



After outcry, WH says Biden will lift refugee cap in May

By ZEKE MILLER, AAMER MADHANI and JULIE WATSON

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Facing swift blowback from allies and aid groups, the White House on Friday said President Joe Biden plans to lift his predecessor's historically low cap on refugees by next month, after initially moving only to expand the eligibility criteria for resettlements.

In an emergency determination signed by Biden earlier in the day, he stated the admission of up to 15,000 refugees set by former President Donald Trump this year "remains justified by humanitarian concerns and is otherwise in the national interest." But if the cap is reached before the end of the current budget year and the emergency refugee situation persists, then a presidential determination may be issued to raise the ceiling.

That set off a deluge of criticism from ranking Democratic members of Congress, including Senate Majority Whip and Illinois Democrat Dick Durbin,



President Joe Biden speaks about Russia in the East Room of the White House, Thursday, April 15, 2021, in Washington.

Associated Press

chair of the Senate Judiciary Committee, who called it "unacceptable." White House press secretary Jen Psaki said later that Biden has been con-

sulting with his advisers to determine what number of refugees could realistically be admitted to the United States between now and Oct. 1, the end of the fiscal

year. She said "given the decimated refugee admissions program we inherited," it's now "unlikely" Biden will be able to boost that number

to 62,500, as he had proposed in his plan to Congress two months ago.

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After outcry, WH says Biden will lift refugee cap in May

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But Biden, she said, was urged by advisers to "take immediate action to reverse the Trump policy that banned refugees from many key regions, to enable flights from those regions to begin within days; today's order did that."

The allocations provide more slots for refugees from Africa, the Middle East and Central America and lift Trump's restrictions on resettlements from Somalia, Syria and Yemen.

Critics from both sides of the political spectrum had accused the president of bowing to political pressure that has been mounting over the record pace of unaccompanied migrants crossing the U.S.-Mexico border. Stephen Miller, a key architect of Trump's immigration policies, tweeted that it "reflects Team Biden's awareness that the border flood will cause record midterm losses."

The White House indicated the border situation was partly why Biden had not acted before now, even though migrants at the border do not go through the same vetting process as refugees.

"It is a factor," said Psaki, noting that the Office of Refugee Resettlement "has personnel working on both issues and so we have to



White House press secretary Jen Psaki calls on a reporter during a press briefing in the White House in Washington, Friday, April 16, 2021.

ensure that there is capacity and ability to manage both." Connecticut Democratic Sen. Richard Blumenthal, who also serves on the Judiciary committee, said he didn't buy that.

"This cruel policy is no more acceptable now than it was during the Trump Administration," Blumenthal said. "To be clear: the asylum process at the southern border and the refugee process are completely separate immigration systems. Conflating the two constitutes caving to the politics of fear."

Since the fiscal year began

last Oct. 1, just over 2,000 refugees have been resettled in the U.S.

Secretary of State Antony Blinken notified Congress on Feb. 12 of a plan to raise the ceiling on admissions to 62,500, but Biden had not issued a presidential determination. The law does not require congressional approval and past presidents have issued such presidential determinations that set the cap on refugee admissions shortly after the notification to Congress.

New Jersey Democratic Sen. Bob Menendez, the chairman of the Senate

Foreign Relations Committee, told Biden in a letter Friday that his inaction "undermines your declared purpose to reverse your predecessor's refugee policies."

Menendez said it also makes it unlikely that the program can hit its target next budget year of 125,000, which Biden has pledged to do.

Refugee resettlement agencies said it was important that admissions go higher even if it's not possible to meet the target to send a message that America will be a leader again in

offering safe haven to the world's oppressed.

Some 35,000 refugees have been cleared to go to the United States, and 100,000 remain in the pipeline and their lives remain in limbo, said David Miliband, president and CEO of the International Rescue Committee. "This leadership is sorely needed," he said.

Under Biden's new allocation, 7,000 slots are reserved for refugees from Africa, 1,000 from East Asia, 1,500 from Europe and Central Asia, 3,000 from Latin America and the Caribbean and 1,500 from the Near East and South Asia. A reserve of about 1,000 slots can be used as needed.

The State Department, which coordinates flights with resettlement agencies, booked 715 refugees to come to the United States with the anticipation that Biden would have acted by March, but those flights were canceled since the refugees were not eligible under Trump's rules, according to resettlement agencies.

Most of the refugees are from Africa and fleeing armed conflict or political persecution. Trump limited most spots to people fleeing religious persecution, Iraqis who have assisted U.S. forces there, and people from Central America's Northern Triangle. □

Associated Press

Garland rescinds Trump-era memo curtailing consent decrees



Attorney General Merrick Garland and acting U.S. Capitol Police chief Yogananda Pittman attend a service for slain U.S. Capitol Police officer William "Billy" Evans who lies in honor at the Capitol in Washington, Tuesday, April 13, 2021.

Associated Press

By MICHAEL BALSAMO

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Attorney General Merrick

Garland on Friday rescinded a Trump-era memo that curtailed the use of consent decrees that federal

prosecutors have used in sweeping investigations of police departments.

Garland issued a new memorandum to all U.S. attorneys and other Justice Department leaders spelling out the new policies on civil agreements and consent decrees with state and local governments. The memo comes as the Justice Department shifts its priorities to focus more on civil rights issues, criminal justice overhauls and policing policies in the wake of nationwide protests over the death of Black Americans at the hands of law enforce-

ment. In easing restrictions placed on the use of consent decrees, the Justice Department is making it easier for its prosecutors to use the tool to force changes at police departments and other government agencies with widespread abuse and misconduct. The memo in particular rescinds a previous memo issued by then-Attorney General Jeff Sessions shortly before he resigned in November 2018. Democrats have long argued the ability of the Justice Department's civil rights division to conduct sweeping probes of police

departments had been curtailed under President Donald Trump.

The so-called pattern or practice investigations examine whether systemic deficiencies contribute to misconduct or enable it to persist.

"This memorandum makes clear that the Department will use all appropriate legal authorities to safeguard civil rights and protect the environment, consistent with longstanding Departmental practice and informed by the expertise of the Department's career workforce," Garland said. □

FBI says it interviewed FedEx mass shooter last year

By CASEY SMITH and RICK CALLAHAN
Associated Press/Report for America

INDIANAPOLIS (AP) — FBI agents last year interviewed the gunman who fatally shot eight people at a FedEx facility in Indianapolis, the bureau said Friday, as investigators searched the home of the 19-year-old former FedEx employee.

Coroners began the slow process of identifying the victims as family members spent hours agonizing over word of their loved ones. The slayings Thursday night marked the latest in a string of recent mass shootings to rock the U.S.

The shooter was identified as Brandon Scott Hole of Indianapolis, Deputy Police Chief Craig McCartt told a news conference. Investigators searched a home in Indianapolis associated with Hole and seized evidence, including desktop computers and other electronic media, McCartt said. Paul Keenan, the special agent in charge of the FBI's Indianapolis field office, said Friday that agents questioned Hole last year after his mother called police to say that her son might commit "suicide by cop." He said the FBI was called after items were found in Hole's bedroom but he did not elaborate on what they were. He said agents found no evidence of a crime and that they did not identify Hole as espousing a racially moti-



Deputy Chief Craig McCartt of the Indianapolis Metropolitan Police Department speaks at a news conference following a shooting at a FedEx facility in Indianapolis, Friday, April 16, 2021.

Associated Press

vated ideology. McCartt said Hole was a former employee of the company and last worked for FedEx in 2020. McCartt said he did not know why Hole left the job or if he had ties to the workers in the facility. He said police have not yet uncovered a motive for Thursday's shooting but added that law enforcement officers seized a gun from him last year. McCartt also said authorities are still identifying the victims and that not all of the victims' families have been notified. Hole started randomly firing at people in the parking lot and then went into the building and continued shooting late Thursday night, McCartt said. He said the shooter apparently

killed himself shortly before police entered the building.

"There was no confrontation with anyone that was there," he said. "There was no disturbance, there was no argument. He just appeared to randomly start shooting."

McCartt said four people were killed outside the building and another four inside. Several people were also wounded, including five who were taken to the hospital. McCartt said the slayings took place in a matter of minutes.

Officials with the coroner's office began the process of identifying victims Friday afternoon, a process they said would take several hours.

Police Chief Randal Taylor noted that a "significant" number of employees at the FedEx facility are members of the Sikh community, and the Sikh Coalition later issued a statement saying it was "deeply saddened to learn" that Sikh community members were among the wounded and killed.

The coalition, which identifies itself as the largest Sikh civil rights organization in the U.S., said in the statement that it expected authorities to "conduct a full investigation — including the possibility of bias as a factor." The coalition's executive director, Satjeet Kaur, noted that more than 8,000 Sikh Americans live in Indiana.

The agonizing wait by the

workers' families was exacerbated by the fact that most employees aren't allowed to carry cellphones inside the FedEx building, making contact with them difficult.

"When you see notifications on your phone, but you're not getting a text back from your kid and you're not getting information and you still don't know where they are ... what are you supposed to do?" Mindy Carson said early Friday, fighting back tears.

Carson later said she had heard from her daughter Jessica, who works in the facility, and that she was OK. She was going to meet her, but didn't say where.

