportunities, as well as migrants from Haiti who have escaped political upheaval.

In the past, some members of the public have expressed concern that gang members from other nations, fleeing persecution by their governments, would use the amnesty program to their advantage. Hon. Courtenay, however, maintained that no such thing would happen under the program. He also stressed the fact that the program is open to migrants of all nations:

“I want to stress two things: one, this is not solely for people from Latin America or Central America. It applies to all nationalities, ethnicities, and races. Second, there is a very rigorous security check that is done for every applicant for permanent residence, and that would also be done and applied to these applicants,” he stated.

“To persons who have expressed concerns about security issues about gang members being allowed to pass through this process: that is unlikely because of the system in place, and I can say that system has already turned up, not in relation to the amnesty, because that has not begun, but persons

who have applied for citizenship and persons who have applied for permanent residence. That system has turned up persons who have convictions elsewhere, and they have been rejected and deported,” added Senator Courtenay.

Hundreds of thousands of persons are expected to turn up to take advantage of the program, and the government has already begun taking appointments. Since doing so, a total of 4,752 persons have signed up—1,627 of which are minors. According to Senator Courtenay, the majority of appointments so far have been made by persons in the Cayo District—a total of 1,586 persons, while over six hundred persons from the Belize District have signed up as well.

This, says Senator Courtenay, comes even before the Government’s launch of their public education and information campaigns and is a result of the International Organization of Migration’s (IOM) Amnesty Clinics, which have been taking place across the country since earlier this year.

Several senators rose in support of the bill, including Senator Kevin Herrera, who is the representative for the Belize Chamber of Commerce & Industry and Belize Business Bureau. Hon. Hererra stated that he feels granting amnesty is the “civil thing to do.”

“We’re certainly in support of the bill, Madame President. I think that it’s a good initiative, given that so many people from neighboring countries, as well as countries from other parts of the world; you know, those people live here, they work here, they’ve settled, they’re grounded here in one way or the other,” he said.

Hon. Herrera also recommended that the bill put emphasis on bringing in persons with special skills that can serve to benefit the country.

The Belizean Nationality Amendment Bill 2022 was first tabled in the House of Representatives on Friday, June 3. An article in the Tuesday, June 7th issue of *AMANDALA* noted that, according to Prime Minister Hon. John Briceño, the Amnesty program will not officially begin until the amendment has been passed and accompanying regulations are issued. The Prime Minister had also noted that before the next two readings of the bill, there would be ample debate and consultations.

**Our email address for news, letters and articles is  
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# Sports and sub-culture of crime in Belize

## Congratulations to our U21 Women Volleyball Team!!

Monday, July 18, 2022

The murders and robberies continue, and so does the weeping and gnashing of teeth by the bereaved, who find little solace, as no one knows the answers or solutions to what seems to have become a way of life in some of our once peaceful and loving communities. Our authorities have tried many strategies, and have all acknowledged that no one approach can solve this multi-faceted and complex problem, which is not just a matter of bad individuals committing crimes, but what has apparently become a new culture or way of thinking among a certain sector of society. While it used to be accepted that "crime doesn't pay", the attitude of many in this sector is perhaps best portrayed in a song by the artist Dan Man, which says, "Wi tyad a ga not'n; we hafu get so'pm." (We're tired of having nothing; we have to get something.)

Despite our current economic hardships, traditional Belizeans still cling to the old values of honesty and respect for others, especially elders, but some others, primarily youths, may have slipped into this new sub-culture of disrespect for official authority and an inclination to commit unlawful acts, from burglaries and robberies to even murder, and a tendency to settle differences by extreme violence rather than through discussion/reasoning and compromise. The question has to be, why? Why do so many of our young people in this sector of society think this way?

Before we can even begin to try and answer this question, we have to acknowledge that we are not just talking about some individuals who are "giving trouble," but it is a way of thinking among members of this sub-culture which provides cover, support, and endorsement of their actions, and emboldens these individuals to continue in their behavior pattern.

For example, at the Under-20 football championship final at the Marion Jones Sports Complex on Saturday afternoon, with his team down 4-1, one young man on the losing team, when the referee showed him a yellow card, aggressively approached and then physically attacked and punched the referee, all this on the field of play and in full view of the attending fans, as well as the association officials at the nearby official desk. By the time a uniformed police officer was able to reach the side of the referee, the young man had not only kicked the game ball high off the northern end of the field, but proceeded to calmly walk to where the ball had landed behind the goal post, picked it up, and then kicked it again further into the adjacent bushes at Marion Jones.

Why we say that this is not an individual problem, but a sub-culture situation, is because of what happened

next. (It is to be presumed that the young man will be suspended from football for a while, as has been the tradition; but the season has ended, so who cares.) The young man, an apparent hero to his fans seated on the big cement bleachers to the west of the Marion Jones football field, then casually walked across the field, out of the enclosure, and across the cycling track, to be greeted by two finely dressed young ladies who appeared eager to engage him in conversation about his recent display of bravado. In decades past, when a certain notorious character "lost it" on the MCC and tore up the referee's card before assaulting him, he then quickly took to running out the gate and away down Princess Margaret Drive to the security of his neighborhood hideout. But in 2022, the youthful offender was a hero being applauded and embraced by young beauties, while there were no voices of criticism or chastisement coming from the many young fans seated. Everybody just minded their own business, or seemed amused about the goings on. One fan remarked that there was a fight just about every week during the recently completed competition. This is where we are in 2022. These are not isolated incidents. Regretfully, it is now a way of life for some, a sub-culture of Belize City.

The management of the losing U20 team at Saturday's final at the Marion Jones reportedly has a good record with the Belize District Football Association (BDFA). Their U17 team had just won the championship earlier that morning in a tightly contested match that had a few questionable referee decisions. But that's football, and the end was incident-free. Overall, their U20 team was not unruly either; but one team member, reportedly a recent recruit from another team, had his own "issues" and sub-culture background, and it all played out on Saturday.

According to our sources, indiscipline and disrespect for official authority are the main reasons why so few football players from Belize City, the most populous district, make it to the Belize National Male Team. Despite the abundance of talent in the old capital, there is a serious problem with a sub-culture that is self-defeating and effectively deprives many of our talented young men from realizing their true potential and enjoying the benefits and the opportunities that come with selection to the highest level of the sport.

A lot of time, effort and energy obviously went into the preparation of our young women who gave their all but came up just short in the Central American U21 Volleyball Tournament that ended on Saturday night with Guatemala, our arch-rival, winning the Gold over Belize, who had to settle for Silver. It was a painful, heartbreaking loss, after the Gold had seemed within our grasp with our 2-1 sets lead. But despite it all, our nation was a gracious host to all, including our Guatemalan adversaries, and our Belizean team displayed sportsmanship of the highest order. Our girls are very young, and it may be that experience was the deciding factor in crunch time. Our day will come. At the old Civic Center, Belize had hosted and won the CARICOM Men Basketball Championship back in 1998. Twice now in the new millennium we have hosted and taken Silver in Central American volleyball at the new Civic Center. And on all occasions, our Belizean culture of warmth, hospitality and sportsmanship has been paramount. Congratulations to the team members, coaching staff, management and the leadership of the Belize Volleyball Association!

It has often been suggested that we need more sports to keep our young people busy, and to teach them to be disciplined and have respect for authority. But from what we have observed over recent years in Belize City football, even when the CYDP (Conscious Youth Development Programme) had taken over the running of the Belize District 1st Division football competition, not much has been achieved in this area. There are medicines that when properly administered can help heal the sick, but improperly administered could be ineffective, and

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# GOB presents US \$75 million loan motion

by *Khaila Gentle*

BELMOPAN, Fri. July 15, 2022

At Friday's Sitting of the House of Representatives, the Government of Belize introduced yet another loan motion—this one for a loan of US \$75 million from the Government of Taiwan. According to Prime Minister Hon. John Briceño, the funding is being granted by the Export-Import Bank of the Republic of China, Taiwan and will be used for “general financing purposes.” That includes financing the budget deficit for fiscal year 2022 to 2023.

The Prime Minister also noted that while the loan motion is new, the Government had informed the House earlier this year about the funding and thus it is “nothing new”.

“We couldn't present the loan motion then, because we were still working out the legal documents,” said Prime Minister Briceño.

“Again, this is no news. You can go back to the records on my presentation, and you'll see I did announce it. It will not be used to fund any new recurring budget spending or fund any new capital programs,” he added.

Nevertheless, the loan motion was hotly debated in the House, leading to an extended back and forth between both sides. The Opposition has often criticized the current administration for what it has called excessive borrowing.

“I have to highlight the hypocrisy of this Prime Minister who, when he was in Opposition, and even when he

became prime minister, would lament over and repeatedly about borrowing—that we, the UDP, were saddling generations upon generations with public debt. And the Belizean people have to appreciate that this prime minister and this government are doing the exact same thing that they criticized the Barrow administration for doing,” said Opposition leader Hon. Moses “Shyne” Barrow.

Adding to Hon. Barrow's comments was area representative for the Albert division, Hon. Tracy Panton, who remarked that she hopes the proceeds from the loan go towards helping those living on the margins.

“As this administration continues to borrow at alarming rates, I would like to urge the Prime Minister and his Cabinet to ensure that the money is used to serve the people,” she stated.

Hon Panton pointed out the fact that since April 2021, the government has presented thirteen loan motions in the House, amounting to \$390 million in total.

“You see, Madame Speaker, in Opposition, the Prime Minister criticized the Barrow Administration for borrowing a million dollars a day. If you look at where we are to date, Madame Speaker—one year and a half into this Administration—they are borrowing more than a million dollars a day,” she added.

The Briceño administration, however, was quick to remind the Opposition of days when the former

administration had to borrow to “pay the bills.”

“There's a difference between just having to borrow because you can't pay your bills, like what happened under the previous administration, when there was talk about not being able to pay Mexico for light, when there was talk about not being able to pay salaries,” stated Fort George area representative, Hon. Henry Charles Usher.

“We had a homegrown plan to rescue this economy—a homegrown plan to make sure that we put this economy, this country back on the right economic footing, and that's where we are right now. And yes, responsible borrowing is needed. Using that money for productive purposes is responsible in the development of any nation,” he added.

