

## MIDDLE PEACE



## Trump: Israeli pacts with 2 Arab states signal 'new' Mideast

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, left, President Donald Trump, Bahrain Foreign Minister Khalid bin Ahmed Al Khalifa and United Arab Emirates Foreign Minister Abdullah bin Zayed al-Nahyan react on the Blue Room Balcony after signing the Abraham Accords during a ceremony on the South Lawn of the White House, Tuesday, Sept. 15, 2020, in Washington.

Associated Press

By **DEB RIECHMANN, MATTHEW LEE and JONATHAN LEMIRE**

Associated Press

**WASHINGTON (AP)** — Israel on Tuesday signed historic diplomatic pacts with two Gulf Arab states at a White House ceremony that President Donald Trump de-

clared will mark the "dawn of a new Middle East," casting himself as an international peacemaker at the height of his reelection campaign.

The bilateral agreements formalize the normalization of Israel's already thawing relations with the United

Arab Emirates and Bahrain in line with their common opposition to Iran. But the agreements do not address the decades-long conflict between Israel and the Palestinians, who view the pacts as a stab in the back from their fellow Arabs and a betrayal of their cause for

a Palestinian state. Hundreds of people massed on the sunwashed South Lawn to witness the signing of agreements in a festive atmosphere little marked by the coronavirus pandemic. Attendees did not practice social distancing and most guests didn't

wear masks. "We're here this afternoon to change the course of history," Trump said from a balcony overlooking the South Lawn. "After decades of division and conflict, we mark the dawn of a new Middle East."

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Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, United Arab Emirates Foreign Minister Abdullah bin Zayed al-Nahyan and Bahrain Foreign Minister Khalid bin Ahmed Al Khalifa stand on the Blue Room Balcony during the Abraham Accords signing ceremony on the South Lawn of the White House, Tuesday, Sept. 15, 2020, in Washington.

Associated Press

#### Continued from Front

Under the agreements, the countries have committed to exchange embassies and ambassadors and to cooperate on a broad array of issues, including education, healthcare, trade and security.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said the day "is a pivot of history. It heralds a new dawn of peace."

Neither Netanyahu nor Trump mentioned the Palestinians in their remarks, but both the UAE and Bahraini foreign ministers spoke of the importance of creating a Palestinian state.

Emirati Foreign Minister Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan, the brother of Abu Dhabi's powerful crown prince, even thanked Netanyahu for "halting the annexation" of West Bank land claimed by the Palestinians in ex-

change for Emirati recognition. Netanyahu, however, has insisted that Israel has only temporarily suspended its plans to annex West Bank settlements.

"Today, we are already witnessing a change in the heart of the Middle East — a change that will send hope around the world," al-Nahyan said.

Bahraini Foreign Minister Abdullatif al-Zayani said Bahrain would stand with the Palestinians. "Today is a truly historic occasion," he said. "A moment for hope and opportunity."

But in the Gaza Strip, Palestinian militants fired two rockets into Israel, apparently meant to coincide with the ceremony. The Israeli military said the rockets were fired from Gaza and one was intercepted by air defenses. Earlier in the day, Palestinian activists held small demonstrations in the West Bank and in Gaza, where they trampled and set fire to pictures of Trump, Netanyahu and the leaders of the UAE and Bahrain.

There are no active wars to be ended by the agreements, but Israel and the U.S. hope they could usher in a major shift in the region

should other Arab nations, particularly Saudi Arabia, follow suit. That could have implications for Iran, Syria and Lebanon. Until now, Israel has had peace deals only with Egypt and Jordan.

Other Arab countries believed to be close to recognizing Israel include Oman, Sudan and Morocco.

"We are very down the road with about five different countries," Trump told reporters before the ceremony.

Skeptics, including many longtime Mideast analysts and former officials, have expressed doubts about the impact of the signings. In addition to the bilateral agreements signed by Israel, the UAE and Bahrain, all three signed a document dubbed the "Abraham Accords" after the patriarch of the world's three major monotheistic religions.

During the signing ceremony, the leaders were seated at a long table where President Harry S. Truman once held weekly luncheon meetings with his Cabinet. Discussions about the Truman Doctrine to restrain Soviet expansion during the Cold War and the Marshall Plan to send billions in

economic aid to Western Europe after World War II were held at the table.

The stagecraft, including live music and flags was meant to evoke previous Middle East agreements. Trump's political backers are looking to boost his standing as a statesman with just seven weeks to go before Election Day. Until now, foreign policy has not had a major role in a campaign dominated by the coronavirus, racial issues and the economy.

Besides Republicans, a few House Democrats attended the event, a notable development at a time when their leader, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi is barely on speaking terms with the president. Many Democrats, including presidential nominee Joe Biden, widely support the deal.

Rep. Elaine Luria, D-Va., said she accepted the invitation immediately on receiving it over the weekend. "It definitely was a monumental event, and the ceremony was very fitting for that," Luria, a member of the House Armed Services Committee, said in a telephone interview afterward. Like Luria, some other Democrats in attendance, such

as Rep. Anthony Brindisi of New York, are freshmen in tough reelection races. Still others, such as Florida Reps. Ted Deutch and Stephanie Murphy hail from districts with large numbers of Jewish constituents.

Questions remain, however, about the significance of the agreements. Even in Israel, where the accords have received widespread acclaim, there is concern they might result in U.S. sales of sophisticated weaponry to the UAE and Bahrain, thus potentially upsetting Israel's qualitative military edge in the region.

Trump said he is OK with selling military aircraft to the UAE. Pelosi also welcomed the agreements but said she wants to learn details, specifically what the Trump administration has told the UAE about buying American-made F-35 aircraft and about Israel agreeing to freeze efforts to annex portions of the West Bank.

The UAE and Bahrain have a history of suppressing dissent and critical public opinion, but there have been indications that the agreements are not nearly as popular or well-received as they are in Israel. Neither country sent its head of state or government to sign the deals with Netanyahu. Bahrain's largest Shiite-dominated opposition group, Al-Wefaq, which the government ordered dissolved in 2016 amid a yearslong crackdown on dissent, said there is widespread rejection of normalization. Al-Wefaq joins other Bahrainis who reject the agreement to normalize ties with the "Zionist entity," and criticized the government for crushing the public's ability to express their discontentment with normalization. The ceremony followed months of intricate diplomacy headed by Jared Kushner, Trump's son-in-law and senior adviser, and the president's envoy for international negotiations, Avi Berkowitz. On Aug. 13, the Israel-UAE deal was announced. That was followed by the first direct commercial flight between the countries, and then the Sept. 11 announcement of the Bahrain-Israel agreement. □





# City to pay \$12M to Breonna Taylor's family, reform police

By DYLAN LOVAN

Associated Press

**LOUISVILLE, Ky. (AP)** — The city of Louisville will pay \$12 million to the family of Breonna Taylor and reform police practices as part of a lawsuit settlement months after Taylor's slaying by police thrust the Black woman's name to the forefront of a national reckoning on race, Mayor Greg Fischer announced Tuesday.

Taylor's death sparked months of protests in Louisville and calls nationwide for the officers to be criminally charged. The state's attorney general, Daniel Cameron, is investigating police actions in the March 13 fatal shooting.

"I cannot begin to imagine Ms. Palmer's pain, and I am deeply, deeply sorry for Breonna's death," Fischer said, referring to Taylor's mother, Tamika Palmer.

At Tuesday's news conference, an emotional Palmer pushed for charges against the officers involved in the shooting.

"As significant as today is, it's only the beginning of getting full justice for Breonna," Palmer said. "We must not lose focus on what the real drive is and with that being said, it's time to move forward with the criminal charges because she deserves that and much more."

The lawsuit, filed in April by Palmer, alleged the police used flawed information when they obtained a "no-knock" warrant to enter the 26-year-old woman's apartment in March. Taylor and her boyfriend were roused from bed by police, and her boyfriend, Kenneth Walker, has said he fired once at the officers thinking it was an intruder. Investigators say police were returning fire when they shot Taylor several times. No drugs were found at her home.

"We won't let Breonna Taylor's life be swept under the rug," said Ben Crump, an attorney for Taylor's family. Crump said the \$12 million settlement is the largest such settlement given out for a Black woman killed by police. He also called

for charges against the officers and urged people to "say her name," a phrase that has become a refrain for those outraged by the shooting.

Fischer said the civil settlement has nothing to do with the criminal investigation.

Asked about the criminal investigation, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, who represents Kentucky, told reporters Tuesday "the investigation seems to have been more complicated than a lot of people felt." He said he has confidence in Cameron and stands by him.

The Louisville news conference was broadcast over a loudspeaker downtown and protesters listened as they sat around a memorial to Taylor.

