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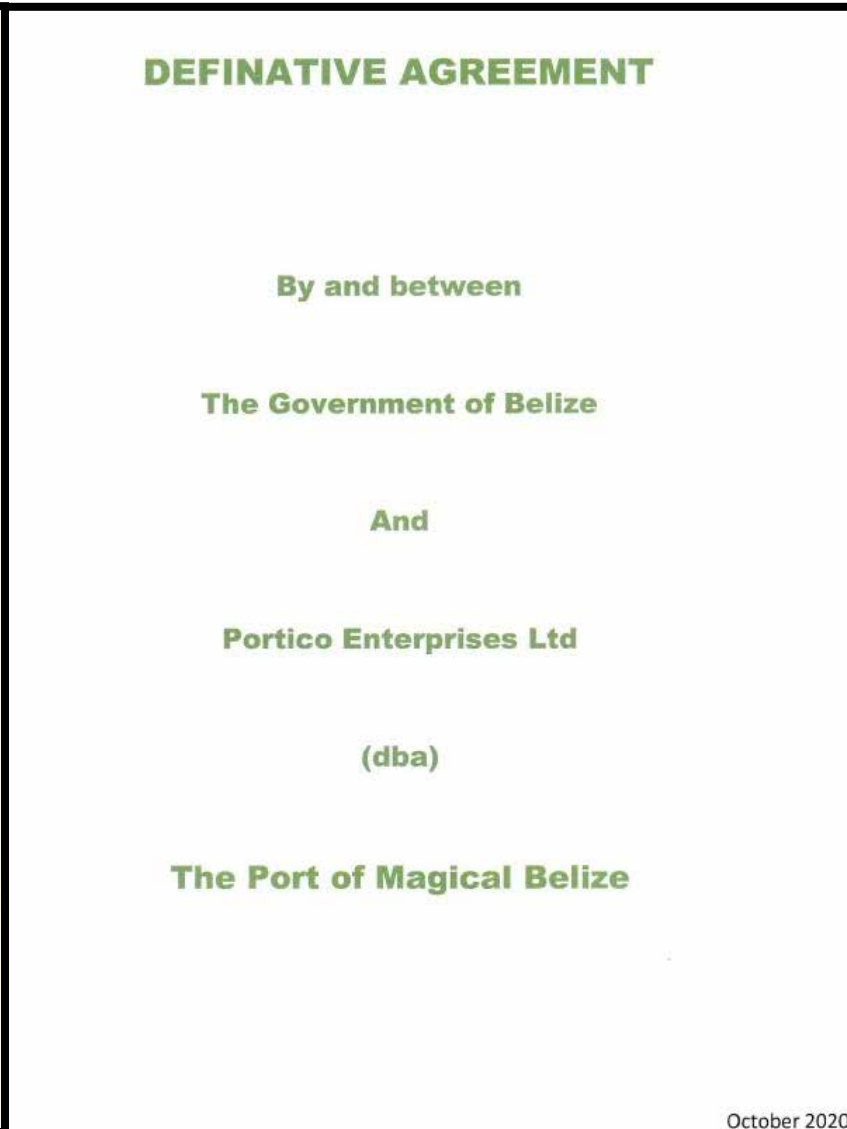
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UNENFORCEABLE!

Former Prime Minister: Legal precedent makes plain that 'Portico' Definitive Agreement not binding of Government



Former Prime Minister Rt. Hon. Dean Barrow



October 2020

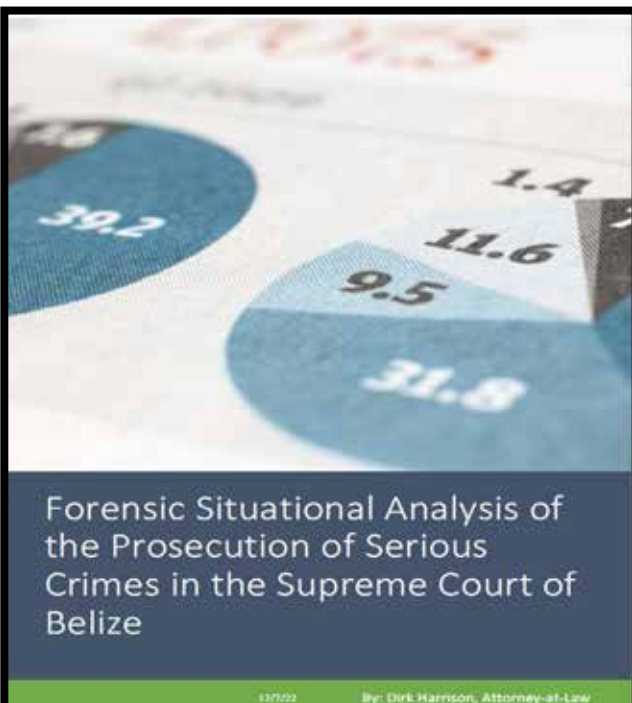
The Portico Definitive Agreement, as clearly set out in case law, cannot bind the government, former Prime Minister Rt. Hon. Dean Barrow told *The Reporter* this week.

According to Barrow, who is also a senior counsel, case precedents such as Claim No. 404 of 2007 already demonstrated in Belize's Supreme Court that government ministers, including the prime minister, cannot place restrictions or demands, per se, on Parliament; thereby, making agreements like the Portico (Port of Magical Belize) document unenforceable.

Barrow's reference to Claim No. 404

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Leaked Report: Belize's conviction rate at 37%! Statistics belie popular public perception that it is 3%



By Javan Flowers

Belize's conviction rate for the prosecution of serious crimes—contrary to the common belief that it is as low as three percent—stands 37.17 percent, a leaked forensic report of the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions (ODPP) informs.

The document titled "Forensic Situational Analysis of the Prosecution

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AG Magali Marin Young to step down



Pg. 2

Attorney General Magali Marin Young



An intriguing constitutional issue has come up before the Senate of Belize, concerning a proposed new law called the Special Prosecutor Bill (2023).

In this Bill, which had already been approved by the House, the Government had sought to create a new prosecutorial authority to pursue and prosecute the person or persons responsible for the ghastly New Year's Eve murders in which three persons in Belmopan were killed in cold blood.

The reason for the new legislation is clear. The Director of Public Prosecution, Mrs. Cheryl Lynn Vidal, has recused herself for personal reasons, given her familial ties—even though only through marriage—to the lead suspect in the murder case.

But this is where the constitutional problem emerges, because the Director of Public Prosecution is the only authority designated under our constitution to handle prosecutions. To be clear, **Section 50(4)** Constitution reads as follows:

“The powers conferred on the Director of Public Prosecutions by paragraphs (b) and (c) of subsection (2) of this section shall be vested in him TO THE EXCLUSION of any other person or authority.”

Of course, the Supreme Law does allow for delegating of powers. **Section 50(3)** reads: “The powers of the Director of Public Prosecutions, under subsection (2) of this section, may be exercised by him in person or through other persons acting under and in accordance with his general or *special instructions*.”

Given the language of **Section 50(3)**, one could wonder if the solution to the ostensible conflict could not have been a type of reliance on the “special instructions” provision already carved out in the Constitution, as opposed to attempting to pass new legislation that appears to conflict with the Constitution itself.

Given its language, the Special Prosecutor Bill clearly seeks to give prosecutorial powers to another office other than the DPP. **Section 6** of the Special Prosecutor Bill reads: “The scope of duties of a special prosecutor shall be to (a) investigate an assigned case and determine whether to institute a public prosecution.”

Interestingly, **Section 50(2)(b)** of the Constitution—again the Supreme Law of the land—authorizes the Director of Public Prosecution (DPP) to “to take over and continue any such criminal proceedings that have been instituted or undertaken by any other person or authority.”

It is important to recall what Section 2 of the Constitution expressly says: “This Constitution is the supreme law of Belize and if any other law is inconsistent with this Constitution that other law shall, to the extent of the inconsistency, be void.”

Considering the “Supreme Law” clause, even if, the Special Prosecutor Bill (2023) declared itself as having powers that are outside the reach of the DPP's Office, the operative question is this: Would such a proviso or declaration be “consistent” with the Constitution that tells us that the DPP can overtake any prosecution (Section 50(2))?

Now, the Special Prosecutor Bill does attempt this by saying at **section 4(3)**: “A special prosecutor shall not be subject to the direction or control of any person or authority.”

Try as it might, however, the Bill—even if passed—would have been no more than an Ordinary Law, therefore, unable to legally upend the language of the Constitution. The Senate—the Upper House—rightfully placed this piece of legislation on pause. While we could understand the intent for the Bill, the means need to be revisited.

This is one of the few instances in our country's history where our bicameral National Assembly has illustrated its usefulness in catching conspicuous flaws that the structural weaknesses of our Lower House makes incapable of reining in. There are at least four legally trained members in the Lower House that one could only assume cringed at the conflict between the Bill and Constitution. But, alas, the “Ayes” must have it, especially when Area Representatives cannot vote their conscience without permission from their respective Party.

UNENFORCEABLE!...

Cont'd from pg. 1

of 2007 speaks to a matter raised by the Port of Belize Limited (claimant) against the Government of Belize regarding certain agreements that the Port of Belize Limited (PBL) argued that the Government breached and failed to fulfill.

Barrow reminded that the judge's ruling in that matter (and others like it) provides sufficient guidance as to how to handle the present Definitive Agreement because those earlier cases established, as a matter of legal principle, that the Executive Branch of Government, *inter alia*, cannot fetter or bind the hands of Parliament.

Barrow, quoting the 2007 case, said:

“The court could, where it finds that the agreements purported to fetter future power of the legislature to legislate, arrive at a conclusion that the undertaking to enact legislation is unenforceable because it is *ultra vires* the Executive Government, contrary to public policy and usurpation

of the functions of the legislature.

“As such, I [Justice Minnet Hafiz Bertram] respectfully disagree with Learned Counsel for the Claimants that the Defendant cannot rely on this argument because it was not pleaded.”

He also quoted another section of that earlier judgment: “I [Justice Hafiz Bertram] agree with the Defendant that the undertaking by the Minister to enact legislation purports to fetter the power of the legislature to legislate.

“The Minister cannot validly enter into a contract that fetters the power of the legislature to legislate. Further, the agreement is beyond the powers of the executive to legislate. The rule against fettering applies to a clash between a contract and future legislation. It is not possible for a Government to bind itself by contract either to legislate or not to legislate on a particular matter in the future.”

In concluding the 2007 case, Justice Minnet Hafiz

Bertram had found that the government (the Defendant) did not breach any agreement for, among other things, the reasons already cited.

The Definitive Agreement

Having outlined the case precedent set—Barrow, who maintained that the document fails on several other grounds—demonstrated how the Definitive Agreement openly purports to do exactly what previous rulings have already declared unenforceable.

Article V, titled “Government's Obligations,” opens by saying at subsection 12.1.1 that the “Government shall introduce into the National Assembly and cause to pass such primary and subsidiary legislation ... and/or take such executive action as may be required.”

The section goes on to list all the concessions that may require legislation. For instance, section goes on to read that the legislation that the National Assembly should introduce and pass

would be to “exempt the Developer ... and their subcontractors from the payment of any and all customers and excise and revenue replacement duties, stamp duties, general sales taxes” and several other taxes.

Apart from the slew of tax exemptions, the Definitive Agreement also sought to bind the Legislature to pass laws that would “provide, or secure the Developer's access to, Government land (including seabed) required for the development of the project.