The Fort George area representative's sentiments were echoed by the Prime Minister:

“You were not even paying your bills. Post Office. Remember, Member from Cayo North? We were at a point of the International Post Office Organization fi shet down the service for post offices for Belize because you nuh pay your bills! How much? More than four years unu nuh pay unu bills,” said Hon. Briceño.

The debate quickly devolved into a back and forth between sides following a discussion on the former leader of the UDP Rt. Hon. Dean Barrow's admission a few weeks earlier that he was aware of rampant corruption in the



*Prime Minister Hon. John Briceño*

UDP. This led to the Speaker of the House reminding all members of Standing Order 42B, which states that while a member is on their feet, others must remain quiet.

“I can tell you, from this chair, it's very difficult, so I'm focusing on the member who is speaking, and I will stop focusing on that member when I hear a point of order. But the bantering that goes on across the aisle, and at the decibel levels that it seems to be increasing at, makes it a bit challenging,” said Speaker Valerie Woods.

The total proceeds of the loan from Taiwan are expected to be disbursed over a four-year period, with the first disbursement of 42 million dollars being committed to supporting the budget.

## Patrick Faber is back

**Former UDP leader Hon. Patrick Faber says that during his extended period of absence from the House of Representatives, he was working on becoming a “better individual”, dealing with family matters, and reenrolling in a doctorate program.**

by *Khaila Gentle*

BELMOPAN, Fri. July 15, 2022

Area representative for the Collet constituency and former UDP leader Patrick Faber was back in the House of Representatives on Friday after several months of absence which were primarily the result of the extended time he has spent outside the country following his departure from Belize in January. According to Faber, he had made attempts to return to the country before Friday, but those attempts were derailed by factors out of his control. When he spoke with the media outside of the National Assembly building at the end of the House meeting on Friday, he explained the reasons behind his extended absence, which included a mild bout of COVID-19 and some family matters.

“I had a very mild bout of COVID—just a fever for a day and a half—but I was not able to get a negative test in time for the House meeting. And then, on another occasion, I was at my son's graduation in the US, and I tried to get back, but there was a slew of cancellations of flights,” he said.

Faber added that his primary focus and responsibility continue to be the people residing in his constituency. He also explained that while away, he managed to remain in the loop when it came to happenings both inside and outside the party.

“I never really left the party. I kept abreast of things. We have various chat groups that keep us abreast of what is happening both in the party and inside of the Government,” he stated.

According to the former party leader, it was never his intention to be absent from the House for so long, and there were at least two occasions on which he attempted to attend a meeting but was unable to, including when he contracted COVID-19.

“But I'm happy to be back, and one thing I can tell you is, I don't intend to be missing House meetings—that's not me. And in fact, on one of the occasions when I was missing and had COVID, I called the Prime Minister to say just that,” he said.

While Faber had been absent from House meetings since December of last year, he departed the country on January 27, 2022—right after an interview on a

local evening talk show, *Uncut*, during which he had taken offense to certain remarks that were made, which led to him storming off the set. Exactly two months later, the United Democratic Party would hold the most recent of several leadership conventions, and Hon. Moses “Shyne” Barrow would be selected by party delegates as the new UDP leader.

Faber stepped down from the position of party leader in late January amid calls for his resignation following a slew of domestic abuse allegations. Much of the Belizean public had become unable to ignore those allegations after a statement made by Faber's fiancée to police was leaked earlier that month. He stood accused of assaulting his fiancée and damaging a laptop belonging to her. And though she eventually withdrew her report, the Collet area representative lost his standing in the public eye.

According to Hon. Patrick Faber, during his time out of the country he has also been working on becoming “a better individual.” That includes working towards getting a doctorate in



*Hon. Patrick Faber returns to the House of Representatives*

Public Administration—which will require him to travel frequently between Belize and the US—and continuing to attend therapy sessions. He also spent time visiting his children in California and Atlanta and grieving the loss of his elder brother John who passed away in March of this year.

At the previous Sitting of the House of Representatives on June 3, only two out of five members of the Opposition were present: Hon. Tracy Panton and Opposition Leader Hon. Moses “Shyne” Barrow. With Faber's return on Friday, the Opposition's numbers increased by one, while Hon. Hugo Patt and Hon. Denise “Sista B” Barrow were both absent.

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# Belize City bridges need replacement

by Charles Gladden

BELIZE CITY. Mon. July 18, 2022

The Minister of Infrastructure Development and Housing, Hon. Julius Espat, has said that two major bridges, the Swing Bridge and BelCan Bridge, in Belize City, need to be replaced due to structural decay that could at some point lead to loss of life if not addressed, while the BelChina Bridge requires maintenance work.

An internal report from the Ministry of Infrastructure Development and Housing that was leaked last week contained recommendations that the Swing Bridge and BelCan Bridge be replaced or undergo extensive reconstruction.

The Swing Bridge, the oldest of the three bridges, was built in 1922, making it 100 years old, and according to the leaked Ministry of Infrastructural Development report, the steel supporting the bridge's

rollers, loading pin, and gears is currently showing signs of extensive decay due to rust, and as a result it has lost much of its structural thickness.

Back in May, Minister Espat told local reporters that his ministry was carrying out some assessment of the conditions of the three major bridges in Belize City. And when the local media met with Minister Espat after the House of Representatives meeting on Friday, he explained, "I had commissioned the engineers from the ministry to do an analysis of all the bridges in Belize City. A



Condition at Swing Bridge

## People's Constitutional Commission Bill introduced



Hon. Henry Charles Usher – Minister of Constitutional Reform

BELIZE CITY, Mon. July 18, 2022

The first reading of an act to establish the People's Constitutional Commission (PCC) was tabled during the sitting of the House of Representatives on Friday. The bill, which Minister of Constitutional Reform, Hon. Henry Charles Usher said has gone through a long gestation period, will forward a process of decolonization in the nation of Belize through the drafting of a new Constitution, 41 years after independence.

"Madam Speaker, 41 years after our independence, it is high time that we as a nation own our independence, and we need to continue this decolonization project. So, I'm very proud to stand here today to introduce this bill," Minister Henry Charles said.

He noted that the last time an undertaking of this sort was carried out, the commission carrying out the process did not have legislative backing. This new commission, Usher said, will not only have full backing but also be independent, since they will be spearheading the process of bringing various stakeholders together to create the new Constitution.

"It was felt, Madam Speaker, originally, that we should have gone through the three readings today, but after further reflections, the Cabinet, myself, those involved in the process

felt that this is of such national importance, that it is important that we just do the first reading and allow the people of Belize to have an opportunity to digest and make comments on this particular piece of legislation," Minister Usher said.

After noting that the Constitutional Reform Commission in 1999 had not received legislative backing when an attempt was made to carry out such a process at that time, Minister Usher pointed out that the current administration's move to put in place the necessary legislation to guide the process shows that they are committed to seeing the process carried out, "in the most consultative manner possible".

"One of the key areas for decolonization is the Constitution of Belize. This is a very important and complex undertaking, and it requires a lot of study, discussion, and action that will make the general citizenry aware and capable of informed participation. There must be a process for creating a new People's Constitution, and this commission, Madam Speaker, will be in charge of that process," Hon. Usher said.

He further stated that the bill consists of 5 parts, with 25 sections covering everything from the establishment of the commission to the enshrinement of its independence from interference.

"Section 7, in particular, speaks about the independence of the commission. I'm very happy that we have included in this legislation the independence of this People's Constitutional Commission," Hon. Usher said.

The recently established Good Governance Unit, headed by Cesar Ross, will act as the secretariat of the People's Constitutional Commission. The members of that unit were present at the House meeting on Friday.

A letter has been sent to the Leader of the Opposition to request that he forward the names of the two persons that the UDP has selected to sit on that committee as well as two alternate members.

couple [of] friends of mine that are fishermen that traverse the river on a constant basis were telling me that come and have a look. So they did an analysis of the 3 bridges: Swing Bridge, BelChina, and BelCan, and the report that you've seen is the report that they sent to us. I took that report to [the] Cabinet and I requested permission to do a feasibility study. We are presently doing a feasibility study to complete the George Price Highway from Belize City to Belmopan... So we are doing a feasibility study. I got the opportunity to insert the three bridges as a part of the feasibility, and that's why the initial report was done."

He further stated, "Now that we have gotten the approval, the engineers are now working on a preliminary design to be able to come up with the first estimates. Of the three bridges, the BelChina is the best; that needs normal maintenance—painting and stuff like that. The second is Swing Bridge in how it is holding up. The Belize City Council had done some work a couple

[of] years ago, and that alleviated it a bit, but it is just like a Band-Aid effect. The major one is the BelCan."

Also, the internal report noted that heavy traffic, including public buses, should no longer traverse the Swing Bridge, as it is no longer safe for such vehicles to cross due to the deterioration of its support mechanisms that has taken place over time.

"Yes, the buses and heavy traffic is what they are referring to. It does create more stress on these structures, and so we are trying to mitigate it to a point where nobody gets hurt. But if you are looking at the three bridges, priority number one is BelCan at this point in time; priority number two is Swing Bridge, and we will deal with the BelChina with the resources that we have in-house presently," he added.

Also, work is currently underway to replace the Haulover Bridge, which connects Belize City to Ladyville. The Hawkesworth Bridge in the western part of the country is also currently being refurbished.

## Man dies after barge capsizes

by Charles Gladden

BELIZE CITY, Mon. July 18, 2022

On Thursday, July 14, around 1:00 p.m. a man lost his life when the barge on which he was working, capsized off the coast of Placencia.

According to local media reports, three persons were onboard the barge, which was carrying construction supplies, an excavator, and a loader near Harvest Caye, when the vessel, which was reportedly being towed by another vessel, capsized, which caused one man who was working on the barge to be cast into the water. He was recovered and taken to Harvest Caye for medical treatment, but passed away moments later.

Commissioner of the Belize Port Authority, Major H. Gilbert Swaso, stated that the situation could have been more dire for the other passengers onboard the vessel due to the unforeseen weather conditions.

