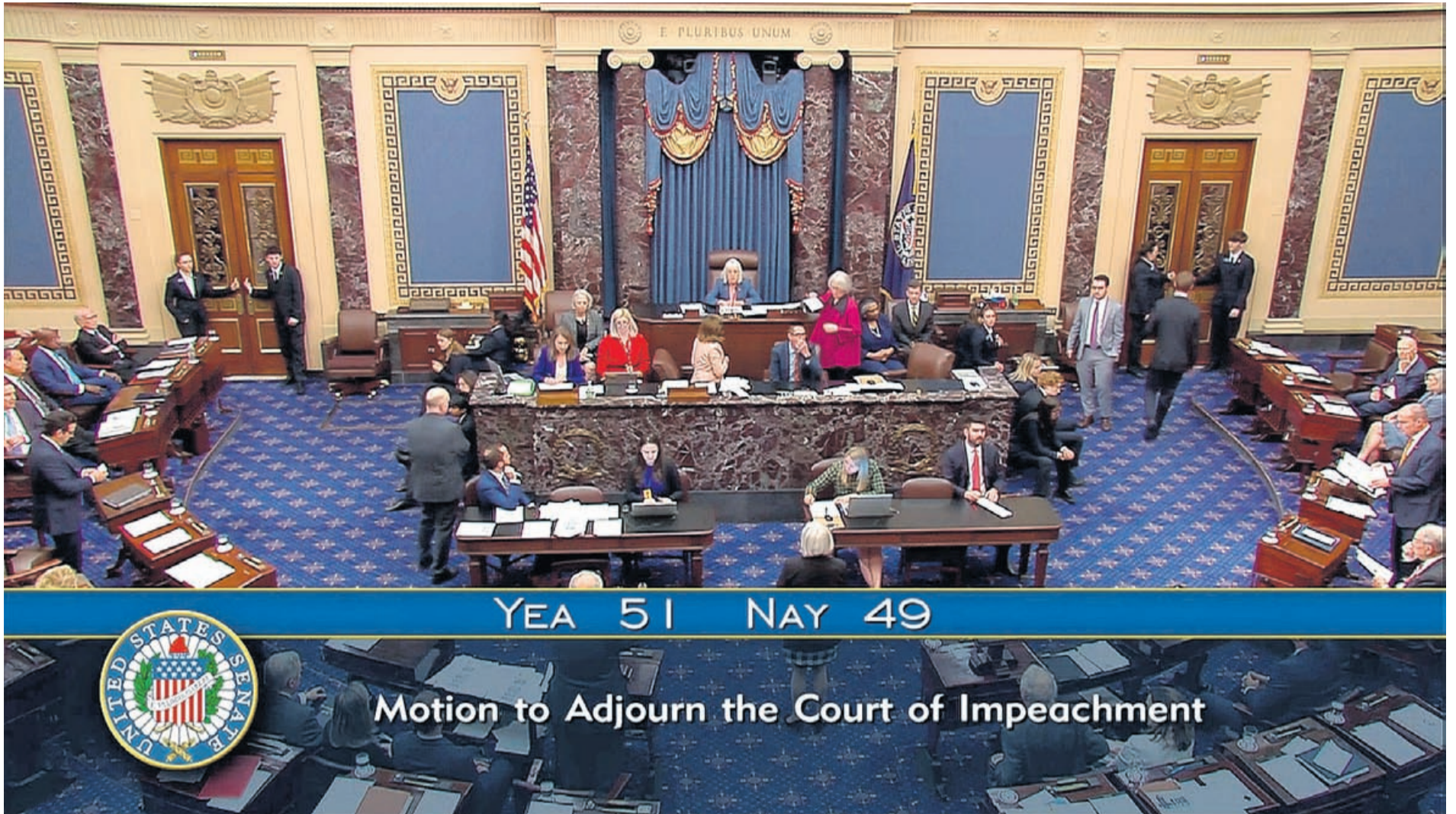




Senate dismisses two articles of impeachment against Homeland Security secretary, ends trial



In this image from video from Senate Television, Sen. Patty Murray, D-Wash., presides over the court of impeachment and prepares to swear senators in for the impeachment trial of Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas on the Senate floor at the U.S. Capitol, Wednesday, April 17, 2024, in Washington.

Associated Press
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By **MARY CLARE JALONICK**
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Senate has dismissed all impeachment charges against Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas, ending the House Republican push to remove the Cabinet secretary from office over his handling of the U.S.-Mexico border and ending his trial before arguments even began. Senators voted to dismiss both articles of impeachment and end the trial, with Democrats arguing that the articles were unconstitutional. The first article charged Mayorkas with "willful and systemic refusal to comply" with immigration law. The second article charged

Mayorkas with a "breach of trust" for saying the border was secure. The votes were 51-48 and 51-49, both along party lines. Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer said the House Republicans' case failed to meet "the high standard of high crimes and misdemeanors" and could set a dangerous precedent. "For the sake of the Senate's integrity and to protect impeachment for those rare cases we truly need it, senators should dismiss today's charges," said Schumer, D-N.Y., as he opened Wednesday's session. Senate Republicans had argued for a full impeachment trial after the House narrowly voted in February to impeach May-

orkas for his handling of the border, arguing in the two articles that he "willfully and systematically" refused to enforce immigration laws. The House vote was the first time in nearly 150 years that a Cabinet secretary was impeached. An outright dismissal of House Republicans' prosecution of Mayorkas, with no chance to argue the case, is an embarrassing defeat for House Republicans and embattled House Speaker Mike Johnson, R-La., who made the impeachment a priority. And it is likely to resonate politically for both Republicans and Democrats in a presidential election year when border security has been a top issue.

Republicans argue that President Joe Biden has been weak on the border as arrests for illegal crossings skyrocketed to more than 2 million people during the last two years of his term, though they have fallen from a record-high of 250,000 in December amid heightened enforcement in Mexico. Democrats say that instead of impeaching Mayorkas, Republicans should have accepted a bipartisan Senate compromise aimed at reducing the number of migrants who come into the U.S. illegally. House impeachment managers delivered the charges to the Senate on Tuesday, standing in the well of the Senate and reading them

aloud to a captive audience of senators. But they did not get a chance to present the case before the Senate dismissed it. Once the senators were sworn in on Wednesday, the chamber turned into the court of impeachment, with Democratic Sen. Patty Murray of Washington presiding. Murray is the president pro tempore of the Senate, or the senior-most member of the majority party who sits in for the vice president. Senators approached the front of the Senate in groups of four to sign an oath book that is stored in the National Archives.

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Senate dismisses two articles of impeachment against Homeland Security secretary, ends trial

Continued from Front

Schumer then called for the votes to dismiss the trial after Republicans rejected a proposed agreement for Senate debate time and several votes on GOP objections. Missouri Sen. Eric Schmitt said Democrats were "bulldozing 200 years of precedent" on impeachments by trying to dismiss the trial. Angry Republicans called for several votes to delay the inevitable final outcome, but none of them passed as all Democrats and three Independents held together.

Senate Republican Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., said "history will not judge this moment well."

"This process must not be abused," McConnell said. "It must not be short-circuited."

Still, Republicans similarly moved to dismiss former President Donald Trump's second impeachment trial in 2021, weeks after the Jan. 6, 2021, attack on the Capitol. All but five GOP senators — including McConnell — voted to end the trial, arguing it was unconstitutional because Trump had already left office.

As Johnson signed the articles Monday in preparation for sending them across the Capitol, he said Schumer should convene a trial to



Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas is sworn-in before the House Committee on Homeland Security during a hearing on "A Review of the Fiscal Year 2025 Budget Request for the Department of Homeland Security" on Capitol Hill in Washington, Tuesday, April 16, 2024.

Associated Press

"hold those who engineered this crisis to full account."

Schumer "is the only impediment to delivering accountability for the American people," Johnson said. "Pursuant to the Constitution, the House demands a trial." Even if the Senate held a trial, Republicans would not be able to win the support of the two-thirds of the Senate that is needed to convict and remove Mayorkas from office — Democrats control the Senate, 51-49, and they appear to

be united against the impeachment effort. Not one House Democrat supported it, either.

Mayorkas, who was in New York on Wednesday to launch a campaign for children's online safety, reiterated that he's focused on the work of his department. "The Senate is going to do what the Senate considers to be appropriate as that proceeds," he said. "I am here in New York City on Wednesday morning fighting online sexual exploita-

tion and abuse. I'm focused on our mission."

Johnson delayed sending the articles to the Senate for weeks while both chambers finished work on government funding legislation and took a two-week recess. Johnson had said he would send them to the Senate last week, but he punted again after Senate Republicans said they wanted more time to prepare. At a hearing with Mayorkas on Tuesday about President Joe Biden's budget request

for the department, some of the House impeachment managers previewed the arguments they would have made.

