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About 8 in 10 Democrats are satisfied with Harris in stark shift after Biden drops out: AP-NORC poll

By S.M.KIM and L. SANDERS
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Vice President Kamala Harris appears to have energized Democrats in the early days of her candidacy, with the surge in warm feelings extending across multiple groups, including some key Democratic constituencies that had been especially tepid about President Joe Biden, a new poll shows. About 8 in 10 Democrats say they would be somewhat or very satisfied if Harris became the Democratic nominee for president, according to the survey from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research, which was conducted after Biden withdrew from the race.

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Vice President Kamala Harris embraces President Joe Biden after a speech on healthcare in Raleigh, N.C., March. 26, 2024.

Associated Press



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About 8 in 10 Democrats are satisfied with Harris in stark shift after Biden drops out: AP-NORC poll

Continued from Front

In a separate AP-NORC poll, taken before Biden dropped out but after his debate against Republican former President Donald Trump, only about 4 in 10 Democrats said they were somewhat or very satisfied that he was the Democratic Party's likely nominee for president. The rapidly changing views among Democrats in such a short time span underscore how swiftly the party — from rank-and-file voters to elected officials — has coalesced behind Harris as its standard-bearer, motivated by the fresh face at the top of the ticket and newfound confidence in the party's prospects against Trump in November.

Gary Hines, a Democrat from Philadelphia, said he wasn't particularly impressed by Harris' first presidential bid but now, she's shown "she's up to the task, can do the work, has proven that she's running a strong campaign so far and maybe on a bigger level, she's somebody that can beat Donald Trump." All those factors have ignited an enthusiasm in Hines that wasn't there when Biden was still in the race, he said.

"I really want to go out and maybe knock on doors, which I would've never done," said Hines, 68. "It's jazzed me up quite a bit." Americans are also more likely to say that Harris would make a good president than they were earlier in July, a shift that was primarily driven by Democrats. They still see a tough contest looming, though: A majority of U.S. adults, 56%, say that if Trump and Harris are their parties' nominees for the general election in November, Trump is more likely to win.

Lauren Schulman, a Democrat from Pompano Beach, Florida, said she admires Biden and what he has accomplished during his presidency. But she said with him at the top of the ticket,

"I have just been so terrified that we were going to lose."

With Harris, on the other hand, "she's been a bright, shining star," said Schul-

said they were satisfied with Biden in July.

Bryan Seigler, a Democrat from Raleigh, North Carolina, praised Harris' "broad appeal" and pointed to a

about 6 in 10 when asked about electing a person of color and about half when asked about electing a woman — say it does not matter.

fectively against Trump.

"When I watched the debate, you could just tell his cognitive ability was hardly there," said Julian Castañeda, a Democrat in Pocatello, Idaho. "He had a hard time forming sentences and a lot of his responses, I couldn't even understand what he was saying. At his age right now, it was appropriate for him to stand aside."

Biden's choice to endorse Harris as the Democratic nominee for president is slightly more divisive, with about half of U.S. adults in support, though Democrats overwhelmingly approve. There are similar levels of support for Biden's decision to serve out the rest of his presidential term.

Withdrawing from the race didn't do much to change Americans' views of Biden overall. About 4 in 10 Americans approve of how Biden is handling his job as president. That number is roughly in line with where it has been for the last two years. Biden's favorability ratings are similar to where they were before he dropped out of the race, with about 4 in 10 adults and about three-quarters of Democrats holding a positive view.

Americans see a tough election contest for Harris. Even as the new Harris campaign has reasons for optimism, the vice president faces an opponent who is better known by the country and who has a reputation for a loyal base of support.

Most Americans perceive Trump as having the advantage going into the November election. A majority of U.S. adults say that if Trump and Harris are the candidates, Trump is more likely to win. About 9 in 10 Republicans say Trump is more likely to become president, while only about 7 in 10 Democrats say that about Harris.

Schulman thinks Harris is more likely to win this fall. Still, she added: "Democrats, we're like a real, nervous, paranoid bunch these days." □



Vice President Kamala Harris speaks during the American Federation of Teachers' 88th national convention, July 25, 2024, in Houston.

Associated Press

man, 66, noting that the vice president is "smart and she's younger, and she even comes off younger than she is. That makes such a huge contrast with Trump."

Growing enthusiasm for Harris — especially compared to Biden

About 7 in 10 Black adults and about half of Hispanic adults would be satisfied with Harris as the Democratic nominee — a marked increase from earlier in July, when about half of Black adults and 15% of Hispanic adults felt satisfied with Biden as the Democrats' expected nominee. (The poll did not include enough Asian adults to analyze their responses separately.)

The share of younger adults (those under the age of 45) who say they would be satisfied with Harris as the nominee, at around 4 in 10, is higher than the 17% who

contrast that Democrats weren't able to make before.

"Donald Trump is the old guy now," said Seigler, 36. The new poll shows that Harris' overall favorability has risen slightly, from 39% at the beginning of the summer — before the debate — to 46% now. Democrats' opinions of Harris have also shifted in a slightly more positive direction. Eight in 10 Democrats have a positive view of Harris, up slightly from around 7 in 10 in early June.

Harris would be a historic candidate — she would be the first woman to win the presidency, as well as the first Black woman, the first South Asian American, and the first Asian American. Around 4 in 10 Americans say that it would be a good thing for the country to elect either a woman or a person of color to be president. Even more —

Majorities of Democrats, however, say it would be good for the country to elect a woman or person of color.

Views of Biden's decision Most Americans, 54%, say they have heard or read a lot about Biden's decision to withdraw from the 2024 presidential race. About three-quarters of Americans approve of his decision to withdraw as the Democratic nominee for president, including most Democrats and Republicans.

For many Democrats, Biden's catastrophic June 27 debate showed that — even if they were largely satisfied with his accomplishments during his time in office — the incumbent president should not be running for a second term because of concerns about how his age was affecting his public performance or his ability to campaign ef-

Families face food insecurity in Republican-led states that turned down federal aid this summer

KATE PAYNE

Associated Press/Report for America

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. (AP) —

Crystal Ripolio had tears in her eyes as she walked the produce line at the Good News Outreach food bank in Tallahassee. It was the bags of ripe peaches that did her in.

"We don't have anything in our fridge," Ripolio said.