"The situation could've been worse, because where two vessels are tied together in tow, sometimes one vessel capsizing and then sinking and would automatically take the other vessel along with it. So there seem to be some immediate actions [that] took place



H. Gilbert Swaso, Commissioner of the Belize Port Authority

which certainly only resulted in only one vessel being sunken at the scene of the incident," he said.

He further stated, "... We need to be very prudent at a time when the seas are rough. We do understand that the weather conditions [were] rough. We're not certain if that may have attributed to what happened, but I just want to take the time out to warn everyone to abide by small craft warnings, and even prior to going out to have an idea of what the weather condition is and what the forecast is. So that then, we take all necessary precautions to safeguard lives."





# Deportes y subcultura del crimen en Belize

## ¡¡Felicitaciones a nuestro Equipo de Voleibol Femenino Sub-21!!

Lunes, 18 de Julio de 2022

Los asesinatos y robos continúan, y también el llanto y el crujir de dientes de los dolientes, quienes encuentran poco consuelo, ya que nadie sabe las respuestas o soluciones a lo que parece haberse convertido en una forma de vida en algunos de nuestras alguna vez pacíficas y amorosas comunidades. Nuestras autoridades han probado muchas estrategias, y todas han reconocido que ningún enfoque puede resolver este problema multifacético y complejo, que no es solo una cuestión de personas malas que cometen delitos, sino que aparentemente se ha convertido en una nueva cultura o forma de pensar entre un determinado sector de la sociedad. Si bien solía aceptarse que “el crimen no paga”, la actitud de muchos en este sector quizás se retrata mejor en una canción del artista Dan Man, que dice: *“Wi tyad a ganot’n; we hafu get so’pm.”* (Estamos cansados de no tener nada; tenemos que conseguir algo.)

A pesar de nuestras actuales dificultades económicas, los beliceños tradicionales todavía se aferran a los viejos valores de honestidad y respeto por los demás, especialmente por los ancianos, pero algunos otros, principalmente jóvenes, pueden haberse deslizado hacia esta nueva subcultura de falta de respeto por la autoridad oficial y una inclinación a cometer actos ilegales, desde allanamiento de morada y robos hasta incluso asesinatos, y una tendencia a resolver las diferencias mediante la violencia extrema en lugar de la discusión/razonamiento y el compromiso. La pregunta tiene que ser, ¿por qué? ¿Por qué tantos de nuestros jóvenes en este sector de la sociedad piensan de esta manera?

Antes de que podamos siquiera comenzar a tratar de responder a esta pregunta, debemos reconocer que no solo estamos hablando de algunas personas que están “dando problemas”, sino que es una forma de pensar entre los miembros de esta subcultura que brinda cobertura, apoyo, y el respaldo de sus acciones, y alienta a estas personas a continuar con su patrón de comportamiento.

Por ejemplo, en la final del campeonato de fútbol sub-20 en el Estadio Marion Jones el sábado por la tarde, con su equipo abajo 4-1, un joven del equipo perdedor, cuando el árbitro le mostró una tarjeta amarilla, se acercó agresivamente y luego físicamente agredió y propinó puñetazos al árbitro, todo ello en el terreno de juego y a la vista de los aficionados asistentes, así como de los responsables de la asociación en el estrado cercano. Para cuando un oficial de policía uniformado pudo llegar al lado del árbitro, el joven no solo había pateado la pelota del juego en lo alto del extremo norte del campo, sino que procedió a caminar tranquilamente hacia donde la pelota había aterrizado detrás de la portería, la recogió y luego la pateó de nuevo hacia los arbustos adyacentes en Marion Jones.

El por qué decimos que esto no es un problema individual, sino una situación de subcultura, es por lo que sucedió después. (Es de suponer que el joven será suspendido del fútbol por un tiempo, como ha sido la tradición; pero la temporada ha terminado, así que a quién le importa.) El joven, un aparente héroe para sus fanáticos sentados en las grandes gradas de cemento al oeste del campo de fútbol de Marion Jones, luego caminó casualmente por el campo, fuera del recinto y atravesó la pista de ciclismo, para ser recibido por dos jóvenes damas elegantemente vestidas que parecían ansiosas por entablar una conversación con él sobre su reciente demostración de bravuconería. En décadas pasadas, cuando cierto personaje notorio “perdía el control” en el MCC y rompía la tarjeta del árbitro antes de agredirlo, rápidamente salía corriendo por la puerta y se alejaba por el Paseo Princess Margaret hacia la seguridad del escondite de su vecindario. Pero en 2022, el joven infractor era un héroe aplaudido y abrazado por jóvenes bellezas, mientras que no hubo voces de crítica o castigo provenientes de los muchos jóvenes fanáticos sentados. Todo el mundo se ocupaba de sus propios asuntos o parecía divertido con lo que sucedía. Un fan comentó que hubo una pelea casi todas las semanas durante la competencia recientemente completada. Aquí es donde estamos en 2022. Estos no son incidentes aislados. Lamentablemente, ahora es una forma de vida para algunos, una subcultura de la Ciudad de Belize.

Según los informes, la dirección del equipo Sub-20 perdedor en la final del sábado en el Marion Jones tiene un buen historial con

la Asociación de Fútbol del Distrito de Belize (BDFA por sus siglas en inglés). Su equipo Sub-17 acababa de ganar el campeonato esa mañana en un partido muy reñido que tuvo algunas decisiones arbitrales cuestionables. Pero así es el fútbol, y el final estuvo libre de incidentes. En general, su equipo Sub-20 tampoco fue rebelde; pero un miembro del equipo, supuestamente un recluta reciente de otro equipo, tenía sus propios “problemas” y antecedentes de subcultura, y todo se desarrolló el sábado.

Según nuestras fuentes, la indisciplina y la falta de respeto a la autoridad oficial son las razones principales por las que tan pocos jugadores de fútbol de la Ciudad de Belize, el distrito más poblado, llegan a la Selección Nacional Masculina de Belize. A pesar de la abundancia de talento en la antigua capital, existe un grave problema con una subcultura que es contraproducente y que priva a muchos de nuestros talentosos jóvenes de darse cuenta de su verdadero potencial y disfrutar de los beneficios y las oportunidades que brinda la selección al más alto nivel del deporte.

Obviamente, se invirtió mucho tiempo, esfuerzo y energía en la preparación de nuestras jóvenes que dieron todo pero se quedaron cortas en el Torneo Centroamericano Sub-21 de Voleibol que terminó el sábado por la noche con Guatemala, nuestro archirrival, ganando el Oro sobre Belize, que tuvo que conformarse con Plata. Fue una derrota dolorosa y desgarradora, después de que el Oro parecía estar a nuestro alcance con nuestra ventaja de 2-1 sets. Pero a pesar de todo, nuestra nación fue un amable anfitrión para todos, incluidos nuestros adversarios guatemaltecos, y nuestro equipo de Belize mostró deportividad del más alto nivel. Nuestras chicas son muy jóvenes, y puede ser que la experiencia haya sido el factor decisivo en el momento crítico. Nuestro día llegara. En el antiguo Centro Cívico, Belize había sido anfitrión y ganó el Campeonato de Baloncesto Masculino de CARICOM en 1998. Dos veces ahora en el nuevo milenio hemos sido anfitriones y ganado Plata en voleibol centroamericano en el nuevo Centro Cívico. Y en todas las ocasiones, nuestra cultura beliceña de calidez, hospitalidad y deportividad ha sido primordial. ¡Felicitaciones a los miembros del equipo, el cuerpo técnico, la gerencia y el liderazgo de la Asociación de Voleibol de Belize!

A menudo se ha sugerido que necesitamos más deportes para mantener ocupados a nuestros jóvenes y enseñarles a ser disciplinados y a respetar la autoridad. Pero por lo que hemos observado en los últimos años en el fútbol de la Ciudad de Belize, incluso cuando el Programa de Desarrollo de una Juventud Consciente (CYDP por sus siglas en inglés) se hizo cargo de la competencia de fútbol de la Primera División del Distrito de Belize, no se ha logrado mucho en esta área. Hay medicinas que bien administradas pueden ayudar a sanar a los enfermos, pero mal administradas pueden ser ineficaces e incluso empeorar el problema. Los deportes de cualquier tipo son mejores que no practicar deportes; entonces, “dejen que los niños jueguen”. Pero si nos esforzamos por utilizar los deportes como uno de los vehículos para ayudar a frenar los graves problemas sociales/culturales que aquejan a nuestras comunidades, entonces esos deportes deben administrarse adecuadamente, comenzando con el calibre de los entrenadores que instruyen e influyen a nuestros jóvenes, y sin descartar la calidad de los funcionarios, tanto administrativos como de campo, a quienes exigimos que nuestros jóvenes y señoritas den respeto. Si hay corrupción y/o incompetencia flagrante en la parte superior, en entrenadores, administradores y/u oficiales de juego, el deporte tendrá poco impacto positivo en la subcultura de indisciplina y tendencia a la ilegalidad.

Mientras tanto, para aquellos miembros de nuestra sociedad beliceña que valoran nuestra cultura tradicional de respeto, buena voluntad y hospitalidad hacia los demás, es importante que aprovechemos cada oportunidad para advertir con amabilidad pero con firmeza a nuestros jóvenes que se descarrian que no es agradable, y que sabemos que pueden hacer mejor. Todos nosotros tenemos un papel que desempeñar para detener este deslizamiento hacia una subcultura destructiva e improductiva. Si los ignoramos o los aplaudimos cuando están haciendo tonterías, lo volverán a hacer, en perjuicio propio y nuestro. “¡Enséñenle a la juventud!”





**Central Information Technology Office**  
**Ministry of Finance**

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**TENDER FOR THE MAINTENANCE OF ELECTRICAL AND AIR CONDITION SYSTEMS AT THE CENTRAL INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY OFFICE**

1. Tenders are invited from Electrical and AC companies for the monthly maintenance or as needed of the Electrical, and Doorand Fire Alarm Systems and for the quarterly maintenance of the Air Condition Systems atthe Belize National ICT Center and Sub Office in Belmopan.

