



Sen. Joe Biden, D-Del., chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee, holds a TEC-9 semi-automatic pistol during a hearing of the committee on Capitol Hill, Aug. 3, 1993, as the committee holds hearings on combating the proliferation of assault weapons.

Associated Press

Emboldened Biden, Dems push ban on so-called assault weapons

By C.LONG/M. C. JALONICK/L. WHITEHURST
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — When President Joe Biden speaks about the “scourge” of gun violence, his go-to answer is to zero in on so-called assault weapons. America has heard it hundreds of times, including this week after shootings in Colorado and Virginia: The president wants to sign into law a ban on high-powered guns that have the capacity to kill many people very quickly.

“The idea we still allow semi-automatic

weapons to be purchased is sick. Just sick,” Biden said on Thanksgiving Day.

“I’m going to try to get rid of assault weapons.”

After the mass killing last Saturday at a gay nightclub in Colorado Springs, he said in a statement: “When will we decide we’ve had enough? ... We need to enact an assault weapons ban to get weapons of war off America’s streets.”

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Council of Ministers of the Kingdom of the Netherlands prolonged mandate of Governor Alfonso Boekhoudt



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Emboldened Biden, Dems push ban on so-called assault weapons

Continued from Front

When Biden and other lawmakers talk about “assault weapons,” they are using an inexact term to describe a group of high-powered guns or semi-automatic long rifles, like an AR-15, that can fire 30 rounds fast without reloading. By comparison, New York Police Department officers carry a handgun that shoots about half that much.

A weapons ban is far off in a closely divided Congress. But Biden and the Democrats have become increasingly emboldened in pushing for stronger gun controls — and doing so with no clear electoral consequences.

The Democratic-led House passed legislation in July to revive a 1990s-era ban on “assault weapons,” with Biden’s vocal support. And the president pushed a ban nearly everywhere that he campaigned this year.

Still, in the midterm elections, Democrats kept control of the Senate and Republicans were only able to claim the slimmest House majority in two decades.

The tough talk follows passage in June of a landmark bipartisan bill on gun laws, and it reflects steady progress that gun control advocates have been making in recent years.

“I think the American public has been waiting for this message,” said Sen. Chris Murphy, D-Conn., who has been the Senate’s leading advocate for stronger gun control since the massacre of 20 children at a school in Newtown, Connecticut in 2012. “There has been a thirst from voters, especially swing voters, young voters, parents, to hear candidates talk about gun violence, and I think Democrats are finally sort of catching up with where the public has been.”

Just over half of voters want to see nationwide gun policy made more strict, according to AP VoteCast, an extensive survey of more than 94,000 voters nationwide conducted for The Associated Press by NORC at the University of Chicago.



Semi-automatic rifles are displayed at Coastal Trading and Pawn, Monday, July 18, 2022, in Auburn, Maine.

go. About 3 in 10 want gun policy kept as is. Only 14% prefer looser gun laws.

There are clear partisan divides. About 9 in 10 Democrats want stricter gun laws, compared with about 3 in 10 Republicans. About half of Republicans want gun laws left as they are and only one-quarter want to see gun laws be made less strict.

Once banned in the United States, the high-powered firearms are now the weapon of choice among young men responsible for many of the most devastating mass shootings. Congress allowed the restrictions first put in place in 1994 on the manufacture and sales of the weapons to expire a decade later, unable to muster the political support to counter the powerful gun lobby and reinstate the weapons ban.

When he was governor of Florida, current Republican Sen. Rick Scott signed gun control laws in the wake of mass shootings at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School and a night club in Orlando. But he has consistently opposed weapons bans, arguing like many of his Republican colleagues that most gun owners use them lawfully.

“People are doing the right thing, why would we take away their weapons?” Scott asked as the Senate was negotiating gun legislation last summer. “It

doesn’t make any sense.”

He said more mental health counseling, assessments of troubled students and law enforcement on campus make more sense.

“Let’s focus on things that actually would change something,” Scott said.

Law enforcement officials have long called for stricter gun laws, arguing that the availability of these weapons makes people less safe and makes their jobs more dangerous.

Mike Moore, chief of the Los Angeles Police Department, the country’s third-largest, said it just makes sense to talk about guns when gun violence is rising nationwide, and consider what the government can do to make the streets safer. He is grateful Biden is bringing it up so much.

“This isn’t a one-and-done,” Moore said of the shooting in Colorado Springs. “These things are evolving all the time, in other cities, at any moment another incident happens. It’s crying out for the federal government, for our legislators, to go out and make this change,” he said. On Tuesday, six people were shot dead at a Walmart in Virginia. Over the past six months there has been a supermarket shooting in Buffalo, New York; a massacre of school children in Uvalde, Texas; and the July Fourth killing of revelers in Highland Park, Illinois. The legislation

that Biden signed in June will, among other things, help states put in place “red flag” laws that make it easier for authorities to take weapons from people judged to be dangerous. But a ban was never on the table.

A 60-vote threshold in the Senate means some Republicans must be on board. Most are steadily opposed, arguing it would be too complicated, especially as sales and varieties of the firearms have proliferated. There are many more types of these high-powered guns today than in 1994, when the ban was signed into law by President Bill Clinton.

“I’d rather not try to define a whole group of guns as being no longer available to the American public,” said Republican Sen. Mike Rounds of South Dakota, who is a hunter and owns several guns, some of them passed down through his family. “For those of us who have grown up with guns as part of our culture, and we use them as tools — there’s millions of us, there’s hundreds of millions of us — that use them lawfully.”

In many states where the bans have been enacted, the restrictions are being challenged in court, gaining strength from a Supreme Court ruling in June expanding gun rights.

“We feel pretty confident, even despite the argu-

ments made by the other side, that history and tradition as well as the text of the Second Amendment are on our side,” said David Warrington, chairman and general counsel for the National Association for Gun Rights.

Biden was instrumental in helping secure the 1990s ban as a senator. The White House said that while it was in place, mass shootings declined, and when it expired in 2004, shootings tripled.

The reality is complicated. The data on the effectiveness is mixed and there is a sense that other measures that are not as politically fraught might actually be more effective, said Robert Spitzer, a political science professor at the State University of New York-Cortland and author of “The Politics of Gun Control.”

Politically, the ban sparked a backlash, even though the final law was a compromise version of the initial bill, he said. “The gun community was furious,” Spitzer said.

The ban has been blamed in some circles for the Democrats losing control of Congress in 1994, though subsequent research has shown that the loss was likely more about strong, well-funded conservative candidates and district boundaries, Spitzer said.

Still, after Democrat Al Gore, who supported stricter gun laws, lost the 2000 White House race to Republican George W. Bush, Democrats largely backed off the issue until the Sandy Hook shooting in 2012. Even after that, it was not a campaign topic until the 2018 midterms. Now, gun control advocates see progress.

“The fact that the American people elected a president who has long been a vocal and steadfast supporter of bold gun safety laws — and recently reelected a gun sense majority to the Senate — says everything you need to know about how dramatically the politics on this issue have shifted,” said John Feinblatt, president of Everytown for Gun Safety. □

Midterms free of feared chaos as voting experts look to 2024

By NICHOLAS RICCARDI

Associated Press

Before Election Day, anxiety mounted over potential chaos at the polls.

Election officials warned about poll watchers who had been steeped in conspiracy theories falsely claiming that then-President Donald Trump did not actually lose the 2020 election. Democrats and voting rights groups worried about the effects of new election laws, in some Republican-controlled states, that President Joe Biden decried as "Jim Crow 2.0." Law enforcement agencies were monitoring possible threats at the polls.

Yet Election Day, and the weeks of early voting before it, went fairly smoothly. There were some reports of unruly poll watchers disrupting voting, but they were scattered. Groups of armed vigilantes began watching over a handful of ballot drop boxes in Arizona until a judge ordered them to stay far away to ensure they would not intimidate voters. And while it might take months to figure out their full impact, GOP-backed voting laws enacted after the 2020 election did not appear to cause major disruptions the way they did during the March primary in Texas.