Ripolio and her 8-year-old daughter, Isabella, walked away with paper bags filled with those peaches, other produce, bread and canned goods grateful for the help she said they desperately need.

Millions of American children are going without extra food this summer, after 13 states declined to participate in a federal program that helps families in need buy groceries.

Thirty-seven states, four U.S. territories and five Native American tribes are benefitting from the program, according to the Department of Agriculture. Qualifying families with children who rely on school meals to get enough to eat are getting an extra \$120 per child this summer to help feed their kids.

Ripolio, who has two school-aged daughters, could have received an extra \$240 deposited directly onto an electronic benefits transfer or EBT card, but Republican-led Florida isn't taking part.

She said she has been



Stacks of donated goods line the shelves at the Good News Outreach food bank, Wednesday, July 31, 2024, in Tallahassee, Fla.

helping Isabella deal with some challenging medical issues lately and hasn't been able to work. The extra money would have really helped by allowing her to buy more basics such as bread, milk and cereal, Ripolio said.

"Are you kidding? I've been holding onto \$17 for three months," she said, referring to her dwindling finances.

The federal program known as Summer EBT or SUN Bucks gives money to qualifying families who can then use it to shop at grocery stores and farmers markets. The initiative is designed to help feed children who receive free or reduced-priced

meals at school, but who often go hungry during the summer.

According to an analysis by the advocacy group Food Research and Action Center, for every 100 children who received a free or reduced-price meal during the 2021-2022 school year, only 11 got a summer lunch in July 2022.

Layla Santiago, a single mom from Jacksonville, said she's been piling her five kids all between the ages of 2 months and 10 years into an Uber to get to local food pantries this summer, because she lacks consistent access to transportation.

"I know there's other moth-

ers like me that don't have transportation, that may need the food but just can't get to it," Santiago said.

The states that declined to participate in the program cited reasons such as problems with aging state computer systems, philosophical opposition to welfare programs, and a belief that existing free meal programs are sufficient. All 13 are led by Republican governors. Under the terms of the Summer EBT program, the federal government covers the cost of the benefits for families, but states must split the administrative costs 50/50. An estimated 2 million Florida children could have

benefited from more than \$258 million in aid this summer if state officials hadn't turned it down. Nationwide, roughly 21 million kids are being fed by the program this year.

Asked whether the state would participate next summer, a spokesperson for Gov. Ron DeSantis directed inquiries to the Florida Department of Children and Families, which did not respond. A spokesperson for the DCF previously told the Orlando Sentinel that the state's current programs are sufficient.

"We anticipate that our state's full approach to serving children will continue to be successful this year without any additional federal programs that inherently always come with some federal strings attached," spokesperson Mallory McManus said. Ripolio, standing outside the food bank just a short walk from the governor's mansion in Florida's capital, said she didn't understand why the state passed up federal money that could have made a difference to her family.

"If other states are able to do it, why can't we?" she asked. "That doesn't make sense."

Service providers have applauded the work of a state-administered summer meal program that operates out of schools, public libraries and community centers. □

Associated Press

Ransomware attack disables computers at blood center serving 250 hospitals in southeast U.S.

ORLANDO, Fla. (AP) — A not-for-profit blood center serving much of the southeastern United States is facing a ransomware attack, officials said Wednesday.

OneBlood said the attack had disabled its information technology, forcing it to operate at a reduced capacity in Florida, Georgia and the Carolinas. To manage its blood supply, the blood center was asking more than 250 hospi-

tals to activate their critical blood shortage protocols. The blood center also was using manual processes to maintain basic operations, officials said.

OneBlood is working with cybersecurity specialists as well as federal, state and local agencies to determine the scope of the attack and how to respond, officials said.

"We are working diligently to restore full functionality

to our systems as expeditiously as possible," Susan Forbes, OneBlood's senior vice president of corporate communications and public relations, said in a statement.

Blood centers across the U.S. were sending extra blood and platelets to OneBlood, which said there's a particular need for O-positive and O-negative blood. □



A health care worker walks by the Big Red Bus from OneBlood outside at Cano Health in Hialeah, Fla., July 29, 2020.

Associated Press

1 person killed in Colorado wildfires as blazes torch large areas of the U.S. West

By **JESSE BEDAYN, MATTHEW BROWN, COLLEEN SLEVIN and OLGA RODRIGUEZ**

Associated Press

LOVELAND, Colo. (AP) — A person was killed in one of several wildfires threatening heavily populated areas of the Colorado foothills, authorities said Wednesday, as almost 100 large blazes burned across the western U.S.

The death came in a fire near the town of Lyons that had burned more than two square miles (five square kilometers) by Wednesday afternoon, authorities said. The person's remains were discovered at one of five homes that burned, Boulder County Sheriff Curtis Johnson said.

Johnson said detectives were assisting the investigation into the death but declined to provide further details.

The Stone Canyon Fire was not growing significantly on Wednesday, Johnson said. It was listed as zero percent contained on a federal wildfire report that said 150 personnel were battling the blaze.

It was one of several large fires burning on Colorado's Front Range, a densely populated corridor along the eastern edge of the Rocky Mountains that includes Denver.

A fire at the edge of the



Flames consume trees as the Alexander Mountain Fire burns near Sylvan Dale Ranch late Tuesday, July 30, 2024, west of Loveland, Colo.

Associated Press

Denver metro area west of the small town of Conifer triggered the evacuation orders for about 575 houses from several subdivisions overnight Tuesday. That fire was less than one square mile (2.5 square kilometers) as of midday Wednesday but was expected to grow with temperatures forecast to reach nearly 100 degrees (38 Celsius).

A third large fire was burning west of the town of Loveland, where rural residents have been under evacuation orders since Monday.

A plane was dropping fire retardant and four helicopters were dropping water from a

nearby reservoir on that fire. The fire was burning in open land in steep terrain, making it hard to fight the flames on the ground, said Mark Techmeyer, a spokesperson for the Jefferson County Sheriff's Office.

"Every neighborhood in this facility is at risk. This fire is not an easy fight. The terrain is treacherous. It is very steep," he said.

Hot, dry weather and localized wind gusts of up to 30 mph (50 kph) were expected across the Front Range on Wednesday, elevating the fire danger, government forecasters said. The hot temperatures were expected to

continue into early next week but winds were forecast to remain light in coming days, which would make it easier to control blazes.