2. Procurement of the services will be conducted through Open Tendering Procedures.

3. The contractor will be expected to provide prompt and efficient operation and maintenance of the complete Electrical, Door and Fire Alarm, and AC systems for one (1) year commencing September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022, and ending August 31<sup>st</sup>, 2023.

4. **Requirements:**

a. The Tenderer should have executed at least five (5) similar work contracts over the past 3 years.

b. The Tenderer should have at least 5 full-time employees on staff specifically trained for operation and maintenance services of Electrical, Door and Fire Alarm Systems, and AC systems. The full list of the employees, viz., name, age, designation, qualifications, and experience should be attached with the Technical Bid.

c. The successful tender will be expected to provide the following Electrical and AC MaintenanceServices:

5. The following services should be included in the financial offer and should not be billed separately:

a. Travel and subsistence

b. Diagnosing issues that require a call out but no remedial work such as a circuit breaker tripping

6. Any costs related to the preparation and submission of tender bids are the sole responsibility of the tenderer.

7. **Eligibility Criteria**  
All Tenders shall include the following:

a. Letters of Good Standing from:

a. Belize Tax Service

b. Belize Companies Registry

c. Belize Social Security Board

b. Current Trade License

c. Evidence of five (5) similar past jobs/contractsover the past three (3) years.

d. Two references

e. Evidence of Electric License for the electricians who will be servicing the electrical systems over the term of the contract.

f. Evidence of Certification in Air Condition maintenance for the AC technicians who will be servicing the AC systems over the term of the contract.

**Electrical Maintenance Program**

- i. All equipment shall be maintained as per the guidelines of the manufacturer.

ii. Inspect, clean, and test all components of the electrical distribution system, such as circuit breakers panels, and switch gears.

iii. Inspect, clean, and test the fire alarm, door alarm, emergency lighting systems, and all lights and lens in the buildings.

iv. Inspect, clean, and test the hydrogen detector system.

v. Repair or replace all electrical components relating to the distribution system, fire and door alarm systems, and lighting systems as needed during the routine monthly service.

vi. Repair or replace all electrical components relating tolights, light fixtures, switches, and outlets as reported by the Customer, within three (3) working days of notification.

vii. Immediately notify the customer of any urgent repairs that are needed for the emergency lights, fire alarm, door alarm, and breaker panels and take corrective action immediately or no later than 24 hours of notification of the customer.

viii. Submission of reports after inspection and works have been completed. The reports should be submitted in both hard and electronic formats.

**Air Conditioner Maintenance Program – CITO Building Corner Mountain View Blvd and Dry Creek Street**

- ix. Clean and replace dust stop air filters as per manufacturer recommendations or as needed.

x. Application of Algae tablets, bleach, and liquid additives in condensation lines and moist areas of the air conditioning system.

xi. Check the entire system for unusual operating conditions, such as excessive noise, condensation, ice build-up, loose insulation, and correct any defects as required.

xii. Check thermostats to ensure they are in proper working order. Operationalchecks to be carried out and adjustments calibration made as required.

xiii. Check evaporator and condenser, blowing out of coils with high-pressure washer and cleaning solution.

xiv. Clean drain pan and all drain pipelines.

xv. Check refrigerant and line for leakage. Inspection of the compressor, all piping, joints, and system components. Conduct pressure checking as required.

xvi. Check all motors and shaft bearings for incidence of wear and replace if needed.

xvii. Check the condition of all contacts in motors and controls. Ensure tightness of all connections and check evidence of over-heating. Correct as may be required.

xviii. Touch up, partial or complete painting as may be required to prevent corrosion.

xix. Clean diffuser grills.

xx. Check ductwork and insulation and replace if needed.

xxi. Submit a detailed report after each service maintenance

d. The company should be capable of offering a 24 hours on-call service for air conditioners and electrical and fire alarm systems to respond to unanticipated emergencies, particularly in the server room.

8. **Evaluation Criteria**  
Bidders will be evaluated according to:

a. Capacity: formal academic qualification and Certification in related field

b. Specific Experience: Experience in providing the service requested

c. Past Performance: Similar Jobs undertook in the past three (3) years

d. Integrity: On the information provided in respect of business certificates

e. Financial Offer

9. Only bids that satisfy the Eligibility Criteria will have their Technical and Financial Offers reviewed. The bid will be assessed on a weighted average – 50% for Technical Merit and 50% for Financial Offer.

10. Price should be inclusive of General Sales Tax (GST) payment of 12.5%.

11. Additional information can be obtained from Ian Smith at Tel: 828-5169 or by email at [Ian.Smith@CITO.gov.bz](mailto:Ian.Smith@CITO.gov.bz).

12. Questions shall be type-written in English and shall be sent via email to the following address:  
  
securitytenders2022@cito.gov.bz. The deadline for queries is 25<sup>th</sup> July 2022. Responses from CITO will be type-written in English and will be emailed to the requester and may also be madeavailable to other Tenderers subject to confidentiality.

13. Tenders are to be submitted in separate Inner Envelopes – one for Technical Offer and another for Financial Offer – and both included in an outer envelope. The outer envelope should mark:  
  
“TENDER FOR THE MONTHLY MAINTENANCE OF ELECTRICAL SYSTEMS AND QUARTERLY MAINTENANCE OF AIR CONDITION SYSTEMSAT THE BELIZE NATIONAL INFORMATION & COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT) CENTER BUILDING (BELMOPAN)”,

14. Deadline for tender submission to the Central Information Technology Office, Belmopan is 1<sup>st</sup>August, 2022 at 10:00 am.

15. Tenderswill be opened in the presence of the representatives of the tenderers on 2<sup>nd</sup>August, 2022 starting at 10:10 am.

16. The lowest or any tender will not necessarily be accepted. Late bids will be disqualified and returned to the sender unopened.

17. This procurement opportunity can also be viewed at <https://blz-cppnb.caricom.org> or <https://procurement.gov.bz>.



# Constitutional Reform



by Clinton Canul Luna

It has been made public that there will be an amendment to the Constitution of Belize or possibly another Constitution, but I rather believe that it will be amended, and it may be that it will serve the status quo. Belize is supposed to want to be a democratic place, because the current system is not. Here there is a monarchy, a form of imperialism; it is a Westminster Parliamentary system where democracy is outside, because in a system where there are kings, queens, there is no democracy. There was an organization a few years ago called, “We the People.” They were fighting politically so that the people could elect the senators, since they were viewed as a rubber stamp, for the reason that they are appointed by the different organizations that make up the government. They are not elected by the people; they are elected by organizations to serve the organizations, not the people. Likewise with the area representatives, they are elected by the people, but they automatically become ministers, that is, of the Cabinet, and one cannot serve the Devil and God at the same time. Either you are serving the people or you are serving a political party.

So, I think that the area representatives, as they are called here in Belize, are deputies, national deputies

who must serve their constituency. The prime minister must be elected by the people, not by area representatives. The prime minister must report to the people directly. Belize is a small country. It is said that it only has four hundred and twenty thousand people. That? Can’t you talk to those people face to face? Does it have to be done on television or radio? In larger countries like Mexico, which has one hundred and twenty-six million Mexicans, the president goes from one place to the other to see the people directly. One hundred twenty-six, gentlemen, not one hundred twenty-three, one hundred twenty-six million, according to the president of Mexico. Here, there are only four hundred and twenty thousand people. It’s hard to see the prime minister. It can’t be done. He became god.

All public posts must be elected by the people in a democracy. These people are to serve the people and must report to the people. Who represents the people? The national deputies, and they must return to the people to explain to the people, not through the press or television. See the face of each one of us, damn it. We are not a lot of people, it is a little bit. Just like when they do their political campaign, they visit each other and go “vote for me” and “vote for me”. What the heck? Have they

already forgotten? Do you think we exist only when it comes to elections? No. Just as they came for us to elect them, so they must report everything. EVERYTHING, penny for penny, job for job.

We remain stunned, but we know the type of work that is being done; it is a job that is laughable. I would like you to see the streets they made in Chetumal—two feet thick with cement and two-inch steel bars. Yes, there is also corruption, but when they do a job, they do a job well done. Not with the first shower of rain there are already potholes, no. With my own eyes I saw how they poured two feet, that is, 24 inches of concrete between the 2-inch steel bars. If they are going to jump to conclusions, stating that Mexico has a lot of money, well, this country also has money, because they are making a stream of loans. Come see us; explain to us, how many nails you bought, how much wood you bought. Don’t give us quantities, because we don’t know what the hell you’re going to do with it. This has been going on for 41 years, the same thing. One enters, the other enters and it’s the exact story.

So, we need a democratic Constitution, from the people, with the people, and for the people. After they have written the reform of the Constitution, let them present it to the people. TO THE PEOPLE, not to the representatives of organizations who later say that “we already consulted the people.” That is a lie. Get down from the high seat that is up there, get down, because we put you there. Explain to us what you plan to reform in the Constitution, because we don’t know, but we’re not that stupid. Belize also needs a president. The prime minister can draw from the pool of intellectual or professional people to be ministers. Anyone who is from the Health Department must be an experienced and specialized man/woman, not just a general practitioner, a specialist with years of experience surrounded by others from other specialties. And that is that, I only named one department. All departments must be the same. And all the chiefs must be elected by the people, not by a political party, because then they will be committed to serve such organizations. Let it be the people who elect, educate the people, present the issues to the people. Or what? Are they gods? Including the prime minister, he should report to the national deputies

who represent the people and those deputies return to the people to explain. It’s nice, yes, being on the radio and television, but not everyone understands. Not because they don’t know how to explain, but because, due to the type of education that has been given, the majority of Belizeans are not of a critical mind and they never will be, because the system does not allow it.

