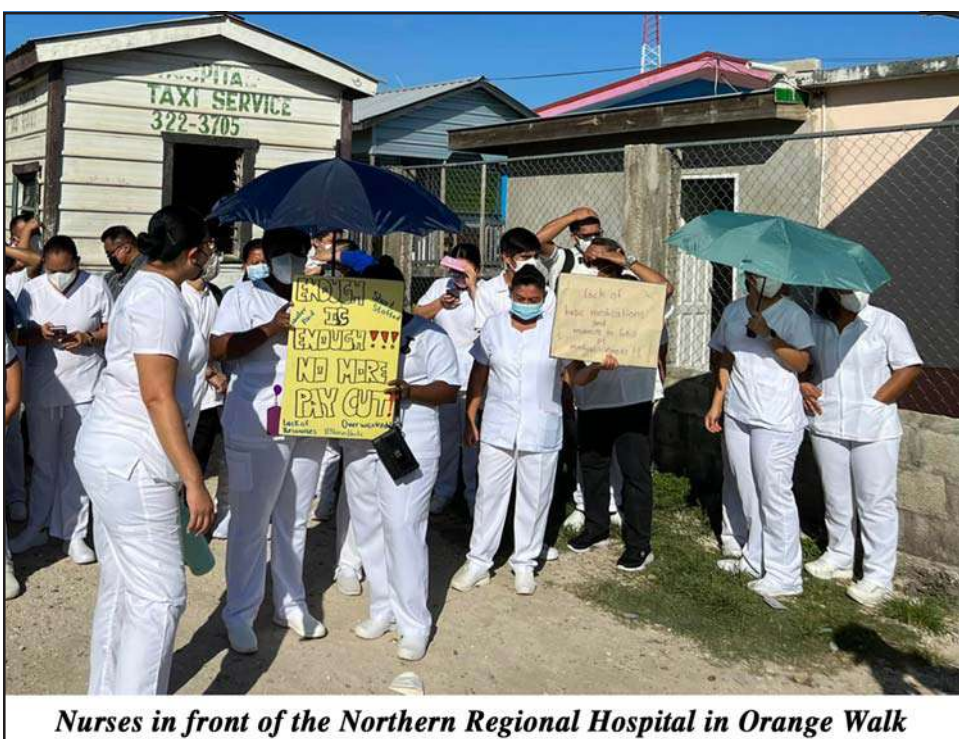


Belize's leading newspaper

Nurses launch nationwide protest



Nurses in front of the Northern Regional Hospital in Orange Walk

BELIZE, Mon. Aug. 29, 2022

Nurses from regional hospitals nationwide today staged protests to highlight the ongoing difficulties facing those in the profession—the most recent being the shortfall in overtime payments and other forms of

compensation that are due to them. The demonstrations started on Saturday with the nurses of the Southern Regional Hospital, who staged a walkout and gathered on the pedestrian ramp in

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BISL settlement final

The terms of a deed of settlement and the supplementary appropriation bill to clear the sum owed to BISL were passed in the Senate.



Senator Eamon Courtenay

BELIZE CITY, Mon. Aug. 29, 2022
 Most of a Senate meeting which took place today was centered on a debate over the settlement agreement reached



Senator Chris Coye

last week between the Government of Belize and the owners of Belize

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Conservation NGOs: GOB should pause all Environmental Impact Assessments

Twelve NGOs, including OCEANA, Fragments of Hope, and the Belize Audubon Society, have signed a letter requesting that all EIAs be put on pause until environmental laws are properly amended and enacted.



Twelve NGOs signed the letter to the Prime Minister

by Khaila Gentle

BELIZE CITY, Fri. Aug. 26, 2022

A group of conservation NGOs in Belize has written to the Prime Minister requesting that all

Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs) currently in progress be put on pause. This includes the hosting of public consultations. Readers of

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Senate divided on re-appointment of retired Auditor General



Senator Collet Montejo

by Khaila Gentle

BELMOPAN, Mon. Aug. 29, 2022

The motion to reappoint Dorothy Bradley as Auditor General was tabled during the Sitting of the Senate today



Senator Beverly Williams

and received support from some members, and opposition from others.

The motion was introduced in accordance with Section 109 (2) of the

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Nurses launch nationwide protest

Continued from Page 1

Dangriga, thus blocking the road.

In addition to raising their voices against circumstances which have for a long time been making their working conditions particularly difficult—such as shortages of staff, medication, and supplies—the nurses are now also highlighting the inadequate compensation they are receiving, and are pointing to the fact that although overtime is an absolute necessity to keep the hospital running, many healthcare workers are not receiving remuneration for those extra hours.

One nurse from the Western Regional Hospital said, “Every month our overtime is being cut, we are being told that we are owing hours, nurses can’t understand how we are owing hours when almost every week we are working 48 hours per week, and our regular hours is 40 hours, so if we are working 48 hours times 4 weeks, how could we be owing hours? And whenever the overtime comes in it is always short. We are not being paid in full what we are working for and we are tired of this.”

She said that sometimes, nurses have to pool their funds together to buy water for the ward when it runs out, and at times, the one meal provided by the hospital is not available.

“Sometimes the cook will tell you the food is finished, so if you don’t have money to buy your food, then sorry you are on your own,” that nurse mentioned.

A nurse from the Southern Regional Hospital posted on social media, “This last salary is a real spit in the face for us nurses ... I just hope they’re ready when my young nurses become active ... just wait.” She added, “imagine how us healthcare workers feel right now. Demotivated and this stops here ...”

This morning, some nurses from the Northern Regional Hospital also took to the street. During an interview with one of those healthcare workers, we learned that a meeting was being held with officials of the government of Belize and reps of the Nurses Association of Belize. She shared their reason for stepping out with the rest of the nation’s nurses. “We are in solidarity because we have had enough with everything that has been going on in the health system. We have been frustrated, we have been unhappy, we lack resources, we lack medication, we lack staffing, and now they’re touching our money, so now enough is enough,” she said.

The president of the Belize Nurses Association, Renetta Pop, said that the pressing issue at hand is a salary deduction that nurses are currently experiencing with each paycheck. She sat down with government officials from the Ministry of Finance, Health, and Labor this morning as a part of a meeting to hash out the issues.

“There are some agreements that we came up to. The Ministry of Health will be doing a press release, there also will be consulting back with our membership,” Pop said. She went on to thank the nurses from the public and private sector who are standing in solidarity.

The Belize Medical and Dental Association issued a press release today



Nurses at Western Regional Hospital



Belize City healthcare workers walks out this afternoon

indicating a stance of solidarity with the nurses of Southern Regional Hospital, who as mentioned, were the first to take to the street on Saturday.

It further noted that it stands with “ALL healthcare workers facing hardship in the workplace at this time.”

“While we advocate for adherence to essential services guideline, we understand the sentiments of the nurses and staff at the SRH. We, therefore, implore the management of all government facilities, the executives at the MOHW and members of the Labor Department to initiate meaningful dialog,” the release from the BMDA goes on to state.

Today, following the meeting, Minister Bernard, in an interview this afternoon said that he had met with the Nurses Association just recently, about 3 weeks ago. “One of them being the main issue is the issue of the overtime, and the deductions were made – what they term in the Ministry of Finance as a short-hour deduction, it was our hope that we would have awaited that meeting for today before any action was taken.”

He shared that it was important for the government and the aggrieved healthcare workers to have had the meeting that took place today.

Addressing the elephant in the room, the issue of overtime calculations for nurses, he stated, “The overtime calculations will be calculated on a monthly basis as opposed to every week or every day where nurses and doctors and all shift workers.” He went on to say, “We have agreed with the Ministry of Finance, that that calculation will revert to where it was calculated monthly so that not to affect a nurse who works on a shift basis where they would be deducted hours if they did not complete the weekly amount.”

He noted that, for the past pay period

for the August 2022 payroll, a short-hour deduction was applied to the salary of nurses.

“That immediately sent shock waves, as I would put it, across the medical profession, and I don’t give nurses or the doctors, or any of these frontline shift workers – who as I said in that meeting with the Ministry of Finance – are feeling it in their pockets. How can you expect these persons’ basic salary to be deducted and expect that they will survive for the rest of the month,” Minister Bernard said.

He shared that his position, along with the Nurses Association of Belize, was to have that decision reverted back immediately.

A joint press release issued by the Ministry of Health and Wellness specifically outlines some of the actions that are to be taken. These include an adjustment in the method used to calculate overtime pay for the nurses, which will now be done on a monthly rather than a weekly basis—using a time sheet that will list monthly hours worked and monthly overtime hours worked. Additionally, the “short-hour reductions” referred to by

Minister Bernard, which were made for the August 2022 pay period will be “reverted back to staff” as an “interest-free advance” by

September 9. The Health Ministry has also promised to carry out reconciliation during the next pay period to resolve any “discrepancies” that resulted from the previous method of calculation that was being used. Additionally, the tool “for the calculation of sick leave and vacation leave” will be standardized countrywide, and a request has reportedly been made for “review and amendment of the PSR and GWR to reflect regulations for shift workers.”

This afternoon at 3:00 o’clock, healthcare workers from the national referral hospital, Karl Heusner Memorial Hospital Authority, staged a walkout in solidarity with their colleagues countrywide. President of the KHMHAU, Andrew Baird, gave comments while picketing in his scrubs in front of the hospital.

He said that the agreement reached this morning addresses only issues of overtime and sick leave benefits.

“I am aware of the agreement, but the agreement is only one-fold. It addresses their overtime issue, but it still has not addressed the issue of shortage of supplies, human resources, and medication. It did not address the issue of better wages,” Baird said.

The CEO of the KMH, Chandra Cansino, also gave an interview this evening, during which she said, “I was a little surprised when, you know, I got an information that in five minutes time we are going to stage a protest, and so my initial concerns were for the patients.”

She added, “We have come a long way with our relationship with the union, so I do not interpret this as a protest against the KHMHA. I interpret this as the KHMHAU in solidarity with their fellow nurses.”

A shortage of workers in the nursing profession has been long recorded in Belize, and in many countries around the world, with the World Health Organization estimating a shortage of 5.9 million nurses worldwide. Because of this, many countries offer very attractive working packages to persuade trained nurses to migrate to those nations.

Conservation NGOs: GOB should pause all Environmental...

Continued from Page 1

Amandala will note that one public consultation scheduled to occur soon is a session to be held in regard to the Waterloo Investment Holdings’ proposed Port of Belize Cruise Tourism Facility and Cargo Expansion project—set for this Thursday, September 1.

The purpose of the letter, signed by a total of twelve organizations, is to ensure that the Government is not compromising commitments made under the Blue Bond

loan agreement (signed with The Nature Conservancy) by carrying out EIAs before relevant environmental laws and regulations are amended and fully enacted.

“That has been the mantra of the NGO community for a long time—that if we have the systems in place and we have the regulations in place and the laws in place then, yes. We create the environment conducive to investments that match our development plan and match our priorities

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SSB launches digital self-service portal

The My Social Security Self Service Portal is one part of the SSB's larger digital transformation efforts



Ward McGregor – SSB Chief Information Officer

by *Khaila Gentle*

BELIZE CITY, Fri. Aug. 26, 2022

The Social Security Board (SSB), at its annual SSB Connect event, launched a new self-service portal which, according to the SSB's Chief Information Officer, Ward McGregor, is a part of the Board's ongoing digital transformation.

Through the launch of the portal, the Social Security Board is hoping to reduce long lines at branch offices, shorten turnaround times for benefit claims, and improve the overall services provided as they work towards becoming more customer-focused. In the near future, persons will also be able to make payments online using the portal.

"I'm sure some people have had the experience where they make a claim for a benefit and it takes a while to get a response on that claim. That's because a lot of our processes—not only in Social Security but across Belize—are largely paper-based," McGregor said.

The Social Security Board's digitization process, explained McGregor, is being made possible through the platform known as Peransa, which integrates several key apps that allow management of everything from security and auditing to appointments and documents.