FedEx said in a statement that cellphone access is limited to a small number of workers in the dock and package sorting areas to "support safety protocols and minimize potential distractions."

The killings marked the latest in a string of recent mass shootings across the country and the third mass shooting this year in Indianapolis. Five people, including a pregnant woman, were shot and killed in the city in January, and a man was accused of killing three adults and a child before abducting his daughter during an argument at a home in March. In other states last month, eight people were fatally shot at massage businesses in the Atlanta area, and 10 died in gunfire at a supermarket in Boulder, Colorado. □

Heavy, wet snow shows another side of spring in New England

BOSTON (AP) — New Englanders who had enjoyed an early spring were brought back to a cold, blustery reality Friday with a storm packing powerful wind gusts, lashing rain and heavy, wet snow.

A foot of snow had fallen in Spofford in western New Hampshire by midday, and the wind gusted to 40 mph on the coast, said National Weather Service meteorologist Andy Pohl.

Snow fell from New York's Hudson Valley to northern

New York and eastward through New England.

The wind and heavy snow caused sporadic power outages and created slippery conditions. In Maine, three vehicles hydroplaned and crashed in a period of an hour on the Maine Turnpike before the rain turned to snow. One of them burst into flames; the driver escaped without injury.

Elsewhere, the town of Hawley, Massachusetts, recorded 7 inches (18 centimeters) of snow, and

Plainfield and Rowe each got about 6 inches (15 centimeters). Stafford, Connecticut, got a little over 3 inches (8 centimeters).

Winter weather warnings or advisories were posted for large swaths of Vermont, New Hampshire, Maine and Massachusetts. The storm could linger in some areas into Saturday.

Blooming flowers that quickly became covered in snow demonstrated how quickly the weather can change in New England. □



A snowplow clears the snow from Route 9, in Marlboro, Vt., as several inches of snow falls on Friday, April 16, 2021.

Associated Press

U.S. says Russia was given Trump campaign polling data in 2016

By ERIC TUCKER

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — It was one of the more tantalizing, yet unresolved, questions of the investigation into possible connections between Russia and Donald Trump's 2016 presidential campaign: Why was a business associate of campaign chairman Paul Manafort given internal polling data — and what did he do with it? A Treasury Department statement Thursday offered a potentially significant clue, asserting that Konstantin Kilimnik, a Russian and Ukrainian political consultant, had shared sensitive campaign and polling information with Russian intelligence services.

Kilimnik has long been alleged by U.S. officials to have ties to Russian intelligence. But the statement in a broader Treasury Department sanctions announcement was perhaps the most direct link the U.S. government has ever drawn between the Trump campaign's inner workings and the Kremlin's intelligence services. The revelation was all the more startling because it went beyond any allegation made in either special counsel Robert Mueller's 2019 report or in an even more damning and de-



The entrance gate of the Embassy of the Russian Federation is seen in Washington, Thursday, April 15, 2021.

tailed document released last year by the Senate Intelligence Committee. Both those investigations were unable to determine what Kilimnik did with the data and whether he shared it further.

The issue resurfaced Thursday because Kilimnik was one of 32 people and entities sanctioned by the U.S. government for attempting to influence the 2020 election. Officials said Kilimnik sought to promote the bogus narrative that Ukraine, not Russia, had interfered in

the 2016 election.

Kilimnik was a key but mysterious figure in Mueller's investigation into potential coordination between Russia and the 2016 Trump campaign.

A business associate of Manafort's who worked closely with him, even managing his firm's office in Kyiv, Kilimnik is mentioned by name more than 150 times in the Mueller report. He was indicted alongside Manafort on obstruction of justice allegations, but has not appeared in the U.S. to

face those charges. The FBI has offered a reward of up to \$250,000 for information leading to his arrest.

A key episode examined by Mueller involved Manafort's decision to share campaign polling data with Kilimnik — something prosecutors say Manafort lied about when questioned. Investigators scrutinized a series of secretive encounters between the men, including in August 2016 at the Grand Havana Room in New York City.

There, according to state-

ments provided by Mueller, Manafort briefed Kilimnik on internal campaign data and messaging, and they discussed battleground states.

The sharing of polling data was an eye-catching data point, especially since it left open the possibility that Russia could have exploited such inside information to target influence campaigns aimed at boosting Trump's election bid in 2016.

But Mueller's team said it couldn't "reliably determine" Manafort's purpose in sharing it, nor assess what Kilimnik may have done with it — in part due to questions over Manafort's credibility. The Senate committee also could not resolve that question, though its report drew attention for its characterization of Kilimnik as a Russian intelligence officer. Kilimnik has denied that.

It was not clear what new information, if any, led to the Treasury Department's assessment that Kilimnik had "provided the Russian Intelligence Services with sensitive information on polling and campaign strategy."

A Treasury Department spokesman did not return an email seeking comment. □



In this Jan. 6, 2021, file photo, people storm the Capitol in Washington.

Associated Press

By MICHAEL BALSAMO and ALANNA DURKIN RICHER

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A member of the far-right Oath Keepers militia group and heavy metal guitarist on Friday became the first defendant to plead guilty

to federal charges in connection with the insurrection at the U.S. Capitol.

Jon Ryan Schaffer, the frontman of the band Iced Earth, has agreed to cooperate with investigators in hopes of getting a lighter sentence, and the Justice

Oath Keeper is 1st suspect to plead guilty in Capitol riot

Department will consider putting Schaffer in the federal witness security program, U.S. District Judge Amit Mehta said.

This signals that federal prosecutors see him as a valuable cooperator as they continue to investigate militia groups and other extremists involved in the insurrection on Jan. 6 as Congress was meeting to certify President Joe Biden's electoral win.

Schaffer, a supporter of former President Donald Trump, was accused of storming the Capitol and spraying police officers with bear spray. He pleaded guilty in a deal with pros-

ecutors in federal court in Washington to two counts: obstruction of an official proceeding, and entering and remaining in a restricted building with a dangerous or deadly weapon.

An email seeking comment was sent to an attorney for Schaffer.

Schaffer, of Columbus, Indiana, was wearing a tactical vest and baseball hat that read "Oath Keepers Lifetime Member" on Jan. 6, and acknowledged in his plea agreement that he is a "founding lifetime member" of the extremist group, prosecutors said.

The 53-year-old was not charged in the case involv-

ing Oath Keepers members and associates, who are accused of conspiring with one another to block the certification of the vote. The case is the largest and most serious brought by prosecutors so far in the attack.

Authorities say those defendants came to Washington ready for violence and intent on stopping the certification. Many came dressed for battle on Jan. 6 in tactical vests and helmets and some discussed stationing a "quick reaction force" outside the city in the event they needed weapons, prosecutors have said. □

3 resign from Auschwitz council after politician appointed

By VANESSA GERA

Associated Press

WARSAW, Poland (AP) —

Three members of an advisory council for the Auschwitz-Birkenau museum in Poland have resigned after the government appointed a former prime minister and top member of the country's right-wing ruling party to serve on the council.

Culture Minister Piotr Glinski, who appointed Beata Szydlo to the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum Council, said he was astounded by the resignations.

He described them Friday as unjustified moves that threaten to "politicize the discussion around the most important museum of martyrdom in Poland, a place of world heritage."

The first advisory council member to resign was philosopher Stanislaw Krajewski, who said he took the step Tuesday to protest what he called the "politicization" of the group of Polish experts who to advise the museum's director. He was followed by histori-



In this Friday, Jan. 27, 2017 file photo, Polish Prime Minister Beata Szydlo lights a candle at the International Monument to the Victims of Fascism, after a ceremony marking the 72nd anniversary of the liberation of the German Nazi death camp Auschwitz-Birkenau, in Oswiecim, Poland.

Associated Press

ans Marek Lasota, who also belongs to the ruling party, and Krystyna Oleksy, a former deputy director of the Auschwitz Museum.

Krajewski, who was about to begin his third four-year term, told The Associated Press that he does not remember a politician ever being named to the coun-

cil and did not feel comfortable with the step, particularly given the policies of the populist and nationalist Law and Justice Party. "It's hard to say what would happen, but it would change the nature of the body very considerably," Krajewski said. "I don't want to be on the same council

with a major politician of the ruling party today." The culture minister's statement said it is "not true that there have never been any politically involved people" on the council. Krajewski is a co-creator of a post-World War II history section at the POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews in Warsaw

and a co-founder of the Polish Council of Christians and Jews. He is also a leading member of Warsaw's Jewish community who since the 1970s has worked to revive Jewish life in Poland that was nearly wiped out by the Holocaust.

After Law and Justice took power in 2015, its leaders launched what they described as a "historical policy offensive" aimed at building pride in the nation's past.

The party has used museums, state media and other tools to promote a patriotic view of history. Poles are proud of the nation's role in resisting the German occupation during nearly six years of World War II. The government has sought to focus on that aspect of Polish behavior during the war, including the thousands of Poles who saved Jews, while seeking to discourage examinations of the role some Poles had in helping occupying German forces in their mass killing of Jews. □

Australian judge rules Google misled Android users on data

By ROD McGUIRK

Associated Press

CANBERRA, Australia (AP) —

Google broke Australian law by misleading users about personal location data collected through Android mobile devices, a



In this Jan. 8, 2020, file photo, the Google exhibit building offers a multitude of products offering the Google Assistant during the CES tech show in Las Vegas.