Hopefully, our dear readers of this column, you have gone to the link which was published on *Amandala* online dated July 13, 2022 under the heading “**Boris Johnson questioned by Parliament Select Committee**”, so that you have heard how the members of parliament in England questioned the former prime minister, Boris Johnson. What I passed to the *Amandala* was just an extract of what seemed important to me, which was the maximum-power weapons that Boris Johnson had sent to Ukraine, according to him. There are other media that have said that those weapons never arrived there, but that they went to Arab countries, and there is also information that they are trying to make an Arab world alliance, including Israel. That seems quite difficult to me, since they are of two different religions—the Israelites, that is, the Jews and the Muslims. They have been in a fight for many, many years. But an alliance of Arab countries that are of the same religion can be done, but the one that is doing that once again is the United States. The war is not over. It hasn’t even started. But, here, I do not want to deal with that point, but rather the point of the reform of the Constitution of Belize. All those people in key positions must be elected by the people, presented to the people with their curriculum vitae, who they are, what is their personality, what they have done. Inform the people, educate the people, so that the people make the decision about who they are going to elect to hold the different public positions, because they are public, to serve the people.

[fincasolan@gmail.com](mailto:fincasolan@gmail.com)  
July 17, 2022  
Finca Solana  
Corozal Town

## Two persons shot in Hattieville

BELIZE CITY, Mon. July 18, 2022  
Police are investigating a shooting that took place in Hattieville on Sunday sometime around 5:00 a.m. Rasheed Maskall, 20, and Latifa Ferguson, 23, were awakened by the sound of gunshots and soon realized that they were both injured.  
Police have since interviewed the

two shooting victims, but could not conclusively determine the motive for this shooting. They have since reported that both victims have received medical attention and are listed as being in a stable condition at the Karl Heusner Memorial Hospital (KMH). A police investigation continues.



## Sports and sub-culture of crime in Belize Congratulations to our U21 Women Volleyball Team!!

**Continued from** Page 5 even make the problem worse. Sports of any sort is better than no sports; so, “let the children play”. But if we will endeavor to utilize sports as one of the vehicles to help curb the serious social/cultural problems plaguing our communities, then those sports must be properly administered, starting with the caliber of coaches instructing and influencing our youths, and not discounting the quality of officials, both administrative and on the field, to whom we are demanding that our young men and women give respect. If there is corruption and/or gross incompetence at the top—in coaches, administrators and/or game officials, the sport will have little positive impact on the sub-culture of indiscipline and tendency to lawlessness.

In the meantime, for those members of our Belizean society who value our traditional culture of respect, goodwill and hospitality towards others, it is important that we make use of every opportunity to gently but firmly advise our young folks who go astray that it is not nice, and that we know they can do better. All of us have a part to play in stemming this downward slide towards a destructive and unproductive sub-culture. If we ignore or applaud them when “dehn di do fool,” they will do it again, to their own and all our detriment. “Teach the youth!”



# Is PUP PAC into playing games too?

by Colin B. Hyde

Nobody complained about the Public Accounts Committee (PAC), that underperforming oversight body, more than Julius Espat when he was on the opposition side of the House. Scarce a House meeting went by without us hearing about this critical oversight body that wasn't delivering for the people. The UDP, which promised reform, got into government in 2008 and sat there for 13 years. Former PM Barrow recently said there were suspicious ministers in his governments, but the evidence fell short of legal guilt. Pray, how could the evidence have been gotten if the important oversight bodies, like the PAC, were non-functioning?

The PAC's business is to scrutinize government spending on a regular basis, the objective there being that anyone who swindled the people wouldn't get too far down the road with the ill-gotten property. It's best to deal with things when it just happened, so evildoers don't have time to cover all their tracks. It's a way to keep the fear of being found out in the front of minds (days/weeks), not in the back (years/decades).

Julius admitted it isn't possible for him to be the same aggressive chaser of truth and transparency he was when he had to forcibly be removed from the House; aha, he's Mr. Lukewarm

now, no longer Mr. Piping Hot. The man's on the pigs' side of the House now, but he still has his name to defend. Mr. Orwell told us all we need to know about swine. If those bohgaz aren't checked, they'll be off with all the milk, and they'll soil the sheets on the beds too.

Ah, many measured Godwin with the same stick he used to measure others when he was a mortal calling out the wrongs of elected representatives. For over two decades, Godwin was at the fore, calling out a number of PUP governments, and offering suggestions to reform our system. If I remember correctly, he didn't point out UDP faults when that party was in charge. In fact, his number one partner in the reform game was Henry Gordon, who served as Cabinet Secretary in the UDP 1993 to 1998 government. While Godwin was clearly leaning red, I wouldn't call him out for bias, because the UDP under Esquivel wasn't into corruption, and the blank inside the UDP Barrow government of 2008-2012 didn't hit the fan right away. The PUP 1998-2008 governments got us into rot that we are still paying for.

I think people forget Godwin was an unelected member of Cabinet, a senator serving in government as a guest of the PM. Sure, the man had a past fighting corruption, but without a constituency, without the power of the people behind

him, he didn't have the clout to back up words he had spoken. I don't think anyone called him out for wrongdoing; no, he was called out for what he didn't do. I said, I think we expected too much from a man who was selected.

In going hard after Geovanni, the UDP is acting like a dog that barks at shadows. They should be rooting out their corrupt elements, looking within instead of crying because the PUP hired the talented Geovanni as a spokesperson. The amount of hot Red air about, you'd think the Blue had made Geovanni a minister!

There are three powerhouses in our country – the PUP, the UDP, and the church. Geovanni doesn't have the superior paper education, great business success, and senator appointments Godwin has. The sense I have is that Geovanni doesn't have the paper education and business success of Paul, Hubert, Bobby, Patrick Rogers, and Wil either. Those brothers have been independent forces for some time. Geovanni's buddy, Louis Wade, who has stopped lighting candles while he's on his crusade to snuff out weed, has also been in the trenches as an independent fighting force. The only difference between Wade and the other successful guys is that his organization is religious, not political.

I'll congratulate Geovanni, not criticize him, for choosing a party. My

gudnis, even Rufus X chose a party. You remember when Diki Bradley had him on his housing team. My sense is that Geovanni is credible, but whatever weight he has in that sphere, he can't take over to the PUP. He is now a Blue, and like Gill, Hilly and Wendy, he is now in the business of making that camp look good. If called upon to justify why the PAC is non-functional, he'll give it his best shot. That's what they're paying him for. I wish him all the best in his new job.

My, my, when the UDP gang was in power, they wanted to investigate the PUP books; now the PUP gang is at the helm, they want to investigate the UDP books. The NTUCB president, Mr. Martinez, said we need to bridle these political bohgaz. Every PAC chairman is a party hack!

The name of their deceptive game is *hand wash hand*. Of course, the PUP deserves some points for changing the membership in the PAC. While in opposition, the PUP insisted that the PAC membership be changed, but the anti-reform UDP government refused. Well, the PUP made the change when it took office. Five of the 9-member PAC are not PUPs. That's all the good news there is. Black Stalin sums up their game best: *It's the same oal thing, the same oal thing dehn pushing*.

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BELIZE DISTRICT

INTOXICATING LIQUOR LICENSE NOTICE

Notice is hereby given to the general public that the Board will convene on,

WEDNESDAY, JULY 27, 2022

for its first Quarterly Meeting at Belize City Hall Conference Room (#810 Regent St.) for Belize City and Out District Applications from,

10:30am to 12:00pm

\*Vessel License Application

\*Hotel License Application

\*Membership License Application

\*Night Club License Application

\*Publican General License Application

\*Beer License Application

\*Malt & Cider License Application

\*Convenience Store License Application

\*Restaurant License Application

\*Publican Special License Application

\*Shop License Application

All proprietors of establishments, seeking to obtain a Liquor License, are required to bring one of the following forms of identifications: Passport, Driver's License, Social Security or Voters ID. In addition, those who fail to attend these meetings will be required to submit payments of \$100.00 to facilitate a special convening of the Board.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

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

Position Name: Bodyguard

Vacancy number: Belmopan-2022-14

Closing date: July 24, 2022

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

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

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

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

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

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

Position Name: Custodian (Janitor)

Vacancy number: Belmopan-2022-15

Closing date: July 24, 2022

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

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

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

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



# Coye: BZ dollar steady despite US's anti-inflation moves

*As the US Federal Reserve battles increased inflation by increasing borrowing costs, economies across the globe have suffered. Hon. Christopher Coye says GOB is doing an excellent job of maintaining policies to safeguard Belize's economy.*

by Khaila Gentle

BELIZE CITY, Mon. July 18, 2022

In the battle to bring steadily rising inflation rates under control, the United States of America's Federal Reserve has been more aggressive in its monetary policies than most nations—the consequences of which are being felt not only in the US but by economies across the globe. In order to mitigate the trickle-down effect that such actions in the US might have on Belize's economy, Minister of State in the Ministry of Finance, Hon. Christopher Coye says that the government is focusing on maintaining foreign reserves as well as a fixed exchange rate.

According to the *New York Times*, the US dollar makes up one side of about 90% of all foreign exchange transactions and is one of the most stable currencies in the world. The strength of the dollar often increases in times of turmoil, which is exactly what has been happening in recent months due to rising inflation.

As the dollar strengthens—it is currently reported to be at a 20-year high—and as the Federal Reserve ramps up its efforts to combat inflation by increasing interest rates, currencies

of nations across the globe have been losing value against the dollar, leading to record-breaking shifts in exchange rates. In fact, it is expected that later this month, the US Federal Reserve will increase the cost of borrowing for the second time this year later in July.

Minister of State in the Ministry of Finance, Hon. Christopher Coye spoke with the media last week and explained the logic behind the Federal Reserve's monetary policy:

"The primary adjustment that they have to make or that they see as the tool to which they can impact on inflation is by impacting on interest rates. So that's why you see that they have been pushing up interest rates—the Federal funds rate. I think the last increase was about three-quarter percent, and it's very likely that they'll try and increase another three-quarter percent in the next couple of weeks. So that activity—if interest rates are going up, then the cost of doing business is going up. So then businesses will not borrow as much and not invest as much, which means the economy will slow down, and as it slows down, then that means demand comes down, which means inflation ultimately starts to flatten back. So that's the effort there," he said.