Protesters gathered Tuesday at what they have renamed "Injustice Square" to listen to the news conference on loudspeakers. Some had been there every day for 113 days, demanding justice for Taylor. The announcement did not bring them much comfort. "It's just not enough," said Holly McGlawn, who stood calculating how much Taylor might have made had she lived. Taylor could have worked to another 40 or 50 years, she said. "You can't put a price on a Black woman being able to sleep at night and know she's not going to get murdered."

In the time since Taylor's shooting, her death — along with George Floyd and others — has become a rallying cry for protesters seeking a reckoning on racial justice and police reform. High-profile celebrities like Oprah Winfrey and LeBron James have called for the officers to be charged in Taylor's death. Palmer's lawsuit accused three Louisville police officers of blindly firing into Taylor's apartment the night of the March raid, striking Taylor several times. One of the officers, Jonathan Mattingly, went into the home after the door was broken down and was struck in the leg by the gunshot from Walker.

The warrant was one of five issued in a wide-ranging



Tamika Palmer, mother of Breonna Taylor, addresses the media in Louisville, Ky., on Thursday, Aug. 13, 2020.

Associated Press


investigation of a drug trafficking suspect who was a former boyfriend of Taylor's. That man, Jamaricus Glover, was arrested at a different location about 10 miles (16 kilometers) away from Taylor's apartment on the same evening.

The settlement includes reforms on how warrants are

handled by police, Mayor Fischer said. Other reforms seek to build stronger community connections by establishing a housing credit program to encourage officers to live in certain low-income areas in the city. Officers will also be encouraged to perform two paid hours of volunteer work ev-

ery two weeks in the communities where they serve. The city will also track police use of force incidents and citizen complaints.

The city has already taken some other reform measures, including passing a law named for Taylor that bans the use of the no-knock warrants. □



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**Wally Wiggins' advice for the next generation:**  
*'To dream the impossible dream and then go chase it'.*

May his soul rest in peace.



# Virus death toll linked to Maine wedding grows to 7

By PATRICK WHITTLE

Associated Press

PORTLAND, Maine (AP) —

At least seven people have died in connection to a coronavirus outbreak that continues to sicken people in Maine following a wedding reception held over the summer that violated state virus guidelines, public health authorities said.

The August wedding reception at the Big Moose Inn in Millinocket is linked to more than 175 confirmed cases of the virus, the Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention said Tuesday.

Maine authorities have identified overlaps between the wedding reception and outbreaks elsewhere in the state. An employee of the York County Jail attended the wedding, Maine CDC officials have said. Maine health officials have also said a staff member from a Madison rehabilitation center, which is the site of six of the seven deaths, attended the event.

The virus cases stemming from the wedding have spanned hundreds of miles in a state that had largely controlled the spread of the coronavirus through the summer. Maine has reported less than 5,000 cas-



This Aug. 18, 2020, file photo shows the Big Moose Inn on Millinocket Lake in Millinocket, Maine. Associated Press

es of the virus in total since March.

But the growing number of cases related to the wedding, which exceeded the state's guidelines of 50 people or less at indoor gatherings, could undo some of that progress if it continues to swell. Authorities have said more than 65 people attended the wedding.

The six people from the Madison rehabilitation facility who died were all residents of that facility and none of them attended the wedding reception,

said Nirav Shah, director of Maine CDC.

"Maine CDC is concerned about where we are, and I'm asking everyone else to share in that concern. COVID-19, right now, is not on the other side of the fence. It is in our yards," Shah said. "The gains that Maine has made against COVID-19 are ones that could, and unfortunately can, be washed away."

The wedding was also officiated by pastor Todd Bell of Calvary Baptist Church in Sanford. The Maine CDC

is currently investigating to determine if an outbreak at the church is connected to the wedding outbreak. That outbreak has sickened 10 people, Shah said.

Calvary Baptist Church issued a statement on Tuesday that said "a number of Calvary Baptist Church members attended" the wedding reception. The statement said the church is taking precautions to limit the spread of the virus, and it will defend its right to continue holding services.

"The Calvary Baptist Church

has a legal right to meet. The authority of a local Christian church, a Jewish synagogue, or a Muslim mosque to gather for their respective religious services is a time-honored part of our nation's history since its inception," the statement said. "These religious activities are also fully protected under the First Amendment to our United States Constitution."

Bell has been critical of government attempts to control coronavirus, and videos show he has held services without the use of social distancing. He hired a lawyer known nationally for defending the religious rights of churches. Neither Bell nor an attorney working with the church, David Gibbs of Florida, personally responded to a request Tuesday for comment.

Maine CDC was unaware of the church's statement and couldn't comment on it, Shah said.

Shah said the state's percent positivity rate has ticked up to 0.63% for the previous seven days. At one point, the rate was less than half a percentage point. The rate remains well below the national average of about 5%, Shah said. □

## States face pressure to ban race-based hairstyle prejudice



In this Jan. 28, 2020, file photo, Michele Watley, founder of Shirley's Kitchen Cabinet, testifies in favor of a bill before the Kansas Legislature to ban discrimination based on hairstyles in employment, housing and public accommodations during a committee hearing at the Statehouse in Topeka, Kansas.

Associated Press

By RUSSELL CONTRERAS

RIO RANCHO, N.M. (AP) —

A growing number of states

are facing pressure to ban race-based discrimination against hair texture and

hairstyles in schools and the workplace.

Advocates this week presented a draft proposal to New Mexico state lawmakers that would outlaw employers and schools from discriminating against Black and Native American women's hairstyles. It's the latest state targeted by a national campaign.

Devont'e Kurt Watson, a member of Black Lives Matter in Albuquerque, told New Mexico lawmakers on Monday that the state should amend its Human Rights law to protect people with Afros, cornrows, dreadlocks and headwraps. The state should also provide protections for Native Americans who face hair discrimination, he said. "Passing the (the proposal)

in New Mexico will have far-reaching implications to protect our diverse community from egregious acts of hatred," Watson said. "Hair discrimination is racial discrimination."

New Mexico Black Lawyers Association President Aja Brooks said job offers have been rescinded to Black women in other states because of hairstyles and that students in New Mexico and in other states have been told in class by teachers their hair was a distraction.

"Hair discrimination for people of color in New Mexico is real," Brooks said.

The draft evaluated by a New Mexico legislative interim committee was the first step for a bill that is expected to be introduced

in January. New Mexico's Legislature is dominated by Democrats and the state has a Democratic governor.

Earlier this year, Democratic Washington Gov. Jay Inslee signed a bill that made Washington the latest state to pass a version of the CROWN Act.

It stands for "Create a Respectful and Open World for Natural Hair" and is part of a national campaign promoted by Dove, the National Urban League, Color Of Change and Western Center on Law and Poverty.

California, Colorado, Maryland, New York, New Jersey, and Virginia have already passed similar laws, according to people involved in the campaign. □



# Survey: U.S.'s international reputation takes a virus hit

By PAN PYLAS

**LONDON (AP)** — The international reputation of the United States has declined further in the wake of its handling of the coronavirus pandemic, according to new research Tuesday from the Pew Research Center. In some of the 13 countries surveyed, favorable views of the U.S. have fallen to record lows. Pew started polling on the topic nearly two decades ago.

Although the international image of the U.S. has been in decline since President Donald Trump took office in 2017, Pew found it has been dented further by what is perceived to be a badly handled response to the pandemic. Pew found that a median of just 15% of respondents say the U.S. has done a good job during the crisis, in contrast to perceptions around the World Health Organization or the European Union, both of which enjoy majority approval.

Though new infections in the U.S. appear to have moderated over the past few weeks, the country has the world's highest official virus-related death toll with around 195,000 deaths. Much of the blame internationally appears to have been laid at Trump's door. The president has raised



In this file photo dated Friday, Jan. 31, 2020, Brexit supporters hold British and US flags during a rally in London.

Associated Press

eyebrows around the world during the past few months with some of his comments on the virus and how it should be handled.

The international declines that Pew gauged were widespread, including among the U.S.'s traditional allies. In the U.K., for example, Pew found that just 41% of people express a favorable opinion of the U.S., the lowest recorded rate. In France, only 31% see the U.S. positively, matching the low level recorded in 2003 when the two countries were at loggerheads

over the U.S.-led war in Iraq. Germans are particularly negative in their views of the U.S., with only 26% of those polled viewing the country favorably, just above the 25% level in 2003, when Germany, like France, opposed the Iraq war.

Of the countries surveyed, only South Korea was found to have a majority of people with a favorable view of the U.S., with 59% support.

Pew also gauged opinions surrounding Trump, who is facing a tough re-election

battle in November against his Democratic opponent, former vice president Joe Biden.