Tennessee Rep. Mark Green, the chairman of the House Homeland Security panel, told the secretary that he has a duty under the law to control and guard U.S. borders, and "during your three years as secretary, you have failed to fulfill this oath. You have refused to comply with the laws passed by Congress, and you have breached the public trust."

Mayorkas defended the department's efforts but said the nation's immigration system is "fundamentally broken, and only Congress can fix it."

The impeachment trial is the third in five years. Democrats impeached President Donald Trump twice, once over his dealings with Ukraine and the second time in the days after the Capitol attack. Trump was acquitted by the Senate both times.

If the Senate had moved to a trial on Mayorkas, senators would have been forced to sit in their seats for the duration, maybe weeks, while the House impeachment managers and lawyers representing Mayorkas made their cases. □

Biden announces help for federal employees who are military spouses and want to telework from abroad



First lady Jill Biden looks at President Joe Biden as he holds the pen he used to sign an executive order aimed to bolster job opportunities for military and veteran spouses during a visit to Fort Liberty, N.C., June 9, 2023

Associated Press

By DARLENE SUPERVILLE
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Joe Biden's administration on Wednesday announced new steps to improve a program that lets federal employees who also are military spouses telework from overseas.

The steps are part of Jill Biden's Joining Forces initiative to support military and veteran families.

The first lady was hosting a White House ceremony later Wednesday with Deputy Defense Secretary Kathleen Hicks and Deputy Secretary

of State Richard Verma, who were signing a permanent memorandum of agreement between their departments. The agreement calls on the departments to work together to ease approvals of remote work arrangements under the Domestic Employees Teleworking Overseas program. Such an agreement was one of several steps to help military and veteran spouses, caregivers and survivors that was laid out in an executive order the Democratic president signed last June at Fort Liberty in North Carolina.

The White House said the steps announced will help military spouses continue their careers and keep their families together when the servicemember in their household is stationed abroad.

Military spouses face a 21% unemployment rate that has not significantly changed over the past decade, according to information from the White House. More than 16,000 military, veteran and surviving spouses work across federal departments and agencies. □

U.S. reimposes oil sanctions on Venezuela as hopes for a fair presidential election fades

By JOSHUA GOODMAN and REGINA GARCIA CANO

Associated Press

MIAMI (AP) — The Biden administration on Wednesday reimposed crushing oil sanctions on Venezuela, admonishing President Nicolás Maduro's attempts to consolidate his rule just six months after the U.S. eased restrictions in a bid to support now fading hopes for a democratic opening in the OPEC nation.

A senior U.S. official, discussing the decision with reporters, said any U.S. company investing in Venezuela would have 45 days to wind down operations to avoid adding uncertainty to global energy markets. The official spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss U.S. policy deliberations.

In October, the U.S. granted Maduro's government relief from sanctions on its state-run oil, gas and mining sectors after it agreed to work with members of the opposition to hold a free and competitive presidential election this year.

While Maduro went on to schedule an election for July and invite international observers to monitor voting, his inner circle has used the ruling party's total control over Venezuela's institutions to undermine the agreement. Actions include



People wait in line to register to vote in the upcoming presidential election in Caracas, Venezuela, Tuesday, April 16, 2024.

blocking his main rival, ex-lawmaker Maria Corina Machado, from registering her candidacy or that of a designated alternative. Numerous government critics have also been jailed over the past six months, including several of Machado's aides.

Wednesday's actions essentially return U.S. policy to what it was prior to the agreement hammered out in the Caribbean island of Barbados, making it illegal for U.S. companies to do business with state-run oil producer Petróleos de Venezuela S.A., better known as

PDVSA, without a specific license from the U.S. Treasury Department.

It's unclear what impact the snapback would have on Venezuela's long floundering oil and gas industry or whether it will pressure Maduro to offer a more level electoral playing field. The initial reprieve was issued for only six months. Experts say that's not nearly enough time to attract the major capital investments required to revive long stagnant production in Venezuela, which sits atop the world's largest proven oil reserves.

supplies.

"The true test of the administration's seriousness about Venezuela is Chevron," said Elliott Abrams, who served as the Trump administration's special envoy to the crisis in Venezuela. "Leaving that license in place suggests the administration cares more about keeping oil prices down until the election, and about Chevron's profits, than about U.S. national security interests and freedom in Venezuela."

While signaling its growing frustration with Maduro, the Biden administration is unlikely to return to the failed "maximum pressure" campaign tried during the Trump administration, which only strengthened the leftist leader's hand, experts said. "It became impossible for the White House to pretend that the Maduro government in any way was complying or even intended to comply with the implicit deal in the partial lifting of sanctions," said Christopher Sabatini, a research fellow at the Chatham House in London.

"To have ignored that would have made the U.S. look weak and undermined its credibility in leveraging sanctions not just on Venezuela but elsewhere." □

Associated Press

However, by allowing Venezuela to send oil directly, instead of going through shady middlemen who charge a hefty fee, Maduro's government was able to boost oil revenues and raise badly needed cash during the six months of U.S. sanctions relief.

Additionally, the stiffening of sanctions doesn't directly impact Chevron, the last major U.S. oil driller in Venezuela, which was allowed to boost shipments thanks to a license it was issued in 2022 amid concerns that Russia's invasion of Ukraine would disrupt global energy

Supreme Court makes it easier to sue for job discrimination over forced transfers

By MARK SHERMAN

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Supreme Court on Wednesday made it easier for workers who are transferred from one job to another against their will to pursue job discrimination claims under federal civil rights law, even when they are not demoted or docked pay.

Workers only have to show that the transfer resulted in some, but not necessarily significant, harm to prove their claims, Justice Elena Kagan wrote for the court.

The justices unanimously revived a sex discrimination lawsuit filed by a St. Louis police sergeant after she was forcibly transferred, but retained her rank and pay.

Sgt. Jaytonya Muldrow had worked for

nine years in a plainclothes position in the department's intelligence division before a new commander reassigned her to a uniformed position in which she supervised patrol officers.

The new commander wanted a male officer in the intelligence job and sometimes called Muldrow "Mrs." instead of "sergeant," Kagan wrote.

Muldrow sued under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibits workplace discrimination on the basis of race, sex, religion and national origin. Lower courts had dismissed Muldrow's claim, concluding that she had not suffered a significant job disadvantage.

"Today, we disapprove that approach," Kagan wrote. □



The Supreme Court is seen in Washington, March 7, 2024.

Associated Press

Air National Guard changes in Alaska could affect national security, civilian rescues, staffers say

By **MARK THIESSEN**
Associated Press

ANCHORAGE, Alaska (AP)

— Kristin Paniptchuk's water broke on Christmas Eve at her home in the western Alaska Inupiat village of Shaktoolik, and then she began to bleed profusely. The local clinic in the tiny village of 200 people on the Bering Sea couldn't stop the bleeding or the contractions brought on by a baby that wasn't due for another two months. With harsh winds grounding an air ambulance from nearby Nome, medical staff called on their only other option: the Alaska Air National Guard. Five days after a military helicopter and then a cargo plane whisked Paniptchuk to an Anchorage hospital, she delivered her daughter Kinley, premature but healthy.

Over the past year-and-a-half, Paniptchuk, whose daughter is now a toddler, has been thinking about how lucky she was.

"I'm just really thankful that they were able to come and get me," she said. "Who knows what would have happened if they didn't?"

The Alaska Air National Guard conducted 159 such missions last year in largely roadless Alaska, many during vicious storms. In one instance, a military helicopter flew nearly 660 miles (1,062



In this image provided by the Alaska Air National Guard, Alaska Air National Guard Staff Sgt. Sharon Queenie with the 176th Air Defense Squadron speaks to students from her hometown of St. Mary's, Alaska, during a recruiting initiative at Andreafski High School, March 31, 2023.

Associated Press

kilometers) to pick up a pregnant woman with stomach pains from an Alaska island 2 miles (3 kilometers) from Russia's waters.

Last month, two airmen parachuted into another western Alaska community to care for a woman experiencing internal bleeding because it was the fastest way to get there. Now, those rescues could be drastically curtailed as personnel changes take an outside toll in a state more than twice the size of Texas, Guard leaders and members say. A nation-

wide move to balance the number of the top-earning positions among the Air National Guard across 54 state and territorial units means the Guard will soon convert many of Alaska's highly paid Active Guard and Reserve members who are essentially the equivalent of full-time active-duty military to dual status tech positions, a classification with lower wages, less appealing benefits and different duties. Many say they will quit rather than accept the changes.

The transition, leaders say, could cut the number of the

Alaska Guard's medical rescue missions to about 50 a year and also affect critical national security work in the state, located just across the Bering Strait from Russia. That work includes scanning for missile launches from Russia, North Korea and China; tracking spy balloons over U.S. air space; and flying a refueling plane for U.S. fighter jets that respond to Russian bombers near American airspace something that's already happened five times this year.