Associated Press

judge found Friday.

The Federal Court decision was a partial win for the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission, the nation's fair trade watchdog, which has been prosecuting Google for broader alleged breaches of consumer law since October 2019.

Justice Thomas Thawley found that Google misled Android mobile device users about personal location data collected between January 2017 and December 2018.

"This is an important victory for consumers, especially anyone concerned about their privacy online, as the court's decision sends a strong message to Google and others that big businesses must not mislead their customers," Commission Chair Rod Sims said in a statement.

"We are extremely pleased with the outcome in this world-first case," he

added.

Google is considering an appeal to the full bench of the Federal Court.

"The court rejected many of the ACCC's broad claims," a Google statement said.

"We disagree with the remaining findings and are currently reviewing our options, including a possible appeal," Google added. The judge ruled that when users created a new Google account during the initial set-up process of their Android device, Google misrepresented that the "Location History" setting was the only Google account setting that affected whether Google collected, kept or used personally identifiable data about their location.

But another Google account setting titled "Web & App Activity" also enabled Google to collect, store and use personally identi-

fiable location data when it was turned on, and that setting was turned on by default.

The judge also found that when users later accessed the "Location History" setting on their Android device during the same time period to turn that setting off, they were also misled because Google did not inform them that by leaving the "Web & App Activity" setting switched on, Google would continue to collect, store and use their personally identifiable location data.

Similarly, between March 2017 and Nov. 29, 2018, when users later accessed the "Web & App Activity" setting on their Android device, they were misled because Google did not inform them that the setting was relevant to the collection of personal location data.

Google said the digital platform provides "robust

controls for location data and are always looking to do more."

The commission is seeking court orders and financial penalties against Google to be determined later.

The Australia Institute Center for Responsible Technology, a Canberra-based think tank, said the case "highlights the complexity of Big Tech terms and conditions."

"The reality is most people have little to no idea on how much of their data is being used by Google and online platforms," the Center's Director Peter Lewis said in a statement.

Lewis said reading most terms and conditions takes an average of 74 minutes and requires a university education, according to the institute's research, and more comprehensive consumer data protection was needed. □

AP Interview: Beijing says US 'too negative' toward China

By **KEN MORITSUGU**

Associated Press

BEIJING (AP) — A top Chinese diplomat said Friday that U.S. policy toward China is "too negative" and that cooperation could be critically important as the Biden administration focuses on combatting COVID-19 and promoting economic recovery.

The U.S. appears to be highlighting confrontation and playing down cooperation, Vice Foreign Minister Le Yucheng said in a wide-ranging interview with The Associated Press.

"Such an approach, I must say, is too negative," he said, adding that it lacks "a forward-looking spirit."

China could be a partner as Biden tackles the coronavirus and the economy, he said.

"To me it is hard to imagine the two priorities can be resolved without a cooperative and healthy China-U.S. relationship," he said.

Le also signaled that China is unlikely to make any new pledges at a climate change meeting called by President Joe Biden for next week. He spoke as Biden's climate envoy, John Kerry, was discussing the issue on the second day of closed-door meetings with Chinese counterparts in Shanghai. Chinese President Xi Jinping announced last year that China would be carbon-neutral by 2060 and aim to reach a peak in its



Chinese Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs Le Yucheng speaks during an interview with the Associated Press at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Beijing, Friday, April 16, 2021.

emissions by 2030.

"For a big country with 1.4 billion people, these goals are not easily delivered," Le said. "Some countries are asking China to do more on climate change. I am afraid this is not very realistic."

Le said he had no details on the Kerry meetings in Shanghai.

Biden has invited 40 world leaders, including Xi, to an April 22-23 virtual climate summit. The U.S. and other countries are expected to announce more ambitious national targets for cutting emissions and pledge financial help for climate efforts by less wealthy na-

tions.

Le said that China would convey a positive message at the meeting, but added that China is responding to climate change on its own initiative, not because others asked it to. On whether Xi would join the summit, Le said "the Chinese side is actively studying the matter." The U.S. and China are increasingly at odds over a range of issues, including human rights in Tibet and the Xinjiang region, a crackdown on protest and political freedom in Hong Kong, China's assertion of its territorial claims to Taiwan and most of the South China Sea and ac-

cusations Beijing was slow to inform the world about the COVID-19 outbreak that became a devastating pandemic.

China hoped for an improvement in relations under Biden, who succeeded President Donald Trump in January, but the new administration has shown no sign of backing down on hardline policies toward China. The two sides traded sharp and unusually public barbs at the start of talks in Alaska last month.

Le said that after the opening of the Alaska talks, the dialogue was constructive and useful and that both sides are following up on

the issues discussed.

The two countries could team up on coronavirus response, he said, but any cooperation must be on an equal basis, an apparent reference to the U.S. pressure on China on multiple fronts.

"It is not one side drawing up a laundry list of demands to the other side," Le said. "In cooperation, one should not be selfish and care only about one's own interests with no regard for the well-being of the other side."

On the same day that a number of Hong Kong pro-democracy activists were sentenced, Le defended China's crackdown on protest in the semi-autonomous territory. He described the convicted as rioters and said "they deserve what they got."

He added, "I don't think it is anything strange if Hong Kong somehow becomes more like a Chinese city because after all Hong Kong is part of China."

The U.K., U.S. and others have accused Beijing of renegeing on a commitment to run the former British colony under a so-called "one country, two systems" framework for 50 years after its 1997 handover to Chinese rule.

Le brushed aside such critiques, saying, "Hong Kong is always China's Hong Kong and this is something that will not change." □

Associated Press

Israel says it will 'definitely' stop Iran from getting bomb

ATHENS, Greece (AP) — Israel's foreign minister said Friday that his country was determined to stop Iran from building a nuclear weapon, after Tehran promised to step up its uranium enrichment process.

"We will do whatever it takes to prevent the extremists (in Iran) from succeeding, and definitely will prevent this regime from having a nuclear weapon," Israeli Foreign Minister Gabi Ashkenazi told reporters on a visit to Cyprus.

Iranian officials say the country will begin enriching uranium up to 60% purity following an attack on its nuclear facility at Natanz, in central Iran, on Sunday, that it blamed on Israel.

Askenazi met with the foreign ministers of Cyprus and Greece, Nikos Christodoulides and Nikos Dendias, as well as Anwar Gargash, a top presidential aide in the United Arab Emirates.

Israel and the UAE normalized relations in a landmark deal last year, and the four countries represented at the meeting Friday promised to boost cooperation in defense, energy, tourism, and other sectors. □



From left to right, Israel foreign minister Gabi Ashkenazi, Cypriot foreign minister Nicos Christodoulides, Anwar Gargash of United Arab Emirate and Greek foreign minister Nikos Dendias pose for photo before their meeting of the ministers of foreign affairs of Cyprus, Greece, Israel and United Arab of Emirates in city of Paphos, Cyprus, Friday, April 16, 2021.

Associated Press

Shortage of intubation drugs threatens Brazil health sector

By **DIANE JEANTET** and **DAVID BILLER**

Associated Press

RIO DE JANEIRO (AP) — Reports are emerging of Brazilian health workers forced to intubate patients without the aid of sedatives, after weeks of warnings that hospitals and state governments risked running out of critical medicines.

One doctor at the Albert Schweitzer municipal hospital in Rio de Janeiro told the Associated Press that for days health workers diluted sedatives to make their stock last longer. Once it ran out, nurses and doctors had to begin using neuromuscular blockers and tying patients to their beds, the doctor said.

"You relax the muscles and do the procedure easily, but we don't have sedation," said the doctor, who agreed to discuss the sensitive situation only if not quoted by name. "Some try to talk, resist. They're conscious."

Lack of required medicines is the latest pandemic problem to befall Brazil, which is experiencing a brutal COVID-19 outbreak that has flooded the nation's intensive care units. The daily death count is averaging about 3,000, accounting for a quarter of deaths globally and making Brazil the epicenter of the pandemic.

"Intubation kits" include



A 43-year-old patient suspected of having COVID-19 is transferred from an ambulance into the HRAN public hospital in Brasilia, Brazil, Wednesday, April 14, 2021.

Associated Press

anesthetics, sedatives and other medications used to put severely ill patients on ventilators. The press office of Rio city's health secretariat said in an email that occasional shortages at the Albert Schweitzer facility are due to difficulties obtaining supplies on the global market and that "substitutions are made so that there is no damage to the assistance provided." It didn't comment on the need to tie patients to beds. The newspaper O Globo on Thursday reported similar ordeals in several other hospitals in the Rio metropolitan region, with

people desperately calling other facilities seeking sedatives for their loved ones. It's unclear whether the problem seen in Rio remains an isolated case, but others are sounding the alarm about impending shortages.

Sao Paulo state's health secretary, Jean Carlo Gorinchteyn, said at a news conference Wednesday that the situation was dire in the hospitals of Brazil's most-populous state. On Thursday, more than 640 hospitals were on the verge of collapse, with shortages possible within days, officials said. "We need the

federal government's support," Gorinchteyn said. "This is not a necessity for Sao Paulo; it is a necessity for the whole country."