The president's ratings were low across the board, particularly in Belgium where just 9% of those polled had a favorable view of Trump. The Japanese were the most positive, though even there only 25% expressed confidence in Trump.

Pew said attitudes toward Trump have consistently been much more negative than those toward his predecessor, Barack Obama, especially in Western Eu-

rope. It said that in the U.K., Spain, France and Germany, ratings for Trump are similar to those received by George W. Bush near the end of his presidency, when his reputation was dented by violence in Iraq as well as the start of the global financial crisis.

Trump was also perceived in a more negative light than other world leaders. German Chancellor Angela Merkel received the most support, with a median of 76% of people across the nations polled having confidence in her. French President Emmanuel Macron also received largely favorable ratings while those towards British Prime Minister Boris Johnson were more mixed. Pew also found that the ratings for Russian President Vladimir Putin and Chinese President Xi Jinping were overwhelmingly negative too, though not as negative as Trump's.

Pew collated said it used data from nationally representative surveys of 13,273 adults from June 10 to Aug. 3, in Canada, Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden, the UK, Australia, Japan and South Korea. Due to restrictions related to the pandemic, all surveys were conducted by phone. □

# Gaza militants fire rockets at Israel as pacts signed in U.S.

**JERUSALEM (AP)** — Palestinian militants in the Gaza Strip fired two rockets into Israel on Tuesday, wounding two people in an attack that was apparently timed to coincide with the signing of normalization agreements between Israel and two Arab countries at the White House.

The Palestinians are opposed to the agreements with the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain, viewing them as a betrayal of their cause by the Arab countries, which agreed to recognize Israel without securing territorial concessions. The Israeli military said two rockets were fired from Gaza and one was inter-

cepted by air defenses. Magen David Adom, the Israeli emergency service, said it treated two people for injuries from broken glass.

The military earlier said that rocket sirens sounded in Ashdod and Ashkelon, cities in southern Israel near the Gaza Strip.

The Islamic militant group Hamas has ruled Gaza since 2007, when it seized power from the internationally-backed Palestinian Authority. Israel and Egypt have imposed a crippling blockade on the coastal territory since then.

A number of Palestinian militant groups operate in Gaza, but Israel holds

Hamas responsible for all attacks and typically responds to rocket fire with airstrikes on militant targets. Israel and Hamas have fought three wars and several smaller skirmishes since 2007. Egypt and Qatar have brokered an informal cease-fire in recent years in which Hamas has reined in rocket attacks in exchange for economic aid and a loosening of the blockade, but the arrangement has broken down on a number of occasions.

Israelis have embraced the agreements with the UAE and Bahrain, which are only the third and fourth Arab countries — after Egypt and Jordan — to



Representations of the U.S., Israeli, Emirati and Bahraini flags are projected onto a wall of Jerusalem's Old City, marking the day of a signing ceremony in Washington signifying the two Gulf nations' normalization of relations with Israel, Tuesday, Sept. 15, 2020.

Associated Press

recognize Israel. City Hall in Tel Aviv was lit up with the

word "peace" in English, Hebrew and Arabic. □





A bronze statue representing the U.S. first lady Melania Trump made by Brad Downey, a Berlin-based U.S. artist, is erected in her birthplace of Sevnica, Slovenia, Tuesday, Sept. 15, 2020, after a previous one, made in wood, was set alight.

Associated Press

## Bronze statue of U.S. first lady is unveiled in Slovenia

**SEVNICA, Slovenia (AP)** —

A bronze statue representing U.S. first lady Melania Trump was unveiled Tuesday in her native Slovenia to replace a wooden one that was set on fire in July. The new sculpture is a replica of the original one by U.S. artist Brad Downey and placed near Trump's hometown of Sevnica, in central Slovenia.

The original statue was torched by unknown arsonists on July 4th. The rustic figure was cut from the trunk of a linden tree, showing her in a pale blue dress like the one she wore at Donald Trump's presidential inauguration.

A plaque next to the new one reads it is "dedicated

to the eternal memory of a monument to Melania which stood at this location." "We are here today because we put up again a statue of Melania to the place where it was burnt and to commemorate the statue that was set on fire," said Slovenian artist Marko Vivoda.

The life-sized sculpture bears no obvious resemblance to the U.S. first lady. Born Melanija Knavs in nearby Novo Mesto in 1970, the new U.S. first lady grew up in Sevnica while Slovenia was part of the Communist-ruled former Yugoslavia. An Alpine nation of 2 million people, Slovenia is now a member of the European Union and NATO. □

## Vietnam sentences seven for human smuggling to Britain

**HANOI, Vietnam (AP)** — A court in central Vietnam on Monday sentenced seven people to up to 7 1/2 years in prison for smuggling a woman who later died in a truck together with 38 other people as they were being transported into Britain, state media reported Tuesday.

According to the Thanh Nien newspaper, the six

men and one woman were found guilty of "organizing and brokering" illegal immigration by the Ha Tinh provincial court in central Vietnam.

From the sealed container, My sent a string of texts to her mother in Vietnam saying "I can't breathe," typing out her name and home address before passing out. □



In this July 4, 2020, file photo, a woman carries an American flag during a protest outside the U.S. Consulate in Hong Kong.

Associated Press

## U.S. issues sweeping new travel warning for China, Hong Kong

**BEIJING (AP)** — The U.S. on Tuesday issued a sweeping new advisory warning against travel to mainland China and Hong Kong, citing the risk of "arbitrary detention" and "arbitrary enforcement of local laws." The advisory is likely to heighten tensions between the sides that have spiked since Beijing's imposition on Hong Kong of a strict new national security law in June that has already been met with a series of U.S. punitive actions. The statement warned U.S. citizens that China imposes "arbitrary detention and exit bans" to compel cooperation with investigations, pressure family members to return to China from abroad, influence civil disputes and "gain bargaining leverage over foreign governments."

"U.S. citizens traveling or residing in China or Hong Kong, may be detained without access to U.S. consular services or information about their alleged crime. U.S. citizens may be subjected to prolonged interrogations and extended detention without due process of law," the advisory said.

In Hong Kong, China "unilaterally and arbitrarily exercises police and security

power," the advisory said, adding that new legislation also covers offenses committed by non-Hong Kong residents or organizations outside of Hong Kong, possibly subjecting U.S. citizens who have publicly criticized China to a "heightened risk of arrest, detention, expulsion, or prosecution."

When in Hong Kong, U.S. citizens are "strongly cautioned to be aware of their surroundings and avoid demonstrations," the advisory said. Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin told reporters at a daily briefing Tuesday that the U.S. should "fully respect the facts and should not engage in unwarranted political manipulation" when issuing such advisories. "China has always protected the safety and legal rights of foreigners in China in accordance with law. China is one of the safest countries in the world," Wang said. "Of course, foreigners in China also have an obligation to abide by Chinese laws."

Last month, the Trump administration suspended or terminated three bilateral agreements with Hong Kong covering extradition and tax exemptions, citing Beijing's violation of its pledge for Hong Kong to

retain broad autonomy for 50 years after the former British colony's 1997 handover to Chinese rule.

Other Western nations have also suspended their extradition treaties with Hong Kong following the national security's law's passage.

The U.S. has also acted to end special trade and commercial privileges that Hong Kong had enjoyed and has imposed sanctions on Hong Kong and Chinese officials, including Hong Kong's pro-Beijing leader Carrie Lam, involved in enforcing the new security law. Tensions between Beijing and Washington have hit their lowest point in decades amid simmering disputes over trade, technology, Taiwan, Tibet, the South China Sea, the coronavirus pandemic and, most recently, Hong Kong. The impact of the tensions has been felt in the tit-for-tat closures of diplomatic missions as well as visa restrictions on students and journalists.

The latest travel advisory did not offer any new warnings regarding COVID-19 in mainland China and Hong Kong, but referred travelers to earlier notices advising Americans to avoid the regions and return home from them if possible. □



# U.N. demands all countries enforce UN arms embargo on Libya

By **EDITH M. LEDERER**

**Associated Press**

**UNITED NATIONS (AP)** — The U.N. Security Council adopted a resolution Tuesday demanding that all countries enforce the widely violated U.N. arms embargo on Libya, withdraw all mercenaries from the North African nation.

The council also called for political talks and a cease-fire in the war, stressing it has no military solution. The vote was 13-0, with Russia and China abstaining.

In the years after the 2011 uprising that toppled long-time autocrat Moammar Gadhafi, Libya has sunk further into turmoil and is now divided between two rival administrations, based in the country's east and west, with an array of fighters and militias — backed by various foreign powers — allied with each side.