Colorado National Guard units were activated to help with the fires, which were expected to continue for weeks, Gov. Jared Polis said. It's the first time the guard has been used in such fashion since a December 2021 fire in heavily populated suburbs between Denver and Boulder that killed two people and destroyed nearly 1,100 homes, he said.

Across the U.S. almost 28,000 firefighters were battling 95 large fires, according to

the National Interagency Fire Center. Almost 7,000 square miles (18,000 square kilometers) have burned nationwide so far this year, an area nearly the size of New Jersey and well above the 10-year average for this time of year.

Evacuation orders were in effect for more than two dozen fires.

Fires in southeastern Wyoming triggered evacuations in Hartville, which has about 65 people, and the unincorporated community of Pleasant Valley. Helicopters and heavy tankers were being used against the fires, which had grown to about 47 square miles (120 square kilometers) by Wednesday morning, Gov. Mark Gordon said in an online post.

In Northern California, the massive Park Fire has scorched 609 square miles (1,577 square kilometers), according to the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection.

The blaze started in Butte County last week after authorities say a man pushed a burning car down a ravine in the city of Chico. That fire has destroyed 361 structures and threatens thousands more. The suspect, Ronnie Dean Stout II, was recently charged with arson. His public defender, Nicole Diamond, said in an email that she had no comment. □

Utility chief in north Florida sentenced to 4 years in prison for privatization scheme



A general view of the Jacksonville, Fla., skyline is shown on Sunday, Sep. 12, 2021, in Jacksonville.

Associated Press

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. (AP) — The former head of a north Florida public utility was sentenced to four years in prison for a scheme to privatize the authority which prosecutors said would have enriched him and his associates by tens of millions of dollars at the expense of taxpayers.

Aaron Zahn was sentenced to federal prison on Tuesday after being convicted earlier this year of wire fraud and conspiracy.

Zahn's defense attorney had argued that the plan never came to fruition and the scheme involving the Jacksonville Electric Authority, also known as JEA, never paid anything out.

Zahn became the authority's CEO in 2018. Not long afterward, he launched an effort to convince JEA's board of directors of the need to privatize, claiming that the authority faced major headwinds if it failed to do so and would have to layoff more than 500 workers, authorities said.

But Jacksonville's city council auditor in 2019 uncovered a hidden incentive plan created by Zahn which would have awarded \$40 million to the CEO and \$10 million to other high-level JEA executives if the sale of the utility went through, according to the U.S. Attorney's Office.

The sale process was stopped and Zahn was fired. □

U.N. report says Palestinians detained by Israeli authorities since Oct. 7 faced torture, mistreatment

By JAMEY KEATEN

Associated Press

GENEVA (AP) — The U.N. human rights office issued a report Wednesday saying Palestinians detained by Israeli authorities since the Oct. 7 attacks faced waterboarding, sleep deprivation, electric shocks, dogs set on them, and other forms of torture and mistreatment.

The report said Israel's prison service held more than 9,400 "security detainees" as of the end of June, and some have been held in secret without access to lawyers or respect for their legal rights.

A summary of the report, based on interviews with former detainees and other sources, decried a "staggering" number of detainees including men, women, children, journalists and human rights defenders and said such practices raise concerns about arbitrary detention. "The testimonies gathered by my office and other entities indicate a range of appalling acts, such as waterboarding and the release of dogs on detainees, amongst other acts, in flagrant violation of international human rights law and international humanitarian law," said U.N. Human Rights Chief Volker Türk in a statement.



Israeli soldiers gather at the gate to the Sde Teiman military base, as people protest in support of soldiers being questioned for detainee abuse, July 29, 2024.

Associated Press

Findings in the report, one of the most extensive of its kind, could be used by International Criminal Court prosecutors who are looking into crimes committed in connection with Hamas' Oct. 7 attacks and Israel's blistering ongoing military campaign in Gaza. In May, the ICC's chief prosecutor sought arrest warrants for leaders of Israel and Hamas, including Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, over war crimes and crimes

against humanity in the Gaza Strip and Israel.

Authors of the report said its content was shared with the Israeli government.

In response to the report, the Israeli military said that abuse of detainees was illegal and against military orders.

It said since the war began there have been cases where correctional staff have been dismissed for violating military rules in their treatment of detainees. Investigations are

launched into all detainee deaths in custody, it said.

Israel's Prison services did not respond to an Associated Press request for comment.

Israel's prison authorities previously told the AP that all Palestinian prisoners are treated according to Israeli law. However, Israel's Ministry of National Security, the body in charge of prisons, says it has actively made conditions worse and purposefully overcrowded cells for Palestinians

held on security charges since the war broke out as a policy of deterrence.

The ministry is headed by ultranationalist minister Itamar Ben Gvir, who has long called for harsher punishment, including the death penalty, for Palestinians held on terror charges.

The report also said detainees were taken from Gaza, Israel and the West Bank, and says Israel has not provided information regarding the fate or whereabouts of many, adding that the International Committee of the Red Cross has been denied access to facilities where they are held.

"Detainees said they were held in cage-like facilities, stripped naked for prolonged periods, wearing only diapers. Their testimonies told of prolonged blindfolding, deprivation of food, sleep and water, and being subjected to electric shocks and being burnt with cigarettes," a summary of the report said. "Some detainees said dogs were released on them, and others said they were subjected to waterboarding, or that their hands were tied and they were suspended from the ceiling," it added. "Some women and men also spoke of sexual and gender-based violence." □

Guinea court sentences former junta leader to 20 years in prison over 2009 stadium massacre

By BOUBACAR DIALLO

Associated Press

CONAKRY, Guinea (AP) — A Guinea court on Wednesday sentenced former junta leader Moussa "Dadis" Camara to 20 years in prison after finding him guilty of crimes against humanity in the 2009 stadium massacre by the military that killed at least 157 people and left dozens of women raped. Guinea's Criminal Court convicted Camara and seven other high-ranking officials after a prolonged trial on charges of murder, kidnapping and rape that were reclassified as "crimes against humanity" on Wednesday. Four other accused were acquitted. More than 100 survivors and

victims' relatives testified in the trial that started in November 2022, more than a decade after the massacre and under pressure from families and activists demanding justice.

