

Reporter

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COVID-era Curfews to end soon



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Minister of Health and Wellness Hon. Kevin Bernard

By Michelle Sutherland

The rolling COVID-19 related curfews are might soon to come to end within weeks, Minister of Health and Wellness Kevin Bernard informed The Reporter on Thursday.

Bernard, speaking in an exclusive interview with The Reporter, indicated that, following intensive discussions with the Covid Medical Response Team (CMRT), it was agreed that if the positivity rate continues to decrease and remains between 10 to 15 % in the next two weeks, his ministry will put forward a recommendation to Cabinet to do away with the nightly curfew for good.

According to Bernard, during multiple discussions with the COVID-19 Medical Task Force, they were of the opinion that after almost two years of living under the pandemic, it is now time to move on. Bernard said that while he had presented some recommendations to Cabinet on Tuesday of this week, they had recommended that he return early next week with a comprehensive write-up that focuses on "Living With Covid."

"The Prime Minister and Cabinet had requested that we come in with a Cabinet paper in terms of

MOHW Confirms Contract With Private Company Exist



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By Michelle Sutherland

The staggering cost of PCR test at Belize's borders points for persons who are traveling out of the country for more than 24 hours, and which are being administered by a private company has led many Belizeans to question the \$100 bill as well as the government's decision to give the green light to a private company instead of administering the test themselves.

In an effort to dig deeper into the situation the Reporter was able to confirm with top sources in the medical community that the previous Minister of Health Michell Chebat had signed the contract with the private entity prior to demitting office. We were additionally told that while there are concerns about the staggering cost of the PCR test on Belizeans, the termination of the contract may lead to lawsuits that could potentially end up costing the government.

When we reached out to the Minister of Health, Hon. Kevin Bernard for a comment he told us, "a contract has existed which ends in June and that is when we are going to really revisit this whole scenario. Hopefully, we may not even need to renew that contract

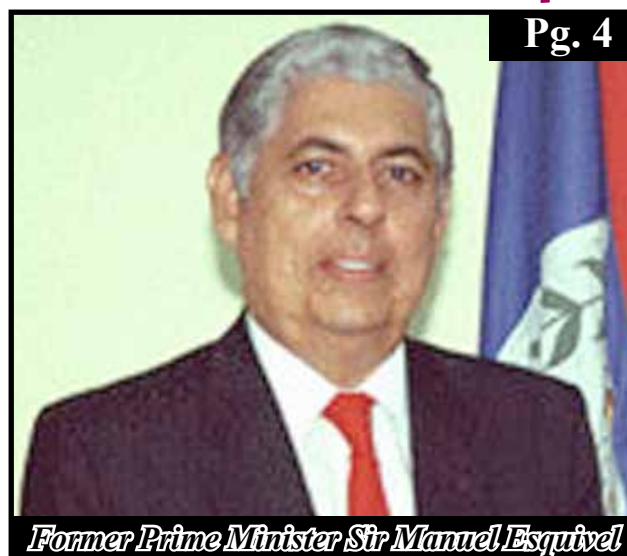
Business Senator calls for 'cap' on fuel tax



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Business Sector Senator Hon. Kevin Herrera speaking on the third supplementary Bill

Sir Manuel Esquivel Passes at age 82



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Former Prime Minister Sir Manuel Esquivel

Former Prime Minister the Rt. Hon Sir Manuel Amadeo Esquivel has passed away.

He died on Thursday afternoon, February 10, after suffering with complications to the heart.

Esquivel was born in Belize City. He attended St John's College and subsequently earned a post-graduate certificate in physics education at Bristol University, England.

In 1984, Esquivel won election to the House of Representatives, becoming prime minister for the first time shortly after. He held the seat until the 1989 then regained the title and served as Prime Minister between 1993-1998.

Esquivel was appointed to the Privy Council of the United Kingdom by Queen Elizabeth II in 1986 and that earned him the title "Right Honourable".



NO HAMMERING

All indicators point to an impressive reduction in the number of Covid infections which caused us so much anxiety last year.

Infection rates have been falling all over the world, and in Belize, where nearly 60 percent of the population have been immunized, people are no longer dying from Covid in large numbers. Since the pandemic took hold two years ago, 630 persons have died in our country from this lung infection.

But, today, there is a new report from China that scientists in Wuhan have come across a new variant which the World Health Organization has named Neo CoV. At the moment it is only found in bats, but if it ever jumps the animal barrier and begins to infect humans, it will have an astonishing ability to kill 1 out of every 3 persons it infects.

This variant is only one step removed from morphing into a virus that can attack humans, and existing vaccines are powerless against it. If this virus were to break loose, the world would be faced with a new and terrifying pandemic.

Neo CoV is not a new virus. It was first discovered in 2012 in the Middle East. It looks like the SARS-COV-2 virus, but it is far more deadly.

“Our studies have shown that the current COVID-19 vaccinations are inadequate to protect humans from the eventually of infection caused by this virus,” researchers from China have said in a report appearing in the journal Business Insider.

People were not prepared for the Coronavirus when it took the world by storm in 2019, and we will not be prepared for this new onslaught if and when it occurs. But we know a lot more about Infectious diseases today than we did two years ago, so we will undoubtedly be able to find a vaccine for this new monster as well.

Just in case it breaks out and attacks us!

Dear Editor,

The headline is not a scolding, it is a recommendation to Government. Let housing construction blast off with skillful laying of bricks everywhere. No hammering of wood. May the sentiments and the attitude be the expression of genuine SOCIAL JUSTICE to raise up the poor by making available to them an asset that shall be the pillar and anchor for their children to arise to meaningful citizenship in Belize.

Because I intend to persevere for the rest of my days in non-partisanship, may I suggest what ideas apply to both political parties, but be more applicable to one or the other at this time.

The next change of government, probably taking place in 2035, will be the victory of the party convincing Belize that it will continue to express a mature confidence in itself to lead a wholesome leadership at home and abroad. Belize must continue to express a mature confidence in itself to lead its people in wholesome leadership in its own base but also in the region and globally.

Should Belize not begin to demonstrate its new image by proving its mature judgement to do what is to the benefit of its own interest while being acceptable to region and world. I believe that at this time Belize should continue to keep its place on the international stage where it has been. We should stay in the Com-

monwealth. If others in CARICOM chose otherwise, we wish them well. While we do not declare: “So, go, Britain, Belize is behind you.” In our own self-interest we chose to remain as a member of the most powerful alliance of nations called the Commonwealth. It includes Britain, Canada, Australia, Jamaica, India, the largest country in the world fast approaching economic superiority. As is well known, Britain has continuously demonstrated its commitment to our territorial integrity.

Let us bless the departing but continue to support those who have helped us significantly to continue being what we aspire for. On another level let us salute Taiwan which has been faithful in its economic support outside of a quid-pro quo arrangement.

We love Taiwan and its people!

The leadership of the next government - in fifteen years - will be a party that has completely rejected these historic negatives: PUNISH ENEMIES, REWARD FRIENDS. Damnable also is what has induced the highest level of crime and corruption ever - FROM THE BASES TO THE BOARD ROOMS.

Belize must grow to an ever increasing level of SOCIAL JUSTICE.

The PREAMBLE should become the bible of our political parties that seek to lead the nation.

Sincerely: Paul Rodriguez

COVID-era Curfews to end soon

Cont'd from pg. 1

focusing on living with Covid and that means that one of the issues will be the lifting of the curfew, easing of other restrictions, as well the easing of the requirements for testing at the borders, in terms of the time period,” explained Bernard. “We know that the concern is the time period in terms of overnight travel. The medical experts are advising us that we can probably take that up when we look at the trend over the next two weeks, so that we can change that to maybe after a three-night stay. So those are some of the recommendations that we are making.”

Over the next couple of days, the Minister and his team will also be reviewing the entire regulations from the beginning of the pandemic in order to compile a new one. Among the recommendations will be allowing weddings, funerals, and other gatherings to revert back to at least 50% capacity.

“The only thing that we know that we are still going to hold on to is the nightclub for a little

longer, but that is a decision that we will be having in Cabinet. I cannot make that decision on my own, but that is what the medical team is requesting. I think the mask mandate will also remain for a while, because I don't see the need for getting rid of the mask at this point because it is important. We are not at that stage where we are free from COVID. COVID is here. ... Until this thing becomes an endemic, I believe that that is when that will come but not at this point,” ended the minister.



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Business Senator calls for 'cap' on fuel tax



The time may have come for the government to consider a cap on its fuel tax take, the Business Senator advised in Wednesday's Senate Meeting.

"Maybe the time has come for us to look at a set amount with respect to government revenues on the fuel, because Government is a beneficiary when the prices are high," Business Senator Kevin Herrera said as he joined the de-

bate on the General Revenue Supplementary Bill. "Perhaps if we look at a fixed amount, then we know what we're up against at any given time."

Herrera suggested the ceiling on fuel taxes, after highlighting that the government seems to be increasing spending on things that are not critical at the moment, and that it seems there have been some increased cash inflows. "So,

if government has gotten some influx of revenues, perhaps we should have been given a break in respect to the fuel and the other costs we face every day. It would have helped the economy," Herrera said, as he lamented the fact the price of premium, regular and diesel fuels have all increased due to international market conditions.

Herrera prefaced his suggestion by

highlighting the fact that at the start of the current fiscal year (FY 2021/22), the Government had asked all stakeholders to share in the "sacrifice," clearly referencing the ten-percent salary cut that the teachers and public officers had endured. At the time, Herrera had voted in favor of the FY2021/22 budget, inclusive of the salary cut for public officers and teachers. However, the senator seems to have hinted at questions as to whether or not the government is still committed to the shared sacrifice.

"And so when we were here doing this exercise in April of last year, there were

tremendous sacrifices that we had committed to," Herrera reminded. "We were very willing at that point—and still very committed—to make those sacrifices. But then when we come and see the third supplementary, and I hasten to add that I am sure that many of these expenses that are necessary. But, for the ones that are not urgent and critical, perhaps those could have waited."

Like other senators who similarly spoke on the supplementary budget, Herrera also lamented the lack of transparency on the government's part regarding both inflows and expenditure. "I don't know what type of new inflows of revenues the government has run into. I understand that the economy has grown. But we haven't seen those numbers."

Excise on Fuel
Herrera's reference to the tax take is on account of the fact that multiple imposts are levied on the commodity. One such charge is the excise tax, which was last amended five years ago.

In 2017, the government—among other revenue enhancing measures tied to the then SuperBond renegotiation—had increased the excise tax charged on fuel. Under The Customs and Excise Duties (Amendment) Act 2017, Premium gasoline's excise charge was increased to \$4.35 from \$4.04 per imperial gallon, and for regular to \$3.95 from the previous \$3.64 per imperial gallon.

Using data provided by the Statistical Institute of Belize (SIB), if just premium and regular are returned to their 2016 excise tax levels (a change of \$0.31), it is estimated that the government revenues could decline close \$6.4 million.

Similarly, if a full dollar is removed (thereby, bringing the per-imperial-gallon figures for premium and regular to \$3.35 and \$2.95, respectively), the revenues to government would decline by close to \$21 million. Note this estimate does not include Diesel and Kerosene.

MOHW Confirms Contract With Private Company Exist

Cont'd from pg. 1 at some point. But it is something that we are aware of, personally speaking, I really want to see some adjustment to that yes."

In fact, according to the minister he is also of the belief that the cost per PCR test for Belizeans is a bit too hefty and needs to be negotiated. In an effort to ease the blow on locals, Bernard confirmed that he will be meeting with the said company over the next couple of days in an effort to negotiate the terms of that contract and possibly to reduce the fees. While he indicated that he cannot preempt a precise figure the minister promised that he will have a formal answer by early next week.

But while Bernard now finds himself trying to wiggle out of a binding contract with that private party, he also told us that the Ministry of Health, at the time could not have taken up the responsibility of providing PCR testing at the border crossings because apart from being understaffed and overworked for the past two years their resources and personnel have been stretched thin across the country.

In closing, Bernard said that while they are cognizant of the concerns among Belizeans, in two weeks' time amendments will be made to ease the restrictions at the borders. The ministry will be recommending that only persons who have stayed more than three days in any of the neighboring countries undergo a mandatory PCR test, at their expense, upon their return back to the country.

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LIQUOR LICENSE NOTICE: Notice is hereby given that **Melva Elizeth Perez of Cotton Tree Village, Cayo District**, is applying for a **Restaurant Liquor License** to be operated at **Friends Kool Spot** situated in **Cotton Tree Village, Cayo District**, for the year **2022**. Under the Intoxication Liquors Act (Revised Edition) of 2000.

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Europe's Consumers are Sitting on 1 Trillion Euros in Pandemic Savings

By Thomas McGregor, Nujin Suphaphiphat and Frederik Toscani

In ordinary times, Europeans save around 12 percent of their income. But as families stayed at home and furlough schemes supported income during the pandemic, this savings rate increased sharply to almost 19 percent in 2020 and 2021.

As shown in this Chart of the Week, we estimate that households in the euro area saved nearly 1 trillion euros more in those two years than they would have done if the pandemic never happened. In other words, people saved a record sum—equivalent to around 8 percent of total euro-area gross domestic product.

Euro-area economic growth and potentially inflation would get a big boost if consumers were to spend part of their excess savings by temporarily reducing the rate at which they save to below that seen prior to the pandemic.

This would be consistent with the pattern after some previous pandemics and severe economic shocks, when households saved a much smaller proportion of their income than they had done historically.

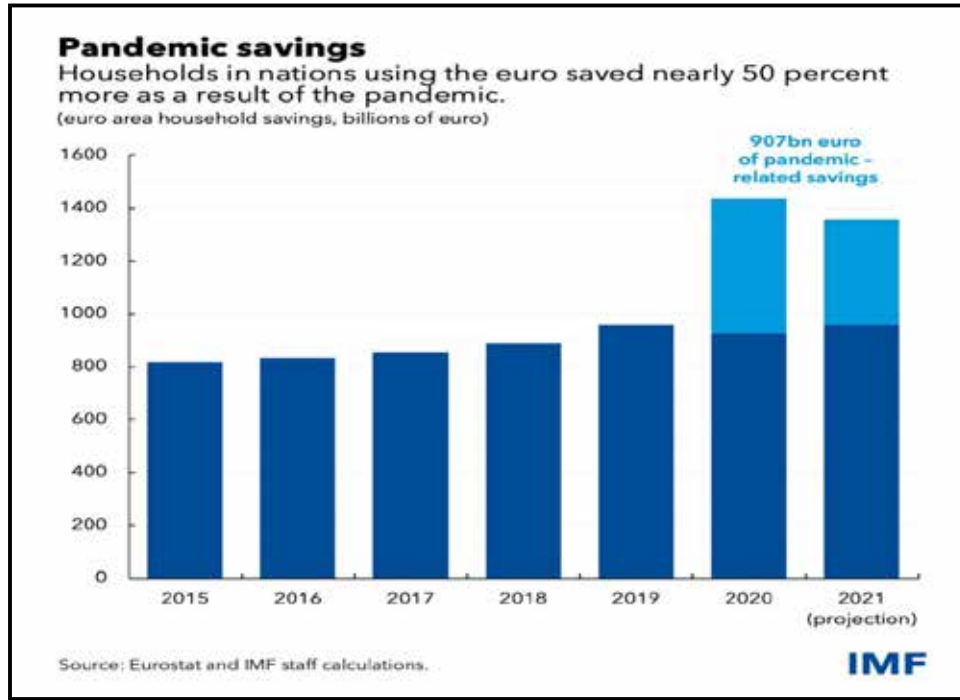
Even a moderate increase in spending—if households were to use about one-third of their excess savings for higher consumption over two years, say—would add 2.5 percentage points to GDP and up to 0.75 percentage point to inflation by the end of the second year.