"The entire ecosystem in a lot of ways has become more resilient in the aftermath of 2020," said Amber McReynolds, a former Denver elections director who advises a number of voting rights organizations. "There's been a lot of effort on ensuring things went well."

Even though some voting experts' worst fears didn't materialize, some voters still experienced the types of routine foul-ups that happen on a small scale in every election. Many of those fell disproportionately on Black and Hispanic voters. "Things went better than expected," said Amir Badat of the NAACP Legal Defense Fund. "But we have to say that with a caveat: Our expectations are low." Badat said his organization recorded long lines at



A woman attends an event for Democratic candidate for Florida governor Charlie Crist at an early voting location Nov. 6, 2022, in Miami.

various polling places from South Carolina to Texas.

There were particular problems in Harris County, Texas, which includes Houston. Shortages of paper ballots and at least one polling location opening late led to long lines and triggered an investigation of the predominantly Democratic county by the state's Republican authorities.

The investigation is partly a reflection of how certain voting snafus on Election Day are increasingly falling on Republican voters, who have been discouraged from using mailed ballots or using early in-person voting by Trump and his allies. But it's a very different problem from what Texas had during its March primary.

Then, a controversial new voting law that increased the requirements on mail ballots led to about 13% of all such ballots being rejected, much higher compared with other elections. It was an ominous sign for a wave of new laws, passed after Trump's loss to Biden and false claims about mail voting, but there have been no problems of that scale reported for the general election.

Texas changed the design of its mail ballots, which solved many of the problems voters had putting identifying information in

the proper place. Other states that added regulations on voting didn't appear to have widespread problems, though voting rights groups and analysts say it will take weeks of combing through data to find out the laws' impacts. The Brennan Center for Justice at the NYU School of Law is compiling data to determine whether new voting laws in states such as Georgia contributed to a drop in turnout among Black and Hispanic voters. Preliminary figures show turnout was lower this year than in the last midterm election four years ago in Florida, Georgia, Iowa and Texas four states that passed significant voting restrictions since the 2020 election although there could be a number of reasons why.

"It's difficult to judge, empirically, the kind of effect these laws have on turnout because so many factors go into turnout," said Rick Hasen, an election law expert at the University of California, Los Angeles law school. "You also have plenty of exaggeration on the Democratic side that any kind of change in voting laws are going to cause some major effect on the election, which has been proven not to be the case." In Georgia, for example,

Republicans made it more complicated to apply for mailed ballots after the 2020 election among other things, requiring voters to include their driver's license number or some other form of identification rather than a signature. That may be one reason why early in-person voting soared in popularity in the state this year, and turnout there dipped only slightly from 2018.

Jason Snead, executive director of the conservative Honest Elections Project, which advocates for tighter voting laws, said the fairly robust turnout in the midterm elections shows that fears of the new voting regulations were overblown. Poll watchers were a significant concern of voting rights groups and election officials heading into Election Day. The representatives of the two major political parties are a key part of any secure election process, credentialed observers who can object to perceived violations of rules.

But this year, groups aligned with conspiracy theorists who challenged Biden's 2020 victory recruited poll watchers heavily, and some states reported that aggressive volunteers caused disruptions during the primary. But there were

fewer issues in November.

In North Carolina, where several counties had reported problems with poll watchers in the May primary, the state elections board reported 21 incidents of misbehavior at the polls in the general election, most during the early, in-person voting period and by members of campaigns rather than poll watchers. The observers were responsible for eight of the incidents.

Voting experts were pleasantly surprised there weren't more problems with poll watchers, marking the second general election in a row when a feared threat of aggressive Republican observers did not materialize.

"This seems to be an increase over 2020. Is it a small increase? Yes," said Michael McDonald, a political scientist at the University of Florida. "It's still a dry run for 2024, and we can't quite let down our guard." One of the main organizers of the poll watcher effort was Cleta Mitchell, a veteran Republican election lawyer who joined Trump on a Jan. 2, 2020, call to Georgia's top election official when the president asked that the state "find" enough votes to declare him the winner. Mitchell then launched an organization to train volunteers who wanted to keep an eye on election officials, which was seen as the driver of the poll watcher surge. Mitchell said the relatively quiet election is vindication that groups like hers were simply concerned with election integrity rather than causing disruptions.

"Every training conducted by those of us doing such training included instruction about behavior, and that they must be 'Peaceful, Lawful, Honest,'" Mitchell wrote in the conservative online publication The Federalist. "Yet, without evidence, the closer we got to Election Day, the more hysterical the headlines became, warning of violence at the polls resulting from too many observers watching the process. It didn't happen." □

Owner of gay club: Shooting comes amid a new 'type of hate'

By JESSE BEDAYN

Associated Press/Report for America

COLORADO SPRINGS, Colo.

(AP) — The co-owner of the Colorado Springs gay nightclub where a shooter turned a drag queen's birthday celebration into a massacre said he thinks the shooting that killed five people and injured 17 others is a reflection of anti-LGBTQ sentiment that has evolved from prejudice to incitement.

Nic Grzecka's voice was tinged with exhaustion as he spoke with The Associated Press on Wednesday night in some of his first comments since Saturday night's attack at Club Q, a venue Grzecka helped build into an enclave that sustained the LGBTQ community in conservative-leaning Colorado Springs. Authorities haven't said why the suspect opened fire at the club before being subdued by patrons, but they are facing hate crime charges. The suspect, Anderson Lee Aldrich, 22, has not entered a plea or spoken about the incident. Grzecka said he believes the targeting of a drag queen event is connected to the art form being cast in a false light in recent months by right-wing activists and politicians who complain about the "sexualization" or "grooming" of children.

Even though general ac-



Supporters of Club Q stand beneath a 25-foot historic pride flag displayed on the exterior of city hall to mark the weekend mass shooting at a gay nightclub Wednesday, Nov. 23, 2022, in Colorado Springs, Colo.

Associated Press

ceptance of the LGBTQ community has grown, this new dynamic has fostered a dangerous climate, he said.

"It's different to walk down the street holding my boyfriend's hand and getting spit at (as opposed to) a politician relating a drag queen to a groomer of their children," Grzecka said. "I would rather be spit on in the street than the hate get as bad as where we are today." Earlier this year, Florida's Republican-dominated legislature passed a bill barring teachers from discussing gender identity or sexual orientation with

younger students. A month later, references to "pedophiles" and "grooming" in relation to LGBTQ people rose 400%, according to a Human Rights Campaign report.

"Lying about our community, and making them into something they are not, creates a different type of hate," Grzecka said.

Grzecka, who started mopping floors and bartending at Club Q in 2003 a year after it opened, said he hopes to channel his grief and anger into rebuilding the support system for Colorado Springs' LGBTQ community that only Club

Q had provided.

City and state officials have offered support and President Joe Biden and First Lady Jill Biden reached out to Grzecka and co-owner Matthew Haynes on Thursday to offer condolences and reiterate their support for the community, as well as their commitment to fighting back against hate and gun violence.

Club Q opened after the only other gay bar in Colorado Springs at that time shuttered, Grzecka said, describing that era as an evolution of gay bars.

Decades ago, dingy, hole-in-the-wall venues were

meant largely for finding a hookup or date. But once the internet offered anonymous ways to find love online, the bars transitioned into well-lit, clean, non-smoking spaces to hang out with friends and Club Q was at the vanguard of that transition, Grzecka said.

Once he became co-owner in 2014, Grzecka helped mold Club Q into not merely a nightlife venue but a community center a platform to create a "chosen family" for LGBTQ people, especially for those estranged from their birth family. Drag queen bingo nights, "Friendsgiving" and Christmas dinners and birthday celebrations became staples of Club Q which was open 365 days a year. In the aftermath of the shooting, Grzecka and other community leaders hope to fill the gaping hole left by the desecration of Club Q. "When that system goes away, you realize how much more the bar was really providing," said Justin Burns, an organizer with Pikes Peak Pride.