Barrow maintained that the Definitive Agreement fails on several grounds, but case precedent and legal principles, demonstrate where the kinds of terms included in the Portico document, signed by a then UDP Minister, could never be considered enforceable. He opined that had such a document been presented during his tenure as Prime Minister, it would not have been countenanced in the slightest.

AG Magali Marin Young to step down

By Javan Flowers

The Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) announced this week that Attorney General Hon. Magali Marin Young will leave office at the end of June 2023 and return to private practice.

The OPM explained that while Marin-Young had indicated that she would serve as the Attorney General for two years, the OPM expressed much gratitude that she stayed on for an additional seven months.

Though, as has been speculated by the Leader of the Opposition Moses “Shyne” Barrow, Marin-Young's move may have been a reaction to the recent issues surrounding the Portico Definitive Agreement having

being taken to Cabinet.

In a letter to the Prime Minister's Office, Barrow wrote, “I understand even your Attorney General Magali Marin Young told you the Definitive Agreement was illegal, therefore, non-binding on the government. Thus, your public pronouncement in March 2023 that the Definitive Agreement is ‘binding’ on your government because it was signed by the previous government is squarely contradicted by your Attorney General.”

The OPM release further noted that Marin-Young's achievements in office were many and that she spearheaded positive changes during her tenure, including “judicial reforms, legal reform, and law revision.”

The release closes by thanking her for the sound advice that “Cabinet [has] benefitted from.” They also expressed gratitude

for her “dedication to professionalism, good governance and sound leadership at the Attorney General's Ministry.”

THE REPORTER

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TENDER



Load Forecast & Economic Dispatch Software Module

BEL invites tenders to express interest for a project to procure and implement a Load Forecast (LF) & Economic Dispatch (ED) Software Module as follows:

The purpose of this Request for Information is to inform potential LF & ED vendors about the project's scope of work, confirm vendor interest in submitting proposals capable of completing the work in a timely and efficient manner, solicit a response from vendors so as to understand the automated baseline LF & ED functionality that they can provide and with any necessary customization, will allow BEL to perform its daily load forecast, generation scheduling and generation dispatch tasks more efficiently and effectively.

The RFI document, which outlines the project scope, requirements and software functionalities, and dates, are available on BEL's website at www.bel.com.bz/Tenders.aspx

RFIs will be accepted by email only and the email subject must include the bid number located on the respective bid form.

Submit bids via email to bidsubmittal@bel.com.bz no later than 3:00 p.m. local time on Friday, July 7, 2023.

For more information or queries, send email to bidboxrequest@bel.com.bz

Cost incurred for preparation of the tender document is the sole responsibility of the bidder. The lowest or any tender will not necessarily be accepted.

Leaked Report: Belize's conviction rate at 37% ...

Cont'd from pg. 1

of Serious Crimes in the Supreme Court of Belize" revealed that the conviction rate for the prosecution of serious crimes in the Supreme Court of Belize for years 2014 to 2021 is, respectively, as follows: 25.89%, 23.4%, 24.05%, 23.01%, 31.3%, 30.8%, 35.2%, and, as of 2021, 37.17%.

The figures are roughly ten times higher than what is generally believed, a point that the report highlights. "Unfortunately, there is the public perception that the conviction rate for the Prosecution of Serious Crimes in the Supreme Court is 3%," notes the report. "This perception is far from the reality. In fact, between 2014 and 2021 the conviction rate ranged between 25.89% and 37.17%."

While reporting on the rate, the document does acknowledge various

challenges facing the office. "Despite these fundamental challenges, the ODPP, which has struggled with staff retention issues for over a decade, is doing fairly well," the report noted. It added, "Consequently, a conviction rate 30%, in all the circumstances is rather hopeful especially within the context of the problem being faced with the unavailability and non-appearance of witnesses."

The document notes that the rate calculation was achieved and represented as a percentage, by dividing the total number of guilty verdicts by the total number of matters before the court for each year – including the Nolle Prosequis.

Last year, Commissioner of Police Chester Williams had spoken on this matter saying that the public perception

was misguided. "Certainly, we have heard the notion for quite some time now that our murder conviction rate is at 3 or 5%," Williams said. "That was not the actual rate we had, but that's the public perception. ... The police department as well as the Office of Director of Public Prosecution has been given a bad rap, per say, in that we were either unable to properly investigate or the prosecutors were unable to properly prosecute. Even though if you were to do an analysis of the cases... you would see that a very high percentage of those cases fell apart due to none cooperation of witnesses particularly this year."

The report also highlighted several internal and external challenges faced by the office. These will be explored in subsequent articles in The Reporter.

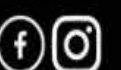


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Russia shells civilians fleeing dam collapse in southern Ukraine

By Lyme Cho and Matthew Mulligan

Ukraine on Thursday accused Russian forces of shelling civilians fleeing floodwaters caused by the catastrophic dam collapse this week.

Video shot from an inflatable boat showed a man in the boat holding on to the side of a house as water lapped the walls just beneath a pitched roof. A hum can be heard growing louder until a solid thud cuts short the sound. The person recording crouches and pans to the right in time to catch a cascade of water forming a misty wall of droplets above the dark brown floodwaters.

NBC News geolocated the video to Korabelnaya Square in Kherson, which is downriver from the Kakhovka dam. The dam's destruction released a surge of water into homes, fields and roads along the Dnieper River toward Kherson, which was liberated from the Russians by Ukraine in November.

A Sky News team recorded residents running in panic at an evacuation point in Kherson as the deep "booms" sounded.

"Russia is shelling the drowning Kherson and flooded coastal areas, preventing rescuers

from evacuating the population," Mykhailo Podolyak, adviser to President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, said Thursday on Twitter.

NBC News was not able to confirm the charges.

Russians, in turn, accused the Ukrainians of shelling Russian-held territory. Vladimir Saldo, the Russian-installed acting governor of the Kherson region, said an evacuation point in Hola Prystan had been hit.

The dam collapsed earlier this week, leaving the water level of the Kakhovka reservoir at "dangerous low," said Kakhovka Hydroelectric Station,



Flood waters continue to rise after the collapsed dam in Ukraine.

which oversees the facility.

Another video posted on Twitter shows the chief rabbi of Ukraine, Moshe Azman, addressing the camera to talk about evacuation attempts in Kherson.

An initial thud interrupts him midsentence, and

Azman crouches down. A larger thud follows and echoes. Everyone at the scene, including the person holding the camera, lies flat on the ground, blocking the camera in a hasty attempt to get to safety.

Distant thuds and the sound of revving engines can be heard

as the footage pans wildly. The person recording breathes loudly and scrambles forward until reaching a concrete wall. The camera pans, the person still breathing heavily, to show a clear sky, now quiet with a policeman and another armed man emerging from a patrol car

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VACANCY: A vacancy exists for Warehouse Assistant at COSMETIC CORNER Please Call: 227-0145 for more information.

RF&G LIFE INSURANCE COMPANY LTD.

Date: June 8, 2023

Feliciana Torres of 6 St Paul Road, Belmopan City, Cayo District, Belize C.A. having made written declaration that Policy 5000013262 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.



BELIZE MEDICAL AND DENTAL UNION

PRESS RELEASE

Date: June 2nd, 2023

The Executive of the Belize Medical & Dental Union (BMDU) hereby calls on its membership, especially those members that were active up to 2018, to contact us as soon as possible.

The purpose of this is to update our database, to gather information of appointed beneficiaries, and to inform our members concerned of their rights, duties and benefits accrued during the tenure of the BMDU.

All members, active and those active up to 2018, are asked to please contact the Executive through the following;

- Email: medicaldentalUbz@gmail.com
- Phone: +5016018968

Deadline for necessary updates in this regard is Sunday, June 23rd, 2023 at midnight. The membership is urged to contact the Executive in a timely and efficient manner. Your kind attention is hereby greatly appreciated!

ENDS

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Warning: The Minister of Health advises that SMOKING IS DANGEROUS TO HEALTH

No more Pick-3 or Fantasy 5!



By Javan Flowers

The Lotteries Committee has confirmed that the licenses for Caribbean Gaming Company Ltd. (Fantasy 5) and 369 Gaming Company Ltd. (Pick 3) will not be renewed due to “non-compliance with the licensing requirements and conditions.”

As reported in a release issued by the Government, the license held by Caribbean Gaming Company Limited for Fantasy 5 for the period June 1st, 2018, to May 31st, 2023, as well as the license held by 369 Gaming Company Ltd. for Pick 3 for the period April 1st, 2018, to March 31st, 2023, will not be renewed.

Thus, The Government informed both gaming companies that they should cease and desist all lottery operations effective June 8th, 2023.

The release further denotes that the Ministry of Investment and the Lotteries Committee advises all establishments that the sale of illegal lottery tickets is strictly prohibited and is considered an

offense, adding that any establishment caught selling illegal Pick 3 or Fantasy 5 tickets will be subject to fines, as per the Lotteries Control Act.

The Ministry of Investment goes on to implore other license holders that if they intend to seek a renewal of their license, “they must comply with all licensing requirements and conditions.”

Avid news consumers would recall that only weeks ago, the Lotteries Committee, in citing material and substantial breaches of the conditions of the exclusive license, officially terminated the license awarded to Brads Gaming Group Ltd (BGGL) to manage and operate the Boledo and Jackpot lotteries (the Government Lotteries) in Belize.

The Government had then advised that effective May 2nd, 2023, BGGL would no longer be permitted to sell or administer the Government Lotteries (Boledo, Jackpot, and Ordinary Lotteries) and that the last lottery draw under the present arrangement was on April 30th, 2023.



MINISTRY OF INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT AND HOUSING INVITATION TO QUOTE



PROCUREMENT OF NEW 19-SEATER PASSENEGER VAN

The Government of Belize via the Ministry of Infrastructure Development and Housing (MIDH) intends to procure one (1) New 19-Seater Passenger Van to facilitate the staff of the Ministry in the Belize District.

The MIDH now invites sealed quotations from eligible and qualified suppliers for the supply of the following item:

a) One (1) New 19-Seater Passenger Van (2.8 L Diesel Engine- Minimum)

Bidding will be conducted through Open National Competitive Bidding Procedures.

Interested eligible suppliers may obtain the **full Invitation to Quote** for the type of Passenger Van **as of Monday, June 12, 2023**, from the MIDH's Offices located at #1 Power Lane, Belmopan from Monday through to Friday 8.00 AM – 5.00 PM.

Quotations must utilize forms provided in the Invitation to Quote. One (1) Original and two (2) copies are to be submitted in sealed labelled envelopes to the address indicated below. Quotations by email **WILL NOT** be accepted.

Offers will be submitted on the Quote Submission Sheet including a detailed description of specifications offered, price and delivery schedule for Goods and related Services. These templates are annexed in the full Invitation to Quote.

All documents must be completed without any alterations in format, and no substitutes shall be accepted. All blank spaces shall be filled in with the information requested. Suppliers are informed that they can only quote for the type of **equipment** specified. Price quotations should be **exclusive of both Import Duty and 12.5% General Sales Tax**. The Purchaser shall award the Contract to the Supplier who complies substantially with the technical specifications and other requirements in these documents and submitted the lowest evaluated price.

All sealed Quotes must be delivered to the address below by **10.00 AM local time on June 26, 2023**, and they will be **opened on the same day at 10.15 A.M.**, at the address below. Late bids will be rejected.

