

Sugar mediation continues

The Prime Minister, Hon. John Briceno, is hoping that the parties reach some resolution by Wednesday in order to get the sugar crop started by the end of this week.

by Marco Lopez

ORANGE WALK, Mon. Dec. 19, 2022
The Belize Sugar Industries Limited (BSI/ASR) and the largest cane farmers association in the country, the Belize Sugar Cane Farmers Association (BSCFA), are currently still in mediation over a new commercial agreement, and to end an almost year-long impasse between the parties. No resolution has been finalized as yet, despite the

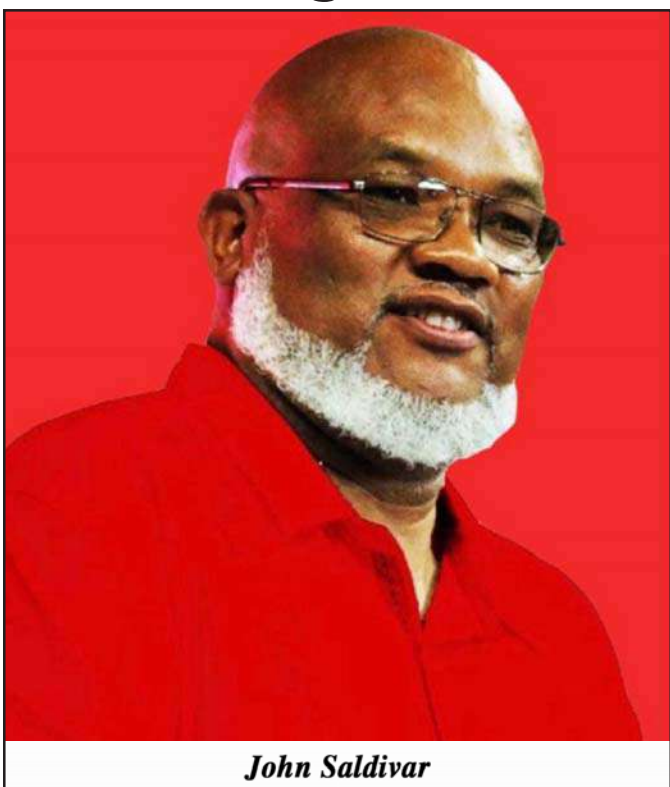
numerous sessions. The final day of mediation was scheduled to take place last Thursday, but the sessions were extended into the weekend and likely continued today.

Prime Minister John Briceno, when interviewed by local reporters, said that the parties have indicated their commitment to the mediation process until a solution to the impasse is found. The ideal solution, according to the PM, would be the signing of a new commercial



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UDP see-saw: NPC gives Saldivar convention green light



John Saldivar

by Marco Lopez

BELMOPAN, Sun. Dec. 18, 2022

On Saturday, the National Party Council for the United Democratic Party overturned the decision of the party's Special Committee, which had voted by a margin of 4 to 3 to disallow John Saldivar's bid to seek via a party convention to be the UDP's Belmopan standard bearer. **Please turn to** ▶ **Page 2**

Woman, 83, dies in house fire

by Charles Gladden

BELIZE CITY, Mon. Dec. 19, 2022

A house fire in Belize City claimed the life of an elderly woman, 83-year-old Elita Elswith Coleman, of Rasta Street, in the early hours of Sunday, December 18.

According to initial police reports, at about 12:20 a.m. the neighbors of Coleman alerted the police that smoke could be seen coming out of her home, and when the officers arrived at the scene, they saw Coleman's 26 foot-by-30-foot cement house engulfed in flames.

Police made several attempts to gain entry into the house, but were not able to do so.

Belize National Fire Service personnel arrived at



the scene shortly after, however, and were able to extinguish the fire. When police **Please turn to** ▶ **Page 15**

Elections and Boundaries Chair Speaks on the Redistricting Exercise

by Kory Leslie (Freelance Writer)

BELIZE CITY, Mon. Dec 19, 2022

For years, Belize's voting population has been preparing for an impending redistricting exercise which would result in a more equitable distribution of voters across the country's 31 electoral divisions. The **Please turn to** ▶ **Page 2**



Attorney Oscar Sabido

Elections and Boundaries Chair Speaks on the Redistricting...

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importance of the exercise has been publicly highlighted by both the UDP and PUP administrations during their past tenures in office but had not resulted in significant action by either party. This prompted criticism from many quarters, as some of Belize's constituencies are known to be significantly larger than others. These disparities have undoubtedly affected the results of Belize's elections and created political strongholds for many ministers who have enjoyed long-lasting careers in certain divisions.

The Belize Peace Movement (BPM), a citizen-led organization, has been championing the immediate redistricting of our electoral divisions since 2019 and made every effort to have the exercise carried out in time for the November 2020 General Elections. While their endeavors did not affect those elections, the BPM did manage to gather enough data, with the help of American elections analyst, Sean P. Trende, to submit a report to the Supreme Court as part of an effort to pressure the GoB to take action. This was accompanied by a civil suit brought against the Elections and Boundaries Commission (EBC) and the Attorney General's Ministry.

Three years later, the BPM is finally making headway with their attempts, after a consent order was handed down by the Supreme Court which would require that the EBC resolve the redistricting challenges with oversight from the BPM. The consent order requires that the Elections and Boundaries Commission provide a report detailing their recommendations for the redistricting exercise to the BPM by July of 2023. This is to be guided by the aforementioned report submitted by Sean P. Trende and the Belize Peace Movement. The EBC must also provide those recommendations to the Attorney General's Ministry so that a bill can be drafted and presented to the National Assembly by July 2023 as well.

Admittedly, the Elections and Boundaries Commission did announce earlier this year that a Redistricting Taskforce was formed and is being

chaired by the Chief Elections Officer, Joesphine Tamai. Following the issuance of the consent order, however, the BPM released a statement requesting the support of the public in holding the EBC and the GoB accountable for fulfilling their commitment to the redistricting process. The chairman of the Elections and Boundaries Commission, attorney Oscar Sabido, held a media briefing at which he affirmed that the EBC will play its part in the process but will do so according to Belize's Constitution:

"The Commission has the duty, and it will execute its duty in accordance with the Constitution, but it is not oblivious of the fact that the Commission must act in accordance with the law. And there is no reason why the Commission will not take proper legal advice. And when I say proper legal advice, I mean proper legal advice from competent persons who are conversant with the law that has to do with redistricting. Law that is relevant to our jurisdiction, not the United States. And in the process, we will find a way that is going to be legal and correct," he said.

Regarding the Taskforce itself, Sabido said that all members are professionally knowledgeable of the technical aspects of conducting the redistricting process properly. Sabido also addressed the criticism of the Commission by former Taskforce member, statistical analyst, Martin Aldana, who resigned in August of this year, stating that the actions of the Taskforce were being influenced by political figures. In reference to those allegations, Sabido stated that Mr. Aldana "was free, as an independent expert to make his comments. And we don't have anything to say about Mr. Aldana's comments because the only thing we can say is that we had to redo everything. And we had to ask for extensions in October to be able to continue working and redoing all the statistical analysis, and all the, whatever he was doing there in terms of his area of expertise. We had to redo it. But he can make any accusations he wants, he's free to do that. We don't have any comments to make about that."

Sugar mediation continues

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agreement between the parties.

The sugar crop, which was to begin as early as today, has once again been delayed, and the government is thus at this current juncture — at which consultations with both parties are ongoing in an effort to find a set of mutually agreeable terms to break the stalemate.

"The ideal is that they can come up with an agreement, but if that were not to happen, then we're hoping that we can have BSI roll over that agreement so that they could continue in the old agreement once the mediation/negotiation go through..." PM Briceno said.

It must be noted that at this time there is no commercial agreement between the BSCFA and BSI. In January of this

year, the previous commercial agreement between the parties expired. It was merely an interim agreement that was signed between the parties at the height of the impasse last year, strictly to get the crop started.

That interim agreement was to hold over until the parties signed a new commercial agreement, but over this past year, very little progress was made to that end, with efforts only ramping up in recent weeks.

There have been calls in some quarters for months for the government to intervene, with some saying that the hands-off approach taken by GoB would be to the detriment of the farmers.

In his remarks made on Saturday, PM Briceno said, "...we may have as a government in consultation with the association and BSI to maybe come

UDP see-saw: NPC gives Saldivar convention green light

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Forty-two members of the NPC, however, reportedly voted in favor of his candidacy, reversing the decision of the Special Committee which preferred that Saldivar be prohibited from running, "in the best interest of the party."

In a Facebook post about a day ago, Saldivar said, "God is good, all the time. Justice prevailed."

Saldivar is the leader of the UDP's Caucus for Change, a group within the party with a significant stronghold and influence among members. In January of this year, the group triggered a recall convention in an effort to oust then party leader Hon. Patrick Faber from his post, and endorsed Hon. Shyne Barrow.

Saldivar no doubt still has a significant pull within the party, but there is no indication if he will be able to reclaim his roles as interim caretaker of the Belmopan constituency and Western Regional Leader, since the current UDP leader, Hon. Barrow, has asked him to stand down and desist from his attempts to be a UDP candidate.

He said at the time that the decision made by the Special Committee was a difficult one, but agreed to disallow Saldivar from being a party candidate in the best interest of the UDP. Barrow was also of the opinion that the decision was the best course of action, and even gave Saldivar a sort of a farewell saying, "I hope Mr. Saldivar could find meaning and purpose in another role if it is that he still wants to be involved in politics but not as an official, not as a candidate for the United Democratic Party."

While these are the LOO's wishes, Saldivar seems to have maintained the confidence of a majority of the NPC, despite being designated as a "Significantly Corrupt" person by the US State Department. That designation is the basis of the proceedings within the party against him. In late November, following the announcement of the designation by the US Secretary of State, Anthony Blinken, the ad-hoc Special Committee was formed by the party to determine Saldivar's standing. The committee, which was formed to deliver a "swift conclusion of the matter" concerning the allegations, did just that — being convened in late

November and handing down a decision by December 9.

As far as Hon. Barrow's plea for Saldivar to step down to save face, in an interview on PlusTV prior to the decision of the Special Committee, Saldivar concluded that he would not let perception guide his decision.

"The reason he is the party leader today is because the Caucus for Change did not fall for the perception, yet my party today is being asked to fall for the perception. Truth in my view and I have said this over and over, truth must always trump perception," Saldivar said.

It is clear that Saldivar's influence as the reputed leader of the UDP's Caucus for Change played a significant role in the vote at the NPC, which should effectively reinstate him in his positions within the party. In a release following the Special Committee decision, the UDP Caucus for Change declared:

"The Special Committee of the UDP to revert to the National Party Council (NPC) to make a decision on the candidacy of John Saldivar in the Belmopan constituency. Our Caucus is clear and determined in our support for John Saldivar in the absence of any evidence to prove his guilt. We believe it is only right and just that the people of Belmopan choose their leader. We will therefore vote accordingly at the NPC."

Now, the National Party Council, the second most powerful decision-making body within the UDP, has decided to allow Saldivar to maintain his candidacy in the Belmopan division.

How the USA will respond to Saldivar's continued active political participation within the Opposition despite its designation of him as significantly corrupt is yet to be seen. Of note, the US Embassy is located in Saldivar's home constituency of Belmopan.

Similarly, how the UDP and its leader, Hon. Shyne Barrow, will navigate this obvious power play by Saldivar is also yet to be seen, since the blessing of the party leader will effectively mean a breakaway from the USA's position, while continued opposition to Saldivar's candidacy could create a rift between Barrow and the all-so-powerful UDP Caucus for Change.

up with some other mechanism that can bring some sort of finality to this to have an agreement that would be fair to everyone, fair to the farmers, and also fair to BSI."