The My Social Security Self Service Portal will allow contributors to more conveniently access SSB services, including making claims and paying contributions. Users can also access the portal to update existing records and apply for a Social Security card replacement.

The SSB's new customer-focused approach goes even further than providing more convenient services, though. According to the CIO, the SSB will also be making a greater effort to reach those customers that are homebound, such as the elderly, and those that live in rural areas.

"Our commitment is to provide inclusive, fair, and dependable services to our customers," McGregor added.

BTB hosts 7th Digital Marketing Summit



Lebawit Lily Girma, Editor-at-large for Skift

by *Charles Gladden*

BELIZE CITY, Mon. Aug. 29, 2022

On Friday, the Belize Tourism Board (BTB) hosted its 7th Digital Marketing Summit, a one-day event held at the

Best Western Belize Biltmore Plaza in Belize City and attended by stakeholders within the tourism sector and the private sector, as well as NGOs.

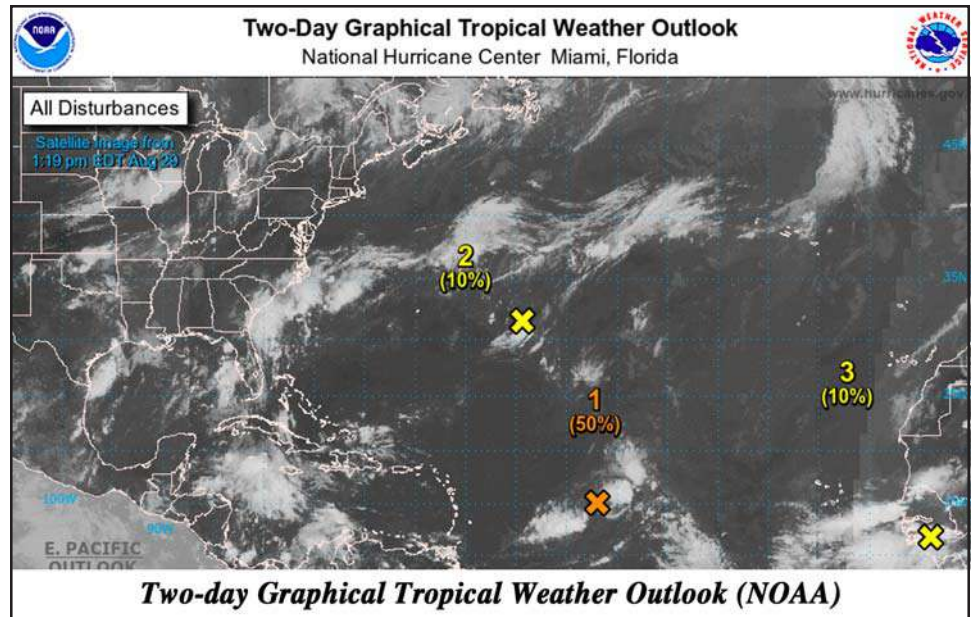
The summit featured presentations from experts in all segments of online marketing — including social media marketing, digital marketing, strategic marketing and video marketing, and was geared at helping those in the tourism industry develop and maintain an online presence.

Lebawit Lily Girma, editor-at-large for Skift, which was founded in 2012 and provides market research and marketing services to the travel industry, told reporters that a way to capture an audience's attention is to be creative and authentic.

"Tourism has come back, and it has come back really ferociously. It is

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Four tropical disturbances in the Atlantic



BELIZE CITY, Mon. Aug. 29, 2022

A tropical disturbance located in the Central Atlantic has a 50% chance of further development over the next two days, as it moves slowly west of the northern Leeward Islands at 5 to 10 mph. The National Hurricane Center says that while the conditions for development are only marginally conducive, the system is expected to get stronger within the coming days, with an 80% chance of formation in the next 5 days.

This is one of four tropical disturbances currently in the Atlantic basin. A second in the Sub-Tropical Atlantic about 600 miles from Bermuda is producing some showers, but strong upper-level winds and dry air in the

region are expected to limit the chance of development of the system as it drifts south-southwestward over the central Atlantic. The chances are high that this system will dissipate in a week, an advisory today noted.

Over the Eastern Tropical Atlantic, a tropical wave is set to move off the coast of Africa later on today or tomorrow morning. The system is projected to develop as it moves westward.

And finally, a trough of low pressure may develop over the northwestern Caribbean later this week. It is expected to develop slowly as it moves toward the Yucatan Peninsula over the next 5 days or so.

State of Emergency ending this week



Chester Williams, Commissioner of Police

by *Charles Gladden*

BELIZE CITY, Mon. Aug. 29, 2022

At the beginning of the month, the Police Department declared a 30-day SOE (State of Emergency) within the Lake Independence area in an attempt to prevent an escalation of gang violence both in that area and in Belize City.

In the final week of July, Belize City saw a massive amount of bloodshed within the streets as a result of gang rivalry between the BLC and PIV gangs, which ultimately resulted in the month-long SOE being instituted. The series of killings in the area started on Sunday, July 24, when Tevin "Bush" Cacho was shot at a residence at the corner of

Lacroix Boulevard and McKenzie Street behind the Charles Barlett Hyde Building after a football game. The following day, former PIV gang boss, Darren Banks, who had stepped away from a life of crime after being diagnosed with a mental illness, was executed at the corner of AMANDALA Drive and Ebony Street. The killings reached a climax when well-known street figure Alrick Smith was shot to death on Thursday, July 28, upon exiting the Rene Villanueva Media Center.

Soon after, the SOE was put into place, and police officers stormed into the Lake Independence area and detained dozens of persons suspected of being gang members. Today, Commissioner of Police, Chester Williams, said that they're working with the men who were detained to resolve the tension among themselves, and the authorities do not intend to extend the SOE.

"We're coming to the end of it, and the LIU, the Human Development Committee Rehab, and [several] different organizations have been in dialogue in working with these young men well in prison, all to see how they resolve the ongoing tension among them, and there is no intent to extend the SOE. We believe that they have come to some resolution and we anticipate with their release, things will continue as is. Certainly, if we see that they want to rear their ugly heads again, then we'll do what needs to be done to protect the greater good of society and the law-abiding among us," he said.

Man fights with 3 police officers near BTL Park

by Charles Gladden

BELIZE CITY, Mon. Aug. 29, 2022

An amateur cell phone video that has been circulated among the public shows an apparent fight which took place on Saturday night between an unidentified civilian man and three on-duty police officers right in front of BTL Park.

In the first few seconds of the video, one of the three police officers can be seen landing a punch on the civilian, after which the civilian threw a punch at the police officer. That act of retaliation against the officer prompted two of his fellow officers to intervene, and they forcefully subdued the disorderly man and detained him.

While it is currently not known what led to the physical encounter between the civilian and the police officer, the Commissioner of Police, Chester Williams, told local reporters that this type of altercation is nothing new to members of the Police Department and that persons who record footage of such incidents tend to negatively portray police officers, without fully capturing the circumstances which prompted the officers' reactions.

"Certainly, you know it's nothing new to policing. Oftentimes, officers encounter



Police attempt to restrain civilian

resistance when trying to take persons into custody, and many times, the videographer would not capture what the civilian would do but capture the police or on occasion would edit the video to make it seem like the police are the bad one. This time, we saw a video that depicts everything. It's an eye-opener for the public to understand it is extremely difficult for officers at times when trying to detain some persons. Yes, there are occasions where some people would easily concede to being arrested, but there are occasions we do have resistance and the police have to apply the best possible measure to deal with the situation without causing any injury to a person or persons," Commissioner Williams said.

Charges are yet to be levied against the civilian for resisting arrest and assaulting a police officer.

1st disbursement of BISP funds issued to BDF



Brig. Gen. Azariel Loria, BDF Commander



Dario Tapia, CEO in the Ministry of Defence

BELIZE CITY, Sat. Aug. 27, 2022

The Belize Defence Force will acquire 10 new troop-lifting vehicles as well as new computer systems to create an intranet operation through a BZD \$3,005,328.16 disbursement allocated to the force. Two contracts were signed yesterday by the Ministry of Economic Development and the Ministry of National Defence and Border Security for this first disbursement under the Belize Integral Security Program (BISP), which is funded by the Central American Bank for Economic Integration (CABEI) and was first approved in 2015.

During the signing, the CEO of the Ministry of Economic Development, Osmond Martinez, pointed to the negligence of the last administration, which left the fund dormant, and the need to redesign the program before it could have been reapproved.

"It is a historic day, because the Belize Integral Security Program funding was approved back in 2014, and the total of that funding is 60 million Belize dollars. It was approved in 2014, it was signed in 2015, and the first disbursement came in 2018, in September of 2018—a total of 3.8 million US dollars. When I came to the Ministry of Economic Development, I found that money sitting there, and I was surprised, nuh—3.8 million dollars sitting at the Central Bank of Belize," CEO Martinez said.

He said that the program was first developed in 2010, but since then became outdated and had to be redesigned. This task of redesigning fell to the Ministry of Economic Development, and the proposals were eventually resubmitted to CABEI. In March of this year, for two days, a technical team for CABEI came to the country to do a reassessment of the needs of the participating agencies under the program, namely, the Belize Defence Force, the Police Department, the Belize Coast Guard, and the National Forensic Science Service.

In April of this year, the funding was once again approved.

CEO Martinez explained, "So in May, they asked us to move forward with the new, redesigned proposal, and why was it redesigned is because it is a 12-year-old proposal, so some of the proposed issues that were on that proposal were no longer needed."

He added, "I want to also mention that we were about to lose the 60 million

dollars. CABEI was about to pull those funds and to actually ask back for the first disbursement of 3.8 million dollars US.

He went on to state that the signing of this contract marks the seriousness of the government to get work done through the program. For the BDF, it means much-needed operational equipment and along with it a boost in morale. Former BDF Commander and now CEO of the the Ministry of National Defence, Dario Tapia, said that he has been relentlessly urging the ministry to roll out these funds.

"Being a former Commander of the Belize Defence Force, what's coming under CABEI funds is desperately needed by the Belize Defence Force, be it the troop-lifting vehicles, be it the computers, be it the infrastructure—Belize Defence Force needs that and doesn't need it tomorrow, they need it now, and so I am glad that we are taking this step today to be able to get those trucks and equipment to the Belize Defence Force, because, you know, when you have these tangible things that the soldiers see, it boost morale. That's the importance of it. I think it will even start to boost more morale when they start to do the infrastructural development," CEO Tapia said.

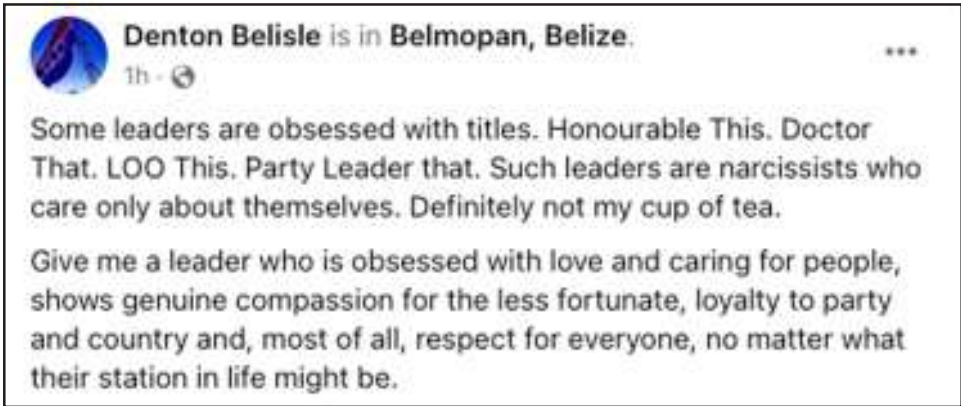
Current Commander of the BDF, Brig. Gen. Azariel Loria, said that the disbursements come at a time when the force needs it the most.

"The BDF is the end user for the troop-listing capability – it comes at a time when we most need it. The current fleet that we have is aging, and we are in need of spare parts; if we get the vehicles, the sooner the better. It will definitely enhance the morale of the troops," Commander Loria said.