"If we're only watching the skies Monday through Fri-

day and they launch a missile on Saturday, well, that's failure," said Alaska Guard commander Brig. Gen. Brian Kile. Alaska is slated to convert 80 members, or about 4% of its 2,200 personnel, to tech positions the most in the U.S. The problem is that much of the Alaska Guard's unique role missions that require being on alert 24 hours a day, seven days a week can't be done by the tech positions, the Guard said.

"They're trying to make all of the units look equal, and the problem with that is they took no consideration of location and of mission into account when they did this," Kile said. "To do that for Alaska is incredibly impactful." Local leaders have met with National Guard leadership, hoping to change their minds about the cuts in Alaska.

In a statement to The Associated Press, the Air National Guard said the staffing reset was "driven by the desire to achieve equity across all units resourced by the same program."

In past statements, Guard officials have said they attempt to address staffing imbalances where some National Air Guard units have more of the highly paid Active Guard and Reserve members than others. Alaska has spent years adding these personnel to support its work. □



The New York State Capitol stands on March 13, 2023, in Albany, N.Y.

Associated Press

Cyberattack hits New York state government's bill drafting office

By **ANTHONY IZAGUIRRE**
Associated Press

ALBANY, N.Y. (AP) — The New York state Legislature's bill drafting office was hit with an apparent cyberattack, officials said Wednesday. The scope of the attack was not immediately clear but officials said the bill drafting system has been down since early Wednesday. The office is responsible for printing legislation for lawmakers at the state Capitol in Albany. The apparent cyberattack

came as the Legislature is moving to finalize its state budget bills, though Gov. Kathy Hochul said the incident isn't expected to dramatically delay the process. "We have to go back to the more antiquated system we had in place from 1994. You know this happened very, very early in the morning and so we've been on top of this," Hochul, a Democrat, said in a WNYC radio interview.

"Our understanding right now is that it will take a little

bit longer to deal with the legislative side of it because a lot of data is included in the computers," she said of the budget process.

Asked if the incident was a politically motivated attack, Hochul said "I don't know."

In a statement, Mike Murphy, a spokesman for the leader of the state Senate, said the bill drafting office "can still process work for the houses and we don't believe this will delay the overall process." □

19 are facing charges in what police in Canada say is the biggest gold theft in the country's history

By ROB GILLIES
Associated Press

TORONTO (AP) — Police said nine people are facing charges in what authorities are calling the biggest gold theft in Canadian history from Toronto's Pearson International airport a year ago.

Peel Regional Police said Wednesday that 6,600 gold bars worth more than 20 million Canadian dollars (\$14.5 million), and CA\$2.5 million (\$1.8 million) in foreign currencies were stolen. The gold was melted down and used to purchase illegal firearms, police said.

Those charged include an Air Canada warehouse employee and a former Air Canada manager who gave police a tour of cargo of the facility after the theft. A jewelry store owner is also charged.

"This story is a sensational one and which probably, we jokingly say, belongs in a Netflix series," Peel Regional Chief Nishan Duraiappah said.

Peel Regional Detective Sgt. Mike Mavity said the gold bars, weighing 419 ki-



Investigators stand during a press conference regarding Project 24K a joint investigation into the theft of gold from Pearson International Airport, in Brampton, Ontario, on Wednesday, April 17, 2024.

lograms (923 pounds), and foreign currency, ordered from a refinery in Zurich, Switzerland, were transported in the haul of an Air Canada flight on April 17 last year.

He said that late afternoon a truck driver arrived at the airline's cargo warehouse with a fraudulent bill that

was provided to an airline warehouse attendant.

Mavity said a bill for seafood that was picked up the day before was used to pick up the gold. The duplicate bill was printed off at the Air Canada warehouse, he said.

"They needed people with in Air Canada to facilitate

this theft," Mavity said in front of the truck police say was used in the theft.

Mavity said police are searching for the Air Canada manager who gave police a tour of the facility in the days after the theft. He said that manager left his job last summer and said they have an idea of where

he is. Mavity said some of the suspects were known to police and some were not. He said they seized six crudely made bracelets made of gold.

"I don't think I ever imagined they would have to deal with the largest gold heist in Canadian history," said Patrick Brown, the mayor of Brampton, Ontario. "It's almost out of an 'Ocean's Eleven' movie or CSI." Air Canada employee Pampal Sidhu, 54, from Brampton, Ontario, jewelry store owner Ali Raza, 37, from Toronto, Amit Jalota, 40, a Oakville, Ontario resident, Ammad Chaudhary, 43, from Georgetown, Ontario and Prasath Paramalingam, 35, from Brampton are among those that have been arrested. Mavity said they have been released on bail conditions and will be in court at a later date.

Mavity said the truck driver that allegedly picked up the gold, Durante King-Mclean, a 25-year-old from Brampton, is currently in custody in the U.S. on firearms and trafficking related charges. □

Associated Press

10 detained in large-scale raid in Germany targeting human smuggling gang that exploits visa permits

By KIRSTEN GRIESHABER
Associated Press

BERLIN (AP) — German authorities conducted a large-scale raid against an international human smuggling gang early Wednesday, police said in a statement.

More than 1,000 police officers searched dozens of homes, stores and offices across western and southern Germany and detained 10 suspects, including two lawyers.

A total of 38 suspected gang members, as well as 147 other people who allegedly paid to be smuggled by it, are being investigated, German news agency dpa reported. The two lawyers, 42 and 46 years old and from the Co-

logne area, are the main suspects, federal police in nearby Sankt Augustin said. The names of the suspects were not given, in line with German privacy rules.

The suspects are accused of having illegally taken advantage of special German immigration rules reserved for skilled foreign workers to obtain residency permits for around 350 mostly Chinese nationals who don't meet the needed criteria in exchange for hundreds of thousands of euros (dollars). Through their law firms, the two main suspects are said to have recruited wealthy foreign nationals for smuggling mainly from China but also from Arab countries. Police said clients paid the law firms from

30,000 to 350,000 euros for illegal help with visas.

The suspected lawyers and their helpers allegedly used the money to set up fake companies, finance alleged residences and falsify alleged wage payments, keeping "not inconsiderable amounts" to enrich themselves, dpa reported. The false residence permits were obtained from immigration offices in the western towns of Kerpen and Solingen, as well as Rhine-Erft and Dueren counties. One of the ten detained suspects is an city employee from Dueren, who was allegedly bribed to participate in the scam, dpa said. Raids were carried out in the states of North Rhine-Westphalia, Schleswig-



Police officers stand near a building that is being searched in Solingen, Germany, Wednesday April 17, 2024.

Associated Press

Holstein, Hesse, Rhineland-Palatinate, Baden-Wuerttemberg and Bavaria, Hamburg and Berlin where police seized assets and collected evidence.

"So far, extensive evidence and not inconsiderable assets have been secured, including around 210,000 euros in cash," the authorities said. □

Envoy says U.S. is determined to monitor North Korean nukes, through U.N. or otherwise

By **KIM TONG-HYUNG**
Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — The United States and its allies are discussing options “both inside and outside the U.N. system” to create a new mechanism for monitoring North Korea over its nuclear weapons program, the American ambassador to the United Nations said Wednesday.

Russia last month vetoed a U.N. resolution in a move that effectively abolished monitoring by U.N. experts of Security Council sanctions against North Korea, which prompted Western accusations that Moscow was acting to shield its arms purchases from North Korea to fuel its war in Ukraine.

“I look forward to engaging with both the Republic of Korea and Japan, but like-minded (countries) as well, on trying to develop options both inside the U.N. as well as outside the U.N. The point here is that we cannot allow the work that the panel of experts were doing to lapse,” U.S. Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield told a news conference in Seoul, using the formal name for South Korea. Thomas-Greenfield



U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Linda Thomas-Greenfield speaks during a press conference at the American Diplomacy House in Seoul Wednesday, April 17, 2024.

didn't provide specific details about U.S. discussions with allies and other partners, including whether an alternative monitoring regime would more likely be established through the U.N. General Assembly or with an independent entity outside of the U.N.

Thomas-Greenfield met with South Korean Foreign Minister Cho Tae-yul on Monday and they discussed unspecified “next steps to

ensure a continuation of independent and accurate reporting” of North Korea's illicit weapons development activities, according to her office.

Thomas-Greenfield said it was clear that Russia and China, which abstained from voting on the U.N. resolution vetoed by Moscow, will continue to try to block international efforts to maintain monitoring of U.N. sanctions against North Korea.

She criticized Russia for violating those sanctions with its alleged arms purchases from North Korea, and China for protecting the North from being held accountable.

Moscow and Beijing have thwarted U.S.-led efforts to tighten U.N. sanctions on North Korea over its ramped-up ballistic missile testing since 2022, underscoring a divide between permanent Security Coun-

cil members that deepened over Russia's war on Ukraine. “I don't expect that they will cooperate or agree with any efforts that we make to find another path, but that is not going to stop us from finding that path moving forward,” Thomas-Greenfield said.