1. **Victor Espat**
Chief Executive Officer
Ministry of Infrastructure Development & Housing

#1 Power Lane
Belmopan, Belize
Tel: 501-822-2136/39
E-mail: ceo.secretary@mow.gov.bz

2. **Darren Azueta**
Mechanical Administrator
Ministry of Infrastructure Development & Housing

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Belmopan, Belize
Tel: 501-822-2136/39
E-mail: darren.azueta@midh.gov.bz

*Keep Calm
and
Read*



The Reporter

Central Banks Can Fend Off Financial Turmoil and Still Fight Inflation

By Tobias Adrian, Gita Gopinath, Pierre-Olivier Gourinchas

Recent events have shown central banks and policymakers can deal with sizable financial stress without compromising their inflation-fighting stance.

Regulators and central banks were able to contain contagion from the collapse of Silicon Valley Bank and other US regional banks, as well as Credit Suisse in Switzerland, without retreating on the inflation front. The same is true of the Bank of England's actions to halt the selloff in bond markets that followed the UK government's tax-cut proposal last September.

In times of acute financial stress and high inflation, though, policy trade-offs are more challenging.

During the 2008 global financial crisis, policies in pursuit of price and financial stability were aligned. As economic activity faltered, the primary question for price stability was how to support aggregate demand to avoid deflation and recession. On the financial stability side, the main concern was to avoid deeper financial distress. Aggressive easing of monetary policy allowed the simultaneous pursuit of both objectives.

With inflation now stubbornly high, the two objectives may clash. Central banks have had to raise policy interest rates aggressively to cool activity and bring inflation back to target. After a long period of low and stable inflation and interest rates, many financial institutions had grown complacent about maturity and liquidity mismatches. Rapidly rising interest rates have stressed the balance sheets of exposed bank and nonbank financial institutions through declining values of their fixed-income assets and increased funding costs. Left unmitigated, these could threaten overall

financial stability.

How should central banks navigate this difficult trade-off? Conceptually, we propose to distinguish between times when financial stress remains modest, and times of heightened financial stress or acute financial crises.

Handling modest financial stress

Past episodes of monetary policy tightening have often generated financial stress. Provided these stresses remain modest, they shouldn't pose much of a challenge to achieving both price and financial stability objectives. Increases in the policy rate transmit to the real economy in part by raising borrowing costs for households and firms. If such modest financial stress leads to an unexpected weakening of aggregate demand, the policy rate path can be adjusted, keeping output and inflation broadly on the same trajectory. Central banks have taken this approach in the past. For example, the US Federal Reserve put a hold on raising rates in the early 1990s when it faced a looming credit crunch, even though inflation was running well above desired levels.

In addition, tools other than the policy rate can be used to contain financial stress. For example, emergency lending at the discount window or via emergency liquidity facilities can provide support while macroprudential tools, where available, could be loosened. In principle, the use of relatively standard financial stability tools—without the need for additional fiscal support—should be sufficient in the case of a modest rise in financial stress, allowing monetary policy to focus on inflation.

The challenges of heightened financial stress

Even when financial stresses may seem

contained for some time, a number of developments can create adverse nonlinear feedback loops and quickly develop into a full-blown systemic financial crisis, a process that was hastened in the recent bank collapses by technology and social media.

Such an environment presents very difficult challenges for central banks. Forceful and timely action by policymakers is required through aggressive financial policies. These include various forms of liquidity support, asset purchases, or possibly direct capital injections. Sufficiently forceful, these interventions could leave monetary policy free to maintain its focus on inflation.

Critically, the actions needed to forestall a crisis may extend beyond what central banks can do alone. While central banks can extend broad-based liquidity support to solvent banks, they are not equipped to deal with the problems of insolvent firms or borrowers, which must be addressed by governments. The need for aggressive financial interventions becomes more acute as financial stresses intensify and insolvency risks grow, and often requires committing sizeable fiscal resources.

This is illustrated in a recent episode in Korea. When the default of a real estate developer last September triggered sharp disruptions in short-term funding markets, the Korean government responded with market support measures, including a corporate bond-buying program, while the Bank of Korea provided substantial liquidity support. These actions allowed the central bank to raise its policy rate in pursuit of its inflation objectives.

When governments lack fiscal space or political support to provide resources,

risk management concerns may induce central banks to adjust their monetary policy reaction function to account for financial stress. Specifically, more prudence in raising rates is needed to reduce the risks of an adverse and potentially nonlinear reaction of the financial system. Under these conditions, while central banks should remain committed to price stability, they could tolerate a somewhat slower return of inflation to target. Uncertainties about balance sheet exposures, intermediaries' connectedness, and self-fulfilling market reactions to policy moves push in the same direction.

Of course, the reduced focus on inflation may be difficult to communicate, possibly heightening the sense of crisis. Moreover, it may leave central banks well behind the curve in fighting inflation or at the mercy of 'financial dominance'. Hence the bar should be high in communicating such a shift in the reaction function, especially when inflation is still raging. The preferred course of action should be to rely on financial policies or to restore fiscal support.

In countries with limited monetary policy credibility and weak fiscal positions, policy options are far more limited. These countries are more vulnerable to broad-based depositor flight that triggers a sharp exchange rate depreciation and high inflation. If available, authorities can deploy measures requiring real resources (foreign exchange interventions, equity injections) but if a crisis is imminent, they may have to turn to capital management tools, notwithstanding potentially adverse reputational effects. Policy options can be further narrowed by investor concerns about the vulnerability of the financial sector.

When the financial crisis is acute

Should financial conditions deteriorate

into a systemic crisis—with a sharp downturn in economic activity expected to ensue—central banks would clearly want to prioritize restoring financial stability. Central banks with high credibility could ease monetary policy, and if inflation was still running high, indicate that they would be more flexible about the time frame for returning inflation to target. In practice, the materialization of a crisis would likely put substantial downward pressure on inflation, thus realigning monetary and financial policy objectives.

But emerging markets with weaker macro policy frameworks would likely have to confront the very difficult challenges posed by capital flight and currency depreciation-inflation spirals. Their central banks would have to remain vigilant about the need to maintain a nominal anchor, limiting any scope to ease. While these countries could take some steps on their own (for example, with capital flow management measures), a strong international safety net is vital to mitigate the risk of a prolonged and severe crisis.

Supporting nonbanks

The rising importance and criticality of nonbank financial institutions, such as insurance firms, pension funds and investment funds,

present important challenges. Typically, central banks provide liquidity through the banking system, but this liquidity may not reach nonbanks. They are often less well capitalized and subject to weaker prudential regulation and supervision, so that central banks have less scope to reduce moral hazard risks in the first place. Yet, in periods of heightened or acute financial stress, central banks may need to provide liquidity to nonbanks, as they did during the global financial crisis and the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the bar on lending to nonbanks should be higher than for banks because of the greater risks to central banks' balance sheets and the risk of creating incentives that could increase future financial instability.

In sum

In practice, the boundaries between the different scenarios are fuzzy. Uncertainty about the health of the financial system and its resilience to monetary tightening will inevitably complicate central banks' decision processes. However, through the lens of our proposed taxonomy, the recent events in Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the United States suggest that the forceful responses by authorities to heightened financial stress helped reduce financial instability and allowed central banks to maintain their inflation fighting stance.



Oración al Espíritu Santo

Espíritu Santo. Tú que me aclaras todo, que iluminas todo mis caminos para yo alcance mi ideal; tú que das el don divino de perdonar y olvidar el mal que me hacen y que en todos los instantes de mi vida estas conmigo, yo quiero en este corto diálogo agradecerte por todo y confirmar una vez más que nunca quiero separarme de ti, por mayor que sea la ilusión material! Deseo estar contigo y todos mis seres queridos por tu misericordia para estar conmigo y los míos. (La persona debiera rezar esta oración 3 días seguidos sin decir el pedido. Dentro de tres días será difícil que sea. Publicar en cuando se reciba la gracia.

Gracias Espíritu Santo.

R.M.L.

Senate approves loan for new tertiary hospital in Belmopan

By Javan Flowers

In the latest sitting of the Senate, members of the Upper House argued and ultimately approved the \$90 million loan that the Government has secured from the Saudi Government to build a state-of-the-art tertiary hospital in Belmopan.

While some Senators supported the initiative, others also raised concerns. For his part, Opposition Senator Michael Peyrefitte noted specific clauses that seemingly compel the government to employ consultants that are apt and approved by the Saudi Government.

"Look at Section 303. It says that the borrower shall cause the executing agency, who is the Ministry of Economic Development, [to employ] qualified and experienced Saudi consultants or [where feasible] a joint venture of Saudi-Belize consulting offices acceptable to the Saudis in order to assist in project tendering and supervision of the execution of the project. ...So, [they] lend us the money, and in typical vampire ways, we have to hire them to consult, and they have to approve all who will work in this hospital."

Other senators

also voiced concerns regarding whether the Government was actively de-prioritizing preventative care initiatives and solely bolstering tertiary care. Other issues raised were if the 200,000 Belizeans expected to utilize the hospital could afford its services.

As detailed under the loan agreement, the new tertiary hospital will be equipped with state-of-the-art medical facilities and integrated health services and is expected to benefit approximately 200,000 citizens annually, thereby enhancing the

capacity of the local healthcare system by training health personnel from the University of Belize.

Prior to the official signing of the agreement, Prime Minister John Briceño, in speaking with the media, underscored the importance of the new hospital. "The truth is that if a hurricane were to hit Belize City, the country [would] lose its only tertiary level hospital." He explained that the measure is to help "relieve pressure" from the Karl Heusner Memorial Hospital.

Briceño further

acknowledged that Belize's only tertiary health institution desperately needs resources and assured Belizeans that through funding from Central American Bank for Economic Integration (CABEI), further development of the KMH would be realized.

While Briceño offered his vision for the project and assurances to the KMH, a release issued by the Karl Heusner Memorial Hospital Authority Workers' Union (KHMHWU) highlighted the union's grave concern regarding the rationale and timing given for the construction of the proposed tertiary hospital.

In the release, the union vehemently disagreed with the notion that the KMH would no longer provide adequate care to Belize's ever-growing population, citing that the existing physical plant structure of the hospital was built with the vision for future expansion of the facility to accommodate an ever-growing population.

The union further noted that aside from the institution being constructed with the intent to expand in the future, in its almost 28-year history, it has not "been given a chance by successive governments to reach" its full potential.

"Instead, we have been stymied by political interference in terms of collection of revenue, and our development and ability to serve have been chained to a subvention that has been slow to adjust to the global context of cost," the union wrote.

As it stands, KMHHA currently has a Human Resource shortage of 50 nurses and 20 doctors, as well as other healthcare professionals, and, as suggested by the union, the Ministry of Health and Wellness has yet to address the shortage.

Aside from healthcare practitioners, the facility is also experiencing severe shortages of services such as Medical and Nursing services, physiotherapy, Bio-Medical Technicians, imaging services,

Laboratory Technicians, Radiographers, and many essential supplies and equipment – that impact quality of healthcare services rendered.

The release continued by noting exactly how a \$90 million investment could strengthen and resolve issues within Belize's healthcare system.

The union explained that the money could be directed towards capacity building for nursing education and the training of doctors and other healthcare workers to reduce staff replacement due to attrition.

It could also be utilized to strengthen and develop its key areas of Internal Medicine, Hemodialysis, Oncology, Cardiology (inclusive of intervention cardiology & Cardiovascular Surgery), Neurology, and Urology, among a laundry list of other areas, which also included bolstering infrastructure, and the structural of the institution to withstand a category-2 hurricane.