Some unwinding but no spending spree

Half of the euro area's excess savings are in bank accounts, meaning they could, in principle, be easily accessed and spent once pandemic restrictions are lifted.

And most of the savings were forced, not precautionary as is more common during recessions when people worry about future income, suggesting that they may be spent soon.

Yet there are four reasons these savings may not be released into the real economy



in a hurry.

First, the sort of expenditure that households were forced to forgo during the pandemic is not easily replaced. Almost 80 percent of the total spending drop in 2020 stemmed from declines in hospitality and transport. Consumers are unlikely to ever make up for all the cancelled airline flights, hotel stays or restaurant meals.

Second, excess savings mostly accrued to those with high incomes. In France, for example, the richest 10 percent of households increased savings substantially even as some poorer families reduced savings, bank data show. High-earners typically save a larger share of their income and so are less likely to spend their savings.

Third, supply chain problems mean many may struggle to spend their savings—even if they wish to. Long delivery times and higher prices are making it harder for consumers to substitute what they would ordinarily have spent on services with increased spending on goods (though this pent-up demand could boost consumption of goods in the future).

And fourth, the spread of the Omicron variant means Europeans may be forced to save for a little longer.

Uncertainty surrounding the outlook for consumption remains exceptionally high. Policymakers should keep a close watch on savings rates

as they assess the strength of the recovery—and, if necessary, adjust monetary and

fiscal policy to ensure sustained and equitable growth and to preserve price stability.

Sir Manuel Esquivel Passes at age 82



Sir Manuel Esquivel

Cont'd from pg. 1

After the UDP won the February 2008 election, Esquivel was appointed by Prime Minister Dean Barrow as senior advisor to the UDP administration with the rank of minister on February 12, 2008. He was also appointed Knight Commander of the Order of St Michael and St George in 2010.

Esquivel is survived by his wife, Kathleen (Kathy), and three children—daughters Laura and Ruth and son David.

The Reporter extends its sympathies to the entire Esquivel family.

PUBLIC AUCTION SALE: SIGNATURE PROPERTY
Pepperland, Mile 60, Unitedville, Cayo District
BY ORDER of the Mortgagees, Messrs. Belize Social Security, Licensed Auctioneers Kevin A. Castillo and Christiana R. Castillo are selling ONLINE via belizepropertyauctions.com the below described property. Sale currently running and will expire on Wednesday 23rd February 2022 at 10:30 am:

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Society Hall	24	3561

(Being a VERY ATTRACTIVE AND UNIQUE residence, farm, leisure development: **Main Residence** - timber & zinc building with premium finishes on the interior 28 ft. x 65 ft. + extension 22 ft. x 10 ft. = 2 bedrooms + 2 bathrooms + living room + dining room + kitchen + gym [2,040 sq. ft.]; at entrance, **Concrete Building** 27 ft. x 54 ft. = apartment + bathroom + food preparation area + workshop/utility/garage [1,458 sq. ft.]; **Warehouse Building** 30 ft. x 30 ft. divided in two [900 sq. ft.]; **Semi Enclosed Building** 15 ft. x 44 ft. = entertainment area + large BBQ Pit; **Open Thatch House (Palapa)** 25 ft. diameter + perimeter concrete bench [490 sq. ft.]; **BBQ Shed** 10 ft. x 14 ft. = built in pit + bathroom [140 sq. ft.]; **Kenel**; **Two Car Garage** 20 ft. x 26 ft. all encompassing 2 acres. The main house situate beside a hill cut and dressed with stone walls + hilltop leveled with concrete slab 15 ft. x 80 ft.; An open space behind the main house has a large fire place with chimney stack + surrounding benches; All buildings are interconnected with concrete walkways beside extensive landscaping works; All roads on this property were improved with stone chippings or gravel providing all weather access; 1 acre developed as pasture and remaining portion developed as a farm with bearing fruit trees (teak, mango, citrus, breadfruit) together with adequate swim hole and road works to three (3) most beautiful hilltops with scenic views of the surrounding area. The entire 15.384 acres of land is fenced mostly with chain link. This very beautiful property situates near Mile 60 on the George Price Highway, Mount Hope, Unitedville, Cayo District, the freehold property of Mr. Howard Oldham (deceased) and Mrs. Wilana Oldham.)

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Borders Finally Reopen, Close to 3K Belizeans Cross in Two Days

By Michelle Sutherland

As had been agreed upon, on Monday, February 6th, 2022, Belize's land borders were officially opened for business, and, as was anticipated, there has been a steady increase in the number of Belizeans entering either Mexico or Guatemala.

In fact, according to the Minister Anthony Mahler, who is responsible for Border Management, on Monday, a total of 1,200 Belizeans crossed both border points, and then by Tuesday that number had increased to 1,500. According to Mahler, that number is expected to increase even more as the days' progress and as the measures is expected to become more relaxed.

Mahler also confirmed that personnel at both of the border crossing have been working in tandem with each other to en-

sure the smooth flow of people. While he maintains that there will be hiccups here and there, he predicts that as staff settles back into their routine the transition will become smoother.

When asked to comment on the staggering cost of mandatory PCR test for Belizeans who are returning back home after more than a 24hours stay in either Mexico or Guatemala, and whether arrangements will be made to ease that blow, Mahler responded, "Hopefully we can do away with all of these things pretty soon."

Mahler added, "We had an intense discussion in Cabinet yesterday with regards to moving forward and living with COVID. The Minister of Health and Wellness should bring a paper next week to Cabinet to lay out the protocols and require-

ments as we would need to continue to open up the economy."

Apart from being subjected to a PCR test while returning back to Belize after staying in Chetumal for more than 24 hours, Medical Chief of Staff at the Corozal Community Hospital Dr. Angela Gilharry said that prior to their departure at the Northern Border crossing, Belizeans will be required to full out a basic form that contains basic information.

That form will be provided to an immigration officer who will then attach the date, and official stamp as well as his or her signatures before you are free to go. If that form is lost

or misplaced, and cannot be presented upon return then the holder will be required to undergo a rapid test at their expense to be admitted back into the country.

Upon arrival back at the border crossing, travelers will have the option of entering by way of three different lanes.

The first lane is being assigned for the free flow of personnel traveling to the Freezone for work or business as well as cargo traffic. The second lane is dedicated to persons who are only planning to go into Chetumal for the day. At that particular point Ministry of Health staff will be present to review the departure documents that you will be

required to be presented upon return.

The third line is assigned for persons who have stayed more than 24 hours in Chetumal. Upon arrival back at that lane, persons will be required to park and check in at the health station where they will be required to undergo a rapid test at their expense.

Out at the Western Border, the requirements and measures remain the same. Only fully vaccinated persons will be able to cross. Persons who are only planning to spend less than 24 hours in Melchor will not be required to present a rapid test upon their return back into the country, however,

those that will be going for more than 24 hours will be required to do so. Belizeans are also being asked to fill out the health form which will also be signed, stamped, and dated by immigration officials. That document will then be utilized to determine whether a person will be required to undergo testing upon their return back into the country.

The only difference with that border crossing is that Guatemala is requiring foreign nationals to present a negative rapid test upon entry into their country. This is something that Belizeans have been complaining about since they say that the test range between BZ\$100 to BZ\$130.

WHO's ACT Accelerator program calls for USD\$23bn to end the pandemic

By Javan Flowers

The WHO's Director-General, speaking at the ACT-Accelerator advocacy event late this week, urged developed nations to do their part in fully funding the program and "ending the pandemic as a global health emergency."

WHO's Director-General Tedros Adhanom noted that the most significant barrier preventing the end of the pandemic as a global health emergency is "ensuring all people, in every coun-



WHO Director General Tedros Adhanom

try, have access to those tools."

It is with this issue in mind that the Access to COVID-19 Tools (ACT)

Accelerator program is imploring leaders of developed nations to meet the USD\$16 billion funding gap and USD\$6.8 billion in-country delivery costs to take vital steps towards saving lives, addressing the threat of Omicron and prevent even more dangerous variants from emerging.

Adhanom further explained that the Financing Framework of the program was derived based on countries' Gross Domestic Product, income per capita, and other factors; as well as acknowledging that while the required funds are significant – it will not surpass the economic toll imposed on economies across the globe by COVID-19.

Notably, the continent's total population rests at approximately 1.391 billion people. According to data made

available by Our World in Data, Africa's inoculation rate has remained at 16.5% for the past six months. This percentile represents only 225 million persons, leaving more than one billion people unvaccinated.

With all the necessary funds procured, the WHO detailed their immediate plan to get things going as soon as possible. Such primary undertakings entail (1) spearheading in-country rollouts to get vaccines into arms, creating a Pandemic Vaccine Pool of 600 million doses, supporting community engagement, and covering ancillary costs for donations; (2) purchasing 700 million tests and expanding sequencing capacity to deliver more effective 'test & treat' strategies; and (3) procure treatments for 120 million patients, as well as 433 million cubic meters of oxygen – all of which would help catapult the continents' vaccination rate to 70% by mid-2022.

Adhanom closed the event with much optimism. "We have a plan. We have the tools. We have hope. Now we need the resources to execute the plan everywhere, make the tools available everywhere, and make hope a reality - everywhere."



Minister Anthony Mahler



MINISTRY OF FINANCE, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, AND INVESTMENT

GAMING CONTROL BOARD NOTICE

The Gaming Control Board of Belize would like to remind all gaming machine licensees that their licenses will expire on 31st March 2022. Licensees wishing to renew their licenses are asked to submit their original application forms to the Ministry of Investment, situated at No.46 Nanche Street in Belmopan on or before Monday, February 28th, 2022. Application forms are available at the Ministry.

We can be contacted via:

Telephone: (501) 828-6704/ 828-9046

Email: belizeinvestment@invest.gov.bz

Facebook: Investment, Policy & Compliance Unit

UB to update BTB tourism master plan

By William Ysaguirre

The University of Belize (UB) will partner with the Belize Tourism Board to update the National Sustainable Tourism Master Plan to counter the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic and to exploit new opportunities which have opened in the travel

industry as a result of the pandemic.

BTB Director of Tourism Evan Tillett signed an agreement to this effect with UB's interim president Dr. Vincent Palacio at the BTB headquarters in Belize City on Wednesday morning, February 9, of the University of Belize.

The tourism master

plan has existed and been implemented by the BTB since 2012, but the pandemic has changed the entire landscape for the travel and hospitality sectors, that is must be updated, explained Minister of Tourism and Diaspora Relations Hon. Anthony Mahler. "Mediocrity is not an option, Belize must be ready to



BTB's Evan Tillett and UB's Vincent Palacio PhD sign agreement.

NPC Votes Faber Out as Leader

By Michelle Sutherland

The National Party Council (NPC) voted 49 to 48 to treat Hon. Patrick Faber's video statement as his formal resignation.

During the six-hour meeting, the UDP Chairman, relying on the Electronic Transaction Act No. 25 of 2021, advanced a position to the NPC to accept Faber's video statement which he had released a couple of weeks ago announcing that effective January 31st he would resign from both of his posts as Leader of the Opposition and Leader of the UDP.

Forty-nine members of the NPC agreed with Peyrefitte to accept the video, while 48 did not agree. While it was a very thin margin, the UDP chairman told the press that it was still enough to remove Faber as Party Leader and appoint Hugo Patt until the leadership convention is held on March 27th.

Peyrefitte explained, "There is an Electronic Act that came out that says if you want to do something you don't have to put it in what we will now term the old fashioned, signature type of thing. The new rules and ways of the world have made it available to you to make pronouncements or say certain things without necessarily or actually putting it in writing."

Peyrefitte continued, "So while the Hon. Patrick Faber is still a member of the House and was certainly a member when that Act was passed... I have to



UDP Chairman Michael Peyrefitte

believe that he [Faber] knew that [the video resignation] would be effective even though a physical letter was not actually sent to me or the secretariat. We have effectively accepted his resignation and we have decided to move on and set a date for a new leader of the party to be voted in."

Peyrefitte further explained that all other decisions that were taken by the Central Executive was overridden by NPC, which is the highest body within the party. Peyrefitte claimed that nobody forced Faber out of his seat, instead they simply accepted his very public resignation.

While sources say that Faber had logged into the NPC's meeting over the weekend, we were told that the emergency meeting was kickstarted after Faber had written Peyrefitte indicating that he would not resign as he had announced and that the only way that they could remove him was by way of a national convention. In that email, Faber had reminded Peyrefitte that while he had not tendered any official

resignation, he was made to understand that a letter of no confidence, signed by three of his fellow parliamentarians had been hand-delivered to the Governor-General, even before he had a chance to pen his resignation letter.

Faber went on to say that the action displayed over the past few days by his colleagues has indicated an over-eagerness on the part of those members and has left party faithfuls uneasy at the length some of their colleagues would go to wrestle power in the party. While Faber said that he had no intentions of remaining party leader beyond the national convention he claim that he will not sit idly by and "watch the democracy of the party be devoured by power-hungry vultures."

When asked about whether he is expecting any legal challenge by Faber and his supporters, Peyrefitte said that while it is within their right to do so if they wish, he will stick by the Electronic Transaction Act No. 25 of 2021.

compete globally," he avowed. He expressed the hope that in the near future, UB would have a Tourism and Hospitality Institute to offer professional standard certification for workers in the tourism industry, and lamented that presently only about 13 percent of high school graduates are going on to tertiary level education, another area he hopes to change.

The vision of UB's mission is for the national university to help develop a national agenda for development, noted UB's Chairman of the Board of Trustees Anthony Sylvestre

Jr, and he was humbled that the 'BTB had asked UB's help. It is UB's mission to guide national development, added interim President Palacio.

UB's team of in-house local experts will be working along with a small team from the University of Melbourne in Australia over the next 10 months to charter the new way forward, Mahler said. The pandemic was a train wreck for the travel sector, and new travel trends and market realities have emerged in the post pandemic world, which the BTB seeks

to take advantage of by revamping its current market strategy, for Belize to become more prominent with potential visitors, and gain greater market share.

To do this, the team will hold consultations with public, private and civil sector partners throughout the tourism industry

Chief Executive Officer Nicole Solano of the Tourism ministry, BTB's Director of Quality Management and Capacity Development Abil Castaneda, and UB's Vice Chair of the Board of Trustees Major Lloyd Jones also witnessed the signing.