Thomas-Greenfield also briefly addressed questions about tensions in the Middle East. When asked about the Palestinian Authority's request to have full U.N. membership, she said a U.N. resolution in support of that request would not contribute to finding a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

“President Biden has said categorically that we support a two-state solution for addressing the situation in the Middle East, where Palestinians will have a state of their own and Israel is secure in their state, and we are working on the ground to get to that place as quickly as possible,” she said.

“We do not see that doing a resolution in the Security Council will necessarily get us to a place where we can find a ... two-state solution moving forward,” she added. □

Associated Press

U.N. report points to yawning gap of inequality in sexual and reproductive health worldwide

GENEVA (AP) — A new study says an African woman is roughly 130 times more likely to die from pregnancy and childbirth complications than a woman in Europe or North America, the U.N. population fund reported Wednesday as it decried widening inequality in sexual and reproductive health and rights worldwide.

UNFPA's latest “State of World Population” report also estimates that nearly 500 maternal deaths per day occur in countries with humanitarian crises or conflicts, and shows that women of African descent in the Americas are more likely to

die giving birth than white women.

“Sweeping global gains in sexual and reproductive

health and rights over the last thirty years are marred by an ugly truth millions of women and girls have

not benefited because of who they are or where they were born,” the fund said in a statement.

UNFPA executive director Dr. Natalia Kanem said the unintended pregnancy rate has declined by nearly one-fifth since 1990 and the maternal death rate has dropped by more than one-third since 2000.

But “inequalities within our societies and health systems are widening, and we have not adequately prioritized reaching those furthest behind,” she said. Improvements in health care access have mostly benefited wealthier women and members of ethnic groups

with better access to care, the fund said.

Kanem hailed some progress: More than 160 countries have passed laws against domestic violence, and “legislation against LGBTQIA+ sexuality” that was once widespread has been on the retreat. Now only one-third of countries have such laws.

While she credited “the world's agreement” that led to such gains, Kanem also warned: “Human reproduction is being politicized.

The rights of women, girls and gender diverse people are the subject of increasing pushback.” □



A woman carries a her baby and a bucket of water in Harare on April 6, 2020.

Associated Press



Attention: Detour

J.E. Irausquin Boulevard

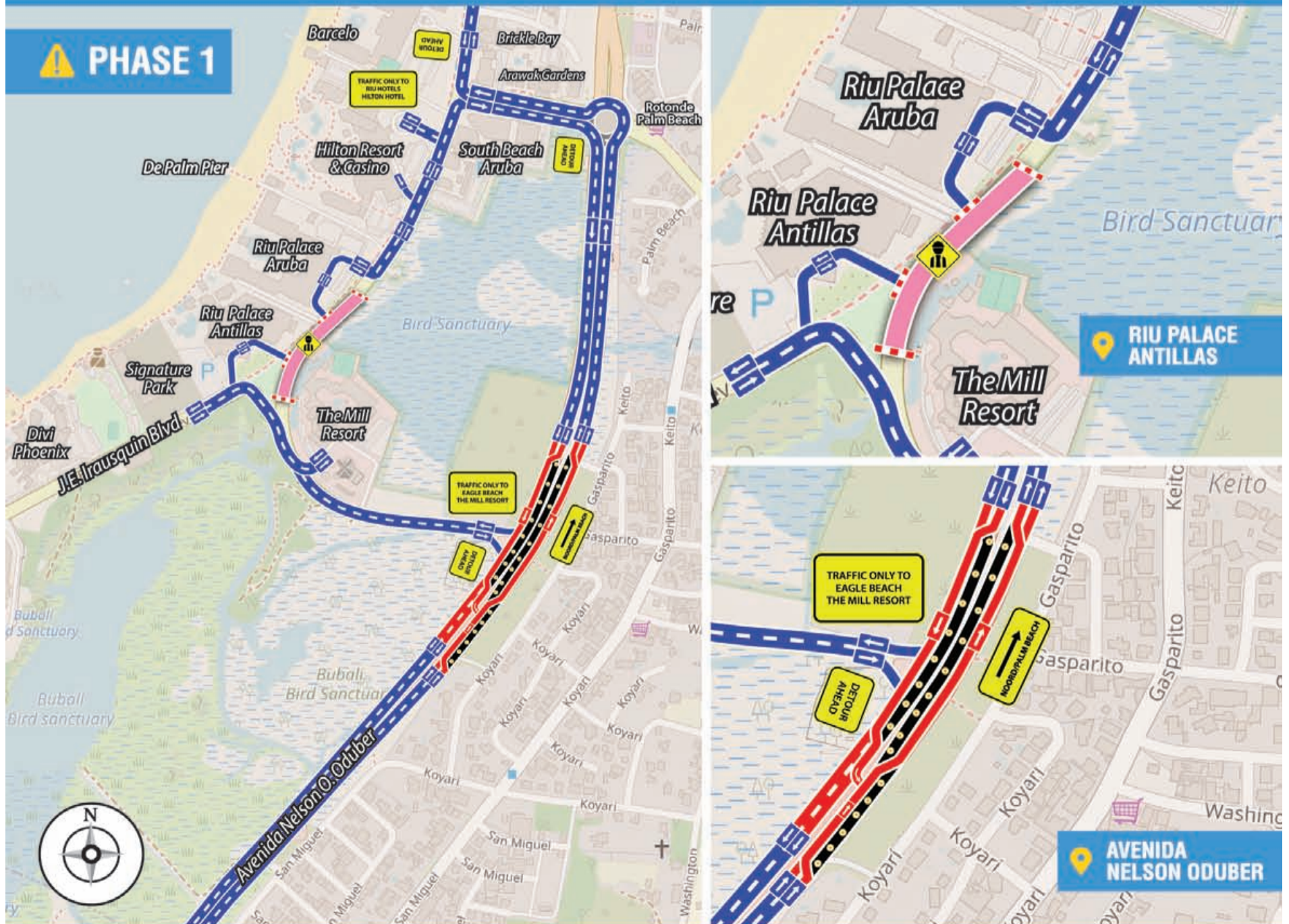


Upcoming Monday, April 22nd, 2024, the road reconstruction project at High Rise Hotels: Phase 1 will commence. Phase 1 involves the area in front of Riu Palace Antillas.

The project will be executed in 4 different Phases, and Phase 1 will have a duration of 7 weeks.

J.E. Irausquin Blvd. will only be accessible to workers and tourists to reach their destination.

Motorists will need to detour onto Avenida Nelson Oduber. The detour will be indicated with signs and traffic barricades.



DOW and the Police are asking the people of Aruba and all motorists, to be aware of this detour. We apologize for inconveniences that may arise and thank you for your understanding and cooperation.



Papillon: Where Culinary Tradition Sparks with Timeless Elegance



Tucked away in the vibrant heart of the Village for over a decade and a half, Papillon isn't just a restaurant; it's a culinary adventure waiting to unfold. Picture this: a sanctuary where the flavors of the French Caribbean dance harmoniously with classic French fare, all set against the backdrop of a movie-inspired ambiance that's as enchanting as it is welcoming.

Step through the doors of Papillon, and you're not just stepping into a dining establishment; you're stepping into a world where sophistication embraces you like an old friend. The decor, a homage to the allure of the iconic film, casts a spell of intimacy and comfort, urging you to settle in and relish every moment. Here, dining isn't just about sustenance; it's about indulging in an experience meticulously crafted to ignite your senses.

At the heart of Papillon's magic lies its menu – a symphony of flavors orchestrated by culinary artisans. Imagine savoring the decadent richness of foie gras or the sublime delicacy of frog legs, each dish a love letter to tradition

infused with a dash of innovation. And oh, the spectacle of the Dover sole being expertly prepared tableside! It's culinary theater at its finest, leaving you spellbound with every bite.

But wait, there's more! Enter the realm of the Chef's Table, a weekly extravaganza led by the maestro himself, Executive Chef Juan Ludeña. Prepare to be whisked away on a six-course odyssey, each dish meticulously paired with wines handpicked by the esteemed Maitre d' Michael Otten. It's a soirée reserved for those who truly appreciate the artistry of gastronomy – an exquisite symphony for the palate.

And if that wasn't enough to tantalize your taste buds, behold the newest addition to the Papillon family: L'Avenue – a Belgian bistro nestled in the sun-kissed paradise of Palm Beach Aruba. Here, amidst the swaying palms and azure waters, Belgian cuisine takes center stage. From plump mussels to heavenly Brussels waffles, every bite is a journey through the flavors of Belgium, set against a backdrop of laid-back luxury.

In essence, Papillon isn't just a restaurant; it's an oasis for epicurean explorers. It's where passion meets refinement, where every dish is a masterpiece waiting to be savored, and every moment is a celebration of the finer things in life. So whether you're craving the warmth of French Caribbean delights or eager to embark on a culinary voyage through Belgium, Papillon and L'Avenue invite you to join them on an unforgettable journey for the senses. Bon appétit! ☐



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Visit the natural bridges of Aruba!