United Democratic Party (UDP) Senator Michael Peyrefitte

STATUTORY NOTICE TO CREDITORS

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN pursuant to Section 36 of the Administration of Estates Act Chapter 197 of the Laws of Belize, Revised Edition 2000 that all creditors having any claims or demands upon or against the Estate of JESUS GARCIA deceased of No. 4829 Gretel Lashley Street, Belama Phase 4, Belize City who died on the 7th day of January, 2023 in whose estate Grant of Probate No. 186 of 2023 has been granted to FELICE WILLIAMS of No. 6213 Keating Crescent, Belize City, Belize and ALTHEA TUCKER of No. 264 Starfish Crescent, Phase 1, Belize City, Belize., should lodge such claims or demands with the said FELICE WILLIAMS and ALTHEA TUCKER, Executors, c/o Barrow & Williams LLP, Attorneys-at-Law of No. 84 Albert Street, Belize City, Belize, on or before the expiration of three months from the first publication hereof AND NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that at the expiration of the said three months the Executors shall proceed to distribute the assets of the said JESUS GARCIA deceased, amongst the parties entitled thereto having regard to all the claims and demands of which particulars are lodged and the Executors shall not be liable for the assets of the deceased or any part thereof so distributed to any person or persons whose claims or demands they shall not then have had notice.

DATED the 31st day of May, 2023

BARROW & WILLIAMS LLP
Attorneys-at-Law
For: Felice Williams & Althea Tucker



Human remains found in 45 bags are missing call center staff

Human remains found in 45 bags discovered in a suburb of Guadalajara belong to call center workers who went missing in May, Mexican authorities have confirmed.

The Jalisco Institute of Forensic Sciences (IJCF) said Tuesday its tests had confirmed the remains belonged to the missing workers and said the next

of kin had been informed. However, it did not specify whether remains from all seven of the missing workers were in the bags.

The seven workers disappeared from the metropolitan area of Guadalajara sometime after May 20. The search for them took a grisly turn last week when bags containing human body

parts were found in a ravine in the municipality of Zapopan.

Mexico's Secretary of Security Rosa Icela Rodriguez Velazquez said last Tuesday that initial investigations suggested the workers might have been involved in "some type of real estate fraud" and "telephone extortion."

Mexico has been troubled by an epidemic of disappearances with more than 100,000 Mexicans and migrants still missing.

More than 1,500 bodies have been found in Jalisco state since 2018, official figures show. According to the office of the Jalisco's special prosecutor for missing persons, 291 bodies were discov-

ered in 2019, 544 bodies were found in 2020, 280 bodies in 2021, and 301 the following year. So far in 2023, 147 bodies have been found.

In March, after four Americans were kidnapped in Mexico, resulting in the deaths of two of them, Mexican President Andrés Manuel López Obrador argued

that Mexico is a safer country than the United States.

Kidnapping and human trafficking are also not unusual in parts of Mexico, particularly in border areas and Mexico's overall homicide rate is among the highest in the world.

- CNN

Amazon to pay \$30m over Alexa and Ring privacy violations

Amazon is to pay \$25 million (£20 million) to settle allegations that it violated children's privacy rights with its Alexa voice assistant.

The company agreed to pay the US Federal Trade Commission (FTC) after it was accused of failing to delete Alexa recordings at the request of parents.

It was found to have kept hold of sensitive data for years.

Amazon's doorbell camera unit Ring will also pay out after giving employees unrestricted access to customers' data.

Ring will pay \$5.8 million (£4.6m) to authorities, according to a filing in federal court

in the District of Columbia.

According to the FTC complaint regarding Alexa, Amazon "prominently and repeatedly assured its users, including parents, that they could delete voice recordings collected" by the system.

But the company did not do this, keeping data for years and using it unlawfully to help improve its Alexa algorithm, the complaint said.

Similarly, the FTC said Ring - which Amazon bought in 2018 - allowed "thousands of employees and contractors" to watch recordings of customers' private spaces.

They were able to view and download customers' sensitive video data for their own purposes, the body said.

Amazon said in a statement that "Ring promptly addressed the issues at hand on its own years ago, well before the FTC began its inquiry".

But according to the complaint, one employee viewed thousands of video recordings belonging to female users of Ring cameras that "surveilled intimate spaces in their homes such as their bathrooms or bedrooms".

The employee was only stopped once their actions were

spotted by a colleague, it said.

"Ring's disregard for privacy and security exposed consumers to spying and harassment," Mr Levine said. "The FTC's order makes clear that putting profit over privacy doesn't pay."

Amazon said: "While we disagree with the FTC's claims regarding both Alexa and Ring, and deny violating the law, these settlements put these matters behind us."

The company added that it will continue to invent more privacy features on behalf of customers.

- CNN

Nigerian states cut working week to three days

Two state governments in Nigeria have reduced the working week to three days for state employees.

The move is to help them cope with increased petrol costs, following the federal government announcement to scrap fuel subsidies.

Nigeria is currently struggling to control the rising cost of transportation, which is affecting citizens.

The Edo and Kwara states governments' announcement will fuel debate in the public and private sectors about measures to help workers cope with the rising costs.

Public service staff across Nigeria work five days a week, but there's still a lot of confusion about the fate of employees in the private sector who are required to work for six days a week.

There are also indications that other states may adopt the new model.

Nigeria's federal government has said it has set up a team to evaluate agreements reached with organised labour on how to reduce the impact of rising costs.

The unions shelved their planned strike action on Wednesday, following a court order.

- BBC

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi visits the scene of train crash

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi was expected to inaugurate a new high-speed train, the Vande Bharat Express, on Saturday as part of his government's massive investment into modernizing the country's sprawling railway network and other infrastructure.

But, instead, he traveled to the site of one of the worst rail accidents in the country's history to share his condolences.

More than 280 people were killed and over 1,100 injured in a three-way crash involving two passenger trains and a freight train in eastern Odisha state on Friday, officials said.

The deadly crash

in the city of Balasore has reverberated across India, now the world's most populous nation, renewing calls for authorities to confront safety issues in a railway system that transports more than 13 million passengers every day. While the government has recently poured millions into upgrading the system, years of neglect has left tracks to deteriorate.

The cause of Friday's crash remains unclear, but senior state railway officials said that it is suspected to have been caused by a traffic signaling failure.

The officials said the Shalimar-Chennai Coromandel Express entered a track where a

train carrying goods was stopped and slammed into it, pushing several coaches into the opposite track. Another train - the Howrah Express traveling from Yesvantpur to Howrah - hit the carriages at high speed and derailed.

A "high-level inquiry" has been ordered into the collision to understand what caused the crash, Ashwini Vaishnav, the minister of railways, told reporters on Saturday.

As the sun rose on Saturday, rescuers scrambled over the tangle of wreckage and overturned train carriages in a desperate search for survivors. Passengers joined first responders in an effort

to free those trapped. Officials said the death toll was suspected to rise further, as many passengers were thought to be pinned under train cars.

The government in the state, which has a population of about 44 million, declared a day of mourning on Saturday.

Video footage and photographs from the crash site near Bahanaga Bazar rail station showed scenes of chaos and despair. Dozens of dead bodies could be seen lying beside mangled train cars, while police officers and survivors stood nearby. Passengers' personal belongings were strewn inside carriages, their

windows crushed, spilling glass and metal debris onto the floors. Train carriages were ripped apart.

India's extensive rail network, one of the largest in the world, was built more than 160 years ago under British colonial rule. Today, the network runs about 11,000 trains every day over 67,000 miles of tracks. It suffers from aging infrastructure and poor maintenance - factors often cited in accidents.

In 2005, at least 102 people died when a passenger train derailed in the southern state of Andhra Pradesh as it tried to cross tracks washed away by a flood. In 2011, scores

were killed when a train jumped tracks in the northern state of Uttar Pradesh.

The death toll from Friday's crash has already surpassed that of another infamous incident in 2016, when more than 140 people were killed in a derailment in northern Uttar Pradesh state. The same year, Modi announced huge investments in India's railway system aimed at improving safety and connectivity.

The latest crash comes as India carries out a major overhaul of its infrastructure, with the country investing millions to modernize transport links.

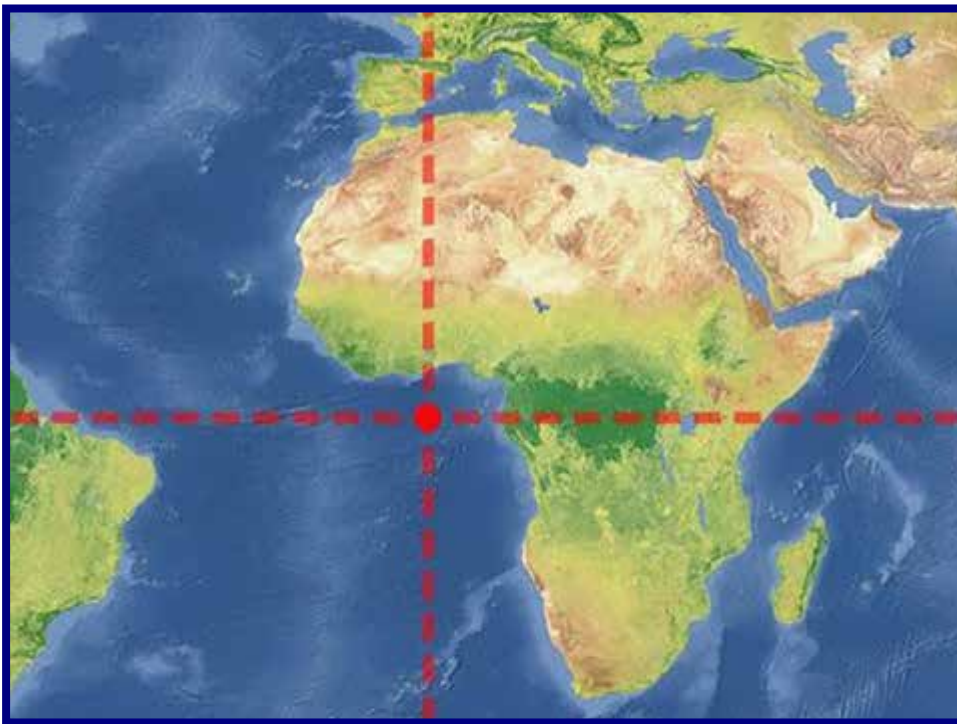
- CNN



FUN FACTS!

Which Continent Is Situated In All Four Hemispheres?

A continent can be defined as a large area of land on the earth's surface. There are no strict criteria used to identify continents; continents can be determined generally by convention. The earth is divided into seven major regions that have been defined as independent continents; these are Asia, Africa, North America, South America, Antarctica, Europe, and Australia. All these continents are located in different regions on the earth's surface. Of these, Africa is the only continent to be situated in all four hemispheres.



lines that are used to classify the planet into different regions, for instance, the part of the globe that is situated in the north of the Equator is referred to as the Northern Hemisphere while that in the south of the Equator is known as the Southern Hemisphere. The location of continents between these hemispheres determines the weather patterns and seasons that these individual continents will experience throughout the year.

While the hemispheres separate the majority of the continents, Africa lies in all four hemispheres of the earth, which are the Northern, Southern, Eastern, and Western Hemisphere. Therefore, Africa can be described as the only continent that has its land crossed by both the Prime Meridian and the Equator. Interestingly, the Equator divides Africa into almost two halves. It passes through Gabon, Sao Tome, Uganda, Democrat-

ic Republic of the Congo, Kenya, Ecuador, and Somalia. On the other hand, the Prime Meridian passes through Mali, Algeria, and Ghana. Due to its strategic location between the hemispheres, Africa experiences the most conducive climate and weather patterns throughout the year. Unlike other continents that are known to experience different seasons throughout the year, most of the countries of Africa do not have well defined seasons.