The resolution's approval follows a recent report by U.N. experts monitoring sanctions on Libya that accused its warring parties and their international backers — the United Arab Emirates, Russia and Jordan on one side and Turkey and Qatar on the other — of violating the arms embargo, saying it remains "totally ineffective."

The resolution also extended U.N.'s political mission in Libya, or UNSMIL, until next



In this Sept. 22, 2016 file photo, fighters of the Libyan forces affiliated to the Tripoli government rest and reload weapons during an offensive against Islamic State militants, in Sirte, Libya.

**Associated Press**

September and stressed its "central role in facilitating a Libyan-led and Libyan-owned inclusive political process and in achieving a lasting cease-fire."

The job of former U.N. special representative Ghasan Salame, who resigned in March, has been split into two, as the United States demanded, putting a special envoy in charge of UNSMIL to focus on mediating with Libyan and international parties to end the conflict, with a coordinator in charge of day-to-day operations.

The U.S. demand held up

a replacement for Salame and the resolution asks Secretary-General Antonio Guterres to appoint a special envoy "without delay." Tensions in oil-rich Libya escalated further when east-based forces, under commander Khalifa Hifter, launched an offensive in April 2019 trying to capture the capital, Tripoli. But Hifter's campaign collapsed in June when militias backing the U.N.-supported government in Tripoli, with Turkish support, gained the upper hand, driving his forces from the outskirts of the capital and other western

towns.

Hifter is supported by the United Arab Emirates, Russia, Jordan and Egypt while the Tripoli forces are supported by the wealthy Gulf state of Qatar and by Turkey, a bitter rival of Egypt and the UAE in a broader regional struggle over political Islam.

Since Turkey and the UAE stepped up their direct involvement in Libya, "arms transfers to Libya by those two member states have been extensive, blatant and with complete disregard to the sanctions measures," U.N. experts said.

In addition to countries that supplied weapons, the experts said 11 companies also violated the arms embargo, including the Wagner Group, a private Russian security company that in May provided between 800 and 1,200 mercenaries to support Hifter's forces. The warring sides and their international backers also failed to inspect aircraft or vessels believed to carry weapons and ammunition. The U.N. resolution called on all parties "to commit without delay to a lasting cease-fire and political dialogue under the leadership" of the new special envoy. It condemned "the forced shutdown of oil facilities," reiterating that "Libya's oil resources are for the benefit of all Libyans" and that the government in Tripoli "retains sole oversight over Libya's economic and financial institutions."

The resolution also expresses "grave concern at the deteriorating humanitarian situation," including insufficient basic services, the plight of migrants, refugees and Libyans displaced in the country, and reports of sexual and gender-based violence. It calls on Libyan authorities to take steps to close detention centers and speed delivery of services throughout the country. □

# Brazil's da Silva faces new charge of money laundering

By **MARCELO SOUSA**

**Associated Press**

**RIO DE JANEIRO (AP)**

— Prosecutors in Brazil's sprawling Car Wash corruption investigation on Monday charged former President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva with money laundering, less than a year after the country's top court ordered him freed from jail while he appealed his conviction in another case.

Prosecutors said the left-leaning ex-leader who governed Brazil from 2003 to 2010 received bribes from construction giant Odebrecht disguised as donations to the institute that carries his name. They allege

he illegally received the funds in Instituto Lula accounts between December 2013 and March 2014 in exchange for granting contracts with state-run oil company Petrobras.

Attorneys for the ex-president known as Lula said they were surprised by the charges and that prosecutors have no evidence to back them. Da Silva has repeatedly claimed his innocence and accused prosecutors in the Car Wash probe of politically persecuting him.

Prosecutors also charged his first finance minister and the head of the Instituto Lula, Paulo Okamoto.

Okamoto denied the accusations.

Da Silva's fourth accusation stemming from the Car Wash investigation comes soon after several prosecutors left the anti-corruption task force. The head of the force, Deltan Dallagnol, said on Sept. 1 that he will step aside for family reasons.

Da Silva was released in November 2019 after Brazil's top court ruled that imprisonment is only permitted after all appeals have been exhausted. On Sept. 7, the 74-year-old former president said he is "at the service of the Brazilian people."



In this Feb. 13, 2020 file photo, Brazilian former President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva arrives for a meeting with the Italian Cgil union, in Rome.

**Associated Press**

But he can only run for political office if his convictions

are overturned by the nation's top court. □



# LOCAL



## Hilton Aruba donates more than 1000 volunteer hours at the local Food Bank



Together they care for over 4,000 families, providing them with food assistance. This year, FPNC went from supporting 250 families a month, to an immense operation. They solicit bids, get purchases approved, buy huge quantities of everything including basic staples, dry and fresh goods, receive the merchandise, repack it with great care and then distribute to grateful families.



**PALM BEACH — Team Members of Hilton Aruba Caribbean Resort & Casino are answering the call to volunteer and donate more than 1000 hours of time at the island's food bank for the whole month of September.**

Volunteer hours have already begun at the island's Food Bank, as Hilton Aruba's "Blue Energy Food Bank Heroes" have spent the last weeks preparing care packages for families in need.

The not-for-profit FPNC, Fundacion Pa Nos Comunidad, has been operating on the island since 2009. Following Gandhi's view that poverty is the worst form of violence, the food bank was created, with a

clothing bank and a furniture bank built-in, designed to alleviate some needs of our community's less fortunate members.

"There is no greater joy than donating time to help those in need, and I am proud of how enthusiastically our Team Members have embraced this spirit of giving," said Glenn Farro, director of human resources.

Hilton Aruba's "Blue Energy Food Bank Heroes" joined hard-working coordinator Gianaika v/d Biezen, and her dynamic staffers Lissa Harris, Gabriel Marchena, Suehen Pourier, Nicolaas Almarracin, Jewel Baker and Liandro Loopstok, at their headquarters in Club Kibrahacha.

The work is overwhelming and FPNC is always happy to welcome volunteers from local businesses. Hilton's Blue Energy crew, says Gianaika, came in at a critical moment, when help was most needed.

### Options to donate:

Donate your time at Club Kibrahacha. Strong arms needed to move boxes and a sweet smile to greet clients. Make a monetary contribution: Bank Information Aruba Bank 1000; Banco di Caribe 100 000 500 001 800 01; Caribbean Mercantile Bank 60001000; RBC Royal Bank 77000 000 44195025. For aid, visit the website [Info@FPNC.aw](mailto:Info@FPNC.aw), or call 588 0002 and 562 4205.

Pictured here, Hilton Aruba's "Blue Energy Food Bank Heroes" in action at the food bank. □

## Dutch Caribbean Nature Alliance (DCNA): Pandemic Response Management Letter for protected areas in the Dutch Caribbean

**KRALENDIJK, BONAIRE —** The Dutch Caribbean Nature Alliance (DCNA) has just released a Pandemic Response Management Letter which will serve as a blueprint for the Dutch Caribbean Park Management Organizations

to recognize, respond to and protect their staff and visitors to protected areas against current and potential pandemic outbreaks. The Management Letter outlines suggested protocols for social distancing, sanitation and other ways

to respond to emergency situations related to health emergencies.

2020 has been an interesting year, with the world facing unprecedented challenges between the affects of climate change



and the global pandemic caused by the Novel Corona Virus and the COV-

ID-19 disease it causes.

Continued on Page 9



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### Continued from Page 8

These issues have brought to light the need for a rigorous emergency response plan which Park Management Organizations can use in order to safeguard their staff and visitors which may visit the protected areas they manage. With this in mind DCNA has just released its Pandemic Response Management Letter to serve as a framework for each Park Management Organization to design their own, tailored emergency response plan.

COVID-19 has been unique in how widespread and devastating the infection has been. The uncertainty surrounding this virus has led to the need for social distancing and minimization of travel. This drop in tourism has been difficult, especially for the Dutch Caribbean. Interactions between the public and staff of Park Management Organizations varies between the six Dutch Caribbean islands, however, with the implementation of safety protocols and procedures, risks can be minimized.

The Pandemic Response Management Letter will provide each island with the tools needed to properly recognize and respond in emergency situations. Each outbreak will have its own unique set of conditions, so the guidelines provided will need to be tailored appropriately. The key to an effective response is for a timely acknowledgment of the problem and to react as swiftly and efficiently as possible.

The objective of creating an emergency response plan is to ensure that Park Management Organizations on all six Dutch Caribbean islands are comfortable recognizing issues and reacting appropriately, especially under pressure. With pandemics, time is often the most important factor with an immediate response potentially saving lives and limiting the spread of a contagion. The blueprints of a pandemic response can also be useful in a variety of other emergency situations so having clear, well thought out protocols can be an important asset in both current and future emergency response.

