



Biden calls for 3-month suspension of gas and diesel taxes

President Joe Biden speaks about gas prices in the South Court Auditorium on the White House campus, Wednesday, June 22, 2022, in Washington.

Associated Press
Page 2

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Biden calls for 3-month suspension of gas and diesel taxes

From Front

By **JOSH BOAK**
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Joe Biden on Wednesday called on Congress to suspend federal gasoline and diesel taxes for three months — an election-year move meant to ease financial pressures that was greeted with doubts by many lawmakers.

The Democratic president also called on states to suspend their own gas taxes or provide similar relief, and he delivered a public critique of the energy industry for prioritizing profits over production. It would take action by lawmakers in Washington and in statehouses across the country to actually bring relief to consumers.

"It doesn't reduce all the pain but it will be a big help," Biden said, using the bully pulpit when his administration believes it has run out of direct levers to address soaring gas prices. "I'm doing my part. I want Congress, states and industry to do their part as well." At issue is the 18.4 cents-a-gallon federal tax on gas and the 24.4 cents-a-gallon federal tax on diesel fuel. If the gas savings were fully passed along to consumers, people would save roughly 3.6% at the pump when prices are averaging about \$5 a gallon nationwide.

Biden's push faces uphill odds in Congress, which must act in order to suspend the tax, and where many lawmakers, including some in his own party,

have expressed reservations. Even many economists view the idea of a gas tax holiday with skepticism. Democratic House Speaker Nancy Pelosi offered a noncommittal response to Biden's proposal, saying she would look to see if there was support for it in Congress.

"We will see where the consensus lies on a path forward for the president's proposal in the House and the Senate," Pelosi said.

In his speech, Biden tied higher energy prices to Russia's invasion of Ukraine and said, "defending freedom, defending democracy was not going to go without cost for the American people and the rest of the free world." The president noted that lawmakers backed sanctions against Russia and aiding Ukraine despite the risks of inflation from resulting energy and food shortages.

Democrats, Republicans and independents in Congress chose to support Ukraine, "knowing full well the cost," he said.

"So for all those Republicans in Congress criticizing me today for high gas prices in America: Are you now saying you were wrong to support Ukraine?" Biden said. "Are you saying that we would rather have lower gas prices in America than (Russian President Vladimir) Putin's iron fist in Europe? I don't believe that."

The president said "states are now in a strong position to be able to afford to take some of these actions," thanks to federal support from the 2021 CO-

VID-19 relief bill. But there is no guarantee that states will tap into their budgets to suspend their taxes on gas or to deliver rebates to consumers, as Biden is requesting.

Barack Obama, during the 2008 presidential campaign, called the idea of a gas tax holiday a "gimmick" that allowed politicians to "say that they did something." He also warned that oil companies could offset the tax relief by increasing their prices.

The administration is saying that gas tax suspensions at the federal and state levels as well as energy companies pouring their profits into production and refining capacity could cut gas prices by \$1 a gallon.

High gas prices pose a fundamental threat to Biden's electoral and policy ambitions. They've caused confidence in the economy to slump to lows that bode poorly for defending Democratic control of the House and the Senate in November.

Biden's past efforts to cut gas prices — including the release of oil from the U.S. strategic reserve and greater ethanol blending this summer — have not delivered savings at the pump, a risk that carries over to the idea of a gas tax holiday.

The president can do remarkably little to fix prices that are set by global markets, profit-driven companies, consumer demand and aftershocks from Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the embargoes that followed. The underlying

problem is a shortage of oil and refineries that produce gas, a challenge a tax holiday cannot necessarily fix. Mark Zandi, chief economist at Moody's Analytics, estimated that the majority of the 8.6% inflation seen over the past 12 months in the U.S. comes from higher commodity prices due to Russia's invasion and continued disruptions from the coronavirus.

"In the immediate near term, it is critical to stem the increase in oil prices," Zandi said last week, suggesting that Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and a nuclear deal with Iran could help to boost supplies and lower prices. Republican lawmakers have tried to shift more blame to Biden, saying he created a hostile environment for domestic oil producers, causing their output to stay below pre-pandemic levels.

Senate Republican leader Mitch McConnell mocked the gas tax holiday as an "ineffective stunt" in a Wednesday floor speech. "This ineffective administration's big new idea is a silly proposal that senior members of their own party have already shot down well in advance," he said.

Rep. Peter DeFazio, the Democratic chairman of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, said he would not support suspending the gas tax. "I'm going to be working against it. I have the largest committee in Congress, so we'll see."

DeFazio said a better course would be to tax oil companies on "wind-

fall profits." House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer, D-Md., said he would look at the proposal because Biden has proposed it.

"What I'm not sure is that it in fact will have the intended effect in terms of the retail price, whether in fact we will save the consumer money," Hoyer said. "Do I think we have the votes? We haven't counted, so we don't know yet."

Administration officials said the \$10 billion cost of the gas tax holiday would be paid for and the Highway Trust Fund kept whole, even though the gas taxes make up a substantial source of revenue for the fund. The officials did not specify any new revenue sources.

The president has also called on energy companies to accept lower profit margins to increase oil production and refining capacity for gasoline.

This has increased tensions with oil producers: Biden has judged the companies to be making "more money than God." That kicked off a chain of events in which the head of Chevron, Michael Wirth, sent a letter to the White House saying that the administration "has largely sought to criticize, and at times vilify, our industry."

Asked about the letter, Biden said of Wirth: "He's mildly sensitive. I didn't know they'd get their feelings hurt that quickly."

Energy companies are scheduled to meet Thursday with Energy Secretary Jennifer Granholm to discuss ways to increase supply. □

British Open allows golfers from Saudi-backed series to play

ST. ANDREWS, Scotland (AP) — Players who have joined the new Saudi Arabia-funded league will still be allowed to compete at the British Open next month, organizers said on Wednesday.

The U.S. Open had allowed players who were banned by the PGA Tour for signing up to the LIV Golf series to play at last week's tournament.

"Players who are exempt or have earned a place through qualifying for the 150th Open in accordance with the entry terms and conditions will be able to compete in the Championship at St. Andrews," R&A chief executive Martin Slumbers said in a statement.

The world's oldest major championship begins July 14.

"The Open is golf's original championship and since it was first played in 1860, openness has been fundamental to its ethos and unique appeal," Slumbers said.

Phil Mickelson and Dustin Johnson headlined LIV Golf's inaugural tournament held this month outside London and won by former Masters champion Charl Schwartzel, who col-



lected \$4.75 million. The league is bankrolled by Saudi Arabia's Public Investment Fund. Mickelson, a six-time major champion

who has become the face of the LIV league, missed the cut at The Country Club last week. He won the British Open in 2013. □

'Groundhog Day' at IRS: Returns pile up, phone delays worsen

By **FATIMA HUSSEIN**

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — It's Groundhog Day at the IRS. After digging out of a daunting backlog from 2021, the agency has an even bigger backup for this tax season than it did a year ago and its pace for processing paper returns is slowing down, according to a watchdog report released Wednesday.

The National Taxpayer Advocate, an independent watchdog within the IRS, also said taxpayers are experiencing longer wait times on the telephone, and delays in processing paper returns have been running six months to one year.

The report on taxpayer challenges, which must be submitted twice a year to Congress, comes one day after the Internal Revenue Service announced that it is on track to eliminate its 2021 backlog of tax returns this week.

The Objectives Report to Congress contains proposals for lawmakers to consider going forward.

"When I released my Annual Report to Congress six months ago, I wrote that 'Paper is the IRS's Kryptonite, and the agency is



A portion of the 1040 U.S. Individual Income Tax Return form is shown July 24, 2018, in New York. Associated Press

still buried in it," National Taxpayer Advocate Erin Collins wrote in the report. "Fast forward to this Objectives Report: It's Groundhog Day."

She added: "At the end of May, the IRS had a larger backlog of paper tax returns than it did a year ago, and its pace of processing paper tax returns was slowing."

Collins, who serves as an IRS ombudsman, said of the agency's problems: "The math is daunting."

According to the report, at

the end of May the agency had a backlog of 21.3 million unprocessed paper tax returns, an increase of 1.3 million over the same time last year. The agency fell short on its goal to bring on 5,473 new employees to process returns, with just 2,056 employees hired. Additionally, phone wait times increased to 29 minutes on average, compared with last year's 20-minute average wait time.

"That the backlog continues to grow is deeply con-

cerning, primarily because millions of taxpayers have been waiting six months or more to receive their refunds," Collins said.

Jodie Reynolds, a spokesperson for the IRS, said the report's numbers "are neither the most accurate nor most recent figures."

"Today, the IRS is running well ahead of tax return processing compared to a year ago," Reynolds said. "The IRS continues to make substantial progress on the inventory," bringing on new contractors, shifting staff

and mandating employee overtime, she said.