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Is vaping healthier than smoking?

Experts agree that all else being equal, it is better to vape than to smoke traditional cigarettes, but e-cigarettes come with their own risks.

Electronic nicotine delivery systems (ENDs), also known as electronic cigarettes, e-cigarettes or vape pens, were introduced in the early 2000s as an alternative to tobacco products. Instead of generating smoke, these pocket-sized devices deliver nicotine with an aerosol that looks like water vapor. But are vape pens “healthier” than cigarettes?

It depends. Experts told Live Science that they agree that “vaping” poses a small fraction of the risks of smoking. However, they stress that vape pens are not entirely safe, and we still do not know enough about the long-term effects of e-cigarette use.

So how harmful are e-cigarettes? Here is everything we know so far about the potential health effects of vaping.

Cigarettes contain tobacco leaves and other additives, such as flavorings and preservatives, that, when burned, generate up to 7,000 different chemicals, including hydrogen cyanide, arsenic, lead and carbon monoxide, according to the American Cancer Society (ACS).

Dozens of these harmful chemicals are carcinogens, or cancer-causing substances, most of which come from the tobacco leaves themselves, rather than the additives, according to the ACS. Smoking cigarettes can increase the risk of several different types of cancer, as well as cause lung and heart disease. By contrast, nicotine, the addictive chemical in tobacco leaves, does not cause cancer, according to the WHO; that said nicotine can have other harmful effects on the body, in addition to being highly addictive.

Commonly used as an aid in quitting smoking, vape pens and liquids may still be a risk to your health. Vape pens come in many shapes and sizes, but they all work based on the same principle: A battery-powered core heats and then rapidly cools a vape liquid, also called e-liquid or vape juice, creating a smoke-free aerosol that a user inhales, or “vapes.” Vape juice can contain nicotine that’s either synthetic or derived from tobacco, but it doesn’t contain tobacco leaves or other chemicals found in the plant.

Given the lack of smoke and the lack of tobacco in e-cigarettes, people who completely switch from smoking to vaping tend to have lower exposure to toxic substances than do those who use cigarettes, said Dr. Alayna Tackett, an assistant professor in the Division of Medical Oncology and the Center for Tobacco Research at the Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center.

However, vape pen liquids can contain other substances that may form carcinogenic compounds when heated, she said.

HOW TOXIC IS VAPE LIQUID?

Most e-liquids consist primarily of nicotine, flavorings and solvents, which generate vapor and keep ingredients in suspension. However, the exact composition of a specific e-liquid will largely depend on the brand’s manufacturing process, according to a 2021 review published in the journal *Pharmacology & Therapeutics*. This makes it difficult to assess exactly how toxic e-liquids are.

The two most common solvents used in e-liquids are propylene glycol and glycerol, which the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) generally recognizes as safe for human consumption. However, they may not be safe to inhale, the 2021 review states. Propylene glycol and glycerol are both airway irritants, meaning they may cause inflammation and other adverse reactions in the respiratory system, the review authors wrote.

Similarly, while flavorings used in e-liquids are



generally safe to eat, no studies show they are safe to inhale as aerosols, and some may be dangerous to inhale, according to the review. For example, the buttery-flavored compound diacetyl was linked to a severe respiratory disease called bronchiolitis obliterans — a condition nicknamed “popcorn lung” because workers at a microwave popcorn factory developed the disease after inhaling diacetyl.

Both solvents and flavoring agents may generate toxic byproducts, such as formaldehyde, a substance classified as a probable human carcinogen, the review authors wrote. Inhaling formaldehyde in high doses can be harmful, and a 2017 study in the journal *PLOS One* found that concentrations of formaldehyde from heated vape liquid solvents may exceed acceptable limits established by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. In theory, this may put ENDS users at a higher risk of cancer, but this cancer risk has not been clearly demonstrated in research.

As noted previously, most e-liquids also have varying levels of nicotine. Because tobacco smoke has a relatively low nicotine concentration and is harsh on the lungs, it is difficult to overdose on the addictive chemical when smoking cigarettes. Vape pens, however, can contain high concentrations of nicotine, and users can often dial up the amount of nicotine delivered in a single puff.

As a result, vaping may increase the risk of nicotine overdose, the review authors noted. Nicotine overdose, or nicotine poisoning, is a condition whose symptoms include muscle twitching, fainting, vomiting, heart palpitations, seizures and difficulty breathing. If it triggers severe enough symptoms, nicotine poisoning can sometimes be deadly, according to Mount Sinai.

A 2014 study by the CDC revealed a significant uptick in nicotine vape pen-related calls to poison control centers — the number of calls increased from one per month in September 2010 to 215 per month in February 2014, while the number of calls involving cigarettes remained steady over that time.

CAN VAPE LIQUID GET CONTAMINATED?

Vape pens themselves can also contaminate e-liquids. Repetitive heating of the device’s core can cause nickel, copper, iron and other metals to slip into the aerosol; breathing in such metals could lead to an increased risk of cancer, kidney damage, heart disease and neurological disorders, according to the *Pharmacology & Therapeutics* review.

The risk of metal contamination may be higher for closed pod ENDS, which have replaceable e-liquid cartridges, than in disposable vape pens designed to be used for a while and then tossed. And the metal contamination from a pod type e-cigarette

may change across its lifetime, according to a 2023 study in the journal *Toxics*. Researchers found that the longer the device was used, the higher were the concentrations of hazardous metals in its vapor.

In addition, black-market vaping products containing THC (the psychoactive ingredient in marijuana) have sometimes been contaminated with vitamin E acetate, a synthetic form of vitamin E. Likely introduced by manufacturers as a way to dilute the THC content of vape juice, vitamin E acetate was linked to a major outbreak of vaping-related illness that hit the U.S. in 2019.

WHAT DISEASES HAVE BEEN LINKED TO E-CIGARETTES?

People who smoke cigarettes would be better off switching to e-cigarettes if they are still using nicotine and haven’t had success with other substitutes, like nicotine gum. However, for those who have never smoked, it remains unclear what the health implications might be from vaping.

The evidence is limited and we do not have studies showing the long term impact of vaping, Hazel Cheeseman, deputy chief executive of Action on Smoking and Health, a charity set up by the Royal College of Physicians in the U.K. to promote smoking abstinence, told Live Science by email.

That said, preliminary research suggests that vaping may raise the risk of certain health conditions.

Lung injury and lung disease

E-cigarettes may lead to irreversible lung damage and lung disease, according to the American Lung Association.

For example, vaping can sometimes cause E-cigarette- or Vaping Product-Associated Lung Injury (EVALI), according to a 2020 review published by *The American Journal of Medicine*. Symptoms of EVALI include shortness of breath, cough, chest pain, nausea, abdominal pain, fever and chills. Up to one-third of patients admitted to an intensive care unit with the condition require mechanical ventilation, the review authors noted. The cause of EVALI is not fully understood, though it appears that vitamin E acetate plays a central role. However, other compounds found in both nicotine- and THC-containing vape liquids may also contribute to the condition, according to Yale Medicine.

In addition, e-cigarette use has been linked to lung diseases, including pneumonia, respiratory bronchiolitis-associated interstitial lung disease (an inflammatory disease previously seen mainly in heavy tobacco smokers), and hypersensitivity pneumonitis (a type of allergic reaction in the lungs), according to a 2022 review published in the

Cont’d on pg. 11

Weh Wi Ga Fi Seh

How 2023 di goh?
Gi tanks evriday:
tee, dina, tee.

Satideh, Joon 3 Flowaz Bank Day:

- * Maypoal
- * Kriol Jromin
- * Sambai – Yangotay
- * Hoks kuknat
- * Sak Rays
- * Laim & Spoon
- * Kanoo rays
- * Spoztz rays
- * Kamyooniti Myoozeeyom

*Myoozik! Food! Ting fi jrink ahn ting fi bai!

Kriol Kongsl: Kohn help wi chek da wi staal da Flowaz Bank:

Moa Kriol werd ahn phrays fi put eena wahn sekan edishan a di Kriol diskshineri!

EmergentCorp ahn Flowaz Bank Vilij Kongsl mi aalso ga di Laibayshan Serimoni pahn Terzdeh, Joon 1. Da-mi eena di erli maanin (6:15 a.m.) da di Monument sait eena Flowaz Bank, Bileez Riva Vali. Dis mek nain yaaz (9 yrs.) fi di Libayshan Serimoni, .

Wi tank di Anglikan Cherkh fi put een Kriol eena di laiv schreem a di Pentikaas Sondeh maas. Da-mi di Gaspl reedn Bishop Wright mi ga: Jan, Chapta 20, Vers 19-23.

Kriol NKK vais-prezident, Michael Kemp, mi reed it!

Fi Pentikaas Sondeh, Bishop Wright mi taak aalso bowt di Buk a Aks, weh Look taak bowt put yu mesij eena aal di langwij dehn wahn kamyooniti yooz.

If yu waahn sen een sohnting fu put eena dis Kriol aatiki, eemayl: sudz142@gmail.com Pahn tap, yu ku vizi: www.nationalkriolcouncil.org

Is vaping healthier than smoking?

Cont'd from pg. 10
journal Annual Review of Physiology.

Vape pen use may also weaken the lungs' immune defenses and increase the risk of infections with pathogens, including the influenza virus and Streptococcus pneumoniae bacteria, according to a 2022 review published in the journal Cureus.

Lastly, studies suggest that e-cigarettes may aggravate symptoms of asthma in adolescents with the condition, according to a 2023 review published in the journal Current Opinion in Allergy and Clinical Immunology. However, more research is needed to understand this effect.

Eye disorders

Exposure to e-cigarette vapor may also lead to eye disorders, according to a 2021 review published in the journal International Ophthalmology. Studies suggest that e-liquid substances such as aldehydes and flavorings may damage the eyes' tear film and lead to inflammation, worsening of the sight and reduced blood flow to the eye, according to the article. However, more research is needed to understand what exactly is causing these effects.

Scientists are getting closer to understanding the link between e-cigarette use and eye disorders. For example, a 2021 mice study published in the Journal of Molecular Medicine found that full-body exposure to vape vapor

may prompt the immune system to release more cytokines - chemical messengers that induce inflammation - which then accumulate in the superficial parts of the eye responsible for light absorption, as well as nourishment and protection of the deeper eye tissues. Animals exposed to e-cigarettes had a particularly high level of cytokines interleukin 1 beta (IL-1β) and tumor necrosis factor alpha (TNF-α), compounds that may damage the delicate barrier that regulates the transport of nutrients between the eye and the bloodstream, the study authors wrote.

Tooth decay

Very little research has been done on the impact of vaping on oral health. However, preliminary evidence suggests that people who vape are more at risk of developing cavities than those who do not vape or smoke, Dr. Sam Jethwa, the vice president of The British Academy of Cosmetic Dentistry, told Live Science by email.

When people inhale during vaping, the sugar in some vaping liquid sticks to the teeth, causing damage to the tooth enamel. Vape liquid may also change the microbiome of the mouth, making it more hospitable to decay-causing bacteria, Jethwa told Live Science. Vaping also appears to encourage tooth decay in areas where it usually does not occur, such as the bottom edges of front teeth rather than

the deep grooves of the back teeth, he said.

Vaping can also decrease saliva production and cause dry mouth, which is a known driver of cavities. "Saliva provides a natural lubrication for the mouth and helps to neutralize the acid that can decay tooth enamel," Jethwa said.

DNA damage and cancer

We have not seen any evidence to date that vaping contributes to cancer, said Dr. Irem Patel, consultant integrated respiratory physician and honorary senior lecturer at King's College London in England. However, it can take decades of follow-up and complex study designs for such increased risk to show up in the data.

