



PR#205-26

PRESS RELEASE

Cabinet Brief

Belmopan, August 5, 2026.

The Cabinet met on 28th July and 4th August 2026.

- Cabinet gave its approval to finalize and execute the Deed of Mutual Release, Compromise and Settlement and the associated Irrevocable Declaration of Trust establishing the Turneffe Conservation Land Trust, and approved that the approximately 17,000 acres remain under Government ownership. These lands will be held in trust in perpetuity for the people of Belize.
- Cabinet took note of the status of the shrimp industry, which is on the rebound after having been decimated by the Early Mortality Syndrome (EMS) disease. Cabinet further applauded the industry, with production that has tripled since 2020 and an economic value to the Belizean economy that has grown to almost \$25 million. It is expected that the use of faster-growing genetics, new investments in the industry, and an increase in farmed pond acreage using the intensive production system will support the continued growth of the industry and revival of shrimp exports to Mexico, the Caribbean, and Taiwan.
- Cabinet approved the change of GOB's equity contribution into the National Bus Company from terminals to electric buses and related charging infrastructure with a value of approximately BZ\$20.9 million. The Minister of Transportation will present a revised Public Transportation Investment Bill Cabinet Memorandum to reflect this change with the concurrence of shareholder partners in the NBC, including the proposed long-term lease agreement of the terminals by GOB to the NBC.
- Cabinet gave its approval for Government to enter into a loan agreement with the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) for US\$8 million to improve the efficiency of the Central Government's wage bill and to increase the efficacy of strategic public employment.

- Cabinet gave its approval for amendments to be made to the National Awards Act for the establishment of the Award of Valour, which would give recognition to persons who demonstrate extraordinary bravery, courage, and self-sacrifice in protecting the lives of others or safeguarding the national interest, and the Order of Patriotic Excellence and National Pride, which will be conferred on Belizean citizens who have demonstrated an exceptional degree of patriotism, loyalty, and selfless service to the nation.
- The Belize Airports Authority (BAA) is mandated to ensure the safety, security, and efficiency of all civil aviation operations within Belize. In recent years, aviation security requirements have evolved significantly due to heightened global security threats, advancements in screening technology, and stricter international compliance obligations. This brings the need for more sophisticated screening procedures along with other modernization initiatives to upgrade airport security. To properly implement such changes, Cabinet gave its approval for the introduction of a \$10.00 aviation security fee per departing passenger travelling through municipal airports within Belize.
- Cabinet gave its approval for amendments to be made to the Cybercrime Bill to clarify the scope of the offence in a manner consistent with the constitutional protection of freedom of expression. This will preserve the Government's ability to combat serious forms of technologically facilitated abuse, including malicious deepfakes, impersonation, extortion, threats, and targeted harassment, while safeguarding the fundamental democratic values of free expression, political debate, journalism, satire, and public accountability. The amendments also include an important guardrail, requiring the DPP's written consent before prosecution of an offence can be initiated.
- Cabinet took note of the changes in the updated draft Protected Disclosures Bill, which outlines the changes proposed by various stakeholders. The changes further ensure that the Bill will fit into Belize's common law system and align with standards recommended by the committees of the OAS Inter-American Convention Against Corruption and the United Nations Convention Against Corruption.
- Finally, Cabinet informs all Belizeans of the Back to School tax-free days on Saturday, 15th August and Saturday, 29th August 2026, when once again GST will be waived on eligible school supplies.

Ends