(Oranjestad)—After you've visited the Alto Vista Church, the Bushiribana Gold Mill Ruins and the mini natural pool that is located right next to it, you're next up around the northern coast line must be the Natural Bridge. Once the largest natural bridge in the Caribbean, this bridge has been a tourist attraction for many years.

The bridge was formed during thousands of years, cut and crafted by the wild waves that crash into the coral stone walls of the coast. Before its collapse, this bridge measured 30 meters in length and 7 meters in height, making it the biggest natural bridge in the Caribbean at the time. For many years, this site was also a frequently visited

beach, as the bridge had a small opening through which the water would flow into the tiny beach.

Unfortunately in 2005, the bridge collapsed, and the little beach dried up. Despite this, this site remained a tourist attraction, with many visitors walking along the coral cliffs of the bridge to see the spectacular view of the northern coastline and the Caribbean Sea. Visitors can also still visit the souvenir shop on the left of the bridge entrance.

While the natural bridge no longer is functional, there is now a smaller natural bridge very close.

This bridge is often called the "Baby Bridge" or "Daughter Bridge". □



Current state of the Natural Bridge



The Baby Natural Bridge



The Natural Bridge pre-collapse

Feeling parched? Grab refreshment by the side of the road!



(Oranjestad)—Touring the island in the blistering heat can leave one feeling rather thirsty and looking to cool off. Luckily there are a few stands along the roads of Aruba that can offer you just what you need: a nice, refreshing beverage!

These "coconut stands" can be found at several locations on the island, where you can cool off with delicious smoothies, drinks, snacks, and of course, fresh coconuts! Perfect during family outings around the island,

these stands can be found in the following locations:

- Near the red Anchor in San Nicolas
- On the Linear Park in Oranjestad (in front of airport runway)
- At the California Light House hill
- Bushiribana Gold Mill Ruin
- Bushiri Beach (Near the Ling & Song Supermarket) □

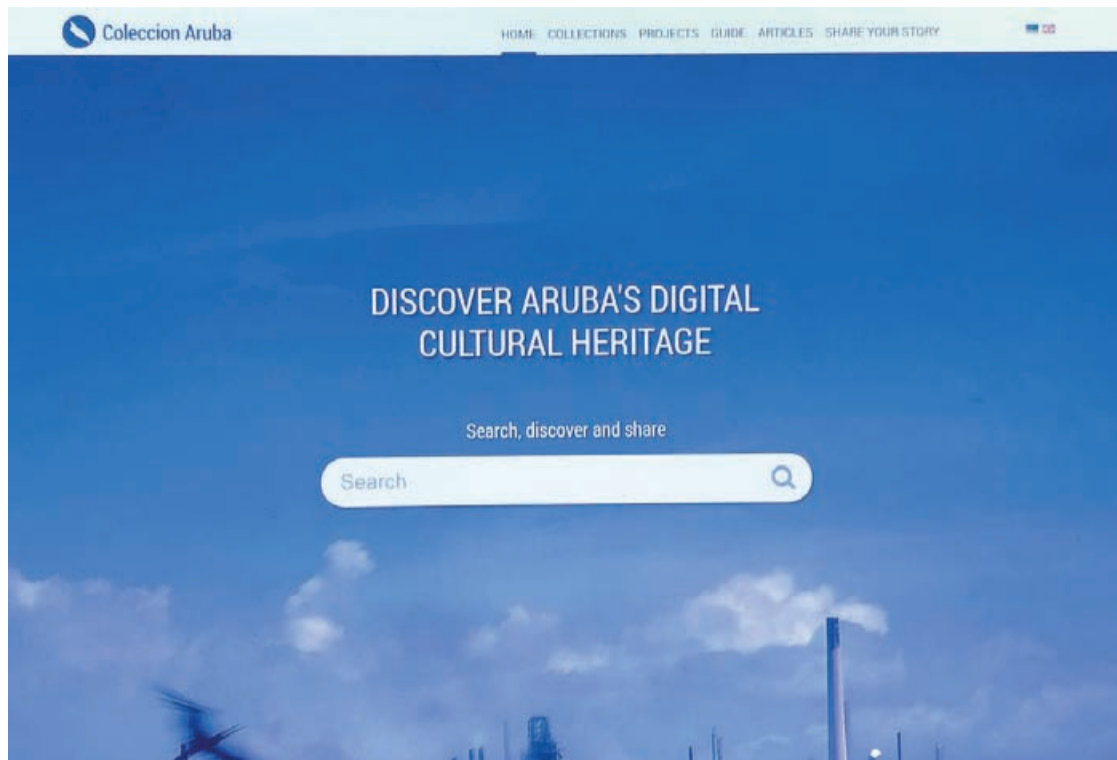


The Aruba Collection offers a glance into Aruban history, one click away!

(Oranjestad)—This week marked a huge accomplishment for Aruban historians and archivists, as the National Library of Aruba (BNA), announced that they, in collaboration with The Internet Archive, have created an online platform in which people from all around the globe can access the history and culture of Aruba. Containing over 100,000 files so far, the Aruba Collection holds documents, photos, and even 3D images that date back hundreds—or even thousands of years.

Aruba Today sat down with Mr. Peter Scholing from the BNA and Edrick Croes from the national archives of Aruba (ANA) to talk about their mission regarding the (digital) Aruban collection, and the types of documents they currently have and continue to receive throughout the years from all around the world.

There are thousands of different files in the Aruba Collection, including documents ranging from earlier settlements in the colonial era, slavery on the islands, the families that have come and gone throughout hundreds of years, to recipes on traditional Aruban cooking, digital copies of old (and discontinued) newspapers, and even pic-



tures submitted from the time when the first refinery LAGO opened on Aruba, and the island saw a boom in migration from different parts of the Caribbean and the US.

Scholing and Croes mentioned that one of the main challenges about this project was the fact that historical documents and stories about Aruba have been scattered all over the world over the past hundreds of years, and so it has been a continuous effort to search for those lost stories and to link missing pieces to incomplete puzzles. For them it has also been an adventure at the very least, as

they continue to uncover more random pieces of lost records—some even by accident.

Through collaborative efforts with 11 separate entities, the collection database was set up to offer the visitor an accessible experience navigating the rich deposit of the database. The database acts as a hub where materials and documents housed under these different entities can be found right under one website domain. These entities include the BNA, ANA, UNOCA, the national museum (MANA), Monumentenfonds, University of Aruba and more.

A few years ago, the BNA campaigned for people to bring their own collection of old documents or photos through their program called "Trece" (bring) that could be stored in the archives of Aruba. This way it creates a pathway for the new generation to feel more connected to their cultural heritage and also inspire them to keep preserving the fragile, yet important files of our island's stories.

The archivists have also emphasized about the contribution that tourists have had on the growth of the collection, as many visitors

have shared their collections of old photos of relatives that have either visited or work at the refinery during the early 1920/30s, offering a different glance of the Aruban landscape, and taking us back in time to a place where Aruba was experiencing its first stages of industrial development.

3D scans of ancient artifacts are also a project that is currently being developed at the BNA. In collaboration with 1403 with the Brenchie's lab, they started creating 3D images of ancient artifacts, offering an entire view of the object from all angles. This can be found as well on the website.

There are hundreds of documents that you can find and read, all ranging in languages like Papiamentu, Dutch, English, and Spanish. The national library is interested in digitalizing all of their files, as well as those found in the Netherlands. This was especially important during the pandemic, when they realized that many people were starting to use their already existing digital database all over the world.

The collection can be found on www.coleccion.aw

Aruba to me

ORANJESTAD — You are back and 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, Instagram and Facebook page! Thank you for supporting our free newspaper, we strive to make you a happy reader every day again.

For today we received a lovely message from our awesome visitors John and Stephanie Hart from Lumberton, NJ, USA.

They wrote to us saying: "Our 2nd home away from home! 30 years and counting..."

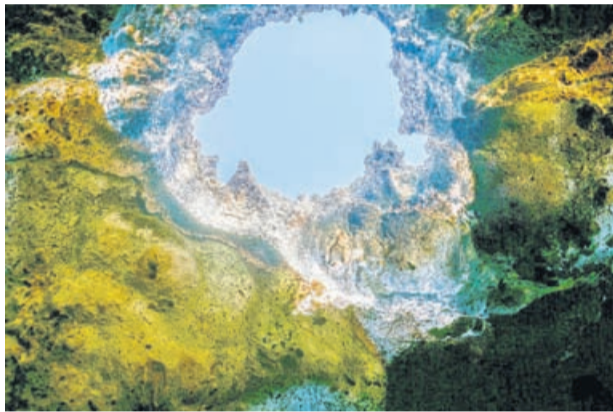
Thank you for sending us this wonderful message sharing what Aruba means to you with us and our readers! ☑



Today is going to be a good day

(Oranjestad)—Here's why: Aruba Today collected some things to do BEYOND the beach. Yes, we know. Aruba, located 15 miles north of Venezuela in the warm waters of the southern Caribbean, is home to beautiful white-sand beaches, 82-degree days, and thus ideal for the perfect beach day. But we are also blessed with some of the warmest people in the world and our island is 19.6 miles long and 6 miles across, with a total area of 70 square miles. Bit more to discover than the white stretch on the coastline we say. Let's mention some of these hidden gems.