Some of the victims' relatives lauded the verdict as justice at last while others said the penalty for Camara in particular was not enough. "The convictions do not match the crimes. Our sisters were raped, our brothers massacred, bodies reported missing," said Safiatou Baldé, 25, a relative of one of the victims.

Maimounatou Tounkara said a part of him died with his brother who was killed in the massacre. "I am still bleeding and these con-

victions will not heal the wounds," he said.

The demonstrators at the stadium in Sept. 2009 were protesting Camara's plans to run for president when soldiers opened fire on them and raped dozens of women. The then-military leader had staged a coup the previous year.

The junta at the time said "uncontrolled" elements of the army carried out the rapes and killings. But Camara's top aides were at the stadium and did nothing to stop the massacre, a Human Rights Watch report said.

Wednesday's court decision "sends a message loud and clear to those responsible for serious crimes in

Guinea and elsewhere that justice is possible," said Tamara Aburamadan, international justice counsel at Human Rights Watch. Many of the victims in the stadium massacre were

shot, crushed or knifed to death while some of the women were dragged out from hiding and gang-raped by uniformed men over several days, witnesses said. □



Moussa "Dadis" Camara speaks upon his arrival from exile in Conakry, Guinea Wednesday, Dec. 22, 2021.

Associated Press

Extortion and gang violence are hitting even big corporations and business leaders in Mexico

By **ALFREDO PEÑA**
Associated Press
CIUDAD VICTORIA, Mexico

(AP) — Even Mexico's largest corporations are now being hit by demands from drug cartels, and gangs are increasingly trying to control the sale, distribution and pricing of certain goods.

Well-known, high-ranking business leaders aren't even safe.

On Monday, the head of the business chambers' federation in Tamaulipas state, across the border from Texas, gave television interviews complaining about drug cartel extortion in the state. Hours later on Tuesday, Julio Almanza was shot to death outside his offices in the city of Matamoros, across from Brownsville, Texas.

"We are hostages to extortion demands, we are hostages of criminal groups," Almanza said in one of his last interviews. "Charging extortion payments has practically become the national sport in Tamaulipas." The problem came to a head when the Femsa corporation, which operates Oxxo, Mexico's largest



Mexican soldiers stand guard outside an Oxxo grocery shop near the Tamaulipas Chamber of Commerce, where its president Julio Cesar Almanza was killed, in Matamoros, Mexico, Tuesday, July 30, 2024.

est chain of convenience stores, announced late last week that it was closing all of its 191 stores and seven gas stations in another border city, Nuevo Laredo, because of gang problems. The company said it had long had to deal with cartel demands that its gas stations buy their fuel from certain distributors. But the straw that broke the camel's back came in re-

cent weeks when gang members abducted two store employees, demanding they act as lookouts or provide information to the gang. Since convenience stores are used by most people in Mexico, the gangs see them as good points to keep tabs on the movements of police, soldiers and rivals.

"We had incidents in stores

that consisted of them (gangs) demanding we give them certain information, and they even abducted two colleagues to enforce this demand," Roberto Campa, Femsa's director of corporate affairs, told local media.

In a statement Monday, Femsa said its stores in Nuevo Laredo remain closed this week "due to acts of violence that put our col-

leagues' safety at risk."

Cartel violence in Mexico has long been focused on smaller businesses, where owners often visit their shops and are easily abducted or approached by gang members to demand extortion payments. But Femsa is the largest soft drink bottler in Latin America, the largest Coca Cola bottler by sales volume and is listed on the Mexican stock exchange. Nuevo Laredo has long been dominated by the Northeast Cartel an offshoot of the old Zetas cartel but the problem is starting to hit larger companies nationwide. Sectors ranging from agriculture, fishing and mining to consumer goods have been plagued by cartels trying to essentially take over their industries.

This week, the American Chamber of Commerce, whose members tend to be larger Mexican, American or multinational corporations, released a survey of its members in which 12% of respondents said that "organized crime has taken partial control of the sales, distribution and/or pricing of their goods." □

Associated Press

China accuses Japan of 'smear attacks' in recent talks with the U.S., India and Australia

BEIJING (AP) — China has expressed strong dissatisfaction to Japan about what it called "smear attacks" against China at recent high-level meetings with the United States, India and Australia, the Foreign Ministry said Wednesday. A ministry statement said that Liu Jinsong, the director general of the Asian affairs department, conveyed solemn representations and serious concern at a meeting the previous day with Akira Yokochi, the deputy chief of mission at the Japanese Embassy.

"Liu pointed out that Japan's smear attacks on China are self-contradictory to its statement of promoting the strategic and reciprocal relationship between the two countries,"

the statement said.

Meeting in Tokyo on Sunday, Japan's foreign and defense ministers agreed

to bolster military cooperation with the U.S. at what are known as "2+2" talks with their American coun-

terparts.

A joint statement said China's foreign policy "seeks to reshape the international order for its own benefit at the expense of others" and that such behavior represents "the greatest strategic challenge" in the Indo-Pacific region and beyond.

The U.S.-Japan talks were followed by a meeting on Monday of the foreign ministers from the Quad countries the U.S. Japan, India and Australia. The joint statement did not mention China by name but expressed opposition to "the militarization of disputed features and coercive and intimidating maneuvers in the South China Sea."

The Chinese government has complained repeated-

ly about the U.S. deepening ties with other countries in the face of China's rise, which President Joe Biden has made a priority during his four years in office.

The Foreign Ministry statement said China urges Japan to stop making irresponsible remarks on China's internal affairs a likely reference to Taiwan and called on Japan to stop colluding with "certain countries" to form small circles that lead to confrontation.

A Japanese Embassy statement said that Yokochi had expounded Japan's positions at the meeting and made representations on various China-related topics, but it did not provide any details. □



U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken, right, speaks during a news conference with Indian Foreign Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar, from left, Japanese Foreign Minister Yoko Kamikawa, Australian Foreign Minister Penny Wong, following the Quad Ministerial Meeting at the Foreign Ministry's Iikura guesthouse in Tokyo, on July 29, 2024.

Associated Press

Alto Vista chapel and its link to Aruba's origins



According to Etnia Nativa, in the 18th century most of the inhabitants of Aruba were indigenous who lived on the north coast, one of the largest communities lived in Alto Vista.