A first-of-its-kind study published in 2023 in the journal Nicotine & Tobacco Research compared the extent of DNA damage in the cells that line the inside of the mouth between vape pen users who never smoked cigarettes, cigarette smokers who did not vape, and non-users. Researchers found that people who vape and those who smoke cigarettes may show similar levels of DNA damage, and such DNA changes can be a precursor to cancer. Sweet, mint and menthol flavored e-liquids appeared to inflict the most damage, the study found. Still, more research is needed to understand this correlation.

- LiveScience



S U D O K U

Medium Puzzle

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

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.

Answer to Puzzle

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



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MOHW Launches the National Nutrition Policy



(L-r) PAHO Representative Karen Bell-Lewis, Health Minister Kevin Bernard, Minister of Education Francis Fonseca

In an era marked by increasing rates of chronic diseases and nutritional imbalances, the Ministry of Health & Wellness recognizes the urgent need for a comprehensive approach to nutrition. As a result, the MOHW launched the National Nutrition Policy 2022-2023 today in Belize City.

The document was developed with the commitment and input of stakeholders, including the ministries of Health & Wellness and Education, the Nutrition and Food Security Commission, civil society, non-government organizations, and

regional and international organizations. The MOHW received substantial contributions from the European Union, the Pan American Health Organization/World Health Organization, UNICEF, and the Institute for Nutrition for Central America and Panama.

This policy aims to improve Belize's nutrition approach and to promote healthier lifestyles for Belizeans. The overall goal is to enhance the population's nutritional status by reducing malnutrition, promoting healthy eating habits, and forming a multi-sectoral approach to ensure access to safe and nutritious food. This

policy will strengthen Belize's nutrition and food security regulatory and operational framework. Strategies from this policy include creating enabling environments, capacity building, public awareness, and intersectoral collaboration, which the MOHW will integrate into its nutrition activities and plans.

Belize has a population with over 60% prevalence of overweight and 30% obesity, which can lead to an increase in chronic diseases such as diabetes and heart disease. One of this policy's objectives is to increase awareness and promote healthy eating to address malnutrition and

to prevent complications secondary to non-communicable diseases.

The Nutrition Unit supports regional and international mandates, such as the Front of Package Warning Label, the Code for Marketing Breastmilk Substitutes, the Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative, Wellness Week, school feeding programs, and food fortification. Most

recently, the government approved a healthy food policy and a ban on sugar-sweetened beverages in schools. These initiatives aim to promote health and wellness.

The intersectoral participation integrated within the policy will ensure that specific strategic lines of action are aligned with national plans and geared towards improving the food

and nutrition security of Belize's population. This policy represents a significant milestone in the ministry's commitment to promoting public good.

The implementation of the National Nutrition Policy highlights the commitment of the MOHW to improve health and prevent illness to ensure a healthier population and country.

Hope for Belize's 42nd birthday

By William Ysaguirre

Belize is about to celebrate the 42nd anniversary of its independence, for which the National September Celebrations Commission announced this year's theme: "Hope Ignited, Hands United, Vision Renewed: Belize at 42" and recognized the winners of the theme contest in a ceremony at the House Culture in Belize City on Wednesday afternoon, May 7.

Minister Education, Culture, Science and Technology Hon. Francis Fonseca presented gift packages and cash prizes to the authors of the winning theme, Mrs. Dalia Moreno and Jahseed Avila.

Minister Fonseca said the commission had received some 230 entries in the contest for this year's theme, and had narrowed this down to a short list of 20 candidates, on which the commission then voted. It came to a tie between Moreno's and

Avila's entries, and the commission decided to combine elements of both into this year's theme.


"People always need hope; people are always looking for hope," Fonseca opined as he explained their final choice. The Belizean people all have to work together as a nation united with a common vision to achieve their objective in the face of

serious economic and social challenges, he encouraged.

Belize City Mayor Bernard Wagner had welcomed all to the award ceremony, which began with Alex Evans playing the national anthem and an invocation by Bishop Philip Wright. BTB's Director of Industry and Development Josue Carballo gave the closing remarks.




Winner Jahseed Avila received prize.



Annual Return Filing Notice

All Company owners are reminded that as per section 294 of the Belize Companies Act No. 11 of 2022 your **Annual Return for 2022 is due by June 30, 2023**. Annual Returns must be submitted via the Online Business Registry System.

ACTIVE	PENDING STRIKE-OFF	STRUCK-OFF
If previous year filed by June 30 <i>Ability to order Good Standing Certificate and make amendments to company.</i>	If previous year NOT filed by June 30 <i>Cannot order Good Standing Certificate nor make amendments to company.</i>	If previous Year NOT filed by December 31 <i>Cannot order Good Standing Certificate nor make amendments to company. A company that remains in struck-off period for 5 years is dissolved.</i>



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STATUTORY NOTICE TO CREDITORS

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN pursuant to Section 36 of the Administration of Estates Act Chapter 197 of the Laws of Belize, Revised Edition 2000 that all creditors having any claims or demands upon or against the Estate of LUCIANO CAL deceased of No. 85 George Price Highway, Santa Elena, Cayo District, Belize who died No. 85 George Price Highway, Santa Elena, Cayo District, Belize on the 1st day of January, 2022 in whose estate Grant of Probate No. 184 of 2023 has been granted to CLARA ELENA BRANNON of No. 61 George Price Highway, Santa Elena Town, Cayo District, Belize, of No. 84 Albert Street, Belize City, Belize, should lodge such claims or demands with the said CLARA ELENA BRANNON, Executor, c/o Barrow & Williams LLP, Attorneys-at-Law of No. 84 Albert Street, Belize City, Belize, on or before the expiration of three months from the first publication hereof AND NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that at the expiration of the said three months the Executor shall proceed to distribute the assets of the said LUCIANO CAL deceased, amongst the parties entitled thereto having regard to all the claims and demands of which particulars are lodged and the Executor shall not be liable for the assets of the deceased or any part thereof so distributed to any person or persons whose claims or demands they shall not then have had notice.

DATED the 31st day of May, 2023

BARROW & WILLIAMS LLP
Attorneys-at-Law
for Clara Elena Brannon

Eat right for a healthier Belize

By William Ysaguirre

Belizeans will be encouraged to eat a healthy diet to enjoy a healthy life with fewer visits to the doctor under the new National Nutrition Policy, which the Ministry of Health and Wellness launched in partnership with the Ministry of Education at the Best Western Biltmore Plaza Hotel in Belize City on Thursday morning, May 8.

The two ministries are on an urgent mission against the clock to get Belizeans to eat healthier, to reduce the alarming numbers that inform that over 60 percent of Belizeans are overweight and 30 percent tend to be obese, conditions which can lead to diabetes, hypertension and heart disease.

These are gateway diseases for the much more serious kidney disease and cancer, all non-communicable diseases which can result from a poor diet.

Prevention of malnutrition is key, and must begin with our children from an early age, from when the child



PAHO representative Dr Karen Bell-Lewis, Minister Kevin Bernard and Minister Francis Fonseca present National Nutrition Policy

is in the womb, said Minister of Health and Wellness Hon. Kevin Bernard. The ministry has embarked on a public education campaign to educate young adults, particularly women of child-bearing age of the importance of eating healthy, as the numbers show that a 49 percent of women in this group have folate deficiency, 23 percent have iron deficiency and 17 percent have Vitamin B-12 deficiency, all of which can hamper a child's development from when it is in the womb.

The cost of imported foods is always rising,

Minister Bernard acknowledged, and he said the government is also working to fulfill its responsibility to ensure an adequate supply of locally produced foods to be available at an affordable price, so that low income families can eat healthy, locally grown foods that meet their nutrition requirements, within their budget.

The need to give children a healthy start is key not only to their physical development, but also to their ability to learn, and is why the Ministry of Education, Culture, Science and Technology

has implemented a healthy start schools feeding program at schools around the country, Education minister Hon. Francis Fonseca explained. The program goes hand in hand with the school gardens initiative that was implemented with support of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) to teach schoolchildren to "Eat what we grow and grow what we eat".

The goal is to ensure that healthy mothers give birth to healthy babies who can then grow into healthy children to become

healthy and productive adults, contributing to Belize's economic development, explained Dr Fidel Cuellar in his policy presentation. The policy has 13 defined objectives, which aim for the country to be enjoying good nutrition after three years or the first 1,000 days, to reduce under-nutrition and deficiencies of micro-nutrients, and to reduce overweight and obesity.

The Ministry will also promote healthy lifestyles, by creating equitable nutrition programs and increase Belizeans awareness and knowledge of what constitutes good nutrition.

This means support programs to ensure that all Belizeans have access to enough food, to a safe water supply, and proper sanitation. To achieve these goals, the ministry will strengthen its system of surveys to monitor people's nutrition levels, and improve the food supply chain to give Belizeans healthy eating options.

The ministry will

conduct further research to support good nutrition using a multi-sectoral approach and establish guidelines for proper labeling of food packages and advertising of food products to warn consumers of high salt, sugars and fats content in these products. More health care professionals will be trained in nutrition, and the ministry will ensure there is a timely response to food emergencies.

The policy aligns with Belize's international commitments to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for 2030: to reduce poverty, eliminate hunger, promote good health, provide good quality education for all, clean water and sanitation, reduce inequality, and to adapt to Climate Change.

The policy was developed in partnership with the support of the European Union, the Pan American Health Organization/World Health Organization, UNICEF, and the Institute for Nutrition for Central America and Panama.



For more information or appointments contact us at 630-8703 or visit us on Cemetery Road next to Rogers Stadium.

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RES PUBLICA 360

Duties of 'Area Reps' may not be what we commonly think

By Dyon A. Elliott

“The first duty of a member of Parliament is to do what he or she thinks in his or her faithful and disinterested judgment is right and necessary for the honour and safety of Great Britain. His second duty is to his constituents, of whom he is the representative but not the delegate. ... It is only in the third place that his duty to party organization or programme takes rank. All these three loyalties should be observed, but there is no doubt of the order in which they stand under any healthy manifestation of democracy.”—Winston Churchill, Duties of a Member of Parliament (c.1954–1955)

Whether one likes or dislikes Churchill as a historical figure, it is hard to find fault with this quote regarding the duties of Members of Parliament (MPs), who for us in Belize are commonly referred to as “Area Representatives” (APs). For our purposes here, let’s call this the ‘Churchillian Hierarchy of APs’ Duties’.

As we, as a people, are actively engaged in discussions about changing or (possibly even) replacing our existing Constitution, I saw the value in raising the topic about the role of our Area Representatives. Why? Well, for instance, the last time we underwent an exercise like this with a Commission (the Political Reform Commission of 2000), the august body reported the following:

“There were also strong arguments against appointments from the general public. The Commission noted that many Belizeans throughout the consultations equate their voting at national elections with electing a minister. Consequently, these Belizeans and are not comfortable with the idea that their elected representatives may not have a chance of becoming a minister.”

It is very likely that this topic will re-emerge as the People’s Constitution Commission (PCC) commences its public consultations. Are we electing ministers when we elect members to the legislature? Is that their primary function as Area Representatives? Interestingly, despite all the attention and fanfare we give these APs, it is possible that many of us employ an inaccurate rubric to grade these APs.

The Job Description

It is always good to begin this discourse at the Constitution level. Section 89(2) of the Constitution says: “Each electoral division shall be represented in the House of Representatives by one elected member”. Good. We know this. We also know what the House of Representatives is, correct?