Exchanging knowledge and experiences between the nature parks of the Dutch Caribbean is very valuable and one of the ways DCNA is assisting to strengthen their activities. Together as a network Park Management Organizations are stronger in the common goal of safeguarding nature in the Dutch Caribbean. Lessons learned by the parks have been incorporated within Pandemic Response Management.

It is recommended that each Park Management Organization take these recommendations into consideration and use them to draft a plan more specific to their situation. Pandemic preparedness is not a quick process as it will require careful planning between all stakeholders and will involve community buy in. There-



fore, it is also important to promote community involvement to optimize local knowledge, expertise, resources and networks.

To stay up to date on this and various other activities related to nature conservation in the Dutch Caribbean please follow along on the websites and social media accounts for your local national park authorities as well as DCNA. When in doubt, please don't hesitate to contact your local park authority for the latest updates.

For more information, please find the full report here: <https://www.dcnanature.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/DCNA-PandemicResponse.pdf> □





# Hotel Hustle

Column by: Shanella Pantophlet

## Housekeeping week: appreciating the backbone of the hospitality industry

**I recently heard the phrase: 'There is no such thing as unskilled labor.' Immediately my mind went to the women and men of the housekeeping department. It helps I read this just as our resort -and every resort around the world- is preparing to celebrate international housekeeping week.**

I must admit, this has not always been my opinion, until I began working in the industry I hadn't grasped how difficult of a job housekeeping actually was. In my mind it was always 'how hard could changing bed sheets, sweeping and mopping the floor and cleaning the bathroom possibly be?' I was ridiculously naive to the skills it takes to do what these women and men do on a daily basis, especially those working in a timeshare resort, where the rooms can be the size of apartments with either a kitchenette or a full kitchen.

At my resort for example the housekeepers who clean the 2 bedroom units are assigned 5 of these units, and the ones who clean the 1 bedroom units are assigned 10 of these units. Me being my judgmental self would see how quickly they'd get rooms done through the week and never once considered everything they had to do in those 5 or 10 rooms on a daily basis to make the Saturday check-in run as smoothly as possible.



All of that changed one fateful Saturday when housekeeping was short staffed and we needed all hands on deck, that day. I experienced first the hard level of skill it takes to turnover a room. Our check out time is 11AM and rooms are guaranteed by 4PM, so that gives them 5 hours to clean up to 10 rooms to our expected standards, while also going through a checklist to verify everything in the room is functioning as it should. I didn't last more than an hour and although she wouldn't say it, I am 100% sure the housekeeper I was assigned to felt, I was slowing her down more than helping. Regardless she was thankful for the assistance of me stripping the beds (the easiest task) and sweeping the floors (she went back over the floors) so she could get underway with the rest of the room, once I was out of her way.

The thing that I and a lot of other people fail to realize is that not every guest is the same. My mother works in hospitality and has always taught

us to keep the rooms as clean as possible, unfortunately not everyone does that. One of the housekeepers explained to me it is important for them to get into rooms during the week so they can assess the cleanliness of the guest staying in order to plan for their Saturday and get all their rooms done on time. A great deal of their time before Saturday is spent discussing, and planning with their managers or supervisors which rooms they will need more time or extra hands in to get done based on what they've observed in the days prior to sale. It allows them to come up with a plan of action and work in teams to get rooms ready for the next guests by check-in.

The people who work in housekeeping are; observant, strategic and hardworking. Superheroes in the industry who make the job look easier than it actually is and they deserve both praise and recognition for the great work they do. □



**Aruban born and bred Shanella Pantophlet is passionate about tourism. That is the world she studied and works in, so we might as well call her a specialist. Luckily for Aruba Today Shanella also loves to write. And together with the fact that the majority of our readers are tourists, we found ourselves a perfect combination for a column: Hotel Hustle.**



# U.S. tariffs on China are illegal, says world trade body

By JAMEY KEATEN

Associated Press

**GENEVA (AP)** — A World Trade Organization panel ruled Tuesday that Trump administration tariffs on \$200 billion worth of Chinese goods are illegal, vindicating Beijing even if the United States has all but incapacitated the WTO's ability to hand down a final, binding verdict.

The decision marks the first time that the Geneva-based trade body has ruled against a series of high-profile tariffs that President Donald Trump's government has imposed on a number of countries — allies and rivals alike. Trump has repeatedly claimed that the WTO treats the U.S. unfairly.

The ruling, in theory, would allow China to impose retaliatory tariffs on billions' worth of U.S. goods. But it is unlikely to have much practical impact, at least in the short term, because the U.S. can appeal the decision and the WTO's appeals court is currently no longer functioning — largely because of Washington's single-handed refusal to accept new members for it. In its decision, the WTO's dispute settlement body ruled against the U.S. government's argument that China has wrongly engaged in practices harmful to U.S.



President Donald Trump walks on the South Lawn as he arrives at the White House, Monday, Sept. 14, 2020, in Washington from a trip to Phoenix.

Associated Press

interests on issues including intellectual property theft and technology transfer — and it quickly drew criticism of U.S. trade representative Robert Lighthizer.

"This panel report confirms what the Trump administration has been saying for four years: The WTO is completely inadequate to stop China's harmful technology practices," Lighthizer said in a statement. He said the United States had presented "extensive evidence" of China's intellectual property theft and the WTO has

offered no fixes for it.

"The United States must be allowed to defend itself against unfair trade practices, and the Trump administration will not let China use the WTO to take advantage of American workers, businesses, farmers and ranchers," he added. The Chinese ministry of commerce said the ruling was "objective and fair" and called on the U.S. to respect it.

The appeals court issues final rulings in trade cases and stopped functioning

last year when the terms of two of its last three judges expired with no replacements. That means the United States can appeal the decision "into the void," said Timothy Keeler, a lawyer at Mayer Brown and former chief of staff for the U.S. trade representative. The U.S. tariffs target two batches of Chinese products. Duties of 10% were imposed on some \$200 billion worth of goods in September 2018, and were jacked up to 25% eight months later. An additional

25% duties were imposed in June 2018 against Chinese goods worth about \$34 billion in annual trade, targeting industrial products and items like airplane propellers, water purifiers and motorcycles.

The Trump administration has justified the sanctions under Section 301 of the Trade Act of 1974, once a common tool used by the U.S. government to impose sanctions and recently revived by Trump. The U.S. argued that China's actions had amounted to "state-sanctioned theft" and "misappropriation" of U.S. technology, intellectual property and commercial secrets. Trade lawyer Mark Herlach, a partner with the firm Eversheds Sutherland, said there has been a long-standing controversy over whether the 301 law is consistent with WTO rules.

"It's not surprising that a WTO panel didn't like what the U.S. was doing," he said. The WTO panel ruled that the U.S. measures violated longstanding international trade rules because they only applied to products from China, and that Washington had not adequately substantiated its claim that the Chinese products hit with the extra duties had benefited from the allegedly unfair Chinese practices. □

# U.S. drops tax on Canada aluminum, heading off retaliation

By PAUL WISEMAN and ROB GILLIES

**WASHINGTON (AP)** — The Trump administration said Tuesday that it is dropping taxes on Canadian aluminum, easing tensions with a close ally just hours before Canada was prepared to impose retaliatory sanctions.

The Office of the U.S. Trade Representative said the U.S. is ending the 10% tariffs a month after imposing them. The U.S. had charged last month that an influx of Canadian aluminum justified the levy.

But the office said Tuesday that shipments of Canadian aluminum are return-

ing to normal levels. It said it could re-impose the tariffs if the imports surged again. Canada was preparing to impose retaliatory tariffs on U.S. products Tuesday.

Mary Ng, Canada's minister of International Trade, welcomed the change in the U.S. position.

"Canada has not conceded anything," Ng said.

Deputy Prime Minister Chrystia Freeland said Canada is prepared to impose retaliatory measures if the tariff is reimposed. She said it was not a negotiated deal with the United States. "At a time when we all focused on recovering from the COVID recession and

keeping the virus under the control we all know that the last thing we need is tariffs," Freeland said.

"Common sense has prevailed."

A senior Canadian government official, who spoke on condition of anonymity, also said that Canada had made no concessions. "Their statement has all sorts of language about what they expect from Canada, but it's important to note Canada has agreed to none of that," said the official said, who was not authorized to speak publicly on the matter.

The official added that, "We're glad the U.S. lifted



Molten aluminum is seen inside a smelter at the Alouette aluminum plant in Sept-Iles, Quebec, on May 21, 2019.

Associated Press

tariffs — that's a victory for Canada and the U.S." Trump originally imposed

the tariffs on aluminum imports from most countries in 2018. □



# Astronomers see possible hints of life in Venus's clouds

By **SETH BORENSTEIN**  
**AP Science Writer**

Astronomers have found a potential sign of life high in the atmosphere of neighboring Venus: hints there may be bizarre microbes living in the sulfuric acid-laden clouds of the hot-house planet.