In a joint letter to Sen. Ron Wyden, D-Ore., who heads the Senate Finance Committee, Treasury Deputy Secretary Wally Adeyemo and IRS Commissioner Chuck Rettig said that roughly six to eight IRS employees manually handle each paper return that is filed.

"What the agency requires to avoid a crisis like this in the future is sustained, multi-year funding to invest in overhauling antiquated technology, improving taxpayer service, and increasing voluntary compliance," the letter said.

"Those resources will be crucial to automating operations to increase efficiency."

Tony Reardon, president of the National Treasury Employees Union, said "no one feels the pressure about backlogs more than the front-line workers who have been plowing through that paperwork for months now."

"Employees working on the backlogs have been doing so at IRS facilities around the country throughout the pandemic," and have been working overtime to address the logjam. □

U.S. importing baby formula from Mexico to ease shortage

By **ZEKE MILLER**

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Biden administration announced Wednesday that it is providing logistical support to import the equivalent of about 16 million 8-ounce baby formula bottles from Mexico starting this weekend, as part of its efforts to ease nationwide supply shortages caused by the closure of the largest U.S. manufacturing plant. The Department of Health and Human Services is expediting the travel of trucks that will drive about 1 million pounds of Gerber Good Start Gentle infant formula from a Nestlé plant to U.S. retailers, the

White House said, nearly doubling the amount imported to the U.S. to date. Cargo flights from Europe and Australia already have brought baby formula into the U.S., including two new rounds of air shipments that begin this weekend.

The White House has been working to make supply more available as it has faced pressure from parents over supply issues after regulators in February shuttered a Michigan plant run by Abbott that is the largest domestic manufacturer of baby formula over safety concerns. The plant reopened on June 4 after the company committed to additional sanitizing

and safety protocols, but shuttered again more than a week ago after severe weather caused damage to the plant.

The company said it needs time to assess damage and re-sanitize the factory after severe thunderstorms and heavy rains swept through southwestern Michigan on June 13.

Last month, the Food and Drug Administration moved to ease federal import regulations to allow baby formula to be shipped to the U.S., and Biden authorized the use of the Defense Production Act to provide federal support to move formula from overseas into the U.S.



Baby formula is displayed on the shelves of a grocery store in Carmel, Ind. on May 10, 2022.

Associated Press

Wednesday's announcement also includes air shipments of 1.65 million 8-ounce bottle equivalents of Nestlé NAN Supremepro 2 infant formula from Germany to Texas this weekend, and 5.5 million 8-ounce bottle equivalents of Bubs infant formula in

two shipments on June 26 and July 5.

The White House says that by June 26, its efforts, dubbed "Operation Fly Formula," will have brought 32 flights and almost 19 million 8-ounce bottle equivalents of infant formula into the U.S. □

Man found not responsible for Times Square vehicle rampage

By TOM HAYS

Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — A man who drove his car through crowds of people in Times Square in 2017, killing a young tourist and maiming helpless pedestrians, was cleared of responsibility Wednesday because of mental illness.

A jury in New York City accepted an insanity defense claiming Richard Rojas was so psychologically disturbed he didn't know what he was doing.

The judge has said the finding would qualify Rojas for an open ended "involuntary mental commitment" instead of a lengthy prison term. He ordered Rojas held while he drafts an examination order, and said there would be a hearing on the matter Thursday.

Rojas, 31, who was impassive throughout the trial, had no visible reaction to a verdict reached after less than two days of deliberations.

The defendant was accused in an attack that injured more than 20 people and killed Alyssa Elsmann, 18, of Michigan, who was visiting the popular tourist destination with her family. The jury was instructed that if it found prosecutors had proven elements of murder and assault charges, it also



Richard Rojas, right, appears in court for the start of his trial in New York on May 9, 2022.

Associated Press

had to decide whether or not Rojas "lacked responsibility by reason of mental disease or defect."

Rojas' attorney Enrico DeMarco told reporters outside court that the verdict "right and humane," adding that winning over the jury was an uphill battle "because it was such a horrible act."

In a statement, District Attorney Alvin Bragg said his office's "condolences continue to be with the family, friends and loved ones of Alyssa Elsmann, who suffered a terrible and tragic

loss, and all of the victims of this horrific incident."

Jyll Elsmann, the mother of Alyssa, reacted with dismay in a social media message. "Really the only thing I have to say is if this had happened to any of the juror's children — would they still have said 'not responsible'?" she wrote.

The trial, which began early last month, featured testimony from victims who suffered severe injuries from what prosecutors labeled "a horrific, depraved act." On the defense side, family members testified how Ro-

jas descended into paranoia after he was kicked out of the Navy in 2014.

That Rojas was behind the wheel of the car was never in doubt. Multiple security videos showed him emerging from the vehicle after it crashed. That put the focus of the case on his mental state.

In his closing argument, prosecutor Alfred Peterson conceded that Rojas was having a psychotic episode, including hearing voices, at the time of the rampage. But Peterson argued Rojas showed he

wasn't entirely detached from reality by maneuvering his vehicle onto the sidewalk and driving with precision for three blocks, mowing down people until he crashed.

One victim's pelvis was separated from her spine. Doctors were certain she would die, but she somehow survived. Elsmann's younger sister Eva, then 13, testified during the trial about her own injuries: broken ribs, a collapsed lung, a compound leg fracture and other wounds that kept her in the hospital for weeks.

"The defendant made a decision that day," the prosecutor, Peterson, said. "He made a choice. ... He went to the 'crossroads of the world,' a high profile place where everyone knows there's lots and lots of people."

Once there, he was "in full control of his car," he added.

DeMarco told jurors "there should be no doubt" his client met the legal standard for an insanity finding. The evidence, the lawyer said, showed Rojas "lacked a substantial capacity to know what he was doing was wrong" because of an underlying illness — schizophrenia, as diagnosed by a defense psychiatrist who testified. □



Police personnel confer outside the entrance to the Castro Muni Metro station following a shooting in San Francisco, Wednesday, June 22, 2022.

Associated Press

By OLGA R. RODRIGUEZ and JANIE HAR

Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — One man was killed and another was wounded in a shooting on a packed sub-

way train in San Francisco Wednesday morning, police said.

"There was an altercation between folks who may have known each other inside the subway before

San Francisco subway train shooting kills 1, wounds another

it stopped in Castro," said Supervisor Rafael Mandelman, who represents the Castro District. Mandelman said that while the person who was killed appeared to be part of the altercation, the second man who was shot and wounded is believed to have been an innocent bystander.

San Francisco police spokeswoman Officer Kathryn Winters said Wednesday's shooting is believed to have been the first ever on a train with the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency — also known as Muni. The agency operates most public transportation in the city, including

trains, buses, streetcars and San Francisco's iconic cable cars.

The shooting happened around 10 a.m. on a Muni train traveling between the Forest Hill and Castro stations.

"When the train stopped, the perpetrator ran out, along with all of the people on the packed train," said Supervisor Myrna Melgar, who represents the Forest Hill neighborhood.

Police were looking for a man described only as wearing dark clothes and a dark hooded jacket. Winters said all Muni trains and subway stations have cameras, and police were

reviewing the footage.

The station where the suspect ran out is at the heart of San Francisco's famous Castro neighborhood, which is internationally known for its LGBTQ activism. The shooting comes just four days before San Francisco's Pride parade, which typically draws thousands of people from around the world, and people are on edge amid a wave of threats to the LGBTQ community.

Winters said the shooting doesn't appear to have targeted the LGBTQ community or to be connected to the weekend's upcoming Pride events. □

Afghanistan quake kills 1,000 people, deadliest in decades

By FAZEL RAHMAN FAIZI

Associated Press

KABUL, Afghanistan (AP)

— A powerful earthquake struck a rugged, mountainous region of eastern Afghanistan early Wednesday, flattening stone and mud-brick homes and killing at least 1,000 people in the country's deadliest quake in two decades, the state-run news agency reported.

An estimated 1,500 others were reported injured, and officials said the death toll could rise.

The disaster inflicted by the 6.1-magnitude quake posed a major test for Afghanistan's Taliban government, which retook power nearly 10 months ago as the U.S. and its NATO allies withdrew from the country and has been largely shunned by the rest of the world since.

In a rare move, the Taliban's supreme leader, Haibatullah Akhundzadah, who almost never appears in public, pleaded with the international community and humanitarian organizations "to help the Afghan people affected by this great tragedy and to spare no effort to help the affected people."

Residents in the remote



In this photo released by a state-run news agency Bakhtar, Afghans look at destruction caused by an earthquake in the province of Paktika, eastern Afghanistan, Wednesday, June 22, 2022.