And while some may consider government's involvement to be a knee-jerk reaction to ensure the start of the sugar crop, one of the single most lucrative cash crops in Belize, the PM said that intervention would likely lead to legal proceedings from either party if they are aggrieved by the decision of the government.

"The problem with intervening is that, if we were to rule in favor of the farmers, BSI will take us to court. If we rule, or do something in favor of BSI, the farmers are going to take us to court, so the government has to be very careful," PM Briceno said.

He is hoping that there is not a repeat

of the blockade and tense impasse that took place last year, and hinted to local media that they have called on police to ensure that there is no blockade at the factory, in order to make sure that members of the other cane farmers associations not in contention with the mill, can deliver their produce.

"I am hoping that we do not have a repeat of what happened last year December. We've already spoken to the police. For one reason or the other, if the farmers feel that they need to go and protest, that is their right. All we're asking them is not to damage property and to allow the other farmers to be able to deliver, so that all we can ask, we can ask for calmer minds to prevail," the PM said.

A newly appointed Sugar Industry

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Three men get reduced sentences for manslaughter

by Charles Gladden

BELIZE CITY, Mon. Dec. 19, 2022

Three men who were convicted of murder for separate homicides, and who all pleaded guilty to the lesser charge of manslaughter during their respective trials, appeared before Justice Susan Lamb in the Supreme Court on Friday, December 16, for their sentencing. The three men who appeared are Kashief Gallego, 30; Marcial Toledo, 52; and Evyn Ardon, 27.

Gallego fatally shot Jermaine Franklin, a resident of East Canal, Belize City, in 2017 in Teddy's DVD store on King Street. When Franklin entered the business establishment, Gallego had followed him. Shortly after, Gallego opened fire on Franklin, who exited the store and collapsed on the pavement. Gallego then reportedly



(l-r) Kashief Gallego, Marcial Toledo, and Evyn Ardon, sentenced

stood over him and fired multiple rounds at him.

Gallego received a 30-year sentence, which was reduced to 20 years, due to the deduction of the 5 years and 6 months he served while on remand. He will be eligible for parole in 9 years and six months.

The second convicted killer who was sentenced by Justice Lamb is Toledo, who is responsible for killing

Police Constable Marvin Locke, 49, outside of the Racocon Street Police Station in 2017 after supposedly discovering that his wife was having an affair with him. He also received a 30-year sentence; however, that sentence was reduced to 20 years because Justice Lamb noted that Toledo had no previous convictions and accepted responsibility for his actions and behaved remorsefully.

Additionally the 5 years he served while on remand was deducted.

Lastly, Ardon received a 14-year sentence for fatally stabbing Salvadoran national, Manuel Canales, 40, in 2018. At the time, both men were out drinking at a bar in Ladyville when a fight between Ardon and Canales erupted, which resulted in Ardon stabbing Canales to death. Justice Lamb noted that he was

remorseful for his actions, which ended the life of his friend.

Ardon was given a 14-year sentence, but 6 years was deducted. Additionally, after considering that he has young children, Justice Lamb deducted two more years off his sentence as well as the 4 years and 8 months he spent on remand, so Ardon will spend only 2 years 3 months, and 27 days more behind bars.

COP15: Landmark Biodiversity Deal Recognizes Rights of Nature is Vital to its Success



by Earth Law Center

Montreal, Canada, Mon. Dec. 19, 2022—Negotiators from across the world have adopted a landmark global biodiversity agreement marking the first international agreement to explicitly promote “rights of nature” and “rights of Mother Earth.” The breakthrough came as nearly 200 countries completed their negotiations at COP-15, the United Nations Biodiversity Conference aimed at creating a plan to protect and restore biodiversity through 2030.

The outcome document, called the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, adopts 23 conservation targets as well as guidance for implementation. The framework highlights rights-based protections for Nature in several sections.

• For example, the framework “recognizes and considers ... diverse value systems and concepts, including, for those countries that recognize them, *rights of nature and rights of Mother Earth*, as being an integral part of its successful implementation” (Section C(9), emphasis added).

• Additionally, the framework calls for at least \$200 billion by 2030 to implement national biodiversity

strategies and action plans, including “*Mother Earth centric actions*” that are defined to include ecocentric and rights based approaches that promote the continuity of all living beings and their communities (Target 19, emphasis added).

Delegates from Bolivia championed the inclusion of Rights of Nature and Rights of Mother Earth (terms that are roughly synonymous) with support from Ecuador and New Zealand, while negotiating with countries who originally opposed the

text (Argentina, Japan, the EU, and Australia, among others). Opposition largely derived from countries stating that their legal systems do not have similar laws, but ultimately negotiators reached consensus on the final text.

“What we have seen thus far in conservation at the international level is that our values, or how we value Nature, shapes how effectively we protect and restore biodiversity,” said **Rachel Bustamante, Conservation Science & Policy Analyst for Earth Law Center**, who co-led a civil society ‘Rights of Nature Delegation’ advocating for the voice of Nature at COP-15. “Rights of Nature in this international treaty will help encourage a proactive and caring approach to conservation, where society considers the interests and needs of biodiversity beyond the benefits that humans receive. This has certainly been lacking by the majority of decision makers but is fundamental in many Indigenous peoples’ understandings and governance systems. The fact that the treaty now encourages us to learn from and work with differing value systems demonstrates leaders are willing to utilize new tools to prevent further biodiversity loss.”

In addition to support for the Rights of Nature, one of the major outcomes of

the framework is support for 30x30, a commitment to preserve 30 percent of all land and seas by the year 2030. This is backed with strong language to ensure protection of Indigenous rights, a concern of many for implementing protected areas without infringing on traditional territories. Some civil society groups pushed for 50x30, arguing that the Global Safety Net report and other scientific sources conclude that 50% global protection by the year 2030 is needed to protect biodiversity and reverse climate change.

Globally, Rights of Nature is now recognized at some level of government in about 30 countries. For example, in 2008, Ecuador became the first country in the world to constitutionally recognize the “Rights of Nature,” thereby granting basic rights to Nature, just as humans possess rights. Just this year, Panama nationally recognized the Rights of Nature, Spain recognized the Mar Menor saltwater lagoon as a legal entity with legal rights, and two local townships in

Morehouse students visit Kremandala

by Charles Gladden

BELIZE CITY, Thurs. Dec. 15, 2022

A group of students and faculty members from Morehouse College in Atlanta, Georgia, which is one of the top-ranking HBCUs (historically black college/university) in the United States, visited the compound of Kremandala while on a 10-day educational trip to learn how journalism is done in Belize.

Morehouse College caters to primarily black male students and, since its inception in 1867, numerous internationally renowned figures have graduated from the institution, including Dr.

Martin Luther King, Jr.; Spike Lee, and Samuel L. Jackson.

During their visit to the Kremandala compound, the students also visited the UEF Library of African and Indian Studies, where they briefly told UEF



chairperson, YaYa Marin Coleman, about the purpose of their trip.

"We're here to learn, educate ourselves on Belize, and for sure have a good time," one student said. "I didn't know there was such a wide mix of

different people from different backgrounds and different places, and the food is the reflection, and that's my favorite part," another remarked.

The Morehouse College Study Tour of Belize was spearheaded by Jerry

Enriquez, who noted that the tour is designed to expose students to Belize's history and development, particularly focusing on issues that impact Afro-descendants and indigenous peoples. During the students' visit to Kremandala, they were educated on the history of the Black empowerment movement in Belize, and the role of the media, as well.

After their stop at Kremandala, the group visited the National Sports Council to learn about the role of sports in Belize's development. The group will also be visiting Bermudian Landing to learn about rural Creole life and culture, the Gulusi museum in Dangriga and Hopkins Village to learn about Garifuna culture, Nuuk Cheil Maya Center, Spanish Lookout, the University of Belize, Xunantunich, Marie Sharp's Fine Foods, Shark Ray Alley, and Caye Caulker.

Legislation passed to reappoint Dorothy Bradley as Auditor General

BELMOPAN, Wed. Dec. 14, 2022

In August of this year, the National Assembly passed a motion to allow for the reappointment of Dorothy Bradley to the post of Auditor General, following her retirement in December 2021. Today, the Senate passed additional legislation to allow for an increase in the maximum age of the person holding the post, since Bradley has passed the age of 60.

Section 109 (4) of the Belize Constitution mandates that persons holding the post must vacate the seat upon reaching the age of 60 but allows for the National Assembly to alter the prescribed age after a person has been appointed.

Senator for Government Business, Hon. Eamon Courtenay said that the social partner senators had brought the age limit for an Auditor General appointee to the government's attention, noting that it could be an impediment in the appointment of Bradley, and as a result, this legislation was passed to ensure that her holding

of the critical post is legal.

"The purpose of the legislation is to ensure that the appointment of Ms. Bradley would be legal, since she has already passed the age set out in section 109. The social partners had brought this to our attention, and they felt that it was necessary to amend the law or to pass a law to provide for regularity, and in accordance with their wishes the Cabinet decided that was the proper thing to do," Senator Courtenay said.

Prime Minister Hon. John Briceño, upon rising to present the motion in August for Bradley's reappointment, commented that she did "an exceedingly good job" while she held the post. In a subsequent interview, however, the president of the Public Service Union, Dean Flowers, claimed that grievances among her staff at the office of the Auditor General during her tenure created "an atmosphere of animosity."

Dorothy Bradley had served as Auditor General from 2011 before her retirement almost a year ago. She was

appointed a member of the United Nations Independent Audit Advisory Committee following her departure. While she held the post, a 2011-2013 Auditor General's Report on irregularities within the Immigration and Nationality Department was published, and the findings laid out in that report resulted in Senate Special Select Committee public hearings in late 2016.



Dorothy Bradley, reappointed Auditor General

She has been reappointed to the post for just two years, largely to facilitate the smooth transition of a successor, PM Briceño has said.

Teen girl stabbed in Griga bar

by Charles Gladden

DANGRIGA TOWN, Mon. Dec. 19, 2022

Eden Pauline Nunez, 18, of Hopkins Village, Stann Creek District, was stabbed in her lower back on Friday, December 16, while out socializing with family members.

An initial police investigation has revealed that at around 1:30 a.m., Friday, Nunez was socializing with relatives of hers at Island Breeze Bar and Grill in Dangriga Town, when she accidentally spilled a drink on a table that belonged to a female inside the establishment.

An argument flared up between Nunez

and the woman whose drink was spilled, and Nunez attempted to defuse the situation by walking away. However, she turned around and noticed that she was being followed by the same woman, who then pounced on her and stabbed her in her back.

Nunez was transported to the hospital for medical treatment at the Southern Regional Hospital, where she was admitted for observation and is in stable condition.

Since then, police have detained the woman who inflicted Nunez's injuries. She has been identified as Crystal Smith. Smith is to be charged for the crime of aggravated assault.