NOTICE

TAKE NOTICE that in compliance with the Supreme Court of Belize Practice Direction No. 2 of 2011, notice is hereby given that Maurice Coleman of Hattieville, Belize District, Belize has commenced Action 30 of 2021 seeking, under the Law of Property Act Chapter 190 of the Laws of Belize, Revised Edition, 2011, a Declaration of Title in the Land referred to in schedule A below on the ground of long continuous and undisturbed possession;

AND THAT any person objecting to the application by Maurice Coleman as herein stated, must file notice and reason for such objection at the Supreme Court Registry within 45 days of the date of the second publication of this Notice or attend Court on the 5th day of April 2022 at 9:30 am, the date of the 1st hearing of the application.

SCHEDULE A

All that piece and parcel of land situate on the Western side of Northern Lagoon, Manatee, Belize District, Belize, being Block 22, Grant 93 of 1881 comprising of 4.79 acres and being more particularly delineated and described as shown on Entry No. 7228 Register 25, by licensed Land Surveyor, C. W. Arnold lodged at the Office of the Commissioner of Lands and Surveys, Belmopan, Cayo District, TOGETHER with all buildings and erections thereon.

Dated the 2nd day of February 2022

Velda Flowers
VELDA M. FLOWERS & ASSOCIATES
Attorneys-at-law for the Applicant

The court office is at Supreme Court Registry, Regent Street, Belize City, Belize, Telephone No. 227-7377, Fax No. 227-0181. The office is opened between 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. Monday to Friday except on public and bank holidays.

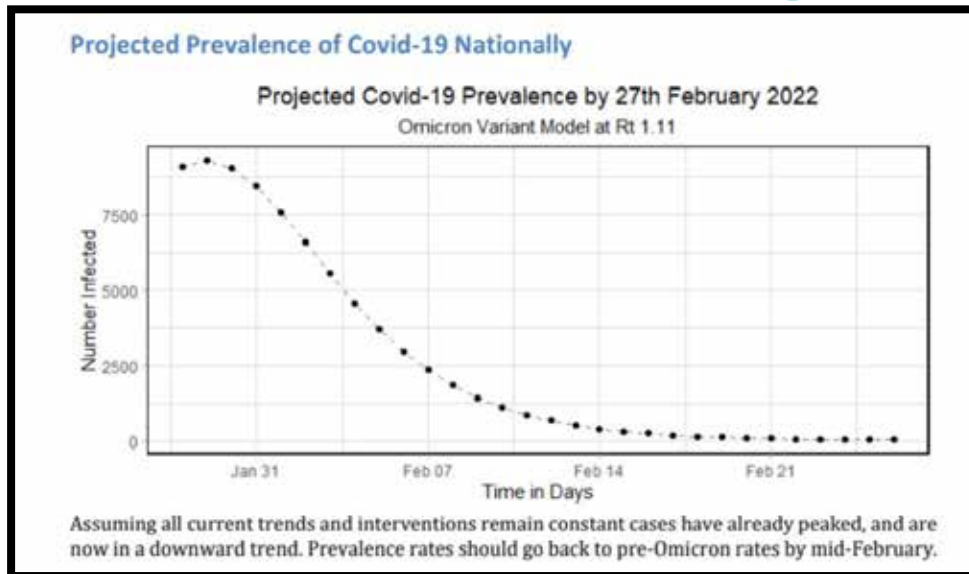
Epidemiologist Predict Pre Omicron Numbers by Ending of the Month

By Michelle Sutherland

Epidemiologists at the Ministry of Health and Wellness who have been tracking COVID infections over the past few months are hoping that if all factors remain in place the country might be able to revert back to pre-Omicron levels by the end of this month.

It is a bold prediction, but one that Dr. Russell Manzanero, medical epidemiologist, within the Ministry of Health and Wellness (MOHW), says is based on data and goes right in line with what was being predicted from the start.

Manzanero said that as had been predicted several weeks ago, the country 4th wave triggered by the highly contagious Omicron variant, peaked in the earlier parts of January before leveling off



and the starting on a downward trend. During that peak, the country's daily positivity rate spiraled to as high as 30%. The good news is that over the weekend, for the first time in several weeks, the positivity rate fell to 20%.

Those numbers are expected to fall even further, revert back to pre-Omicron numbers by the end of this month.

On Wednesday, Manzanero, via a

virtual conference, presented a graph that epidemiologist at the ministry had been working on. He explained, "In regards to the model and what you are seeing there, it is pretty much saying that by February or the end of February you should be seeing a downward trend of cases. However, I must say that models, in themselves, can change, and particularly, in the nature of Omicron the situation

is very fluid and we really cannot develop a true module to say that this is what is going to happen because Omicron is spreading so fast and the transmission rate is so high. If we continue with the public health measures, then we can continue to see numbers decreasing."

Manzanero, while admitting that the Omicron variant is

not as severe as the previous variant, noted that due to its high rate of transmission, they are aware that the infections can double in just a matter of days. Therefore, the possibility of reaching pre-Omicron numbers will depend very heavily on the country's vaccination coverage, human behaviour, and adherence to the public health measures as well as the reopening of borders. Manzanero stressed that that all this can change if the public reverts back to being too lax.

When questioned about what to expect in the next few weeks and if he thinks that we are on our way to getting over the 4th wave, Manzanero responded, "To say that you are over a wave basically is to say

that you are reporting no cases over a period of time. We are not at that, we have never been there at any point."

Manzanero added, "We have been seeing an increase in cases over a period of time and that is the way how this will be. Omicron will not be the last variant; we will see others. This is the nature of the virus; it adapts and tries to establish itself within the population and so this is the way that it is going to go."

On Tuesday, February 8th, MOHW reported 337 confirmed cases of the virus, which translated into a 16.8% positivity rate for the country. However, as had been reiterated before Manzanero said that the ministry's goal was to get that number to below 5%.

Boosters for Kid

By Michelle Sutherland

The Ministry of Health and Wellness (MOHW) announced Tuesday the rollout of COVID-19 booster shots for children aged 12 to 17.

The measure is an effort to lessen the spread of the virus in schools across the country.

The ministry informed that they were partnering along with the Ministry of Education to offer boosters to those in the specified age range, who have gotten their second dose of the vaccine three months ago.

Both ministries will be partnering to ensure that the proper arrangements are made to facilitate easy access to the booster doses, through the various schools. Children aged 12 to 17 years, who are not attending school, can get vaccinated at the nearest schools and at scheduled times that will be agreed upon and shared shortly by both ministries.

Prior to the announcement, MOHW epidemiologist Dr. Russell Manzanero said that the concern for

health officials at this time is the population of children that are not eligible for vaccines, such as those at the primary school level. According to Manzanero, while there are risks associated with sending students to school at this time, those who are not eligible for the vaccines face a greater risk than those who are at the secondary level and who have access to the vaccines.


"We are talking about our students who are at the secondary level who are at greater risk. Secondary level students already have some level of protection and they are able to access it, and if they haven't accessed that then they should," reiterated Manzanero.

Manzanero also touched on the need for not only the Ministry of Health but also the Ministry of Education to do their part in keeping school children safe. He noted the need for schools to ensure that the public health measures, social distancing, and other protocols are enforced in the school setting. Something which he

says will vary from school to school depending on various factors.

In terms of infections within the school setting, Manzanero said that they haven't had any reports of clusters within any of the schools that are open for hybrid learning. What he did note was that there are persons who are testing positive outside of the classroom setting and taking the virus with them into the school setting.

Manzanero noted, "What we are doing is working along with the Ministry of Education and we do know that many of them have in place their SOP (Standard Operating Procedures) and that was done in collaboration with our surveillance teams throughout the country so that is engaged and activated. If there is a need to continue, then we will do that. I mean it's a lot on the schools, the responsibility on the schools and the teachers, it is a lot, when you are sending your kids to school, it is a risk. There is a risk there."



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Saint Catherine Academy, a Catholic all-girls high school sponsored by the Sisters of Mercy is seeking qualified and dedicated professionals to join its dynamic team of educators. Opportunity for employment exists in the following areas:

Post: Permanent Faculty:

- Biology/ Integrated Science/General Science Teacher

Duties:
The successful applicants will be familiar with and committed to the mission of St. Catherine Academy and the values of Mercy Secondary Education.

Responsibilities include teaching, homeroom duties, participation in school activities, fundraising, and extracurricular service to the school.

Minimum Qualifications:
Candidates with a Bachelor's degree and teaching experience are especially encouraged to apply.
Must possess a valid teacher's license.

Application package must include application letter along with copies of relevant transcripts, 2 letters of references, and valid teaching license.

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- Groundskeeper/ Maintenance Personnel

Required Skills: Carpentry, Electrical, Plumbing and Masonry

Applicant must be willing to work flexible hours and on weekends if necessary

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Application package must include application letter, 2 character references, and a valid police record.

Remuneration: In accordance with the Government of Belize Pay scale.

Deadline: The deadline for applications is February 18, 2022. Packages may be addressed to

The Principal
Saint Catherine Academy
6 Hutson Street
Belize City, Belize
or
Email: administration@sca.edu.bz

A MERCY CENTER OF EXCELLENCE AND INNOVATION



Belize no closer to lifting curfew and mask mandate

By Michelle Sutherland



Even as projections compiled by epidemiologists at the Ministry of Health and Wellness (MOHW) project a downward trend of COVID-19 infections, with the possibility of reaching pre-Omicron levels by the end of the month, health officials say that that will be totally dependent on the curfew and health measures to stay intact for the time being.

Epidemiologist Dr. Russell Manzanero told reporters this week, "In regards to the curfew that is definitely something that we take into consideration. With a curfew in place and limited mobility, it does create some kind of barrier. Individuals seem to adhere at some points. However... there is still that risk there of spreading. That is why the public health measures have to go along with these curfews. So we really can't just say curfew and let that happen, because it tends to go along with certain measures."

But even as the World Health Organization (WHO) had said this week that some countries can now consider carefully relaxing the rules if they have high immunity rates, or their health care systems are strong and the epidemiological trends are going in the right direction, and countries such as the United States, Europe, and the United Kingdom are taking the lead

in lifting their mask mandates in some states, Manzanero said that we are simply not there yet.

He pointed to the fact that these countries are able to ease their restrictions because of the fact that their vaccination rate is higher than ours. Manzanero then went on to stress the need for Belize to increase its vaccination coverage so that we can also follow suit and ease those restrictions, as we go along.

For the time being, "We are hoping that the vaccination uptick is still there and we need to encourage people to still do it. At this point we are seeing Omicron affecting everybody, at any age group, we are seeing instances where you can become infected with omicron more than once even if you are vaccinated. So vaccination is a form of prevention for you to avoid getting into the hospital, so these are the things that need to be in place," reiterated Manzanero.

While flattening case counts in countries across the world where Omicron had first peaked represents what could be a turning point in a nearly two-year pandemic, locally

Manzanero said that health officials remain stumped as to what to expect next. What they do know, and based on lessons learned from the ongoing pandemic is that preparations are key, because they are sure that Omicron will not be the last variant to come our way.

Witness Protection Bill to help boost low conviction rate

By Javan Flowers

The Witness Protection Bill, which was recently tabled at the House of Representatives, aims to help boost Belize's notoriously low conviction rate, by ensuring that eye witnesses are protected.

Within our nation's criminal justice system, there exist significant gaps as eyewitnesses often refuse to come forward because they fear for their lives. As a consequence of this, prosecutors fail to succeed in their cases as there is insufficient evidence to secure convictions.

Attorney General Hon. Magali Marin



Young S.C, in speaking with the press, expressed her confidence that this bill will effectively address the issue. "This [bill] seeks to provide the prosecution with options to be able to call witnesses who may be fearful of coming forward or who have been intimidated from testifying in the trial of a criminal matter," said Young.

Sections 4(1)(a) and (b) of the Bill reads, "The Chief Magistrate may grant an Investigation Anonymity Order, concerning a specified person, prohibiting the disclosure of information – (a) that identifies the speci-

fied person as a person who is or was able or willing to assist a specified criminal investigation; or (b) that might enable the specified person to be identified as such a person."

Young also highlighted the guardrails formed to ensure that information is never intentionally or unintentionally disclosed.

The Bill states that a "person who discloses information in contravention of an Investigation Anonymity Order commits an offense and is liable on summary conviction to a fine of twenty thousand dollars or imprisonment for four years or to both."

	<p>Headquarters British Army Training Support Unit Belize Price Barracks, British Forces Post Office 12</p> <p>Telephone 00 501 225 2209 Fax 00 501 225 2362 E-mail david.hannan347@mod.gov.uk</p>			
Our Reference: RC/001/22				
<table style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 60%;">Notice to General Public</td> <td style="text-align: right;">Date: 3 Feb 22</td> </tr> </table>			Notice to General Public	Date: 3 Feb 22
Notice to General Public	Date: 3 Feb 22			
<p>Dear Sir/Madam</p> <p>Prior warning is to be given to the general public for training exercise taking place, by the British Army, in the following Training Areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. 1963 Line b. Chiquibul <p>The training will take place during the period 08 Feb 22 – 12 Mar 22 with Live ammunition being used, along with military vehicles.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Note LIVE Firing will be conducted at 1963 Line Training Estate – Sun 20 Feb until Tues 8 Mar Nov 22. <p>The general public should avoid the areas listed above and be aware of the presence of high numbers of British soldiers on the ground carrying weapons. At times loud explosions may be heard along with gunfire, this is normal in respect to the training being conducted.</p> <p>Should any member of the general public wish to enter the areas listed above they are to be advised all roads are safe unless marked with a red lamp at night or a red flag during the day light hours. British troops will also operate checkpoints along the roads entering danger areas and can give advice to areas of training activity.</p> <p>All enquires relating to British Forces training in Belize should be directed to RANGE CONTROL, BATSUB on 225 2209.</p> <p>Your continued support to BATSUB is vital to the British Army and its success in operations around the world.</p> <p>Yours faithfully</p> <p>D Hannan Maj Training Safety Officer for Commander BATSUB</p>				

The Reporter



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Faber's Fiancée emerge to call him 'hero'

By Michelle Sutherland

In perhaps one of the most shocking turn of events, Dr. Shanikka Arnold, who is the fiancée of former embattle UDP Leader, Patrick Faber has emerged to detail her fight with Borderline Personality Disorder (BPD) and referring to him as a victim in all that has ensued so far.

Arnold made the announcement via a personal Facebook post, last Friday where she admitted to being diagnosed with BPD, approximately three years ago, but made a decision to keep it private for fear of being subjected to the stigma associated with mental health and the impact that it could pose to her career as a medical professional.

Dr. Arnold characterized BPD as emotional dysregulation, impulsivity, and difficulty with interpersonal relationships and said that her BPD predisposes her to extreme anger



Dr. Shanikka Arnold discusses her battle with mental health.

and violence often directed toward and limited to those closest to her. "After an episode, I quickly enter a phase of dissociation which causes a disconnection between my memories, feelings, behaviors, and perception of self."