Associated Press

area near the Pakistani border searched for victims dead or alive by digging with their bare hands through the rubble, according to footage shown by the Bakhtar news agency.

It was not immediately clear if heavy rescue equipment was being sent, or even if it could reach the area.

At least 2,000 homes were destroyed in the region,

where on average every home has seven or eight people living in it, said Ramiz Alakbarov, the U.N. deputy special representative to Afghanistan.

The full extent of the destruction among the villages tucked in the mountains was slow in coming to light. Rutted roads difficult to pass in the best of times may have been badly damaged, and landslides

from recent rains made access even more difficult.

Rescuers rushed in by helicopter, but the relief effort could be hindered by the exodus of many international aid agencies from Afghanistan after the Taliban takeover last August. Moreover, most governments are wary of dealing directly with the Taliban.

In a sign of the muddled workings between the Tal-

iban and the rest of the world, Alakbarov said the Taliban had not formally requested that the U.N. mobilize international search-and-rescue teams or obtain equipment from neighboring countries to supplement the few dozen ambulances and several helicopters sent in by Afghan authorities.

The disaster only compounds the misery in Afghanistan, which is already deep in one of the world's worst humanitarian crises, with millions facing increasing hunger and poverty after the cutoff of international financing to the Taliban. That has prompted a huge aid program, but to avoid putting money in the Taliban's hands, the world has funneled funding through the U.N. and other humanitarian agencies, a system that may be too slow for an emergency response to the quake.

The quake was centered in Paktika province, about 50 kilometers (31 miles) southwest of the city of Khost, according to neighboring Pakistan's Meteorological Department. Experts put its depth at just 10 kilometers (6 miles). Shallow earthquakes tend to cause more damage. □

China says Ukraine crisis has sounded alarm for humanity

BEIJING (AP) — The conflict in Ukraine has "sounded an alarm for humanity," Chinese leader Xi Jinping said Wednesday, as China continues to assume a position of neutrality while backing its ally Russia.

China has refused to criticize Russia's war in Ukraine or even to refer to it as an invasion in deference to Moscow, while also condemning U.S.-led sanctions against Russia and accusing the West of provoking Moscow.

"The Ukraine crisis has again sounded the alarm for humanity.

Countries will surely end up in security hardships if they place blind faith in their positions of strength, expand military alliances, and seek

their own safety at the expense of others," the official Xinhua News Agency quoted Xi as saying.

Xi, who did not propose any solutions, was speaking at the opening of a virtual business forum of the "BRICS" countries Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa.

In other comments, Xi said imposing sanctions could act as a "boomerang" and a "double-edged sword," and that the global community would suffer from "politicizing, mechanizing and weaponizing" global economic trends and financial flows.

Xi also said China would seek to reduce the damage to international supply chains caused by the CO-

VID-19 pandemic, which it has confronted with a hard-line policy of lockdowns and quarantines, despite a diminishing number of cases and the increasing economic cost.

China's increasingly assertive foreign policy and drive to dominate global markets have prompted a backlash in the U.S., Europe and elsewhere, including calls to replace Chinese suppliers and reduce reliance on the Chinese economy.

Xi called for nations to work together on such issues, saying efforts to "build a small courtyard with high walls" was in no one's interest.

"Economic globalization is an objective requirement



In this photo released by Xinhua News Agency, Chinese President Xi Jinping delivers a keynote speech in virtual format for the opening ceremony of the BRICS Business Forum on Wednesday, June 22, 2022.

Associated Press

for the development of productive forces and an irresistible historical trend," Xi said.

"Going backwards in histo-

ry and trying to block other people's road will only block your own road in the end," he said. □

Thousands of Dutch farmers protest, fearing government cuts

By **ALEKSANDAR FURTULA**

Associated Press

STROE, Netherlands (AP)

— Thousands of farmers gathered in the central Netherlands Wednesday to protest the Dutch government's plans to rein in emissions of nitrogen oxide and ammonia, driving their tractors across the Netherlands and snarling traffic on major highways.

The protest was organized earlier this month after the government published nationwide targets for reducing emissions, sparking anger from farmers who claim their livelihoods and those of thousands of people who work in the agricultural service industry are on the line. Calling it an "unavoidable transition," the government mandated reductions in emissions of up to 70% in many places close to protected nature areas and as high as 95% in other places. The government has been forced to act after courts in recent years began blocking permits for infrastructure and housing projects because the country was missing its emissions targets.

Organizers said some 40,000 farmers converged on a green field in the small agricultural village of Stroe,



Dutch farmers protesting against the government's plans to reduce emissions of nitrogen oxide and ammonia gather for a demonstration at Stroe, Netherlands, Wednesday, June 22, 2022.

Associated Press

about 70 kilometers (45 miles) east of the capital, Amsterdam. A stage was set up for speakers to address the crowd and music blared out of speakers while children bounced in a giant inflatable pig.

Farmers hooted their tractors' horns as they drove onto the field, where a banner on a truck read, in Dutch, "What The Hague chooses is deeply sad for the farmer," a reference to

lawmakers in the city that houses the Netherlands' parliament. Another banner on a tractor said: "We can no longer be stopped." Marijn van Heun, a 23-year-old dairy farmer from the central Utrecht province, said the government plans were stripping young farmers of their futures.

"We cannot invest. Our fathers, our uncles, cannot invest in the future. And so as young farmers we also

have no prospect of ... taking over a farm," he said.

The national infrastructure authority urged motorists to delay travel as slow-moving convoys of tractors defied appeals not to use highways as they drove toward the demonstration. The traffic chaos continued throughout the day.

As tractors returned home, some farmers blocked a highway. Earlier, in The Hague, a few dozen farm-

ers and their supporters, some wearing T-shirts with the text "No farmers, no food," gathered for a breakfast before heading to the protest. "This is where the rules are made," said dairy farmer Jaap Zegwaard, who parked his tractor on the edge of a park in the city. "I was asked to come here and provide breakfast so we can show we are food producers, not pollution producers."

The ruling coalition has earmarked an extra 24.3 billion euros (\$25.6 billion) to finance changes that will likely make many farmers drastically reduce their number of livestock or to get rid of them altogether. The plans, which have to be carried out by provincial governments, have been opposed even by members of Prime Minister Mark Rutte's own party and other members of his coalition. Provincial governments have been given a year to formulate plans to meet the reduction targets. One government lawmaker, Tjeerd de Groot, tweeted that he had planned to attend to discuss the plan with farmers but called off his trip on the advice of a government security agency. □

Royals thank Caribbean migrants for contribution to the UK

By **SYLVIA HUI**

Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Queen Elizabeth II and her grandson Prince William paid tribute Wednesday to Britain's

Caribbean immigrants for their "profound contribution" to the U.K., as a national monument was unveiled in London to celebrate the migrants' work

to help rebuild Britain after World War II.

William and his wife, Kate, unveiled the statue depicting a man, woman and child standing atop suitcases at London's Waterloo train station. In his speech, William highlighted the racism faced by thousands who journeyed to Britain in the post-war years, and said it still affects their descendants today.

"Discrimination remains an all too familiar experience for Black men and women in Britain in 2022," he said. William referred to a British government scandal that "profoundly wronged" tens of thousands who travelled to Britain between 1948 and 1973 after the govern-

ment called on colonies to send workers amid post-war labor shortages. The new arrivals were called the "Windrush generation" after the Empire Windrush, the ship that brought the first 500 migrants to British shores in 1948.

In 2018, the Windrush scandal revealed that thousands of Caribbean migrants who had lived and worked legally in the U.K. for decades were ensnared by tough new rules designed to crack down on illegal immigration. Scores lost their jobs, homes and the right to free medical care because they didn't have the paperwork to prove their status. Some were detained, and

an unknown number were deported to countries they barely remembered.

Britain's government apologized and offered compensation, but many have complained that the claiming process is too cumbersome and the payments offered aren't high enough to make up for harm done by the British government.

"Alongside celebrating the diverse fabric of our families, our communities and our society as a whole something the Windrush generation has contributed so much to it is also important to acknowledge the ways in which the future they sought and deserved has yet to come to pass," William said. □



A view of National Windrush Monument unveiled at Waterloo Station in London, Wednesday, June 22, 2022.

Associated Press

Storm's damages put focus on Cuba's dire housing crisis

By ANDREA RODRÍGUEZ

Associated Press

HAVANA (AP) — Olga Lidia Lahera lives with her daughter and two granddaughters in a tiny 15-square-meter (160-square-foot) apartment with peeling plaster walls that has barely enough room for a shelf with pots and a rickety sofa bed. A cloth curtain separates the space they use to wash up. There is no bathroom. A bit farther down Gloria Street in the Talla Piedra neighborhood of Old Havana, Anet Ayala and her brother Wilmedis live on the second floor of an old building with cracks in the walls and ceilings so big that air, light and even water can pass through.