Two telescopes in Hawaii and Chile spotted in the thick Venusian clouds the chemical signature of phosphine, a noxious gas that on Earth is only associated with life, according to a study in Monday's journal *Nature Astronomy*.

Several outside experts — and the study authors themselves — agreed this is tantalizing but said it is far from the first proof of life on another planet. They said it doesn't satisfy the "extraordinary claims require extraordinary evidence" standard established by the late Carl Sagan, who speculated about the possibility of life in the clouds of Venus in 1967.

"It's not a smoking gun," said study co-author David Clements, an Imperial College of London astrophysicist. "It's not even gunshot residue on the hands of your prime suspect, but there is a distinct whiff of cordite in the air which may be suggesting something."

As astronomers plan for searches for life on planets outside our solar system, a major method is to look for chemical signatures that can only be made by biological processes, called



**This May 2016 photo provided by researcher Jane Greaves shows the planet Venus, seen from the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency's Akatsuki probe**

**Associated Press**

biosignatures. After three astronomers met in a bar in Hawaii, they decided to look that way at the closest planet to Earth: Venus. They searched for phosphine, which is three hydrogen atoms and a phosphorous atom.

On Earth, there are only two ways phosphine can be formed, study authors said. One is in an industrial process. (The gas was produced for use as chemical warfare agent in World War I.) The other way is as part of some kind of poorly understood function in animals and microbes. Some scientists consider it a waste product, others don't.

Phosphine is found in "ooze at the bottom of ponds, the guts of some creatures like

badgers and perhaps most unpleasantly associated with piles of penguin guano," Clements said.

Study co-author Sara Seager, an MIT planetary scientist, said researchers "exhaustively went through every possibility and ruled all of them out: volcanoes, lightning strikes, small meteorites falling into the atmosphere. ... Not a single process we looked at could produce phosphine in high enough quantities to explain our team's findings." That leaves life.

The astronomers hypothesize a scenario for how life could exist on the inhospitable planet where temperatures on the surface are around 800 degrees (425 degrees Celsius) with

no water.

"Venus is hell. Venus is kind of Earth's evil twin," Clements said. "Clearly something has gone wrong, very wrong, with Venus. It's the victim of a runaway greenhouse effect."

But that's on the surface. Seager said all the action may be 30 miles (50 kilometers) above ground in the thick carbon-dioxide layer cloud deck, where it's about room temperature or slightly warmer. It contains droplets with tiny amounts of water but mostly sulfuric acid that is a billion times more acidic than what's found on Earth.

The phosphine could be coming from some kind of microbes, probably single-cell ones, inside those sulfuric acid droplets, living their entire lives in the 10-mile-deep (16-kilometer-deep) clouds, Seager and Clements said. When the droplets fall, the potential life probably dries out and could then get picked up in another drop and reanimate, they said.

Life is definitely a possibility, but more proof is needed, several outside scientists said.

Cornell University astronomer Lisa Kaltenegger said the idea of this being the signature of biology at work is exciting, but she said we don't know enough about Venus to say life is the only explanation for the phosphine. "I'm not skeptical, I'm hesitant," said Justin Filiberto, a planetary geochemist

at the Lunar and Planetary Institute in Houston who specializes in Venus and Mars and isn't part of the study team.

Filiberto said the levels of phosphine found might be explained away by volcanoes. He said recent studies that were not taken into account in this latest research suggest that Venus may have far more active volcanoes than originally thought. But Clements said that explanation would make sense only if Venus were at least 200 times as volcanically active as Earth.

David Grinspoon, a Washington-based astrobiologist at the Planetary Science Institute who wrote a 1997 book suggesting Venus could harbor life, said the finding "almost seems too good to be true."

"I'm excited, but I'm also cautious," Grinspoon said. "We found an encouraging sign that demands we follow up."

NASA hasn't sent anything to Venus since 1989, though Russia, Europe and Japan have dispatched probes. The U.S. space agency is considering two possible Venus missions. One of them, called DAVINCI+, would go into the Venusian atmosphere as early as 2026.

Clements said his head tells him "it's probably a 10% chance that it's life," but his heart "obviously wants it to be much bigger because it would be so exciting." □

# Perfectly preserved Ice Age cave bear found in Arctic Russia

Reindeer herders in a Russian Arctic archipelago have found an immaculately preserved carcass of an Ice Age cave bear, researchers said Monday.

The find, revealed by the melting permafrost, was discovered on the Lyakhovsky Islands with its teeth and even its nose intact. Previously scientists only had been able to discover the bones of cave bears that became extinct 15,000 years ago.

Scientists of the North-Eastern Federal University in

Yakutsk, the premier center for research into woolly mammoths and other prehistoric species, hailed the find as groundbreaking.

In a statement issued by the university, researcher Lena Grigorieva emphasized that "this is the first and only find of its kind — a whole bear carcass with soft tissues."

"It is completely preserved, with all internal organs in place, including even its nose," Grigorieva said. "This find is of great importance for the whole world."

A preliminary analysis indicated that the adult bear lived 22,000 to 39,500 years ago.

"It is necessary to carry out radiocarbon analysis to determine the precise age of the bear," the university quoted researcher Maxim Cheprasov as saying.

The bear carcass was found by reindeer herders on Bolshoy Lyakhovsky Island. It is the largest of the Lyakhovsky Islands, which are part of the New Siberian Islands archipelago that lies between the Laptev Sea

and the East Siberian Sea. At about the same time, a well-preserved carcass of a cave bear cub has also been found in another area in Yakutia's mainland, the university said. It didn't describe its condition in detail but noted that scientists are hopeful of obtaining its DNA. Recent years have seen major discoveries of mammoths, woolly rhinos, Ice Age foal, several puppies and cave lion cubs as the permafrost melts across vast areas in Russia's region of Siberia. □





# Lego to ditch plastic bags for paper ones in its boxed sets

By **JOSEPH PISANI**  
AP Retail Writer

**NEW YORK (AP)** — Lego said Tuesday that it will stop using plastic bags inside its boxed sets and replace them with paper ones.

The Danish toymaker said it will start making the switch next year and expects plastic bags to be completely phased out in the next five years. The bags are used to hold loose bricks in boxed sets.

Lego, as well as other big brands, have been looking for ways to cut plastic use in order to please customers increasingly worried about how their purchases impact the environment. Monopoly maker Hasbro, for example, has also announced plans to eliminate plastics in its packaging.

Among the environmental issues posed by plastic is that it doesn't disintegrate. Instead, it breaks down into tiny pieces that can be eaten by birds or other wildlife, endangering their health.

Lego's colorful bricks are also made of plastic, but the company has had trouble finding another material that's as durable. About 2% of its pieces, such as Lego trees and bushes, are made of sugar cane, Lego said kids wrote the company asking it to drop the plastic bags.

"We have been exploring alternatives for some

time and the passion and ideas from children inspired us to begin to make the change," said Lego CEO Niels B. Christiansen, in a prepared statement.



In an image provided by Lego, colorful toy Lego bricks are seen. Associated Press

## SUDOKU

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Solution on Page 14

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# Netflix delves into the 'human side' of Challenger disaster

By **MARK KENNEDY**

**NEW YORK (AP)** — Many Americans have vivid memories of Jan. 28, 1986. That was the day the space shuttle Challenger exploded over a chilly Florida, just seconds after liftoff. School children across the country had tuned in to see Christa McAuliffe become the first teacher in space.