A total of BZD\$13,000,000 is allocated to the BDF under the BISP. Other program areas include the procurement of communication and medical equipment, construction and equipping of a kitchen at Price Barracks, a medical center at Fairweather Camp in Punta Gorda, and operations rooms at Camp Belizario in Cayo.

This program, which, as mentioned, will also benefit other security service sectors, is geared toward strengthening citizen security through investments in infrastructure and equipment for these public institutions responsible for national security.

UDP in-fighting continues



BELIZE CITY, Mon. Aug. 29, 2022

Despite an agreement among United Democratic Party members who attended a recent National Party Council meeting that they would desist from engaging in constant internal fighting and from being publicly critical of processes or persons within the party, new waves of attacks against the current party leadership are being spread on social media, after being published on the Facebook page of UDP stalwart Denton Belisle.

A most recent post made this morning stated, "Some leaders are obsessed with titles. Honourable This. Doctor That. LOO This. Party Leader that. Such leaders are narcissists who care only about themselves. Definitely not my cup of tea."

These remarks, obviously aimed at current UDP leader Hon. Shyne Barrow, are just the most recent of a string of posts and comments that can be found on the social media platform,

largely calling for the removal of Barrow from leadership and an upending of the current UDP hierarchy.

The chairman of the UDP, Michael Peyrefitte, has referred to the ongoing infighting within the UDP as "unfortunate" and has called for an end to the internal squabbles within the party. Just recently, the National Party Council met and an agreement was reached among those in attendance to stop the constant social media attacks against other members of the party and remove any critical social media posts that have already been published. Belisle, however, in defiance of that NPC stance, has chosen to continue an offensive against the current UDP leadership.

Denton Belisle, who is the father of former UDP Belmopan mayor Khalid Belisle, is a long-time UDP supporter and, by all indications, a supporter of Albert area representative Hon. Tracy Pantan.

Call us at: 202-4477



“Only the people...”

Mon. Aug. 29, 2022

The power of “big money” is never more evident than around election time. As one famous American quote puts it: the three most important things in an election are “money, money and money.” And there is no denying that the “war chests” of major Belizean political parties are such that so far the third parties have not been able to compete, despite their strong rhetoric and sincere dedication. But there are times when the momentum of disenchantment with the party in government has been so strong that it appears that no amount of money can stop “the force of an idea whose time has come.” When the Belizean people have made up their minds, a party can bring all the money it wants, and as it is said in the streets, the people will “tek dehn money and vote dem out;” the tide will be swung by those who “vote their conscience.”

There is no denying that there are some, from both major political parties, who will “do their party duty” once the compensation is considered adequate, but there is a block of voters, and it is suspected that among them are certain members of both major parties, who will swing Belizean elections one way or the other, and election “bribes” be damned. Those are the really deep-thinking and sincere Belizeans, to whom country matters more than party, and the long-term benefit for Belize outweighs any quick token or party treat, whose children’s future weighs more heavily on their minds than the smiling face of the vote-seeking area representative. And it is these same rock-solid patriots who will need to flex their political muscles in the current battle against corporate giants who are determined to have their way with projects that may forever tarnish and cripple the Jewel in their single-minded quest to plunder and exploit our precious natural resources. While environmental voices may enlighten, it is the conviction of the people that must pressure our elected politicians to do the right thing.

The problem with some of our Belize politicians, and it is a problem that is common to both major parties, is that there seems to have developed a trend of thought, a philosophy, really, that almost makes it a sacred mantra, where politicians will boldly sing the high praises of “foreign direct investment,” FDI’s, as if it is some Holy Grail that will come to save the Belizean people. The people are crying for “jobs, jobs, jobs,” and our political leaders will naturally endeavor to satisfy them, often resulting in undue haste to “sign off” on any new major “foreign direct investment” proposal that comes their way. With the lure of mega-millions of dollars and hundreds, even thousands of jobs that some investors will dangle before eager eyes, there have been project proposals that were embarrassing for some politicians, when they were found to be a threat to our nation’s welfare by thinking, patriotic Belizeans. The most glaring example of such a proposed “foreign direct investment” project, that would have, like they always say, pumped millions of foreign exchange into our economy, was the glamorous Puerto Azul Exclusive Resorts & Hotel proposed development, an investment said to cost “billions,” that was big international news back in 2014.

And, oh, of course the developers sang high praises for Belize and our wonderful reef and cayes, and they pledged most emphatically to ensure no harm would come to our environment. In a gala affair at the 67th Annual Cannes Film Festival, the developers hosted The Puerto Azul Experience Night, where they described their project as a “dream

luxury experience that will be built in the clear and beautiful waters of Lighthouse Reef, Belize.” They really laid it on, and if you listen to the claims of the propaganda professionals, it is easy to become swayed by all the good things they have to say. Talking about jobs? They declared that the project would “accommodate 1,000 guests and 2,000 employees.” And more, there would also be “residential suites, apartments and overwater bungalows, bank & business center, police station, coast guard, fire brigade, telecommunications center, golf courses, shopping areas, amusement park, super yacht marine, diving school, hyperbaric chamber, botanical garden, hospitals, vocational school and sewage and waste management to name a few.”

Thankfully, not all our then UDP government representatives were completely swooning from the blandishments of the Puerto Azul salesmen. While two government ministers were being hosted at the “ultra-posh Puerto Azul Exclusive Resorts party,” one other minister did caution them that our Cabinet had only “approved permission for Puerto Azul to conduct an environmental study to confirm if the project is sustainable.” No EIA had yet been approved.

And that is where the Belizean people, with enlightenment and leadership from our environmentalists, soon came to the nation’s rescue. With a groundswell of support from ordinary Belizeans, especially in San Pedro, government was forced to put a massive “brakes” on the whole scandalous affair. It was a classic case of, like the old Belizean proverb says, “pick[ing] sense from nonsense.”

A November 21, 2014 release at europe.oceana.org perhaps summed it up best, saying in part: “...Foreign developers are planning a massive luxury resort on the atoll, which is part of the Mesoamerican Barrier Reef System — the largest barrier reef in the western hemisphere and a thriving marine ecosystem. Called Puerto Azul, the proposed project would decimate important marine habitat and compromise the integrity of Belize’s eco-based tourism industry...”

“Opposition to Puerto Azul is widespread among Belizeans. While they support tourism — the backbone of the country’s economy — they do not support building a resort that will irreversibly destroy the Mesoamerican reef, the very place that tourists come to experience. If such a project is to go forward, it must be built elsewhere, at a site that does not threaten the health of protected ocean life and World Heritage sites...”

Now, under a PUP government, Belizeans are currently facing a looming crisis of choices, between, on the one hand, the glitter of two grandiose proposed projects, Waterloo and Vulcan, and certain eager politicians trumpeting the glory of foreign direct investments, and jobs, jobs, jobs; and on the other hand, the cautious warning of our environmental scientists who are not easily swayed by the lure of quick and easy money, but by the long-term health and sustainability of the natural wonders that God’s goodness gave to us to provide continuing wealth and sustenance for generations of Belizeans to come.

Some decisions are more easily made than others. And where some seemingly sincere and generous politicians are generally head-over-heels in support of any billionaire’s mega-project because of “jobs, jobs, jobs,” it will be tempting for some supporters to jump on the bandwagon to “all these millions” and say, “please take us there.” But there is also an old saying that “once bitten; twice shy.” And if ever a nation and people have been “once bitten,” and bitten again and again and again, it is we the Belizean people. It is okay to be invited to a banquet, Belizeans, but what good is it if no place has been set for your children to eat? We’re messing with deep waters and very big predatory fishes.

We do not have all the answers; but the people’s will, however it becomes realized, is more powerful than any developer’s motive or any politician’s scheme. In matters of the earth and the sea and nature’s “wealth untold” that God has given to this nation, we tend to perceive more sincerity, consistency and honesty in the advice of our scientists, those not on the developer’s or government’s payroll, than in some of our politicians.

This is indeed a time to keep an open mind, Belizeans. “Sleep wid yo own eye,” listen to your own heart, “pick sense from nonsense,” and decide whether you will say “yea” or “nay,” and let your voice be heard, not just for today, but for the children of tomorrow.

“Only the people can save the people!”

(Some information for the above article was taken from sanpedrosun.com and ambergriscaye.com)



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Sister of murdered US national seeks answers

by Charles Gladden

COROZAL, Mon. Aug. 29, 2022

Carla McLean, the sister of 66-year-old US retiree, Rodney Wayne Rushing, who was killed on August 17, moments after arriving at his home on Consejo Road in Corozal Town, is seeking answers and has made public comments to US media about the death of her brother in Belize.

Rushing had recently migrated from Alabama to Belize, approximately two months before he was killed, and was living alone with his two dogs. At the time of the shooting that claimed his life, about nine gunshots were heard by his neighbors, and when they went to the scene to see what had happened, they saw a grey Hyundai Tucson SUV parked inside his yard with the driver's side door opened—indicating Rushing had just exited the vehicle. Approximately 10 feet away from the SUV, Rushing's lifeless body was found in a face-down position.

There were visible gunshot wounds on Rushing's head, upper back, the right side of his abdomen, his right leg, and his right thumb at the time his body was discovered. He was then transported to the Corozal Community Hospital, where he was pronounced dead on arrival.

McLean told *WSFA12 News* that her brother was targeted, and that the motive for the shooting could have been robbery, because the gunmen probably believed he had a lot of money because he was an American. She also noted that his wallet was missing after he was killed.



Rodney Rushing, deceased

"[He was] wanting a better life and then went to a place that was the end of his life. I think it may have been somebody he confided in. I don't think Rod went around waving money, because he wasn't like that," McLean said.

Currently, Rushing's family is in communication with the US Embassy and Belizean law enforcement authorities in an effort to find answers, because they fear this murder case will be forgotten.

"People get hurt. They get shut up. They get paid off and sometimes taken out—I've been hearing that," McLean said.

A GoFundMe account has been created by the family in an attempt to get the necessary funds to transport Rushing's body to the United States. They are also trying to decide what to do with his car, dogs, and other possessions.

RRB program roads to be designed by MIDH



CEO Victor Espot, CEO Osmand Martinez signing of Memorandum of Agreement

BELIZE CITY, Mon. Aug. 29, 2022

On Friday, representatives of the Ministry of Infrastructure Development and the Ministry of Economic Development signed a memorandum of agreement to implement one of the components of the Resilient Rural Belize Program (RRB)—the upgrading of feeder roads used by the various agricultural communities being supported under the program.

The agreement is specifically aimed at the upgrading of three such roads, which are located in the Valley of Peace, Trio, and San Carlos communities respectively. During the 6-year project, engineers from inside the Ministry of Infrastructure Development will be spearheading that work on the road. It is an initiative that the CEO of the Ministry of Economic Development, Osmond Martinez, has described as the perfect example of inter-ministerial cooperation. Martinez further highlighted the fact that having engineers from within the Infrastructure Ministry carry out the upgrade is projected to save the RRB several hundreds of thousands, which, he claims, will be passed on to the community members living below the poverty line.

CEO in the Ministry of Infrastructure Development, Victor Espot, also, when talking to local reporters, made reference to the fact that local engineers within his ministry will be designing these roads, and he noted that the exercise will provide an opportunity to highlight the abilities of the in-house engineers, who are oftentimes sidelined

by foreign firms or other private entities. "So, our engineers will be the ones designing these roads. That will result in significant, significant savings. The M.I.D.H. will also contribute to these designs. So, the project won't have to pay for the designs," he said.

Espot further said that the ministry has committed to ensuring that the roads meet the highest structural standard after completion of the works and added that because there was a delay in the implementation of the project, there is a need to speed up the pace to get the work done within the designated timeframe.

The International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), which is the implementing body for the RRB project, has no objection to the inter-governmental partnership, said CEO Martinez, who mentioned that the partnership will help the project move a bit faster.