The first storm of the 2022 hurricane season, which hit Cuba in mid-June, collapsed or damaged dozens of homes in the capital that were already in poor condition, tearing off pieces of roof, balconies and facades.

That highlighted one of Cuba's main social problems: a shortage of quality housing caused by decades of inadequate maintenance, a lack of new housing and impediments facing people trying to fix up their own homes.

An official review last year found that the island of 11.3 million people had 3.9



Anet Ayala and her dog peer from her balcony in Havana, Cuba, Monday, June 13, 2022

Associated Press

million homes at the end of 2020, almost 40% of which were just in fair to poor condition. Cuba needed another 862,000 homes to adequately house its people up from an officially estimated shortfall of about 500,000 in 2005.

The government announced a major national program to solve the problem in 2018, but the latest official figures show a dramatic drop in recent construction as the country has struggled with a pandemic-stricken economy and tighter U.S. sanctions.

In 2019, 44,000 homes were built 35% by the state and 65% by individual families. In 2020, that number dropped to 32,000 43% by the state and 57% by individuals. Last year, about 18,000 units were built (47% by the state and 53% by individuals). There are no official figures for the current year.

That leaves families like Ayala's with little option.

"When it rains here everything gets wet, furniture, the refrigerator. We have nowhere to move things to," said Ayala, trying to

control her emotion while showing the effects of the latest downpours, including a strong musty smell.

"Tomorrow a wind will come and this (roof) will fall on us and we will be two more dead," said Ayala, 36, whose face is partially paralyzed after surgery for a brain tumor.

She and her brother Wilmedis Horta Ayala, a 39-year-old physical education teacher at a primary school, filled out all kinds of paperwork to get authorization to legally fix the place, which is about a

century old, but the building permit mandatory in Cuba was never issued.

Lahera, 65, was a state employee until she requested sick leave. The four of them live off what the Cuban state give her daughter to take care of her and the girls. "When it rains, the walls here pick up a current (become electrified)," she said. "They are bad, but I don't know to what degree they would fall. They are all cracked; the building, the structure is very old."

For decades in Cuba, residential construction was wholly controlled by the socialist government and no legal real estate market existed. People could not sell homes.

In 2011, President Raúl Castro authorized the buying and selling of homes as a way to reactivate the economy, giving more space to private enterprise. Thousands of people acquired houses or invested in fixing up the ones they had, which suddenly gained capital value.

With an increase in tourism and a rapprochement with the United States in the middle of that decade, some areas like Old Havana saw a wave of gentrification, often aided by funds from families in the U.S. That hit a wall with the pandemic and Trump-era sanctions. □

Former education minister in Brazil is jailed in graft probe

By DÉBORA ÁLVARES

Associated Press

BRASILIA, Brazil (AP) — A former education minister of Brazil's President Jair Bolsonaro was arrested on Wednesday in connection with a federal police corruption investigation, further hurting the far-right leader's bid for reelection. Milton Ribeiro left the post in March after Brazilian media reported leaked conversations of him with mayors who would allegedly be favored by the federal government in the distribution of the budget.

The leaked conversations reported by Brazilian me-

dia showed in March that Ribeiro had two Evangelical pastors as unofficial intermediaries approaching mayors who could help Bolsonaro's campaign. The former minister is an evangelical pastor himself. Both favored municipalities governed by their allies and demanded bribes, including a kilo of gold, the reports said.

Ribeiro is accused of influence peddling, corruption, prevarication, and administrative advocacy - meaning under Brazilian law he could have used his ministerial job to promote private interests.

The former minister denied any wrongdoing when the scandal broke.

Bolsonaro, who at the time said he would "put his face to the fire" for Ribeiro, changed his narrative after his former minister was jailed.

"If he is guilty, he will pay," Bolsonaro said in a radio interview. "Let him answer for his actions. I pray to God that there is no problem. But if there is a problem, the federal police are investigating. It's a sign that I don't interfere with the federal police because it would be staining me, obviously."



Federal police leave the headquarters of the Education Ministry after searching for evidence connected to the work of former Education Minister Milton Ribeiro in Brasília, Brazil, Wednesday, June 22, 2022.

Associated Press

Brazil's president is facing an uphill battle for his reelection. Former President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva

leads all polls for October's vote. He hopes to return to the job he had between 2003-2010. □

Bowls Noodle Bar invites you to a Happy Hour with a unique flavor

Bowls Noodle Bar recently opened at their new location at The Village, near the High Rise Hotels. To celebrate, they are launching their new Happy Hour from 9pm to 11pm every day.



Before the pandemic, Bowls Noodle Bar opened at the Hyatt by the airport, and was in the process of opening a second location at The Village when the pandemic hit. Due to the consequences of the pandemic, they decided to close the restaurant by the airport and open their new location at The Village. Their new location has been open for about six months to great results.

At The Village, night time is the best time. This is why they are now offering a daily Happy Hour, from 9pm to 11pm. It includes \$3 beer and \$5 cocktails.

Their cocktails are made in-house with a unique fusion of Asian flavors, for example, the popular purple Ube Mojito, with the flavor of traditional Ube, a Japanese dessert; the Blue Samurai with ginger flavor; and the refreshing Fruity Blossoms, with a flavor encompassing the Sakura, the famous Japanese Cherry Blossoms. You can try all these for only \$5 each during Happy Hour.

Fusion is at the core of the unique flavors of Bowls Noodle Bar, and this is expressed beautifully in their traditional Japanese soups. They are the only restaurant in Aruba that has most of the noodles traditionally used, Udon, Ramen, and Rice noodles. Ramen noodles, served fresh, are a surprising flavor for those who are used to dried ramen noodles. They also have Jasmine rice for the rice bowls.

Their authentic soups are the highlight and star. Chef Warren explains that there are four main components to the soup: the broth, the noodles, tare, and the oil, and these are very important for the traditional Japanese soups. At Bowls Noodle Bar, they have a wide variety of flavors to cater to every taste, like the famous Pork Chashu. It comes with fresh ramen noodles, and it's the pride of Bowls Noodle Bar. Chef Warren says that the broth for this soup takes two to three

days to make, and is made in-house, with fresh and delicious ingredients. They also cater to vegetarians and vegans, with various options on the menu like tofu mushroom soup, vegetable gyoza, wonton, and fresh kimchi fermented at the restaurant.

The wok concept also allows you to create your own unique dish, choosing your base, protein, vegetables and sauce.

Origin

The founders of Bowls Noodle Bar, Dexter Moreno and his partner Lai, opened their first location on Curaçao. They traveled to Japan to study Japanese Cuisine, and they fell in love with Japanese soup. Lai's parents are Chinese, and this is the start of the Asian-fusion flavors that are both surprising and delectable, combining Japanese, Chinese and even some Korean cuisine. Chef Warren was trained in these traditional flavors by the founders themselves.

They came to Aruba where Dexter approached some ex-colleagues in the industry to open a location on the island, and with a local team, opened Bowls Noodle Bar Aruba with a more extensive menu.

Opening hours are Monday to Thursday 5pm – 11:30pm; Friday and Saturday 5pm – 12pm; and Sunday 5pm – 11:30pm. Come visit for great atmosphere, delicious flavors, and a Happy Hour to remember! ☐





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Honoring of loyal visitors at Costa Linda Beach Resort

EAGLE BEACH - Recently, Aruba Tourism Authority representative Mr. Mario Arends had the great pleasure in honoring many loyal Aruba visitors with their distinctive certificates. These certificates are a way to say "Masha Danki" for continuously choosing Aruba as a favorite vacation destination. The titles are as following: 10+ years "Distinguished Visitor", 20+ years "Goodwill Ambassador" and 36+ years "Emerald Ambassador".

The honorees are Mr. Allan D. Tyrrell Jr. resident of Ohio, and Ms. Brenda Longbrake, also resident of Ohio, who have been honored as Goodwill Ambassadors.

This symbolic honorary title is presented on behalf of the Minister of Tourism as a token of appreciation to the guests who visit Aruba between the 10-20-35 and more consecutive year mark.

The honorees love coming to the Island for its beautiful beaches, Outstanding resort, friendly people of Aruba, healing powers of the ocean and the adventures and family traditions.

Arends together with the representatives of Costa Linda Beach Resort presented the certificates to the honorees, handed over some presents and also thanked them for choosing Aruba as their favorite



vacation destination and as their home-away-from-home. □

Aruba to Me



ORANJESTAD – We would like to portrait you! By inviting you to send us your favorite vacation picture while enjoying our Happy Island. Complete the sentence: Aruba to me is Send your picture with that text (including your name and where you are from) to: news@arubatoday.com and we will publish your vacation memory. Isn't that a special way to keep your best moments alive? Please do note: By submitting photos, text or any other materials, you give permission to The Aruba Today Newspaper, Caribbean Speed Printers and any of its affiliated companies to use said materials, as well as names, likeness, etc. for promotional purposes without compensation.