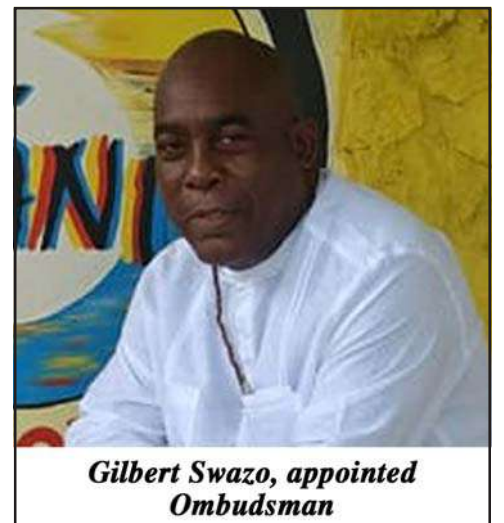
Senate confirms Gilbert Swazo's appointment as Ombudsman

BELIZE CITY, Thurs. Dec. 15, 2022

Retired BDF soldier, Major H. Gilbert Swazo, has officially been appointed as the new Ombudsman of Belize. He is to commence his work as the country's Ombudsman in January 2023. The announcement was made official yesterday during a meeting of the Senate.

There has been no one serving as Ombudsman in Belize since April 2021, when Lionel Arzu surrendered the post, leaving that most vital office without someone at the helm. The office caters to Belizeans who believe their rights have been violated in some way by one of the public institutions of the country but have no means of legal redress. In the Senate, Major Swazo, who is originally from Dangriga, was lauded by senators as a person fit to carry out the important tasks assigned to the person who holds the post.

Major Swazo is 61 years old at this time, and is thus within the constitutionally prescribed age range for someone designated to hold the post of Ombudsman. His appointment was supported by fellow Dangriga residents Senator Moses Benguche and Erica Jang. Collet Montejo for the PUP also supported his appointment.



Gilbert Swazo, appointed Ombudsman

Newly appointed UDP senator, Ian Jones, asked whether consideration was given to any other possible candidate for the post, and opined that a younger qualified former public servant could have been chosen to fill the role.

Major Swazo, who was appointed Ports Commissioner in 2020, served within the BDF for 24 years before retiring from the force. He also served NEMO and the Port Authority as Operations Manager and Deputy Ports Commissioner before his 2020 appointment.

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Strange creatures

“Still they go unpunished and unaccused of any crime,
While on the backs of the ordinary man these vultures climb.
They use their riches and their power, make a mockery of the law,
And have the law protect them same time...”

— from “Good Citizens” by The Mighty Sparrow

Sunday, December 18, 2022; Monday, December 19, 2022

Almost every week in the local newspapers, there appears at least one advertisement informing the public about the dissolution of an “International Business Company.” It’s gibberish to most of us, and we quickly move on. Now and then, as on page 4 of this Sunday’s issue of *The Reporter*, we come upon an ad listing a number of such dissolutions. As is normally the case, the company names are given, the date when each dissolution took place, and the name of the registered agent for the companies. In this case, the “Registered Agent” is one “Anacton Consult Group Limited.” The company names are weird-sounding already, but even the name of their agent sounds like some “hocus pocus.” We have “Camburg Holdings Limited”, “Rosman Investments Limited”, “Havenin Finance Limited”, and “Lumberton Holdings Limited,” all being dissolved on “30-Nov-2022”; “Whiteshell Holdings Limited” on “06-Dec-2022”; “Interos Development Limited” on “07-Dec-2022”; and “Danburg Holdings Limited” being dissolved on “08-Dec-2022.” All were reportedly “dissolved and struck off the International Business Companies Register with effect from the date indicated.”

It’s a peculiar occurrence that raises many questions in our uninformed minds. Why so many companies being “dissolved”? Doesn’t it cost a significant sum just to register a company? Are these many businesses all going broke at the same time? What’s going on? And what do these “international business companies” (IBCs) have to do with us ordinary citizens of Belize anyhow?

Well, we gather that some Belizeans do get employment in the offshore industry. And our government collects substantial sums of money for registering these companies in Belize, dollars that help government pay its bills, which include the goods and services provided to us, the Belizean people. But there is a lot we don’t know about these financial “creatures”, and it would be good if some down-to-earth explanation would be given to us innocents by our government officials. What jumps out at us when we google “IBC” is that, like at sterlingoffshore.com, IBCs generally are “100% tax exempt on all forms of income, gains and similar with no withholding taxes.” And, “Usually may not earn income from domestic sources.” For a hardworking taxpayer, those are matters of concern and curiosity. Already having so much trouble with giant financial sharks that we think we know (Ashcroft and BSI/ASR), could we be vulnerable to getting the “shaft” from these financial monsters?

Sometimes we citizens get the feeling that our government officials and top technocrats are operating at levels way above our heads and ability to understand what they are doing. And sometimes we are left to wonder if THEY knew what they were doing.

Take the matter of privatization, for example. Back in the late 1980s and into the 1990s, our leaders were boasting about the great benefits our country could gain by following the worldwide trend towards a thing called “privatization.” So, our leaders thought about privatizing the government hospital, but quickly realized that government had to hold on to this critical responsibility. So, instead, the management system was modified, so that the KMH began to be run like a business, with a C.E.O. and a board of directors. But since then there has been a lot of grumbling about the inadequate flow of resources to satisfy the needs of poor people, who often suffer because of lack of money to pay for prescribed medicines and services. Meanwhile, government has been working on the NHI (National Health Insurance) program; but we haven’t gotten it all right yet.

Privatization was more aggressively implemented with our major utilities – WASA (now BWSL), BEL and BTL. And, while there was an initial surge of cash flow from the sale of these assets, it was quickly realized that it was a mistake putting majority control into big corporate hands; things were not working out for the betterment of the Belizean people, and the situation had to be reversed. Perhaps the privatization strategy worked well in some more developed countries, but it backfired somewhat in Belize. As observed on elibrary.worldbank.org, “private ownership alone is no longer argued to automatically generate economic gains in developing economies; pre-conditions (especially the regulatory infrastructure) and an appropriate process of privatization are important for attaining a positive impact.”

The situation is discussed further by Ashutosh Pandey @blogs on indiatimes.com. He defines privatization simply as “The transfer of ownership, property, or business from the government to the private sector”; and it can involve a “process in which a publicly-traded company is taken over by a few people.” While there are obvious benefits: “the creation of wealth” as “the cost of production is reduced and profits are maximized”; there are also disadvantages. And he begins by stating that “One important disadvantage to recognize is the opportunities for bribery and corruption that come with privatization. Typically, private companies are less transparent than government offices, and this reduced transparency paired with a drive for profit can be a breeding ground for corruption.” (Underlining ours.) Need we say more? He elaborates with an example of the UK in the 1980s that rings eerily of our situation at home. He said that in the UK “the increasing inequality of the eighties was, in part, due to privatization. The government was selling off state assets (owned by everyone) to a wealthier subset of the population, thereby increasing the gap between the rich and the poor.”

That is a much more involved topic than we are equipped or have the space here to exhaust. Our point here is to spot the light on an issue that needs further investigation and discussion, before we get burned, as we have in the past by accepting the situation only at face value as presented by our political leaders.

We want our Boledo back! That was the cry of most Belizeans. And that cry was echoed in the House by no less than the sitting Deputy P.M. And then we heard about ten-year contracts issued by the previous government; and a strange-sounding company name; and still we have not gotten to the names of the directors of the company that is supposed to hold our Boledo contract, because of legal confidentiality restrictions surrounding the company registry.

So now, while secrecy surrounds these IBC creatures with the strange-sounding names, we are told that a few of our own local business folks have been using a loophole in that same company registry law to cloak their business companies in secrecy also.

So now, we can’t get our Boledo back, it seems. And we don’t know who has it, his/her name, at least. And the proposed solution to our problem, as

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(estb. 1969)

Business and editorial offices:
3304 Amandala Drive
(formerly Partridge Street),
Belize City, Belize,
Central America
is published twice weekly by
Amandala Press.
Telephones: 501-280-4703/
501-202-4477

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Artist: Deshan Swasey
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Lithography: Clive Smith
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Amandala’s website:
amandala.com.bz



THE FRAUD of CHRISTMAS



Continued from page 27 of issue #3611, Friday, December 16, 2022.

by Hart Tillett

“But it all seems so unfair,” he mumbled at last. “Why us? You and Auntie don’t have issues—like cancer. No one else I know of is sick like that. Why my dad? Just not fair!”

For Houston it was a vulnerable moment in which anger and anguish left his emotions fazed. For me I realized he needed a hand to hold. I rose and went to sit beside him.

“Take my hand,” I said softly. He hesitated then grasped my upturned palm, resting on my knee. I gently squeezed his grip, and was reassured when I felt his boyish responding squeeze. When our eyes met, he smiled.

“Tell you what,” I said, as I released his hand, “the weather will soon be turning cold and you’ll soon be needing warmer clothing. What do you think of a day out to get you some warm clothing?”

“That sounds like fun, Uncle!” he said, then he paused and his eyebrows crinkled with excitement. “But my clothing is in Orange Walk,” he said at last.

“And that’s where we’ll be heading, but there are tons of places with exciting things to see and do between here and

there—Altun Ha, Maskall, Guinea Grass, Crooked Tree...,” I said.

“Dad always promised to take me to Crooked Tree but never did,” he said. He was excited, and we spent the next few minutes planning an itinerary.

Actually, I had another reason for wanting to be in that area. Our family traditionally cut our own Christmas tree, and I would scout out a likely candidate in advance. Two weeks before Christmas, we’d all go together and bring it home.

The day was fun-filled, and Houston got to see Crooked Tree at last. The excited chatter from them in the back of the station wagon said so.

“That was such a good idea, Jesse,” Hazel confided later that night. “I think we all needed that break.”

“You’re right there, luv,” I agreed. “And being inside his home was the cream to top off the excursion.”

It was shortly after that journey that we learned of the comment he had made regarding Santa Claus being a fraud. The query came from Juds.

“Mom, Mom,” she had said as she ran to Hazel almost in tears, emotionally distraught and rattled. “Houston said there’s no Santa.”

After quieting the distraught child, Hazel asked: “And what exactly did he say, Juds?”

“He said (*sob*) that it’s a lie; that Santa Claus is a fraud—a joke parents play on their children, (*sob*). Junie and Jeff tried to argue with him but he insisted on calling Santa a big, fat fraud.” She was

silent for a moment. “What’s a fraud, Mama?”

Hazel explained the word, then added: “Santa is not a fraud,” she assured her. “We’ll talk to him.”

“Another one of Jim’s pearls he has left his son, I guess,” Hazel would say later when she confided in Jesse.

Meanwhile, Jim’s radiation therapy was coming along fine. Each week he checked into the clinic for his treatment, and it didn’t take long for him and the staff to be on a first-name basis, trading personal tidbits on occasion. Everyone was drawn to their Guyanese patient with the British accent and the lilting voice.

“And how’re we today, Jim?” That was how Shirley the receptionist greeted him one morning in late November in her usual cheerful spirit.

“Just glad that I got referred to the best bunch of radiation specialists in Chicago, Shirley,” he jived.

“You go on, you,” she came back at him, all smiles. “Any change to report?” she was looking at her computer as she put the question.

“You know something? There is!” Jim related to her how he felt some exhaustion beginning with the weekend. The tiredness would not go away even with rest. He had been warned to expect this, but up till then he had been tolerating the radiation well.

“You’re doing fine, Jim,” she coaxed. “You’ve only got nine more to go. After that it’ll be recovery time, and then this’ll be just a memory.”

There was a pause and Shirley felt she needed to switch gears to get his thoughts elsewhere.

“How’s your boy?” she asked, looking directly at him. “Spoke with him lately?”

“Yes, I did. Just yesterday he called.” It was a slow morning at the clinic and Shirley appeared inclined to talk. Jim was quiet for a moment in which he seemed to be weighing whether to go on or not. Then he brightened. “Seems he had a little incident with the folks he’s staying at.”

“Like?” prompted Shirley when Jim remained silent.