Nature Calls



The Arikok National park is worth the ride. We love the hikes that are guided by the park's rangers whose job is to maintain trails and protect natural resources. The flora and fauna are beautiful and the historical sites tell you about the island's indigenous roots. The guided tours are even free of charge. If you are not up to walking, you can drive through the park, one way or another this park is a great place to spend an entire day. Cruising through the landscape you end up at some of the most stunning beaches like Dos Playa or Daimara Beach. In Total the park consists of 7907 acres protected nature with a richness of animals living in it. The Aruban whiptail lizard (cododo), Aruban cat eye snake (santanero) and endangered rattle snake (cascabel) are just some of them, you can also admire these close in the park's Visitors' Center. For more information, visit the website www.arubanationalpark.org

Philip's Animal Garden



To stay with the animals, let's hop to an amazing place. Something different to do, an experience that is to be enjoyed by people of all ages. Welcome to Philip's Animal Garden. We are not talking about a zoo here, this is actually a sanctuary for all types of creatures, from

horses to peacocks, kangaroos to turtles, monkeys, goats, and many, many more different species. The place was founded in 2009 and it is the only organization rescuing and rehabilitating exotic animals in Aruba, which has resulted in an amazing collection of these animals. They provide a suitable living environment for all the rescued animals. Up until now the owner, Philip, has built this shelter with his own efforts; building all the cages from scratch, designing all structures and welding them with his own bare hands. His goal is to upgrade the facilities to a world-class animal shelter with veterinary care and round-the-clock staffs. With the input from the Aruban community and visitors they provide the best care for these animals. Please check out their website for more information: www.philipsanimalgarden.com.

The Lighthouse



No, you would not think of this as a hidden gem. The California Lighthouse is actually one of the most known highlights in Aruba and many repeated guests most probably took the ride uphill already. But, there is a significant change to this tower. Since September 2016 you can climb the top. In 2015 Stichting Monumentenfonds started the restoration of the California Lighthouse. The project finished in September 2016 and the Lighthouse is now open for visitors to enjoy the beautiful view from the top. The construction of the California Lighthouse started in 1915. The name 'California' came from a vessel of the West India Company and Pacific Steamship Co. called 'California' that shipwrecked in the area in 1891. Therefore they came up with the idea of building a lighthouse that could indicate the island's eastern tip to ships with its light. www.arubalighthouse.com will give you more information.

Kayak in the Mangroves



Mangel Halto at Savaneta is definitely a place not to miss out on. The beautiful beach with the natural mangroves is simply a beauty, but if you

are into a more active way to enjoy the nature: take a kayak. While you are doing some workout -as it might get a little windy and rough-, you will see the island from a different perspective. You can even make a stop to do some snorkeling at the reef. Its fun, it's healthy and for sure something else. There are several companies that offer kayak tours, we had good experience with The Shack Kayak Tours Aruba, find them on Facebook.

Take an "off-road" sightseeing tour



A must-do activity on the island is for sure taking an off-road sightseeing tour. If you have a rented car, you can drive through the north-eastern side of Aruba and explore the natural pools, caves, rock formations and gorgeous view of the Atlantic Ocean. To access most of these sights, like the natural pool (Conchi) and the Guadirikiri and Fontein caves, you must enter through the Arikok National Park and buy a day pass. Then you drive up the rugged road that leads you through the white dunes, caves and along the wind turbines. Other locations, like the Ayo and Casibari Rock formation are situated more in the center of the island, and are free for guests, 24 hours a day.

Go for a shopping spree in the city center



Need a new bathing suit? Head to the city center of Oranjestad, where there is countless of different stores—both high end and more affordable—that can offer you the service you deserve! Local shopping stores often offer a more affordable price, and have a variety of clothes, shoes, bathing suites, purses and more. Along the Royal Plaza strip, there are numerous jewelry stores with great quality jewelry. In the Renaissance mall, you can shop high-end luxury brands, like Dolce & Gabbana, Kate Spade, Louis Vuitton and more.

Around the high-rise hotel area near Palm Beach, the Paseo Herencia Mall contain a variety of shopping stores, restaurants, small food stands and even a movie theater! □

CROSSWORD

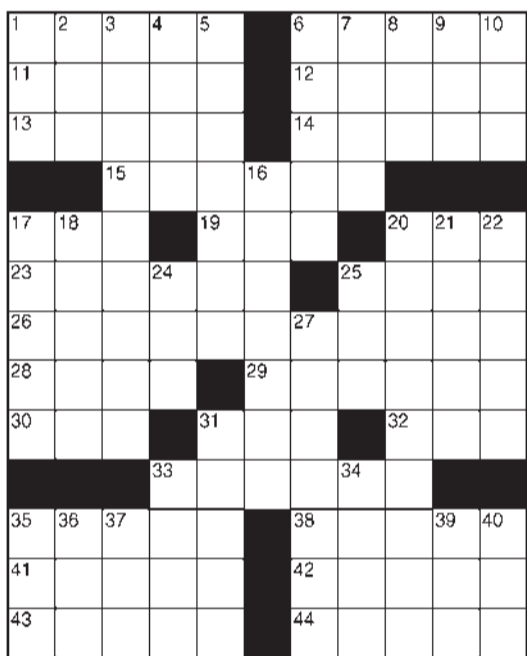
By THOMAS JOSEPH

- ACROSS**
- 44 Car of the '50s
 - 1 Reading aids
 - 6 Fleet-based
 - 11 Figure of speech
 - 12 Corundum, for one
 - 13 Polynesian nation
 - 14 Garden pests
 - 15 Fin type
 - 17 Constant complainer
 - 19 Quaker's pronoun
 - 20 Bowler, e.g.
 - 23 Slow tempo
 - 25 Skin opening
 - 26 Quadrennial event
 - 28 Pub pints
 - 29 Gift
 - 30 Capt.'s subordinates
 - 31 Turkish topper
 - 32 Methane, e.g.
 - 33 Movies
 - 35 Deck extra
 - 38 Eastern monks
 - 41 "Hello" singer
 - 42 Deceive
 - 43 Natural gifts
- DOWN**
- 1 Set afire
 - 2 Bustle
 - 3 Manipulation of a sort
 - 4 Possum of the comics
 - 5 Candy in a multi-colored roll
 - 6 "Forget it!"
 - 7 Skating jump
 - 8 Be a contender
 - 9 Throw in
 - 10 Trumpeter Elgart
 - 16 Abbreviate
 - 17 Said with a twang
 - 18 Minor no more
 - 20 Half of a team's schedule
 - 21 Concert spot
 - 22 Midterms, e.g.
 - 24 Baseball team VIPs
 - 25 Bud
 - 27 Long-horned grazer
 - 31 Cans
 - 33 Ireland native
 - 34 Hotel worker
 - 35 Boxing poke
 - 36 Exalted work
 - 37 Film-maker Burns
 - 39 Ended a fast
 - 40 Musical note



Yesterday's answer

- 18 Minor no more
- 20 Half of a team's schedule
- 21 Concert spot
- 22 Midterms, e.g.
- 24 Baseball team VIPs
- 25 Bud
- 27 Long-horned grazer
- 31 Cans
- 33 Ireland native
- 34 Hotel worker
- 35 Boxing poke
- 36 Exalted work
- 37 Film-maker Burns
- 39 Ended a fast
- 40 Musical note



4-18

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.

4-18

CRYPTOQUOTE

UFV JNKZUX YUXLK QVUX UFV
LCDLVNLMYL, GMZ UFV
LCDLVNLMYL YUXLK QVUX
UFV QUONKWM LKK

— KGYWG IFNAVR

Yesterday's Cryptoquote: DO NOT IMPOSE ON OTHERS WHAT YOU YOURSELF DO NOT DESIRE. — CONFUCIUS

Cruise Schedule

TUE	09	SYMPHONY OF THE SEAS	08.00	21.00	I	1
WED	10	CARNIVAL MAGIC	07.00	15.00	B	1
		NORWEGIAN PRIMA	10.00	20.00	C	1
		MARELLA VOYAGER	08.00	20.00	I	1
THU	11	MSC DIVINA	07.00	14.00	B	1
		RHAPSODY OF THE SEAS	08.00	18.00	C	1
FRI	12	CARNIVAL PRIDE	09.00	22.00	C	1
		NORWEGIAN SKY	10.00	20.00	I	1
SAT	13	NORWEGIAN JADE	07.00	20.00	C	1
TUE	16	RHAPSODY OF THE SEAS	08.00	21.00	B	1
		CARNIVAL HORIZON	09.00	22.00	C	1
WED	17	ODYSSEY OF THE SEAS	08.00	23.00	C	1
SAT	20	NORWEGIAN PRIMA	10.00	19.00	C	1

Helpful tips for your stay on Aruba

(Oranjestad)—When traveling to another country, especially for the first time, it is always better to be over-prepared than under-prepared. That is why we have a list of basic—but important—information that we think may come in handy to Aruba's visitors.

lets used on the island: type A with two flat prongs; type B with two flat and one grounding prong, and on occasion, type F with two round prong and two earth clips on the side. However, Type A is most commonly found in homes and establishments.

