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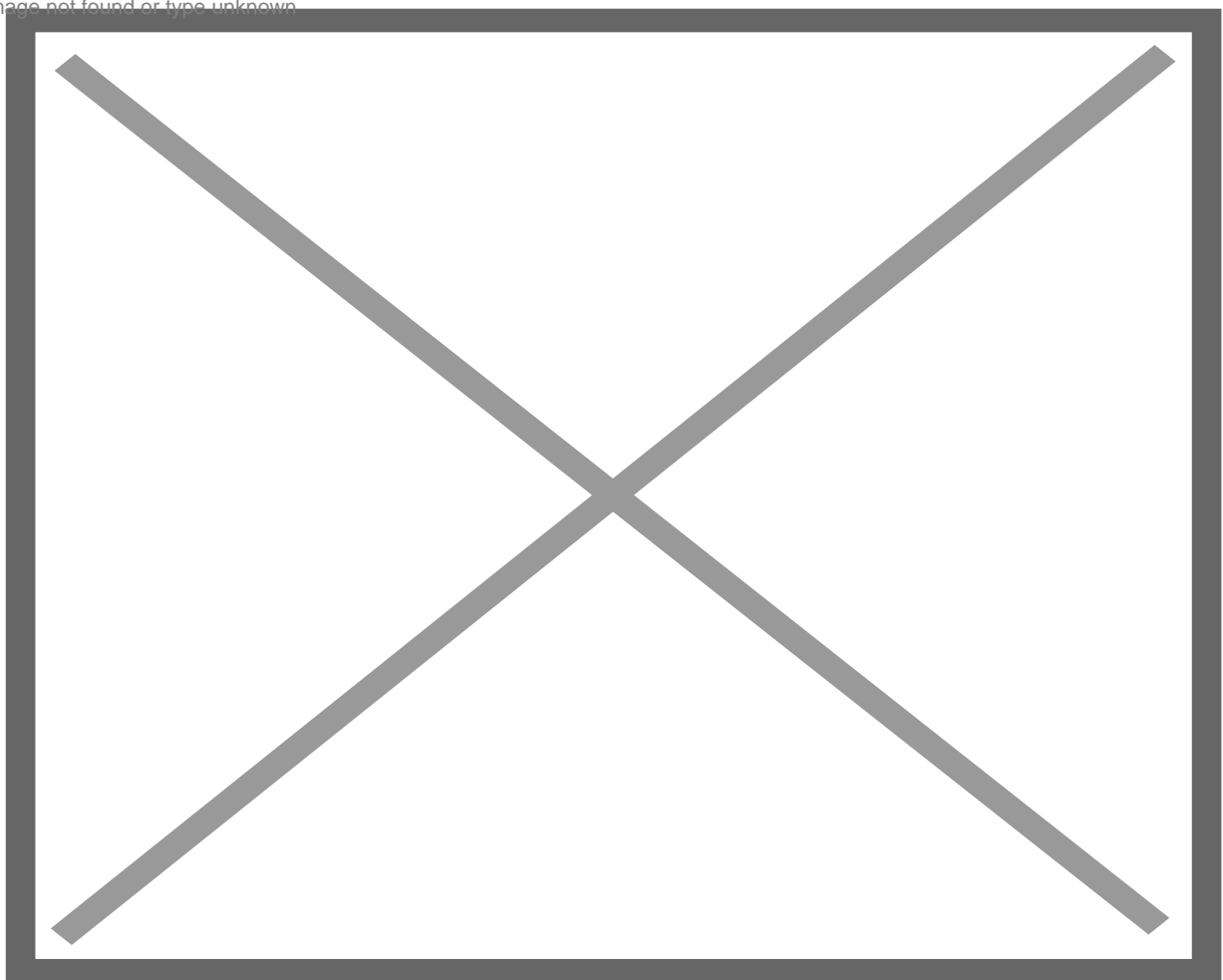
Governor's Cup Winner Calls For BVI Government To Follow USVI Lead, Invest In World-Class Horse Racing Track

Smith advocates for a \$2 million grant to build a grandstand and revive racing in BVI.

Development / **Published On May 07, 2024 05:47 AM /**

Janeke Simon **May 07, 2024**

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“Now is about time we invest in our own selves,” said Lesmore Smith, whose horse “Ghostinyou” snatched the Governor’s Cup and a cash prize of \$40,000 as horse racing made a triumphant return to St. Thomas last Friday.

Mr. Smith, President of the BVI Horse Owners Association, was speaking to the press back home following his victory. He advocated for the British Virgin Islands to follow the lead of their neighbors separated by nationality, and construct a world-class racing facility on home soil.

Racing in the BVI has seen a lull in recent years since the Ellis Thomas Downs race track closed in 2022 due to a leasing dispute between the government and the owners of one of the parcels of land the track sits on.

It was time for the territory to move on, Mr. Smith said, proposing that land on Beef Island slated for a development that never took off be repurposed for horse racing. “Give us the land, \$2 million, we can build a grandstand,” Mr. Smith envisioned. “We will give him a track - first class...all we need is a little cushion to work with,” said the leader of the BVI horse owner community.

Reporters also spoke with Premier Natalio Wheatley about the issue. While remaining non-committal, Wheatley said that Mr. Smith’s proposal was “worthy of being considered.” However, he maintained that “all options were on the table” when it came to the resumption of horse racing in the BVI. A final decision on exactly how that would happen, he said, would be made after stakeholder consultations scheduled for some unspecified time in the future.