Recently, an FPIC protocol was signed with the village of San Jose and the RRB program as a part of the compliance requirements of the implementation agency IFAD. In a working document drafted by the organization titled "Seeking, free, prior and informed consent in IFAD investment projects" they state, "IFAD is the first international financial institution to adopt FPIC as an operational principle in its policy documents. In IFAD-funded projects and programmes, the borrowing entity or grant recipient is responsible for seeking and obtaining FPIC."

Caribbean Shrimp Company receives ASC certification



Caribbean Shrimp Company Ltd.

by Charles Gladden

BELIZE CITY, Mon. Aug. 29, 2022

The Caribbean Shrimp Company, a shrimp farm in the country that has been operational since 1986, has received international certification from the Aquaculture Stewardship Council (ASC), which provides a guarantee to buyers that it has met the industry's standards.

The 266-acre farm is family-owned by second-generation Belizean-Canadian citizens, and each year the farm, on which more than 30 persons are employed, produces more than 100,000 pounds of organically-grown

shrimp for the local and export markets.

"It's fantastic. I can't even begin to describe how ecstatic I was that we were able to work through this process. This is to Belize the longest continuously-owned shrimp farm in the country, because it's been under one ownership the whole time. And we have been operating the whole time—maybe at a lesser capacity, depending on how things are going—but we have been operating right through," said Heather McIntosh, general manager and owner of Caribbean Shrimp Company Limited, to a local media outlet.

McIntosh added, "I am Belize's smallest shrimp farm, so for us to be

able to work through such an arduous process and it is only a team of two—myself and my office manager, Miss Yolanda Cacho—we did all of the documentation provision and everything. ASC sends a control union representative; two come and do an onsite audit. We had three, because they brought a trainee with them as well. And they were here for two solid days, starting at six in the morning, and they looked at every single document, every single process, [and] did a full site inspection to go through the multitude of processes and parameters to make sure that we complied with that process. And it wasn't easy. There are steps along the path where we weren't a hundred percent compliant, but they give you time to show them that you

can become compliant."

McIntosh mentioned that the company produces sixteen shrimps per cubic meter of the farm's ponds, as they try to make the environment as natural as possible.

"Some of the other farms do between two hundred and four hundred shrimp per cubic meter, because they do intensive farming. I have extensive farming, and I have earthen ponds. I try to keep it as close to nature as possible. I have mangroves all around the ponds to try and naturally filter the water. I have no mechanized equipment here; it is all-natural," she said.

The aim for the company is to focus on export, niche consumer, resort, and retail markets, and, now, agri-tourism.

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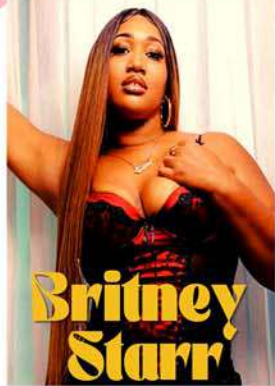
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Cozmo Boy



Britney Starr



Jalmita



King Rome

MARTINS FEST

SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 11TH

MAHOGANY STREET

STARTING FROM 10 IN THE MORNING

★ Sweet Pain Band 3.0 Chico Ramos ★

★ PAPA JOHN ★ YG ★ J MONEY ★ XKLUSIVE Soundz ★

★ BLUE
★ STEEL

THERE IS GOING TO BE A KIDS ZONE WITH RIDES, BOOTHS FROM VARIOUS BUSINESSES AND ORGANIZATIONS. FOOD WILL BE ON HAND ALL DAY MAHOGANY STREETS FLAVORS AND QUALITY.



“Solo el pueblo...”

Lun. 29 de agosto de 2022

El poder del “gran dinero” nunca es más evidente que en época de elecciones. Como dice una famosa cita estadounidense: las tres cosas más importantes en una elección son “dinero, dinero y dinero”. Y no se puede negar que los “cofres de guerra” de los principales partidos políticos beliceños son tales que hasta ahora los terceros partidos no han podido competir, a pesar de su fuerte retórica y sincera dedicación. Pero hay momentos en que el ímpetu de desencanto con el partido en el poder ha sido tan fuerte que parece que ninguna cantidad de dinero puede frenar “la fuerza de una idea a la que le ha llegado su hora”. Cuando el pueblo beliceño se ha decidido, un partido puede traer todo el dinero que quiera y, como se dice en las calles, la gente “tomará su dinero y votará para sacarlos”; la marea la cambiarán aquellos que “voten a conciencia”.

No se puede negar que hay algunos, de los dos partidos políticos principales, que “cumplirán con su deber partidista” una vez que la compensación se considere adecuada, pero hay un bloque de votantes, y se sospecha que entre ellos hay ciertos miembros de ambos partidos principales, que influirán en las elecciones beliceñas de una forma u otra, y al carajo con los “sobornos” electorales. Esos son los beliceños realmente profundos y sinceros, para quienes el país es más importante que el partido, y el beneficio a largo plazo para Belize supera cualquier obsequio rápido o regalo de partido, cuyo futuro de los niños pesa más en sus mentes que la cara sonriente de los representantes de área buscando votos. Y son estos mismos patriotas sólidos como una roca los que necesitarán mostrar sus músculos políticos en la batalla actual contra los gigantes corporativos que están decididos a salirse con la suya con proyectos que pueden empañar y paralizar para siempre la Joya en su búsqueda decidida de saquear y explotar nuestros preciados recursos naturales. Si bien las voces ambientales pueden esclarecer, es la convicción de la gente la que debe presionar a nuestros políticos electos para que hagan lo correcto.

El problema con algunos de nuestros políticos de Belize, y es un problema que es común a los dos partidos principales, es que parece que se ha desarrollado una tendencia de pensamiento, una filosofía, realmente, que casi la convierte en un mantra sagrado, donde los políticos cantan audazmente las grandes alabanzas de la “inversión extranjera directa”, la IED, como si fuera un Santo Grial que vendrá a salvar al pueblo beliceño. La gente está pidiendo a gritos “trabajos, trabajos, trabajos”, y nuestros líderes políticos, naturalmente, se esforzarán por satisfacerlos, lo que a menudo resulta en una prisa indebida para “dar visto bueno” a cualquier nueva propuesta importante de “inversión extranjera directa” que se les presente. Con el atractivo de mega millones de dólares y cientos, incluso miles de puestos de trabajo que algunos inversionistas colgarán ante ojos ansiosos, ha habido propuestas de proyectos que fueron vergonzosos para algunos políticos, cuando inteligentes beliceños patrióticos descubrieron que eran una amenaza para el bienestar de nuestra nación. El ejemplo más evidente de un proyecto de “inversión extranjera directa” de este tipo, que, como siempre se dice, habría inyectado millones de divisas en nuestra economía, fue el glamuroso desarrollo propuesto de Puerto Azul Exclusive Resorts & Hotel, una inversión que se dice que costaría “miles de millones”, esa fue una gran noticia internacional en 2014.

Y, por supuesto, los desarrolladores elogiaron a Belize y nuestros maravillosos arrecifes y cayos, y se comprometieron enfáticamente a garantizar que nuestro medio ambiente no sufriera ningún daño. En un evento de gala en el 67° Festival Anual de Cine de Cannes, los desarrolladores organizaron una Noche de Aventura Puerto Azul, donde describieron su proyecto como una “experiencia de lujo de ensueño que se construirá en las aguas claras y hermosas del arrecife Lighthouse, Belize”. Realmente le dieron con todo, y si escuchan las afirmaciones de los profesionales de la propaganda, es fácil dejarse llevar por todas las cosas buenas que tienen que decir. ¿Hablando de trabajos? Declararon que el proyecto “daría cabida a 1.000 invitados y 2.000 empleados”. Y más, también habría “suites residenciales, apartamentos y bungalows sobre el agua, banco y centro de negocios, estación de policía, guardacostas, bomberos, centro de telecomunicaciones, campos de golf, áreas comerciales, parque de diversiones, super yate marino, escuela

de buceo, cámara hiperbárica, jardín botánico, hospitales, escuela vocacional y gestión de alcantarillado y desechos, por nombrar algunos”.

Afortunadamente, no todos nuestros entonces representantes del gobierno UDP estaban completamente flaqueados por los halagos de los vendedores de Puerto Azul. Mientras dos ministros de gobierno estaban siendo recibidos en la “fiesta ultra elegante Puerto Azul Exclusive Resorts”, otro ministro les advirtió que nuestro Gabinete solo había “aprobado el permiso para que Puerto Azul realice un estudio ambiental para confirmar si el proyecto es sostenible.” Todavía no se había aprobado ninguna EIA.

Y ahí es donde el pueblo beliceño, con la iluminación y el liderazgo de nuestros ambientalistas, pronto acudió al rescate de la nación. Con una oleada de apoyo de los beliceños comunes, especialmente en San Pedro, el gobierno se vio obligado a poner “frenos” masivos a todo el escandaloso asunto. Fue un caso clásico de, como dice el viejo proverbio beliceño, “descifrar lo que tiene sentido y lo que no”.

Un comunicado del 21 de noviembre de 2014 en europe.oceana.org quizás lo resumió mejor, diciendo en parte: “...Desarrolladores extranjeros están planeando un masivo complejo de lujo en el atolón, que es parte del Sistema de Barrera de Coral Mesoamericano, la barrera de coral más grande en el hemisferio occidental y un próspero ecosistema marino. Llamado Puerto Azul, el proyecto propuesto diezmaría un importante hábitat marino y comprometería la integridad de la industria del turismo ecológico de Belize...”

“La oposición a Puerto Azul está muy extendida entre los beliceños. Si bien apoyan el turismo, la columna vertebral de la economía del país, no apoyan la construcción de un centro turístico que destruirá irreversiblemente el arrecife mesoamericano, el mismo lugar que los turistas vienen a experimentar. Si un proyecto de este tipo va a seguir adelante, debe construirse en otro lugar, en un sitio que no amenace la salud de la vida marina protegida y los sitios del Patrimonio Mundial...”

Ahora, bajo un gobierno PUP, los beliceños se enfrentan actualmente a una crisis inminente de opciones, entre, por un lado, el brillo de dos grandiosos proyectos propuestos, Waterloo y Vulcan, y ciertos políticos entusiastas que pregonan la gloria de las inversiones extranjeras directas y los trabajos, trabajos, trabajos; y por otro lado, la advertencia cautelosa de nuestros científicos ambientales que no se dejan seducir fácilmente por el atractivo del dinero rápido y fácil, sino por la salud y sostenibilidad a largo plazo de las maravillas naturales que la bondad de Dios nos dio para proporcionar riqueza continua y sustento para generaciones venideras de beliceños.

Algunas decisiones se toman más fácilmente que otras. Y donde algunos políticos aparentemente sinceros y generosos por lo general están locamente a favor del megaproyecto de cualquier multimillonario debido a “trabajos, trabajos, trabajos”, será tentador para algunos partidarios subirse al carro de “todos estos millones” y decir, “por favor llévennos allí”. Pero también hay un viejo dicho que “una vez mordido; dos veces tímido.” Y si existe una nación y un pueblo que ha sido “mordido una vez”, y mordido una y otra vez, somos nosotros, el pueblo beliceño. Está bien ser invitado a un banquete, beliceños, pero ¿de qué sirve si no se ha preparado un lugar para que sus hijos coman? Estamos jugando con aguas profundas y peces depredadores muy grandes.

No tenemos todas las respuestas; pero la voluntad del pueblo, sin importar cómo se realice, es más poderosa que el motivo de cualquier desarrollador o el plan de cualquier político. En asuntos de la tierra y el mar y la “riqueza incalculable” de la naturaleza que Dios le ha dado a esta nación, tendemos a percibir más sinceridad, consistencia y honestidad en el consejo de nuestros científicos, aquellos que no están en la nómina del desarrollador o del gobierno, que en algunos de nuestros políticos.

De hecho, este es un momento para mantener la mente abierta, beliceños. “Duerman con sus propios ojos”, escuchen su propio corazón, “descifren lo que tiene sentido y lo que no”, y decidan si dirán “sí” o “no”, y dejen que se escuche su voz, no solo por hoy, sino por los niños de mañana.