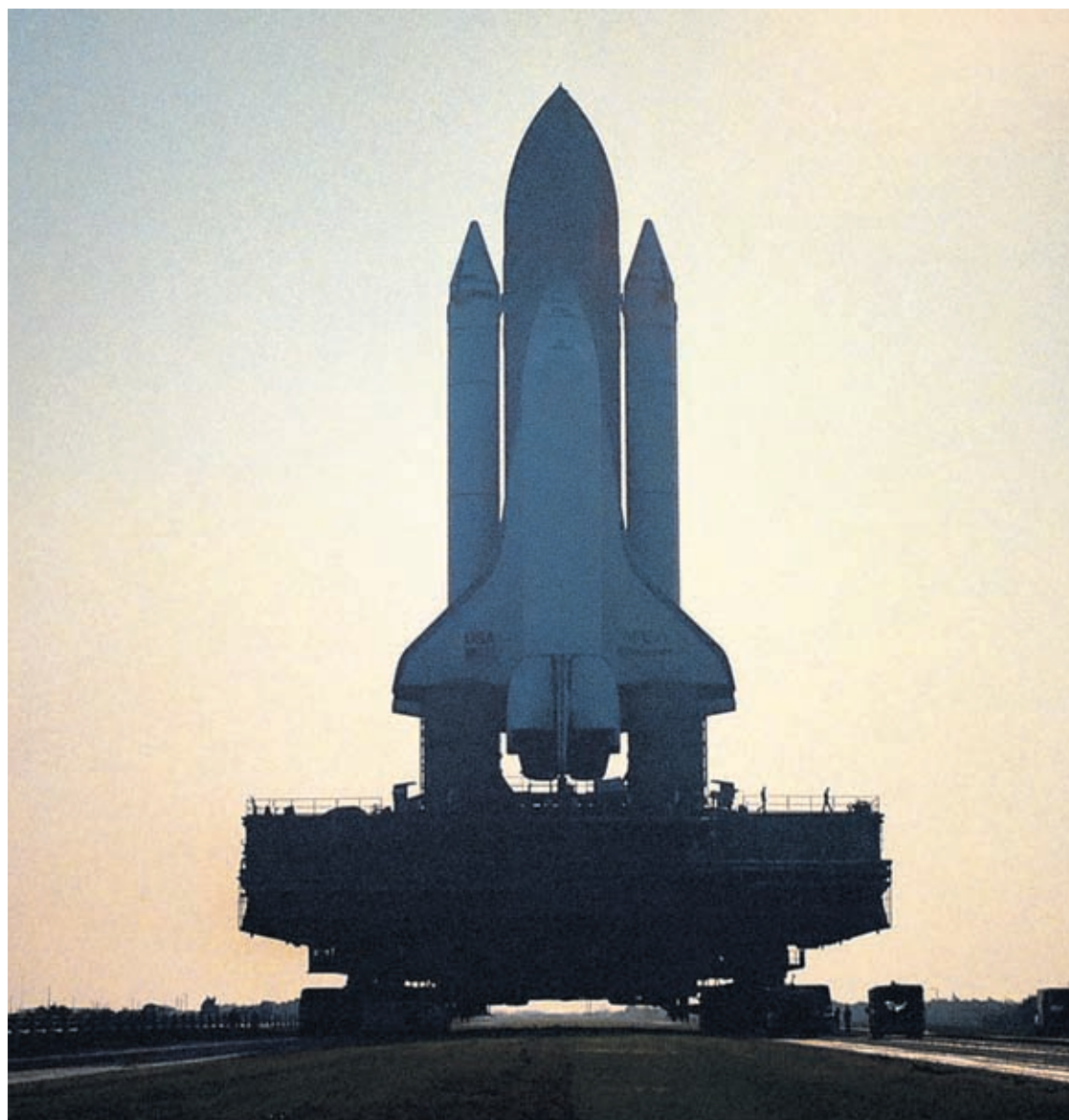
One person watching was Steven Leckart, a space-obsessed elementary school kid. Like everyone else, he was shocked by the blast and felt the slow, sickening realization that all seven aboard were gone. "I remember wanting to be an astronaut and I remember wanting to go to space. And then I remember Challenger completely shattering my dream for that," he recalled.

Leckart has returned to that dark day as co-director of the four-part Netflix documentary series "Challenger: The Final Flight," executive produced by J.J. Abrams and Glen Zipper. It premieres Wednesday.

The series approaches the disaster less like a post-mortem and more like a drama. It explores NASA history and the lives of the seven lost astronauts, why the accident occurred and the inquest that followed.

Zipper and Leckart conceived of it in 2015 while looking to make something personal. Both had seen the disaster as boys but could only remember the name of one astronaut aboard Challenger: McAuliffe. Who were the other six?

The more they dug, the more they found extraordinary people: Ellison Onizuka was the first Asian American in space and Ronald McNair was the second African American. Judith Resnik was the second



This image released by Netflix shows Challenger 7 on the launchpad in a scene from "Challenger: The Final Flight."

Associated Press

American woman in space and the first Jewish woman. "We wanted to humanize these astronauts and wanted you to know these characters and understand the human side of this whole story," co-director Daniel Junge said.

Watching the series was a "rollercoaster ride of emotion" for June Scobee Rodgers, the widow of Challenger commander Dick Scobee and who helped establish the Challenger Center for Space Science Education.

"There is sadness and as a reminder of that tremendous private grief that was

made so public," Scobee Rodgers said. But there is also home movies of her late husband having fun with family and friends. "There are wonderful snippets of joy."

She credited the filmmakers for telling a story "no one else has ever been able to do. There's been many, many stories, but they give it the serious respect that it deserves by telling the whole story."

Months after the disaster, the cause was revealed: O-ring seals failed, causing leaks in the right booster rocket. An investigation found some workers had warned NASA about the danger of launching Challenger because the O-rings grew brittle in cold weather. But NASA was under pressure to keep to its ambitious flight schedule and the risk was deemed acceptable.

"When we started this series, I did kind of expect to find that mustache-twirling villain, that one person that

everything could be laid at their feet. And I don't think we did find that person," Zipper said.

"There is no one who said 'This thing is definitely going to disintegrate. But let's launch it anyway.' They all were loyal to their missions to a fault."

Scobee Rodgers said the series shows how people can rationalize away problems, but despite her immense loss, she has no anger toward the Challenger decision-makers.

"I have such empathy for the gentlemen that made the difficult decisions because they were under pressure for that schedule, placed on NASA unfairly, I do believe," she said.

Leckart likened the way the Challenger disaster unfolded to another man-made disaster in 1986 — the Chernobyl meltdown. "These are not necessarily nefarious people with anything but the best of intentions. But that can quickly go awry."

The series airs just as space exploration has returned to America's consciousness. In May, Elon Musk's SpaceX launched astronauts into orbit from home soil for the first time in nearly a decade. Jeff Bezos' Blue Origin and Richard Branson's Virgin Galactic also plan trips to space.

"We are going to be going further in space and we're going to be taking more risk. So the time is right to remind people of what can go wrong," Zipper said.

The series has lessons for any complex organization, especially how red flags are handled, the necessity to slow the process down when necessary and the need to have both transparency and clear decision-making.

"There's always going to be risk. There's always going to be loss. If we want to launch ourselves into the next frontier, the final frontier, we're going to lose more people. It's inevitable," Zipper said.

"But the question becomes, 'What level of risk is acceptable?' Because if we said no risk is acceptable, then I don't think we can continue our mission into space."

Making "Challenger" made watching the SpaceX launch earlier this year a dicey proposition for Leckart. He was with his children to witness two NASA astronauts blast off to the International Space Station.

"I remember having a moment of thinking, like, 'Do I want my children to be watching this live?' And I'm not sure I would have thought about that quite the same had I not made 'Challenger,'" he said. "When they did get to orbit safely, I had breathed a huge sigh of relief." □

## SOLUTION SUDOKU

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Las Vegas Aces' A'ja Wilson, left, drives against Los Angeles Sparks' Nneka Ogumike during the first half of a WNBA basketball game Saturday, Sept. 12, 2020, in Bradenton, Fla.

Associated Press

## Aces' A'ja Wilson earns AP WNBA player of the year honors

By DOUG FEINBERG  
AP Basketball Writer

A'ja Wilson has been the cornerstone of the Las Vegas franchise since she was drafted and took her game to another level this season, earning her The Associated Press WNBA player of the year honors. The former No. 1 overall pick three years ago led the Aces to an 18-4 record during the shortened season and the top seed in the WNBA playoffs that begin Tuesday in Bradenton, Florida.

"She knows who she is, she knows where she's going," said Las Vegas coach Bill Laimbeer. "She knows that she's in charge, and she's responsible for our team. She has taken this upon her shoulders." Wilson averaged 20.5 points, 8.5 rebounds and two blocks this year for the Aces and views herself as a more all-around player now.

"I feel like I'm a more complete player now than when I first got into the league," Wilson said in an online interview. "Even when I may not be shooting the ball well, I can find other ways to help my team win."

The 6-foot-4 Wilson, who turned 24 last month, was selected by the 16-member media panel that votes on the weekly AP power poll. She received 11 votes. Seattle's Breanna Stewart was second with four. It's the fifth season that the AP

panel has selected post-season award winners.

Candace Parker edged Alyssa Thomas and Alysha Clark for defensive player of the year honors. Parker, in her 13th season, received five votes. Thomas and Clark each had four.

"When I made my decision to come to IMG this season, my focus was on working hard everyday to help put our team in a position to win a championship. For us, that starts with defending at a high level and closing defensive possessions with a rebound," Parker said. "Overall, our team has been able to do that and I'm honored to be recognized for my role on that end of the floor. The award is a testament to my teammates executing on defense and our entire coaching staff."