Photo by Jason Leung

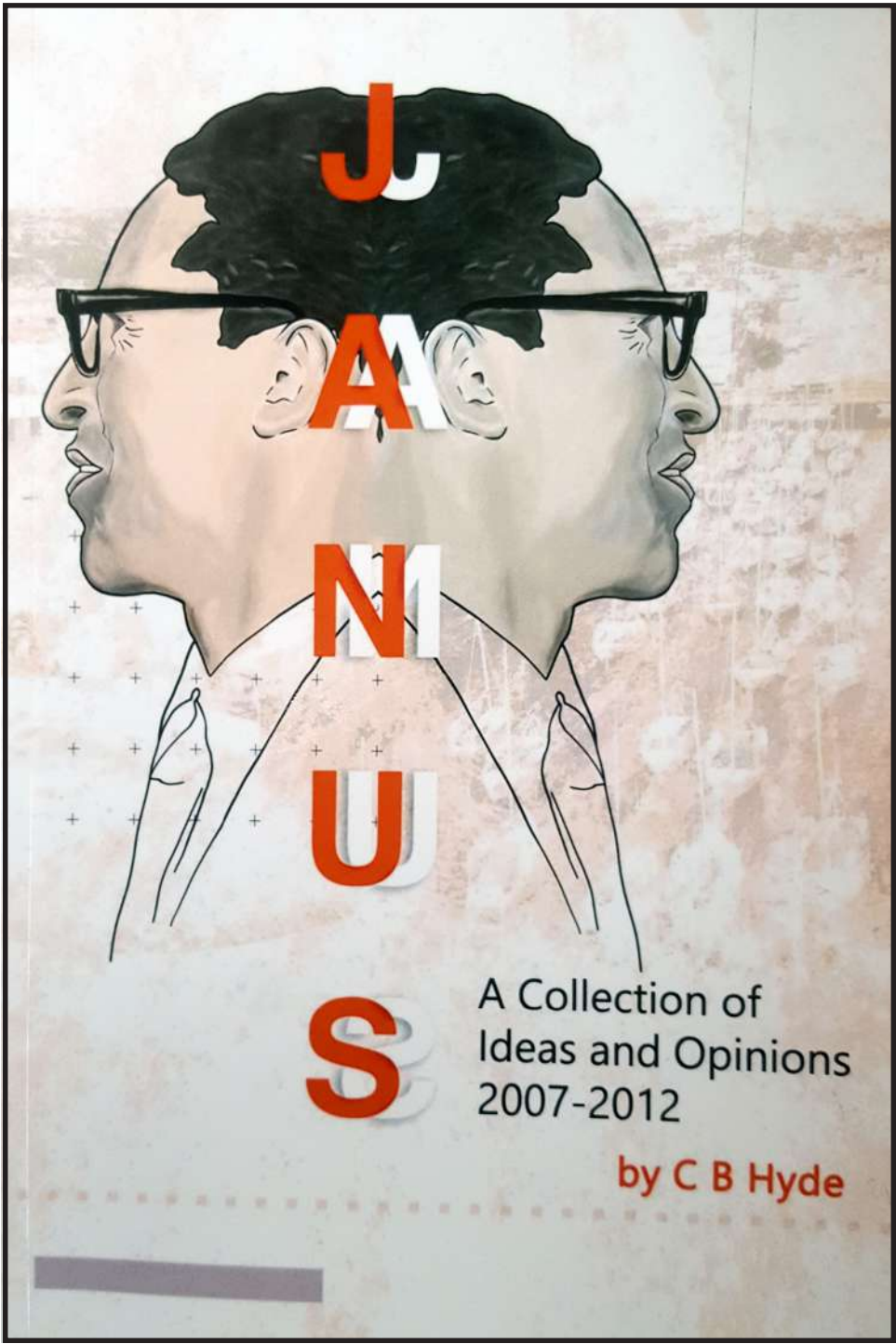
Nevertheless, those efforts have adversely impacted and are expected to continue negatively affecting economies across the globe. In Europe, for example, the value of the Pound has decreased by more than 10% and continues to lose value. Likewise, the Euro has fallen below parity against the US dollar for the first time in two decades. Those most affected, though, are nations whose governments have borrowed significantly in dollars.

"The rise of the US currency means more expensive imports of commodities like energy and food, which often trade in dollars. That adds to economic strains, especially if a government holds a lot of debt in

dollars," explained *BBC News*.

According to the Finance Minister, the Government of Belize and the Central Bank have been focusing on their own policy positions to mitigate the effects of the Federal Reserve's hikes in interest rates.

"We have to focus on maintaining that fixed exchange rate, which means that we have to maintain foreign reserves. That is our primary policy position that we have to be focusing on. We are doing excellently on that. We're at the highest levels in history both at the levels of the Central Bank reserves as well as the domestic banks' foreign exchange holdings," said Hon. Coye.



## Is PUP PAC into playing games too?

Continued from Page 11

The PUP wants the PAC to look at past UDP spending. We all want to know what the Reds did to our treasury and other assets, but we don't have to read the Constitution — what, are gays going to write the new bible of Belize? And those people who want to tamper with the Queen, do they think we're going to stand by while they sully our legacy? No, we don't have to read the Constitution to know that the primary job of this PAC is to look at present spending. Ouch, the UDPs in the PAC run cold sweat when they hear about opening the books to their past. Tracy, you might be a saint, but you were sitting front bench with that caucus that ran the Immigration Department into disgrace.

The three hardworking non-affiliated members of the PAC just want to get on with the job, and that would happen if the five-year monarchy and the Opposition put country before party. So, the PAC can't resolve the impasse, and until they do, we can't get on with the job. The old Indian sage was wrong when he said *everything changes, only the earth remains*. Meet the PAC. That

Blue-revamped PAC, it's the same oal thing, the same oal thing dehn pushing.

Oh, the poor people of Belize desperately need an active PAC to make sure that the pressure is kept on the present government. As for the 13 years of spilt milk, daam right those books have to be thrown wide open. But we don't need the PAC to do that. Why are we sitting on the Special Senate investigation into UDP hustling at the Immigration Department? Why has the GOB quit on the Commission of Inquiry into UDP caring for and sharing with members of their gang who were about to be thrown on the mercy of the world? The PAC shouldn't be burdened with digging into the deeds and misdeeds of the last government. Form a sub-committee and unseal those 13 years.

Eyes are on our Cayo South area rep. In the world of Cabinet, the blame is collective, but he's the one who led the charge. We can't cut the PAC any slack. Fishermen know that when you hook a fish you have to keep the line taut, because if you don't, the prize will shake the hook from out its mouth. Ouch, we voted for this new PAC and it's looking to be another dud.





# Mexico mourns marines who crashed after drug lord’s capture

by Vanessa Buschschlüter (BBC)

MEXICO, Mon. July 18, 2022

Mexico’s navy has held a ceremony to honour 14 marines who died when the helicopter they were travelling in crashed in the north of the country.

President Andrés Manuel López Obrador said the marines had been supporting the operation in which drug lord Rafael Caro Quintero was captured on Friday.

The navy said that the crash had been an accident and that its cause was still being investigated.

Only one of those aboard the Black Hawk helicopter survived the crash.

President López Obrador said it had come down shortly before landing in Los Mochis - in northern Sinaloa state - “after fulfilling its mission of lending support to those carrying out the arrest warrant for Rafael Caro Quintero”.

Quintero - who was on the FBI’s 10 most wanted list - was one of the co-founders in the late 1970s of the now-defunct Guadalajara drug cartel.

Dubbed “Narco of Narcos”, he was convicted in 1985 of ordering the torture and murder of Enrique “Kiki” Camarena, an agent with the US Drug Enforcement Administration who had infiltrated the Guadalajara cartel.

But in 2013, an appeals court ruled he had been tried under the wrong



Rafael Quintero

jurisdiction and freed him after serving 28 years of his 40-year sentence.

A new arrest warrant was issued less than a week later but Rafael Caro Quintero had already gone into hiding.

The navy said the drug lord was tracked down by a bloodhound called Max, a female dog normally used for search and rescue missions following natural disasters.

Max sniffed out 69-year-old Quintero hiding in some bushes near the town of Choix.

US Ambassador to Mexico Ken Salazar praised Mexico’s navy for hunting down the drug lord and said it had been a purely Mexican operation without US involvement.

The US justice department also thanked Mexico’s navy and said it would seek Rafael Caro Quintero’s extradition.

First published by BBC News.

# Heatwave: Ferocious European heat heads north

by Malu Cursino

WESTERN EUROPE, Mon. July 18, 2022

Western Europe faces more sweltering temperatures on Tuesday as a ferocious heatwave heads north.

In France and the UK extreme heat warnings were issued while northern Spain recorded temperatures of 43C (109F) on Monday.

Wildfires in France, Portugal, Spain and Greece have forced thousands of people to evacuate their homes.

The UK is expected to see its hottest day ever and experts say parts of France face a “heat apocalypse”.

Several parts of France saw their hottest-ever days with the western city of Nantes recording 42C, the national weather office said.

Wildfires in recent days have forced more than 30,000 people to flee, with emergency shelters set up for evacuees.

Gironde, a popular tourist region in the southwest, has been hit particularly badly, with firefighters battling to control blazes which have destroyed over 15,000 hectares (37,066 acres) of land since last Tuesday.

“The idea that comes into my head is, it’s a monster,” Jean-Luc Gleyze, the president of the Gironde region said of the fires.

“It’s a monster like an octopus, and

it’s growing and growing and growing in the front, in the back, on both sides. Because of the temperature, because of the wind, because of the lack of water in the air... it’s a monster and it’s very difficult to fight against it.”

The UK had one of its hottest days on record on Monday, with a high of 38.1C recorded in Suffolk, in eastern England. Forecasters say Tuesday could see a top of 40C, which would be the highest temperature ever recorded in the country.

There were severe travel disruptions with trains cancelled and flights at London’s Luton Airport suspended when part of the runway buckled under the searing heat.

On Monday, the Netherlands recorded its hottest day of the year so far. In the south-western town of Westdorpe, temperatures reached 33.6C.

And it is expected to be hotter on Tuesday, with temperatures forecast to top 39C in southern and central regions of the Netherlands.

Forecasters say the heatwave is heading north, with Belgium, Germany and Italy expected to see temperatures around 40C in the coming days.