His state's health officials sent nine requests for intubation medication to the Health Ministry over the past 40 days, according to a statement Wednesday. Its last delivery was enough to cover just 6% of monthly needs in the state's public health network, officials told AP. Federal Health Minister Marcelo Queiroga, who took over the post last month, said Wednesday that a shipment of sedatives was expected to ar-

rive in Brazil "in the next ten days." It is the result of a contract signed with the Pan American Health Organization.

He said two separate efforts to acquire medications on the international market are underway "to end this day-to-day struggle." For many weeks, the ministry has also been facing logistical constraints on getting oxygen delivered to hospitals across the country. Queiroga said it remains "a daily concern."

A more contagious coronavirus variant, known as P.1, has been spreading across Brazil this year. It may also be more aggressive than the original strain, and health workers have reported patients requiring far more oxygen than last year.

The private sector has stepped up to help address some of the supply shortfall. A group of seven large companies donated 3.4 million doses of intubation drugs enough for the management of 500 beds for six weeks to the Health Ministry.

A first batch of 2.3 million was scheduled to arrive from China late Thursday at Sao Paulo's international airport and would be distributed to states with critical shortages, the ministry said in an emailed response to AP questions about supply bottlenecks. □

U.S. puts visa restrictions on Uganda, saying vote was flawed

NAIROBI, Kenya (AP) —

The United States says it is imposing visa restrictions on "those believed to be responsible for, or complicit in, undermining the democratic process in Uganda," including during the election in January and the campaign period.

Secretary of State Antony Blinken in a statement said the Ugandan government's actions "represent a continued downward trajectory for the country's democracy and respect for human rights." The election in which longtime

President Yoweri Museveni won a sixth term "was nei-



In this Thursday, Jan. 14, 2021 file photo, security forces gather on election day in Kampala, Uganda.

Associated Press

ther free nor fair," Blinken said.

The statement did not say who is affected by the visa restrictions.

The election was a generational clash between Museveni, 76, and the popular singer and opposition lawmaker known as Bobi Wine, 39, who was detained and harassed multiple times ahead of the vote. Wine later alleged widespread irregularities in the election.

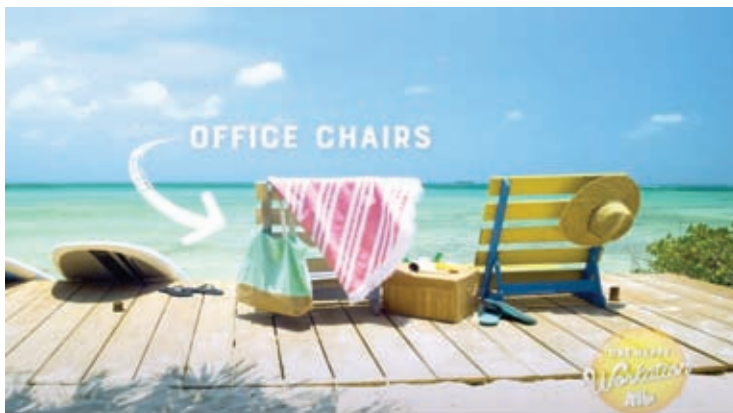
Blinken said that "opposition candidates were routinely harassed, arrested, and held illegally without

charge. Ugandan security forces were responsible for the deaths and injuries of dozens of innocent bystanders and opposition supporters." Civil society figures were intimidated and arrested, and journalists were targeted with violence, he said.

Uganda's government limited accreditation for election observers to the point where the United States decided not to observe at all.

Blinken's statement said the U.S. will consider additional measures against individuals. □

Aruba Tourism Authority (A.T.A.) launches concept: Promotions for 'workations Aruba' receives great enthusiasm



ORANJESTAD — The latest developments of the Covid-19 pandemic shows that more and more persons are working from home. The Aruba Tourism Authority (A.T.A.) took this fact as an opportunity to present Aruba as an alternative destination for the persons that want to visit the island and stay longer while at the same time be able to work. This in return will create an income for our local businesses and our economy.

The project is being led by the Aruba Convention Bureau (A.C.B) and A.T.A. through their 'business-to-business' (B2B) database and all other marketing channels in order to reach all interested in this 'workation' in Aruba. 'Workation' is currently being promoted in the US and visitors will be able to stay in Aruba for 90 days. In the future Aruba hopes to be able to extend this in order to offer longer periods.

Attractive and valuable packages are being offered at three types of accommodations:



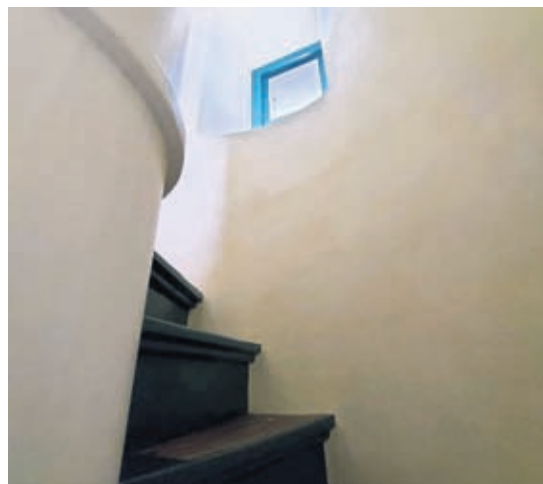
- Hotel
- Hotels with kitchens such as timeshares
- Condominiums and vacation rentals

The outcome of this promotion has been very positive in the US market. Many families see this as an opportunity to leave their country to stay at our island for an extended period as a great opportunity to work and at the same time vacation. US citizens do have to go through different protocols before being able to visit the island but from reactions received at the A.T.A. office it is worth it. They know that despite the challenges caused by the pandemic they still feel safe in Aruba. □

California Lighthouse is back open for the public

ORANJESTAD — After being closed since February of this year, for a much needed maintenance, the California Lighthouse is now ready to re-open for the public this weekend.

The maintenance work were on this building was performed by Projexon Group. Most maintenance work were done on the inside of the monument. The wooden staircase had been fixed, the walls had been plastered and painted and windows also were fixed. The biggest change done was the installation of a banister that will give support when climbing up the stairs. In order to do this the Stichting Monumentenfonds Aruba (SMFA) had to request the permit to the Monumentsbureau, seeing that something new will be added to the monument. The banister will not only function as a support while climbing, but it will also help in preventing visitors from touching the walls when climbing. For the plaster work and paint job ex-



ecuted on the insight of the lighthouse they made use of the original caulk material. The Stichting Monumentenfonds Aruba hired an expert on this material from the company Limeworks from the United States, who guided the contractor on the preparation of the surface and the process on how to apply the product correctly. The whole process had been documented by the SMFA for future projects. At the same time three more persons got certified for this application procedure. Back in 2019 a total of 19 persons took part of a special course given by the foundation and received the certification here for. When performing maintenance on historical buildings it is extremely important to use original materials in order to prevent deterioration. The use of this caulk will last longer and also will help the foundation in reducing maintenance cost.

Stichting Monumentenfonds Aruba would like to thank Experitours for their understanding and cooperation for the period that the lighthouse had been closed. For more information on the lighthouse visit their facebook page California Lighthouse Aruba. □



Aruba to me..... My happy place!



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For today we received amazing pictures from happy visitor **Fred**. Who wrote,

"Aruba to me is my happy place." □

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First buyers of new Commandeurs Ponton Apartments a fact: Intentional living that focuses on what you believe matters

ORANJESTAD — "The philosophy is to get more out of life and live in a great environment that is also sustainable," says Randolph Arends from Aruba Living Today. The property mediator is referring to their newest offering: **Commandeurs Ponton Apartments**. Construction of the complex has already started and Arends is happy to present to us the first buyers from the Netherlands. Why did they choose for Commandeurs?

"The perfect location, the environmental friendliness of the project with solar panels, the community feeling which is especially important when you have a certain age made us decide for Commandeurs. The prospect clearly states that this is the best purchase for starters and people who retire and we cannot agree more on that. On top of that we will be able to enjoy Aruba's famous sunsets," says the owner. They looked for an affordable and small apartment, though very comfortable and convenient and they found it. "We are beyond happy."

The modern designed project shines with happy, bright colors and offers affordable 2-bedroom, 1-bathroom apartments built with high quality European materials. Ocean view, centrally located, a community pool and great value for money. On September 14th 2020, construction started of the first of three buildings. "Now we started the first building with eight 72 m² (775 sq. ft.) apartments and eight 54 m² (581 sq. ft.) apartments. Pre-construction prices start at \$ 152,000, but in the course of the building will increase. So get it while you can," Arends hints. He is happy to inform that several options on apartments are already taken.

Unique on the island: Home care offering & permit handling

Arends: "What we see is that Aruba is very popular with the older generation, the pensionaries. Reasons are the stable warm climate, the quiet and long-stretched white-sandy beaches, the location outside of the hurricane belt, the safety of the island, the political stability, the high quality infrastructure and our friendly people. And let us not forget the high quality health care, founded on the system of the Netherlands." Aruba Living Today noticed that this type of buyer also requires assistance in several areas and they decided to take it all out of



Randolph Arends (right) with the first buyer

hands and offer more than the average realtor. "We are unique in this because we have our own certified Dutch nurse (multilingual) available for our home owners meaning there is a 24/7 home care for you standby. The interior design of our apartments will be as convenient



Happy first owners

as possible and wheelchair friendly with stable doors and wider entrance. We will be offering different packages of home care support and retirement permits. We are evaluating a shuttle service to take people to town and to the beach. Yes, we are here to release you of any hassle and give you back happiness and peace in mind!"