Last but not least: check out our website and Facebook page! Thank you for supporting our free newspaper, we strive to make you a happy reader every day again. □

Consumer Price Index for the base period of June 2019 - May 2022

The Central Bureau of Statistics presents the most important findings for the Consumer Price Index (CPI) for the month of May 2022.06.22

Consumer Price Index for the month of May 2022

The CPI for May 2022 is 102.49, an increase of 0.3% compared to the index of April 2022 (102.16) and accumulating an increase of 1.9% up to and including May of this year. The percentage change of the CPI over the last twelve (12) months (May 2021 to May 2022) is 5.2, an increase of 5.4 percentage points (ppts) compared to the percentage change for the same period of last year (-0.2%).

The period average (last 24 months) percentage change of the CPI for the periods May 2020 to May

2021 and May 2021 to May 2022 is 3.0%, an increase of 5.2 ppts compared to the period average percentage change over the periods May 2019 to May 2020 and May 2020 to May 2021 (-2.2%). During this month, eight (8) of the twelve (12) sectors registered increases in prices. The increases that had the greatest influence on the CPI were registered for the "Food and non-alcoholic beverages" (1.4%), "Health" (6.8%) and "Clothing and footwear" (5.0%) sectors, which contributed with an effect of 0.16, 0.14 and 0.12 ppts, respectively. The increases in the remaining sectors had an effect of 0.13 ppts on the CPI of May 2022.

Aforementioned increases were partially offset mainly

Table 2 Percentage change by sector

Sector	Weight coefficient	Effect Apr.-May	Percentage changes			
			Monthly Apr.-May	Year-to-date Dec.-May	End of period May.21 - May.22	Period average May.21 - May.22
CPI	10,000.0	0.32	0.3	1.9	5.2	3.0
01. Food and non-alcoholic beverages	1,087.7	0.16	1.4	5.1	9.7	3.8
02. Alcoholic beverages and tobacco	78.2	0.00	0.4	2.4	3.9	1.6
03. Clothing and footwear	276.8	0.13	5.0	1.8	14.2	2.4
04. Housing	2,522.2	-0.05	-0.2	-0.1	0.0	0.8
05. Household operation	929.2	0.06	0.7	-4.2	5.8	2.3
06. Health	223.1	0.14	6.8	3.9	3.9	2.2
07. Transport	1,257.4	0.05	0.3	14.2	19.9	14.8
08. Communications	849.6	0.03	0.3	-1.3	-1.5	-0.9
09. Recreation and culture	1,013.3	-0.13	-1.4	-3.6	1.6	1.3
10. Education	98.0	0.00	0.0	0.0	4.6	3.8
11. Restaurants and hotels	442.0	0.02	0.5	3.5	6.3	2.9
12. Miscellaneous goods and services	1,222.6	0.02	0.2	0.2	2.4	1.1

Source: Central Bureau of Statistics Aruba

by a decrease in the index for the "Recreation and culture" (-1.4%) sector, causing an effect of -0.13 ppts. The decreases in the remaining sectors had an effect of -0.09 ppts on the CPI of May 2022.

The increase in the "Food and non-alcoholic beverages" sector was mainly due to an increase in the category "Food" (1.5%), which contributed to an effect of 0.15. The increase in the "Health" sector was mainly due to an increase in the category "Medical products, appliances and equipment" (9.3%), which contributed to an effect of 0.12 ppts. The increase in the "Clothing and footwear" sector was mainly due to an increase in the category "Clothing" (5.5%), which contributed to an effect of 0.11.

The decrease in the "Recreation and culture" sector was mainly due to a decrease in the category "Holidays" (-4.8%), which contributed to an effect of -0.14 ppts.

Consumption basket

The consumption basket of the CPI consists of 408 goods and services. Compared to April 2022, 52.2%

of these products had an increase in price, causing an effect of 0.89 ppts, while 29.2% showed a decrease, contributing to an effect of -0.57 ppts and the remaining 18.6% had no change in price. The prices of goods increased by 0.8% and caused an influence of 0.49 ppts. The prices of services showed a decrease of 0.4% and had an influence of -0.16 ppts on the CPI of May 2022.

Core inflation

The CPIC (core inflation) - CPI excluding the effect of energy and food - was 1.7% in May 2022. The energy index - which consists of the products: electricity, water, gasoline and diesel - was 8.7%. The food index showed an increase of 4.0%.

Subsistence level

The subsistence level for a household consisting of two (2) adults and two (2) children (aged 0-14 years) in May 2022 is Afl. 5,046, an increase of Afl. 294 compared to May 2021 (Afl. 4,752). The subsistence level for a single adult household is Afl. 2,403, an increase of Afl. 140 compared to May 2021 (Afl. 2,263).

Change in prices of crude oil, utilities, gasoline and diesel in May 2022

The prices of utilities (electricity and water), gasoline and diesel are for the greater part determined by international crude oil prices. In May 2022 the average price per barrel of crude oil (US\$ 109.31) had an increase of US\$ 7.02 (6.9%) compared to April 2022 (US\$ 102.29).

The prices of electricity and water did not change compared to April 2022. Subsequently, the average electricity price per household remained at Afl. 240.09, while the average price of water per household remained at Afl. 137.05.

In May 2022 the price of gasoline registered a decrease of Afl. 2.00 cents (-0.7%) and had an effect of -0.04 ppts on the CPI. The price of diesel registered an increase of Afl. 14.50 cents (5.3%) and had an effect of 0.02 ppts on the CPI of May 2022.

In May 2022, utilities, gasoline and diesel as a group showed a decrease in price of 0.1% compared to April 2022, and had an influence of -0.02 ppts on the CPI, while the remaining 404 goods and services, as

a group, show an increase of 0.4% and had an effect of 0.34 ppts on the CPI.

Change in prices of Food & catering services in May 2022

The "Food & catering services" index showed an increase of 1.1% in May 2022, after an increase of 1.2% in April 2022. The index for "Food at home" showed an increase of 1.4% in May, as ten (10) of the eleven (11) "Food at home" indices increased in May 2022. The "Milk, cheese and eggs" index registered the largest increase (5.0%) in May 2022. Furthermore, other significant increases were posted in the indices for "Meat" (1.8%), "Fish and other seafood" (1.7%), "Potatoes and other tubers" (1.5%) and "Vegetables" (1.0%). The only decrease was registered in the index of "Oils and fats" (-0.1%).

Over the last twelve (12) months, the "Food & catering services" has increased by 8.5%. The "Food at home" index showed an increase of 9.7%, where all of the "Food at home" indices increased over the last year. The "Oils and fats" index increased by 21.0%, the largest increase among the "Food at home" food groups. Furthermore, other significant increases were posted in the indices for "Milk, cheese and eggs"

In May 2022, "Food at home" and "Food away from home" as a group showed an increase in price of 1.1% compared to April 2022, and had an influence of 0.17 ppts on the CPI, while the remaining goods and services, as a group, experienced an increase in price of 0.2%, causing an effect of 0.15 ppts on the CPI. □

Table 1 Overview percentage change of the CPI

	May.21	Jun.21	Jul.21	Aug.21	Sep.21	Oct.21	Nov.21	Dec.21	Jan.22	Feb.22	Mar.22	Apr.22	May.22
Index	97.39	98.09	98.53	98.84	99.24	99.31	99.90	100.60	100.07	100.44	101.47	102.16	102.49
Monthly	-0.2	0.7	0.5	0.3	0.4	0.1	0.6	0.7	-0.5	0.4	1.0	0.7	0.3
Year-to-date	0.3	1.1	1.5	1.8	2.2	2.3	2.9	3.6	-0.5	-0.2	0.9	1.5	1.9
End of period	-0.2	1.0	1.8	1.4	2.2	2.4	3.1	3.6	3.3	3.5	4.0	4.7	5.2
Period average	-2.2	-1.8	-1.4	-1.1	-0.7	-0.3	0.2	0.7	1.2	1.7	2.1	2.6	3.0
Goods	-0.4	0.6	0.8	0.4	0.9	-0.7	0.7	1.4	-0.6	0.1	1.6	0.8	0.8
Services	0.2	0.8	0.0	0.2	-0.2	1.1	0.5	-0.2	-0.5	0.7	0.2	0.5	-0.4
CPIC	-1.7	-1.6	-1.4	-1.3	-1.2	-0.9	-0.7	-0.3	0.1	0.5	0.8	1.2	1.7
Energy	-4.1	-2.4	-0.9	0.6	2.0	3.4	5.1	6.7	7.5	8.2	8.7	8.8	8.7
Food	-2.6	-2.5	-2.3	-2.1	-1.7	-1.4	-0.9	-0.3	0.4	1.2	2.0	3.0	4.0
1 adult	2,263	2,271	2,293	2,294	2,304	2,311	2,331	2,337	2,343	2,348	2,372	2,382	2,403
2 adults + 2 children	4,752	4,770	4,815	4,817	4,839	4,854	4,896	4,907	4,920	4,931	4,980	5,003	5,046