It is under this microscope that Dr. Arnold says that she now finds herself without any mental recollection of how it all unfolded but said that the details that were disclosed to the public were less than accurate in the least.

"I am a victim of my BPD; I am a victim of my emotion; and my tendency to violent outbursts. But if I am going to be completely candid and honest, so is Patrick. He is not and has never been an instigator of violence. He,

on that faithless, night was a man burnt out from loving someone with a mental illness."

Arnold summed up the storm of events that have transpired so far because of Faber's decision to be with her despite knowing of her mental health condition. Something which she says he attempted to calm, but in return suffered for doing so.

"When my anger surfaced he had the very difficult job of figuring out how to control his and mine and he did well for a long time. He has saved me from unliving myself more often than I wish to admit. He has even in a last-ditch effort to save me from further criticism, stigma, discrimination, and feared professional repercussions; resigned from positions we have both fought tooth and nail to achieve. He is facing the need to rebuild his career in an attempt to save me from having to rebuild mine," said

Arnold.

She then went on to say that the events of the past few days have thrust her directly into one of her greatest BDP fear and that is having driven away Faber and shattering his reputation and career. Arnold further claimed if Faber was ever guilty of any crime it was in trying to be her hero and a mental health advocate on her behalf. She also took a swing at those in the public, and the media, who chastised Faber for "revictimizing" her on a live show. She claimed that she did not feel that she was revictimized by Faber at any point because it was his story as much as it was hers to tell because they had both been living in it together.

She then ended by apologizing to the UDP for having Faber take the fall for something that she says was her fault. To the public, she echoed the need to treat mental illness with the respect it deserves.

EU grants Cayo villages \$4.6 million for Climate resilience

By William Ysaguirre

The villages of the Cayo district which are host to migrant communities will benefit from a \$4.6 million grant from the European Union, which will fund a one-year project to help migrants become productive members of their host communities and resilient to Climate Change impacts

The United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) will manage the project in partnership with the Ministry of Sustainable Development, Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management and the International Organization for Migration (IOM). Minister of Sustainable Development Hon. Orlando Habet signed the grant agreement with the EU in a launch ceremony in Santa Familia Village, Cayo district, last Wednesday, February 2

The project aims to help improve the livelihoods and quality of life of migrants who have settled in the western villages of Belize, to bolster their resilience and help them

develop their communities sustainably, so they will no longer be displaced.

To alleviate the flooding which affects close to 50 households in Billy White Village every year, the project will build three miles of drains, with 10 culverts. The Los Tambos community primary school also serves as a hurricane shelter to host up to 100 persons so a mile of drains with two culverts will be built there to prevent flooding.

Some 1,550 displaced persons living in four settlements will benefit from a fire bowser with complete firefighting gear will be provided to equip them to fight the threat of forest fires in the pine savannahs which surround their communities. The project will also train a total of 90 persons in firefighting, search and rescue, fire management and disaster risk management to establish emergency response brigades in six communities and to ensure sustainability.

Close on 500 of the most vulnerable and



EU rep Aniceto Rodriguez Ruiz signs agreement with Minister Orlando Habet.

displaced persons who include women, children, senior citizens, and the poor will also be provided with access to hurricane shelters in their communities. The two primary schools in Los Tambos and Billy White Village will be upgraded so they can be used as hurricane shelters during natural disasters, and three new hurricane shelters will also be built in the villages of Duck Run 1, Duck Run 3 and Santa Familia.

The water systems in Billy White, Los Tambos and Santa Familia

villages will also be upgraded to meet Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Standards (WASH) for the 3,350 people who live in these communities. Health services will be improved for the 5,180 people who live in the neighboring communities of Billy White, Duck Run I, Duck Run II, Duck Run III, and Los Tambos, by a polyclinic to be built in Duck Run I. It will be equipped with basic furniture, medical equipment and supplies. This will benefit these displaced persons, especially wom-

en, children and elders, who have had to make do with limited access to health services.

The project successfully won €2 million Euros in funding from the "Lives in Dignity" Grant Facility, from among more than 70 project proposals which were submitted to the grant facility last year. It is also in line with "Plan Belize", Belize's migration policy, and the objectives of the Global Compact for safe, orderly and regular migration (GCM), and with the United Nations' Sustainable

Development Goals (SDGs), especially those which relate to Climate Change impacts.

The expected benefits of the project will also contribute to Belize's 2030 Agenda for sustainable development and the UN principle of "Leaving No One Behind." The Government of Belize and IOM intend for this project to be a pilot, which can be scaled up to address migration, climate change and community stabilization in other communities across Belize.

Museum of Belize finally reopens

By Javan Flowers

After celebrating Aits 20th anniversary, the Museum of Belize finally reopened its doors to the public this week after more than 18 months.

Speaking on Channel 5's Open Your Eyes, interim President of NICH Marilyn Young explained the issues that the COVID-19 induced closure imposed on the Museum's overall maintenance. "As a new board, when we visited the museum, we were completely shocked as to how the museum looked and appalled by the mold-covered conditions that they [the staff] were working in."

Young continued by highlighting other issues that could jeopardize and ruin the artworks themselves



The Museum of Belize reopens after being closed for almost 18 months.

"When it's raining, they have to move things from one side of the room to the other side, and A/C was not functioning."

Also speaking with the hosts was the Curator of the Museum of Belize, Ilona Smiling, who

added, "Due to some of the damage that we had with the roof, we had to remove most of the objects from upstairs and put them into safekeeping." Smiling continued by emphasizing that to preserve and manage the integrity

and wellbeing of each artifact and art piece, the museum's atmosphere needs to be kept pristine, as there's the risk of just about anything ruining them from moisture to excessive temperatures.

The interim President noted that with the assistance of The Minister of Education, Culture, Science, and

Technology Fonseca and others, the Museum was able to source the necessary funds to provide urgent roof, exterior, and interior -- renovations, repairs, and upgrades which totaled approximately \$100,000.

With these structural issues now resolved, the Museum of Belize reopened its doors and unveiled a brand-new

exhibit made entirely by Punta Rock Legend Pen Cayetano.

Cayetano's collection, comprised of 87 paintings, was made between 1992 – 2010 while he resided in Germany. The Museum's Curator explained that the exhibit was compartmentalized into themes. For instance, Cayetano's artwork paints a lot of cultural and traditional scenery, one of which is the "cassava making" detailed within the painting is the various processes in cassava making. So there is an entire gallery dedicated to cassava making.

Due to COVID-19 regulations, the number of visitors allowed has been significantly slashed to no more than 50 persons at any given time. Therefore, Belizeans and tourists are urged to schedule bookings in advance, especially if your party exceeds five individuals.

OIRSA donates 800 hive beetle traps to Ministry of Agriculture

By Javan Flowers

The Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security, and Enterprise earlier in the week received a donation of 800 hive beetle traps valued at US\$3,637 from the International Regional Organization for Agricultural Health (OIRSA).

This donation was made to assist bee farmers countrywide who are being affected by the small hive beetle, a scavenger and parasite of honeybee colonies.

According to research conducted by Agriculture Victoria, an institution that works in partnership with farmers, industries, communities, and international government agencies, these parasites affect the health of honeybee colonies in numerous ways. When the beetle's larvae are laid, they burrow and tunnel through the honeybee's comb, piercing and damaging the wax comb, and cell caps. Once inside, the larvae consume the hive's honey, pollen, and live honeybee brood eggs.



Ministry received donation worth US\$3,637

The parasite also defecates in the honey, causing it to ferment, froth, and weep from the cells. The fermenting honey has an odor of decaying oranges. A combination of fermenting honey, secretions, and excrement result in the slime on the combs and other components in the hive. Contaminated honey is unsuitable for sale and unacceptable to bees as bee food.

The beetle, *Aethina tumida*, is native to Africa and was introduced to Belize in 2016, mainly by the commercial movement

of bees. Both adult and larval beetles feed on larvae, pollen, honey, and bee brood. The adult female lays her eggs in the hive. The larvae hatch and feed on broods, pollen and honey, then leave the hive to pupate in the soil, where the adults hatch, then fly to look for new hives.

The handing over was conducted by OIRSA country representative Fermin Blanco and was received by Minister of Agriculture, Food Security, and Enterprise Hon. Jose Abelardo Mai.

Weh Wi Ga Fi Seh

Kip sayf fahn di vairoso!
Kip op yu helt.

Rait soh ... Janiweri Free Paypa Bon!

1. Di skoolpikni dehn noa seh dat dehn free paypa bon wen dehn staat si mesij bowt "Bak tu Skool."
2. Koroanavairoso mi-gi lat a wi free paypa fi stay weh fahn skool (nat dat wi mi waahn!), bot kohn 2022, free paypa bon. Minischri seh wi hafu laan fi liv wid disya vairoso weh luk laik ih wahn deh rong fareva!
3. Wans Sondesh aftanoon lait staat fayd weh, mee noa seh dat mi lee weeken free paypa bon.
4. Eesta haliday ga gud gud weda, ahn mee ahn mi famili goh da key er rivasaaid (wen no koroanavairoso!). Bot di minit Eesta Mondeh shoa op, wi noa seh wi free paypa bon.

Yes, da chroo Janiweri free paypa bon. Dis meen Janiweri don (er soon don). Da tainh fi chek if yu mi du evriting yu mi waahn du fu Janiweri 2022. Er, if yu mikays now, yu ku stil finish op sohnting yu mi waahn finish op bifo Janiweri 31 set een. Er, maybi yu hafu wach yu lis a ting dehn ahn disaaid wich wan a dehn yu waahn kehr faawad tu Febiweri. Wateva yu du, memba seh dat yoo ga di powa fi put yu main tu weh yu waahn du. Pahn tap: Noh beet op pahn yuself. **Az di layt Mista Dean Lindo doz laik seh:** "Toch di braidl lait ahn wach di feel." Mee tek dis fi meen dat wi shuda plan gud, widowtn no lat a jraama; lish ahn luk pahn weh di hapm bifo wi rosh een wid wi oan too-sens!

Silvaana Udz, Ed.D. da fahn Bileez. If yu waahn tel shee bowt sohnting speshal fu put eena dis Kriol aatiki, eemayl: sudz142@gmail.com Vizit: www.nationalkriolcouncil.org

No Excuses

“An Apology is Offered”

Sedi Elrington

This writer was stopped on Tuesday morning, February 8, by a female Police Sergeant in front of the police substation on Mahogany Street. She and a constable, both of Latin extraction, were monitoring the traffic. She politely asked to see my driver's license. I told her that I did not have it on me. She then asked for my vehicle registration papers. I told her that I did not have it on me either. She then informed me that she would be issuing me with two tickets. She instructed me to park my Volkswagen beetle to the side of the street and invited me into the police substation where she began preparing the tickets. By that time I was struggling to maintain my cool, and not to sin my soul! With all the stresses of daily life in today's Belize, the last thing one needs is to be hassled by the police over traffic matters.

While watching her preparing the tickets I casually checked my pants pockets again, and discovered that I did have my driver's license with me. I took it out and gave it to her. It is valid up to the year 2024. Simultaneously I recalled that I did have some vehicle papers in a pouch in the beetle. With her permission, I went to the vehicle, retrieved them and saw that they were the registration documents. I gave them to her.

It was the first time in more than fifty years of driving that I had been asked to provide those two documents to a police officer. I was genuinely not aware

that I was required by law to have them in my possession at all times. And, she obviously did not think that she was obliged to show me the law which authorized her to demand that I produce them to her. We therefore had a brief, heated exchange of words, after which she kindly allowed me to leave the station unticketed. Clearly I was at fault for being ignorant of the law. Ignorance of the law is no excuse!

As I pondered upon that incident after reaching my destination which was immediately behind the said substation, not two minutes away, I recalled the various incidents in the United States in which drivers were killed by the police over simple traffic incidents. And I mused whether the day was fast approaching when similar incidents would be occurring in my beloved Belize. In the United States because of institutional racism, many traffic legislations were passed deliberately to facilitate the stopping of blacks and other minorities by the police with impunity. That is their main purpose.

In this day and age it is difficult to appreciate why Belize should be mandating that driver's license and vehicle registration documents be kept on one's person or in one's vehicle at all times. What is the purpose for that requirement? In this computer age all that information is available to the authorities simply with the touch of a button.

At a time like this when our country is experiencing an epidemic of murder and other

violent crimes, and when planes laden with poisonous cocaine are landing seemingly everywhere in the country it is incomprehensible that our government can afford to be deploying police officers with as high a rank as Sergeant, to be monitoring the traffic on our streets. In general our police officers are seriously undertrained, overworked and poorly paid. Giving them license to stop all motorists indiscriminately is tantamount to giving them license to shake down all motorists, a habit which is now entrenched in our society.

The most serious crisis now facing our country is gang related. It is evident that our combined security forces are virtually impotent against the criminal elements. Should not every single member of the police force be deployed at this time in trying to prevent the violence and mayhem being perpetrated by the criminals, and in trying to apprehend them? Indeed, even as this article is being penned another teenager is being shot to death in broad daylight in Belize City.

The Belize City Council has a very vigilant, competent and professional team of traffic officers. Given the cash strapped status of both Central Government and the City Council there can be no possible justification for having two different sets of officers doing the identical job in small compact Belize City. It makes no sense for so doing. Incidentally, being stopped by City Council traffic wardens, is invariably, much less

stressful than being stopped by the police.

Given that this writer is not the only driver who is ignorant of the law requiring that both driver's license and vehicle registration documents be kept on one's person or in the motor vehicle at all times, it would certainly be most helpful if the authorities responsible for road traffic would embark on a sustained national campaign to educate the public about these and other obligations of drivers.

Public authorities should take care that the mandates they impose upon the citizenry are really essential and, that the benefits those mandates confer upon the citizens and the society outweigh the burdens. Life is too stressful for citizens to be saddled with mandates of dubious public benefit and which largely conduce to the corrupting of public officials.

Had I known the traffic laws I certainly would not have taxed the Sergeant as much as I did. No one can know all the laws hence the need for continuous public education.

Road traffic accidents and fatalities are rapidly increasing nationwide. With the enhancement of our national highways and the exponential increase of traffic on the highway resulting from increased tourism and industrial activities, including the transportation of sugar from north and west to the south, the likelihood is that there will be many more traffic incidences and fatalities.

Now would therefore seem to be a most opportune time for the commencement of a massive national education campaign to educate drivers, cyclists and pedestrians as to their roles and responsibilities when using the roads.

Such a campaign, if sustained, would certainly go a long way to prevent traffic accidents and save lives. Also such a campaign is one which both the private sector and the tourism industry should be happy to

support financially.