Section 55 of the Constitution establishes the LEGISLATURE, which is comprised of two Houses: The House of Representatives and the Senate. Then, in section 68 of the Constitution, this Legislature is given law-making powers for “the peace, order and good government of BELIZE”. Notice it did not say “of the particular Electoral Division that the AP represents.”

As a result, we may take some liberties and rewrite Churchill’s quote above thus: “The first duty of an Area Representative is to do what he or she thinks in his or her faithful and disinterested judgment is right and necessary for the peace, order and good government of

BELIZE”.

In the United Kingdom (UK), when explaining the role of MPs (or as we say, APs), an official source explains: “MPs’ duties in Parliament include participating in debates and voting on legislation and other matters.”

In terms of their duties to constituencies, that same source says: “MPs can help their constituents by advising on problems (particularly those that arise from the work of government departments), representing the concerns of their constituents in Parliament, and acting as a figurehead for the local area.”

Paved Streets, Piece of Land, Paying Utility Bills, Rent, and Other Promises?

So, based on both Belize’s Constitution and examples from the Parliamentary system’s motherland, the chief responsibility of the APs is to function in the Law-making body of the country (the Legislature) by supporting and/or proposing laws that is to the benefit of the nation state of Belize.

As far as individual constituencies go, it is not necessarily to ‘pave streets’, or promise individuals land, pay their utility bills/rent, or to provide yard filling to “supportive” households. These things, if left unchecked, instead engender the scourge of clientelism.

Actually, such promises—if they’re NOT presented as an across-the-board constituency development policy—may very well be inching those APs closer to what section 32 of the Representation of the People’s Act (ROPA) defines as “bribery”—a crime.

In the UK House of Common’s Handbook, it is largely summarized this way:

“Members have a general duty to act in the interests of the nation as a whole; and a special duty to their constituents.” That special duty is largely “spokesman-like” and advisory in nature.

The AP may either advocate via direct communication with ministers of government (e.g. Minister of Works for paving of public roads) or via his contributions in Parliament.

Local Government and Social Assistance

This brings me to the whole matter of expecting APs to do things like pave streets, and fix bus sheds, and the like.

If it is the APs’ job to repair streets and the like, then what’s the purpose of section 24 of the Belize City Council Act, the Belmopan City Council Act, and the Town Council Act that empowers those municipal bodies to do exactly that and more?

Those Acts read as follows:

24.–(1) All streets, in which term is included public drains and bridges within the boundaries of the [municipality in question], shall be under the control, care and management of the Council.

(2) The Council is empowered in respect of any street to do any of the following things, (a) to lay out, construct, repair, alter or widen all streets with such material and in such manner as the Council thinks fit.

Outside of that, then it’s likely the Ministry of Works that the AP may have to lobby on behalf of his constituency. However, as we’ve seen repeatedly play out in Parliament over the years, the success of such pleadings depend on the level of magnanimity of the incumbent

government, and more precisely the ‘will’ of Cabinet.

Similarly, we have also seen the Area Representative’s office become the “de facto” institution for citizens to access social assistance. People visit their APs for assistance with necessities such as rent, education, and more. While this is an honorable gesture, it is hard to ignore the fact that such social programs should be issued via well-resourced programs that are executed via the departments of government.

By operating via the bureaucratic apparatus, it should minimize instances of discrimination and conflicts of interest, and, yes, clientelism. Moreover, that is due to you, Dear Taxpayer!

Raising the Bar of Expectations

In the end, the point being made here is that we need to make sure that we raise the bar of expectation on these APs in accordance with their PRINCIPAL and actual job: That is to make laws for “the peace, order and good government of BELIZE”.

Answer me this simple question: if you’re hiring someone to your Legislature, shouldn’t you be talking to him or her about their stances on various laws and public policies? What was your AP’s stance, for instance, on the Special Prosecutors Bill that passed the Lower House recently, but was checked and paused in the Upper House? What would your AP’s voting been on the Equal Opportunities Bill had it gone through the law-making process?

The point is this: You cannot logically hire thirty-one (31) people to your Legislature—the Law-making body of your nation—without knowing how they intend to vote on various big-ticket issues! What laws do they plan to support to improve access to education, social protection, healthcare, or even employment opportunities?

That’s what our grading rubric for APs should chiefly reflect. Paved streets and cleaned parks are for your City or Town Council.

But! Does it even matter?

However, with all that said, here’s something even more troubling: with Crossing-the-Floor (anti-defection) laws being what they are, does it even matter what laws your AP thinks or believes or supports?

Remember that ‘Churchillian’ hierarchy of duties? The one that came last was the APs’ duty to their party. However, with anti-defection laws in place that do not separate between defection and mere dissent, in Belize, the hierarchy of duties has been completely reversed.

Your so-called AP (especially if he’s a member of Cabinet that is bound by a “Payroll vote”) could be ‘fired’ from the job you hired him to do if he votes against his party without permission. That is, of course, until we amend the anti-defection (crossing-the-floor) provision in Belize’s Constitution that was also added to our Constitution the last time we went through one of this reform processes just over two decades ago.

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.



CONNECTING CREDIT UNIONS AND BANKS FOR FASTER, EASIER PAYMENTS

The Central Bank of Belize continues its work to improve the national payments infrastructure, allowing for greater connectivity. In this latest development, credit union members will be able to send electronic payments to banks and receive electronic payments from bank customers

BRIDGING THE GAP

SSN has joined banks as a participant in the Automated Payment and Securities Settlement System, or APSSS.

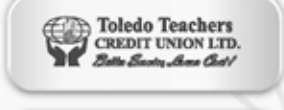
NEW PAYMENT POSSIBILITIES

This integration empowers credit unions to take charge of their members' payment and settlement services.



HOW IT FUNCTIONS

SSN represents the credit unions as an operator in APSSS.



The Holy Redeemer, St. Francis Xavier, and St. Martin's Credit Unions are already connected to the SSN, with more credit unions preparing to join the network.

COMING SOON!
Please contact your credit union for more information.

Website intended for farmers and food businesses big and small released on World Food Safety Day 2023

Rome – The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) has launched a comprehensive, practical and accessible toolbox designed to help all those operating in the food sector adhere to international food hygiene standards.

The toolbox, whose release on 7 June coincides with World Food Safety Day 2023, is based on the Codex Alimentarius (Latin for “food code”), a collection of standards, guidelines and codes of practice managed by FAO and the World Health Organization (WHO) that aims to protect consumer health and promote fair practices in food trade.

The toolbox translates the extensive set of guidelines and norms governing Good Hygiene Practices (GHP) and Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) into easily digestible information via an FAO website. Special care was taken to consider the challenges faced by small food business operators and producers in low- and middle-income countries. For instance, the website has been designed to work well on handheld mobile devices, which in some developing countries are far more widespread than computers.

The overarching aim is to give all food business operators, whether on the farm or further along the value chain, and regardless of size and location, an instrument that enables them to better engage with local food safety authorities to produce, process and distribute safe food. The toolbox also caters for those with an institutional role, such as government officials, academia and capacity-building organizations.

“This toolbox is an important point of reference for food safety globally,” said Corinna Hawkes, FAO’s Director of Food Systems and Food Safety Division. “It provides not only the internationally agreed upon principles of food safety, but also sets a common language, which in turn provides a framework and a commonality within which countries can negotiate and food businesses can communicate on food safety amongst themselves.”

Strengthening food safety

When food is scarce, people will go to great lengths to keep themselves and their families fed. There is a direct correlation between situations of food scarcity and increased threats to food safety. With 600 million people afflicted by foodborne illness every year, one

of FAO’s priority areas is to help ensure safe food for everyone.

FAO supports its Members in their efforts to improve food safety in various ways. Together with WHO, FAO provides the advice that forms the scientific basis of Codex Alimentarius standards. FAO also provides support in implementing standards and developing legislative frameworks and capacities to ensure food safety.

This toolbox, initially available in three languages (English, French and Spanish), is among the resources that aid such initiatives.

The technical content of the toolbox was developed and reviewed jointly by FAO Food Safety Officers and a team from the Department of Food Science, University of Guelph in Canada. It follows requests from Member countries for making Codex guidance more accessible.

Its contents include guides to personal hygiene, such as how to educate external visitors entering a food production site, the correct procedure and frequency for hand washing, and suggestions for appropriate clothing.

Going forward, the plan is to collect feedback and possibly expand the toolbox to provide more in-depth guidance for other sectors of the agrifood system, such as fisheries. Academia has already expressed an interest in using it as a basis for creating dedicated courses on food safety.

World Food Safety Day 2023 is marked by a hybrid high-level event featuring QU Dongyu, the FAO Director-General, and Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, the WHO Director-General. This year’s event coincides with the 60th anniversary of the establishment of the Codex Alimentarius Commission.

BPA not consulted on GOB-Portico Definitive Agreement

By Javan Flowers

A release issued by the Belize Port Authority (BPA) notes categorically that neither the Belize Port Authority nor the Ministry in charge of Logistics “were consulted in relation to that agreement.”

The Belize Port Authority is the designated Authority responsible for determining whether any relevant facility shall be a “Port Facility” as per compliance with the Belize Port Authority Act, the Port Security Regulations, and the International Ship and Port Facility Security (ISPS)



Code.

It is within this context that the BPA denotes that

the Definitive Agreement “signed by the Barrow Administration and the Developers of Port of Magical Belize on the 1 of October 2020” saw no consultation with BPA. There was also no consultation with the Ministry in charge of Logistics, the release noted. The BPA also pointed out that neither were they consulted in relation to the proposed legislation that would have given legal effect to the terms of such agreement.

The release continued by citing section 21 of the Belize Port Authority Act, which provides that “(1) Notwithstanding anything contained in this Act, the Minister may, after

consultation with the Authority, grant in writing a license to any person, corporation or other body to construct and operate a private port subject to such terms, conditions, and restrictions and on the payment of such fees as the Minister may consider appropriate.”

It is further noted that part of the license-granting process is meaningful consultations with the BPA as the regulator of ports. The BPA, therefore, informed the public that the developers of the Port of Magical Belize “have not applied for, nor have they been granted, a license for the construction and operation of a private port as required by the Belize Port Authority Act.”

Public Notice of Investment



Notice is hereby given, pursuant to the Social Security Act, Chapter 44 of the Laws of Belize, Revised Edition 2020, that the Social Security Board, as per its Investment Framework, Section 49, has proposed to invest **Twenty Million Dollars (BZ\$20,000,000.00)** in Series 2 Debentures being offered by the Belize Water Services Limited (BWSL). Proceeds from the Debenture issue will be used for key capital projects. The Debentures have a term of ten (10) years and a coupon rate of **4.50% per annum payable semi-annually.**

The Righters Write

Human rights ensure all spaces are accessible to women in all their diversity

Contributed by the Human Rights Commission

Last year the world observed the 75th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights under the theme “Freedom, Equality and Justice for All”. The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights,

women make up less than 10 per cent of parliamentarians, according to the Inter-Parliamentary Union, a global organization of national parliamentarians.

“Only with the active participation of women in all their diversity

international NGO working to advance human rights at the intersection of gender and disability.

While these barriers are different for each person, these barriers stem from issues in organizing and executing meetings

Protocol, a groundbreaking set of commitments that seek to ensure the inclusion of women with disabilities in gender equality spaces.

The Protocol calls for countries, civil society organizations, and the United Nations to make a pledge to ensure that gender equality discussions and decision-making spaces are fully accessible to and inclusive of women, girls, trans, intersex and nonbinary persons with disabilities. The Protocol includes 13 pledges where each one is a call to action on a specific aspect of accessibility and inclusion in events

and meetings, including event planning, execution, and follow-up.