Source: Central Bureau of Statistics Aruba

Table 3 Prices of crude oil, utilities, gasoline and diesel, 2021 - 2022

	2021				2022			
	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	Jun.	Jul.	Aug.
Crude oil (US\$ per barrel)	88.21	88.21	88.21	88.21	88.21	88.21	88.21	88.21
Electricity (Afl. per kWh)	240.09	240.09	240.09	240.09	240.09	240.09	240.09	240.09
Water (Afl. per m³)	137.05	137.05	137.05	137.05	137.05	137.05	137.05	137.05
Gasoline (Afl. per liter)	1.13	1.13	1.13	1.13	1.13	1.13	1.13	1.13
Diesel (Afl. per liter)	1.13	1.13	1.13	1.13	1.13	1.13	1.13	1.13
Yearly Average	88.21	88.21	88.21	88.21	88.21	88.21	88.21	88.21

Source: Central Bureau of Statistics Aruba

Millennial Money: 4 items for your midyear money checklist

By **LAUREN SCHWAHN** of **NerdWallet**

A lot can happen in six months. That's why, as we close out the first half of the year, it makes sense to check in on your financial life.

"With inflation, I think people this year are more heavily impacted than they probably have been in many years leading up to this point," says Jason Dall'Acqua, a certified financial planner and founder of Crest Wealth Advisors in Annapolis, Maryland. "So it's a good time to see how things have been going ... as well as plan for what lies ahead in the remainder of the year."

So where should you start? Add these four items to your midyear money checklist.

1. REVIEW YOUR INCOME, EXPENSES AND GOALS

You don't have to tally up every penny you've made and spent over the last six months. But taking a few minutes to check a bank or budget app can help you better understand your finances and course-correct if necessary.

"Right now with inflation, even if you had a budget back in January, it probably is not the same as it is today. There are some things that are going to need to



In this June 15, 2018, file photo, cash is fanned out from a wallet in North Andover, Mass.

Associated Press

be changed. So it's just really resetting and figuring out where you stand today versus where you thought you were going to stand today," says Kayla Welte, a CFP with District Capital Management who lives in Denver. Look for opportunities to scale back if you've spent more than anticipated. For example, you can dine out less or cancel subscription services you rarely use. "Any excess spending that you've been doing, you may have to cut down to account for this higher cost of things that you absolutely have to buy," Welte says.

If you set money resolutions or other financial goals earlier this year, check on those too. Have you saved

as much toward retirement or an emergency fund as you planned? Are you on track to pay off debt?

2. DEAL WITH DEBT

Debt is becoming more expensive to carry due to rising interest rates. Pay down debts sooner, particularly those with variable interest rates, to save money. These debts might include credit cards, personal loans or adjustable-rate mortgages. Concentrate on reducing your highest-rate debt first, then move on to the next highest. Dall'Acqua also suggests switching from variable-rate to fixed-rate options by refinancing, if possible. "If you can lock in the fixed rate now, you're likely to be saving yourself significantly in interest costs

over time," he says.

Be aware of end dates for loans in forbearance. For instance, federal student loan payments will resume on Sept. 1, barring another extension.

"At this point they have been on pause for nearly two years," Dall'Acqua says. "So if that money has gotten lost within (people's) overall spending, it's going to be a big shock when they then have to resume paying."

Setting aside money now in a separate savings fund can help soften the blow.

3. PLAN HOLIDAY SHOPPING

Inflation could make holiday gifts a little pricier this year. Create a shopping list and think about how much you can afford to spend. "Figure out what that would require for you to start saving on a weekly or monthly basis and start putting that money aside right now," Dall'Acqua says.

Starting on shopping early can also help you manage the cost without accruing debt. Many retailers host major sale events in the summer, so you'll find discounts well before Black Friday. Amazon's Prime Day is coming in July. So is the Nordstrom Anniversary Sale.

4. EXAMINE YOUR TAXES AND BENEFITS

Welte recommends using an online tax calculator to check whether you're withholding too much or too little. This can help you avoid getting hit with a big tax bill unexpectedly or missing out on extra cash you may need now. "If you do the math and you're going to get a \$6,000 tax refund, it would be a great time to change your W-4s, get more money in your pocket now to pay for these excess costs that are coming up with inflation rather than waiting until next April to get that refund," Welte says. If you need to make adjustments, fill out a new Form W-4 (you can find this on the IRS website) and submit it to your employer. While you're at it, evaluate your employee benefit selections. These benefits can include health insurance, life insurance, health savings accounts and flexible spending accounts, plus perks like gym memberships. Reviewing your choices in the summer can prevent you from becoming overwhelmed in October and November, when open enrollment begins for most companies, says Joe Bautista, a CFP in Lake Oswego, Oregon. □

Labor board takes Starbucks to court over alleged violations

By **DEE-ANN DURBIN**
AP Business Writer

The National Labor Relations Board is asking a federal court to order Starbucks to stop interfering with unionization efforts at its U.S. stores.

It's the third time the board has filed a case in federal court against Starbucks since December, when a store in Buffalo, New York, became the coffee chain's first location in decades to unionize. Since then, more than 289 U.S. stores have petitioned the NLRB to hold union elections and at least 151 stores have voted to unionize. Starbucks opposes the unionization effort,

saying its stores function better when it works directly with employees.

The NLRB's regional director in Buffalo, New York, filed the petition Tuesday in U.S. District Court in western New York. It asks the court to order Starbucks to reinstate seven Buffalo employees it says were unlawfully fired for trying to form a union. It also seeks to force Starbucks to bargain with a store whose union election was allegedly tainted by Starbucks' repeated anti-union activity.

But more broadly, the petition asks the court to order Starbucks to halt a variety of activities at all of its

U.S. stores, including offering benefits to non-union stores, threatening reprisals for employees who support unionization, refusing to bargain with stores that have voted to unionize and temporarily or permanently closing stores.

Earlier this month, Starbucks announced plans to permanently close a store in Ithaca, New York, that had voted to unionize. Employees at the store said the company is retaliating for their labor activism. Starbucks, which operates 9,000 U.S. stores, said it opens and closes locations regularly and based its decision on staffing and other



Pro-union pins sit on a table during a watch party for Starbucks' employees union election, Dec. 9, 2021, in Buffalo, N.Y.

Associated Press

problems at the store.

In its petition, the NLRB alleged Starbucks committed numerous violations of U.S. labor law in Buffalo, including surveilling employees about unionization plans by listening in to conversations on their head-

sets, promising higher pay and better benefits if they didn't unionize and interrogating them for wearing union pins.

A message seeking comment was left with Seattle-based Starbucks Corp. Tuesday. □

CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS 44 Go to

1 Arthur of the courts

5 Cup holder

11 Cajole

12 Take for granted

13 Easy win after much

14 Increase discussion

15 Tangled up

17 Peyton's brother

18 Old characters

22 Historic event

24 Digging tool

25 Spanish gold

26 Words with pickle or jam

27 Batch of drinks

30 Energy choice

32 ATM button

33 Tax org.

34 Brake's neighbor

38 Incense

41 Adore

42 Cheer for

43 Big gulp

DOWN

1 Plot

2 Shortly

3 Produce

4 Gives

5 Window part

6 Fall flowers

7 Depleted

8 Recipe unit

9 Running bird

10 Gym unit

WASH RECTOR
ECHO EQUINE
PROP NURSED
TEE FEAT
SHAWL MAR
COHAN SCONE
AKIN ZONE
RANGE PANEL
BYE JEERS
TEXT HAT
MEDICI VINO
ALERTS INTO
NICEST MEET

Yesterday's answer

16 Use pews

19 Finalizes taste

20 Writer

31 Threat ending

21 Blacken

35 Transmit

22 Course

36 Keen

37 Tripod trio

23 Steel

38 Geologic

28 Make void

39 Undoing

29 Knight's word

40 Turn bad

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
11 12
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17 18 19 20 21
22 23 24
25 26
27 28 29 30 31
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38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45

6-23

AXYDLBAAXR
is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

6-23 **CRYPTOQUOTE**

H E J N I J Y R G I I G J I I G B E J S

Z K A T Z R T B N N E J N M B H I G B T

N E H K I M Z T B I N S . — I J T H B

X Y T H B

Yesterday's Cryptoquote: THE RAINFORESTS HOLD ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS WE HAVE YET TO ASK. — MARK PLOTKIN

From 'carp' to 'copi': unpopular fish getting a makeover



Asian carp, jolted by an electric current from a research boat, jump from the Illinois River near Havana, Ill., June 13, 2012.