It was customary in the colonial days, at the beginning of each school year, for traffic officers to visit primary schools across the country to educate children on how to deport themselves when using the road and when alighting from buses and other motor vehicles on the highway. Serious thought should be given to the resumption of those lessons. The traffic situation is much more dangerous today than

tire population. Public officers need to be ever mindful that they can only properly demand of the citizen those things they are duly authorized by law to demand of him. And, that they should be prepared to share with the citizen their warrant of authority when requested so to do. Citizens also need to be educated to cooperate and comply fully with requests of duly authorized persons once they are shown proof that the request is legitimate and lawful. Public authorities should take care that the mandates they impose upon the citizenry are really essential and, that the benefits those mandates confer upon the citizens and the society outweigh the burdens. Life is too stressful for citizens to be saddled with mandates of dubious public benefit and which largely conduce to the corrupting of public officials.

Happily the Sergeant's behaviour was commendably respectful and professional. She is obviously very talented. Her services could be put to much better use in fighting crime and apprehending criminals which are unquestionably priorities in our country today.

This writer's own behaviour in dealing with the Sergeant could have been greatly enhanced with a good dose of humility! In the circumstances an apology for the undue stress to which she was subjected simply for doing her job earnestly and justly is in order. That apology is now being sincerely and freely and publicly offered.

Disclaimer: the opinions expressed by our columnists are theirs alone, and are not necessarily reflective of the newspaper's stance on the issues touched. We believe it is critical that our columnists be allowed freedom to generate discussion through their expressions on any number of topics.

NOTICE OF COMMENCED DISSOLUTION

Notice is hereby given to all interested parties that the company

Zelda Management Corp.

(“the Company”) incorporated under the IBC Act of Belize commenced dissolution on the 03rd day of February 2022; and Himtee Devi Harpal of Seneque Road, Plaines des Roche, Riviere du Rempart, Mauritius, is the Liquidator of the Company, and any claims against the Company should be forwarded to the Liquidator by 30 days from commencement.

**Alpha Consulting (Belize) Ltd.
Registered Agent**

PUBLIC AUCTION SALE

LICENSED AND CERTIFIED AUCTIONEER, SHELDON N. C. ARNOLD
WILL SELL THE FOLLOWING PROPERTIES WITH RESERVE PRICES.

CAYO DISTRICT PROPERTIES - TO BE AUCTIONED AT HUMMINGBIRD FURNISHINGS COMPOUND BELMOPAN CITY ON TUESDAY FEBRUARY 15TH, 2022 AT 11:00AM.



Location: Block - 24, Parcel - 3760 Being Registration Section - Society Hall, Cayo District
Description: land containing 8730 sqft. Vacant Lot being the freehold property of Larry R Leslie.



Location: Block: 1, Lot No. 92 containing 1184.397 Sq. Yds. situate in St. Margaret's Village, Cayo District.
Description: The property is a concrete bungalow occupied as a single family residence. It comprises of three bedroom, one bathroom and kitchen, living and dining area, and a laundry room being the Freehold Property of Rueben A. Parham.

ORANGE WALK PROPERTIES- TO BE AUCTIONED AT HUMMINGBIRD FURNISHINGS COMPOUND BELMOPAN CITY ON TUESDAY FEBRUARY 15TH, 2022 AT 11:00AM.



Location: Block 4, Parcel 625/1, Registration Section, Guinea Grass, Orange Walk District.
Description: All that piece or parcel of land containing 1023.519 SQM. Includes 1 concrete family home with 4 bedrooms, 1 bathroom, living, dining, kitchen and laundry rooms, being the Leasehold property of David R. Perrera and Maria G. Magana.



Location: Block 1, Parcel 126, Registration Section, Douglas Village, Orange Walk District.
Description: A concrete detached family home with 2 bedrooms, 1 bathroom, small front porch, fully fenced, with living, dining and kitchen being the freehold property of Roman F Nicholson.



COROZAL PROPERTIES- - TO BE AUCTIONED AT HUMMINGBIRD FURNISHINGS COMPOUND BELMOPAN CITY ON TUESDAY FEBRUARY 15TH, 2022 AT 11:00AM.



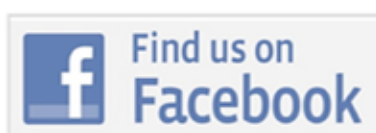
Location: Block 1, Parcel 715, Registration Section-Sarteneja Village, Corozal District.
Description: A concrete detached family home with 2 bedrooms, 1 bathroom, back porch, living and kitchen rooms, fenced being the freehold property of Graciliano Rivero.



Location: Block - 3, Parcel - 820, Registration Section - Sarteneja Village, Corozal District.
Description: All that piece or parcel of land containing 871.0 S.M. A concrete family home consisting of 3 bedrooms, 1 bathroom, 2 entrance, living, dining, kitchen rooms being the freehold property of Hermina and Alejandro Gongora.



Sheldon N.C. Arnold
P.O. BOX 666, Belmopan
Cell # 615-8308 or 624-5200
Email: info@arnoldenterprise.com
Website: www.arnoldenterprise.com
Terms - Cash 10% Deposit, Balance in 14 days
Financing Available, Call Ahead For Details



CBD US\$1.5 trade programme benefits Belize



CDB President Dr. Hyginus "Gene" Leon

By William Ysaguirre

Belize will benefit from a US\$ 1.5 million trade programme launched by the Caribbean Development Bank this week along with the Economic Partnership Agreement financed by the European Union and the Standby Facility of the Common Single Market Economy (CSME).

The programme to strengthen trade was top of the agenda for CDB President Dr Gene Leon, who led a high-level mission on a week-long visit to Belize on Monday, February 7. The CDB delegation also held a series of meetings with a cross section of public- and private-

sector interests to discuss innovative financing, advancing agriculture and building economic and climate resilience, among other issues.

The team also hosted talks with the Prime Minister and the Cabinet, the Governor of the Belize Central Bank, the Belize Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and the Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre in Belmopan, among others. They also conducted field visits to ongoing and completed projects in infrastructure, health, climate change, education and trade.

The Government and people of Belize have enjoyed a longstanding relationship with

the CDB, and the mission built on this solid foundation to identify new opportunities and partnerships, by which the CDB might help Belize and advance the country's development and growth agenda.

The CDB delegation included CDB Vice-President of Operations - Isaac Solomon, Director of Projects Daniel Best; senior advisor

Shelton Nicholls; and Andrea Power, the coordinator for regional cooperation and integration.

The CDB was established in 1970 to contribute to the harmonious economic growth and development of its 19 borrowing member countries, and has total assets of US\$3.64 billion as of December 31st, 2020.

UDP Chairman challenges GOB's contract to SMART



UDP Chairman Michael Peyrefitte



Prime Minister John Briceño

Former Attorney General Michael Peyrefitte wants the Supreme Court to squash a \$3.37 million contract the Briceño Administration awarded to Speednet Communications (SMART).

Peyrefitte filed an application for judicial review, seeking permission to legally challenge the multi-million dollars software licensing contract the PUP Government awarded to SMART, a company owned by family members of Prime Minister John Briceño who is also the Minister of Finance.

Briceño has conceded the Government broke the law when the contract was awarded to SMART before it was sent to the Office of the Contractor General. The Finance and Audit (Reform) Act, FARA, explicitly states that the Government shall submit the contract to the Contractor General "for review and comments before the contract is executed." The government failed to do so.

On Friday, Briceño told reporters that "if it goes to court, it will go nowhere simply because the Contractor General, after the fact, took a look at everything that took place and he has given a stamp of approval, saying that everything was done openly and transparently." Briceño, who denied any knowledge of the transaction, is being accused of diverting monies from Belize Telemedia Limited (BTL), the country's largest telecommunications company which is partly owned by the Government, to SMART.

Briceño explained that this was the first time that the Microsoft 365 software licensing contract was put to tender. He accused the previous Administration of simply awarding the contract to BTL which, according to the PM, was fleecing the government. Briceño said, "Speednet gave the cheapest rate and that government is saving Belizeans money. When reporters pressed him on the matter, Briceño responded that the media was "creating a mountain out of a molehill."

Justice Sonya Young is expected to rule on the claim on Friday, February 18th. When asked if he is expecting criminally charges to follow, Peyrefitte told reporters, "That's up to the Director of Public Prosecution and that's up to the Police Department."

PUBLIC AUCTION SALE

LICENSED AND CERTIFIED AUCTIONEER, SHELDON N. C. ARNOLD WILL SELL THE FOLLOWING PROPERTIES WITH RESERVE PRICES.

STANN CREEK PROPERTIES-TO BE AUCTIONED AT HUMMINGBIRD FURNISHINGS COMPOUND BELMOPAN CITY ON TUESDAY FEBRUARY 15TH, 2022 AT 11:00AM.



Location: Block 31 Parcel - 635 Registration Section, Valley Community/ AltaVista, Stann Creek District.
Description: Land containing 1.209 Acres, Vacant lot being the freehold property of Frans L. Faux.



Location: All that piece or parcel of land containing 729.20 S.M being 292 Nurse Ceferina Gomboas Street Dangriga Town.
Description: A concrete bungalow structure with a gross floor area of 1,133 sft The same is occupied as a family home with 3 b rooms & 1 bathroom an complete with kitchen, dining, living and laundry room spaces. The structure is fully tiled, secured, plastered & painted being the freehold property of Joseph M Roaches.



Location: 242 Toucan Street, Mango Creek, Village, Stann Creek District.
Description: Lot - 679.437 square meters with an elevated bungalow of mixed construction, containing 4 bedrooms, 1 bathroom, living, dining, kitchen and porch areas, being the property of Jeanne R. Longworth.



Location: Lot No. 80, containing 696.66 sq. m. situated in San Juan Village, Stann Creek District.
Description: A concrete family home consisting of 3 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, living, dining and kitchen room spaces, being the freehold property of Maria Maldonado.

2008 SILVER FORD VAN



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- TIRE /RIM - LT 245/75R16
- POWER WINDOWS/
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- GASOLINE ENGINE
- MILEAGE 100,000 MILES

2017 BLUE GREAT WALL WINGLE



- EXTERIOR UNIVERSAL BLUE
- 4 DOORS
- 15" ALLOY RIMS
- MANUAL TRANSMISSION
- GASOLINE
- 4 CYLINDERS
- MILEAGE: 157,927 KM
- INTERIOR GREY/ CD PLAYER/ POWER WINDOW, DOORS AND LOCKS/ AIR CONDITIONER

Sheldon N.C. Arnold
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Email: info@arnoldenterprise.com
Website: www.arnoldenterprise.com
Terms - Cash 10% Deposit, Balance in 14 days
Financing Available, Call Ahead For Details





Do other viruses have as many variants as SARS-CoV-2?

SARS-CoV-2 seems to be constantly changing. In the span of just two years, alpha, beta, delta, lambda, mu and omicron have all made headlines. And that list doesn't include dozens of other variants that were detected but not considered high priority by the World Health Organization.

Is this coronavirus's rapid evolution unusual, or do other viruses have just as many variants? We asked the experts to find out.

Viruses are constantly replicating. But the replication process can have hiccups, said Suman Das, an associate professor of medicine at Vanderbilt University Medical Center who studies the evolution of viruses, including SARS-CoV-2. When viruses use host cell machinery to copy their genetic material, mistakes — random additions, removals and substitutions called mutations — happen. And while most random mutations can make the virus unviable or have no effect at all, some mutations actually give it a competitive edge. Maybe some mutations help the virus evade a vaccine or make the pathogen more transmissible. Mutations that help the virus live longer and replicate more easily are "selected" — meaning they stick around. That's how new variants come to be.

Like influenza viruses, RSV, enteroviruses, and rhinoviruses, which cause the common cold, SARS-CoV-2 carries its genetic information on a strand of RNA. And compared with other RNA viruses, "[the mutation] rate in SARS-CoV-2 is not particularly remarkable," said Katie Kistler, a postdoctoral researcher who studies viral evolution at the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center in Seattle. In

fact, it's similar to the mutation rate of other common RNA viruses, such as influenza and other common coronaviruses that cause cold-like symptoms, she told Live Science.



The bottom line on mutations: SARS-CoV-2 isn't mutating at an unusually fast rate. But other factors in play, like the virus's high transmissibility, its transition from an animal host to humans, and the development of new treatments and vaccines, may have ramped up the number of SARS-CoV-2 variants we've seen over a short time.

"SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, may appear to evolve more mutations due to the fact that it's much more transmissible than other common viruses, resulting in many more cases," said Jesse Erasmus, a virologist and assistant professor of microbiology at the University of Washington School of Medicine. The actual rate of mutations per infection is similar to

other common viruses, if not slower. But it's continually circulating through many more people — and has been for more than two years — which gives it more opportunities to replicate and produce advantageous mutations, he told Live Science.

The rapid changes of SARS-CoV-2 may also be related to its recent jump to humans. Until 2019, the virus was adapted to infect an animal host, most likely bats. Initially, "the virus needs to adapt to infect humans rather than bats," Kistler said. "There are a lot of beneficial mutations available to the virus during that [transition] phase." Afterward, a virus's adaptive evolution slows down a bit.

The 2009 H1N1 flu pandemic influenza virus followed this pattern. "During the initial pandemic phase, and [a] year or two following its emergence, we see that the rate of functional change is higher, and then it drops down to a more steady baseline level," she said. Scientists don't know how the evolution of SARS-CoV-2 will change as it transitions from epidemic

to endemic, but based on other pandemic viruses, they hypothesize that the pace of adaptive evolution could slow down.

Finally, the changes we see in SARS-CoV-2 are also partly driven by the rapid development of vaccines and treatments designed to stop it. Compared with the early days of the pandemic, there's now much more selection pressure on the virus to escape the pharmaceutical measures designed to defeat it, Das told Live Science. Now we have multiple vaccines: antibody cocktails, convalescent plasma therapy and two drugs on the market to combat COVID. That's a lot of new pressures driving selection of the virus. Some of the mutations that stick are now the ones that will help the virus avoid these challenges.

S U D O K U

Medium Puzzle

			9		6			
3			4					2
			8					
	4	9			8		7	6
1								9
			1					4
	7		9	3				
		1		6		5		7
5								

Answer to Puzzle

3	2	9	1	8	7	4	5	6
7	6	5	4	9	2	1	3	8
8	1	4	5	3	9	2	7	6
4	3	8	2	6	1	7	9	5
9	5	2	7	4	6	3	8	1
6	7	1	8	5	3	9	4	2
5	4	6	3	2	8	9	1	7
2	8	7	9	1	4	5	6	3
1	9	3	6	7	5	8	2	4

Sudoku rules are extremely easy: Fill all empty squares so that the numbers 1 to 9 appear once in each row, column and 3x3 box. Tip: Use a soft erasable pencil. Start with the easy puzzles, then move on to the harder ones. Make small pencilmarks to show which numbers are allowed in empty squares. This will come handy when analyzing techniques are used. Never guess! Only make moves based on logical deductions. There is only one unique solution for each puzzle.



FUN FACTS!

Airplane Facts You've Always Been Curious About

Flying can spark a lot of questions about everything from the iffy food to the holes in the airplane windows. Brush up on your airplane trivia, and become an airplane expert before you fly off for your next trip.

What is all that banging noise when you're boarding?

No worries, they're not patching up the plane at the last minute. The banging noise that you hear when you're boarding the plane and right after you land is the cargo that's being loaded or taken off the plane. It's directly below the cabin, so it does sound pretty loud.