“¡Solo el pueblo puede salvar al pueblo!”

(Alguna información para este artículo fue tomada de sanpedrosun.com y ambergriscaye.com)

Working as one for the global good

The global community is confronting a number of unprecedented crises: from the ongoing challenge of COVID-19 variants and stalled efforts on climate change, to supply chain disruptions and Russia's unprovoked invasion of Ukraine. Now more than ever, China's increasing rhetorical and military intimidation is jeopardizing regional peace and stability. All these will impact security and well-being of the world. As the UN members meet again in New York this year, it is worth



Jaushieh Joseph Wu, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Republic of China (Taiwan)

reminding these leaders that all people—including the people of Taiwan—deserve to have their voices heard and to be part of the collaborative effort to tackle these challenges for the global good.

A beacon of democracy in Asia and a force for good in the world, Taiwan is a valuable partner that can help overcome these global challenges. Since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, Taiwan has provided humanitarian support across the globe, including much-needed masks and medical supplies, as well as developing and sharing its homegrown vaccine. Taiwan also sent over 550 tons of relief supplies to the people of Ukraine following the Russian invasion of their country, in addition to making over US\$40 million in donations for Ukrainian refugees.

Further, Taiwan is committed to combating climate change, with a blueprint for net-zero carbon emissions by 2050 and policies in place to help achieve the UN Sustainable Development Goals. As the world's 22nd-largest economy in terms of GDP and a major semiconductor manufacturer, Taiwan plays a key role in global supply chains. And as a defender of democracy, Taiwan is working to safeguard the status quo and support the rules-based international order. While China is using coercion to export its brand of authoritarianism abroad, Taiwan lets its free and open society lead by example.

Sadly, Taiwan is unable to participate in the largest and most important forum of global cooperation due to the relentless suppression by the People's Republic of China (PRC). By deliberately conflating its "One China" principle with the UNGA Resolution 2758—the resolution that determined who represents "China" in the organization some 50 years ago—Beijing is misleading the world by spreading the fallacy that Taiwan is a part of the PRC. Contrary to these false claims, the resolution does not take a position on Taiwan, nor does it include the word "Taiwan." The long-term status quo is, the ROC (Taiwan) and the PRC are separate jurisdictions, with neither subordinate to the other. The people of Taiwan can only be represented in the international community by their free and democratically elected government.

The wrongful interpretation of UNGA Resolution 2758 has long deprived Taiwan of the right to

participate in the United Nations and its specialized agencies, and it has also denied the international community of an opportunity to benefit from Taiwan's contributions. Worse yet, the PRC's efforts to rewrite Taiwan's status at the UN further undermine global peace and stability. Beijing's recent dangerous military maneuvers surrounding Taiwan is a case in point.

The UN Charter states clearly that the purposes and principles of the United Nations are to maintain international peace and stability, and that international disputes should be resolved by peaceful means. However, Beijing continues to conduct military exercises in areas around Taiwan, undermining the status quo in the Taiwan Strait, escalating tensions, impacting international trade and transportation, and putting regional peace and security at risk. Such irresponsible actions need to be condemned and brought to a halt. Given the current circumstances, it is even more important that the UN and its member states stop allowing such a member, which ironically is a member of the UN Security Council, to dictate the positions of the organization to suit its own political agenda. Acquiescing to China's wrongful claims over Taiwan will only destabilize the region, which is also against the very purpose of the UN.

Taiwan will resolutely defend its sovereignty and security. As a responsible member of the international community, Taiwan will also continue to exercise restraint in response to China's provocations, and work together with like-minded countries to uphold peace and stability in the region. And as we have shown the world over the years, we will continue to fulfill our international responsibilities by actively engaging with and contributing to the international community.

The theme of the 77th session of the UN General Assembly, "A watershed moment: transformative solutions to interlocking challenges" pointedly reminds us of the grave challenges facing the international community: the COVID-19 pandemic, food and energy shortages, disrupted global supply chains, and climate change, and the list goes on. When the UN talks about "joint solutions" and "solidarity" to tackle "interconnected crises," we could not agree more. Taiwan is more than willing and able to be part of such joint solutions. And the 23.5 million resilient Taiwanese people surely should not be



SUMMARY PROCUREMENT NOTICE

Contract Title: Consultancy to Re-Develop the CSME Application Processing System (CAPS) / Consultancy on National Accounts

Contract reference nos.: EU/SFCICP/CSME/2022-GY / EU/SFCICP/RSTATS/2022C-PH-C

The Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Secretariat intends to award a service contract for the following:

- **Consultancy to Re-Develop the CSME Application Processing System (CAPS);**
- **Consultancy on National Accounts.**

The contract will be implemented at the CARICOM Secretariat (Guyana) Office with financial assistance from **11th European Development Fund**. The detailed Request for Expressions of Interests (REOIs) are available at <https://caricom.org/procurement-notice/>

The deadline for submission of Expressions of Interests (EOIs) is **16 September 2022**.

Gift of Life's cardiology clinic for kids ends - until next year



Source - Rotary Club of Belize

by Khaila Gentle

BELIZE CITY, Sun. Aug. 28, 2022

For more than ten years now, the organization Gift of Life, in collaboration with the Rotary Club of Belize, has provided cardiac care to children across the country. Through the initiative, Gift of Life Belize and the Rotary Club have hosted a number of U.S cardiologists who have visited the country twice a year to diagnose and assist congenital heart disease patients. This was done in partnership with Gift of Life Florida and the Rotary Club of Omaha in the months of February and August.

Approximately 1 out of every 115 children born is affected by congenital heart disease or heart defects. The Gift

of Life program has proven helpful and even life-saving for many, especially in light of the fact that there are very few, if any, pediatric cardiologists in Belize.

In addition to providing cardiac screening services, Gift of Life also grants patients access to critical surgical interventions when needed.

"Our August Gift of Life Clinics are now done until early next year. We wish our young Belizeans who came to visit us good health and we thank all those that helped to make these clinics a life-saving reality twice a year," said the Rotary Club of Belize.

This year's program came to an end on Sunday, but Gift of Life will resume early next year to continue the decade-long tradition.

excluded from such important global efforts.

We are thankful that countries worldwide are beginning to realize what Taiwan can offer, and many support Taiwan's robust participation in the UN system. Among them, the European Parliament overwhelmingly approved a resolution on July 6 this year expressing support for Taiwan's meaningful participation in international organizations. The G7 countries have also expressed similar support. In particular, US Secretary of State

Antony Blinken publicly encouraged all UN member states to join the United States in support of Taiwan's meaningful participation in the UN system last October.

Our shared obstacles require all hands on deck. Those grave interconnected crises cannot be resolved until the entire world comes together. Taiwan has proved to be a reliable and indispensable partner, and the people of Taiwan stand ready to contribute. Let's work together as one for the global good!

Biden's mouth is writing checks US army can't cash—Part 2



by Clinton Canul Luna

Permit me, our dear readers of this column, to present to you the following which I find to be of much interest. Below is Part 2 of Scott Ritter's "Two-Front War: Biden's mouth is writing checks the US Military can't Cash", which was posted on Youtube by RonPaulLibertyReport on July 4, 2022.

Now, what is NATO? We call it a military alliance. Back in the 1960s, 1970s, 1980s, it was truly an alliance of military powers. The military that the United States had deployed into Europe—at that time over 300,000 men and women—was the finest military the world had ever seen. A military capable of engaging in large-scale ground combat in Europe and winning, and I say that because I was one of them, and I'm telling you right now, if anybody thought they could beat us, they were wrong, maybe. We never got tested, thankfully, but we were good, because we trained, because we were organized, because we were prepared, but then something happened: the Cold War went away, and for the decade of the 90s, we were looking more at the peace dividend from the Cold War than we were at sustaining our military supremacy, even though we talked a big game. And this is a very important thing: we talked a very big game, but we weren't the same; by 1998, we weren't the same military that existed in 1991. We were a far diminished military.

We barely had enough resources in 2003 to take on a depleted Iraqi military. We almost ran out of logistics. A lot of people who study the invasion and occupation of Iraq will know that we had an operational pause before we moved on to Baghdad, because we

ran out of everything. And had the Iraqis been half as good as some people thought they were, we might not have won that war in the time frame that we thought. It was a very close-run thing, because we weren't that good anymore. And then another thing happened after 9/11. We started getting focused on low-intensity conflict. We're fighting wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. But not the kind of wars where you close with to destroy the enemy through firepower maneuver involving hundreds of thousands of troops, tens of thousands of tanks, thousands of aircraft. We're talking about small unit conflict, where patrols are going out of platoon-sized, company-sized, maybe of a battalion-sized operation. We forgot how to fight a big war. We didn't train for it. I'm telling you right now, if you don't train for it, you can't do it, you can't do it.

And we spent 20 years withering away every advantage we once had, where once no one could stand toe to toe with us, and again I'm just saying that if somebody was there and, thank goodness, nobody tested us, because sometimes being a little too cocky you pay a little bit of price, but we were cocky because we were good; we were good because we trained. The military that existed, that exists today is a by-product of 20 years of neglect. We do not have a military today that can fight a large-scale ground war in Europe. We do not have a military today that can fight a large-scale ground war in Europe. I'll say it one more time, because this is important: we do not have a military today that can fight a large-scale ground war in Europe. And yet what is the president positioning us to do? Fight a large-scale ground war in Europe. Ladies and gentlemen, if we

fight the Russians, we will lose, we will lose, hands down; it won't even be close. NATO doesn't exist anymore. Oh, it's there as an organization. When I was in the British army on the Rhine, around 80,000 guys, highly trained, today they barely have 80,000 guys in their entire military. Ask the Brits to put together a brigade and send it out their island into Europe; they can't do it, they can't do it. Ask the French; they can't do it; ask the Germans, they can't do it. No one can do it.

This is why Joseph Burrell, who is the head of foreign policy for the European Union, is freaking out right now, because he recognizes the trajectory that Europe's on, which implies the potential for combat with Russia, and he says Europe cannot beat Russia in a war. That's an absolute statement of fact. People talk about the Russian military today, and if you read our newspapers, you listen to news, you're thinking these guys are just a bunch of local yokel bumbungs. They can't fight. They can't do anything right. Heck, they got beat north of Kiev; the ghost of Kiev shot down all their airplanes, those 13 brave marines gave him the finger and told them to stick it in their rrrr, no, you know. No guys. The Russians are some of the finest, most professional troops in the world. Why? Because in the 20 years that we were squandering our resources, hunting down goat herders and insurgents in Iraq and Afghanistan, they were focused on fighting us, not because they want to fight us, but because we were promulgating policies that were pushing them into a corner where they had no choice but to fight us. In 2008, Russia fought a short five-day war with Georgia. There was a Russian victory, but it was a close-run thing, because the Georgians had been trained for a number of years by U.S. marines, and their small-unit tactics were outstanding, and the Russians went in there and they were getting waxed to small-unit level. The Georgians were shooting, moving, communicating out, maneuvering out, flanking, moving, moving and the Russians were like "what the heck is going on here? we're slow and lumbering." They had to bring in their artillery, their armor and just grind it through, and they beat them, but they realized we got a problem here, because that's a small army trained to NATO standards. If we went up against a big army trained to NATO standards, we get waxed. So they changed the whole way they did business, and we saw that from 2008 to 2014.

Remember 2014, Crimea? Little green men? Well, the little green men were the new face of the Russian army—professional, uhm, not conscripts, contract soldiers. We call them volunteers in America. They call them contracts. They're a little bit more honest. It's about money. I'm going to make some money, join the

military, become a professional. 70 percent of the Russian military today is composed of contract soldiers. They're very, very, good at what they do. It's not just a small unit level. In 2016, again, because of our policies, what did Russia do? They brought back Cold War-era units, the first guards tank army, the 20th combined arms army. These were units that used to exist during the Cold War, whose sole purpose was to punch through NATO lines, get into NATO rear areas and annihilate everything—large-scale ground combat. And the Russians brought these units back, breathed new life into them, gave them new equipment, they're there. The Russians today are organized to fight large-scale ground combat in Europe, and when I say organized to fight, that means, organized to win. How do we know this? Well, we see it right now, ladies and gentlemen.