Article 9 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities states that accessibility is a precondition for persons with disabilities to live independently, participate fully and equally in society. This means that for people with disabilities, the right to access the physical environment, transportation, information, and technologies and spaces open to the public is a prerequisite to fulfilling many other rights, including the right to participation in public life, according

to Wu.

“Recognizing this, we encourage our colleagues and partners to use the Feminist Accessibility Protocol to ensure that women and girls with disabilities can access both in person and virtual spaces, where important decisions on women’s rights and gender equality take place,” Wu said.

To advance on women’s and girls’ participation in public life, the Office calls for concrete actions in a range of interrelated areas, including strengthening the national legal framework to ensure

Cont’d on pg. C



as a continuance of the activities, is highlighting a range of human rights issues on a monthly basis in 2023. In June, the focus is on Women’s participation in public and political life. Below is the article published on ohchr.org, June 8, 2023.

Human rights ensure all spaces are accessible to women in all their diversity

Women’s equal and meaningful participation in decision-making is not only a right in itself, but also represents a necessary condition for women’s human rights to be respected and their interests to shape public decisions.

Globally only 26.5 per cent of parliamentarians are women and in about 22 countries

and incorporation of women’s lived experiences at all levels of decision-making, the goals of equality, sustainable development and peace will be achieved,” said Hannah Wu, Chief, Women’s Rights and Gender Section, UN Human Rights.

This participation includes all women but is especially pertinent for women with disabilities. According to Women Enabled International (WEI), one in five women around the world have a disability, but far too often they are excluded from participating in decision-making because there is a lack of physical access to a room, or there is no sign language interpretation, or the information materials aren’t in an accessible format. WEI is an

and events. Some of these issues include a lack of knowledge about accessibility requirements, lack of funding to invest in accessibility measures, and a disconnect between the organizers and women with disabilities and their representative organizations, according to WEI.

The Inclusive Generation Equality Collective (IGEC), created in 2021 to advance gender equality for all, wants to change this situation. The group of activists with disabilities worldwide advocates for the inclusion of all women with disabilities. It is working on removing these roadblocks with the introduction of the Feminist Accessibility



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

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

Deadline: The deadline for applications is June 30, 2023. 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



Human rights ensure all spaces are accessible to women in all their diversity

Cont'd from pg. B

gender equality in the public and private sectors.

“Women’s human rights are interdependent and indivisible,” she said. “We cannot promote women’s equal participation in public and political life alone, if we do not secure women’s right to equality in all aspects of family life, freedom from gender-based violence, sexual and reproductive health and rights,

and opportunities for economic empowerment.”

UNIVERSAL ACCESS

The Protocol and this push to make all spaces accessibility to women with disabilities is deeply personal for Cristina Dueñas. Dueñas, from Spain, is a mechanical engineer and a disability rights and gender activist.

Dueñas had an unsuccessful back surgery, which resulted in a leg that makes it difficult for her to walk without

crutches.

“Since I wasn’t born with it, it has changed my life pretty deeply and how I look at life,” she said.

After her surgery she decided to become a specialist in universal accessibility in the urban environment and buildings.

“Universal accessibility is not only beneficial for people with disabilities, but for everybody,” she said. “Because without accessibility, we as women with disabilities can’t participate in feminist

spaces and, in the end, we won’t have the gender equality that we wish for.”

Dueñas was part of the team at IGEC that developed the Protocol. She said the origins of the idea came when her and her IGEC colleagues attended the Gender Equality Forum in July 2021, where they realized there were many barriers due to lack of accessibility for them to participate in the discussions.

“This led to us not being able to participate fully and



not being able to see what happened in this important event because many of us couldn’t access the events,” she said. “It was clear we needed to be there in all the events and the meetings and that’s where the Protocol on accessibility was born.”

IGEC member Shiela May Inmenzo Aggarao, was also part of the Protocol development team. She acquired her visual impairment at 15-years-old when glaucoma left her with low vision. She is now the Secretary of Nationwide Organization of Visually-Impaired Empowered Ladies, a group of women with visual impairments working on the intersection of gender and disability in the Philippines.

“A lot of people and organizations don’t know what accessibility is and how to implement it, so the Protocol is a great tool that anyone can use in a practical way,” she said.

Aggarao said that there are many roadblocks for women with disabilities and their opportunity to participate and lead.

“There is still an attitude towards women and girls with disabilities that we can’t take on leadership roles, we should stay home, and our families and the community can be overprotective,” she said.

However, Aggarao pointed out that women with disabilities just don’t want to talk about accessibility, but to talk about gender equality with a disability perspective.

“We want to talk about the issues that other women and people want to talk about,” she said. “We want to talk about accessibility, but if the topic is gender, let’s talk about gender. We want to have that voice and have that space that all women are entitled to for us to do so.”

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.



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Belize wins 7 Golds at Central American athletics championships

By William Ysaguirre

Belizean-American athletes harvested six Gold medals and Mia Sylvester won a seventh Gold at the 2023 Central American Isthmus Athletics Confederation (CADICA) Under-18 and Under-20 championships held at the Cementos Progreso Stadium in San Jose del Golfo, Guatemala City, on Saturday and Sunday, June 3-4.

Belize also won eight silver medals and two bronze – 17 total.

Fourteen-year-old Brooklyn Lyttle smashed the previous Central American record, setting a new record of 5.82 meters as she won Gold in the Long Jump for females 15-17 years. She tallied four Golds as she went on hop, skip and leap 11.31 meters to win Gold in the triple jump, another Gold in the 100 meters - clocking 12.58 seconds, and led the Belize 15-17 girls to another golden victory in the 4x100 meters relay along with Samya Lamb, Tridean Martinez and Nyasha Harris.

Bel-Am Kali Magaña harvested three more medals in the 18-19 years age group: Gold in the 400 meters in 56.43 seconds, and two silvers - in the 100 meters in 12.50 seconds and the 200 meters in 24.57 seconds.

Belizean hurler Mia Sylvestre, 18, of Belmopan has been winning Gold for Belize in Central American athletics from she was 14, winning her first goal at CADICA for 14-16 year olds in 2019 in El Salvador, and her prowess won her an athletics scholarship this



Belize FEM 15-17yrs win GOLD in 4x100meters Relay



Belize men win BRONZE in 1000m Medley Relay

year to the University of Idaho.

She won Gold in the discus throw for females 18-19 years at 44.14 meters, improving on the 40.85m throw with which she won gold in Managua last year. Mia also won Silver in the 4kg shot put for females 18-19 years, with a throw of 11.07 meters, which was far below her personal best of 15.75 meters at the Big Sky conference meet in February. She threw 16.64 in April and 14.53 in May in university tournaments in the USA. She also won silver in the hammer throw at 42.48 meters.

Belizean American Kamryn Cadle also won Silver in the discus throw at 36.39 meters.

Demetrie Meyers, 15, of Philadelphia won Belizean hearts when he won two Gold medals at the CARIFTA Games in Nassau in April, and he won another Gold for Belize in 3,000 meters in 9:30.99,



Minister of State Hon. Gilroy Usher Sr. welcomes home athletes.

which was somewhat slower than his 9:08.56 golden performance at CARIFTA. He also lagged 19 seconds slower than his CARIFTA 4:11.19 win in the 1,500 meters in which he clocked 4:30.64 for fifth place. Teammate Keemar Wagner was sixth in 4:32.54.

Keemar Wagner won

Silver in the 400 meters for 15-17 years in 51.46 seconds, Jahson Logan won silver in the 6kg shot put at 12.05 meters, and Joas Mejia of Toledo won silver in the triple jump for men 18-19 years at 13.82 meters. Wagner also won Bronze in the 1,000 meters medley relay in 2:04.30. Rupert Cardinez

won bronze in the 110 meter hurdles in 15.55 seconds.

The Belize Amateur Athletics Association congratulated the athletes via a release, saying “their remarkable achievement is a testament to the dedication, hard work, and immense talent of our young athletes. They

have exemplified the spirit of sportsmanship, competing at the highest level and demonstrating their commitment to excellence. Their success at the 2023 CADICA Championships is a proud moment for the entire nation of Belize.... They have not only brought glory to our nation but have also served as role models for aspiring athletes across Belize.”

The BAA thanked the athletes for “their unwavering commitment and dedication to their sport... and to the coaching staff, support personnel, and the Belizean community for their continuous

encouragement and support.”

Minister of State for Sports, Hon. Gilroy Usher Sr also congratulated the athletes when the BAA hosted at a welcome reception at the Ned Pitts Olympic House at the Marion Jones Sports Complex on Monday evening, June 5th.

STATUTORY NOTICE TO CREDITORS

In The Estate of Alejandro Cruz Fernandez a.k.a. Alejandro Fernandez.

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN Pursuant to Section 36 of the Administration of Estate Act, Chapter 197 of the Substantive Laws of Belize, Revised Edition 2000, that all Creditors and other persons having any claims or demands upon or against the Estate of **Alejandro Cruz Fernandez a.k.a. Alejandro Fernandez**, Deceased, late of No. 25 Carmen Street, Santa Elena, Cayo District, Belize, who died on the 9th day of July, 2017 in whose estate Grant of Probate has been granted to **OLDA SHERRARD of Mile 60 George Price Highway, Cayo District, Belize**, the lawful Executrix are required to send particulars in writing of their claims or demands to the Executrix of the said estate, **C/O ORLANDO A. FERNANDEZ, Attorney-at-Law at P.O Box 236, San Ignacio, Cayo District, Belize** and to send such particulars not later than within (3) three months from the date of the 1st publication of the notice, **AND NOTICE IS ALSO HEREBY GIVEN** that at the expiration of last mentioned date, Executrix will proceed to distribute the assets of the said **Alejandro Cruz Fernandez a.k.a. Alejandro Fernandez**, deceased, amongst the parties entitled thereto having regard only to the claims or demands of which particulars have been delivered and the Executrix will not be liable for the asset or any part thereof so distributed to any persons of whose claims or demands they shall not then have had notice.

DATED this 29th day of May, 2023

**ORLANDO A. FERNANDEZ
Attorney-at-Law for the Executrix**

STATUTORY NOTICE TO CREDITORS

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN pursuant to Section 36 of the Administration of Estates Act Chapter 197 of the Laws of Belize, Revised Edition 2000 that all creditors having any claims or demands upon or against the Estate of **ROY MATTHEW MILLER** deceased of 31.5 Miles George Price Highway, Monkey Bay Wildlife Sanctuary, La Democracia Village, Belize District, Belize who died at No. 5 Cooma Carin Street, Belmopan, Cayo District, Belize on the 12th day of January, 2023 in whose estate Grant of Probate No. 187/2023 has been granted to **RODWELL WILLIAMS, of No. 84 Albert Street, Belize City, Belize**, should lodge such claims or demands with the said **RODWELL WILLIAMS, Executor, c/o Barrow & Williams LLP, Attorneys-at-Law of No. 84 Albert Street, Belize City, Belize**, on or before the expiration of three months from the first publication hereof **AND NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN** that at the expiration of the said three months the Executor shall proceed to distribute the assets of the said **ROY MATTHEW MILLER** deceased, amongst the parties entitled thereto having regard to all the claims and demands of which particulars are lodged and the Executor shall not be liable for the assets of the deceased or any part thereof so distributed to any person or persons whose claims or demands they shall not then have had notice.

DATED the 31st day of May, 2023

**BARROW & WILLIAMS LLP
Attorneys-at-Law
for Rodwell Williams**