Burns said the shooting pulled back a curtain on a broader lack of resources for LGBTQ adults in Colorado Springs. Burns, Grzecka and others are working with national organizations to do an assessment of the community's needs as they develop a blueprint to offer a robust support network. □

Woman dies on hike in Utah's Zion Park, husband hospitalized



Zion National Park near Springdale, Utah, is pictured on Sept. 15, 2015.

Associated Press

SPRINGDALE, Utah (AP) —

A woman died and a man was rescued and treated for hypothermia after they were caught in extreme cold weather while hiking in Utah's Zion National Park, officials said.

The married couple were on a permitted, 16-mile (25-kilometer) hike through the park area known as the Narrows, the National Park Service said in a statement Thursday.

The woman, 31, and the man, 33, were not identified by the park service.

The Zion National Park

Search and Rescue Team responded on Wednesday morning after shuttle drivers said visitors reported an injured man and a non-responsive woman in the Narrows, the park service said.

The rescue team found the man on a trail being helped by other hikers and transported him to the Zion Emergency Operations Center for treatment. Rescuers moved further up the Narrows and found the woman near the Virgin River. They administered emergency aid but de-

termined the woman had died, the park service said. The couple started their trip through the Narrows on Tuesday. They stopped about 1.5 miles (2.4 kilometers) from the north end of Riverside Walk, a paved trail.

The man told rescuers they became "dangerously cold" overnight and experienced symptoms consistent with hypothermia, the park service said.

Early on Wednesday morning, the man sought help and the woman remained in place. □

U.N. experts denounce Taliban treatment of women as crime

By RAHIM FAIEZ

Associated Press

ISLAMABAD (AP) — The Taliban treatment of women and girls in Afghanistan may amount to a crime against humanity and should be investigated and prosecuted under international law, a U.N. team of experts said Friday.

The Taliban promptly rejected the allegation.

The statement by the U.N.-appointed experts followed a confirmation from the Taliban that three women were among 12 people lashed on Wednesday in front of hundreds of spectators at a provincial sports stadium.

It signaled the Taliban's resumption of a brutal form of punishment that was a hallmark of their rule in the 1990s.

And on Nov. 11 in Taloqan in northeastern Takhar province, 10 men and nine women were lashed 39 times each in the presence of elders, scholars and residents at the city's main mosque after Friday prayers. They were accused of adultery, theft and running away from home.



A Taliban fighter stands guard as people receive food rations distributed by a Saudi humanitarian aid group, in Kabul, Afghanistan, Monday, April 25, 2022.

The U.N. experts said the latest Taliban actions against women and girls have deepened existing rights violations already the "most draconian globally" and may constitute gender persecution, which is a crime against humanity.

The Taliban overran Afghanistan in August 2021 as American and NATO forces were in the final weeks of

their pullout from the country after 20 years of war. Despite initially promising a more moderate rule and allow for women's and minority rights, they have restricted rights and freedoms and widely implemented their harsh interpretation of Islamic law, or Sharia.

They have banned girls from middle school and high school, restricted

women from most employment, and ordered them to wear head-to-toe clothing in public. Women are also banned from parks, gyms, and funfairs.

Lashings in public, as well as public executions and stoning for purported crimes were common across Afghanistan during the first period of Taliban rule, from 1996 until 2001, when they

were driven out in a U.S.-led invasion following the September 11 terrorist attacks. The Taliban had sheltered al-Qaida and its leader, Osama bin Laden.

The experts' statement did not specifically mention the cases of public lashings but said the Taliban have beaten men accompanying women wearing colorful clothing or without a face covering.

"We are deeply concerned that such actions are intended to compel men and boys to punish women and girls who resist the Taliban's erasure of them, further depriving them of their rights, and normalizing violence against them," it said. It urged the Taliban to reinstate the rights and freedoms for Afghan women, release activists from detention and restore access to schools and public spaces.

The expert team, appointed by the U.N. Human Rights Council, includes Richard Bennett, special rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Afghanistan, and Farida Shaheed, special rapporteur on the right to education. □

Associated Press

EU, U.S. edging toward trade spat when both want unity instead

By RAF CASERT

Associated Press

BRUSSELS (AP) — The European Union and the United States are treading precariously close to a major trans-Atlantic trade dispute at a time when the

two Western giants want to show unity in the face of challenges from Russia and China. EU trade ministers on Friday insisted they would be forced to respond if Washington stuck to all the terms of its Inflation

Reduction Act, which is favorable to local companies through subsidies and, according to the EU, will unfairly discriminate against its firms that want to compete for contracts.

"Nobody wants to get into a tit-for-tat or subsidy race. But what the U.S. has done really isn't consistent with the principles of free trade and fair competition," Irish Trade Minister Leo Varadkar said. Even though the allies have stood shoulder to shoulder by imposing strict sanctions against Russia since the Feb. 24 invasion of Ukraine, they cannot gloss over the trade differences. "What we are asking for is fairness. We want and expect European companies and exports to be treated in the same way in the U.S. as American companies and exports

are treated in Europe," EU Commission Vice President Valdis Dombrovskis said. And beyond the European Commission, which nego-

tiates on behalf of the 27 member nations on trade issues, the concerns are largely shared in EU national capitals, too. □



Czech Energy Minister Jozef Sikela speaks with the press prior to presiding a meeting of EU energy ministers at an extraordinary energy council in Brussels, Thursday, Nov. 24, 2022.

Associated Press

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Mexico's domestic airline industry in shambles

MEXICO CITY (AP) — Mexico's domestic airline industry is in shambles, plagued by safety problems, a ratings downgrade by the U.S. Federal Aviation Administration, and vandalism.

This week alone, passengers missed connections because thieves cut the fiber optic cables leading into the Mexico City airport, forcing immigration authorities to return to using slow paper forms.

The internet outage Wednesday came almost one month after aviation and transportation authorities were forced to suspend medical, physical and license renewal exams until 2023 because the Transportation Department's computer systems had been hacked. After a near-miss between two planes at the Mexico City airport on May 7, things just got worse. Authorities revealed that one of the airport's main terminals is sinking and needs emergency work to shore it up. President Andrés Manuel López Obrador's answer has been to propose allowing foreign airlines to fly domestic routes. But the safety downgrade the FAA dropped Mexico from Category 1, which most



Passenger planes land at Benito Juárez International Airport in Mexico City, May 12, 2022.

Associated Press

countries have, to the lower Category 2 in 2021 prevents Mexican airlines from opening new routes to the United States.

Thus, Mexico's struggling airlines face competition in their home market, with no access to new international routes. Experts say all of it looks like a disaster for domestic aviation, a sector López Obrador had placed special emphasis on developing. "It is not very encouraging for in-

vestment or the prospect of recovering Category 1 in the short or medium term," aviation expert Rodrigo Soto-Morales wrote in the trade journal *a21*, referring to the internet outage and hacking.

Authorities said the Mexico City airport internet cables were cut by thieves who mistakenly thought the fiber optic cables were saleable copper. They stressed it happened outside airport property but, in fact, it was

a cable conduit that leads directly into the airport from less than a mile away.

Rogelio Rodríguez Garduño, an aviation expert who teaches aeronautical law at Mexico's National Autonomous University, said the events reflect a decadeslong decay in Mexico's aviation regulation. Mexico, unlike most countries, doesn't have an independent aviation agency. "If something goes wrong, they investigate themselves

and say they don't bear any responsibility," said Rodríguez Garduño. It doesn't bode well for López Obrador's promise to recover a Category 1 safety rating. "It seems possible that this is a process where we are taking steps backward," Rodríguez Garduño said.

Consider the incident on May 7, when a Mexican airliner was cleared to land on a runway where another plane was about to take off. The only person who appears to have been fired for the near-miss was a member of the crew of another plane who filmed the incident on her cellphone, accompanied by the words, "No no no no," and a phrase roughly equivalent to "unbelievable."