You can talk about the Ukrainians all you want. I'll tell you this, not only were they one of the largest militaries in Europe, they were one of the best-equipped militaries in Europe, one of the best trained militaries in Europe, one of the most competent militaries in Europe. This is the Ukrainian army I'm talking about. The Ukrainian army was capable of defeating, hands down, any army in NATO besides the United States, maybe the Turks, but everybody else, Ukraine would wax them. They're that good, and yet Russia is crushing them, crushing them. That doesn't mean that Russia's not taking losses. Man, when you step into the ring with a heavyweight fighter, he's going to hit you, he's going to hit you hard, and if you're not careful, he's gonna knock you out, and Ukrainians are fully capable of delivering some heavy blows, and they have. The Russians aren't perfect, they have made mistakes, and they have paid a price, but the sign of a professional organization is your ability to adapt and overcome, and the Russians have adapted and they've overcome. Today we have people saying the Russian army officers aren't that good, their army is not that good. The battalion commanders that the Russians have on the ground in Ukraine today, are the finest battalion commanders the world has ever seen. These guys are doing miracles. America's battalion commanders would do well to study what these guys are doing, how you lead from the front, sustain combat operations for 100 days and you get better, not worse.

(To Be Continued)

fincasolan@gmail.com
August 28, 2022
Finca Solana
Corozal Town

THE SECRETARY-GENERAL MESSAGE ON THE INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR PEOPLE OF AFRICAN DESCENT

31 August 2022

Each year, the International Day for People of African Descent celebrates the diverse heritage and culture of people of African descent and their enormous contribution to our societies throughout history.

Yet, around the world, millions of people of African descent are still subject to racism and deeply entrenched and systemic racial discrimination. That is why the United Nations continues to call for the full respect of their human rights and fundamental freedoms, for redress when these are violated, and for formal apologies and reparations for the egregious wrongs of slavery and colonialism.

In December, the Permanent Forum of People of African Descent, whose establishment is an important achievement of the International Decade

for People of African Descent, will hold its first session. I urge all stakeholders, including people, communities and organizations of African descent, to participate and drive the work of the Forum forward.

The United Nations General Assembly has requested the Intergovernmental Working Group on the Effective Implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action to draft a United Nations declaration on the promotion and full respect of the human rights of people of African descent. The Forum will contribute to this critically important work.

It is essential that we continue to speak up – loudly and without fail – against any notion of racial superiority and that we work tirelessly to free all societies from the blight of racism.

Cordel and Bernard got "mass partied"

by Colin Hyde

Aha, I heard Cordel express unhappiness with all this money that is being transferred from the lean coffers of the people to the burgeoning vaults of Ashcroft, as settlement for the ships registry, which a Barrow government had taken away from the Ashcroft crowd for so many right reasons. It was a 2013 UDP government that should have had the right to extend the contract with them, not a 2005 PUP government.

US\$38.5 million is a lot of money, a whole lot, and Brother Cordel had to vote yes to it. Hmm, I bet he was not the only one biting his lip. This guy Ashcroft, he and his gang, I won't go into the fault here, just the fact that they got over us again. My, it hurts. That money, some of it could have been directed to the MSME program, to inject additional capital to help Belizeans develop their businesses. Some of it could have gone to support our public hospitals, schools, security services, and pantry.

Ah, Bernard Wagner, his Council had to bend over to Micah so that he could go and study, law. It would have been an easier buy if the talented young brother had sought support so he could go and study how to fix Belize City's massive drainage problem.

It's indeed a tricky one. Ms. Michelle Sutherland, in *The Reporter*, said Micah

was unable to get the support of four of his colleagues on his application for paid study leave, but he had been able to work out an interim arrangement for six months. Mayor Wagner pointed out that councilors don't really have full-time jobs, that they operate as a kind of board, to advise, debate and adopt policies. So, Micah will be participating in meetings virtually, from his university abroad.

Aha, while not full-time that way, councilors are full-time when it comes to responsibility to the people who elected them.

Respect to the PM and *The Belize Times'* "Think About It" columnist for gushing all over Micah, but in the "revised curriculum," law is last on the list. I think all that the PM said about Micah was beautiful and true, but it was best his party found the funds from elsewhere, and maybe encouraged him to study something of benefit to us. That young man is very intelligent, so he should have no problem in another field.

Apparently some councilors are squirreling. Why would the poor people of Belize City pay anyone to go and study law when many of them have difficulty paying for their garbage? I don't have to ask; I know enough about Bernard to know he will do his best for the young man, short of bending his principles, ehm, if he can. Hmm, this

mass party thing, it's going to get you. It is so that if you are a member of a mass party, you will wake up in bed with people who are very strange to you. That George Price had a lot of good quotes. Now let's see, let's see. No, I can't think of any.

Ahem, those PUP bohgas have every opportunity to find the loot from elsewhere for Micah to go and learn the profession that Carolyn Trench-Sandiford rejected.

GOB should "find" new buyer for White Ridge

I don't know if this proposed Vulcan project to raze those hills to the southwest of Gales Point would directly impact Hope Creek, but Mullins River, just a few miles south of Gales Point, would be directly in the dust clouds when the wind is blowing from the northeast, north, and northwest.

There's a problem here, and the GOB should solve it by "finding" a new buyer for White Ridge. The property is listed for US\$39 million, and with 3 miles of beach, 14,000 acres of land, a lot of road and building infrastructure, and farm and tourism potential, it looks to be worth more than money in the bank. Vulcan is talking about a few jobs to break stones, but with the right business, right management, and some cash, White Ridge could offer hundreds of jobs to Belizeans.

Before Vulcan or Ashcroft and his crowd snap up White Ridge, GOB should intervene, demand six months for us to raise the dough. Go to Belizeans abroad, and Oceana, and the Duke's son who recently danced in Hopkins, and get that money. Mining those hills is preposterous.

Vulcan has quite a few tugs and barges, and maybe a couple ships too, that have been put on dock after this fallout in Mexico. They want to find work for their boats. For sure they can get all the road fill material on their home turf, but they don't want to pay the minimum wage. I hear their best jobs here are US\$35 per day. Over there that Biden government is talking about a minimum wage of US\$15 per hour. We don't need the revised curriculum to help us do the math there.

The US\$22.7 billion Vulcan Material, oh the company value you saw is right, they looked at the prospectus put out by the present owners of White Ridge, and tore it up. Before reporting on Vulcan's proposed sacrilege, can you believe there are Belizeans who looked at a company that size and didn't blink? I think they are victims of too many Joel Osteen and TD Jakes shows.

White Ridge is marketed as "one of the most breathtaking locations in the

world", a magnificent 23 square miles of land which, with an "intelligent master plan can provide for diverse projects, all of which, through a thoughtful set of guidelines, can be designed with environmental and architectural integrity." Uy, the "property extends into the dramatic foothills of the Mayan Mountains" and "it has crystal-clear whitewater creeks, extensive caverns and existing private mountain villas with panoramic vistas."

We don't know why the owner(s) wants to sell. In the world of private properties, they have that right, so no questions there, but they must be hiding their heads under their beds, ashamed knowing that if Vulcan buys, "this pristine 14,000+ acre plantation on the country's wild coast" will be turned into an environmental disaster. We're talking mining here, and if you didn't know, the word association game with that kind of project starts with scar and ends with degradation.

He'll have to hand back that Grammy

We've heard the howls from some quarters that government members of the House are out of line when they remind the Leader of the Opposition about a blot in his past, but what I know is that a person who wants to climb high goes the extra mile to keep his backside clean, because we know what happens the higher up you go. The Leader of the Opposition is quick to call on the Speaker at a hint of history, ah, but he's equally quick to clutch on to his Grammy, which he offered to give, or was it share, with the PM at the last House meeting.

The Shakespeare-ites among us, mostly men who went to St. Michael's College, drool over one Mark Anthony, I think it was he, who said, speaking of his boss who was lying in a casket before him, that "the evil that men do lives after them; the good is oft interred with their bones." Keeping things above ground here, you know it is the aim of every intelligent striker to get inside the penalty box, because when you get there the enemy can't so much as breathe on you. Aha, so it seems some want it in the House in Belize. Soon talk about corruption will not be allowed.

The gentleman should hand back the Grammy anyway. I think he already said he isn't proud of it. Really, as I've been telling you from a way back when, that black music, the lyrics are all from the white supremacist's store. Rest easy, nobody is asking him to give back the money which he earned through hard work and excellence in his craft.



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REGIONAL & INTERNATIONAL

Official: 6 of 43 missing Mexican students given to army



Friends and relatives

by **FABIOLA SÁNCHEZ** and **CHRISTOPHER SHERMAN**

August 26, 2022

MEXICO CITY (AP) — Six of the 43 college students “disappeared” in 2014 were allegedly kept alive in a warehouse for days then turned over to the local army commander who ordered them killed, the Mexican government official leading a Truth Commission said Friday.

Interior Undersecretary Alejandro Encinas made the shocking revelation directly tying the military to one of Mexico’s worst human rights scandals, and it came with little fanfare as he made a lengthy defense of the commission’s report released a week earlier.

Last week, despite declaring the abductions and disappearances a “state crime” and saying that the army watched it happen without intervening, Encinas made no mention of six students being turned over to Col. José Rodríguez Pérez.

On Friday, Encinas said authorities were closely monitoring the students from the radical teachers’ college at Ayotzinapa from the time they left their campus through their abduction by local police in the town of Iguala that night. A soldier who had infiltrated the school was among the abducted students, and Encinas asserted the army did not follow its own protocols and try to rescue him.

“There is also information corroborated with emergency 089 telephone calls where allegedly six of the 43 disappeared students were held during several days and alive in what they call the old warehouse and from there were turned over to the colonel,” Encinas said. “Allegedly the six students were alive for as many as four days after the events and were killed and disappeared on orders of the colonel, allegedly the then Col. José Rodríguez Pérez.”

The defense department did not immediately respond to a request for

comment about the allegations Friday.

The role of the army in the students’ disappearance has long been a source of tension between the families and the government. From the beginning, there were questions about the military’s knowledge of what happened and its possible involvement. The students’ parents demanded for years that they be allowed to search the army base in Iguala. It was not until 2019 that they were given access along with Encinas and the Truth Commission.

The commission report says the army registered an anonymous emergency call on Sept. 30, 2014, four days after the students’ abduction. The caller reportedly said the students were being held in a large concrete warehouse in a location described as “Pueblo Viejo.” The caller proceeded to describe the location.

That entry was followed by several pages of redacted material, but that section of the report concluded with the following: “As can be seen, obvious collusion existed between agents of the Mexican state with the criminal group Guerreros Unidos that tolerated, allowed and participated in events of violence and disappearance of the students, as well as the government’s attempt to hide the truth about the events.”

Later, in a summary of how the commission’s report differed from the original investigation’s conclusions, there is mention of a colonel.

“On Sept. 30 ‘the colonel’ mentions that they will take care of cleaning everything up and that they had already taken charge of the six students who had remained alive,” the report said.

In a witness statement provided to federal investigators in December 2014, Capt. José Martínez Crespo, who was stationed at the base in Iguala, said the base commander for the 27th Infantry Battalion at the time was Col. José Rodríguez Pérez.

Through a driving rain later Friday, the families of the 43 missing students marched in Mexico City with a couple

Back-to-school haircuts in Port Loyola

10th annual back-to-school trimming drive in Port Loyola hosted by Inspirational Promotions



by **Charles Gladden**

BELIZE CITY, Mon. Aug. 29, 2022

Inspirational Promotions, a non-profit community organization in the Port Loyola area, celebrated its 10th annual back-to-school haircut and hair braiding event for children within the community, who are starting a new academic school year.