Details that matter

The development is close to the new Watty Vos Boulevard putting you within five minutes to Eagle Beach (voted as one of the best beaches in the world), the supermarkets and the downtown area. The building will have central air conditioning and the staircase or elevator will take you up to the higher floors which provide a spectacular view to the Caribbean Sea. By owning one of the apartments, you will automatically be a part of the owner's association which together will take care of the community grounds, pool, elevators and solar panels (on the roof and parking lot) to lower the costs of electricity. Arends: "Not too expensive, not too big. A good size apartment for those who strive to live comfortable yet still have the financial space to travel and do other things in life."

A happy, low-stress life provides the space to figure out what matters most and the freedom to focus on these things. Instead of spending your weekends on home maintenance projects or mowing a yard, you can go to the beach and the pool. You can relax more and even nap more (yes!) without thinking about things that need done around the house. Commandeur Ponton Apartments is all about intentional living, a concept that suits Aruba Living Today completely. Arends: "My goal was to do real estate in a different way when I established this company June 1st 2009. Not from the perspective of only selling, but to look for the perfect match between dream house and client. My philosophy is: it will only work when all involved are happy and connected by that personal touch."

Aruba Living Today

Tanki leendert 291

Noord, Aruba

Phone: +297 587 9987

Mail: info@livingtoday.aw

Website: <http://www.livingtoday.aw>



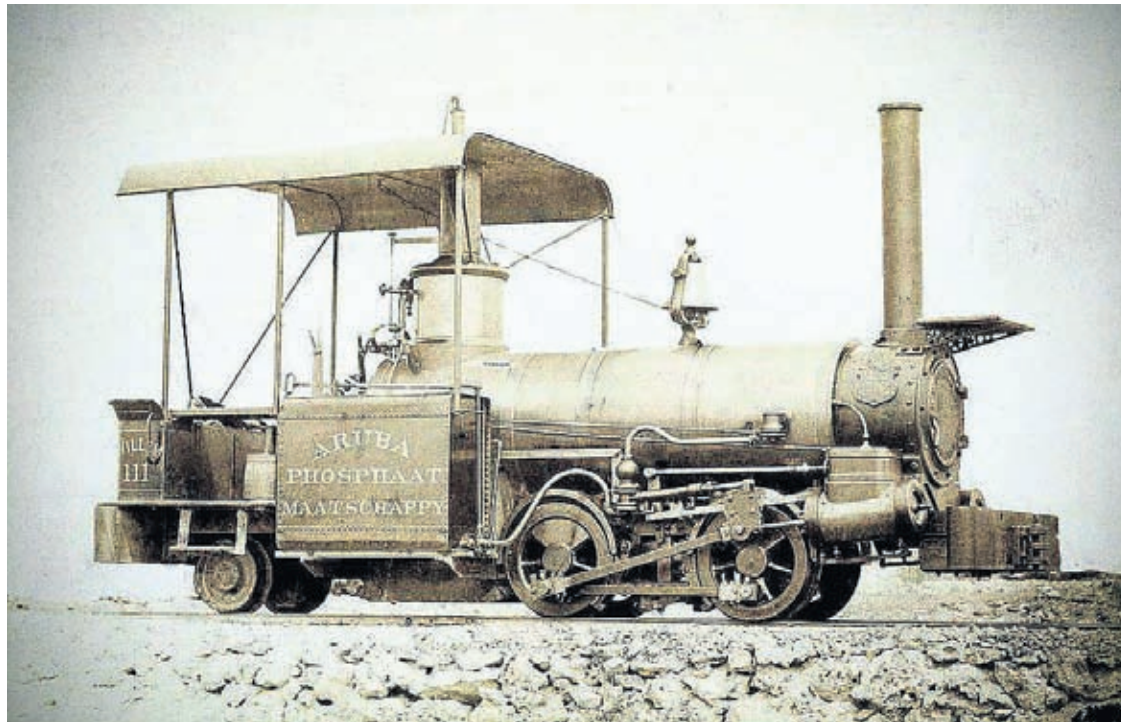
Aruba's natural product: phosphate

ORANJESTAD — In the 19th century another natural product, besides gold, was found to be fit for exploitation. On Seroe Colorado, at the utmost south-easterly tip of the island, guano was found. This limestone, containing phosphoric acid, originates from bird droppings, in this case sea gulls. There was a broad world market for phosphate that was used as a fertilizer.

The discovery of guano is being credited to J. H. Waters Gravenhorst in 1874, but it seems that in 1859 already an American, S. R. Kimball, who was digging guano on the Aves islands, had applied for a permit for exploitation. If it actually has come to that, remains unknown.

In 1871, guano had also been discovered on Klein Curaçao by the Englishman John Godden. His discovery caused quite a hype on de Antillian islands, a kind of 'guano mania'. On Curaçao too, guano was found and exploited by Godden. The phosphate was very conspicuous by its color: yellow to red-brown or the color of liver, sometimes green or purple. That's how Seroe Colorado (the Colored Hill) got its name.

After the discovery of guano on Aruba by Gravenhorst, exploitation was started by the Aruba Phosphaat Maatschappij (APM), founded in December of 1879. The center of exportation was San Nicolas, which only consisted of a few fishermen's huts before. The activities surrounding the exploitation and exportation of phosphate led to more and more huts being built there. It already started to look quite like a little village, where sailors from the ships that came for the phosphate came looking for distraction ashore. Local labor was initially only found with difficulty: that was because of the rival branch of industry, the exploitation of gold. That's why forty men were attracted from Bonaire and about twenty bricklayers and carpenters from Curaçao. Even a group of Ital-



ians was attracted to the island to manage the company; four of them never left the island: Antonio and Victorio Petrocci, Eugenio Falconi and Cajetano Jacopucci. They settled at Tanki Leendert.

The exploitation of phosphate led to the development of the settlement of Sint Nicolaas. First a wooden pier was built in the harbor and the phosphate was taken there by donkey. In 1881, new material arrived from England and New York. The installations that were built then were ultramodern for that time. In the Sint Nicolaasbay, an iron landing was built and that was the most modern harbor facility in the whole Caribbean at that time. For the transport of the phosphate to the harbor, a six kilometer long narrow gauge railway was built and the phosphate was taken to

the loading berth in trains of about twenty tip carts and a steam locomotive. There it was loaded into sail ships that took it to countries like England, France, Germany and the United States to be processed to super phosphate that was used as fertilizer. The phosphate company had its own tugboat (the 'S.S. Phosphate') and its own pilot to get the ships safely in and out of the Sint Nicolaasbay. The time that was needed to load a ship was being reduced from 15 to 5 days. Three- to five hundred tons of phosphate per day could be handled by the pier. In 1882, about 250 men worked in the phosphate industry and the salaries were not bad. People came from all over the island to work in the phosphate mines; those who lived in the surroundings of Noord, had to get on their way by foot or on

a donkey by Sunday afternoon, stayed overnight in Savaneta to start working on Monday. The workers stayed near the phosphate mines all week and slept in barracks. On Saturdays, they worked half day, after which they set out to return home on foot or on a donkey.....

Business went well and soon a profit was made which allowed paying off the loans that were made for the investments. A dividend could be paid out as well.

Initially, phosphate was extracted on Seroe Colorado and Seroe Culebra. When the supply at the surface of the hills was exhausted after about fifteen years, they went on to look for phosphate deeper in the ground. On a depth of 15 to 18 meters, phosphate layers, six feet thick on average, were discovered at

Banki Jerome, a bit more to the north. Mines were made to bring up the material. Those provided enough phosphate for the next 15 years. Holes were drilled by hand into the phosphate and then it was extracted with explosives. The exploitation of the phosphate caused the revenues of the island to rise considerably and that made it possible to support the other islands of the colony Curaçao (the Netherlands Antilles did not yet exist) as well. In the years of exploitation (that went on till 1914), 530.060 tons were exported with a total market value of almost 17 million guilders. Aruba could generate about 4 million guilders from exportation taxes.

But in the course of the years, phosphate exploitation became less profitable: as the phosphate had to be extracted from deeper underground, the quality became poorer. Furthermore, there was strong competition from good quality phosphate from Canada. Good and relatively cheap phosphate came out of Florida as well and as a result, the global prices went down. The APM found out that the expenses to exploit phosphate were too high to be able to still be competitive. Even though the tax rates had been reduced by the government, the profits continued to go down and finally the expenses could not be covered anymore.

When World War I broke out in 1914, the exploitation of phosphate became very difficult. It was impossible to get dynamite and the means of exportation became worse as a result of the war in Europe. The Aruba Phosphaat Maatschappij closed down in August of 1914 and a year later, the company was dissolved by its shareholders. Workers left again and went looking for work in the surrounding countries like Venezuela and Colombia. □



Source: www.historiadiaruba.aw.