"The problems we are seeing, for example, in air traffic control where planes are on the verge of colliding ... the failure of the immigration system, the problems with training and maintenance supervision, the issuing of permits, it's a recurring thing that didn't start yesterday with this administration," Rodríguez Garduño said, "though this administration also hasn't taken the necessary steps." □

China's Xi pledges support for Cuba on 'core interests'

BEIJING (AP) — Chinese President Xi Jinping and his Cuban counterpart pledged mutual support over their fellow communist states' "core interests" Friday at a meeting further hailing a return to face-to-face diplomacy by Beijing. In comments to Miguel Díaz-Canel Bermúdez, Xi said China hoped to "strengthen coordination and cooperation in international and regional affairs" with Cuba. The two will "go hand in hand down the road of building socialism with each's own characteristics," Xi was quoted as saying in a Chinese government news release.

China generally defines core interests as the defense of its economic and political development



China's President Xi Jinping arrives to attend the APEC Economic Leaders Meeting during the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation, APEC summit, Saturday, Nov. 19, 2022, in Bangkok, Thailand.

Associated Press

aims, along with control over territory it claims, especially self-governing Taiwan.

No specific issues or other countries were mentioned

in the Chinese government news release.

Díaz-Canel's visit is a further sign of how China is trying to jump-start its in-person diplomacy after a

virtual shutdown of such exchanges during the pandemic.

Xi, who is also the leader of the ruling Communist Party and has eliminated term limits to allow him to remain in power indefinitely, met with German Chancellor Olaf Scholz earlier this month in Beijing, then attended the meeting of the Group of 20 leading economies in Indonesia and the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation forum in Thailand.

Mongolian President Ukhnaagiin Khurelsukh and European Council President Charles Michel are due to travel to Beijing next week. Díaz-Canel arrived in China after a visit to Moscow, where he and Russian President Vladimir Putin hailed

the "traditional friendship" between their sanctions-hit nations.

Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, China and Cuba grew closer, just as China and Russia gradually established warmer ties, largely in opposition to the U.S.-led liberal democratic global order.

In the Chinese news release, Díaz-Canel was quoted as saying his visit "shows that we attach great importance and attention to the friendly and cooperative relationship between Cuba and China."

Cuba "highly recognizes" Xi's practical and theoretical contributions "and we believe this is a real encouragement to all progressive forces in the world," he said. □

“Between Aruba and the Netherlands I found Paradise”: artwork found a home in MANA

ORANJESTAD – Last Wednesday, contemporary artist Osaira Muyale and the National Archeological Museum Aruba (MANA) signed an agreement for an undefined time period, so that the artwork “Entre Aruba y Hulanda mi a haya Paraíso”, which translates as “Between Aruba and the Netherlands I found paradise, can be exhibited in the museum.

Muyale is also the creator of the majestic blue horses found in the city centre.

The sleeping horse, broken in two, of which one half has the shield of

Aruba and the other half the shield of the Netherlands, captures our attention to the cultural rupture that took place during the colonization process.

The triangular commerce route from the 16th to the 18th centuries between Europe, Africa and America (particularly the Caribbean) formed an economic enterprise. At the same time this interfered and broke the way of life and culture of people involved in displacement and slavery. However, it is through the division and reconnections that the new identities and cultures

of today were formed.

We are still dealing with the consequences of colonization, and Muyale's artwork accentuates the hybrid aspect of ex-colonies. At the same time it illustrates the cultural disconnection and the lack of understanding that is still going on today. Colonies of the past and political structures of the present are still connected and separated by the immense blue sea.

In her artwork, personal narratives as a child of mixed parents (Dutch and Aruban) and the national narratives, like the Apart Status of Aruba in the Kingdom of the Netherlands are explored and they scream for dialogue, art as the symbol of the effort of a Caribbean nation to understand its own history and to have its own voice.

The formalization of the agreement and cooperation between Osaira Muyale and MANA was celebrated symbolically. Together they drank coffee with sweet bread and speculaas cookies. They explored possibilities for the artist and MANA to continue working together through research, education and art. One more seed was planted, and together they will continue working for the cultural development of Aruba. □



Council of Ministers of the Kingdom of the Netherlands prolonged mandate of Governor Alfonso Boekhoudt

ORANJESTAD – Yesterday, 25th of November, the Council of Ministers of the Kingdom of the Netherlands (Rijksministerraad) approved the proposal of the government of Aruba to prolong the appointment of Mr. Alfonso Boekhoudt as Governor of Aruba for another six-year term.

The mandate of His Excellency Governor Alfonso Boekhoudt will expire on the 1st of Januari 2023. The Government of Aruba, seeing the experience and knowledge of Mr. Boekhoudt, seeing the respect enjoyed by Mr. Boekhoudt in our community, asked Mr. Boekhoudt to stay on for one more term. Mr.

Boekhoudt accepted the government's request.

The government of Aruba proposed to the Netherlands to prolong the appointment of Governor Boekhoudt for one more term, from 2023 until the 1st of Januari 2029. Yesterday RMR approved this proposal.

Prime minister of Aruba, Evelyn Wever-Croes, in the name of the government of Aruba congratulated Mr. Boekhoudt with his appointment and thanked Mr. Boekhoudt for his availability to continue serving the community of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. □



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How it all began

It was 1938 when Mr. Eric Ponson started his journey at General Store. Ponson did not hesitate and decided to buy General Store. Buying a store and thus going from employee to owner of a business with a debt of 11.000 guilders was not an easy task.

As the saying goes: "Behind every successful man, is a strong woman". In the case of Ponson, this was no different. As General Store progressed and slowly became successful, Mrs. Irene Ponson, came in to assist her husband. Irene Ponson is a visionary, she knew exactly where and how to invest and within a short amount of time in 1970, General Store moved to a better location at the Steenweg. This allowed for a lot more merchandize, products and employees. Supply and demand was as such, that General Store became the number 1 electrical business. Business kept going so well that the location at the Steen-



weg became too small and was moved later to Dakota Shopping Paradise and later to Pedro Gallego Straat. With this move, an expansion was decided upon and an electronics store in Savaneta was opened. General Store still being very successful was ready for more growth.

Ricky, Kenneth, Corine and Frans are the fruits of this marriage. Kenneth and Frans however, decided to further develop their father's legacy and continued with their mother's dream to expand the business. An expansion not in square feet only, but in merchandize as well. A great opportunity presented itself when the Ponson family was able to buy a piece of property across from the airport. In 2007 the Ponson family moved into their brand new and huge building

After a successful opening and expansion, Kenneth and Frans who inherited their mother's vision, decided that General Store was ready for yet another expansion. With the support of Mr. Tom Barfell and management of Do it Best in the States, the construction of Do it Center commenced.

Fast forward to today. A Do it Center in Aruba, with more than 50.000 top of the line items for interior as well exterior use, building materials, STO products and a top of the line grocery store. Perseverance, responsibility, vision and the courage to invest have made Ponson's General Store as successful as it is today.

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Do it Center Shaba is open from Monday to Saturday from 8AM to 8PM and on Sunday's from 9AM to 6PM.

For more information go to www.doit.aw. □



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Aruba Tourism Authority honored loyal visitors of Manchebo Beach Resort & Spa



The Aruba Tourism Authority recently recognized the Goodwill Ambassadors of Aruba, by presenting the Ambassadors with the Goodwill certificate as a

token of appreciation for visiting the island for more than 20 consecutively

Honorees were:
Henk Fidder & Klazina

Loonstra residents of South Holland, Holland During the ceremony Ms. Olga Ruiz representing the Aruba Tourism Authority (A.T.A.), and members Man-



chebo Beach Resort & Spa bestowed the certification of the Ambassador, and presented the Ambassador with gifts, and thanked her on behalf of the Government of Aruba for choosing Aruba as her favorite vacation destination for so many years. Aruba can now be considered by the Honor-

ees, their Home Away from Home!