In Spain and Portugal, more than 1,000 deaths have been attributed to the heat in recent days.

Temperatures in Portugal hit 47C on Thursday - a record for July. Most of the



# Monkeypox Vaccine Doses to Fight Outbreak

The Centers for Disease Control and PreventionTrusted Source (CDC) reports there have been at least 350 identified cases of monkeypox in the country and over 5,000 worldwide.

As a result, federal officials are taking steps to stop the outbreak including releasing vaccines.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) announced this week they will start releasing the JYNNEOS monkeypox vaccine as part of a nationwide effort to combat the outbreak. The HHS plans on relating nearly 300,000 doses in the coming weeks.

That vaccine will be used in areas with the highest transmission to help stop the spread of the disease.

“Within days of the first confirmed case of monkeypox in the United States, we quickly began deploying vaccines and treatment to help protect the American public and limit the spread of the virus,” said HHS Secretary Xavier Becerra. “While monkeypox poses minimal risk to most Americans, we are doing everything we can to offer vaccines to those at high-risk of contracting the virus. This new strategy allows us to maximize the supply of currently available vaccines and reach those who are most vulnerable to the current outbreak.”

CDC activates Emergency Operations Center

Continuing an “aggressive” public health response to monkeypox, the CDC activated its Emergency Operations Center (EOC) on June 28.

According to the agency, this action helps to gear up the CDC’s command center for monitoring and coordinating their emergency response to monkeypox and mobilization of additional CDC personnel and resources.

“Globally, early data suggest that gay, bisexual, and other men who have sex with men make up a high number of monkeypox cases,” the CDC said in a statement. “CDC continues to provide guidance and raise awareness among frontline healthcare providers and public health.”

Increased testing is an important strategy to control spread of the infection, with orthopoxvirus tests being shipped to five commercial laboratory companies to increase testing capacity and access in all communities.”This development will



Monkey Pox vaccines

facilitate increased testing, leverage established relationships between clinics, hospitals and commercial laboratories, and support our ability to better understand the scope of the current monkeypox outbreak,” CDC said in a statement.

Disease originated in animals

According to the World Health OrganizationTrusted Source (WHO), monkeypox is a viral disease originating in animals and is typically found in the tropical rainforest areas of Central and West Africa.

The organization says it resembles smallpox—a related infection declared eradicated worldwide in 1980. It is also less contagious than smallpox and causes less severe illness.

The WHO says scientists have identified several animals as susceptible to the monkeypox virus, including rope squirrels, tree squirrels, Gambian pouched rats, dormice, non-human primates, and other species.

Symptoms of Monkeypox

“Early symptoms include fever, chills, enlarged lymph nodes, muscle and body aches, and exhaustion,” Hannah Newman, MPH, director of epidemiology at Lenox Hill Hospital, told Healthline.

According to Newman, the most obvious symptom is painful blisters.

“In 1 to 3 days after fever onset, there is generally the development of a rash or “pox” that consists of painful blisters and lesions that often begin on the face and spread to other parts of the body, especially the face, palms, and soles of the feet,” she explained.

Newman said most monkeypox cases resolve over time.

“But the rash and pustules can last for several weeks,” she said. “Mortality has been estimated to be 1 to 10 percent, depending on the strain.

Please turn to Page 15

country has been placed under high fire danger by the national meteorological office IPMA.

Local media reports that 300 people from the northern Murça municipality have been evacuated due to the fire danger - authorities are anxious to avoid a repeat of 2017, when 66 people were killed in wildfires.

In Spain, at least twenty fires are burning out of control. A passenger filmed the moment the train he was travelling on came to a temporary halt -

as fires raged on both sides of the carriage near the northern border with Portugal.

Heatwaves have become more frequent, more intense, and last longer because of human-induced climate change. The world has already warmed by about 1.1C since the industrial era began and temperatures will keep rising unless governments around the world make steep cuts to emissions.

First published by BBC News.





## Lopez Obrador says he pleaded for Assange in letter to Biden

Mexico's president says country renewed previous offer of asylum for Wikileaks founder, wanted in US on several charges.

Mexico's President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador has said he gave a letter to his US counterpart Joe Biden in defence of Julian Assange after the United Kingdom approved the Wikileaks founder's extradition to the United States.

In response to a reporter's question during a news conference on Monday, Lopez Obrador said Mexico has renewed a previous offer of asylum to Assange.

"I left a letter to the president about Assange, explaining that he did not commit any serious crime, did not cause anyone's death, did not violate any human rights, and that he exercised his freedom, and that arresting him would mean a permanent affront to freedom of expression," Lopez Obrador said.

"I also said that Mexico is offering protection and asylum to Julian Assange," he said, adding that he has not yet heard back from Biden.

The development comes after the UK last month approved Assange's extradition to the US to face criminal charges related to WikiLeaks' release of confidential US military records and diplomatic cables.

UK Home Secretary Priti Patel's office said British courts had concluded the extradition would not be incompatible with Assange's human rights, and that he would be treated appropriately.

On July 1, Assange appealed his extradition to the US at the High Court in London.

The 51-year-old, who was born in Australia, is wanted by US authorities on 18 counts, including a spying charge, relating to WikiLeaks' release of vast troves of confidential US military records and diplomatic cables that Washington said had put lives in danger.

The Australian government has been under mounting pressure to intervene, but last month Prime Minister Anthony Albanese rejected calls for him to publicly demand that Washington drop its



Julian Assange has appealed

prosecution of Assange.

Last week, Lopez Obrador met with Biden in Washington, DC, during which the Mexican president said he brought up Assange's case.

Lopez Obrador, often referred to as AMLO, recently said the Statue of Liberty should be dismantled and returned to France if Assange is imprisoned in the US.

Assange's supporters, meanwhile, say the Wikileaks founder is an anti-establishment hero who has been victimised because he exposed US wrongdoing in conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq. They argue that his prosecution is a politically motivated assault on journalism and free speech.

"The fight to save Assange is also the fight to save press freedom and our First Amendment rights," DC Action for Assange and the Assange Defense Committee, US-based groups, said in a letter thanking Lopez Obrador for his support last week.

"We agree with you that the prosecution of Mr Assange for publishing

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## Westline Over-40 Football Championship series begins

by Rudolph "Bolo" McKoy

BELIZE CITY, Mon. July 18, 2022

This coming Saturday, July 23, at the MCC Grounds, the Westline Over-40 Championship begins at 4:00 p.m. The two top teams in the tournament - number 1 seed, undefeated Kulture Yabra vs the number 2 seed Medina's Jewelry Pickstock Lake.

Kulture Yabra features the top goal scorers in the tournament, Kevin Rowland with 8 goals

and Chris Gilharry with 7 goals. Medina's Lake will feature their fabulous goalkeeper, Aaron Buckley.

First Place cash prize is \$3,000.00, sponsored by Westline

Bus Services. Second prize is \$1,000.00, sponsored by Public's Supermarket.

Game 2 in the best-of-two games championship series will be on Friday, July 29, at 6:00 p.m. at the MCC where "goal average" will be the deciding factor.

Entrance fee is \$5.00 for both games.

Over-40 Championship schedule at the MCC:

Saturday, July 23, Game 1

4:00 p.m. - Kulture Yabra vs Medina's Jewelry Pickstock Lake

Friday, July 29, Game 2

6:00 p.m. - Medina's Jewelry Pickstock Lake vs Kulture Yabra

## NBB Interdistrict Quarterfinals end; Semifinals this weekend

BELIZE CITY, Mon. July 18, 2022

The National Bank of Belize Amateur Interdistrict Championship (NBBAIC) completed its quarterfinal knockout round over the weekend. Two games each were played on Saturday night and Sunday afternoon.

Saturday, July 16, results

With a 7:00 p.m. kickoff at the Ambergris Stadium, it was the home team Conquerors FC claiming the 1-nil victory over Hopkins Ibayani on an early second half goal by Jose Aquino (57').

The other Saturday night quarterfinal started at 7:30 p.m. at the Isidoro Beaton Stadium in Belmopan, and after a scoreless first half, it ended deadlocked at 1-1 in regulation between Belmopan's Atletico FC and Mavericks FC of Toledo. Wilfredo Galvez (61') put Atletico in front, but Jaren Lambey (79') equalized for the visitors. In the ensuing penalty shootout, Atletico prevailed, 2-0.

Sunday, July 17, results

Goals were also scarce in the northern clash starting at 4:00 p.m. at the Louisiana Football Field between Orange Walk's Progreso FC and Corozal's Libertadores. Jaheim Augustine (11') scored the only goal of the match, to give Progreso FC the 1-0 win over Libertadores.

The last quarterfinal kicked off half hour later at 4:30 p.m. at the Carl Ramos

Stadium in Dangriga, where it also ended deadlocked in regulation, this one with a 2-2 score. Home standing Griga Conquerors sported a 1-nil halftime lead over Caribbean Rum Boys from Orange Walk, courtesy of a goal from Wayne Ford (37'). An own goal early in second half by the Rum Boys' Marvin Flowers (47' OG) extended Griga's lead to 2-0; but the boys from Sugar City came roaring back with a goal each from Rodolfo Argueta (54') and Enrique Valdez (65') to knot the score at 2-2, and it remained that way until the long whistle. Griga fans were not disappointed, though, as they racked up 2 more goals in extra time, 1 each from Izon Gill and Jose Valdez, to give Griga Conquerors the 4-2 victory.

The Football Federation of Belize (FFB) sanctioned National Bank of Belize Amateur Interdistrict Championship (NBBAIC) 2022 moves on to its knockout semifinals this coming weekend.

NBBAIC Knockout Semifinals schedule:

Saturday, July 23

7:00 p.m. - Atletico FC vs Conquerors FC - Isidoro Beaton Stadium

Sunday, July 24

4:30 p.m. - Progreso FC vs Griga Conquerors FC - Louisiana Football Field

19 pts; Elvis Usher 13 pts; Charles Ponce 9 pts.