After union vote, Bezos vows to do better for Amazon workers

By JOSEPH PISANI

AP Retail Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — After a union battle at an Alabama warehouse, Amazon founder Jeff Bezos acknowledged that Amazon has to do better for its workers and vowed to make Amazon a safer place to work.

Bezos made the promise Thursday in his annual letter to shareholders. He said he didn't take comfort in the outcome of the recent union election in Bessemer, Alabama, even though workers there overwhelmingly rejected a union.

"I think we need to do a better job for our employees," said Bezos, who will be stepping down as CEO later this year and will become executive chair of the online shopping giant.

Amazon's treatment of workers has been in the spotlight during the pandemic.

While coronavirus was raging, warehouse workers had to pack orders as Amazon sales soared.

The New York attorney general is suing Amazon for not doing enough to protect workers against the virus at



In this Sept. 19, 2019, file photo, Amazon CEO Jeff Bezos speaks during his news conference at the National Press Club in Washington.

two facilities in the city. And earlier this month, the company vowed to improve working conditions after acknowledging that some delivery drivers might have had to urinate in bottles to deliver packages on time, an allegation the company previously denied.

The letter from Bezos comes a week after workers in Alabama voted against form-

ing a union, cutting off a path that labor activists had hoped would lead to similar efforts throughout the company.

Workers who were seeking a union said they spent 10-hour days on their feet packing packages and unloading boxes, with only two 30-minute breaks and not enough time to eat lunch, go to the bathroom

or recover from the back-breaking work.

Bezos disputed the portrayal of Amazon workers and how they are treated.

"If you read some of the news reports, you might think we have no care for employees. In those reports, our employees are sometimes accused of being desperate souls and treated as robots," Bezos

wrote.

"That's not accurate. They're sophisticated and thoughtful people who have options for where to work."

Bezos said part of his focus as chair will be to make warehouse jobs safer. He said about 40% of injuries are sprains and strains caused by repeating the same motions and are more likely to happen during a worker's first six months in the job. He said training may help those "working in a physical role for the first time." And he said the company is deploying technology this year that will change up a worker's job so they're not using the same muscles over and over again.

Stuart Appelbaum, president of the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union, which organized workers at Bessemer, said Thursday that the letter from Bezos proves what it had been saying about poor conditions at Amazon's warehouses.

"Workers need a union — not just another Amazon public relations effort in damage control," Appelbaum said. □

Associated Press

Massachusetts looks to bar Robinhood in state; company sues

NEW YORK (AP) — Stakes are rising in Massachusetts' legal battle against Robinhood Financial, and regulators are asking for the popular trading app's brokerage registration to be revoked, which would effectively bar it from the state.

Robinhood, meanwhile, calls the complaint brought by Secretary of the Commonwealth William Galvin's office elitist and based on a rule that should not apply in its case. It's asking to move the issue to a state court, rather than continue to work through an administrative process.

The legal battle began in December, when state regulators filed an administrative complaint against Robinhood, whose easy-to-use app has helped bring a new generation of

investors to the market. The app has grown so popular that the company is preparing to sell its own stock on the market through an initial public offering.

In its initial complaint, Massachusetts' securities division alleged Robinhood

exploited its customers to make bigger profits and failed to meet standards of conduct required by the state, something called the "fiduciary rule." It said Robinhood used techniques to make investing seem like a game, such as showering

users' screens with confetti, in hopes of encouraging unsophisticated customers to make more and more trades. On Thursday, the securities division said Robinhood's culture has not changed since the initial filing and that it "continues to entice and induce inexperienced customers into risky trading." Regulators cited Robinhood's offering bonuses to customers for depositing cash in their accounts as an example of tactics that it said demonstrate a "cavalier approach to complying with the duties it owes Massachusetts customers."

Regulators are asking a hearing officer in the administrative case to consider revoking Robinhood's registration as a broker-dealer in the state.

Also on Thursday, Robinhood filed its own suit in

Massachusetts state court, asking a judge to prevent the securities division from continuing its administrative case and to declare that applying the fiduciary rule to brokerages is invalid, in part because doing so runs counter to state law. The company also said in a court filing that the state's fiduciary rule, which requires someone to provide advice solely in the financial interest of the customer, should not apply to self-directed brokerages like Robinhood, which doesn't provide investment advice.

It criticized examples that Massachusetts regulators gave when accusing Robinhood of violating the fiduciary rule, such as showing customers lists of popular stocks without considering whether they were suitable investments. □



This Thursday, Dec. 17, 2020 photo shows the logo for the Robinhood app on a smartphone in New York.

Associated Press

How the Kremlin provides a safe harbor for ransomware

By FRANK BAJAK

AP Technology Writer

BOSTON (AP) — A global epidemic of digital extortion known as ransomware is crippling local governments, hospitals, school districts and businesses by scrambling their data files until they pay up. Law enforcement has been largely powerless to stop it.

One big reason: Ransomware rackets are dominated by Russian-speaking cybercriminals who are shielded — and sometimes employed — by Russian intelligence agencies, according to security researchers, U.S. law enforcement, and now the Biden administration.

On Thursday, as the U.S. slapped sanctions on Russia for malign activities including state-backed hacking, the Treasury Department said Russian intelligence has enabled ransomware attacks by cultivating and co-opting criminal hackers and giving them safe harbor. With ransomware damages now well into the tens of billions of dollars, former British intelligence cyber chief Marcus Willett recently deemed the scourge “arguably more strategically damaging than state cyber-spying.” The value of Kremlin protection isn’t lost on the cybercriminals themselves. Earlier this year, a Russian-language dark-web forum lit up with criticism of a ransomware purveyor known only as “Bugatti,” whose gang had been caught in a rare U.S.-Europol sting. The assembled posters accused him of inviting the crackdown with technical sloppiness and by recruiting non-Russian affiliates who might be snitches or undercover cops.

Worst of all, in the view of one long-active forum member, Bugatti had allowed Western authorities to seize ransomware servers that could have been sheltered in Russia instead. “Mother Russia will help,” that individual wrote. “Love your country and nothing will happen to you.” The conversation was captured by the security firm



A Russian man identified as Alexander Vinnik, center, is escorted by police officers from the courthouse at the northern Greek city of Thessaloniki, in this Friday, Sept. 29, 2017, file photo. Associated Press

Advanced Intelligence, which shared it with the Associated Press.

“Like almost any major industry in Russia, (cybercriminals) work kind of with the tacit consent and sometimes explicit consent of the security services,” said Michael van Landingham, a former CIA analyst who runs the consultancy Active Measures LLC.

Russian authorities have a simple rule, said Karen Kazaryan, CEO of the software industry-supported Internet Research Institute in Moscow: “Just don’t ever work against your country and businesses in this country. If you steal something from Americans, that’s fine.”

Unlike North Korea, there is no indication Russia’s government benefits directly from ransomware crime, although Russian President Vladimir Putin may consider the resulting havoc a strategic bonus.

In the U.S. alone last year, ransomware struck more than a hundred federal, state and municipal agencies, upward of 500 hospitals and other health care centers, some 1,680 schools, colleges and universities and hundreds of businesses, according to the cybersecurity firm Emsisoft. Damage in the public sector alone is measured in rerouted ambulances, postponed cancer treat-

ments, interrupted municipal bill collection, canceled classes and rising insurance costs — all during the worst public health crisis in more than a century. The idea behind these attacks is simple: Criminals infiltrate malicious data-scrambling software into computer networks, use it to “kidnap” an organization’s data files, then demand huge payments, now as high as \$50 million, to restore them. The latest twist: if victims fail to pay up, the criminals may publish their unscrambled data on the open internet.

In recent months, U.S. law enforcement has worked with partners including Ukraine and Bulgaria to bust up these networks. But with the criminal masterminds out of reach, such operations are generally little more than whac-a-mole.

Collusion between criminals and the government is nothing new in Russia, said Adam Hickey, a U.S. deputy assistant attorney general, who noted that cybercrime can provide good cover for espionage. Back in the 1990s, Russian intelligence frequently recruited hackers for that purpose, said Kazaryan. Now, he said, ransomware criminals are just as likely to be moonlighting state-employed hackers.

The Kremlin sometimes enlists arrested criminal hackers by offering them a choice between prison and working for the state, said Dmitri Alperovitch, former chief technical officer of the cybersecurity firm CrowdStrike. Sometimes the hackers use the same computer systems for state-sanctioned hacking and off-the-clock cybercrime for personal enrichment, he said. They may even mix state with personal business.

That’s what happened in a 2014 hack of Yahoo that compromised more than 500 million user accounts, allegedly including those of Russian journalists and U.S. and Russian government officials. A U.S. investigation led to the 2017 indictment of four men, including two officers of Russia’s FSB security service — a successor to the KGB. One of them, Dmitry Dokuchaev, worked in the same FSB office that cooperates with the FBI on computer crime. Another defendant, Alexsey Belan, allegedly used the hack for personal gain.

A Russian Embassy spokesman declined to address questions about his government’s alleged ties to ransomware criminals and state employees’ alleged involvement in cybercrime. “We do not comment on any indictments or rumors,”

said Anton Azizov, the deputy press attache in Washington.