How do flight attendants deal with unruly passengers?

If you're seriously out of control, you may find yourself handcuffed on your flight. Some airlines keep plastic zip-tie cuffs on the plane, while others will allow the flight attendants to cuff the passengers with seat-belt extenders.

What are those hooks on the planes' wings?

Don't get too nervous, but those bumps contain holes on the wings that make it easier for flight attendants



to attach ropes so they can deploy the inflatable slides in case of an emergency water landing. With them, you can hold the rope which will lead you to the inflatable slides and make it out safely, according to Captain Joe. Without the bumps, the wings would be too smooth and slippery for the passengers trying to get to the slide.

Why do flight attendants reach upwards as they walk?

They're not trying to touch the ceiling to show off how tall they are. There's actually a scalloped spot at the bottom of the overhead compartments and the



flight attendants are gripping that as they walk down the aisle so they don't have to grab your seat to keep their balance.

Where do pilots sleep?

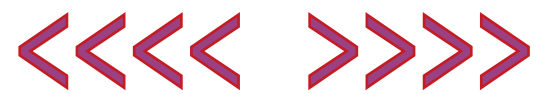
During those really long flights, pilots and flight attendants need to snooze too, and it's not

so comfy in the cockpit. On many planes, like the Boeing 777 and 787, there are secret places where the pilots and other staff can sleep. For example, there may be a locked door in front of or a door that looks like an overhead bin, which secretly leads to a few beds.



Doggy High!

Dogs get high when you rub their ears real good. They have a branch of nerves in their ears that extend to their internal organs and release endorphins when you rub them, sending relaxing impulses through their bodies and giving them a natural high.

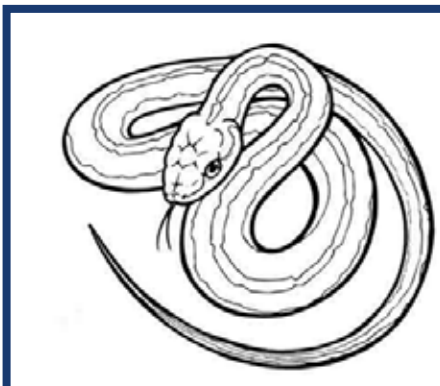


Panic!

The word 'panic' stems from Greek mythology. It's derived from the name of the god of shepherds, Pan, who would get really angry and start shouting any time someone woke him up from his midday nap. His yelling was so violent that it sent his flocks into a stampede, causing a sudden wave of anxiety and fear among everyone in the vicinity.



COLOR ME



Garter snakes are reptiles. A reptile is an animal that is ectothermic (cold-blooded), scaly, and breathes using lungs; most lay eggs. Being cold-blooded means these animals often bask in the sun to warm their bodies.

Garter snakes can be found in meadows, gardens, forests, and they prefer areas near water. They like to make dens under big rocks or other support structures like steps, stone walls, and building foundations.

They are carnivores! These snakes are small and swallow their prey whole so they will eat anything they can overpower. This includes snails, earthworms, leeches, small fish, grasshoppers, and other insects. Occasionally they will eat small birds and rodents.

These snakes use their excellent sense of smell and vision to hunt prey. Snakes use their tongues as a way to "smell the air." They do have nostrils primarily for breathing, but by flicking their tongue they can pick up the scent chemicals of prey or predators close by. The tongue goes back into the mouth and fits neatly into the Jacobson's organ located on the roof of the mouth. Here the information about the chemicals gathered is sent to the brain and decoded!

Garter snakes are one of the few types of snakes that have live births. Females usually give birth to 15-40 young. They are left on their own to hunt after being born.



MINISTRY OF INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT & HOUSING

PHILIP GOLDSON HIGHWAY AND REMATE BYPASS PROJECT

CONSULTANCY SERVICES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF A LIVELIHOODS ENHANCEMENT STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

REQUEST FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST

The Government of Belize (GOBZ) has received financing from the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) and the United Kingdom Caribbean Infrastructure Partnership Fund (UKCIF) towards the cost of the Philip Goldson Highway and Remate Bypass Project and intends to apply a portion of the proceeds of this financing to eligible payments under a contract for which this invitation is issued. Payments by CDB will be made only at the request of GOBZ and upon approval by CDB, and will be subject in all respects to the terms and conditions of the Financing Agreement. The Financing Agreement prohibits withdrawals from the Financing Account for the purpose of any payment to persons or entities, or for any import of goods, if such payment or import, to the knowledge of CDB, is prohibited by a decision of the United Nations Security Council taken under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations. No party other than GOBZ shall derive any rights from the Financing Agreement or have any claim to the proceeds of the Financing.

The Ministry of Infrastructure Development and Housing (MIDH) through its Project Execution Unit (PEU), the Executing Agency, now wishes to procure consultancy services for the Development and Implementation of a Livelihoods Enhancement Strategy and Action Plan for Small Businesses and Communities along the Philip Goldson Highway and Remate Bypass.

The objective of the consultancy is to explore the potential economic development opportunities available for Project-impacted communities especially small businesses and entrepreneurs, including vendors, to take advantage of the wider economic opportunities that the upgrading of the road is intended to bring. The consultancy team is expected to provide the consultancy services in two phases: Phase One (Assessment and Planning) in 30 days, over a four-month period; and Phase Two (Implementation) in 45 days, over an eight-month period.

MIDH now invites interested eligible consulting firms to submit Expressions of Interest indicating qualifications and experience required to provide these consultancy services.

Consultants shall be eligible to participate if:

- (a) Be legally incorporated or otherwise organized in, and have their principal place of business in an Eligible Country;
- (b) Be more than fifty (50) percent beneficially owned by a citizen or citizens and/ or a *bona fide* resident of an Eligible Country, or by a body corporate or bodies meeting these requirements, as far as the ownership can be reasonably determined; and
- (c) in all cases, the consultant has no arrangement and undertakes not to make any arrangements, whereby any substantial part of the net profits or other tangible benefits of the contract will accrue or be paid to a person not a citizen or bona fide resident of an eligible country.

Eligible countries are member countries of CDB.

The attention of interested Consultants is drawn to paragraph 1.9 of CDB's Guidelines for the Selection and Engagement of Consultants (2019), setting forth CDB's policy on conflict of interest.

In the assessment of submissions, consideration will be given to qualifications and experience on similar assignments. The consultancy team should possess persons with appropriate qualifications in Sociology, Community Development, Gender Studies or a related field, as well as expertise in monitoring and evaluation, management or business or a related field; and natural resources management with a minimum of 10 years' practical experience in applying community development and small business/livelihoods development, and natural resource management in rural communities.

All information must be submitted in English. Further information may be obtained from the first address below between **8:00am and 5:00pm local time Monday to Friday**.

Expressions of Interest must be submitted in English by email, in pdf format, to both email addresses below, no later than **10:00am local time on Friday, 4th March 2022**. The e-mail subject line should state, "**EXPRESSION OF INTEREST - CONSULTANCY SERVICES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF A LIVELIHOODS ENHANCEMENT STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN, PGHRP**" and the body of the email must state the name and address of the applicant. The Expression of Interest will be deemed to have been received at the time it is received by the receiving office named in the first address below. The burden of proving receipt of the email will be on the applicant and will not be met solely by a read receipt or sent items report generated by the applicant's computer.

Following the assessment of submissions, a short list of not less than three and not more than six applicants will be provided with full terms of reference and invited to submit technical and financial proposals to undertake the assignment. GOBZ reserves the right to accept or reject late applications or to cancel the present invitation partially or in its entirety. It will not be bound to assign any reason for not engaging the services of any applicant and will not defray any costs incurred by any applicant in the preparation and submission of Expressions of Interest.

1. Attention: Mr. Evondale Moody
Project Execution Unit
Ministry of Infrastructure Development
and Housing
Belmopan
BELIZE, C.A.
Tel: +501-828-5220
Email: peu@midh.gov.bz

2. Procurement Officer
Procurement Policy Unit
Caribbean Development Bank
P.O. Box 408, Wildey
St. Michael
BARBADOS, W.I.
Tel: +246-539-1600
Email: procurement@caribank.org



JOIN A GLOBAL GROUP OF CONSERVATION PROFESSIONALS

We are in search of a dynamic and competent **Country Director** to lead our **Belize Team!**

BV's office in Sarteneja and a co-working space in Belize City are accessible to staff, who also have the option to work remotely from their homes across Belize. We anticipate that this role will revert to a hybrid remote-in person working pattern as is possible due to the Covid pandemic.

Blue Ventures develops locally led approaches to marine management that benefit people and nature alike. By listening and responding to community needs, we design our models to catalyse and sustain marine conservation, unlocking the potential of coastal communities to manage their resources. We work in places where the ocean is vital to local cultures and economies, and are committed to advancing the rights of small-scale fishers throughout the coastal tropics.

Our Belize team is also optimally placed to expand our work in the wider Latin American and Caribbean (LAC) region. Building on our experience in Asia and Africa, Blue Ventures is now scoping opportunities to identify and support values-aligned partners on fisheries management and governance across the wider region with a view to developing a thriving regional programme.

Summary Job Description

- BV's Belize Country Director has two overarching responsibilities: leading our programme in Belize, and driving expansion of our work in the wider LAC region. We envisage a roughly 50:50 split between these two main aims for the successful postholder.
- The Belize Country Director leads our thinking and approach on marine conservation in Belize and the wider LAC region. With a natural flair for cross-sector working, particularly with Government, the Country Director is accountable for our work to develop and accelerate community-based approaches for natural resource management in Belize.

Responsibilities

Leadership and Management

- Leading by example to set and maintain a creative, supportive and **thriving environment** for Blue Ventures' Belize team, ensuring BV values are upheld and culture is maintained
- Promoting a **shared vision** for Blue Ventures in Belize, and ensuring all staff understand their contribution to that vision and Blue Ventures' overall strategy

Programme Management

- Maintaining a strong **shared understanding** of across the team of programme delivery, goals, and challenges via regular check-ins with senior staff and technical programme leads
- Overseeing **project management and donor reporting** with Belize and global teams

Communications, Knowledge Sharing/Management and Advocacy

- Cultivating effective proactive **internal communication** to ensure all staff are well informed of our core mission and kept up to date with ongoing activities, as well as new developments, policies and procedures
- Promoting and supporting Blue Ventures' commitment to **documenting learning and sharing knowledge**, and to incorporating lessons from the wider BV team and beyond

Operations

- Overseeing the **programme budget, site funds, and bank account** efficiently and accurately
- Supporting the development and maintenance of budget, finance, recruitment and project management **systems**

Skills and Experience

Required

- Degree in relevant field and/or proven experience in fisheries management, marine conservation or international development, particularly in the Latin American and Caribbean region
- A proven ability to develop strong working relationships in new environments.
- Experience in financial planning and control, and budget preparation and management

Desired

- Previous human resources, operations support or administrative support experience
- Previous international organization/NGO experience
- Fundraising

For more information or to apply to any of these positions, please visit:

<https://careers.blueventures.org/>

Kindly submit applications online.

Only applications submitted through our online system will be considered.

Deadline for submission: Sunday 13th February 2022, 4pm local time.

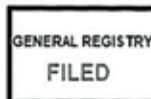
DV20210302

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2022-01-24



Action No. 302



SUPREME COURT OF BELIZE, A.D. 2021 (DIVORCE)

(HENRY WONG K. Petitioner
(
BETWEEN (and
(
(NANCY MIRALDA BOLTON WONG K. Respondent

To: NANCY MIRALDA BOLTON WONG K.

TAKE NOTICE that a Petition for dissolution of marriage dated 4th October, 2021 endorsed with a notice to you to appear and answer the charges therein has been filed in the Supreme Court of Belize by HENRY WONG K. of 4 ½ miles Stann Creek Valley Road, Stann Creek District, Belize AND THAT you are required within 28 days after the second publication herein, inclusive of the day of such publication, to enter an appearance either in person or by your Attorney-at-Law at the Registry of the Supreme Court, should you think fit so to do and thereafter to make answer to the charges in this Petition, and FURTHER TAKE NOTICE that in default of your so doing, the Court will proceed to hear the said charges proved and pronounce judgement your absence notwithstanding.

The Petition is filed and this Notice appear is by Marin Young & Go LLP of No. 82B Coney Drive, 3rd Floor, Belize City, Belize District, Belize, Attorneys-at-Law for the Petitioner, HENRY WONG K.

DATED the 26th day of January, 2022.

Deputy Registrar

NOTE: Any person entering an appearance must at the same time furnish an address for service within two miles of the Supreme Court.



Wesley College

The Board of Management of Wesley College invites applications from highly motivated and dedicated individuals with good communication and interpersonal skills to fill the following vacancies.

- **1 Business/Spanish Teacher – Part Time (March – June)**
- **1 Social Science Teacher – Part Time (April – June)**

Applicants must be organized, creative, punctual and positive, self-motivated, a good team member, excellent role model, willing to work as a homeroom teacher, willing to work after school hours and participate in co-curricular activities. He/she must be familiar with the subject content and the CSEC syllabus, be able to teach on line, willing to collaborate and work in a Methodist environment. The ability to teach a second subject would be an asset.

Qualifications:

Teaching: Preferred: Bachelor Degree in Subject area and must possess a valid Secondary License to Teach. Teaching experience would be an asset.

Remuneration:

In accordance with the Government of Belize pay scale

Application Deadline: 17th February, 2022

A letter of application, along with a resume, original transcripts, two (2) letters of reference – one from current employer a valid Police Record, Certified copy of Degree/Diploma, Social Security Card, Medical Certificate, proof of Covid-19 vaccine and Certified Copy of Marriage/Divorce Certificate (where applicable) must be sent to:

The Secretary
Wesley College Board of Management
34 Yarborough Road
Belize City, BELIZE

The Righters Write

The right to life and freedom from slavery

Contributed by the Human Rights Commission

The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated human rights violations globally. This is a statement that has been repeated in so many news articles and news reports across the world. And despite it being said and known, violations against people continue, particularly against vulnerable and underserved populations. Many violations are against life itself, a direct affront to the third article of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) which states that “Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person”. Sadly, while the UDHR aims to protect and defend the rights of every human being, human rights advocates agree that even today, it still remains much more of a dream than a reality.

The United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner (OHCHR) states that “The right to life has gone on to be one of the core rights accepted by countries; 77 percent of the world’s constitutions include this right, compared to 27 percent of constitutions in effect in 1945, when the UN was founded. Article 3 is about much more than the death penalty. It is fundamental to enjoyment of all other rights: after all, you have to be alive to exercise free speech, get married, or hold nationality.”