Minnesota's Crystal Dangerfield was the runaway winner for rookie of the year. The second-round draft pick became the second consecutive Lynx player to win the award, joining Napheesa Collier. The Lynx's point guard averaged 16.2 points and 3.6 assists this season.

She particularly excelled in the fourth quarter. Dangerfield had the second most total points in the league in the final period behind only Arike Ogunbale. The UConn grad averaged 6.5 points a game in the fourth. □



German Lennard Kamna crosses the finish line to win stage 16 of the Tour de France cycling race over 164 kilometers (102 miles) from La Tour-du-Pin to Villard-de-Lans, France, Tuesday, Sept. 15, 2020.

Associated Press

## Kamna posts solo win in the Alps, Roglic keeps yellow jersey

VILLARD-DE-LANS, France (AP) — After coming close to a first Tour de France stage win last week, Lennard Kamna did not miss his second chance.

The 24-year-old German rider won the roller-coaster Stage 16 featuring five categorized climbs after pulling clear of a group of breakaway riders as the race entered the Alps on Tuesday.

Kamna was beaten by four seconds for the stage win by Daniel Martinez on Stage 13.

"It was a fight from the beginning on and I knew I had to make it to the finish alone," said Kamna, who also won a stage last month at the Criterium du Dauphine.

There was no significant change in the overall standings ahead of Wednesday's mammoth summit finish in the high mountains as yellow jersey holder Primoz Roglic kept his 40-second lead over second-place Tadej Pogacar intact. The Slovenian pair enjoyed a quiet day in the pack of main contenders and crossed the finish line 16 minutes, 48 seconds behind the stage winner, who is not a threat in the overall standings. Rigo-

berto Uran of Colombia remained in third place overall, 1 minute, 34 seconds off the pace. Pogacar tested Roglic's legs on the final ascent but could not gain time on his rival.

"It was a good warmup for tomorrow, the queen stage of the race," Pogacar said. Pogacar, a 21-year-old Tour rookie, will have another chance to unsettle Roglic during Wednesday's Stage 17 — arguably the toughest — featuring the Col de La Madeleine and the Col de La Loze, the highest point this year at 2,304 meters. The last six kilometers (4 miles) of the climb are particularly difficult, with very steep sections and sharp turns.

"There will be gaps and a mix-up on the GC (general classification)," Pogacar continued. "We see everyone is exhausted."

The 24-year-old Kamna, who rides for the Borahansgrohe team, made his decisive move on the penultimate ascent to drop former race leader Julian Alaphilippe, Richard Carapaz and Sebastien Reichenbach, three rivals with a strong pedigree.

Kamna was part of a group of 15 riders who broke away from the peloton

early in the 164-kilometer (102-mile) trek.

Among them, Frenchman Quentin Pacher also tried a solo escape but his effort was short lived as he was easily caught and then dropped by Alaphilippe, Carapaz, Reichenbach and Kamna. Carapaz, the Giro d'Italia champion, made Alaphilippe and Reichenbach crack with a couple of biting attacks but could not respond when Kamna countered before the summit.

The German was faster than his remaining rival in the downhill and on the flat sections as he sped toward Villard-de-Lans to post the biggest win of his career.

"When I saw that Carapaz was dropping the speed, I thought now it's the time to go and went all in to the end," Kamna said. "It's a big relief also for the team and for me. I can almost not imagine it. The step I made this year is huge and I'm so blessed to win today."

The remaining 156 Tour de France riders were authorized to start the stage after the UCI and race organizers announced that all 785 COVID-19 tests on Sunday and Monday of riders and staff members of the 22 teams returned negative,



# Defense, Snell, Big Ben carry Pittsburgh over Giants 26-16

By **BARRY WILNER**  
AP Pro Football Writer  
EAST RUTHERFORD, N.J. (AP)

— There was one overriding reason Ben Roethlisberger worked so hard to return from a major elbow injury. His team.

Roethlisberger, who missed the final 14 games last season after elbow surgery, threw for three scores and the Pittsburgh Steelers beat the New York Giants 26-16 at an empty and eerie MetLife Stadium on Monday night. He also got all the help he could ask for from his defense and backup running back Bennie Snell.

"I am excited we won the game," Roethlisberger said. "I told the guys before the game it is not about me individually. The reason I came back is for these guys, this team. It's a special group of football players, of men, and I am just glad to be a part of it."

A key part of it, along with several defensive plays and Snell's 113 yards on 19 carries — his first 100-yard performance in his second NFL season.

"We have talked openly about the maturation process and things you can expect from a second-year player," coach Mike Tomlin said, "and he's showed signs of that from the very beginning of this process. He is a quality player and one that is maturing and emerging, and one who answered the bell when called upon." The defense, while not quite on the level of the famed Steel Curtain, was



Pittsburgh Steelers quarterback Ben Roethlisberger (7) looks to pass under pressure from New York Giants cornerback Darnay Holmes (30) during the first quarter of an NFL football game Monday, Sept. 14, 2020, in East Rutherford, N.J.

stingy and physical. It held Saquon Barkley to 6 yards on 15 carries, swarming in the backfield nearly all night.

"I have to be better," Barkley said. "I have to be better for the team. We have to get the running game going."

Three Steelers stars got them their first touchdown. All-Pro linebacker T.J. Watt made a clever interception at the New York 36. Roethlisberger beat a blitz with a perfect throw to JuJu Smith-Schuster for a 10-yard second-quarter score. Chris Boswell's extra point hit the upright, leaving them behind 10-9.

They got the lead with 7 seconds remaining in the half as Roethlisberger con-

nected with James Washington, who dove into the end zone for a 13-yard score. Boswell made the PAT this time, and added a 36-yard field goal early in the final quarter. That came following the night's biggest play.

Even though the Pittsburgh defense broke down as the Giants marched 87 yards on 19 plays in the third quarter, it still came up with a huge stop. Bud Dupree pressured quarterback Daniel Jones as he rolled left from the 4 and deflected his pass. Edge rusher Cam Heyward practically made a fair catch in the end zone for the interception.

"I want to make a play for my team. I saw Bud laying him down," Heyward said. "I

tried to make a good play and float to the ball.

"We got to be an opportunistic defense. We got sacks by guys who don't usually get sacks and interceptions by guys who don't usually get interceptions." Roethlisberger then took Pittsburgh 62 yards for the field goal and a 19-10 lead. He hit Smith-Schuster again for a 10-yard touchdown and a 26-10 lead before New York got a late TD.

Roethlisberger finished 21 of 32 for 229 yards has now thrown for 366 touchdowns, a franchise record, tying Eli Manning for the eighth most in NFL history.

## SLOPPINESS

Not unexpectedly, sloppy play was the order of the evening early on. In Joe

Judge's debut as coach, the Giants had a dropped pass by Evan Engram and a delay-of-game penalty on fourth-and-1.

The first time a Steeler touched the ball this season was a muff by punt returner Diontae Johnson. Oshane Ximines recovered at the Steelers 3, but New York only managed a 21-yard field goal by Graham Gano.

There were three drops and the muff in the first half of the opening period, and neither team could run the ball successfully.

Not exactly made for prime time — until the beginning of the second quarter and Darius Slayton's post pattern touchdown reception of 41 yards for a 10-3 Giants lead.

Slayton caught a 7-yard TD pass with 1:52 remaining in the game and had six receptions for 102 yards.

## PREGAME SCENE

Nineteen of the Giants' 48 active players knelt during the national anthem, mostly defensive players. Defensive tackle Dalvin Tomlinson was on a knee with a hand across his heart.

The Steelers stood side by side while a group of players held a white banner with the words "Steelers Against Racism." Only tight end Eric Ebron raised his arm.

The Steelers remained in their locker room and the Giants stood in an end zone some 25 minutes earlier when the Black anthem, "Lift Every Voice and Sing," was played. □

# Morant unanimous pick for NBA's All-Rookie team



In this Aug. 11, 2020, file photo, Memphis Grizzlies' Ja Morant passes the ball during the second half of an NBA basketball game against the Boston Celtics in Lake Buena Vista, Fla.

Associated Press

**LAKE BUENA VISTA, Fla. (AP)** — Rookie of the Year Ja Morant of the Memphis Grizzlies was the lone unanimous selection to the NBA's All-Rookie Team that was announced Tuesday.

Morant was a first-team pick on all 100 ballots. Joining him on the first team were Miami guard Kendrick Nunn, Grizzlies forward Brandon Clarke, New Orleans forward Zion Williamson and Golden State for-

ward Eric Paschall.

The second-team picks were Heat guard Tyler Herro, Toronto guard Terence Davis II, Chicago guard Coby White, Charlotte for-

ward P.J. Washington and Washington forward Rui Hachimura.

Paschall edged Herro by one point for the last first-team spot. □