Saturday, July 16, results

(Under 15) Assassins Jr. (#1), 40-29, over Benque Basketball Academy (#2). Assassins Jr. - Andre Pinelo 11 pts; Jeremy Carbajal 10 pts; Roy "Sonny" Valentine 8 pts. Benque Academy - Hua Qiang Zhao 10 pts; Dylan Segovia 7 pts.

(Open Male) Assassins (#2), 65-42, over Outdoors (#3). Assassins - Aaron Allison 18 pts; Robert Jeffries 9 pts; Jamie Carbajal 9 pts; Ryan "Mentes" Carbajal 8 pts. Outdoors - Kevin Brown 11 pts; Gregory Buckley 10 pts.

Upcoming Schedule

Below is the schedule for this coming weekend.

Friday, July 22, Victor Galvez Stadium, San Ignacio Town

7:00 p.m. - (U18) Love Soul Mambas (#1) vs Snipers (#2)

8:00 p.m. - (Open) Venom (#1) vs Benque No-Hops (#4)

Saturday, July 23, Victor Galvez Stadium, San Ignacio Town

7:00 p.m. - (U15) Assassins Jr. (#1) vs Benque Basketball Academy (#2)

8:00 p.m. - (Open) Assassins (#1) vs Outdoors (#3)

## Basketball playoffs tip off out west

by Karim Juan

SAN IGNACIO TOWN, Cayo District, Sun. July 17, 2022

The playoffs for the Benque and San Ignacio/Santa Elena Tournament tipped off this past weekend. Games were played at Deacon Cal's basketball court in conjunction with the annual Benque Fair.

The Under 15 and Under 18 teams will battle in a best-of-three playoff series, while the top 4 teams in the Open division will play in a best-of-three semi-finals, with the winners advancing to the championship games.

Below are the scores, standings and the upcoming playoff schedule.

Friday, July 15, results

(Under 18) Love Soul Mambas (#1), 64-24, over Snipers (#2). Love Soul Mambas - Eliel "Bino" Landero 16 pts; Tashawn "Pawdy" Haylock 11 pts; Kishawn Usher 10 pts. Snipers - Flody Gillett 7 pts; Ian Rodriguez 4 pts; Zane Santiago 4 pts.

(Open) Venom (#1), 65-52, over Benque No-Hops (#2). Venom - Frank Fuller 18 pts; Elvert "PG" Ariolla 16 pts; Joel Montejo 13 pts; Johan "Cutto" Bermudez 12 pts. Benque No-Hops - Kysslon Kisling



# Murder in Bella Vista, Toledo

Several persons were detained in connection with the death of 20-year-old Randy Adomay Xol of Bella Vista, Toledo District.

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police suspect could be the murder weapon was seen lying nearby.

According to initial police reports, Xol, who had a bruise on the right eye when his body was found, had been socializing in front of a popular Chinese establishment in the area sometime before midnight on Saturday, July 16, when he got into a disagreement with some patrons who are believed to be responsible for Xol’s death.

Lying in some grass about 75 feet away from Xol’s motionless body when he was found was a pocket knife with an orange handle and a blade that measured 3 1/2 inches in length. What appeared to be drops of blood could be seen on the blade of the knife.

It has been confirmed that a number of threats had been made to Xol’s life over the past month — the most recent being on Wednesday, July 13, three days before his untimely death. His mother, Elena Choko, told local reporters, “This is not the first time that they are doing this! Any time my kids travel the road, they stopped them, they curse them, but as a mother, I take everything [and] I don’t rush to pick problems. I take everything easy, and I leave it in God’s hands. My son told me, ‘when he attacked me the second time, I hit him on his nose and he fell on the floor and when he fell, he fainted and when he fainted his sister ran to us and she hurried told me. ‘Boy, you

don’t know who that person is! That person just came out of Hattieville, you know that person already killed someone and he will soon kill you’”.

Choko went on to express lack of confidence in the police, despite her hopes that justice could be served for her son. She went on to claim that a number of the officers in the area are often intoxicated.

“... We have the most criminals in this area that police can’t control. They can’t control — why? Because police, when you give a report, the police are right there drunk in those bars; they are drunk! Even though if they get some calls, they reach the people drunk, what can the police do like that? And when things happen like that, they can’t bring back life. They can’t give me what I lost,” she lamented.

She further remarked, “What they have done to me and my family, and what they have done my son, it is a great sorrow from the bottom of my heart. Losing my son, and he doesn’t owe [anybody] and he doesn’t give any trouble. They walked down the street for 12 years, living [on] this farmland. I always advise my kids [to don’t] rob anyone, don’t hurt anyone, don’t go attack anybody, and don’t steal anything from adults [and] young children, walk straight. I advise them every day.”

Currently, police are following several leads and have detained several persons for questioning. However, no arrests have yet been made.

# Monkeypox Vaccine Doses to Fight Outbreak

Continued from Page 13

Thankfully, the strain identified in the UK cases has been associated with a lower mortality rate, about one percent.”

Who is most at risk?

“Severe disease and mortality [are] higher among children, young adults, and immunocompromised individuals,” Newman noted.

She added that there have been cases without travel to areas where the disease is established in the current outbreak.

“While sexual orientation, specifically those who identify as gay, bisexual, or men who have sex with men, has been shown to be a commonality in this particular outbreak,” she emphasized. “It is important to note that anyone with close contact could contract the virus.”

Monkeypox treatment

Newman said there’s no monkeypox-specific treatment, but antiviral drugs and immunoglobulins Trusted Source used against smallpox are effective in this disease. The smallpox vaccine is about 85 percent effective at preventing monkeypox.

“Currently “ring vaccination Trusted Source” strategies are in place to vaccinate close contacts of confirmed cases to try to cut off transmission,” said Newman. “Due to fears of smallpox being used as bioweapons, there is actually a good supply of vaccine available in the US, should it

be needed.”

She pointed out that the mode of transmission for this virus is much easier to prevent and control than a virus with aerosolization components like measles or COVID-19.

Newman added that disease prevention strategies in response to COVID-19 could also help against monkeypox.

“Including social distancing, masking, increasing ventilation, and staying home if we are sick,” said Newman. “Hand hygiene is also really key since this is a DNA virus which is better suited to survive on surfaces.”

No need to panic

Dr. Alex Li, deputy chief medical officer, L.A. Care Health Plan, there is no need for panic.

“The CDC is monitoring this situation very closely,” he said.

Li said CDC officials had informed him and his colleagues that they’re currently trying to determine how the infected U.S. patients contracted monkeypox.

“We have also been informed that there is a national stockpile of medications available should there be a greater outbreak,” he said.

Li advises that anyone who has symptoms similar to chickenpox, has had contact with symptomatic people, or has recently traveled to Africa, should contact their healthcare professional.

The bottom line

# “Where have all the flowers gone?”

After the shootings in Uvalde, Texas, and the slaughter of 19 innocent preadolescent children, life goes on! The slaughter continues at an accelerated rate, as though the hunger for blood and sacrifice can’t be quenched, can’t be sated! People are being gunned down relentlessly, as if some dark cloud has descended on earth, demanding retribution, demanding chaos and mayhem, everywhere, including in Belize! We are now living in a time, which Yeats so aptly described in his poem, “The Second Coming”: “The best lack all conviction, while the worst are full of passionate intensity!” We sit by, we, governments, and we, the people, and let this insanity go on, day after day, week after week, year after year, and we do nothing to stop it.

Do you know how the children of Uvalde were identified by their parents? By the shoes they wore. Their bodies were so chewed up, torn to pieces by the bullets from that unforgiving, high-powered rifle, made to defend us on the battlefield, in times of war, but used as a weapon of choice by those intending to inflict as much damage as possible, on an unsuspecting populace, that they could not be readily recognized by their loved ones! Insult to injury! The same thing happened in Highland Park, Illinois, a couple weeks later, and it’s already fading from our very short-term

memories. Life goes on, and we feel powerless to end this madness.

For the life of me, I will never understand why it is so difficult to ban these deadly weapons. They aren’t of any use in civilian life; like I’ve said, they’re weapons of war. Yet, in the United States, Congress does nothing, in the face of overwhelming calls for something to be done, to put in place some measures and pass laws, to ban these weapons. I blame Republicans and Democrats, and we, the people, for all these tragedies! We don’t really care until it affects us directly. I don’t really care about gangs killing each other; they can shoot themselves into oblivion, for all I care. They chose the life they lead, so die with it! But innocents, civilians, in their homes or churches or parks, schools, or at the store? That’s unacceptable in any civilized society! Civilized? That’s another word that has no meaning anymore, just like death, or common sense, or truth, or honesty. They don’t mean a damn thing!

The flowers are gone, never to return, and many more will follow. They have been plucked and scattered and dissected into pieces before they’ve had a chance to bloom, to spread their beauty and scent and goodness into the world. When will we learn? When will we ever learn?

Glen

# Lopez Obrador says he pleaded for Assange in letter to Biden

Continued from Page 14

is a profound threat to journalism around the world. We appreciate your consistent vocal support for these important principles, core tenets of a functioning democracy,” they said.

Assange’s legal troubles began in 2010 when Sweden sought his extradition from Britain over allegations of sex crimes.

When he lost that case in 2012, he fled to the Ecuadorean embassy in London, where he spent seven years.

When he was removed in April 2019, he was jailed for breaching British bail conditions although the Swedish case against him had been dropped. He has been fighting extradition to the US since June 2019 and remains in jail.

First published on Aljazeera

STAYING COVID FREE

wash your hands

- Wash your hands frequently with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are unavailable, clean your hands with an alcohol-based sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.

practice social distancing

- Stay a safe distance - at least 6 feet apart - from others not in your household in both indoor and outdoor spaces.

wear a mask

- Wear a mask that covers both your nose and mouth in public spaces. Face masks can help protect others and prevent both asymptomatic and symptomatic spread of COVID-19.

Federal health officials are going to release nearly 300,000 doses of a monkeypox vaccine in the coming weeks to help stop the outbreak.

Experts say monkeypox is spread by contact with bodily fluids containing the virus rather than through the air like measles or COVID-19.





# 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

## SAN PEDRO

- Rocks Shopping Center

## INDEPENDENCE

- \* G N J Mart

## PUNTA GORDA

- \* King's Texaco
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