Supermarket hours



Supermarket hours may vary depending on where you are staying on the island. Generally though, most supermarkets are open from 8am to 9 or 10pm, Monday through Saturday. On Sundays, supermarkets generally close earlier; mostly around 2pm.

Electrical power



Aruba generally operates on 110V to 127V supply voltage and 60Hz. There are also three types of out-

Drinking water



The water that flows through the sinks of every house, hotels and other establishments is distilled and perfectly safe to drink. Aruba's drinking water exceeds WHO's international standards for water quality, so there is no need to buy bottled water from the store.

Safety



Since February 2024, Aruba has been categorized as the safest country in the Caribbean by The Telegraph, and many tourist that visit have often told us how they feel safe to explore the island or walk around at night. However, rare incidents do occur, so keep yourself and your belongings safe.

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 Week 8/Unit 1113 (19k);
 Week 8/Unit 1409 (19k);
 Week 10/Unit 1207 (19k);
 Week 13/Unit 1509 (14k); and,
 Week 14/Unit 1308 (14k).
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 Platinum season
 2 Bedroom Ocean side \$ 25 K
 2 Bedroom Ocean Front\$50 K
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Marriott Surf Club
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 Gold season
 2 Bedroom Ocean View \$ 11 K
 2 Bedroom Ocean side \$12 K
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 Johnnypaesch@gmail.com

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 Eagle Beach
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 Room 1216
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 johnnypaesch@gmail.com

Casa del Mar
 Eagle beach
 1 BR WK 13 room 1134 \$7800
 1 BR WK 13 room 1129 \$7800
 1 BR WK 14 room 1430 \$8400
 1 BR WK 14 room 1232 \$7200
 1 BR WK 14 room 1333 \$8400
 Call :011-297-630-1307
 johnnypaesch@gmail.com

Casa del Mar
 Eagle beach
 1 BR WK 15 room 1128 \$4020
 1 BR WK 15 room 1331 \$4500
 1 BR WK 15 room 1334 \$4500
 1 BR WK 15 room 1328 \$4500
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 johnnypaesch@gmail.com

Divi Village
 Eagle beach
 Studio week 13 room # 6206
 Studio week 14 room # 6205
 19 weeks remaining on each
 Price : \$ 7 K each
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 johnnypaesch@gmail.com

Divi Village
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 2 BR WK 13 room 3512
 Building C with 28 weeks
 remaining
 Contract expire :2036
 Non Mandatory maintenance fee
 Price :\$10 K
 Call : 011-297-630-1307
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Condominium
 Blue Residence
 Eagle Beach
 2 BR 2 Bath unit 112 \$615 K
 3 BR 4 bath PH 1-2 \$1,255,000
 3 BR 4 bath PH 1-3 \$1,196,000
 4 BR 4 bath TH 4 \$1,159,650
 2 BR 2 bath unit 536 \$ 710K
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 johnnypaesch@gmail.com

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 Eagle beach
 2 BR 2 bath unit 513 \$785,400
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 Coral Shell
 Niki beach
 3 BR 3,5 bath GF-A \$1,916,556
 3 BR 3,5 bath GF-C \$1,973,111
 2 BR 4 Bath 1-E ,2E \$1,398,400
 1 BR 1 Bath 1 G \$520,667
 2 BR 2 Bath 1 H \$ 841,333
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Property land
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 652 m2
 Price :\$120 K
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 johnnypaesch@gmail.com

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 Sero preto san nicolaas
 2 BR 1 Bath can go 2 sd floor
 Land 326 m2 construction 89 m2
 Ocean view
 Price : \$210K turning key
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 johnnypaesch@gmail.com

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 6 apartment under construction
 3 down 3 upstairs ocean view
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Condominium
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 With apartment
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San Nicolas

Imsan 24 hours
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 San Lucas:Tel. 584 5119

OTHER

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 Urgent Care 586 0448
 Walk-In Doctor's Clinic
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EMERGENCY

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Oranjestad	527 3140
Noord	527 3200
Sta. Cruz	527 2900
San Nicolas	584 5000
Police Tipline	11141
Ambulancia	911
Fire Dept.	115
Red Cross	582 2219

TAXI SERVICES

Taxi Tax	587 5900
Prof. Taxi	588 0035
Taxi D.T.S.	587 2300
Taxi Serv. Aruba	583 3232
A1 Taxi Serv.	280 2828

TRAVEL INFO

Aruba Airport	524 2424
American Airlines	582 2700
Avianca	588 0059
Jet Blue	588 2244
Surinam	582 7896

AID FOUNDATIONS

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Narcotics Anonymous
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Fundacion Contra Violencia
 Relacional Tel. 583 5400

Centre for Diabetes
 Tel. 524 8888

Child Abuse Prevention
 Tel. 582 4433

Quota Club Tel. 525 2672

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Phone Directory Tel. 118



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'I was afraid for my life' Orlando Bloom puts himself in peril for new TV series

By MARK KENNEDY
AP Entertainment Writer
NEW YORK (AP) — Orlando Bloom wanted to test himself for his latest adventure project. Not by eating something gross or visiting a new country. He wanted to risk death — with not one but three extreme sports. The Peacock series "Orlando Bloom: To the Edge" sees the "Pirates of the Caribbean" star shoot through the sky thousands of feet above the ground, dive into a deep sinkhole and rock climb hundreds of feet. "While I was at moments scared for my life during the show, having come out the other end of it I feel way more capable," Bloom tells The Associated Press.



This image released by Peacock shows Chris Copeland and Orlando Bloom in an episode of the television series "Orlando Bloom: To the Edge."

The series, which debuts Thursday, was born from the pandemic, which made outside adventures even more alluring. It met the perfect host in a man who is a natural risk-taker. When he made his Broadway debut in "Romeo and Juliet," he roared onto the stage on a Triumph motorcycle. "I'm like a collector of experiences in some ways," he says. "I've been remarkably gifted and fortunate to have some unique ones, but this was definitely like, 'Oh, wow, I'm capable of this. Therefore

I can do anything.'" First up was wingsuiting skydiving in a special jumpsuit that adds lift so you can glide longer before opening your parachute. Bloom's goal was to jump out of plane at 13,000 feet (3,962 meters) fly 3 miles (4.8 kilometers) over the Pacific Ocean and land on the beach. Then he heads to the Bahamas, to a 663-foot-deep (202 meters) hole in the ocean, with the aim of plunging to 100 feet (30.5 meters) on just

one breath. After that, it's off to Utah to climb a 400-foot (122 meter) tower and stand on a summit the size of a pizza box. There were some heart-in-your-throat moments, like on his seventh skydiving jump, where Bloom needed to activate his reserve chute, something that is necessary just 1 in 1,000 times. And for his 21st jump, he did it holding hands with his 80-year-old uncle, Christopher Copeland, a master skydiver.

Usually it takes 200 solo skydives before anyone is allowed to wingsuit but Bloom convinces his instructor in just two weeks. Katy Perry, his partner, is on hand for the first wobbly flight, embracing her man after he lands and lovingly calling him "a flying wombat." Bloom battles ear pain to attempt the 100-foot (30.5 meter) freedive and practicing a breath exercise leaves him in tears, struggling and sweating. Freediving turns

out to require a slowing heart, conserving energy and relaxing the opposite of most sports. The rock climbing challenge sees a usual 2-3 year training process condensed into a week. There was added stress because Bloom broke his back in a fall in his 20s and really didn't want to do that again. "Just remember if everything hurts and you want to puke, you're doing it right," an instructor helpfully tells him. Bloom also leans into his Buddhist belief, meditating and chanting in the run-up to each daredevil step. Bloom joins a crowded field of adventure-seeking celeb TV hosts, which includes Eugene Levy, Zac Efron, José Andrés, Chris Hemsworth, Will Smith, Stanley Tucci, Macaulay Culkin and Ewan McGregor. Bloom, already a guy who went to the gym twice a day, was a quick learner and even emerged with a skydiving license. But he had one-on-one help from experts usually out of the reach of regular thrillseekers, like Maureen "Mo" Beck, a gold medal at the 2014 Spanish Paraclimbing World Championships, and Camila Jaber, the youngest female freediver to break records. □

Associated Press



Mickey Mouse interacts with guests at Disneyland in Anaheim, Calif., Friday, April 30, 2021.