Top reason for returning to Aruba, provided by the honorees were:

Aruba is like coming home
Lovely hotel (Manchebo)
Friendly people
Beautiful beaches
Rest and relaxation ☐



The Aruba Tourism Authority recently recognized the Distinguished Ambassadors of Aruba by presenting the Ambassadors with the Distinguished certificate as a token of appreciation for visiting the island for more than 10 years consecutively.

Honorees were:
Keith & Maria DeRaffele resident of New York, United States

Adriana DeRaffele, Gabriella DeRaffele, Nicholas DeRaffele, residents of New York, United States

Aruba Tourism Authority honored loyal visitors at Marriot's Aruba Surf Club



Ms. Olga Ruiz representing the Aruba Tourism Authority, and members of the Marriott's Aruba Surf Club bestowed the certification of the Ambassadors and presented the Ambassador with gifts, and thanked them on behalf of the

Government of Aruba for choosing Aruba as their favorite vacation destination for so many years. The Honorees can now call Aruba their home away from home!

Top reason for returning

to Aruba, provided by the honoree were:

Safety
Friendly locals
The best weather
The best food
Beautiful Beaches ☐

Short history of the beginnings of baseball in Aruba

ORANJESTAD — Baseball was played on the island of Aruba in the 1930's, but only by United States expatriates working for LAGO and living inside the LAGO colony. Jim Bluejacket, the legendary US Indian who had played in two major league teams, worked for LAGO during 14 years and was a key factor in the growth of the popularity of the game in the colony. There is no record of Bluejacket ever playing outside the colony.

Outside the colony, the game of baseball was introduced to Aruba by Venezuelan immigrants and sailors on the Venezuelan fishing boats that used Aruba as their home port. They formed pick-up teams and played games on Sundays on an open field behind what is now the Court of Justice. One of the Venezuelans that comes to mind is Felix Garrido, grandfather of our current Prime-Minister.

In the late 30s the leader of this group was Raúl Aparicio, a cousin of Luis Aparicio who is now enshrined in the Hall of Fame in Cooperstown. The Aparicios were evidently very good at sports. Raúl had two brothers who also played baseball, René and Roman. Rosendo, his only brother who did not play baseball became a professional soccer player in the Venezuelan league. Rosendo was nicknamed "Cabeza de oro" (golden head) for a memorable header he scored to win a game for his team. Interestingly, it was in Aruba that Luis Aparicio played his first game outside of Venezuela. This took place in 1950 when he played shortstop for the school he attended. Later he played for "Cabimas" in a doubleheader of the Venezuelan Western League. These official games of the league were authorized to be played in Aruba by the Professional Baseball Organization of Venezuela. Several others who played in those games have also been enshrined.

Luis Aparicio's father was the super popular Luis "El Grande" (the great one) after whom the baseball stadium in Maracaibo is named. He and his brother owned the professional baseball teams "Gavilanes" which later became the "Aguilas", and the "Cabimas".

In the early '40s, another group, mostly immigrants from the Dominican Republic also became very active with pickup teams. Some of these remained active in baseball well into the early '50s; as umpires, managers even as players. Among these were Nestor "Pantin" Guerrero who also had a musical band.



Perhaps not so coincidentally, many of Pantin's players were also musicians. Luthai Pantophlet who umpired many years was a well-known drummer. Gaston Hazel was a bongo player; José Bryson and the brothers Nicholson, Teddy and Julio, all played several instruments. In San Nicolas, baseball was played on the grounds next to where the LAGO Sport Park (now Laveist Sport Park) was officially inaugurated in March 1941.

During the WWII years, baseball got a big lift from the influx of Puerto Rican and US soldiers stationed here. As LAGO was playing a very important role in the struggle against Hitler, it was able to get all the sports equipment needed here to allow more people to participate.

In the '40s only the Lago Sports Park organized baseball championship games. The first teams to participate were Artraco, (Aruba Trading Co.), Esso Garage and Botica San Lucas. In 1945 Venezuelan employees of the Lago refinery participated under the name of "Cafenol", a very popular Venezuelan coffee brand. Two other groups of Venezuelan immigrants formed the teams "Cerveceria" (named after the iconic team Cerveceria Caracas), and "Venezuela", although not all members of these teams were Venezuelans. This was also the year that the team sponsored by Roxy Café started to play as "Dodgers".

Dodgers became the dominant baseball powerhouse till the 1950s. Other teams that entered the baseball scene in the late 1940s: Pepsi Cola (Oranjestad) and St. Thomas Boys (former students of St. Thomas College, Oranjestad). "Baby Ruth" in San Nicolas played initially under the name "Camel" and "Barnes' Ramblers" the only team consisting of Lago Colony players to participate in the Lago Sport Park championships. "Red Rock Cola" was formed in Oranjestad in 1950.

In 1952 the team Pepsi Cola became "Nesbitt's" and had players of seven countries, including two American expats from Lago Colony.

In 1950 a group of prominent

members of the Aruba community founded the Amateur Baseball Bond of Aruba (ABBA) to give structure to the management of the sport and became the organizers of official championship games. While maintaining the existing teams in a league that was referred to as A-class, ABBA established a B-class league in which the "Budweiser" and "Braves" played the first years.

By 1952 Aruba became a member of the International Amateur Baseball Association and fielded a team managed by Joe Proterra, (former pitcher of "Barnes' Ramblers"), that would play for the first time ever in the Amateur Baseball World Series that took place in Havana, Cuba in September. Surprisingly, Aruba won two of its six games and became the darling of the Havana fans. Nell Harms of the Aruban team was named the "Outstanding player of the week" for his performance against Honduras. He allowed just two hits, struck out 15 and hit the only homerun of the game. Joe Cambria, the famous scout for the Washington Senators offered him a contract, but Nel was not interested, but the next year, at the Amateur Baseball World Series in Caracas, Venezuela, Nel and Ruben Phillips did sign and in 1954 they played professional baseball the Georgia-Florida League and the Texas-New Mexico League. They were the first Arubans to play professionally, but not the only ones. During the games in Havana, contacts were made with the organizers of Little League Baseball in Cuba which eventually resulted in the introduction of Little League in Aruba. Little League of Aruba has been extremely successful: It has produced many players who earned baseball scholarships at universities in the United States, a few who played professionally in the Netherlands and different countries in the Caribbean and five who reached the major leagues: Calvin Maduro, Eugene Kingsale, Radhames Dijkhoff, Sydney Ponson, and Xander Bogaerts one of the brightest stars of Boston Red Sox. □

Different organizations joining together for 16 days of activities against gender-based violence

ORANJESTAD – Fundacion Contra Violencia Relacional (FCVR – Foundation against relational violence), HIAS, UNHCR and Cedehm joined together and during a press conference informed the local community about their Orange the World campaign, a world campaign against the abuse of girls and women.

Rish-Ann Ammerlaan of FCVR explained that this is the seventh time that the foundation is taking part in this worldwide campaign. In 2016 they began participating, collaboration with other organizations. This year, the abovementioned organizations, from the 25th of November until the 10th of December will be carrying out activism with the goal of bringing awareness in the community regarding the topic of gender-based violence.

On the 26th of November and the 3rd and 10th of December they will be doing fundraising so that the foundation can continue with its normal operation. They will have volunteers on the street in various areas, for example, in the round about in Sant Cruz, in Noord, on the bridge by the Renaissance Hotel as well as in front of Imelda Kleuterschool.

She's Gone

Carolina Bedoya of UNHCR indicated that the theme for Orange the World for 2022 is to join together to put an end to violence against girls and women. She invited the entire community to play a role and raise their voices to break the silence on violence against girls and women. She mentioned that today from



9:30am until 12 noon at the Cas di Cultura there will be an artistic exposition called "She's Gone". For this exposition, an artist collected clothes and belongings of different victims of femicide around the world, including Aruban victims. "It is a very impactful exposition. We invite the community to see the items of these people, who have sadly lost their lives abruptly due to femicide. The idea is for us all as a community be involved in breaking the violence, so that people who today are victims of violence can know that they are not alone",

Bedoya commented.