Proving links between the Russian state and ransomware gangs is not easy. The criminals hide behind pseudonyms and periodically change the names of their malware strains to confuse Western law enforcement.

But at least one ransomware purveyor has been linked to the Kremlin. Maksim Yakubets, 33, is best known as co-leader of a cybergang that cockily calls itself Evil Corp. The Ukraine-born Yakubets lives a flashy lifestyle. He drives a customized Lamborghini supercar with a personalized number plate that translates to ‘Thief,’ according to Britain’s National Crime Agency.

Yakubets started working for the FSB in 2017, tasked with projects including “acquiring confidential documents through cyber-enabled means and conducting cyber-enabled operations on its behalf,” according to a December 2019 U.S. indictment. At the same time, the U.S. Treasury Department slapped sanctions on Yakubets and offered a \$5 million reward for information leading to his capture. It said he was known to have been “in the process of obtaining a license to work with Russian classified information from the FSB.”

“The indictment charged Evil Corp. with developing and distributing ransomware used to steal at least \$100 million in more than 40 countries over the previous decade, including payrolls pilfered from towns in the American heartland.

By the time Yakubets was indicted, Evil Corp. had become a major ransomware player, security researchers say.

By May 2020, the gang was distributing a ransomware strain that was used to attack eight Fortune 500 companies, including the GPS device maker Garmin, whose network was offline for days after an attack, according to Advanced Intelligence. □

Study: 2.5 billion T. rex roamed Earth, but not all at once



In this Tuesday, March 7, 2006 file photo, life-sized Tyrannosaurus rex models are unloaded for a dinosaur exhibition in Potsdam, Germany.

Associated Press

By SETH BORENSTEIN
AP Science Writer

One Tyrannosaurus rex seems scary enough. Now picture 2.5 billion of them. That's how many of the fierce dinosaur king prob-

ably roamed Earth over the course of a couple million years, a new study finds. Using calculations based on body size, sexual maturity and the creatures' energy needs, a team at

the University of California, Berkeley figured out just how many T. rex lived over 127,000 generations, according to a study in Thursday's journal Science. It's a first-of-its-kind number, but just an estimate with a margin of error that is the size of a T. rex.

"That's a lot of jaws," said study lead author Charles Marshall, director of the University of California Museum of Paleontology. "That's a lot of teeth. That's a lot of claws."

The species roamed North America for about 1.2 million to 3.6 million years,

"Probably like a lot of people, I literally did a double-take to make sure that my

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Conceptis Sudoku

By Dave Green

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Difficulty Level ★★★★★

4/17

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Sexy rom-com loses steam between Friday and ‘Monday’

By JOCELYN NOVECK
AP National Writer

Monday. Ugh. The very word emits a chill. Monday means back to school, or work. Nose to the grindstone. Party's over. Friday, meanwhile, is the opposite vibe. What's great about Friday is that, unlike Saturday and certainly Sunday, it signals the beginning of fun. Friday means you have lots of time — Monday's a mere twinkle in the distance. Now there's an entire movie, "Monday," by writer-director Argyris Papadimitropoulos, based on this concept. The story of an intoxicating love affair slowly inching toward some sort of reckoning with reality, "Monday" should really be called "Mostly Friday," because most of what we see transpires in that phase: the beginning of a relationship, when we willfully ignore any warning signals. "Monday" takes some patience. It's arresting at times, and beautiful, even seductive, mainly due to the chemistry between its leads, Sebastian Stan and Denise Gough, who spend a lot of time, well, having sex. (Stan recently promoted the movie by teasing a shot of his nude backside on Instagram. This will not hurt the film's chances.) But Papadimitropoulos doesn't say a whole lot



This image released by IFC Films shows Denise Gough, left, and Sebastian Stan in a scene from "Monday."

here or offer much of a lesson. This may not be a fatal problem, but it can feel trying; better to watch this film on a Friday, when you have no reason to rush through life. Speaking of intoxicating, our setting is Greece. In the summer. This is where we meet thirtysomething American immigration lawyer Chloe (Gough, an Irish actress better known for her accomplished stage work), who's spending one last night on the Athens club scene before returning stateside. Chloe is

nursing a bad breakup; it's time to go home and start a new job. But then she meets Mickey, also American, a DJ and jingle writer who's been living in Athens for years. Mickey is charismatic and charming — a man-boy who's clearly gotten by on these assets for a long time. They meet on the dance floor and are kissing within seconds. The next morning, they wake up stark naked on the beach. The cops take them down to the station. In handcuffs, they introduce themselves to each

other by name for the first time. Ah, young(ish) love. The cops let them go, and Mickey gives Chloe a lift home. It would all end here, except she lost her bag, with her keys. She ends up traveling to a dreamy island with him for a party. And soon, they're hooked. Chloe gets as far as the security line at the airport, but he races there and pulls her back at the last moment. If it's a bit hard to believe a woman like Chloe — smart, with a meaningful career — would drop everything (and halfway through se-

curity!), well, we're willing to suspend disbelief. After all, it IS Friday. In fact that first chapter is called "Friday," as is the next, and the next, and the next. And these two can't keep their hands off each other. They have sex everywhere, including in a flatbed truck on a side street in daylight. But fissures slowly appear. An old friend of Mickey's comes to visit and tells him, "You're only happy when you're failing." Mickey's ex, meeting Chloe, calls him "a baby." This concerns her, but the magnetic field of their attraction is apparently too intense to escape. At the same time, there's a worrying undercurrent that maybe it's not all about chemistry — maybe these two are using each other for reasons they'd prefer not to acknowledge. One of them actually verbalizes this, but it's pretty far into the game, "Monday" has an artsy, improvised feel, but also falls prey to some pretty standard rom-com tropes. Running to the airport to catch someone just before they board a plane, for example, seems right out of a Richard Curtis film. The same goes for someone grabbing the mic at a random wedding to make a clumsy, drunken pronouncement of love.□

Associated Press

Viola Davis is named Hasty Pudding Woman of the Year



Viola Davis poses for a portrait at the Ritz-Carlton Hotel during the Toronto International Film Festival in Toronto on Sept. 9, 2018.

Associated Press

CAMBRIDGE, Mass. (AP) — Viola Davis was named Woman of the Year on Friday by Harvard University's Hasty Pudding Theatricals. "Viola has inspired our company with her incredible grit and determination, and we cannot wait to celebrate her successes, strong character and wonderful talent," said Jessica Moore, the group's president, in a statement. Davis is scheduled to be honored April 22 in an online ceremony that will include a roast, a discussion and a speech from Davis as she is presented with her ceremonial pudding pot. Because of the pandemic, the event will not include its

traditional parade through the streets of Cambridge. "We're very excited to honor Viola Davis as our 71st Woman of the Year because of her immense impact in Hollywood, especially in such a historic and difficult year for the arts," said Natalie Needle, the event coordinator and producer. In March, Davis became the Oscars' most nominated Black female actor ever when she landed her fourth nomination, this one for her lead role in "Ma Rainey's Black Bottom." The film, based on an August Wilson play, is set around a recording session in 1920s Chicago as a blues

band awaits the arrival of Ma Rainey. The movie also includes the final performance from actor Chadwick Boseman, who died last year of cancer. Davis won an Academy Award for her appearance in the 2016 film "Fences," a role she originated in a 2001 Broadway revival that landed her a Tony Award. The Oscar win made her the first Black woman to win an Oscar, Emmy and Tony for acting. She won her Emmy in 2015 for her role in "How To Get Away With Murder," and she has another Tony win for her role in "King Hedley II." The Hasty Pudding award

has been handed out annually since 1951 to people who have made lasting and impressive contributions to the world of entertainment. Previous Hasty Pudding winners include Meryl Streep, Katharine Hepburn and Helen Mirren. Elizabeth Banks was last year's recipient.□

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

AP study: MLB salary down 4.8% in 2 years; top 100 earn half

NEW YORK (AP) — The average major league salary dropped 4.8% to just under \$4.17 million on opening day from the start of the previous full season in 2019. The average has fallen 6.4% since the start of the 2017 season, when it peaked at \$4.45 million, according to a study of major league contracts by The Associated Press. The salary downturn is yet another sign baseball could be headed toward labor strife and a possible work stoppage in 2022.

Baseball's middle class has borne the brunt of the drop. The median salary — the point at which an equal number of players are above and below — is \$1.15 million, down 18% from \$1.4 million two years ago and a drop of 30% from the \$1.65 million record high at the start of 2015.

Of 902 players on opening-day rosters, 417 (62%) had salaries under \$1 million, including 316 (35%) under \$600,000.

The 50 highest-paid players are getting 33.4% of all salaries, up from 28.6% in 2017, and the 100 highest-paid are receiving 52.4%, an increase from 42.5% in 2017. Los Angeles Dodgers pitch-



In this Monday, March 1, 2021, file photo, Los Angeles Dodgers starting pitcher Trevor Bauer throws against the Colorado Rockies during the first inning of a spring training baseball game in Phoenix. Associated Press

er Trevor Bauer is the highest-paid player in 2021 at \$38 million after agreeing to a \$102 million, three-year contract he can terminate after one season. Los Angeles Angels outfielder Mike Trout is second at \$37.1 million, followed by Yankees pitcher Gerrit Cole (\$36 million) and St. Louis third baseman Nolan Arenado (\$35 million), who was acquired in an offseason trade with Colorado.