As they were very religious, they had a chief with the name of Antonio Silvester who guided them in the Christian life and it was he who decided to build a stone chapel with a roof of corn rods, which would serve as a place of prayer. In 1750 it was blessed by Father Algemesi who came from Coro-Venezuela and appointed Domingo Antonio Silvester as the island's first prosecutor in the name of the Spanish crown and

Rome. In 1752 the prosecution passed into the hands of Antonio Silvester's son-in-law, Miguel Álvarez, who continued to guide the parishioners in their prayers.

According to the book, The History of Alto Vista by R.H. Nooyen, it is not known when Domingo Antonio Silvester came to Aruba from Venezuela. The elders believe Antonio was a Spaniard. In 1780, father Joseph Antonio de la Vegal called Bernardino Silvester, one of Antonio's sons with his wife Anna Cathalina Tromp, "neighbors and naturals of the island Aruba" and thus they became natives.

At the end of the eighteen

century many inhabitants the island died as a result of the black fever epidemic and since people believed that the Alto Vista area was the most infected, they began to build their homes further south within the Noord area, so the town of Noord began to grow into a community till getting its own Church. However religious festivals continued to be celebrated at this sacred native place, with the custom of arriving in procession to Alto Vista.

Two-hundred years after the beautiful time of Alto Vista, people can no longer see much of the town of Alto Vista from 1750. With a lot of work they found



the old foundations of the Church of the Queen of the Holiest Rosary to build a new chapel on the same place. The entire surrounding area was empty and desolated, making it hard to imagine that Alto Vista was a town at all. A hundred years later, people can see the remains of around twenty houses, some made of stone and others of clay. Nowadays, only around six of these houses remain.

South of the chapel in the yard two graves can be observed, there was the cemetery which father Pablo de Algemesi blessed. It is not certain, but it is believed that the two graves belong to Antonio Silvester and Miguel Alvares, according to Nooyen. About

50 meters near the chapel there are still the markings of an old house, where Antonio and Bernardino Silvester would have lived. About 200 meters from the chapel there is a water tank which the locals call Tanki Cacique. In the past this tank was closed. But mostly water was brought out from the Poz di Noord, a well dug in the sand.

The chapel can be viewed from basically any point in the north side, even from Paradera and Sero Plat. All the historical remains around the chapel provide us with an idea on how the old people of Alto Vista used to live. Don't miss the opportunity to visit a place of historical significance with a window to Aruba's past. □

Aruba's Bocas: home to the rarest fossil reefs on the planet!

(Oranjestad)—If you've been to the northern coast of Aruba already, you've probably noticed how the ground differs entirely from the sandy beaches on the southern part of the island. These hard surfaces, with sharp bumps and holes are actually fossilized coral

reefs, of which its growth and changes can be traced back to the last glacial period.

On May 30 2023, geoscientists, Dr. Patrick Boyden from the Marum research faculty at the University of Bremen, Prof. dr. Alessio

Rovere from the Ca' Foscari University of Venice and Prof. dr. Gianfranco Scicchitano, from the University of Bari Aldo Moro, presented their research on these fossilized coral reefs at the University of Aruba. Their focus for their research included studying the health and formation patterns of these coral reefs, and to investigate how these reefs have responded and can respond to fluctuating sea levels or extreme weather, like hurricanes and tsunamis.

Through underwater and land surveillance, and 3D models of the reefs, they were able to narrow down

when these formations started to take place. They were also able to track the fluctuation of sea levels during the past hundred or even thousands of years, and the effects that this fluctuation has had on the coral reefs of the windward side of Aruba.

These findings can certainly put things into perspective. The ground on which we have walked many times in the northern part of the island hold such rich history, history that dates back to a time that most of us cannot even imagine. As the scientists themselves have pointed out, these fossilized reefs on the windward side

are truly an incredible and rare remnant of geological history, as they provide a clear view of how these reefs have formed.

This research is also important for the future of coral reefs on the island. By studying rising sea levels and climate impact on these coral reefs, we are able to take concrete action in protecting and preserving our coral reefs. So, if you are ever visiting one of the bocas or driving along the northern part of the island, please be conscious to help protect our natural historical remnant. Oh, and wear (coral-friendly) sunscreen! □



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Aruba's most family-friendly beaches

(Oranjestad)—One of the biggest concerns that parents have when travelling with their children is a guarantee of their safety and healthy enjoyment. Therefore, we thought it would be a great help to traveling parents to list off some of the most family-friendly beaches around the island.

Baby Beach in San Nicolas
Baby Beach is one Aruba's most popular and visited beaches, and for good reason: This sandy and quiet lagoon is a great place for parents to sit back and relax while their children play in the shallow shores of the beach. Beside the relaxing atmosphere, there are also several services that may accommodate your stay,

like a parking lot, sun tent rentals, chairs, bathrooms and a snack bar right at the far left of the beach.

Mangel Halto in Pos Chiquito

Mangel Halto is situated in the back streets of the Pos Chiquito city. Though there are several stairs on the sides of the beach cliff leading you down, the best spot for families to hang out is across the bridge, passed the mangrove trees near the entrance sign. Here, there are small and big palapas, perfect for big and small families to set up their belongings. In this area, the shore is also shallow, falling right around your knee before slowly getting deeper: perfect for

kids to safely play.

Eagle Beach/Palm Beach in the hotel area

Yet another highly popular beach site, Eagle Beach and Palm Beach is where most of our visitors go to tan, swim or play in the white sand. Because they are near the low-rise and high-rise hotel areas, these beaches are the most accessible for visitors on foot. These beaches also offer many palapas free to use, but you can also rent chairs and tents. Much like Baby Beach, these sites are one of the best beaches for your children to play and build sand castles.

Boca Catalina in Malmok
Boca Catalina is a small bay



beach near the Malmok beach area further down the hotel areas. Though it may not be a very sandy beach, it is relatively quiet and tranquil. This is a great place for family to lay down a big blanket and have a little picnic. This is also one of the best places to snorkel, as this area is filled with little fish and corals, even close to the shore.

Palm Island

Ok, this one is technically not a beach, but a must-visit attraction for family fun. This small water park oasis is located further down the Mangel Halto Beach and is reachable by boat. This water park offers 6 hours of fun activities, food, drinks, and a chance to see pink flamingoes up close! □

Blackstone Beach

(Oranjestad)—Named after its most recognizable feature, the Blackstone Beach almost represents the opposite of the typical Aruban beaches. For one, it has black sand and is covered in black smooth stones. Secondly, it lies on the northern side of the island, away from the white sandy beaches of in the southern region. So, if you feel up for something different—or if it's opposite day, visit

the Blackstone Beach.