But there is so much work still to be done as studies continue to show that this right is grossly violated in many countries. Amnesty International Report 2020/2021, which documents human rights situations in 149 countries in 2020 states that “The pandemic threw into stark relief the human rights impact of years of political and

financial crises and flaws in global systems of governance and co-operation, which some states exacerbated by shirking their responsibilities or attacking multilateral institutions. These dynamics were illustrated by trends in three areas: **violations of the rights to life, health and social protection; gender-based violence and threats to sexual and reproductive rights; and repression of dissent.**

Meanwhile, in both long-running and new conflicts, government forces and armed groups carried out indiscriminate and targeted attacks on civilians, killing thousands, and caused or prolonged mass displacement and humanitarian crises. Despite a few notable convictions for war crimes and crimes against humanity, impunity in times of war and peace remained the norm and, in some countries, the rule of law was eroded. Millions of people suffered from disasters exacerbated by the climate crisis. The overall picture was of a world in disarray.”

According to the OHCHR some argue that Article 3 embraces many other issues which include the deprivation of health care that leads to death, extra-judicial killings, even the use of live ammunition by police forces against unarmed protestors.

But the threat to life does not only come from the state or law enforcement agencies, it can come from others around us. It comes from “your neighbour or your partner, from criminal gangs and armed groups, and States has an obligation to protect their citizens. Killings of women and girls –

by their partners, by strangers, by parents who prefer boys – also constitute a particular grave and all-too-common abuse of this fundamental right, and females of all ages still often suffer inadequate legal and physical protection by state authorities and institutions. As Rashida Manjoo, former UN Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women put it: “Women subjected to continuous violence are always on ‘death

row,’ always in fear of execution”,” states the OHCHR.

In today’s modern world, slavery continues to be a lucrative business. The OHCHR states that “Men bought and sold like commodities, held for years against their will on fishing boats off Thailand. Yazidi women sold into sex slavery, raped daily and passed from owner to owner. Human beings offered as birthday gifts to children.

Article 4 is clear: no one has the right to make us a slave and we cannot make anyone our slave. But if you thought slavery disappeared with the end of the Transatlantic slave trade in the 1800s, it may be a shock to learn of the abuse of fisherfolk who supply seafood to some of the world’s top supermarkets, the fate of women under so-called Islamic State or of migrant women in brothels in Europe and elsewhere;

or current reality in Mauritania, the last country in the world to officially ban slavery.” Article 4 protects your right not to be held in slavery or servitude or made to do forced labour.

Much of these kinds of violations happen right here at home, in our Jewel, Belize. If we looked closely and more intentionally, we will notice that the woman scorned for working in a brothel is not

Cont’d on pg 19



CALL FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

MATCHING GRANT PROGRAM

FOR TOURISM SMALL AND MEDIUM SIZED ENTERPRISES



The Matching Grant Program will provide financial incentive for Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) to support projects that generate positive effects and are beneficial for the Belizean tourism ecosystem productivity and host communities. The grant will assist the SMEs in overcoming a clearly define set of market-failures

<p>Type of Tourism Business to which the MGP is addressed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accommodation • Food & Beverage • Adventure & Tourism • Transportation • Events & Conferences • Attractions • Tourism Services • Tourism Education & Training • Other tourism related services 	<p>Approved Projects</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bio-protocol implementation positive and negative externalities. • Environmental positive and negative externalities. • Skills development externalities and imperfect information. • Technology investment and adoption externalities and imperfect information. • Market intelligence and promotion strategies externalities • Potential external economies of scale or scope externalities.
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For further information
 Applicants/Interested SMEs who have applied can contact the Project Coordination Unit at: ✉ grants.unit@belizetourismboard.org ☎ 67-GRANT (674-7268)

An Expression of Interest is not considered an application.

An online submission must be received no later than **4:00 PM on Friday February 21st, 2022.**

For more information visit <https://belizetourismboard.org>



Contact: Mike Hernandez Jr. (Sr. J.P.)
Media and Communications Officer
PHONE: 501-227-2420 FAX: 501-227-2423 TOLL FREE: 1-800-624-0686
WEBSITE: travelbelize.org; email: grants.unit@belizetourismboard.org
ADDRESS: P.O. Box 325, #64 Regent Street, Belize City, Belize.

LAUNCH OF MATCHING GRANT PROGRAM FOR TOURISM SMALL AND MEDIUM SIZED ENTERPRISES

Belize City, Belize, Monday, January 31st, 2022

Today, the Belize Tourism Board (BTB) officially launched a call for Expression of Interest (EOI) for Small and Medium Sized Enterprises (SMEs) interested in applying for Grant Funding under the "Matching Grant Program for Tourism Small and Medium Sized Enterprises".

The project has earmarked \$2.4 Million Belize Dollars to contribute to the growth of the tourism industry through the support of the Inter-American Development Bank.

The project launch was held at the Belize Biltmore Plaza with guest speakers which included Hon. Anthony Mahler, Minister of Tourism and Diaspora Relations, Inter-American Development Bank Representative, Ramiro Lopez Ghio, Director of Tourism at the Belize Tourism Board, Evan Tillett and Chief Tourism Officer, Raymond Mossiah.

During his remarks, Minister Mahler, said "Micro Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) represent over 70% of our private sector employment and income in Belize and in tourism, they are the backbone of our service industry. MSMEs also provide inclusive growth that leads to a more equitable distribution of wealth."

Minister Mahler also noted that the program will have two special projects complementing it. One will be the development of a Gastronomy Corridor in Belize City to begin our quest to take Belize's culinary experience to the global stage. The second, will be the establishment of two Music Entertainment Studio facilities, which will serve as a catalyst for Belizean artists to refine their art, and a platform for music to take on its merited role as a critical segment in the tourism value chain."

The goal of the Matching Grant Program (MGP) is to identify, develop and implement growth opportunities within the tourism industry, for the benefit of all stakeholders. Further, it aims to contribute to the development of Belize's economy via the enhancement, expansion and promotion of the tourism industry. The Matching Grant Program will provide financial incentive for Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) to support projects that generate positive effects and are beneficial for the Belizean tourism ecosystem productivity and host communities.

The grant will assist the SMEs in overcoming a clearly defined set of market failures.

The MGP will support projects by SMEs in the selected project categories:

1. Projects to implement COVID-19 bio-protocols in Belize.
2. Projects to enhance or preserve Belize's natural capital or contribute to the mitigation or adaptation of the tourism sector ecosystem.
3. Projects which enhance the human capital of the tourism sector entrepreneurship and/or workforce in Belize.
4. Projects with the purpose to boost technology investment and adoption in the tourism sector entrepreneurship and or workforce in Belize.
5. Projects with the purpose to invest on market intelligence and promotion strategies.
6. Projects with the purpose to create a more efficient critical mass.

The MGP will benefit SMEs operating in the tourism sector and enterprises in the tourism value chain: Accommodation, Food & Beverage, Adventure Tourism, Transportation, Travel Trade, Events & Conferences, Attractions, Tourism Services, Tourism Education & Training and Other Tourism Related Services.

SMEs who wish to express interest must complete and submit the required **Expression of Interest Forms** for assessment and eligibility. The deadline for this submission is **February 21st, 2022, at 4:00 p.m.** Visit BTB's Website or Facebook page for more information on the guidelines and eligibility for the Matching Grant Program.

PHOTOS OF THE PROJECT LAUNCH



From Left: During the project launch, the Minister of Tourism & Diaspora Relations, Hon. Anthony Mahler, said Micro Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) make over 70% of our private sector employment and income in Belize. In tourism, they are the backbone of our service industry. **Clockwise from top:** Other speakers included Mr. Ramiro Lopez Ghio, IDB Country Representative, Mr. Raymond Mossiah, Chief Tourism Officer and Mr. Evan Tillett, Director of Tourism, BTB.

About Belize Tourism Board

The Belize Tourism Board (BTB) is a statutory body within the Belize Ministry of Tourism and Diaspora Relations, and it is governed by a Board of Directors appointed by the Minister of Tourism and Diaspora Relations. The BTB works in conjunction with members of the private sector – including the Belize Hotel Association, Belize Tourism Industry Association and Belize National Tour Operators Association – and is dedicated to building tourism in the most economically and environmentally sustainable manner. As a part of its responsibilities, the BTB promotes Belize as a premier tourism destination to both in-country and international consumers. Among its outreach to the international travel market, the BTB markets the country's unique attractions to travelers, members of the travel trade industry and media outlets in key markets. The BTB is also dedicated to developing and implementing tourism programs that will help strengthen and grow the Belizean tourism industry; promote good destination stewardship; and instill high quality standards for accommodations and travel experiences. For more information on the BTB and its services, visit www.travelbelize.org.

belize
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The right to life and freedom from slavery

Cont'd from pg 18

always doing so willingly; that the child selling fruits at the market may earn their day's meal or go to bed without it if they fail to meet a quota. That the Hispanic house maid is not being paid or treated fairly. The idea seems too farfetched and too cruel to fathom and could not possibly be happening in our backyard. But it is. We need just look closely.

On a worldwide scale, the violations are appalling. The OHCHR goes on to state that "The trafficking of people is truly global in nature, with victims of some 160 different citizenships detected in or repatriated from some 140 different countries, according to a report produced by the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), which described this data as "only the tip of the iceberg."... Investigations by journalists, non-governmental organizations and the UN in 2014 and 2015 found that much of Thailand's \$7-billion fishing industry was based on kidnapping, violence and imprisonment.

Poor men from southeast Asia were lured with promises of good jobs, but found instead 20-hour-shifts fuelled by methamphetamines, regular beatings, torture and execution-style killings.

"According to the ILO, the 60-75 million people working in the garment industry around the world

– some 75 percent of whom are women and girls -- are particularly prone to exploitation and abuse... An estimated 92 percent of those engaged in forced labour in the accommodation and food services sector are women and girls, and the ILO estimates that 24 percent of all domestic workers – of whom the great majority are also women – are subjected to forced labour...

Domestic workers are one of the groups most vulnerable to what is perhaps the least known form of modern-day slavery, known as 'debt bondage', where a person is forced to work to pay off a debt – which grows steadily, and which they can never actually discharge."

The fight continues for human rights defenders. The UN Secretary-General António Guterres has urged everyone to "come together around the key issues of prevention, protection and prosecution to build a future where this crime cannot exist." As individuals, we can also help – if we see something, say something.

Disclaimer: the opinions expressed by our columnists are theirs alone, and are not necessarily reflective of the newspaper's stance on the issues touched. We believe it is critical that our columnists be allowed freedom to generate discussion through their expressions on any number of topics.

**Kick back
Relax and
Enjoy**

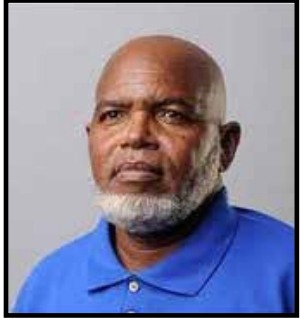


The Reporter

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GRASSROOTS

The Request for More Money



“Transparency means that my motives are easily perceived. No hidden agendas, and I prove it through my actions.” – Pamela Saunders

By Hon. Gilroy Usher

To meet the financial needs of the country for the next two months until

April 1st, 2022, government presented a supplementary allocation budget of just over \$70 million to parliament.

The funds are necessary to pay a number of long overdue bills as well as several unperceived bills.

The supplementary budget is also necessary to deal with the unexpected increase in the cost of acquiring certain products and services.

Such steep increase in the cost of acquired goods and services could be the result of unavoidable increase in the price of fuel, which affects the price of all other items.

One of the unexpected costs referred to in the supplementary budget includes the need to fix a broken section of the Phillip Goldson Highway that suddenly became too dangerous for the safety of motorists and pedestrians.

That's the same portion of the highway that the previous administration purportedly properly fixed at a cost of over \$1 million.

Special attention will be given to only a few of the other most important allocations in the supplementary budget.

\$15.5 million is for the Ministry of Health and Wellness for outstanding payables.

\$2.7 million is for hemodialysis treatment with private institutions, while just under \$5 million is for the continuation of NHI.

It must be noted that the supplementary budget includes payment of over \$5 million for unpaid bills that were incurred by the Ministry of Health under the very corrupt 2008 – 2020 administration.

\$1.5 million in the supplementary budget is for the Ministry of Education to assist with school fees for high school and tertiary institutions including tertiary institutions abroad.

\$3.7 million is mostly for fuel and food for the Ministry of Home Affairs, and the balance of the Kolbe contract that was renegotiated.

Additionally \$1.75 million of the new allocation is for the Ministry of Defense for border security, which includes food for the soldiers and fuel for patrols.

The supplementary allocation budget also includes provision for six new vehicles to enable the different Ministries to carry out very important work for the benefit of the people. Two of those vehicles are for the Ministry of Youth, Sports, and Transport.

To enhance transparency with the spending of the people's money, instead of each Ministry ordering vehicles, all six vehicles will be acquired through the Ministry of Finance.

\$20 million in the supplementary budget is allocation to strengthen the Central Bank of Belize as a lending institution.

With that allocation the government is simply being proactive, as none of the major lending institutions are experiencing any financial problem.

\$1 million in the new allocation is to enable the Ministry of Human Development to continue the Grocery Bag program to the end of the fiscal year, and \$1.5 million is for construction of the pier for the new Haulover Bridge.

Under the leadership of the current P.M. the supplementary budgets of this new administration always achieve two things:

1st. They are always in compliance with the Finance and Audit Reform Act of 2005, which clearly states that following the passage of the Budget, the

The Belizean people did have a chance to benefit from those mega spending, because of massive corruption by several members of the previous administration and their cronies.

government must receive approval from the House of Representatives for any further spending above \$10 million. And 2nd the supplementary budgets of this administration always give a detail and verifiable breakdown of how taxpayers money were spent or will be spent.

Verification of the spending in the supplementary budgets of this administration are doable, because all the public officers, who processed the spending of those funds, are still in the same departments in the government service.

That's transparency and accountability with the use of taxpayers' money.

Under the previous administration, supplementary budgets were brought to the Honorable House years after the funds were spent, and practically all the key persons who approved the payments were no longer employed in the Public Service.

In comparison to this supplementary budget, the supplementary budgets off the previous administration were largely a guise, a cover-up for massive corruption with government funds.

Furthermore, apart from being years late, supplementary budgets of the previous administration largely did not include any breakdown for the hundreds of millions of dollars they spent, and which taxpayers of this country have to repay. .

The supplementary budgets of the previous administration mainly listed the millions of dollars they spent years ago with absolutely no prior debate in the House, and as usual the previous administration used its majority in the House and the Senate to approve really rubber stamp those unlawful spending which mainly benefitted themselves and not the Belizean people.

Shame on the members of the previous administration for remaining silent in the House as their administration totally ignored the Finance and Audit Reform Act of 2005 and plundered the national treasury.

In total disregard for its responsibility to ensure that the people get value for their money including huge loans which they have to repay, the previous administration spent over \$700 million from Petro Caribe and over \$600 million from oil with absolutely no approval from the House.

Unlike this administration that brings its supplementary budgets to the House for debate and approval in the current time, the Supreme Court found the previous administration guilty of unlawfully spending over a billion dollars without getting approval from parliament for spending even a dollar of so much of the people's money.

Approval of the little over \$70 million allocated in this supplementary budget will result in visible benefits for the Belizean people.