The World Series champion Dodgers topped the major leagues at \$241 million, the highest big league total since the Dodgers set the record at \$270 million at the start of the 2015 season. Players are unhappy with the slide in salaries under the current collective bargaining agreement, even before last year's pandemic-shortened season, and intend to press for changes during labor talks this year

to replace the contract that expires Dec. 1. The average was just over \$500,000 when AP started its salary studies in 1989 and went down just twice before 2017: after the 1994-95 strike and between the 2003 and 2004 seasons. The average has dropped 4.9% under the current labor agreement, which started after the 2016 season. The average rose 15.3% under the 2007-11

contract and 32.6% under the 2012-16 deal.

This year's average was depressed by the opening-day absence of Houston pitcher Jake Odorizzi, who was left off the initial roster, and infielder Rougned Odor, who had been designated for assignment by Texas and later was traded to the New York Yankees. Their presence on opening day would have increased by average by roughly \$24,000, cutting the drop over two years to 4.2%.

Add the money Boston owes second baseman Dustin Pedroia, on the voluntary retired list after missing most of the prior three seasons while hurt, and the average would have been down 3.9% to \$4.2 million. Termination pay, option buyouts and portions of signing bonuses paid to released players are not included in the average.

In addition, the average likely was lowered slightly by the expansion of active rosters to 26, which probably caused teams to add 30 players making near the \$570,500 minimum.

The New York Yankees are second at \$201 million and the New York Mets, under new owner Steven Cohen, third at \$186 million. □

Dwyane Wade joins Utah Jazz ownership group

SALT LAKE CITY (AP) — Dwyane Wade is an NBA owner. The Utah Jazz announced Friday that the 13-time NBA All-Star will join the youngest ownership group in the league.

The group is headed by technology entrepreneur Ryan Smith, who along with his wife, Ashley, acquired majority interest in the Jazz in late 2020.

Wade and Smith have known each other for several years and had discussed working with each other in various capacities. "Dwyane is not only a basketball legend, he is also a great leader, businessman, and human being," Smith said in a statement. "As we continue to build on the incredible legacy

of the Utah Jazz franchise, we are excited to add Dwyane's experience and expertise to the equation. Utah is an amazing place and I couldn't be more thrilled about the future of the franchise and the future of this state. Dwyane's influence will be important to both."

Wade played 16 NBA seasons with Miami, Chicago and Cleveland before retiring after the 2018-19 season. He won three NBA titles and had his No. 3 jersey retired by the Heat last month.

"Partnering with Ryan and the Utah Jazz is the perfect fit as we share the same vision and values," Wade said. "Not only is this group focused on building

a championship franchise, they are also committed to using their platform to do good and actively create a more inclusive, equitable world. We share a lot of the same goals and are trying to go the same places in life."

Wade talked about entering into NBA ownership in the final seasons of his career and said in 2019 that he wanted to discuss the potential of joining the Heat leadership group. The sides talked later that year, with no agreement, and it's not known if the conversations ever resumed.

"I want to congratulate Dwyane on his recent announcement," Heat managing general partner Micky Arison said Friday.



Former Miami Heat guard Dwyane Wade speaks during a jersey retirement ceremony at halftime of an NBA basketball game between the Heat and the Cleveland Cavaliers in Miami, in this Saturday, Feb. 22, 2020, file photo.

Associated Press

"We had discussed having him join our ownership group after his retirement but he was not prepared to commit at the time. Of course I am disappointed

that he didn't reconsider. "Having said that I wish him good luck and much success with the Jazz. To me Dwyane will always be a Heat lifer." □

NFL teams drafting, changing QBs at dizzying pace

By **JOSH DUBOW**
AP Pro Football Writer

One after another, quarterbacks once believed to be franchise cornerstones after being top five draft picks changed addresses this offseason in staggering succession.

Matthew Stafford and Jared Goff switched teams in a swap of former No. 1 overall picks. Carson Wentz and Sam Darnold were traded away by teams that had recently tried to build around those passers. Mitchell Trubisky had to settle for a backup contract deal after flaming out in Chicago.

Those were part of a growing pattern around the league as teams have never been more willing to use high draft picks on quarterbacks, and never been quicker to cut ties when those investments don't pay off.

The cycle will continue later this month when quarterbacks are expected to be drafted with the top three picks and a chance that a record five could go in the top 10 as the lure of a top passer on an affordable rookie deal is too enticing to pass up.

The Jets will get back on the rookie quarterback roller coaster three years after trading up to take Darnold with the third pick. With New York holding the second selection in a quarterback-heavy draft, general manager Joe Douglas dealt Darnold to Carolina and now has his eyes on another potential franchise QB, likely BYU's Zach Wilson. "We felt like this was the best decision for the entire organization moving forward," Douglas said, "and hitting the reset button."

The resets are coming quicker than ever, with the Jets' decision to trade Darnold after his third sea-



In this Dec. 20, 2020, file photo, Detroit Lions quarterback Matthew Stafford throws a pass during the second quarter of the team's NFL football game against the Tennessee Titans in Nashville, Tenn.

Associated Press

son the quickest a team has moved on from a top 5 quarterback since the Raiders cut 2007 No. 1 overall pick JaMarcus Russell after his third season in the NFL. But moves like it are happening more frequently, with the Cardinals trading away 2018 first-rounder (No. 10) Josh Rosen after one season in order to take Kyler Murray first overall in 2019.

In all, four of the five quarterbacks taken with top five picks from 2016-18 changed teams this off-season. Darnold was one of three to get traded, joining the top two picks in the 2016 draft: No. 1 selection Goff dealt from the Rams to Detroit for 2009 top pick Stafford, and No. 2 choice Wentz from Philadelphia to Indianapolis. Trubisky, the third overall pick by Chicago in 2017, was signed as a free agent to be a backup in Buffalo to Josh Allen. Only 2018 No. 1 pick Baker Mayfield remains with his original team as he

enters his fourth season with Cleveland.

"It's really unprecedented, what's happening with possible franchise guys that are moving," Rams coach Sean McVay said.

Later this month several more teams will hope they found their franchise guy, with Jacksonville, the Jets and San Francisco all expected to take quarterbacks with the first three picks on Aug. 29, something that has happened only twice (1971, 1999) in the common draft era. Clemson's Trevor Lawrence is widely expected to go first to the Jaguars, then Wilson as the possible replacement for Darnold at No. 2.

If that happens, the Niners would have their choice of Ohio State's Justin Fields, Alabama's Mac Jones and North Dakota State's Trey Lance, with the other two potentially going later in the top 10 to teams like Atlanta, Detroit or Denver. And don't forget another

quarterback-needy team willing to trade up such as New England, Washington or Chicago.

San Francisco made the big move because of the desire to find one of the handful of quarterbacks that can turn a good team into a Super Bowl contender on an annual basis.

"It's a risk every single year you go into an NFL season without one of those top five guys," said coach Kyle Shanahan, who traded the No. 12 pick and two future first-round choices to move up to No. 3. "It's very tough to win in this league and there's only a few quarterbacks that you're going to win because of just the quarterback. Very few, and even those guys still need a good team around them. You've got to take risks. This is a risk we were willing to take."

Shanahan lost a Super Bowl following the 2019 season to one of those quarterbacks as Patrick Mahomes led a fourth-quarter comeback to deliver the Chiefs the title.

Mahomes is by far the most successful of the 22 quarterbacks taken in the top 10 of the past 10 drafts, a rate that is double what it had been in the common draft era.

The change came follow-

ing the 2011 CBA that implemented a rookie wage scale, which increased the value of quarterbacks on rookie contracts. This will be the seventh straight season with multiple QBs going in the top 10, more than doubling the previous longest streak in the common draft era of three years.

The hit rate on those quarterbacks hasn't been extremely high, however, with none of the 11 picked from 2011-16 still on the team making that selection; two of them picked in the past four drafts — Trubisky and Rosen — already are gone. Some of those QBs who have moved on had some level of success, with 2011 No. 1 overall selection Cam Newton winning an MVP and taking Carolina to the Super Bowl. And 2012 top pick Andrew Luck putting together a sustained stretch of success before an early retirement in 2019 due to injuries.

Others who are still on their current teams have shown promise, with Allen leading Buffalo to the AFC title game last season, Mayfield winning Cleveland's first playoff game in 26 years, and Murray and Offensive Rookie of the Year Justin Herbert showing flashes of stardom.

For others such 2020 top 5 picks Joe Burrow and Tua Tagovailoa, or 2019 first-rounder Daniel Jones, it might still be too early to judge.

Others never reached their lofty expectations with the teams that drafted them whether because of injuries (Robert Griffin III) or poor play (Trubisky, Blake Bortles and Blaine Gabbert).

For 2012 No. 8 pick Ryan Tannehill, it took changing teams from Miami to Tennessee for him to live up to his billing, something the Panthers hope will be replicated with Darnold.

"I think in this offense ..., with the weapons we have around him, that he can take that next step with us," GM Scott Fitterer said.

If not, the Panthers could soon be looking for a replacement in the top 10 of the draft. □



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