Jim told her about the furor that Houston’s comment about Santa Claus

had stirred up.

“I guess it’s my fault,” he admitted, “as I’m the one who told him that.”

“You didn’t!” Shirley’s response was so sudden it made Jim hesitate in explaining his decision. “Why would you do such a thing, Jim Morrisett?” she added playfully. Jim was about to reply when her phone rang, and she began a long exchange with someone who needed to reschedule an appointment. He waved himself off and went to the waiting room.

“Yes, indeed”, he thought as he settled in, “Why did you? Not that it mattered now after so many years and Houston no longer a baby.” He pulled out his phone and called Eileen about the fruits she wanted him to pick up on his way back.

Shirley’s takeaway from the revelation was different. Born in Bethany, Oklahoma, all her instincts regarding Christmas were firmly traditional—the music, the food, gifts, caroling, decorations and Santa Claus. It was her job that took her to Chicago and her marriage that kept them there. Her husband headed the Family Department in the church they attended, and that included the presentation of the annual Christmas pageant.

The play he had chosen that year was a nineteenth century work entitled, “THE MUSE of MIRA”. It was the story of the life and times of the priest who is better known as Santa Claus. Eileen had read the script and liked it. When she told her husband of her chat with Jim and that she thought of inviting him and Eileen to the pageant, he agreed.

“My husband is the director,” she said as she ended her spiel to Jim. “The whole church is there for pageant night, so you’ll need to be early.”

“What’s it about?” he asked.

“Oh, just something portraying Christmas themes,” she replied airily. “And there’ll be some choral singing too.”

To be continued...



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Strange creatures

Continued from Page 5

presented to us with the “Belize Companies and Corporate Affairs Registry (BCCAR),” looks like no solution at all. Everybody can have secrecy now, because any local business can be registered as an IBC. Is that what it is? The Belize International Financial Services Association (BIFSA), whoever they are, seems very happy with the idea. Please enlighten us some more, GoB?

Our P.M. spoke proudly of the \$250 million saved by the Blue Bond deal with the Nature Conservancy, and another \$250 million to be saved by renegotiating our Petro Caribe debt. Wonderful news! But we also need to be sure that, while we benefit from providing tax shelters for foreign IBCs, we don’t give it all away by opening wide the door for elite Belize passport holders to dodge their transparency and tax obligations to the detriment of poor hardworking Belizeans.

Peace and love to all this Christmas and New Year!

77 schools damaged by Hurricane Lisa

The final report handed to the Minister of Education, Hon. Francis Fonseca, has estimated that it will cost approximately \$3 million to repair the damaged school buildings.

BELIZE CITY, Thurs. Dec. 15, 2022

The Ministry of Education has arrived at a final estimate of the number of schools that were damaged in some way by Hurricane Lisa. According to a final report handed to Minister of Education, Hon. Francis Fonseca, that number is 77—and it encompasses schools that received varying degrees of damage, with one school building even losing its entire roof. Some funds for repairs (a few hundred thousand dollars) have been allocated within the Ministry’s budget, and that amount has been augmented by what has been contributed to the cause by members of the community, but according to the Ministry’s estimates, a total of \$3 million will be needed to carry out all the necessary repairs at institutions across the country.

The school that received the most extensive damage as a result of the storm is Belize Rural Primary, where the entire roof of one of the school buildings was lost. Most of the other institutions have sustained medium to low-level damage, Minister Fonseca says.

“The estimate overall is about three million dollars worth of damage. We’ve put that, that assessment has been given over to the Office of the Prime Minister and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, but we have not waited, obviously, for those monies to come in. We have been working with various partners, so we’ve gotten support from different entities in



Hon. Francis Fonseca, Minister of Education

Belize. We’ve gotten some donations, plus in our own budget we have a few hundred thousand dollars that we have allocated to addressing some of the more urgent needs,” Fonseca said.

He went on to say that the closing of schools for the Christmas holiday has been identified as the ideal opportunity to carry out the necessary repairs so that the school facilities are in an improved condition for the January school year. While there has been significant damage at some schools, all schools have been able to resume classes to complete this current term.

“There are issues that we have to deal with over the next few weeks to get those schools back up and running for January,” Minister Fonseca said.

Cop injured in collision; motorbike bursts into flames

by Charles Gladden

BELIZE CITY, Thurs. Dec. 15, 2022

Darien Skeen, a police constable attached to the Eastern Division, was injured when the motorcycle he was driving collided with an M&M Engineering delivery truck while he was heading to his home in Ladyville. The incident occurred near Mile 4 on the Philip Goldson Highway around 5:15 on Tuesday evening, and the impact of the collision was explosive—with Skeen’s motorcycle bursting into flames after it hit the truck.

According to surveillance camera footage of the accident, the driver of the delivery truck, Ian Armstrong, slowed to a stop on the highway in front of a car rental lot in an attempt to make a left turn across the road so that he could enter a business establishment. Shortly after Armstrong began to make the left turn, Skeen, who was riding his motorcycle in the same direction in which Armstrong was heading, entered the frame. The footage then shows the motorcycle colliding with the rear of the delivery truck. The motorcycle then burst into flames and



Darien Skeen, injured



Video clipping of accident scene

was flung onto the pavement.

Skeen, who suffered a broken leg and arm as a result of the accident, told a local media outlet that he wasn’t expecting

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

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

Position Name: Administrative Management Assistant (International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs)
Vacancy number: Belmopan-2022-22
Closing date: December 23, 2022

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

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

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

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

New buses for the new year

Minister of Transport, Hon. Rodwell Ferguson confirmed that new buses will be on the country’s roads in 2023.

by Charles Gladden

BELIZE CITY, Thurs. Dec. 15, 2022

Earlier this year, Minister of Transport, Hon. Rodwell Ferguson, had stated that the country’s bus operators would have to start upgrading their fleet by the end of this year. And, based on what he told local reporters this week, it appears that that upgrade is already in motion.

“If you go to almost by Old Belize right now, a lot of bus owners are there negotiating with a bus owner right now. There’s about 15 buses parked there for the last year. And the operators recognize that they must operate. As a matter of fact, our transportation study was recently completed last week, and the consultants are telling them that they must upgrade, so they’re prepared and they’re fully on board. We say we want to see a gradual approach, so starting January 1st, you will see some different buses on the highway. I see Tillett from Orange Walk bringing at least two or three already, then Sergio Chuc will bring another three or so by January 1st, and the others are now negotiating with this operator right here in Belize,” Minister Ferguson said.

Sergio Chuc, the owner of Westline Bus Co. Ltd, also confirmed that his buses have been upgraded and will be in operation next year.

“Westline put out one of our buses. We started two weeks ago, and we have two other buses coming in the middle of this month. We’re already in the middle, so by January 1, we will have three buses that will meet the



Sergio Chuc, owner of Westline Bus Co. Ltd.

requirement. It’s the same schoolbus type, but with individual seats and air [conditioning] that the ministry required... They are not brand new models but 2013 models, so I believe those are the newest models that are in the country. In January we will have three, and we will be phasing them little by little,” said Chuc.

Minister Ferguson also said that the government might be able to provide some form of extended assistance to the bus operators. “Initially, we are hoping that in the end we can come and say government is going to subsidize or contribute. I just came back from Korea about three weeks ago; it’s a big country, 35 million people, so they subsidize their bus industry. Belize is a small country, can’t afford to do, we subsidize a lot in education but we can’t subsidize the bus right now until we can grow the economy... But just remember in May of last year, you get a subsidy of almost a million dollars. I was able to go back to Cabinet two weeks ago and negotiate for another 200,000 dollars to take them to December, so we are doing our best to work with them, and I’m very happy,” he said.

Armstrong to make a left turn. He said that he tried to use his brakes but was unable to bring the motorbike to a halt before it the truck’s rear, after which, he said, he rolled under the truck.

Skeen said that he stood up after the accident and noticed that his ankle was injured and asked bystanders to lay him back on the ground.

He was transported to the Karl Heusner Memorial Hospital, where he is reportedly in a critical but stable condition.

The communications director for the

Belize Police Department, ASP Fitzroy Yearwood, told the media that investigators are doing their part to determine who was at fault.

“The investigators are doing their investigation, and as soon as they can rule out who’s not at fault, we will know who is at fault for that accident. We have the Fire Department doing [its] part. It is a multi-agency investigation, but certainly, we will not leave any rocks unturned to find out who is responsible for this accident,” he said.



Criaturas extrañas

“Aún quedan impunes y sin acusación de ningún delito,
Mientras que sobre las espaldas del hombre corriente trepan estos buitres.
Usan sus riquezas y su poder, se burlan de la ley,
Y se ven protegidos por la ley al mismo tiempo...”
— de “Good Citizens” de The Mighty Sparrow

Domingo, 18 de diciembre de 2022; lunes, 19 de diciembre de 2022

Casi todas las semanas en los periódicos locales aparece al menos un anuncio informando al público sobre la disolución de una “Compañía Comercial Internacional”. Son incoherencias para la mayoría de nosotros, y rápidamente seguimos adelante. De vez en cuando, como en la página 4 de la edición de este domingo de The Reporter, nos encontramos con un anuncio que enumera una serie de tales disoluciones. Como suele ser el caso, se dan los nombres de las empresas, la fecha en que se produjo cada disolución y el nombre del agente registrado de las empresas. En este caso, el “Agente registrado” es un “Anacton Consult Group Limited”. Los nombres de las empresas ya suenan extraños, pero incluso el nombre de su agente suena como un “abracadabra”. Tenemos “Camburg Holdings Limited”, “Rosman Investments Limited”, “Havenin Finance Limited” y “Lumberton Holdings Limited”, todos disueltos el “30 de noviembre de 2022”; “Whiteshell Holdings Limited” el “06-dic-2022”; “Interos Development Limited” el “07-dic-2022”; y “Danburg Holdings Limited” siendo disuelto el “8 de diciembre de 2022”. Según los informes, todos fueron “disueltos y eliminados del Registro de Empresas Comerciales Internacionales a partir de la fecha indicada”.

Es un hecho peculiar que plantea muchas preguntas en nuestras mentes desinformadas. ¿Por qué tantas empresas “disueltas”? ¿No cuesta una suma significativa registrar una empresa? ¿Todos estos negocios van a la quiebra al mismo tiempo? ¿Que esta pasando? ¿Y qué tienen que ver, de todos modos, estas “compañías comerciales internacionales” (IBC) con nosotros, los ciudadanos comunes de Belize?

Bueno, deducimos que algunos beliceños obtienen empleo en la industria offshore. Y nuestro gobierno recauda sumas sustanciales de dinero por registrar estas empresas en Belize, dólares que ayudan al gobierno a pagar sus cuentas, que incluyen los bienes y servicios que nos brindan a nosotros, el pueblo beliceño. Pero hay muchas cosas que no sabemos acerca de estas “criaturas” financieras, y sería bueno que los funcionarios de nuestro gobierno nos dieran una explicación realista a nosotros, los inocentes. Lo que salta a la vista cuando buscamos “IBC” en Google es que, al igual que en sterlingoffshore.com, las IBC generalmente están “100% exentas de impuestos sobre todas las formas de ingresos, ganancias y similares sin retención de impuestos”. Y, “Por lo general, es posible que no obtenga ingresos de fuentes domésticas”. Para un contribuyente trabajador, esos son motivos de preocupación y curiosidad. Teniendo ya tantos problemas con los tiburones financieros gigantes que creemos conocer (Ashcroft y BSI/ASR), ¿podríamos ser vulnerables a recibir trato injusto de estos monstruos financieros?