Associated Press

By JOHN FLESHER

AP Environmental Writer

TRAVERSE CITY, Mich. (AP)

— You're in the mood for fish and your server suggests a dish of invasive carp. Ugh, you might say. But how about broiled copi, fresh from the Mississippi River?

Here's the catch: They're the same thing.

Illinois and partner organizations kicked off a market-tested campaign Wednesday to rechristen as "copi" four species previously known collectively as Asian carp, hoping the new label will make them more attractive to U.S. consumers. Turning carp into a popular household and restaurant menu item is one way officials hope to rein in a decades-old invasion threatening native fish, mussels and aquatic plants in the Mississippi and other Midwestern rivers, as well as the Great Lakes.

"The 'carp' name is so harsh that people won't even try it," said Kevin Irons, assistant fisheries chief with the Illinois Department of Natural Resources. "But it's healthy, clean and it really tastes pretty darn good."

The federal Great Lakes Restoration Initiative is funding the five-year, \$600,000 project to rebrand the carp and make them widely available. More than two dozen distributors, processors, restaurants and retailers have signed on. Most are in Illinois, but some deliver to multiple states or nationwide.

"This could be a tremendous breakthrough," said John Goss, who led the Obama administration's effort to halt the carp invasion and worked on the re-naming project. "The next couple of years are very critical for building confidence and acceptance." Span, a Chicago communications design company, came up with "copi." It's an abbreviated wordplay on "copious" — a reference to the booming populations of bighead, silver, grass and black carp in the U.S. heartland.

Imported from Asia in the 1960s-70s to gobble algae from Deep South sewage lagoons and fish farms, they escaped into the Mississippi. They've infested most of the river and many tributaries, crowding out

native species like bass and crappie.

Regulators have spent more than \$600 million to keep them from the Great Lakes and waters such as Lake Barkley on the Kentucky-Tennessee line. Strategies include placing electric barriers at choke points and hiring crews to harvest the fish for products such as fertilizer and pet food. Other technologies — underwater noisemakers, air bubble curtains — are in the works.

It would help if more people ate the critters, which are popular in other countries. Officials estimate up to 50 million pounds (22.7 million kilograms) could be netted annually in the Illinois River between the Mississippi and Lake Michigan. Even more are available from the Midwest to the Gulf Coast.

"Government subsidies alone will not end this war," Goss said. "Private-sector, market-driven demand for copi could be our best hope."

In the U.S., carp are known primarily as muddy-tasting bottom feeders. Bighead and silver carp, the primary targets of the "copi" campaign, live higher in the water column, feeding on algae and plankton. Grass carp eat aquatic plants, while black carp prefer mussels and snails. All four are high in omega-3 fatty acids and low in mercury and other contaminants, Irons said.

"It has a nice, mild flavor ... a pleasant surprise that should help fix its reputation," said Brian Jupiter, a Chicago chef who plans to offer a copi po'boy sandwich at his Ina Mae Tavern. The fish is adaptable to numerous cuisines including Cajun, Asian and Latin, he said.

Yet it could be a hard sell, particularly because the fish's notorious boniness makes it challenging to produce fillets many diners expect, Jupiter added. Some of the best recipes may use chopped or ground copi, he said. □

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A security surveillance camera is seen near the Microsoft office building in Beijing, July 20, 2021.

Associated Press

Microsoft: Russian cyber spying targets 42 Ukraine allies

By FRANK BAJAK

Associated Press

CLEVELAND (AP) — Coinciding with unrelenting cyberattacks against Ukraine, state-backed Russian hackers have engaged in "strategic espionage" against governments, think tanks, businesses and aid groups in 42 countries supporting Kyiv, Microsoft said in a report Wednesday.

"Since the start of the war, the Russian targeting (of Ukraine's allies) has been successful 29 percent of the time," Microsoft President Brad Smith wrote, with data stolen in at least one-quarter of the successful network intrusions.

"As a coalition of countries has come together to defend Ukraine, Russian intelligence agencies have stepped up network penetration and espionage activities targeting allied governments outside Ukraine," Smith said. Nearly two-thirds of the cyberespionage targets involved NATO members. The United States was the prime target and Poland, the main conduit for military assistance flowing to Ukraine, was No. 2. In the past two months, Denmark, Norway, Finland, Sweden and Turkey have seen stepped-up targeting. A striking exception is Estonia, where Microsoft said it has detected no Russian cyber intrusions since Russia invaded Ukraine on Feb. 24. The company credited Estonia's adoption of cloud computing, where it's easier to detect intruders. "Significant collective defensive weaknesses remain" among some other European governments, Microsoft said, without identifying them. □

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Thriller 'The Black Phone' is captivating, really

By **MARK KENNEDY**

AP Entertainment Writer

Phones in serial killer movies are usually used by the deranged hunters to taunt the police or carefully tell victims how they'll die. But in "The Black Phone" it's the other way around, fitting for a horror-thriller that flips many of the genre's formula. The serial killer at the heart of Scott Derrickson's latest film is clueless about the chunky wall-mounted rotary phone in his sound-proof dungeon. He tells his victims it hasn't worked in years. They think otherwise: They use it to communicate with each other.

The kid-centric thriller "The Black Phone" is a very satisfying balancing act of a movie that has elements of supernatural, psychological suspense and horror but never falls heavily into a single camp. It also has one of the most satisfying endings of a horror-thriller in recent years.

The film — set in northern Denver in 1978 — follows 13-year-old Finney, played with real verve by newcomer Mason Thames. The filmmakers establish a grim mood right from the start, with wide-scale bullying, school-yard fights, bloody bruises and alcoholic and abusive parents. Add to this mix, the low-level buzz of homemade missing posters



This image released by Universal Pictures shows Ethan Hawke, left, and Mason Thames in a scene from "The Black Phone."

on walls. There's a serial killer prowling, nicknamed The Grabber, (In a nod to John Wayne Gacy, he's a professional magician. And in perhaps another nod to The Steve Miller Band, he drives around in a black truck emblazoned with the word "Abracadabra," fitting the lyrics "I wanna reach out and grab ya.") Five teen boys have vanished. Finney — and his spunky younger sister, a fabulous Madeleine McGraw — are old enough to understand stranger abduction but still young enough to think that

saying his name out loud is unlucky.

Finney knows a few of the victims but gets a firsthand knowledge when The Grabber — a confusing Ethan Hawke — nabs him and locks him in his basement, a space meant to hold humans. It's carefully curated except for that black phone the killer says is disconnected, it's wires cut. So why does it keep ringing for Finney?

Poor Hawk is marooned as another one of those pure movie psychos, by turns gentlemanly and menacing.

We've seen his like before, a chilling precision with enunciation and that relentless, bloodless toying with his victim. His only stand-out quality is a very good collection of creepy masks. (Halloween will be super nuts this year if this movie takes off.)

"The Black Phone" is in some ways a reteaming of the guys who made "Sinister" in 2012 — Derrickson and cowriter C. Robert Cargill partnered with producer Jason Blum and Hawke for that one, too. This time, they're leaning on horror

royalty — the source material is a short story by Joe Hill, the pen name of Joe King, son of Stephen King.

The filmmakers, to my mind, lean a little too much on the supernatural to free Finney — does the phone really need to periodically beat like a heart? — but that's me. The movie has a "Stranger Things"-meets-"Room" vibe and even namechecks a film deep in its debt: "Texas Chain Saw Massacre."

The film's tagline is "Don't Talk to Strangers" and it's painfully wrong. While applicable to The Grabber, Finn learns that the voices on the other end of the black phone are his previous victims. They're helping him, each call a way to outwit The Grabber and, put together, a way home safe. "Use what we gave you," one disembodied voice counsels.

What makes "The Black Phone" stand out is how it perfectly captures what growing up was like in the often raw '70s and an utter respect for the world of kids. Every adult is either dismissive and distant — or downright murderous. At its center is the fraternity of teen victims and the bond between sister and brother working against the twisted adult world. It will, uh, grab you. □

Associated Press



Chaka Khan sings the national anthem before the NBA All-Star basketball game, on Feb. 16, 2020, in Chicago.

Associated Press

Chaka Khan, Ukraine tribute highlight Boston Pops show

BOSTON (AP) — The Boston Pops Fireworks Spectacular on the July Fourth holiday this year will feature guest artist and 10-time Grammy winner Chaka Khan as well as a performance of the Ukrainian national anthem, the Boston Symphony Orchestra announced Wednesday.