The event took place at the YMCA compound on Fabers Road Extension, where over 200 primary school boys and girls either received a haircut or got their hair braided, in addition to being given a backpack full of school supplies.

The drive started back in 2012 when the two founders of Inspiration Promotions, who grew up in Port Loyola and were childhood friends, decided to make an effort to assist the children in the community in which they grew up and started with only 10 children, then

went to the local orphanage.

Edmond Staine, one of the two founders of Inspiration Promotions, told a local media outlet, “We believe that education is the solution to poverty, and so we want the kids to take pride in themselves and to go to school with a fresh cut or their hair neatly braided to give them that boost in confidence on the first day. We knew the struggles we had growing up and we tried to figure how best we can help those behind us.”

While the event was primarily for children within the Port Loyola area, children from other areas in Belize City were present at the event.

Apart from hosting its annual back-to-school haircut drive, the organization annually hosts a Christmas toy drive and partnered with the Port Loyola Organization for Women (PLOW) to open a resource center on Kraal Road, Belize City.

Belmopan resident found dead

Samuel Sanchez, 37, a Belizean laborer residing in Belmopan, was found dead in a drain.

by **Charles Gladden**

BELMOPAN, Mon. Aug. 29, 2022

Samuel Sanchez, 37, a laborer of Guatemala Street in the San Martin area of Belmopan, was found dead by police on a farm at Mile 42 on the George Price Highway on Friday night, August 26. He was lying in a drain on the farm when he was

found.

According to initial police reports, earlier that day Sanchez left his home en route to the farm to do some landscape work, and at around 9:00 p.m. his body was found partially in a drain. Sanchez was taken to the Western Regional Hospital, where he was pronounced dead on arrival.

Police are investigating.

hundred other people as they have on the 26th of every month for years.

Parents carried posters of their children’s faces and rows of current students from the teachers’ college marched, shouted calls for justice and counted off to 43. Their signs proclaimed that the fight for justice continued and asserted: “It was the State.”

Clemente Rodríguez marched for his son Christian Alfonso Rodríguez Telumbre, who was a second student identified by a tiny burned bone

fragment.

Rodríguez said the families had been told last week before the report was released about the coronel and the six students.

“It’s not by omission anymore. It’s that they participated,” he said of the military. “It was the state, the three levels of government participated.”

Full article can be found at: <https://apnews.com/article/mexico-crime-caribbean-army-34010c60dd7f6e3615fc60bef57f7e7>

First published by AP News Mexico



XXX National Women's Softball Championship results

BELIZE CITY, Mon. Aug. 29, 2022
 The XXX National Women's Softball Championship, hosted by the Belize Softball Federation, concluded on Sunday, August 28, 2022, at Rogers Stadium.

Team Beacon (Belize City) defeated Play Chune Girls (Belmopan) 5-2 in the final game to clinch the National Championship title.

Team Beacon was led by pitcher and Tournament Most Valuable Player, Shadalee Ho.

Belize Bank E-kyash Bulldogs captured 3rd place.

8 teams (the top 2 qualifiers from each of 4 district associations that held competitions this year) were placed into 2 groups for pool play. The top 2 teams from pool play advanced to the Championship Round.

GROUP A – (Belmopan) Play Chune Girls; (Belize City) Beacon; Crooked Tree; San Lazaro Bravers.

GROUP B – (Belize City) Belize Bank Bulldogs; Grace Kennedy Roaring Creek; Double Head Cabbage Unity; Guinea Grass.

Final Standings: Champions – Beacon; Sub-Champions - Play Chune Girls; Third Place - Belize Bank E-Kyash Bulldogs; Fourth Place - Guinea Grass.

Individual Awards:

Batting: Most Stolen Bases - Arneek Baptist (Beacon) – 7; Most Runs Batted In (RBIs) - Sharette Vernon (Belize Bank E-Kyash Bulldogs) – 6; Highest Batting Average - Kelsey Robinson (Belize Bank E-Kyash Bulldogs) - .666.

Pitching: Most Strikeouts - Ashey Lucas (Play Chune Girls) – 15; Most Wins - Shadalee Ho (Beacon) – 3.

Most Valuable Player - Shadalee Ho (Beacon).

The XXX National Women's Softball Championship was declared open by Mrs. Brenda Johnson



Photos by pics by William Ysaguirre

Beacon - National Women's Softball Champions 2022

Gabourel, a member of the 1972 Gold Medal Belize Team at the Central American and Caribbean Games in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic. Mrs. Johnson also threw out the ceremonial first pitch.

The Belize Softball Federation thanks all the donors, sponsors, technical staff, team players, coaching staff, umpires, security personnel and fans who all contributed to making the XXX National Women's Championship a successful softball event.

- press release -



Photos by pics by William Ysaguirre

Play Chune Girls - National Women's Softball Sub-Champions 2022

National U13 Boys Elite Championship Week 4 results

BELIZE CITY, Mon. Aug. 29, 2022

The final regular season games, Week 4 of the Football Federation of Belize's (FFB) National U13 Boys Elite Championship 2022 were played on Saturday, August 27, at four different venues across the country. At stake was a chance to advance to the semifinals, which would include the top two teams in each group after the end of Week 4. All games were scheduled to start at 2:00 p.m. Below are the results.

At the Norman Broaster Stadium in San Ignacio, Cayo dropped Stann Creek, 2-0, with both goals coming from Marlon Meza, Jr. (1' & 59').

Meanwhile, at the Marshalleck Stadium in Benque, it was the visitors, Toledo coming away with a 4-1 victory over Benque Viejo. Scoring for Toledo were Abnor Choco (8' & 12'), Jovan Ogaldez (39') and Henry Coc (60'); while the lone goal for Benque was by Shamir Orellana (19').

Here at the MCC Grounds in Belize City, the old capital trounced new capital Belmopan, 4-0, with a goal each from Herwin Godoy (15'), Jacob Joseph (26' PK), Barrack Morey (37' PK) and Breylin Middleton (51').

Out at the Ambergris Stadium in San Pedro Town, the home team San Pedro defeated Orange Walk, 2-0, with both goals coming from Daniel Caliz (12' & 20').

And down south at the M.A. Stadium in Independence, visiting Corozal prevailed, 4-2, over Mid-South. Netting a goal apiece for Corozal were Tishaun Reid (4'), Jahzeel Navarro (21'), Jaleel Swazo (47') and Kimmani Rancheran (60'); while Mid-South got a goal each from Deshawn Baptist (39') and Tayshawn Pandy (58').

See final regular season standings below:

National U13 Boys Elite Championship 2022								
Standings at Week 4, Saturday, August 27, 2022								
GROUP - A	GP	W	D	L	GF	GA	Diff	Pts
Cayo	4	4	0	0	15	3	12	12
Stann Creek	4	3	0	0	5	2	3	9
Toledo	4	1	2	1	5	6	-1	5
Mid-South	4	0	1	3	4	13	-9	1
Benque Viejo	4	0	0	4	2	14	-12	0
GROUP - B	GP	W	D	L	GF	GA	Diff	Pts
Belize	4	3	0	1	9	3	6	9
San Pedro	4	2	1	1	6	2	4	7
Orange Walk	4	2	1	1	6	4	2	7
Belmopan	4	1	1	2	4	5	-1	4
Corozal	4	1	0	3	8	12	-4	3

The top two teams from each group now go on to the home-and-away semifinals. Upcoming Semifinals Leg 1 schedule:

Saturday, September 3

2:00 p.m. – (#1 A) Cayo U13 vs (#2 B) San Pedro U13 – Norman Broaster Stadium

2:00 p.m. – (#1 B) Belize City U13 vs (#2 A) Stann Creek U13 – MCC Grounds

Conservation NGOs: GOB should pause all Environmental...

Continued from Page 2

and goals,” said OCEANA Vice President, Janelle Chanona, to the media on Friday.

The NGO community is concerned by public statements that have been made by potential investors which assert that once an EIA is allowed, environmental clearance is guaranteed.

“Current laws are also being interpreted to infer that if the developers can afford to resubmit rejected EIAs, there are no guidelines or limits for repackaging and resubmitting rejected projects,” the letter further states.

Two weeks ago, the Department of the Environment announced that Waterloo Investment Holdings had resubmitted an application for review of its Environmental Impact Assessment and that, as a part of that resubmission, the company would be hosting another public consultation. The announcement, however, raised much public concern.

Waterloo’s Port Expansion Project was rejected by the National Environmental Appraisal Committee (NEAC) in 2021, and public consultations held by the developers received notable opposition. Despite this, the company has been relentless in its efforts to get the proposed project approved, with its chairman, Lord Michael Ashcroft, going as far as threatening legal action against the Government of Belize in a letter leaked last week.

In speaking with the media, the OCEANA Vice President said that one of the main issues with environmental laws as they stand is that there is nothing that specifies what happens after an EIA is rejected. Furthermore, there is nothing detailing what constitutes a new EIA in the case of resubmission.

“We know that the EIA regs have needed to be amended, and updated. For some time now, there are parts of the law that are silent on critical issues. There are parts of the law that need to be clarified, and we’ve gotten to this point after some time has been allowed and we are not seeing those changes,” said Chanona.

In the letter, the NGO community points out that current laws are being interpreted to infer that if developers can afford to resubmit rejected EIAs, then they can do so without limits.

“By this logic, everyone allowed to prepare an EIA can sue the Belizean Government and people if their proposal is rejected and can continue submitting ‘revised’ rejected EIAs indefinitely,” states the letter.

The conservation community refuses to accept any national development

agenda that allows such a possibility.

The twelve NGOs also submitted a letter to Waterloo’s Principal Consultant for the Port of Belize Cruise Tourism Facility and Cargo Expansion project, Allan Herrera, of Nextera Environmental and Engineering Consultants. In that letter, the conservation community asks Herrera to clarify how the “new” Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) differs from the previously submitted version.

In a letter/statement that has been sent by Herrera to Chanona, he points to an additional part of the document that outlines what he claims is “an environmentally viable alternative to offshore placement” of the dredged material that the project would generate—material which the company initially planned to dispose of off-shore. He then, after referring to the insertion of that alternative disposal method in the document (specifically the use of an “expanded near-shore disposal site within the Project envelope”), refers to updated information that has been inserted in the ESIA in response to specific requests made by the National Environmental Appraisal Committee (NEAC) regarding six final items, which he then listed. These areas of the document which contain additional or updated information include a section on nearshore disposal and its hydrodynamic impact, a new study on flood risk assessment, additional information from a Lands and Survey Department consultation, and the results of a supposed Port Loyola community consultation that the company is now claiming it conducted.

It’s worth noting, however, that Chanona has publicly pooh-poohed the company’s suggestion that nearshore disposal of the dredged material would prevent environmental harm—including possible damage to the Belize Barrier Reef. Last week, she told Jules Vasquez of *7News*, “We confirm still to the position that ocean dumping does not and should never make sense for Belize. It is (I’m trying to be kind) a point of fact that offshore dumping and nearshore dumping are both dumping dredge spoils in the Caribbean Sea. You cannot tell me because the water is in front of Belize City versus in front of Turneffe that that is not the Caribbean Sea. You are talking about dumping millions of cubic meters of dredge spoils in the Caribbean Sea and all the science, all the data has shown, all the modeling has shown, that wherever you dump that material, it will end up on some part of the Belize Barrier Reef System.”



‘Man of the Hole’: Last of his tribe dies in Brazil

The last remaining member of an uncontacted indigenous group in Brazil has died, officials say.



The man’s face was briefly captured on camera by anthropologist Vincent Carelli

The man, whose name was not known, had lived in total isolation for the past 26 years.

He was known as Man of the Hole because he dug deep holes, some of which he used to trap animals while others appear to be hiding spaces.

His body was found on 23 August in a hammock outside his straw hut. There were no signs of violence.

He is thought to have died of natural causes at an estimated age of 60.

The man was the last of an indigenous group living in the Tanaru indigenous area in the state of Rondônia, which borders Bolivia.

The majority of his tribe are believed to have been killed as early as the 1970s by ranchers wanting to expand their land.