Around 47,000 girls and women around the world are murdered each year by their partner or a member of their family, and in many cases, the crimes are never solved.

"She's Gone" is an artistic expression protesting the global phenomenon of murder because of gender that are committed by partners or family members. This artwork is a scream in the silence in the name of every innocent victim who was murdered for the simple reason of being female.

Art Banner against violence

Genesis Maduro from HIAS said that they are glad to be able to collaborate with different local and international organizations in Aruba. HIAS will have an activity from the 25th of November until the 10th of December where the entire community is invited to participate in an 'art banner', where people can put a hand print on a banner. They will do a tour around Aruba visiting different organizations.

Maduro indicated that the banner will be a symbol where everyone stands in solidarity against violence against girls and women. If an organization wants to participate in this activity and protest gender-based violence, they can call (297) 730 77 65.

Red Tent for support

Jeanine Tromp from Centro di Desaroyo di Hende Muhe (Cedehm; Center for the Development of Women) said their organization will also be taking part in the 16 days of activism. For the 8th of December, they are organizing a Red Tent, which will be a support for a group of women where they will be using the theme against gender-based violence in order to bring awareness in the community about what exactly violence against women and girls is. □



CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

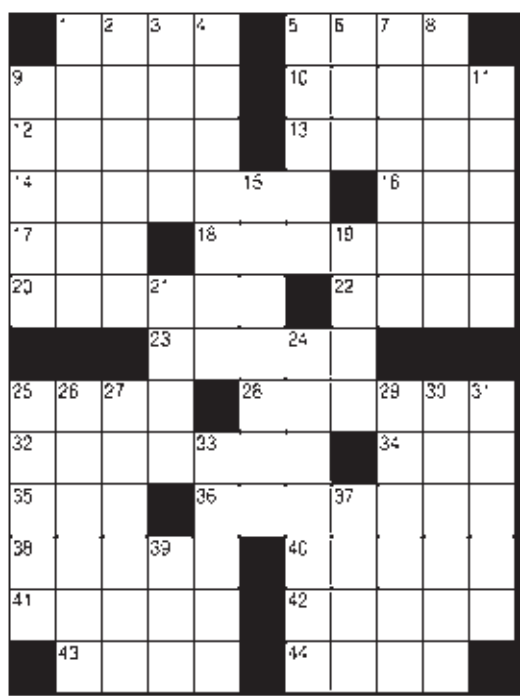
- ACROSS**
- 41 Middling card
 - 1 Port on the Big Island
 - 5 Viper feature
 - 9 Sheets and such
 - 10 Old market



Yesterday's answer

- DOWN**
- 1 Suggest
 - 2 Entirely
 - 3 Cordelia's father
 - 4 In theory
 - 5 Going rates
 - 6 Previously
 - 7 "Forget it!"
 - 8 Farm association
 - 9 Finishes last
 - 11 Peruvian peaks
 - 15 Refuse
 - 19 Kind
 - 21 New-born's need
 - 24 Single-issue publication
 - 25 Wrong
 - 26 Thanks-giving highlight
 - 27 Statue spot
 - 29 Sights
 - 30 Court players
 - 31 Used up
 - 33 Change for the better
 - 37 Show thrift
 - 39 Stephen of "The Crying Game"

- 12 Like bar beer
- 13 Flying reptile of Japanese film
- 14 Closet use
- 16 Goal
- 17 Chow down
- 18 Book excerpt
- 20 High fellow
- 22 Flamenco cries
- 23 Shady spot
- 25 Cain's father
- 28 High jinks
- 32 Odometer reading
- 34 Travel aid
- 35 Kin of Ltd.
- 36 Voicemail item
- 38 Boring movie
- 40 Golfer Walter



11-26

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.

11-26

CRYPTOQUOTE

U X H B U G E U Q D E W T K
U M Q D D U C G D P Q H D X I E R K D Z
U E Y X J V W D E R H J X E R K D Z
S U E E X J T Q H R H T H E B E

MDJQMD DGHJR

Yesterday's Cryptoquote: ALL OUR DREAMS CAN COME TRUE IF WE HAVE THE COURAGE TO PURSUE THEM. — WALT DISNEY

Inflation hovers over shoppers seeking deals on Black Friday

By ANNE D'INNOCENZIO, HALELUYA HADERO and ALEXANDRA OLSON
AP Retail Writers

NEW YORK (AP) — Shoppers hunted for the best deals at stores and online as retailers offered new Black Friday discounts to entice consumers eager to start buying holiday gifts but weighed down by inflation.

Due to elevated prices for food, rent, gasoline and other essentials, many people were reluctant to spend unless there was a big sale.

Shoppers were being more selective, selecting cheaper options, dipping more into savings and turning to "buy now, pay later" services that allow payment in installments. Some were also running up their credit cards at a time when the Federal Reserve is hiking rates to cool the U.S. economy. Sheila Diggs, 55, went to a Walmart in Mount Airy, Maryland early Friday looking for a deal on a coffee maker and to see what else was in the aisles. She said her family is being more cautious about their holiday spending this year. Usually, all the adults in the family would exchange gifts. But this year, everyone is drawing names and selecting one person, because things cost so much more, she said.

"Everything's going up but your paycheck," said Diggs, who manages medical records at a local hospital. This year's trends are a contrast from a year ago when consumers were buying early out of fear of not getting what they needed amid supply-network clogs. Stores didn't have to discount much be-



A person shops in an Apple store on Black Friday, Nov. 25, 2022, in New York.

Associated Press

cause they were struggling to bring in items.

This year, shoppers are holding out for the best bargains, said Rob Garf, vice president and general manager of retail at Salesforce, which tracks online sales. He said retailers finally responded this week, introducing more attractive deals online after offering mostly lackluster discounts earlier in the season.

Online discounts rates were 31% on Thanksgiving, up 7% from the previous year, according to Salesforce data. The steepest discounts were in home appliances, general apparel, makeup and luxury handbags. Online sales on the holiday rose 9% over last year. "Retailers have finally stepped up the discounting game and consumers are responding in kind," Garf said.

Macy's Herald Square in Manhattan, where discounts included 60% off fashion jewelry and 50% off select shoes, was bustling with shoppers early Friday. The traffic was "significantly larger" on Black Friday compared to the previous two years because shop-

pers feel more comfortable in crowds, Macy's CEO Jeff Gennette said.

He said that bestsellers from Macy's online sale, which started last weekend, included 50% off beauty sets. Last year Macy's, like many other stores, had supply chain issues and some of the gifts didn't arrive until after Christmas.

"Right now we are set and ready to go," he said.

Sophia Rose, 40, a respiratory specialist visiting Manhattan from Albany, New York, was heading into Macy's with big plans to splurge after scrimping last year when she was still in school. She put herself on a budget for food and gas to cope with inflation but had already spent \$2,000 for holiday gifts, and plans to spend a total of \$6,000.

"I am going to touch every floor," she said. "That's the plan." A Best Buy store in Manhattan had TVs stacked up high including Samsung 50-inch TVs marked down to \$297, a savings of \$82.

Delmarie Quinones, a 30-year-old health home aide from the Bronx, was only there to pick up a laptop and printer she ordered online at \$179 down from \$379 as part of a Black Friday sale.

Quinones said that higher prices on food and other expenses are making her reduce her spending from a year ago, when she had money from government child tax-credit payments. □

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24/7

Facial recognition can help conserve seals, scientists say

By **PATRICK WHITTLE**

FREEPORT, Maine (AP) —

Facial recognition technology is mostly associated with uses such as surveillance and the authentication of human faces, but scientists believe they've found a new use for it: saving seals. A research team at Colgate University has developed SealNet, a database of seal faces created by taking pictures of dozens of harbor seals in Maine's Casco Bay. The team found the tool's accuracy in identifying the marine mammals is close to 100%, which is no small accomplishment in an ecosystem home to thousands of seals.