Associated Press

By AMY TAXIN
Associated Press
ANAHEIM, Calif. (AP) — Workers who help bring Disneyland's beloved characters to life said Wednesday they collected enough signatures to support their push for a union.

A group of 1,700 performers, including those who represent characters and dance in parades at Disney's Southern California theme parks, said they filed an election petition with the National Labor Relations Board. A vote would

Disneyland performers file petition to form labor union

likely be held in May or June. The workers said they also asked The Walt Disney Co. to recognize their union, which they are calling "Magic United." In a statement Wednesday, Disney officials said: "We support our cast members' right to a confidential vote that recognizes their individual choices." Most of the more than 35,000 workers at the Disneyland Resort already have unions. Parade and character workers announced their plans to unionize in February to address safety concerns and

scheduling, among other issues. The union would be formed under Actors' Equity Association, which already represents theatrical performers at Disney's Florida theme parks. Union membership has been on a decades-long decline in the United States, but organizations have seen growing public support in recent years amid high-profile contract negotiations involving Hollywood studios and Las Vegas hotels. The National Labor Relations Board, which protects workers' right to organize, reported more

than 2,500 filings for union representation during the 2023 fiscal year, which was the highest number in eight years. Disney has a major presence in Anaheim, where it operates two theme parks Disneyland and Disney California Adventure as well as a shopping and entertainment area called Downtown Disney. Disneyland, the company's oldest park, was the world's second-most visited theme park in 2022, hosting 16.8 million people, according to a report by the Themed Entertainment Association and AECOM. □

The Celtics have been the NBA's most dominant team. Only a championship will make season complete

By KYLE HIGHTOWER
AP Sports Writer

BOSTON (AP) — The Boston Celtics know that no one cares about everything they've accomplished during the regular season. Being the only team to win 60 games? That's cool. Beating 10 teams by 30 or more points and becoming the first team in NBA history to have three 50-point wins in the same season? Not bad.

Clinching the Eastern Conference's No. 1 playoff seed with 11 games remaining in the regular season? Yawn.

Bottom line, the Celtics know this franchise is judged by championships. And for the buckets of success this year's team has had, it will mean nothing if it doesn't end with the raising of its 18th championship banner to TD Garden's rafters.

It's why the only refrain has been about the unfinished business Boston's players believe was left after last season's conference finals when they fell behind the Miami Heat 3-0 and won three straight games, only to be blown out at home in Game 7. The Celtics were an NBA-best 37-4 at home this season, where they lost only once to an Eastern Conference opponent.

All-Star Jayson Tatum wants



Boston Celtics' Jayson Tatum (0) drives past Sacramento Kings' Davion Mitchell (15) during the second half of an NBA basketball game Friday, April 5, 2024, in Boston.

Associated Press

their approach to be different in the playoffs.

"Not take it for granted. I think in the past we just felt like coming back home we had the advantage, that we were supposed to win and maybe relax a little bit," Tatum said. "Not necessarily take the opposite approach and feel like our back is against the wall when we come home. And maybe have some better outcomes."

In an offseason that saw the exits of defensive stalwart Marcus Smart, along

with last season's Sixth Man of the Year Malcolm Brogdon and big man Robert Williams, Boston found itself with the additions of Jrue Holiday and Kristaps Porzingis.

"This year we've been organized, we've been consistent," Celtics All-Star Jaylen Brown said. "The pieces that we've added have made contributions right away. ... Things that might have haunted us in the past have kind of turned into some of our strengths." It's also why Celtics presi-

dent of basketball operations Brad Stevens chuckled this week at the mention of his name being floated in the coaching rumor mill about a possible return to the college ranks.

He, too, wants to see their near misses bear the ultimate fruit.

"We've been here 11 years now and got to see this team do a lot of cool things and go a long way," Stevens said. "We'd like to get over that hump."

A big part of why Boston has flourished has been

due to the steadiness of coach Joe Mazzulla, who's found a groove in his second season with a hand-picked coaching staff that includes lead assistant Charles Lee and Sam Cassell.

He's managed to cultivate an offense that plays to the strengths of Brown and Tatum, while also integrating Holiday and Porzingis into a group that overwhelms teams with its ability to space the floor and shoot 3-pointers. Meanwhile, Boston ended the season with the NBA's top offensive rating and second-best defensive rating.

But it's the 3-point shooting that has stood out.

The Celtics led the league during the regular season, attempting a 3-pointer on 47.2% of their possessions. That translated into a league-high 42.5 attempts from beyond the arc per game, but also an NBA-best average of 16.5 made 3s per game.

It has made for a pulverizing offensive machine to beat this season if the shots are falling. In Boston's 64 wins they shot 40.6% from 3-point range, compared to 32.4% in its 18 losses. That includes two losses to the defending champion Denver Nuggets in which the Celtics shot under 33% from beyond the arc. □

U.S. Basketball Writers Association will name women's coaching award after UConn's Geno Auriemma

STORRS, Conn. (AP) — The U.S. Basketball Writers Association announced Wednesday that it will name its annual women's national coach of the year award after UConn's Geno Auriemma.

The 70-year-old Hall-of-fame coach just completed his 39th season at the school, guiding the Huskies to their record 23rd Final Four. He has led UConn to 11 national championships and six perfect seasons, winning the USBWA award six

times, more than any other coach.

Auriemma has compiled a 1,213-162 record, which gives him an 88.2% winning percentage and puts him second on the all-time Division I wins list, just three games behind Stanford's Tara VanDerveer, who announced her retirement earlier this month.

He also led the United States Women's National Team to gold medals in the 2012 and 2016 Olympic Games and the 2010 and

2014 FIBA World Championships.

The women's coaching award had been the only unnamed award presented by the USBWA. The national player of the year receives the Ann Meyers Drysdale Award, and the national freshman of the year receives the Tamika Catchings Award.

The announcement was made in advance of the USBWA's annual awards banquet in St. Louis Wednesday night. □



UConn coach Geno Auriemma smiles after gaining his 1,200th career win, following the team's NCAA college basketball game against Seton Hall Wednesday, Feb. 7, 2024, in Hartford, Conn.

Associated Press

NHL has no appetite to expand playoffs beyond its 16-team tournament for the Stanley Cup

By **STEPHEN WHYNO**
AP Hockey Writer

Sixteen teams, each one needing to win 16 games over four rounds of best-of-seven series to lift the Stanley Cup, has been the way the NHL decides its champion for nearly four decades. That isn't changing any time soon.

The NHL is the only one of the major four North American professional sports leagues not to expand its playoffs in recent years. It is content with the current format and isn't looking to add more teams, a play-in round or anything else amid plenty of discussion

about doing so. "We're not giving any thought to expanding the playoffs," Commissioner Gary Bettman said in advance of the playoffs, which begin Saturday. "We have no interest in it. What we have is working very well. When you look at how our playoffs play out, the number of six- and seven-game series, the competitiveness of it, nothing in anybody else's playoffs rivals that."

There is an added benefit, Bettman said: It makes the regular season more meaningful. A handful of players who have won the Cup in

recent years agreed that they prefer the status quo. "You like what you know, I feel like," said Washington's Trevor van Riemsdyk, who won the Cup with Chicago in 2015. "It keeps the importance of the regular season and all that stuff in the right place. I think 82 games is plenty of time, ample time, to make it."

It has been that way since 1987, and in that era 16 of the league's 21 teams qualified for the playoffs. Now the league has 32 teams and half of them make the cut.

"Where we're at right now at the NHL, I think we're in



Florida Panthers' Anton Lundell (15) and Boston Bruins' Jesper Boqvist (70) battle for the puck during the second period of an NHL hockey game, Saturday, April 6, 2024, in Boston.

Associated Press

a good spot," said Pittsburgh's Reilly Smith, who won with the Golden

Knights last year. "There's a lot of parity in the league, but 16 teams is plenty."

Smith thinks the playoffs are tough enough already, arguably the most physically taxing and grueling route to a title in sports, and adding games would put it over the edge.

If more games is the goal, hockey already has that. Over the past decade, over two-thirds of the 150 playoff series (67.3%) have gone to a sixth or deciding seventh game, compared to just over half (54%) in the NBA, which is in its third season with a four team per conference play-in tournament.

The NFL went from 12 to 14 playoff teams starting in 2020, and two years later Major League Baseball expanded to 12 teams, with six division winners and six wild cards making it.

Boston's Kevin Shattenkirk, who won the Cup with Tampa Bay in 2020, pointed to the end of this regular season as another reason playoff expansion isn't needed particularly in the Eastern Conference where the Capitals, New York Islanders and others were essentially playing play-in games to make it.

"I feel like naturally our situation kind of creates that," Shattenkirk said.

"It's not as heavy at the top as it is in basketball, I think. I think that's why we don't really need it." □

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