Blackstone Beach shows the more natural side of Aruba: the stones that cover the beaches and the shape of it has been crafted for thousand years via volcanic eruptions, coral reef movements and wave activity of the rural northern part of the island.

Located further east to the Natu-

ral Bridge and Andicuri Beach, the Blackstone Beach is relatively easy to access. Once you get passed the Ayo Rock Formation, take the Andicuri road leading up to Andicuri Beach. There, you can park your car and take a 1km hike towards Blackstone Beach.

This beach forms part of the Arikok National Park and is therefore a site that is preserved. This is why it is

also relatively untouched by commercial influences. Despite being called a beach, do note that it is not advised to swim in the water, as the current is very strong and can easily stray you further in the wild ocean. However, you can still enjoy a spectacular view of the stones and the northern ocean that stretches out in front of the beach and take a picture with your friends or family! □



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Did you know about...

Basic driving rules on Aruba (part 2)

(Oranjestad)—In Yesterday's issue, we've provided some basic rules when driving on the four-lane highways and roundabouts on the island. Today, we want to offer you more tips and tricks when it comes to driving on the roads and highways of Aruba.

Speed limit in certain areas As mentioned in yesterday's issue, the legal minimum and maximum speed limit on the island is 50 and 80 km/h respectively. However, there are some areas where it is mandated to drive up to a certain speed. This is always indicated by a circular traffic sign with red border and the number 50 on it. Signs like these are always paired by a similar sign with the number crossed out further down the road. This means that the mandate for this speed is now over; you may increase your velocity. Red borders on traffic sign—whether it's a circle or triangle—usually signal a warning, prohibition or preference.

Besides the "50" sign, you may also encounter a traffic sign that says "bebouwde kom". These can be found in San Nicolas and Oranjestad. Bebouwde kom signs are rectangular and blue, and essentially tell you that you are in a heavily inhabited area. The maximum speed limit in a bebouwde kom is 50 km/h. Just like the previous pair, bebouwde kom signs are

also paired with a similar sign crossed out.

Priority signs

On the main roads of Aruba (not the highways), you may see a yellow, squared sign with a white border. This sign tells you that on this road, you have priority and all other traffic should yield to you. This sign can be seen in Savaneta for example. So, if you are driving on the main road in Savaneta going to San Nicolas, you are driving on a single long road, and other cars that want to get on this

main road or cross it, either from an intersection or from a dirt road, must all wait until traffic on the main road is clear. In other words, you do not have to stop for them. This sign too has a counter part that indicates that your priority is over.

Another priority sign you may encounter is a triangle sign with a red border and something that looks like a cross. You'll see this sign in an intersection. The general rule of thumb for crossing an intersection that do not contain traffic lights, round-

abouts, sign or arrows on the road, is to always yield for traffic on your right. However, if you encounter this sign on your side of the intersection, you have priority over the other cars, even the one on your right.

However, be careful not to confuse this sign with a similar up-side down triangle, also found on intersections. This sign is a prohibition sign, telling you that you have to stop and give other cars priority. Of course you also have a "stop" sign that mean the same thing. The

stop sign is generally used for tricky intersections with minimal view of opposite incoming traffic.

These are some of the basic rules that you would have to know if you decide to drive on the island. These are of course other traffic signs, and we recommend you visit aruba-travelguide.com for an extensive overview of all traffic signs used on Aruba.

Picture credits: aruba-travel-guide.com



bebouwde kom



end bebouwde kom



end priority



end speed limit



intersection priority



priority



speed limit



stop sign



triangle stop sign

Sun catchers: The different lizards in Aruba

ORANJESTAD – Colorful or camouflaged, you're bound to encounter a variety of lizards basking in the sun or scurrying on their way in our island. From the charming, friendly iguanas to the good-luck gecko Pega-Pega, you're bound to meet a few of these special residents during your visit.

Aruba, as a desert island, is home to an incredible variety of unique and colorful species. Among them we can find different lizards, most of which have South American origins. But there are a few exceptions.

Iguanas

Iguanas are easy to spot, as they are larger than most other lizards and when young, have a bright green color that makes them stand out.

The iguanas usually found in Aruba are the Iguana iguana, known as the green iguana, or locally as Yuwana. The Yuwana are a mostly herbivorous species, and can grow up to 2 meters in size, including the tail, making them one of the largest in the iguana family. As you will see, despite their name, as they reach adulthood, the iguanas can take on a grey or blue tone instead of the bright green displayed by the young ones. In Aruba – as in the rest of the Kingdom of the Netherlands – the most usual color varies from green to lavender, black and sometimes a reddish brown.

Yuwana is a protected species, as it is listed under Appendix II of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES), meaning that international



trade is regulated through the CITES permit system. In the past, Arubans used to eat a popular Yuwana soup, as it was believed to give strength and help restore health – probably due to the protein boost it delivered. However, it is now illegal to catch, kill, buy or sell Yuwanas in Aruba, and this includes eating them!

Turnip-tailed gecko

The turnip-tailed gecko is known locally as the Pega-Pega, meaning sticky-sticky, due to the way it sticks to walls using the suction in its little fingers. They are found inside houses, and are mostly a nocturnal animal.

According to Etnia Nativa, the local Pega Pega is immediately recognizable by its large size, with a body length of up to 12 cm, and its large, swollen tail, approximately the same length or slightly shorter than its body; females are larger and more robust than males. It has short, robust legs with flattened toes and extensive basal webbing.

The undersides of its toes are covered in lamellae, which are used as friction pads to cling to smooth vertical sur-

faces. Some can even walk around completely upside down. Its toes are covered with ridges, which are peppered with millions of microscopic bristle-like structures called setae that attach and detach when the animal wills them to, and they never get gunked up.

They are variable in coloration, from a mottled dark gray to orange-brown, and are capable of changing color depending on their mood and surroundings. Mottled and banded markings aid in camouflage against tree bark. They are harmless and fragile; you can hold one in your hands as long as you are VERY gentle. Never put pressure on its tail because it will surely drop as a measure to try to distract the predator, and they are different from other lizards because they're long-lived, talkative, lack eyelids, and their small scales are situated next to each other like cobblestones rather than overlapping as is the case in most other lizards.