A veces, los ciudadanos tenemos la sensación de que nuestros funcionarios gubernamentales y los principales tecnócratas están operando a niveles muy por encima de nuestras cabezas y nuestra capacidad para comprender lo que están haciendo. Y a veces nos preguntamos si ELLOS sabían lo que estaban haciendo.

Tomemos el tema de la privatización, por ejemplo. A fines de la década de 1980 y en la década de 1990, nuestros líderes se jactaban de los grandes beneficios que nuestro país podría obtener al seguir la tendencia mundial hacia algo llamado “privatización”. Entonces, nuestros líderes pensaron en privatizar el hospital del gobierno, pero rápidamente se dieron cuenta de que el gobierno tenía que retener esta responsabilidad crítica. Entonces, en cambio, se modificó el sistema de gestión, de modo que el KMH comenzó a funcionar como un negocio, con un C.E.O. y una junta directiva. Pero desde entonces ha habido muchas quejas sobre el flujo inadecuado de recursos para satisfacer las necesidades de los pobres, que a menudo sufren por la falta de dinero para pagar los medicamentos y servicios recetados. Mientras tanto, el gobierno ha estado trabajando en el programa Seguro Nacional de Salud (NHI por sus siglas en inglés); pero aún no hemos logrado hacerlo todo bien.

La privatización se implementó de manera más agresiva con nuestras principales empresas de servicios públicos: WASA (ahora BWSL), BEL

y BTL. Y, si bien hubo una oleada inicial de flujo de efectivo por la venta de estos activos, rápidamente se dio cuenta de que fue un error poner el control mayoritario en manos de grandes corporaciones; las cosas no estaban funcionando para el mejoramiento del pueblo beliceño, y la situación tenía que revertirse. Quizás la estrategia de privatización funcionó bien en algunos países más desarrollados, pero fracasó un poco en Belize. Como se observa en elibrary.worldbank.org, “ya no se argumenta que la propiedad privada por sí sola genera automáticamente ganancias económicas en las economías en desarrollo; las condiciones previas (especialmente la infraestructura regulatoria) y un proceso apropiado de privatización son importantes para lograr un impacto positivo”.

La situación es discutida más a fondo por Ashutosh Pandey @blogs en indiatimes.com. Él define la privatización simplemente como “La transferencia de propiedad, pertenencias o negocio del gobierno al sector privado”; y puede implicar un “proceso en el que unas pocas personas se hacen cargo de una empresa que cotiza en bolsa”. Si bien hay beneficios obvios: “la creación de riqueza” a medida que “se reduce el costo de producción y se maximizan las ganancias” porque “las empresas tienen un incentivo de ganancias para reducir costos y ser más eficientes”; también hay desventajas. Y comienza afirmando que “Una desventaja importante a reconocer son las oportunidades de soborno y corrupción que vienen con la privatización. Por lo general, las empresas privadas son menos transparentes que las oficinas gubernamentales, y esta transparencia reducida, junto con la búsqueda de ganancias, puede ser un caldo de cultivo para la corrupción”. (Subrayando la nuestra.) ¿Necesitamos decir más? Él elabora con un ejemplo del Reino Unido en la década de 1980 que suena inquietantemente a nuestra situación en casa. Dijo que en el Reino Unido “la creciente desigualdad de los años ochenta se debió, en parte, a la privatización. El gobierno estaba vendiendo activos estatales (propiedad de todos) a un subconjunto más rico de la población, aumentando así la brecha entre ricos y pobres”.

Ese es un tema mucho más complicado de lo que estamos equipados o tenemos el espacio aquí para agotar. Nuestro punto aquí es sacar a la luz un tema que necesita más investigación y discusión, antes de quemarnos, como lo hemos hecho en el pasado al aceptar la situación solo al pie de la letra, tal como la presentan nuestros líderes políticos.

¡Queremos nuestro Bolido de vuelta! Ese fue el grito de la mayoría de los beliceños. Y ese grito fue repetido en la Cámara por nada menos que el viceprimer ministro. Y luego nos enteramos de contratos de diez años emitidos por el gobierno anterior; y un nombre de empresa que suena extraño; y todavía no hemos llegado a los nombres de los directores de la empresa que debe tener nuestro contrato de Bolido, debido a las restricciones legales de confidencialidad que rodean el registro de empresas.

Así que ahora, mientras el secreto rodea a estas criaturas IBC con nombres que suenan extraños, se nos dice que algunos de nuestros propios empresarios locales han estado usando una laguna en esa misma ley de registro de empresas para encubrir sus empresas comerciales en secreto también.

Así que ahora, parece que no podemos recuperar nuestro Bolido. Y no sabemos quién lo tiene, al menos su nombre. Y la solución propuesta a nuestro problema, tal como se nos presentó con el “Registro de Empresas y Asuntos Corporativos de Belize (BCCAR por sus siglas en inglés)”, no parece ser ningún tipo de solución. Todos pueden tener secretismo ahora, porque cualquier negocio local puede registrarse como IBC. ¿Eso es lo que es? La Asociación de Servicios Financieros Internacionales de Belize (BIFSA por sus siglas en inglés), quienquiera que sean, parece muy contenta con la idea. Por favor, ilústrenos un poco más, Gobierno de Belize?

Nuestro P.M. habló con orgullo de los \$ 250 millones ahorrados por el acuerdo del Bono Azul con Nature Conservancy, y otros \$ 250 millones que se ahorrarán mediante la renegociación de nuestra deuda de Petro Caribe. ¡Noticias maravillosas! Pero también debemos asegurarnos de que, si bien nos beneficiamos al proporcionar paraísos fiscales para las IBC extranjeras, no lo regalamos todo al abrir de par en par la puerta para que los titulares de pasaportes élites de Belize eludan sus obligaciones de transparencia e impuestos en detrimento de los pobres beliceños trabajadores.

¡Paz y amor para todos en esta Navidad y Año Nuevo!

Nuri and Joe Guerrero want to talk polygamy

by Colin Hyde

After a time, in our parents' home, my younger brother and I came to accept our dad calling us by the names of our older brothers. We had five older brothers, and it was routine for our dad to run through two or three of their names before calling us by our right name, when he wanted to address one of us. I think older children in a large family might develop personality problems if they're routinely called by the wrong name, but not the latecomers. Younger children get used to hand-me-downs. It was a joke for me and my younger brother when our dad started fumbling around, and sometimes we'd just help him along, get to the right name before he got there.

Brother Nuri is particularly terrible with names. Regular callers to the WUB, even guests, get a hefty dose of being misnamed. Last Friday, did he call Bobby Lopez, Bobby Leslie? Well, Bobby is certainly not the first or second born in the Lopez family, and that might explain why he wasn't crushed at all, why he just let it ride.

Aha, Brother Nuri and his first guest on Friday, Joe Guerrero, want to talk polygamy. On the fun side of that, I think all of us guys love the song, "kill all the men, all that remain is women, it's then I going have mi fun..." ... whoa there, clearly there are situations where polygamy is a virtue, but I can't see it existing officially alongside the present monogamy. The fact is that there is no perfect institution made by man, many of us being "squarish" pegs trying to fit into the round hole that is civilization. But monogamy is the ideal.

Joe Guerrero said polygamy was practiced by the Garinagu in years past. It is a fact that polygamy was the thing on the African continent and other places for thousands of years. It's not hard to see polygamy being a Garinagu practice, especially after the males in the population were decimated in the war with the British in St. Vincent. After

their defeat, the women, and the men that survived, were exiled to then British-controlled Roatán. The Garinagu were very concerned with preserving their race and culture, so in a time of man shortage, sharing most likely would have been encouraged. But there were times in Belize when there was girl shortage. I think Dr. Joseph Palacio said it was a practice to send to Honduras for a girl, even a cousin, to make a pareja over here.

PG originals happiest about redistricting

You know, well I think so, that PG has a kind of we-against-them attitude when it comes to Belize City. That PG is the capital of what was once the forgotten district, Toledo. In the scheme of things it's possible that Monkey River Town was once bigger in Belize, it, Monkey River Town being a lot closer to Belize City than PG. But if that was so, it is no more. Monkey River lost town status in 1981, and now PG stands alone in the district.

Boy, Brothers Jerry Enriquez and Paul Morgan especially must be celebrating the downsizing of Belize City, which will come about after the redistricting victory in the courts. They will say it is only the law, but I know those two have a little "thing" about Belize City. Hmm, I'm leaning toward the belief that PG brothers Hubert Enriquez and JC Arzu are enjoying this one too.

Ah, so much is perception. There was a time when Belize City was no different from PG. If PG folk and Belize City folk from the 50s and 60s compared notes, there'd be a whole lot of similarities. But then States came to Belize City, and then crack cocaine, and then gangs and deportees, and some people grew very rich, and the fabric in the old capital came apart.

Hey, I straddle the worlds. I was born in Belize City, I spent my youth in Belmopan, and I've lived rural all my adult life. Whoa there, what's

the divide about?

Ian Jones makes a second suspect move

It's hard for people on the outside to understand the Ian Jones move to replace Patrick Faber in Collet. This is a relatively young man, and if he was serious and savvy about politics, he wouldn't participate in a move to oust the very popular leader, Faber, who holds the UDP's safest seat if we go by the results of the 2020 election. Patrick Faber has a high hill to climb to get back to the top of the UDP, but at the constituency level, as Collet area rep or standard bearer, it makes no sense for anyone in his party to move so hard against him. Serious senior leaders of the UDP are standing by Patrick, say his crimes are misdemeanors. I understand when they say that at the least the people of Collet should decide if his career should sink, like a runaway SUV did into the sea.

It was floated a while back that the Jones' game here is to secure a path for Shyne Barrow if the redistricting excises Mesopotamia. Albert, Queen's Square, and Mesopotamia could well end up as one division, and people will choose Tracy over Shyne every day of the week if they had to vie for that one.

Mr. Jones didn't distinguish himself when he spoke in the Senate last week. You see why Brother Paul Rodriguez and other proponents of the elected senate say it's a man's job, not for a boy. Jones chastised the government for placing an elder in the Ombudsman's seat when, he said, there are so many highly qualified younger people out there. It's like this brother doesn't listen to KREM at all. If he did he would have heard Ms. Sandra Coye speak on the absolutely vital importance of institutional knowledge when the president of the PSU made the mistake of questioning the utility of retiree, Florencio Marin, as an advisor to the sugar industry. Florencio can't be

blamed for not being able to broker a deal between the disputing millers and farmers. It was a darn good try, and it is for sure his input helped, not hurt the negotiations.

If Mr. Jones doesn't listen to KREM he should read me. Yap, I've heaped praise on precocious kids, some of them tagged as geniuses, but cautioned that wisdom never comes out of the mouths of babes, that when you hear interesting thoughts from young ones they got it from their old folks.

Braa, the Ombudsman's job is for sages, not for young people. We have to be real. Wisdom, like fine wine, is not made overnight. Thus, it's a virtue that resides exclusively with elders.

John prevails in a caucus vs caucus showdown

You know what this is all about. On Saturday John Saldivar faced his party's National Party Council (NPC), for them to decide if he will be allowed to run in the Belmopan constituency convention, for the right to represent the UDP in the next general election. The party, the remnant that remains after it got shellacked at the polls in 2020, had convened a Special Committee to decide on John's fate after the US called him a "corrupt" person, and that committee decided he should step back. And John resisted, hence the NPC gathering to rule on the matter.