On the other hand after members of the previous administration unlawfully spent over a billion dollars with absolutely no approval from the House, in 2020 when they were booted out of office hopefully for decades, more Belizeans were living in poverty than before they were elected to office thirteen years earlier in 2008.

This writer would like the members of the now Opposition to explain how that happened. How did the Belizean people end up poorer, after you all spent millions and millions of dollars during their 13 years in office.

The Belizean people did have a chance to benefit from those mega spending, because of massive corruption by several members of the previous administration and their cronies.

The administration's presentation of its supplementary allocation budget last week, is in keeping with the pledge of Plan Belize to weed out corruption in government with transparency and accountability in the spending of taxpayers' money.

Another good thing about this and other supplementary budgets of this administration is that they are forwarded to all members of parliament long before a House meeting to allow members of parliament sufficient time to be fully prepared to debate the matter.

That good will gesture is strikingly opposite from the days when the previous administration, knowing they had a lot to hide, gave members of the then Opposition, the House papers shortly before the start of House meetings to undermine their ability to expose the terrible corruption that occurred with old supplementary budgets and other matters.

Given the details of this supplementary budget, it is clear that the funds will be used to address the needs of the people and will not end up in the socks or private accounts of Ministers as was the norm with several ministers in the previous administration.

It was that unconscionable corruption in government that made the previous administration the most corrupt government in the history of Belize.

With the current Prime Minister, the supplementary allocation budget is transparent. It has no hidden agendas.

This writer, therefore, fully supports it for the good of the Belizean people and this nation.

Disclaimer: the opinions expressed by our columnists are theirs alone, and are not necessarily reflective of the newspaper's stance on the issues touched. We believe it is critical that our columnists be allowed freedom to generate discussion through their expressions on any number of topics.

Joint Public Accounts Cmte 'nowhere close to starting its work': NGO Senator



NGO Senator Osmany Salas says the JPAC needs resources to function

"I would like to ask the government to ensure that in our new [national] budget there are resources in there to support the work of the Joint Public Accounts Committee (JPAC)," Belize Network of Non-government Organization

(BNN) Senator Osmany Salas urged in Wednesday's Senate Meeting.

Salas, who rose to speak on the third General Revenue Supplementary 2021/22, lamented the JPAC's lack of support and resources

which has prevented the committee from functioning appropriately. "The JPAC was set up seven months ago," Salas reminded. "[Yet] we are nowhere close to starting the job that the JPAC was intended to do, which is to examine, con-

sider and report on the accounts."

Salas indicated that the delays are, once again, tied to politics. "Your politics takes precedence as usual," he scolded. "There are always the different excuses and reasons as to why we cannot meet and engage."

The Joint Public Accounts Committee, established last July, is an expanded version of the Public Accounts Committee (PAC), which originally had membership from only the two political parties

represented in the House. The House of Representatives (Amendment) Standing Orders 2021 amended section 73 of the Orders by adding the following provision:

"The Joint Public Accounts Committee shall consist of nine members as follows ... three members nominated by the President of the Senate from among the social partner members of the Senate."

The reconstitution of the committee represented the first time that social-partner

senators were allowed to join the PAC. "When the JPAC was first set up, we hailed it as a bold move from the Government," Salas reminded. "For the first time, the non-government representative on the JPAC would outnumber the government representatives. Seven months and nothing has happened."

However, despite the broad support for the creation of the JPAC, Salas criticized the lack of support that has the committee nowhere "close to starting the job."


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Date: February 8, 2022

Jacinto Gutierrez of # 19 Temash Street, Belmopan City, Cayo District, Belize C.A. having made written declaration that Policy G7506513 under RF&G Life Insurance Company Ltd has been lost and having made request to the Company for a duplicate of the Policy, notice is hereby given that unless objection is raised within one month of the date herein, the requested duplicate policy will be issued.



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Belize's Blue Economy to benefit from UK £16.2 million Ocean Partnership

By William Ysaguirre

Belize launched its partnership with the United Kingdom's £16.2m million Ocean Country Partnership Programme (OCP) on Wednesday, February 9.

Deputy Director James Smith for International Marine Environment of the UK's Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), recognized Belize's continued leadership on climate and environmental issues at the programme launch at the British High Commission in Belmopan.

Smith led a British delegation to Belize on Sunday, February 6, to launch the Programme, which is funded under the UK's £500 million Blue Planet Fund (BPF). Belize plays a leading role in global ocean issues, as evidenced by Belize's protection of the biodiversity of its marine ecosystems and its commitment to a sustainable blue economy, he said, noting that Belize had previously partnered with the UK in the Commonwealth Litter Program (CLIP) and the Commonwealth Marine Economies Program.

Through this new partnership, the Blue Planet Fund will support Belize and other countries in their efforts to protect the marine environment, marine habitats and

to enhance sustainable aquaculture, to protect our shared ocean. The importance of the ocean to small island developing states can't be downplayed, even as it is threatened by marine pollution, Climate Change and biodiversity loss, which is felt most heavily by coastal communities and SIDS.

Belize is preparing to launch its first ever Blue Economy policy and strategy, and a 5-year marine economy plan, and so the UK's Ocean Partnership is most timely, affirmed Minister of Blue Economy and Civil Aviation Hon. Andre Perez. He welcomed the UK's continued collaboration in the field of marine biodiversity conservation.

British High Commissioner, H.E. Claire Evans accompanied Smith when he met with Prime Minister John Briceño to discuss how the Ocean Partnership would work. He also paid courtesy calls on the Governor General, HE Froyla Tzalam; Minister of Sustainable Development, Climate Change, and Disaster Risk Management Hon. Orlando Habet Minister of Agriculture, Food Security and Enterprise Hon. Jose Mai, and Minister of State for Finance, Economic Development and



The Ocean Country Partnership Programme is a £16.2 million initiative

Investment Senator Hon. Christopher Coye,

Through the partnership, Belize will share in an exchange of UK expertise in science, research, and development to address marine environmental challenges in marine pollution, marine biodiversity, and sustainable seafood. Smith's delegation included members of the OCPP operations team which will be working to deliver the programme in Belize from the UK's Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture (Cefas) and the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC).

This week the operational team from Cefas and JNCC also met with CEOs from the Ministries of Blue Economy and Civil Aviation; Sustainable

Development, Climate Change, and Disaster Risk Management; Agriculture, Food Security and Enterprise; and Economic Development, to discuss how the programme would be implemented over the next year to serve demands in the three thematic areas. The

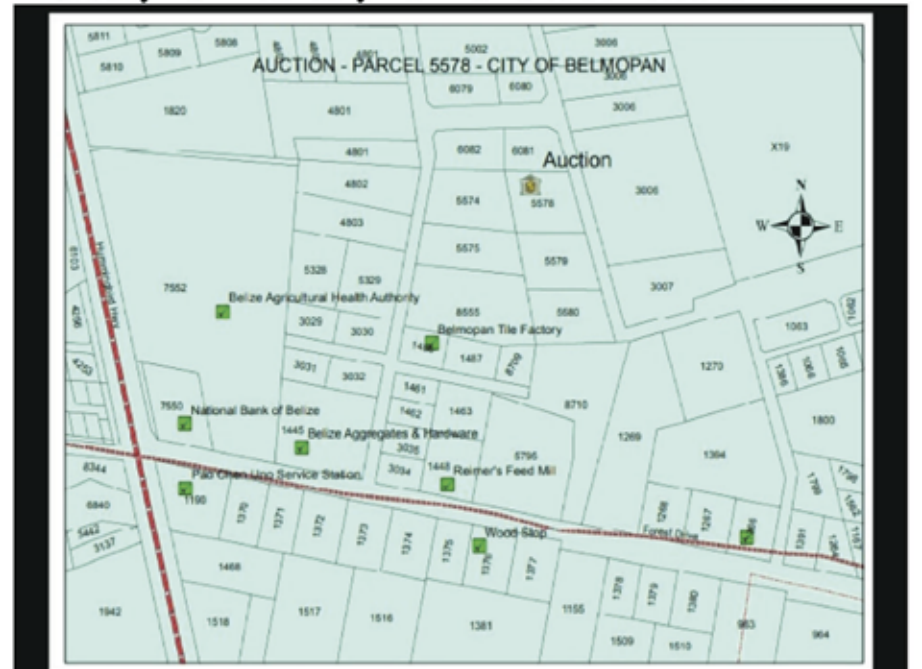
team leaves Belize on Friday, February 11.

The UK's £500 million Blue Planet Fund (BPF) was officially launched in June 2021 to support developing countries to reduce poverty, protect and sustainably manage their marine resources and address threats across

four key themes: marine biodiversity, climate change, marine pollution, and sustainable seafood. The BPF is managed by the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (Defra) and the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO).

PUBLIC AUCTION SALE

By Order of the Supreme Court of Belize License Auctioneer Noel J. Codd will sell the following on Thursday 17th February 2022 on site at 10:00 a.m.



All that piece or parcel of land being Parcels 5578 Block 20, Registration Section Belmopan City. The property is situated in the Industrial area of Belmopan City and measures 4,840 square yards. All major utilities are in the area.

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EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

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

Position Name: Maintenance Mechanic (Generator Mechanic)

Vacancy number: Belmopan-2022-03-R

Closing date: February 25th, 2022

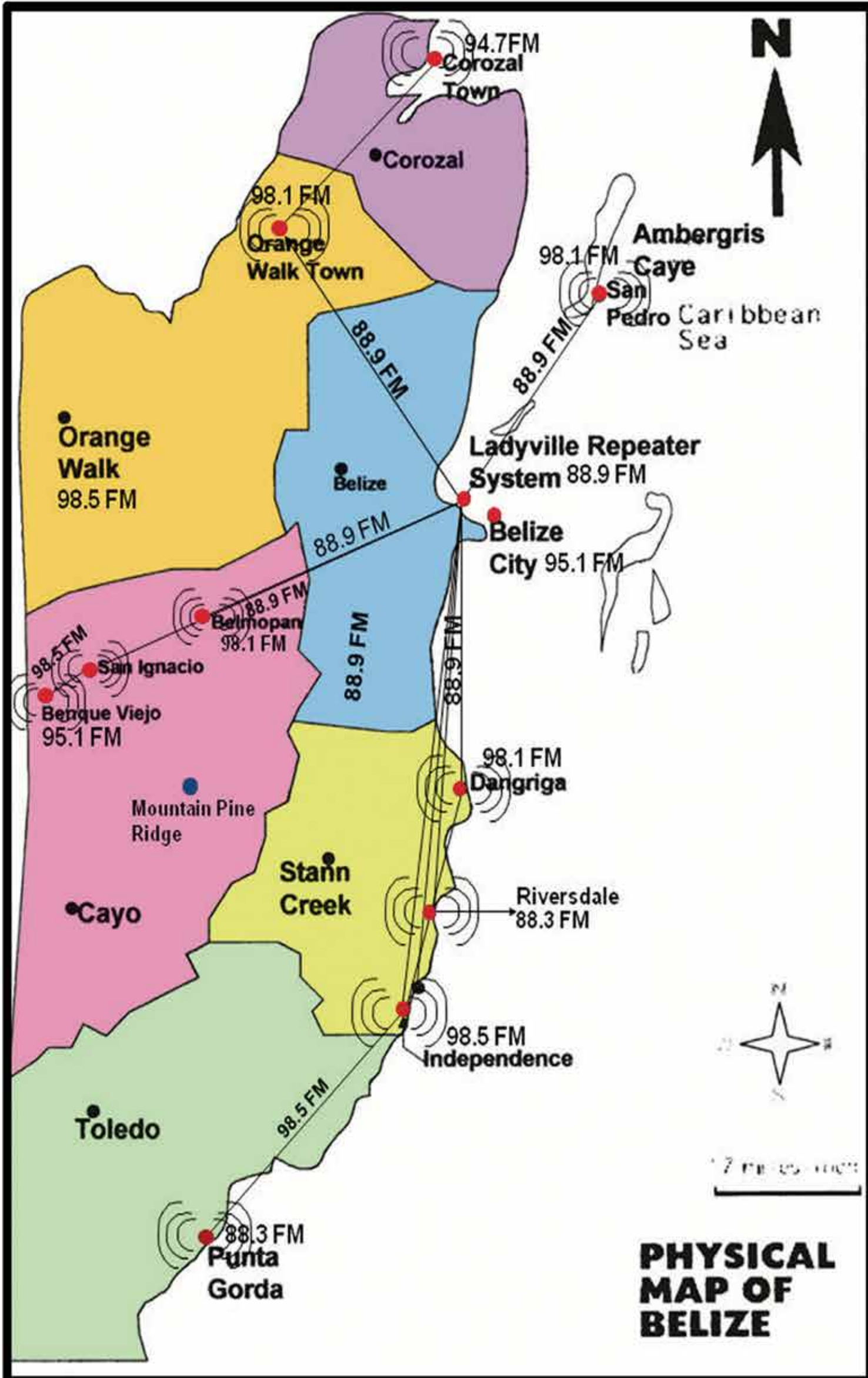
Interested applicants must submit their application via the Electronic Recruitment Application (ERA) system, a web-based system. To view and apply for this vacancy, visit the ERA site at: <https://erajobs.state.gov/dos-cra/blz/vacancysearch/searchVacancies.hms>

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.

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CALL FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST

UPDATE OF THE NATIONAL CRUISE TOURISM POLICY

The Belize Tourism Board (BTB) is inviting Expressions of Interest (EOI) for a consultant to update the National Cruise Tourism Policy of Belize.

1. Minimum Qualification and Experience of Consultant:

- At least 5 years' experience in public policy development, public governance, tourism policy development, tourism development, cruise tourism, port destination management, economic, business management, or related fields.
- Proof of experience in similar or related projects locally and/or internationally, in countries of similar governance and development ecosystems.
- Proof of Experience in facilitating and carrying out national public consultations is a requirement, as well as proven experience in developing technical reports, studies, drafting policy, and policy-related documents.
- Minimum Academic Qualifications: Bachelor's Degree in Public Policy, Policy Development, Tourism Development, Sustainable Development, Economic, Business Development, Governance or related fields.



2. Application:

Interested persons should submit a proposal based on the terms of reference (accessible via contact below), complete with:

1. Full Curriculum Vitae (with two professional references);
2. Proposed work schedule and description of approach/ methodology for performing the assignment.
3. Demonstrated knowledge of skills in similar activities, and stakeholder participation techniques; as well as strong communication, documentation and presentation skills
4. A technical proposal should be submitted to include at minimum the proposed approach to be taken to execute the consultancy, evidence of stakeholder participation, indicative timeline and budget for completion.
5. Proposals should not exceed 10 pages in length (exclusive of CV and references).

SUBMIT ELECTRONICALLY TO:

- Mrs. Romy Rancharan
- romy.rancharan@belizetourismboard.org
- **Deadline: February 25th, 2022 at 5:00pm**
- Any questions please submit to romy.rancharan@belizetourismboard.org
- Labeled **Re: Consultancy to Update National Cruise Tourism Policy**