Turnip-tailed Geckos are insectivorous and feed on cockroaches, grasshoppers, beetles, flies, mosquitoes, and spiders, which makes them the best pest control to have at home! They spend their days concealed in dark tree grooves and cavities, in narrow crevices in the walls, or behind paintings, which provide the perfect shelter for them. Pega pega is a gecko endemic to our island, but in time, some 4–5 intrusive gecko species have been observed, some of which do not cease to amaze us with the racket they make, especially during the hours

of the night.

The Pega-pega *Phyllodactylus Julieni* is also a protected species in Aruba, by law. It is illegal to kill them!

Blue Kododo

These are one of the most striking lizards in Aruba, recognizable by the male's bright blue color. The Aruban whiptail lizard, *Cnemidophorus arubensis*, is a species endemic to Aruba, meaning you can only find it here on our One Happy Island! They are also recognized as the most common and populous lizard on the island. While the male is blue with white dots, the female is brown with blue dots.

These charming lizards eat mostly plants, such as flowers, nectar, leaves and fruits, and occasionally enjoy some insects. They are selective in which plants they eat, because of the toxins present in many available plants species. The Kododo help take care of Aruba's vegetation by playing a significant role in the dispersal of seeds for certain plants: when they eat fruit, they excrete the seeds in diverse locations, contributing to the reproduction cycle of our local plants.

Striped anole

The striped anole (*Anolis lin-*

eatus) that lives in Aruba is known locally as Waltaka or Toteki. This is a species of lizard in the family Dactyloidae, and they are native to Aruba and Curaçao. It is usually found in dry areas, commonly where there are not large trees; rather they enjoy rocks, walls or tree trunks, as they prefer to stay close to the ground.

These lizards are about 7cm in length, have a brown color with a stripe on each side and typically, several stripes on the body and tail that are lighter in color. It has a dewlap which is orange-yellow – and what's unique about this species is that it is the only known species of anole where the dewlap is asymmetrically colored, with one side being a deeper orange and the other side a lighter yellow. Mostly this is seen in the males, as it is almost imperceptible in the females. If the Toteki shows you his dewlap, retreat! This is not a friendly greeting!

Lizards are wonderful creatures that are precious to our fragile, local ecosystem. Please be mindful of these residents as you enjoy your stay.

Images: Some images are from Aruba Birdlife Conservation.



Meet our Aruban trailblazers: Padu Lampe

(Oranjestad)—This week we remember one of our most beloved Aruban giant, Juan Chabaya Lampe—better known as Padu Lampe or Padu del Caribe. As one of the most important and renowned artists in the Aruban cultural sphere, Padu's long career led him to be honored today as "the father of culture."

On April 26th, 1920, Juan Chabaya Lampe "Padu Lampe/Padu del Caribe" was born in Nassastraat, Oranjestad. He grew up in a happy musical environment, and it is because of this that he developed a love for music. Starting from the age of 12, he was agile in the clarinet, mandolin and cuatro. Henry Lampe, his father, was also a well-known pianist and musician.

In a publication of the informative seminar, "Observer", from august 1st, 1962, Padu's many merits and friendly personality stood out. It was said that he was an excellent pianist with a personal style and full of surprises. Secondly, though the composer was not too familiar with music theory, he showed innova-



tions in his compositions. Lastly, Padu was a promoter of Creole music around the world.

One of the most important moments in Aruban history, in which he was able to witness first-hand, was the first radio broadcast on the island on March 20th, 1954. Here, he was accompanied by Antillean guitarist Julian Coco and Hubert "Loi" Booi.

In the art world, Padu was also a known painter. During his youth, he made several paintings using his unique style. In 1939, he participated in an art exhibit in New York, where he won a bronze medal for his painting "Typi-

cal View of Aruba."

Padu remained a popular artist within the Dutch Antilles and the Caribbean as a pianist, singer, author and painter. Padu Lampe was a local artist who became renowned in Venezuela, Colombia, The U.S. and The Netherlands too. In the 1950s, he sold no less than 50 thousand copies of his long-playing albums (LPs).

Padu Lampe was a multifaceted artist, inspired by his interest in parapsychology and supernatural phenomenon. He wrote three books in Papiamentu on the subject in 1986, which was published by the Aruban National

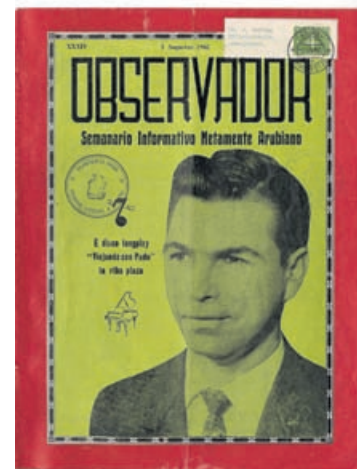
Printing Press with sponsorship provided by the Prince Bernhard Funds Netherlands Antilles.

Besides that, Padu passed his exam on "Society to Advanced Ethical Hypnosis" in 1964 in New Jersey. He received a certificate as a hypnotechician, which gave him the authority to practice hypnosis in some states.

Over the course of his career, he received many accolades and awards in Aruba, Curacao, Venezuela and the Netherlands.

Padu del Caribe passed away on November 29th, 2019, at the age of 99 years old. Padu brought the Aruban culture around the world. His legacy will remain ingrained in the Aruban cultural history, and he will be known forever as one of the most influential trailblazers of our community.

Padu will always be in Aruba's heart, because he had composed various special songs dedicated to the mothers of the island; his song "Sonrisa di un baby" ("A baby's Smile") has been written in three different languages. Padu also wrote our national anthem



"Aruba Dushi Tera", along with Mr. Rufo Wever. This song was approved by the government of Aruba and was named the official anthem of the island in 1976. Other songs that have been considered as being almost a second anthem for Arubans is the special composition he wrote for his wife Daisy Croes called "Abo so". Daisy later passed away in 1994. □

Aruba's neighborhoods; the meaning behind their names

Just like any other country, Aruba has unique and beautifully named neighborhoods that all form a part of its culture and development. Many of these names have a historical background and meaning that teaches us about the island and its rich culture every day.

With this series, we want to take you on a journey of discovery, where you'll learn not only the beautiful names but the history behind it that gives it life and meaning.