Ah, what would the ruling be? Patrick Faber had said that John should take a walk. They are old friends and rivals, and enemies, both coming on to the scene relatively recently. John was around as a minor player when the UDP was in office between 1993 and 1998, and both were soldiers in the trenches for the party when the UDP was out in the cold, between 1998 and 2008. And my, were they rolling in the sweets when the UDP had an unbroken 13 years in power, from 2008 to 2020.

On Saturday John took to his facebook page, wherefrom he conducts most of his battles, and announced: "God is good all the time! Justice prevailed!" Ai, this saga, John in, John out, John up, John down, John blown out at the polls, John hanging on by a thread; it's a story that seems to have no end. But I'll have to put the brake there, because I already had other fish frying in the pan.



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Evan X Hyde

ISBN: 978-976-95180-2-5

Published by Ramos Publishing
Distributed by Amandala Press
www.amandala.com.bz

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10th Moscow Conference on International Security



by Clinton Canul Luna

History will recognize the president of Russia, Vladimir Putin, as the man who fought the powers of the world to change the unipolar system imposed by the western world to a multipolar system, which would benefit every country and its people that adhered to it. Our dear readers of this column, permit me to present to you the following speech delivered by the President of Russia, Vladimir Putin, on December 16, 2022 to participants and guests of the 10th Moscow Conference on International Security. It is as follows:



Ladies and gentlemen,
Esteemed foreign guests,

Let me welcome you to the 10th Moscow Conference on International Security. Over the past decade, your representative forum has become a significant venue for discussing the most pressing military-political problems. Today, such an open discussion is particularly pertinent. The situation in the world is changing dynamically, and the outlines of a multipolar world order are taking shape. An increasing number of countries and peoples are choosing a path of free and sovereign development based on their own distinct identity, traditions and values. These objective processes are being opposed by the Western globalist elites, who provoke chaos, fanning long-standing and new conflicts and pursuing the so-called containment policy, which in fact amounts to the subversion of any alternative, sovereign development options. Thus, they are doing all they can to keep hold onto

the hegemony and power that are slipping from their hands; they are attempting to retain countries and peoples in the grip of what is essentially a neocolonial order. Their hegemony means stagnation for the rest of the world and for the entire civilisation; it means obscurantism, cancellation of culture, and neoliberal totalitarianism.

They are using all expedients. The United States and its vassals grossly interfere in the internal affairs of sovereign states by staging provocations, organising coups, or inciting civil wars. By threats, blackmail, and pressure, they are trying to force independent states to submit to their will and follow rules that are alien to them. This is being done with just one aim in view, which is to preserve their domination, the centuries-old model that enables them to sponge on everything in the world. But a model of this sort can only be retained by force. This is why the collective West – the so-called collective West – is deliberately undermining the European security system and knocking together ever new military alliances. NATO is crawling east and building up its military infrastructure. Among other things, it is deploying missile defence systems and enhancing the strike capabilities of its offensive forces. This is hypocritically attributed to the need to strengthen security in Europe, but in fact quite the opposite is taking place. Moreover, the proposals on mutual security measures, which Russia put forward last December, were once again disregarded.

They need conflicts to retain their hegemony... They have implemented the anti-Russia project and connived at the dissemination of the neo-Nazi ideology... It is clear that by taking these actions the Western globalist elites are attempting, among other things, to divert the attention of their own citizens from pressing socioeconomic problems, such as plummeting living standards, unemployment, poverty, and

deindustrialisation. They want to shift the blame for their own failures to other countries, namely Russia and China, which are defending their point of view and designing a sovereign development policy without submitting to the diktat of the supranational elites. We also see that the collective West is striving to expand its bloc-based system to the Asia-Pacific region, like it did with NATO in Europe. To this end, they are creating aggressive military-political unions such as AUKUS and others. It is obvious that it is only possible to reduce tensions in the world, overcome military-political threats and risks, improve trust between countries and ensure their sustainable development through a radical strengthening of the contemporary system of a multipolar world. I reiterate that the era of the unipolar world is becoming a thing of the past. No matter how strongly the beneficiaries of the current globalist model cling to the familiar state of affairs, it is doomed. The historic geopolitical changes are going in a totally different direction.

And, of course, your conference is another important proof of the objective processes forming a multipolar world, bringing together representatives from many countries who want to discuss security issues on an equal footing, and conduct a dialogue that takes into account the interests of all parties, without exception. I want to emphasize that the multipolar world, based on international law and more just relations, opens up new opportunities for counteracting common threats, such as regional conflicts and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, terrorism and cybercrime. All these challenges are global, and therefore it would be impossible to overcome them without combining the efforts and potentials of all states. As before, Russia will actively and assertively participate in such coordinated joint

efforts; together with its allies, partners and fellow thinkers. It will improve the existing mechanisms of international security and create new ones, as well as consistently strengthen the national armed forces and other security structures by providing them with advanced weapons and military equipment. Russia will secure its national interests, as well as the protection of its allies, and take other steps towards building of a more democratic world where the rights of all peoples and cultural and civilisational diversity are guaranteed. We need to restore respect for international law, for its fundamental norms and principles. And, of course, it is important to promote such universal and commonly acknowledged agencies as the United Nations and other international dialogue platforms. The UN Security Council and the General Assembly, as it was intended initially, are supposed to serve as effective tools to reduce international tensions and prevent conflicts, as well as facilitate the provision of reliable security and wellbeing of countries and peoples. In conclusion, I want to thank the conference organizers for their major preparatory work, and I wish all participants substantial discussions. I am sure that the forum will continue to make a significant contribution to the strengthening of peace and stability on our planet and facilitate the development of constructive dialogue and partnership.

Thank you for your attention.
fincasolan@gmail.com
December 18, 2022
Finca Solana
Corozal Town

Belizean student-athletes to get monthly stipend

by Charles Gladden

BELIZE CITY, Wed. Dec. 14, 2022

On Wednesday, December 14, the Belize Basketball Federation (BBF) and the Football Federation of Belize (FFB) signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Sports that will establish a framework through which monthly stipends will be sent to Belizean student-athletes living abroad.

The government will provide a monthly allowance of \$600 to 22 students chosen by the Football Federation of Belize who are living abroad on either partial or work scholarships. Additionally, 30 under-16 student-athletes chosen by the Basketball Federation will also receive a monthly stipend.

“The fact of the matter is that these students need it out there, because the

cost of living in the US is different [from] here in Belize. To some out there, it sounds nice; 600 dollars is good, but 600 Belize [dollars] in the US is very little, but it’s for their best interest, and from the conversations we’re having, they are more than grateful and looking forward to it, said president of the Football Federation of Belize, Sergio Chuc

“... We don’t understand that many of us don’t have access to education and for us to give 30 sixteen and under kids the opportunity to get a tuition scholarship up to a bachelor’s degree in Belize is monumental and it touches me because I never had that opportunity and I need these kids to understand the investment that these government is making in them,” Jacob Leslie, the president of the BBF, remarked.



Jacob Leslie, President of the Belize Basketball Federation, and Sergio Chuc, President of the Football Federation of Belize signs MOU



Mexico and the unbearable whiteness of advertising

From beers to cars to supermarkets, Mexico and other postcolonial societies are grappling with a whiteness epidemic.



The 2.5 million strong Afro-Mexican community are effectively rendered invisible in advertisements in Mexico, say experts [File: PEDRO PARDO/AFP]

by **Belén Fernández**

Scrolling through Facebook recently on my phone in Mexico, I came upon an advertisement informing me in Spanish: “The moment has arrived to renew yourself.” A company based in the northern Mexican state of Nuevo León offered to loan me up to 250,000 pesos — more than \$12,000 — to pursue the plastic surgery of my choice. An image of a bikini-clad white woman with blond hair provided additional encouragement.

A perusal of the company’s Facebook page revealed that she was not the only white person selected to promote these surgically focused financial services. In fact, not a single non-white person had been chosen to embody “renewal”. This in a country where the vast majority of people are not white, and where a soaring national poverty rate — nearly 44 percent at the end of 2020 — means most folks could never afford a \$12,000 loan.

And yet the Nuevo León firm is scarcely alone in its extra-white marketing approach. Generally speaking, the chromatic composition of Mexican advertising exists in glaring defiance of the physical diversity of Mexico’s primarily mestizo (mixed heritage) and Indigenous population. As is the case elsewhere in Latin America and in other countries subjected to European colonial depredations, the Spanish colonial legacy in Mexico has meant that lighter skin is associated with societal superiority and economic advantage. And what is the point of advertising if not to make people want to be something “better” than they are?

Nowadays in Mexico, the citizen-consumer is bombarded with advertising images that blatantly illustrate the overlap of racism and classism in the social hierarchy. From beer and car companies to department

stores and supermarket chains, the whiteness of ads has become a sort of sinister elephant in the room, urging poor Mexicans to spend their way out of socioeconomic misery into an impossibly whiter future.

As social anthropologist Juris Tupa notes in a 2020 peer-reviewed paper on “colourism” in Mexican advertising, the overwhelmingly dominant casting profile requested by firms for commercial advertisements is “international Latino” — which basically translates into someone with light skin, dark hair, and dark eyes, “reinforcing the imagery of a ‘Europeanised Latin Americanity’” at the expense of the average Mexican.

Meanwhile, the Afro-Mexican population — which is more than 2.5 million strong — is effectively rendered invisible by the commercial advertising landscape, as Juris observes. In contributing to the perpetuation of a vicious cycle of colourist discrimination, advertising firms and their clients have helped maintain a colonial “pigmentocracy” in Mexico.

Sometimes, the Mexican advertising industry gets publicly called out for its racist shenanigans — like in 2018 when an ad campaign for Indio beer featured a bunch of fair-skinned Mexicans sporting t-shirts on which the phrase “pinche indio” (“f***** Indian”, a prevalent insult in Mexico) was partially crossed out and replaced with “orgullosamente indio” or “proudly Indian”. According to the minds behind the campaign, its objective was to raise awareness of discrimination in the country — something that is clearly best achieved by having white people appropriate Indigenous identity.

Full article can be viewed at:

<https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2022/12/19/the-unbearable-whiteness-of-advertising-in-mexico-and-beyond>

First published on Aljazeera

Two shootings in St. Martin de Porres area

by **Charles Gladden**

BELIZE CITY, Thurs. Dec. 15, 2022

On Thursday, December 15, a group of three men in a moving vehicle became the targets of a gunman who fired several shots in their direction in the St. Martin de Porres area of Belize City.

According to initial reports, Kingsley Morrison, 61, a resident of Periwinkle Street, was driving the vehicle — a Toyota Camry — at the time of the shooting, which took place shortly before 2:00 p.m. that day, while Ulide Allen, 25, and Chris Welch, 25, were passengers. The three men reportedly came under fire when the vehicle reached Lacroix Boulevard in the vicinity of the Adventist Church. A gunman on the sidewalk in that area reportedly began shooting at the vehicle, and when the vehicle sped onto Mahogany Street and arrived in front of Kim’s Construction Supplies, the men found themselves being fired at by another gunman. At that point, Morrison reportedly pulled out his licensed firearm and fired warning shots, then he drove to the Karl Heusner Memorial Hospital (KMH) so that he and his companions could receive medical treatment.

The communications director for the Belize Police Department, ASP Fitzroy Yearwood, told local reporters that the



ASP Fitzroy Yearwood, Communications Director, BPD

intended target could have been any one of the three men, as they were all caught in the crossfire, but he is doubtful that Mr. Morrison, 61, had any enemies.

“When you open fire at a vehicle, everybody in that vehicle is a target. We’re not here to lay blame on anybody. It’s an unfortunate incident in that they attempted to take three lives. If you notice, three parties were injured, and we are hoping to make an arrest,” Yearwood said.