The researchers are working on expanding their database to make it available to other scientists, said Krista Ingram, a biology professor at Colgate and a team member. Broadening the database to include rare species such as the Mediterranean monk seal and Hawaiian monk seal could help inform conservation efforts to save those species, she said. Cataloguing seal faces and using machine learning to identify them can also help scientists get a better idea of where in the ocean seals are located, Ingram said.

"Understanding their dispersal, understanding their patterns really helps inform any conservation efforts for the coast," she said. "For mobile marine mammals that move around a lot and are hard to photograph in the water, we need to be able to identify individuals."

SealNet is designed to automatically detect the face in a picture, crop it and recognize it based on facial patterns such as eyes and nose shape, as it would a human. A similar tool called PrimNet that is for use on primates had been used on seals previously, but SealNet outperformed it, the Colgate researchers said. The Colgate team published its findings in April in the scientific journal *Ecology and Evolution*. They processed more than



A harbor seal looks around in Casco Bay in this July 30, 2020 file photo off Portland, Maine. Associated Press

1,700 images of more than 400 individual seals, the paper said. The paper stated that the "ease and wealth of image data that can be processed using SealNet software contributes a vital tool for ecological and behavioral studies of marine mammals in the developing field of conservation technology."

Harbor seals are a conservation success story in the U.S. The animals were once subject to bounties in New England, where they were widely viewed by fishermen as pests in the 19th and early 20th centuries. But the Marine Mammal Protection Act, which turned 50 in October, extended them new protections and populations be-

gan to rebound.

Seals and other marine mammals have long been studied using satellite trackers. Using artificial intelligence to study them is a way to bring conservation into the 21st century, said Jason Holmberg, executive director of Wild Me, an Oregon-based company that works to bring machine learning to biologists. Wild Me is developing a potential partnership with SealNet.

"This is a shift and a lift of 'big brother' style technology to a very benevolent conservation-style goal," Holmberg said.

Harbor seals are now fairly abundant in New England waters, where they haul out on rocks and delight

seal watch cruises and beachgoers. Other seal species, however, remain in jeopardy. The Mediterranean monk seal is thought to be the world's most endangered seal with only a few hundred animals remaining. □

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Kenya faces threat of athletics ban for doping 'crisis'

By GERALD IMRAY

AP Sports Writer

DOHA, Qatar (AP) — Kenya faces the prospect of being banned from international athletics because of doping problems that have now reached "crisis" levels, according to authorities in the country.

The threat of an imminent ban by track and field governing body World Athletics, which would have repercussions for a number of medal contenders at next year's world championships and the 2024 Paris Olympics, was conceded by the country's sports ministry in a statement issued on Thursday.

In it, the ministry said there was a "doping crisis" in the East African nation and said that sports minister Ababu Namwamba, who was in Qatar for the soccer World Cup, had written to World Athletics president Sebastian Coe and "urged" the governing body "not to ban Kenya."

"Government is taking firm measures to protect and uphold the integrity of athletics," the Kenyan sports ministry said. The Kenyan government was "treating it as a matter of top strategic national interest," the ministry said.

The ministry gave assurances that it was working to solve the doping problems in an apparent effort



Kenyan athletes train together just after dawn on a dusty track in Kaptagat Forest in western Kenya, on Jan. 30, 2016.

to stave off a ban.

World Athletics is due to hold a meeting of its decision-making Council in Rome next week, when the issue of Kenya is reportedly due to be discussed.

A ban might force Kenya into a Russia-type situation, where the sanction is applied to the national track federation and athletes are forced to apply to compete as neutrals and not under their nation's flag at major championships. Russia's track federation has been suspended since 2015 because of a massive, state-sponsored doping scandal.

Previous action against Ke-

nya has focused on problems at the national anti-doping agency and hasn't affected athletes competing.

Kenya won 10 medals in athletics at the Tokyo Olympics last year; four golds, four silvers and two bronzes.

Only the United States won more medals in athletics. Kenya collected another 10 medals at this year's world championships in Eugene, Oregon. Again, only the U.S. won more.

A sanction on the Kenyan federation would affect the likes of marathon world-record holder and two-time Olympic champion Eliud

Kipchoge, who is among the greatest long distance runners ever.

Kipchoge has indicated that he will go for a third straight marathon gold at the Paris Games.

Numerous other star runners would be impacted, like current Olympic and world 800-meter champion Emmanuel Korir, former 1,500 world champion Timothy Cheruiyot, two-time Olympic 1,500 champion Faith Kipyegon and two-time 5,000 world champion Hellen Obiri. There are also many Kenyans who regularly win races on the Diamond League track circuit and the major marathon

series.

Kenya's doping problems have been documented for at least a decade and its national anti-doping program, which was shown to be ineffective and was accused of being corrupt, was given a major overhaul in 2016 when the new Anti-Doping Agency of Kenya (ADAK) was established.

The national track federation has also been implicated in doping-related corruption.

Authorities have largely blamed the issues on small groups of what they refer to as "criminal elements" making money off selling banned performance-enhancing substances to Kenyan runners. Kenya has moved to make doping a criminal offense.

But the reality is that the Kenyan anti-doping and athletics bodies have failed after years of warnings to rein in doping, which is often centered in the country's remote high-altitude running towns far away from authorities, and where controls are poor.

At least 45 Kenyan athletes have been sanctioned for doping this year, either by the Athletics Integrity Unit or Kenya's ADAK.

It's the highest number in Kenya for years. Another 20 doping cases involving Kenyans are currently being investigated. □

Associated Press

Neise wins skeleton World Cup opener, Clarke 2nd for USA



Kendall Wesenberg, of the U.S., races down the track during women's competition at the IBF Skeleton World Cup event in Whistler, British Columbia, Thursday, Nov. 24, 2022.

Associated Press

WHISTLER, British Columbia (AP) — Olympic champion Hannah Neise of Germany won the opening women's skeleton World Cup race of the season Thursday, while Hallie Clarke of the U.S. tied for second in her debut and gave the American program its best finish in nearly six years.

Neise finished two runs in 1:47.40, while Clarke and Britain's Brogan Crowley shared the silver with times of 1:47.58.

The 18-year-old Clarke born in Canada, but now in her first season racing for the U.S. and in a World Cup

race for the first time was the leader after the first run but couldn't hold off Neise, who rallied to get her first World Cup gold.

Clarke's silver was the first medal for the U.S. in a World Cup skeleton race since Megan Henry won bronze at Igls, Austria, on Jan. 17, 2020. The last silver for the U.S. in skeleton was Jan. 20, 2017, when Kendall Wesenberg was second at St. Moritz, Switzerland.

Kelly Curtis, who went to the Olympics last season for the U.S., was 11th Thursday and Wesenberg in her return to World Cup after a

retirement was 15th in the 16-woman field.

In the men's race earlier Thursday, Britain's Marcus Wyatt got his first win in 34 World Cup races. Seunggi Jung of Korea was second and Britain's Matt Weston was third.

Germany took the next two spots; Olympic silver medalist Axel Jungk was fourth, one spot ahead of reigning Olympic gold medalist Christopher Grotheer.

Austin Florian was ninth and 2022 Olympian Andrew Blaser was 14th for the U.S. in what was a 15-sled men's field. □

Analysis: Winning isn't always most important stat for QBs

By **ROB MAADDI**
AP Pro Football Writer

Zach Wilson found out wins and losses aren't the only stat that matters.

The New York Jets benched Wilson this week despite his 5-2 record as a starter. Wilson, the No. 2 overall pick in 2021, has struggled in his sophomore year. He has the NFL's second-worst passer rating and was awful in a 10-3 loss at New England on Sunday. The 23-year-old Wilson then failed to take accountability after the game.