In 1995, six of the remaining members of his tribe were killed in an attack by illegal miners, making him the sole survivor.

Brazil’s Indigenous Affairs Agency (Funai) only became aware of his survival in 1996, and had been monitoring the area ever since for his own safety.

It was during a routine patrol that Funai agent Altair José Algayer found the man’s body covered in macaw feathers in a hammock outside one of his straw huts.

Indigenous expert Marcelo dos Santos told local media that he thought

the man had placed the feathers on himself, knowing that he was about to die.

“He was waiting for death, there were no signs of violence,” he said, adding that the man had probably died 40 to 50 days before his body was found.

There were no signs of any incursions in his territory and nothing in his hut had been disturbed, officials said. A post-mortem will be carried out to try to determine whether he had contracted a disease.

As he had avoided any contact with outsiders, it is not known what language the man spoke or which ethnic group he may have belonged to.

In 2018, members of Funai managed to film him during a chance encounter in the jungle. In the footage, he can be seen hacking at a tree with something resembling an axe.

There had been no sighting of him since, but Funai agents did come across his straw huts and the deep holes he dug.

Some had sharpened spikes at the bottom and are thought to have been traps for animals he hunted, such as wild boar.

Mr Algayer, the Funai agent who found his body, said that all of the huts the man had built over the years - of which there were more than 50 - also contained a 3m-deep (10 ft) hole.

First published by *BBC Latin America*.

BTB hosts 7th Digital Marketing Summit

Continued from Page 3

extremely competitive, and for Belize to stand out, they have to embrace new ways of presenting the product. To capture the audience these days, you have to be a hundred percent creative, and authentic and you have to give people context, because it is all about what we call at Skift the hyper-localization of travel. Travelers want to be fully immersed, they want what’s real, [and] they want to connect emotionally. And that’s the future; the

tourism industry’s future is to connect with people on a more emotional level after the last two years,” she said.

Also at the summit was Google’s Senior Account Manager in New York, Shamara Valdez Rubio, who noted that searches for Belize have increased due to the number of local and foreign travelers who are in search of cultural diversity and looking for an authentic experience.

“I was sharing data on searches for trends in Belize from the U.S. and from Europe – both of which have grown –

and it indicates that the traffic will remain steady. But it is also about the growth is there, the search is there, and how we capture it. So I think that’s where there is an opportunity for us. Local travel in Belize and things to do in Belize are what I found in my searches, but I think the local aspect is what is starting to be highlighted more,” said Valdez Rubio. Ashleigh Hardin-Jones, senior social media strategist at Zimmerman Agency, noted the importance of having a social media presence.

“I think everything now is online [and]

is on social media so you have Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, you have all those platforms, so find one and choose one and figure out which one works best for you, but it is important to have that social media presence, because that’s where everyone is now. Everyone’s gravitating towards digital. It is easier to access; they don’t have to read a lot. Websites are still important, but you want to have that extra piece for those people who are on that platform and just being able to expand your reach,” Hardin-Jones said.

BISL settlement final

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International Services Limited (BISL), which was passed in the House of Representatives last week. By the end of the meeting, a supplementary appropriation bill and the terms of the deed of the settlement were passed in the upper house—making the payment to the Ashcroft Alliance and his partners final. A total of \$38.25 US million will thus be paid out to the Belize Bank, and the Panamanian law firm Morgan and Morgan.

Before making his presentation, lead government senator Hon. Eamon Courtenay disclosed that his and Senator Coye's law firm, Courtenay Coye LLP, which formerly represented BISL in its lawsuit against GoB, had not been legal representatives of the company in its efforts to reach a settlement agreement with the government after Courtenay and Coye took office, subsequent to which BISL secured the services of two UK barristers.

"I wish to place on record two important things, Madam President: 1) First – the law firm of Courtenay Coye LLP has served as attorneys at law for Belize International Services Limited. Senator Coye and I are partners of that firm, and therefore we disclose that well-known fact as we are required to do to this honorable Senate. 2) With respect to the negotiating for settlement of the BISL claim between the government of Belize and BISL, no attorney from the firm Courtenay Coye LLP was involved in any way," Senator Courtenay said.

As a part of the settlement with BISL, the senator's law firm is expected to receive a sizable payout for their legal services; however, Senator Courtenay said that the urgency in getting the matter settled was largely due to the large amount of interest being added to the amount owed daily, and he echoed the Prime Minister's assertion that this payment will end that matter once and for all.

"I want to say to my colleague senators today that the BISL issue is not something that any Belizean should be proud of, but we are faced with a question today: The country is at risk of millions of dollars; the settlement is very close to what government itself said it would pay, and if we settle it, the interest stops accruing, the matter is resolved, we put it behind us, but we learn our lesson," Senator Courtenay said.

He then presented a detailed timeline of the legal process which followed the takeover of BISL by GoB and emphasized the importance of the ruling of the CCJ, which ordered the government to pay the company but also reprimanded the then administration for refusing to pay the settlement ordered. Despite this, UDP senator, Beverly Williams, questioned the reason for the urgency of this payment.

She remarked that while Senator Courtenay chronicled the origin and pursuit of the legal claim, he failed to mention the 2005 signing by the PUP administration of an extended contract with the company and the sizable revenue gained for the country through

the acquisition of the registries.

"You failed to say that in the 9 years that the government assumed management of the ship registry – which is normally state-owned, it's a national asset – that government agreed that we earned a whopping 90 million dollars US or 180 million dollars Belize," Senator Williams said.

She said that the revenue earned from the ship's registry alone was sufficient to cover the 76 million Belize dollars to be paid to the former owners.

"We concede that we have to pay. We concede that it is a bitter pill to swallow, but we have to pay, so what's the urgency? Why not take the savings and spread it over a period of time and make a payment plan?" Williams said.

Business Senator Kevin Herrera called the whole issue scandalous, pointing out that the signing of the 1993 and 2003 contracts was done on dates close to general elections in both instances, and the 2005 contract was signed during a time of tension between the public and the then PUP administration.

"In this tragedy, perhaps there is room to learn a few things so that this never happens again, but especially with respect to how we deal with the Ashcroft Alliance investments. I really believe that we should refrain from calling these investments and probably start categorizing them as contingent liabilities. Because it always ends up as a liability," Senator Herrera said. He added, "BTL, 557 million dollars; UHS, 90 million dollars; BISL 78 million dollars — total 718 million dollars through the litigation process. This is a poor country," he went on to say.

Senator Elena Smith said that the community she represents is tired of seeing the burden of the various administrations' decisions being placed on the Belizean people.

"I don't want for anybody to get it wrong, that we are a people or I represent a group that is willing to go against the rule of law. However, I represent a group of people that is now tired of seeing the burden fall on the Belizean people. Our students are back in school; many of them are barely making it; many of them can't pay their school fees, and people need housing. People need food, and better healthcare. These monies could have been put into those things to make the lives of our people better, yet as my colleagues said, we are giving 76 million to a person who really doesn't need this money any at all," Senator Smith said.

Senator Coye, as mentioned, is one of the principals of the law firm which represented BISL in its litigation against the Government of Belize. During his remarks, he said, "If it is that we are to take on a sacrifice, it is better that we do, so that we may make a better future for our children and our children's children. This, at its very essence, is what this decision is about today. Today we have to decide whether we will pay 76 and a half million dollars or expose ourselves to paying 180 million dollars plus the cost of an interest rate at 6 percent per annum. That's another 6 million plus per annum on top of that capital cost."

Senator Courtenay in closing agreed

Senate divided on appointment of Auditor General

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Constitution, which stipulates that, if after January 15, 2022, the office of the Auditor General is vacant or if the holder of that office is unable to exercise the functions of the office, the Governor General, acting on the recommendation of the National Assembly, may appoint a person to act as Auditor General.

The post of Auditor General has been vacant since December 7, 2021, when Dorothy Bradley retired from the position. Last week, during the Sitting of the House of Representatives, the Government recommended that Bradley be reappointed and that she serve as Auditor General for the next two years until a suitable replacement can be found.

UDP Senator Beverly Williams rose to state that she could not support the motion, pointing out the fact that Bradley's tenure as Auditor General was rife with grievances on the part of public officers working under her. Senator Williams, who is a former Commissioner of Sales Tax, added that she had the opportunity to work with Bradley in her then substantive post as Assistant Commissioner of that department.

"No public officer, Madame President, wrote to the Ministry of Public Service on my performance during my tenure of thirty-five years in the public service, nor to the commission. No public officer complained about not getting their subsistence, about not being allowed their allowances where it was prescribed that they were entitled to those allowances," said Senator Williams.

PUP Senator Collet Montejo, however, noted that Bradley, despite the conflict with public officers, was able to uncover many corrupt practices during her time as Auditor General.

"She did her job without fear or favor," Senator Montejo said.

He also pointed out that the US Department of State designated Bradley as an "anti-corruption champion".

"If we recall, she was the one that highlighted the many corrupt practices and the illegalities in the Immigration Department. As a matter of fact, it was because of the work that she and her department did that a sitting minister was removed from Cabinet," he added.

The PUP Senator then went on to state that the need for an Auditor General is urgent.

Senator Bishop Alvin Benguche, the representative for the Belize Council of Churches and Evangelical Association of Churches, in addition to explaining why he supported the motion, rose to relay concerns brought to him by various sectors concerning

and drove home Senator Coye's point, saying "It is in the financial interest of the people of Belize to settle this debt on the basis of the negotiations having regard to the litigation risk that this country is exposed to."

As noted, the law firm owned by

Bradley's reappointment.

"As I received these emails and information, they were both for and against. But as we sit here and will have to make a decision, both personal and as it involves the Senate, I must say that, in light of the fact that Dorothy Bradley has been asked to take up the post for an additional two years, we see the numerous accolades and ways in which she has served her country, both at home and abroad," he said.

Bishop Benguche said that those who contacted him in opposition to Bradley's appointment raised mostly personal concerns. He also stated that he thought long and hard about why he could stand in the Upper House and be able to support the motion.

"While there is the concern about perhaps what was done in her tenure as far as some persons were concerned, I can also say that I was told that here is a principled person who has served her nation well and has done everything insofar as principle is concerned. That might be hard for some people to swallow, but I can only speak from that perspective," said Bishop Benguche.

PUP Senator Erica Jang also supported the motion. Senator Elena Smith, the representative for the National Trade Union Congress, however, shared some of the concerns that workers of the NTUCB have raised.

"I am sure that we have heard earlier the complaints that employees would have had as it relates to the Auditor General when she was Auditor General and as Senator Benguche said earlier, we too have received calls as it relates to this matter," she said.

Senator Smith said that persons pointed to issues of the former Auditor General's professionalism as well as the manner in which public officers serving under her have been treated.

"One of the larger concerns would be that of not being able to fulfill the duties as prescribed of an Auditor General, and that would be in relation to the reports that should have been submitted, or the audits that should have been carried out. For example, there should be accounts of all officers and authorities of government, all courts of law, the Belize Advisory Council, every commission—all of these things should be done on a yearly basis," she said.

The concern, said Senator Smith, is that these audits have not been done over the past few years. UDP Senator Veronica Camara rose in agreement, adding that there are already persons in the Audit Department capable of taking over the post.

In addition to stating that the NTUCB does not support the motion, Senator Smith called for a division on the matter. In total, nine senators were in support of the motion while four were in opposition.

both those senators is expected to get a considerable payout for their legal services in regard to the matter.

At the end of voting, both the settlement terms of agreement and the supplementary appropriation to clear the debt were passed in the Senate.



Sales Agents

BELIZE CITY

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

PLACENCIA

- * Placencia Office Supplies

LADYVILLE

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

ORANGEWALK

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

BENQUE

- * Eduard Cambranes
- 6 Diaz St., Benque

CAYO

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

BELMOPAN

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

STANN CREEK

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

COROZAL

- * Aguilar Car Care Products # 60 4th Avenue, Corozal Town
- * Xiomara 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
- * NJV Pharmacy

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