“... In reality, we have to be real. We do not believe that Mr. Morrison has an enemy out there that would want to make sure that he doesn’t escape an attack. So it’s the other two occupants. We’re going to deal with it as soon as

Please turn to **Page 15**

25 Peruvians Murdered in a Week of Intense Repression



The sign reads, “Terrorists are the lawmakers and the Lima City’s press”

The departments where these deaths occurred were Ayacucho (9), Apurimac (6), Cusco (3), Junin (3), La Libertad (3), and Arequipa (1).

On Sunday, Peru’s Health Ministry acknowledged that 25 people have died during the protests against President Dina Boluarte and in favor of an immediate call for general elections.

According to official data, the departments where these deaths occurred were Ayacucho (9), Apurimac (6), Cusco (3), Junin (3), La Libertad (3), and Arequipa (1).

The Health ministry also reported 287 injured people who have already been discharged. They are distributed as follows: Apurimac (56), Ayacucho (45), Lima (37), La Libertad (36), Arequipa (35), Junin (35), Cusco (16), Puno (15), and Huancavelica (12).

Nevertheless, 69 people remain

hospitalized in Ayacucho (20), Junin (17), La Libertad (12), Ucayali (6), Apurimac (5), Lima (4), Arequipa (4), and Huancavelica (1).

Boluarte announced that the Public Ministry and the Military Justice would investigate the death of civilians during the social protests.

On Tuesday, she will appoint new officials to replace the president of the Council of Ministers and the ministers of education and culture, who resigned on Dec. 16 after stating their disagreement with the violent repression of the population.

Peruvians have been staging huge protests since Dec. 7, when Congress appointed Dina Boluarte as president after removing Pedro Castillo, who is currently sentenced to 18 months in preventive prison for rebellion. Mexico will grant political asylum to his family.

First published by TeleSur



Argentina wins World Cup, caps month of record spending and viewership

BY JUSTIN BYERS

(Front Office Sports), Sun. Dec. 18, 2022

After a 3-3 draw that went to a penalty shootout, Argentina beat France in a thrilling final match that went down the wire.

Now the 2022 World Cup is over, and this year's tournament leaves behind a legacy of stunning upsets and off-field controversy — along with record viewership and spending.

Hosted by Qatar, the biggest sports event in the world saw fans surpass spending totals from each of the prior two tournaments as soccer legend Lionel Messi finally added a World Cup title to his long list of accomplishments.

Before the quarterfinals, fans had already spent 89% of what they did at the 2018 World Cup in Russia, according to FIFA's payments partner Visa — even despite a late-breaking ban on in-stadium alcoholic beverage sales.

More than 760,000 fans made the trip to Qatar for the month-long event.

The country spent roughly \$300 billion on infrastructure projects to prepare for the tournament.

Viewership expectations are high for Argentina-France. The semifinal match between Argentina and Croatia on Dec. 13 drew **6.47 million viewers** on Fox,



Argentina team photo

making it the most-watched World Cup semifinal on English-language TV.

Argentina's \$42 million in prize money is also the most in tournament history.

Coming to America

The 2026 World Cup, which will be

played across the United States, Canada, and Mexico, may be the tournament's largest edition to date, potentially expanding from 32 to **48 teams**, and could host as many 104 matches.

FIFA expects to generate **\$11 billion** in revenue during the 2023-26 commercial cycle, thanks in part to lucrative sponsorships and media deals.

Comparatively, FIFA recorded **\$7.5 billion** in revenue during the 2019-22 cycle

World Cup final: Lionel Messi named best player as Kylian Mbappe wins Golden Boot

Argentina's Lionel Messi was named best player and France's Kylian Mbappe won the Golden Boot award following a sensational World Cup 2022 final.

bbc.com, 18 December 2022

Messi, 35, led Argentina to their third World Cup title, scoring twice in the final as they beat France in a dramatic penalty shootout.

He netted seven goals in seven games and became the first player to score in each round of the same World Cup since the last-16 round was introduced in 1986.

He is also the first player to win the Golden Ball award twice since it was introduced in 1982 after also winning the honour in 2014.

Mbappe was top scorer with eight goals, including a hat-trick in the final.

It was the first treble in a World Cup final since Sir Geoff Hurst's in 1966, when England beat West Germany.

Mbappe, 23, scored twice in normal time and once in extra time as 2018 champions France lost the showpiece at Lusail Stadium.

The Paris St-Germain forward also created history when he became the first player to score four goals in a World Cup final, having also netted in France's 2018 victory over Croatia.

Mbappe, who took his total tally of World Cup goals to 12, became the youngest player to reach double figures in the competition.

He joined Brazil's Vava and Pele, West Germany's Paul Breitner and France's Zinedine Zidane as the only players to score in multiple World Cup finals.

Messi, who captained Argentina in what is expected to be his last tournament, netted his 97th and 98th goals for his country in the final.

He has scored 13 goals in the competition and has contributed to 21 total goals in World Cup history - more than any other player.

Messi also won the Silver Boot for finishing second in the goalscoring charts, while Frenchman Olivier Giroud took the Bronze Boot for netting four goals in six matches.



Argentina trio Enzo Fernandez, Lionel Messi and Emiliano Martinez all won individual awards, alongside France's Kylian Mbappe

Mbappe was named the Silver Ball winner as the second best player in the tournament and Croatia's Luka Modric picked up the Bronze Ball after guiding his country to third place.

| TOP SCORERS | | | | |
|-------------|----------------|---|---|---|
| | GS | A | P | |
| 1 | Kylian Mbappe | 8 | 2 | 7 |
| 2 | Lionel Messi | 7 | 3 | 7 |
| 3 | Olivier Giroud | 4 | 0 | 6 |
| 4 | Julian Alvarez | 4 | 0 | 7 |

Kylian Mbappe scored eight goals and assisted two in seven matches at the 2022 World Cup

Please turn to



Pelé congratulates Messi and Mbappé after World Cup final



A life-size statue of Brazilian soccer legend Pelé is displayed during an Conmebol event to pay tribute to Pelé in Doha, Qatar, Sunday, Dec. 11, 2022. (AP Photo/Andre Penner)

SAO PAULO (AP), Sun. Dec. 18, 2022

Brazil great Pelé congratulated Lionel Messi and Argentina for winning the World Cup and Kylian Mbappé for his goal-scoring exploits in Sunday's final.

Pelé, who won a record three World Cups as a player, has been in the hospital to treat a respiratory infection.

He posted his message on Instagram after Argentina beat defending champion France 4-2 in a penalty shootout following a 3-3 draw at Lusail Stadium in Qatar.

"Today, football continues to tell its story, as always, in an enthralling way," Pelé wrote in his post. "Messi winning his first World Cup, as his trajectory deserved. My dear friend, Mbappé, scoring four goals in a final. What a gift it was to watch this spectacle to the future of our sport."

Messi scored two goals in the match and finally won the lone trophy that had eluded him in his remarkable career. Mbappé, who scored in the 2018 title match when he was a teenager just as

Pelé did in 1958, became only the second player in history to score a hat trick in the World Cup final.

Both Messi and Mbappé also scored in the penalty shootout.

Messi ended up winning the Golden Ball award as the best player of the tournament and Mbappé won the Golden Boot award as the top scorer with eight goals in seven matches.

Pelé also took time to mention Morocco for its history-making run as the first African team to reach the semifinals at the tournament.

"And I couldn't fail to congratulate Morocco for the incredible campaign," Pelé wrote. "It's great to see Africa shine."

Pelé ended his message by again lauding Argentina and mentioning the man most often associated with him as the greatest players the game has ever seen — Diego Maradona.

Maradona, who led Argentina to the 1986 World Cup title, died in 2020.

"Congratulations Argentina!" Pelé wrote. "Certainly Diego is smiling now."

World Cup final: Lionel Messi named best player as Kylian Mbappe wins Golden Boot

Continued from Page 13

Golden Glove - Emiliano Martinez (Argentina)



Emiliano Martinez kept clean sheets against Mexico, Poland and Croatia

Emiliano Martinez kept clean sheets against Mexico, Poland and Croatia. Aston Villa goalkeeper Emiliano Martinez kept three clean sheets as he helped Argentina win the World Cup and was given the Golden Glove award.

He played every minute of the tournament and saved Frenchman Kingsley Coman's spot-kick in the final shootout.

Morocco's Yassine Bounou and England's Jordan Pickford also kept three clean sheets as their sides reached the semi-finals and quarter-finals respectively.

Young player of the tournament - Enzo Fernandez (Argentina)



Enzo Fernandez played in all seven of Argentina's matches at the 2022 World Cup

Argentina and Benfica midfielder Enzo Fernandez, 21, was named Young Player of the Tournament after a string of impressive performances in Qatar.

He started the final win over France and scored his only World Cup goal in the 2-0 victory over Mexico in the group stage.

Elsewhere, England won the FIFA Fair Play Trophy for the fewest bookings throughout the tournament.

Colombia's ELN rebels announce end-of-year ceasefire

Truce will last from Saturday to January 2, leftist rebels say, as peace talks with Bogota to resume next month.

Colombia's largest remaining rebel group has announced a unilateral ceasefire over the end-of-year holiday period, a week after the National Liberation Army (ELN) and the Colombian government concluded a first round of peace negotiations.

An ELN spokesperson said in a video shared on social media on Monday that the ceasefire would last from 6am (11:00 GMT) on Saturday, which is Christmas Eve, to the same time on January 2.

The ceasefire only covers the "military forces and the state police" said the spokesperson, saying ELN fighters reserve the right to defend themselves if

they are attacked.

The United Nations special representative to Colombia, Carlos Ruiz Massieu, welcomed the announcement, saying on Twitter that he trusts the ceasefire will help "alleviate suffering and improve the humanitarian situation".

Representatives of the leftist rebel group and the government began peace talks in neighbouring Venezuela last month in an effort to end a decades-long conflict that has killed more than 450,000 people.

The South American nation has seen an uptick in violence in recent years, especially in areas where armed groups

are battling for control over drug trafficking routes and other illicit activities.

The talks were held after Gustavo Petro – Colombia's first left-wing president, who took office in August – had promised to pursue a "total peace" plan for the country, including holding talks with armed groups.

Petro's right-wing predecessor, Ivan Duque, broke off negotiations with the ELN, a group that is believed to have about 4,000 fighters in Colombia and neighbouring Venezuela, in 2019 after a car bombing killed 22 police cadets.

While a formal ceasefire was not reached in the first round of talks between Bogota and the ELN, the two sides promised on December 12 to "implement a partial agreement for emergency care" to

begin in January in several areas worst hit by violence.

Defence Minister Ivan Velasquez said there had been a "noticeable drop in operations" by the ELN since the peace talks resumed.

The talks also led to an agreement this month to allow displaced Indigenous Embera people to return to their homes in western Colombia, which they fled due to increased attacks and insecurity.

Mexico, which has agreed to be an official guarantor of the ELN-Colombia talks, will hold the next round of negotiations starting next month.

Pablo Beltran, the rebel group's chief negotiator, said last week that he hoped a ceasefire could be agreed upon during the next round.

COP15: Landmark Biodiversity Deal Recognizes Rights...

Continued from ▶ Page 3

Washington State recognized the rights of the Southern Resident Orcas in an important step toward protecting the endangered species and their habitat, the Salish Sea.

This news is a tremendous victory for groups involved, who have been collaborating for three years to encourage the inclusion of Rights of Nature language in the post-2020 framework. Their efforts received support from approximately 200 organizations and individuals from over 40 countries.