The Carolina Panthers and Houston Texans are also switching QBs but they have nothing to lose. Both teams are heading nowhere. Sam Darnold replaces Baker Mayfield in Carolina. Kyle Allen is expected to take over for Davis Mills in Houston.

The Panthers (3-8) and Texans (1-8-1) should be in a prime spot to draft a potential franchise QB next April. The Jets (6-4) are in a different position. Wilson is supposed to be their guy after Darnold wasn't. They have a shot for their first winning season since 2015 and first playoff appearance since 2010. But New York has been winning in spite of Wilson, not because of him. Plus, leadership counts. Wilson has completed just 55.6% of his passes with four touchdowns and five interceptions in seven games



New York Jets quarterback Zach Wilson (2) runs as New England Patriots defensive end Deatrich Wise Jr. (91) gives chase during the second half of an NFL football game, Sunday, Nov. 20, 2022, in Foxborough, Mass.

Associated Press

since returning from a knee injury that forced him to miss the first three games. Wilson won't even dress Sunday against the Chicago Bears. Joe Flacco will be Mike White's backup while Wilson gets to "reset," according to Jets coach Robert Saleh.

"We haven't wavered in our belief that he's going to be the future of this franchise," Saleh said about Wilson. "Is it a small step back? Absolutely for him. But do I think it's going to be a great leap forward when he does get a chance to rest himself? Absolutely.

"This is not putting a nail in his coffin. This is not that, this is not anything close to that. But I do believe at the end of this he is going to be a rejuvenated, renewed

young man that once he reconnects to all the different things we're trying to reconnect to he's going to show why he was the second pick."

Saleh is taking a risk. If White plays well and the Jets win, he can't go back to Wilson right away. He has to wait. The Jets have two difficult road games coming up after the Bears. They face the Vikings (9-2) and Bills (8-3) so perhaps Wilson comes back for Buffalo. He had his best game against the Bills earlier this month, completing 72% of his passes for 154 yards, one TD and a 101.1 passer rating.

The Commanders are sticking with Taylor Heinicke, who has led them to a 4-1 record since Carson Wentz broke his finger. Wentz

returned to practice this week but is expected to be inactive for Sunday's game against Atlanta. Rookie Sam Howell will continue to serve as the backup for Washington (6-5).

Heinicke has similar numbers to Wilson but he's been lauded for the team's resurgence. Heinicke has completed 60.8% of his passes with five TDs, four picks and an 81.8 passer rating. Wilson's QBR is 44.9 while Heinicke's is 46.5. The Commanders aren't winning because of Heinicke; they're winning with him. Washington's running game has improved and the defense has played well.

"It's been the play of the defense some, it's been the play of the guys up front on the offensive line," Commanders coach Ron Rivera said. "It's been some of the play on some individuals that have just done some really good things and just kind of everything's been coming together and heading in the right direction. I mean, there's a lot of things to point to. Is there one specific thing? I don't think so."

Wentz was inconsistent in his six starts, throwing 10 TDs and six picks with an 84.1 passer rating and 32.8 QBR. The Commanders have more incentive to keep Wentz on the sideline for at least another game. They would owe the Colts a

**FIFA WORLD CUP
Qatar 2022**

Group A		Group B		Group C		Group D	
QAT	1 - 3	SEN	nov 25	POL	- -	KSA	nov 26
NED	1 - 1	ECU	nov 25	ARG	- -	MEX	nov 26
WAL	0 - 2	IRN	nov 25	TUN	- -	AUS	nov 26
ENG	1 - 1	USA	nov 25	FRA	- -	DEN	nov 26

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second-round pick instead of a third-rounder if Wentz plays at least 70% of Washington's offensive snaps in 2022. □

Tiger Woods to return to PNC Championship with son, Charlie

ORLANDO, Fla. (AP) — Tiger Woods and 13-year-old son Charlie are returning to the PNC Championship with hopes of doing one better than last year.

The 20-team field is for winners of majors or The Players Championship and a child or parent. This will be the third time Woods plays. A year ago, he and Charlie finished one shot behind John Daly and his son.

The 36-hole event, televised by NBC, is Dec. 17-18 at the Ritz-Carlton Golf Club Orlando.

"We have been looking

forward to this week all year," Woods said. "This is such a special opportunity as a dad to get to compete with my son against so many golfing greats and their family members. It is going to be a very special week and I know that Charlie and I will have a blast." Woods has not competed since he missed the cut in the British Open at St. Andrews in July. He is playing next week in his Hero World Challenge in the Bahamas, a 72-hole event against a 20-man field of the world's top players. He also has a

made-for-TV exhibition on Dec. 10 with Rory McIlroy as his partner against Justin Thomas and Jordan Spieth. That will be seven rounds in 18 days.

Thomas and Spieth also will be at the PNC Championship with their fathers. Thomas and his father, longtime club professional Mike Thomas, won in 2020. Annika Sorenstam is playing again, this time with her son, Will. The PNC field also includes Nelly Korda and her father, Petr, a former Australian Open tennis champion. □



Tiger Woods tips his hat to the crowd during a match between Serena Williams and Anett Kontaveit, of Estonia, in the second round of the U.S. Open tennis championships, Wednesday, Aug. 31, 2022, in New York.

Associated Press

Weekly SPECIALS

 <p>Blueberries 16oz 1Pint</p> <p>WAS \$4.34</p> <p>\$2.85 Each</p>	 <p>Halos Clementines 5lb</p> <p>WAS \$10.28</p> <p>\$7.99 Per Bag</p>	 <p>Chorizo Sausage</p> <p>WAS \$9.71</p> <p>\$5.71 Per KG</p>	 <p>Taco Bell Assorted Shredded Cheese 7oz</p> <p>WAS \$6.85</p> <p>\$5.14 Each</p>
 <p>Tangerine</p> <p>WAS \$3.42</p> <p>\$2.85 Per KG</p>	 <p>Cabbage Green USA</p> <p>WAS \$2.28</p> <p>\$1.71 Per KG</p>	 <p>U.S. pork loin Steaks</p> <p>WAS \$8.51</p> <p>\$6.28 Per KG</p>	 <p>Striploin Seasoned Brasil</p> <p>WAS \$17.71</p> <p>\$15.99 Per KG</p>
 <p>Nestle Nesquik Chocolate/Strawberry 38.09oz</p> <p>WAS \$11.42</p> <p>\$9.54 Each</p>	 <p>Spam Classic 340gr</p> <p>WAS \$4.85</p> <p>\$4.34 Each</p>	 <p>Melkan Volle Melk Gecondenseerd 397gr</p> <p>WAS \$2.28</p> <p>\$1.71 Each</p>	 <p>Spar Nr.1 Voorgekookte Rijst 1000gr</p> <p>WAS \$2.28</p> <p>\$1.71 Each</p>
 <p>EE Napkins Basic 12.5x11.6in 250ct</p> <p>WAS \$3.86</p> <p>\$3.42 Each</p>	 <p>Kleenex Tissues Soft White 2 ply 70pcs</p> <p>WAS \$1.71</p> <p>\$1.14 Each</p>	 <p>Hillshire Turkey Sausage/Polka Kielbasa 13oz</p> <p>WAS \$7.42</p> <p>\$6.51 Each</p>	 <p>Irish Spring Moisture Blast 18oz</p> <p>WAS \$9.14</p> <p>\$7.42 Each</p>
 <p>El Sembrador Plantain Leaves Frozen</p> <p>\$1.88 Each</p>	 <p>Krums Silicone Lunch Container Assrt 1ct</p> <p>WAS \$9.14</p> <p>\$6.85 Each</p>	 <p>Gwoon Adult Hondenbrokken Kip/Lam 5000gr</p> <p>WAS \$10.85</p> <p>\$9.14 Each</p>	 <p>Arm & Hammer Liquid Laundry Detergent Assorted</p> <p>WAS \$11.42</p> <p>\$9.14 Each</p>

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