The show at the Hatch Memorial Shell on the Charles River Esplanade — the first full holiday concert since 2019 because of the coronavirus pandemic — will also feature "The Voice" winner Javier Colon, Tony and Grammy winner Heather Headley, the Tan-

glewood Festival Chorus, the Middlesex County Volunteers Fifes & Drums, and the Honor Guard of the Massachusetts 54th Volunteer Regiment.

A portion of the program will be dedicated to the people of Ukraine, embroiled in a war with Russia, including a performance of the national anthem, "Shche ne vmerla Ukrainy i slava, i volia," which translates as "The glory and freedom of Ukraine has not yet perished."

This year's free show will also include a tribute to David Mugar, whose support of the event starting in

1974 transformed it from a local event into a national celebration. Mugar died in January.

The Ukrainian national anthem performance "will be dedicated to the people of Ukraine and the courage and perseverance they have consistently shown in their struggle for their country's continuing independence," Boston Pops conductor Keith Lockhart said in a statement.

The 2020 live show was canceled. Last year featured a pared-down event.

The event dates to 1929, but was revitalized by Mugar in the 1970s. □

NFL seeks arbitration for Flores' racial discrimination suit

By LARRY NEUMEISTER

Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — The NFL and six of its teams have filed for arbitration in the lawsuit that alleges they engaged in racial discrimination. If the league's request is successful, NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell would be the arbitrator.

The league and the teams filed papers late Tuesday with a judge presiding over a lawsuit that was filed by Brian Flores after he was fired in January as head coach of the Miami Dolphins.

The NFL said employment agreements with teams signed by Flores and other coaches contain provisions that require the arbitration of all disputes.

Flores now works as an assistant coach for the Pittsburgh Steelers. Two other Black coaches in the league — Steve Wilks and Ray Horton — joined Flores' lawsuit, in which he alleges that the league engages in racist hiring practices despite its claims to the contrary.

The NFL has insisted the lawsuit is "without merit," although Goodell said before the Super Bowl that "all of the allegations, whether they were based on racism or discrimination or the



Miami Dolphins head coach Brian Flores during the second half of an NFL football game against the New England Patriots on Jan. 9, 2022, in Miami Gardens, Fla.

integrity of our game, all of those to me were very disturbing."

A Manhattan federal judge is unlikely to rule on the arbitration issue until late summer at the earliest.

David Gottlieb, a lawyer for the coaches, said Wednesday that moving the case to the secrecy of arbitration was, in effect, "stripping our clients of their rights."

"Arbitration is privatizing the judicial branch," Gottlieb said. "All we're asking for is an open and fair pro-

cess."

He said lawyers for Flores and the other two coaches will argue that the lawsuit belongs in federal court because any agreements calling for arbitration were signed with the teams rather than the league.

In March, Flores' attorney Douglas Wigdor wrote a letter to Goodell, saying "arbitration is not transparent" and urging him to let the lawsuit stay before a judge.

In its papers, the NFL argued

that the discrimination lawsuit's claims were not properly before the Manhattan court because multiple arbitration agreements signed by the coaches require arbitration.

The league also defended its record on fighting discrimination, saying "diversity, equity and inclusion are core NFL values." It cited its implementation nearly two decades ago of the "Rooney Rule," which now requires teams to interview at least two minority candi-

dates for any head coaching opening and at least one candidate in person.

In his February lawsuit, Flores said the league remained "rife with racism" and continues to deny Black coaches positions for racial reasons, making it difficult for them to become general managers, head coaches, offensive and defensive coordinators and quarterbacks coaches in particular.

His lawsuit sought class-action status and unspecified damages. In their papers, the league — along with the New York Giants, Miami Dolphins, Denver Broncos, Houston Texans, Arizona Cardinals and the Tennessee Titans — insisted that arbitration agreements will require the coaches to assert their claims individually. The filing came hours before a House committee released a document alleging Washington Commanders owner Dan Snyder conducted a "shadow investigation" to discredit former employees who claimed workplace sexual harassment. The document said private investigators were hired to intimidate witnesses and an overseas lawsuit was used as a pretext to obtain phone records and emails. □

Williams looks sharper in winning 2nd match at Eastbourne

EASTBOURNE, England (AP)

— Serena Williams might yet win a title in her comeback event.

The American star moved into the semifinals of the women's doubles at Eastbourne by partnering Ons Jabeur to a 6-2, 6-4 win over Shuko Aoyama and Chan Hao-ching on Wednesday. And, ahead of playing in the singles at Wimbledon next week, there were signs that the 40-year-old Williams is regaining some sharpness after nearly a year out.

Like the back-to-back pick-up shots off her toes early in the first set. Like the three straight aces on break points in the second game

of the second set.

Indeed, Williams' serve — the biggest the women's game has ever seen — was increasingly impressive when under the pump, and it was the 23-time Grand Slam singles champion who served out the match.

On the five break points she faced, she sent down four aces and one unreturnable serve. Overall, her performance was more polished compared to Tuesday, when Williams and Jabeur needed to win a tiebreaker to advance in the grass-court tournament on the south coast of England. They started much quicker against Aoyama and Chan, winning the first

set in 25 minutes.

Williams was keen to deflect any praise toward her partner.

"I think we played together much better today," she said, "although I think we played really good together yesterday, too."

"But Ons really helped me out today. She was playing so good. I was just looking at her, like 'Wow, this is great'."

Jabeur still appears star-struck alongside Williams.

"I'm getting used to this, really," the Tunisian player said, laughing.

Then, she turned to Williams and said: "Do you want to play U.S. Open?"

So, Williams' competitive



Serena Williams of the United States and Ons Jabeur of Tunisia react after losing a point to Shuko Aoyama of Japan and Hao-Ching of Taiwan during their quarterfinal doubles tennis match at the Eastbourne International tennis tournament in Eastbourne, England, Wednesday, June 22, 2022.

Associated Press

preparation for Wimbledon will take in at least one more match. In the semifinals, Williams and Jabeur will face Magda Linette

and Aleksandra Krunic, who dispatched the second-seeded pair of Gabriela Dabrowski and Giuliana Olmos 6-1, 6-3. □

Brittney Griner chosen as honorary WNBA All-Star starter

By **DOUG FEINBERG**
AP Basketball Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Brittney Griner will have a place at the WNBA All-Star Game, being named an honorary starter Wednesday by Commissioner Cathy Engelbert.

Griner has been detained in Russia since Feb. 17 after authorities at an airport outside of Moscow said she had vape cartridges containing cannabis oil in her bag.

"During each season of Brittney's career in which there has been an All-Star Game, she has been selected as an All-Star," Engelbert said. "It is not difficult to imagine that if BG were here with us this season, she would once again be selected and would, no



Phoenix Mercury center Brittney Griner (42) drives past Chicago Sky forward Candace Parker (3) during the first half of Game 1 of the WNBA basketball Finals, Sunday, Oct. 10, 2021, in Phoenix.

Associated Press

doubt, show off her incredible talents. So, it is only fit-

ting that she be named as an honorary starter today

and we continue to work on her safe return to the

U.S." The State Department in May designated Griner as wrongfully detained, moving her case under the supervision of its special presidential envoy for hostage affairs, who is effectively the government's chief hostage negotiator. Russian state-run news agency Tass reported last week that Griner's detention was extended until at least July 2. Another American, Paul Whelan, has been held in Russia since December 2018 on espionage charges he and the U.S. government say are false.

Breanna Stewart and A'ja Wilson received the most votes from fans and were selected as co-captains for the event. They will be joined by Sue Bird and Sylvia Fowles, who both have announced they will retire at the end of the season. Bird will set a record with her 13th All-Star appearance. Fowles, who is injured right now, was selected for her eighth game. Stewart and Fowles will be paired up as co-captains, as will Wilson and Bird, and will choose their teams. Joining Wilson, Stewart and Fowles in the frontcourt are Connecticut's Jonquel Jones, Los Angeles's Nneka Ogumike and Chicago's Candace Parker. The starting guards, in addition to Bird, are New York's Sabrina Ionescu and Las Vegas teammates Kelsey Plum and Jackie Young.

"For icons like Sylvia and Sue to be voted into the AT&T WNBA All-Star Game as starters in their 15th and 19th seasons, respectively, is extraordinary," Engelbert said. "And when you see the starting lineups dotted with first-time All-Stars like Sabrina Ionescu, Kelsey Plum, and Jackie Young, it just seems right that Sylvia and Sue — who have said this will be their final season — join A'ja and Breanna as co-captains for an All-Star event that will in some ways symbolize the passing of the torch to a new generation of WNBA stars." Starters were chosen by a combination of fan, media and player voting. □

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