Additional Quotes

Vera Urtaza, co-founder of Keystone Species Alliance, is equally excited about the adopted text, stating she acknowledges that “one way to get closer to achieving the Paris Agreement goal of staying ‘well below 2 degree Celsius’ is to acknowledge that Nature has rights, that we share this planet with 8.7 million known species and that it is our duty to change course to avoid our own extinction. We are Nature, and we need to respect and honor life on Earth.

”Inclusion of the Rights of Nature in

this international biodiversity agreement is a watershed moment for the movement on one of the world’s biggest stages,” said Missy Lahren, Board President at EarthLaw Center. “This victory will also help propel the Rights of Nature and other ecocentric law movements into new jurisdictions as well as within other international treaties.”

“I have the greatest respect for the hard work of everyone involved, who worked on this framework to find the right words that honor the needs and wishes of not only the biodiversity treaty parties, but also Mother Earth’s own needs and wishes,” said Doris Ragetli, Co-Founder, Rights of Mother Earth. “In particular, I am thrilled by the agreement’s commitment to enhance Mother Earth centric actions, including by Indigenous peoples and local communities,” she added.

“This is a first and very important step towards a new ethic based on an understanding of humans as a part of nature, not separate from it. The next challenge is the implementation, which needs supporting and binding legal frameworks.” Pella Thiel, End Ecocide Sweden.

Belizean student-athletes to get monthly stipend

Continued from ▶ Page 11

The Minister of Education, Hon. Francis Fonseca, noted at the signing of the MOU, “It’s been done in a very haphazard fashion for many years, The individual families have generally approached the ministry saying, ‘listen we have this opportunity’. So we wanted to put in place a structured, coordinated process that would allow

these formal organizations, these bodies to identify these student-athletes, bring them to us, and say listen, they have gotten partial scholarships at this university or this community college, they need additional support on a monthly basis to assist them with living expenses, accommodation, that sort of thing and so that’s where we stepped in so I’m very pleased that we were able to formalize these MOU’s.”

Two shootings in St. Martin de Porres area

Continued from ▶ Page 12

we can break it down,” he then pointed out.

Police have indicated that when they examined Morrison’s vehicle at the KMH, they discovered several bullet holes on it. In addition, 13 expended shells were recovered at the scene of the shooting.

This morning, Monday, December 19, there was another shooting incident in the St. Martin de Porres area. One person was injured in the shooting, which took place on Black Orchid Street.

When asked if the two incidents are

the indication of another flare-up in the Lake Independence area, where a State of Emergency was declared in August of this year, ASP Yearwood said, “We put everything into every area, but especially in that area. For us to say a flare-up, I wouldn’t want to say it’s a flare-up. One, the shooting of those men in that vehicle I explain that of a domestic nature. The shooting of the car with the three men, we know is not a result of gang rivalry. So for us to say it’s a flare-up, no. Each shooting in the recent past has its indications. For us to say it’s a flare-up, it would be an unfair statement.”

Memories/Recuerdos!

“Waking and sleeping, you cannot leave your memories alone in this world, for other men to own!” Hilary Mantel, one of the best authors of our time, in my opinion, was channeling Thomas Cromwell’s last thoughts before he was beheaded by Henry VIII. Those imagined thoughts hit me like a brick over the head—the depth and truth and beauty of the sentence. It made me think of all the people who have left this world, leaving a vacuum for others to fill, to exaggerate, or denigrate, to do whatever they see fit with. I know we cannot all control our narratives; sometimes we can’t because of our sudden demise, or because we don’t think we are worthy of praise or recognition for our accomplishments, or because we don’t think it’s important, in the larger scheme of life! So we leave it to others, usually unqualified others, to define us. By us, I mean, us collectively, not individually; that would be too presumptuous!

There are so many people that we meet every day, who do extraordinary things for others. Selfless, unremembered acts of kindness and of love, that go unnoticed, ignored, because they don’t fit the mode society has set up to acknowledge those accomplishments. Usually it is the Pharisees that get the notice, the adulation, not the Publicans! Sometimes others take the credit for those oases of comfort and respite, while those truly

responsible sleep peacefully at night, knowing that they are truly blest to be able to give, to share, to help the less fortunate without fanfare or self-aggrandizement! Your neighbor, a teacher, a policeman, a merchant, just an everyman, makes a difference in someone’s life every single day, and it makes the world a better place, and life more bearable for a family, or a child, or a community!

I have so many people in mind who deserve to have their memories immortalized by their peers, and more importantly, by themselves! The publisher, the Imam, the crusader, the voice of reason that has moved on, gone south to become a caregiver, which he always was to us, the public! They don’t advertise their contributions, they just act and give, out of the goodness of their hearts and souls. These are the people who should control their own memories, but probably won’t, and instead their legacies will be defined by the Pharisees, the charlatans, and those that need to be in the spotlight!

2022 has been a busy year, a rough and unstable, a calamitous year! Let us hope that 2023 will be kinder to us, less harsh and unrepentant than our now, and that those of us who deserve to own our memories, do so, silently and gratefully.

Glen.

Woman, 83, dies in house fire

Continued from ▶ Page 1

subsequently examined the burnt remains of the building, they discovered Coleman’s motionless, burnt body inside a room.

“We had two officers, [who] arrived at the scene and actually saw her in that house. I know it’s very traumatic for them, but as I said, it’s a very sad day for us. The details of the conversation were not sent to me, but I’m certain that they made every effort that they could have to try to get into that house,” said communications director for the Belize Police Department, ASP Fitzroy Yearwood.

The son of the victim Raymond Pitterson told local media that when police arrived on the scene they contacted the fire department but made no attempts to enter the burning building. The victim, Coleman, reportedly clinged on to a burglar bar, crying for help, but no one

assisted her, recounts her son. He claimed when the fire department arrived on the scene they did not have any water in the trucks.

ASP Yearwood told local reporters that the officers who attempted to rescue Coleman from the fire will be receiving counseling.

“An experience like that is not something you get over within a few hours, so they will be doing the counseling and going through that mandatory leave process,” he said.

The fire was reportedly caused by an electrical failure, the family of the victim says, but not a faulty washing machine as was initially reported by police.

ASP Yearwood also noted that Coleman resided at her residence alone. Her body was taken to the morgue of the Karl Heusner Memorial Hospital, where she was pronounced dead on arrival.

Police are investigating.

Sugar mediation continues

Continued from ▶ Page 2

Control Board was to set the date for the start of the sugar crop over the weekend. It has been reported that December 27 has been tentatively set as the new starting date if an agreement is signed. (Following an emergency meeting on December 17, the chairman of the SICB issued a notice which stated that “The Board has passed a resolution that the 2022-2023 crop start date is December 27, 2022 with the proviso that BSI and BSCFA sign a Commercial Agreement”). When both parties meet in consultation with the SICB and a date is set and gazetted, then the sugar crop for 2022-2023 can legally begin.

While the BSCFA represents the association with the largest number of cane farmers as members, there are other cane farmers associations with farmers who are in good standing with the mill, BSI/ASR, and are willing to start the delivery of sugar cane. BSI/ASR indicated its desire and preparedness to start milling the crop today, Monday, December 19.

PM Briceno has his fingers crossed that a resolution can be found so that the new season can begin this week. Over 5000 residents of the northern districts of Orange Walk and Corozal depend on the yearly Zafra, which is a prime source of much-needed economic activity in the region.

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From the border... to the Boulevard;



From the Hondo... to Mahogany!

Sugar and Cream

Corozal Town - Orange Walk Town - Belize City

New Year's Day

2023



Who will win?

32nd Annual kren FM

CYCLING CLASSIC

New Year's Day 2023!!



| | | | |
|----------|--|----------|---|
| 1991 | Michael Lewis (first) Ernest Meighan (second) | (Ladies) | Lori Harkey (first) |
| 1992 | Francisco Flores (first) Fitzgerald Joseph (second) | | Shalini Zabaneh (second) Carlos Hernandez (first) |
| 1993 | Derrick Mahler (first) Orlando Chavarria (second) | (Ladies) | Carlos Manuel Hernandez (second) Shalini Zabaneh (first) |
| 1994 | Douglas Lamb (first) Ronald Sutherland (second) | | Anthea Sutherland (second) Marco Salas (first) |
| 1995 | Robert Mariano (first) Gustavo Carillo (second) | (Ladies) | Juan Rojas (second) Shalini Zabaneh (first) |
| 1996 | Nigel Matus (first) Ian Smith (second) | | Patricia Chavarria (second) Geovanni Choto (first) |
| 1997 | Fred Usher (first) Michael Lewis (second) | (Ladies) | Byron Pope (second) Kaya Cattouse (first) |
| 1998 | Francisco Flores (first) James Frampton (second) | | Shalini Zabaneh (second) David Henderson (first) |
| 1999 | Ernest Meighan (first) Skip Spangenburg (second) | (Ladies) | Gregory Lovell (second) Shalini Zabaneh (first) |
| 2000 | Ariel Rosado (first) Quinton Hamilton (second) | | Patricia Chavarria (second) Byron Pope (first) |
| 2001 | Miguel Perez (first) Shane Vasquez (second) | (Ladies) | Carlos Lopez (second) Shalini Zabaneh (first) |
| | (Ladies) Karen Rosito (First) | | Gabrielle Lovell (second) |
| 2002 | Amlita Knowles (second) Barney Brown (first) | 2015 | Hector Rangel (first) David Santos (second) |
| | Hugo Rostrain Monterosa (second) | (Ladies) | Alicia Thompson (first) Kaya Cattouse (second) |
| (Ladies) | Ann Marie Bennett (first) | 2016 | Joel Adan Borland (first) Gregory Lovell (second) |
| 2003 | Douglas Lamb (first) Frank Cannon (second) | (Ladies) | Alicia Thompson (first) Kaya Cattouse (second) |
| (Ladies) | Fiona Humes Gonzalez (First) | 2017 | Ron Vasquez (first) Brandon Cattouse (second) |
| 2004 | Marlon Castillo (first) Mateo Cruz (second) | (Ladies) | Alicia Thompson (first) Kaya Cattouse (second) |
| (Ladies) | Fiona Humes-Gonzalez (first) | 2018 | John DeLong (second) Giovanni Lovell (first) |
| 2005 | Claudett Maheia (second) Michael Lewis (first) | (Ladies) | Alicia Thompson (first) Kaya Cattouse (second) |
| | Shane Vasquez (second) | 2019 | John DeLong (First) Clayton Travis (Second) |
| (Ladies) | Marinette Flowers (first) | (Ladies) | Kaya Cattouse (First) Nicole Gallego (Second) |
| 2006 | Scottie Weiss (first) Marlon Castillo (second) | 2020 | Oscar Quiroz, Jr. (First) Joslyn Chavarria, Jr. (Second) |
| (Ladies) | Alicia Thompson (first) | (Ladies) | Alicia Thompson (First) Nicole Gallego (Second) |
| | Marinette Flowers (second) | 2021 | NO RACE (DUE TO COVID) |
| 2007 | Shane Vasquez (first) Marlon Castillo (second) | 2022 | Brandon Cattouse (first) Derrick Chavarria (second) |
| (Ladies) | Gina Lovell (first) Shalini Zabaneh (second) | (Ladies) | Gabrielle Gabourel (first) Kaya Cattouse (second) |
| 2008 | Neo German Camacho Villegas (first) Edward Reyes (second) | | |
| (Ladies) | Shalini Zabaneh (first) Alicia Thompson (second) | | |
| 2009 | Marlon Castillo (first) Gregory Lovell (second) | | |