Anabui/Tierra Del Sol

This neighborhood can be seen on Van Raders map and Werbata as Anna Boei. Anna Boei is a name of which there isn't much information about its origin.

The best historians were able to deduce is that this name came to be because of a miscommunication between Van Spengler and the natives who were living on the island. In the Arawak/Taino language one can find the word Anaiboa, which consists of Ana meaning flower or the best and Iboa; the



juice of a cassava, which together would mean "the best juice of a cassava".

If one assumes that the actual word heard was Anaboio instead, consisting of Ana meaning the best and Boio (bohio); house, the iteration of Anabui would mean "the best house." This is the origin that has been more or less speculated and assumed for the word Anabui and its meaning.

During the second world war and later, this area was used as a terrain for train-

ing of shooting by militia and latero n Korps Mariniers (the marines of Aruba). By the end of the previous century a large part of Anabui was developed to have luxurious villas and a golf course, which lead to it getting the name Tierra Del Sol, Spanish for Land of the Sun. The name is not an official name, but the name of the development project that took place. It is hoped that the original and 'old' name of Anabui is never lost and now it will be remembered

by both locals and tourists.

Angochi

This name can be seen on the Werbata map with little and cursive letters. It is the unofficial name for the area given by a tenant to the land that was rented to him.

The biggest probability that historians believe is that it comes from native descent, during the time in the 19th century where Mestizos still lived on Aruba. The name can't really be explain and according to books on its history seems to be more of a sign of corruption.

However, it seems to come from combining A(n), which is a generalizing prefix and Goeiza, which means 'the spirit of a living man'. Angochi remains more of a guess.

This neighborhood's abbreviation is; An. □



CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS 46 Take a
1 Earth neighbor

DOWN 1 Dwight's wife
2 Find too cute

10 Parting word
12 Sheepish

13 Exodus figure
14 Ship staffs

15 Tick off
16 Investi-gate

18 Pal of Pooh
20 Decimal base

21 Bit of smoke
23 Slugger Williams

24 Related
26 Some July babies

28 Cargo unit
29 Petty argument

31 Vein yield
32 Concert extra

36 Like driftwood
39 Not strict

40 Deadly
41 Once and again

43 "Hello" singer
44 Thrifty person

45 Boxing ring border

CARAFE SHOP
OLIVIA HOWE
PEDALS AMEN
SLEAZE
SECT BATCH
LEO ANYMORE
ARM LOS WOE
PIETINS NOD
SEDAN ASKS
OBERON
BAWL AVIARY
ACNE PASTIE
TEST SLEEPS

Yesterday's answer

17 Marks a ballot line
19 Athena's symbol

22 Star circlers
24 Trans-port to Oz

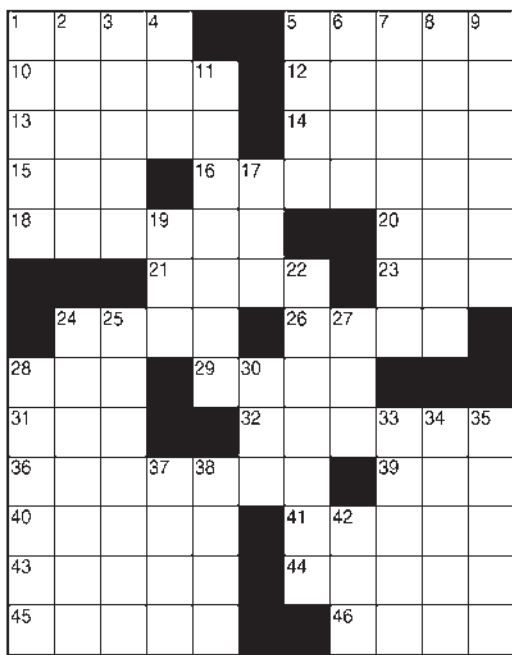
25 Ballroom dance
27 Series-ending abbr.

28 Over the line
30 Pricing word

33 Martini garnish
34 Indy events

35 Put to use
37 Robust

38 Flamenco cries
42 Fighting



5-9

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.

5-9 CRYPTOQUOTE

K F H V E N M F Y X F N V A F S C

N E Q W K V N F L K E Q J C I E G E Q W

G D F I F A E V N . — C T E N G F G K V

Yesterday's Cryptoquote: I NEVER FEEL MORE ALONE THAN WHEN I'M TRYING TO PUT SUNSCREEN ON MY BACK. — JIMMY KIMMEL

Cruise ship Schedule: August 6 - 27 2024

			ARR	DEPT	BERTH	
TUE	06	ADVENTURE OF THE SEAS CARNIVAL HORIZON CARNIVAL MARDI GRAS	08.00 09.00 13.00	20.00 22.00 23.00	B C I	1 1 1
WED	07	RHAPSODY OF THE SEAS	09.00	21.00	C	1
TUE	13	CELEBRITY BEYOND CARNIVAL CELEBRATION CARNIVAL VISTA	08.00 08.00 13.00	21.00 22.00 23.00	B C I	1 1 1
THU	14	ENCHANTED PRINCESS	08.00	18.00	C	1
WED	20	CARNIVAL HORIZON	09.00	22.00	C	1
WED	27	CELEBRITY BEYOND	08.00	21.00	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 basicbut 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 occurs, so keep yourself and your belongings safe.

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Why does Vermont keep flooding? It's complicated, but experts warn it could become the norm

By **PATRICK WHITTLE** and **MICHAEL CASEY**
Associated Press

Vermont is flooding. Not just yesterday, two weeks ago and a year before that, but experts say the state could see catastrophic events like these for the foreseeable future. Climate change is fueling stronger, more persistent storms and the state's infrastructure is feeling the effects in villages along the Green Mountains' rivers and streams, which carry a huge amount of water. Now, these towns are the

epicenter of a flooding conundrum that state and federal officials are scrambling to resolve. In the meantime, many homeowners are still trying to rebuild from floods just over a year ago considered historic at the time, now becoming the norm. A combination of factors leaves Vermont susceptible to these kinds of devastating floods. Climate change warming the atmosphere Extreme flooding conditions like these are often the result of random, short-term natural weather patterns heightened by long-term, human-caused climate change. With climate change, storms are forming in a warmer atmosphere, making extreme rainfall a more frequent reality. □

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Stores lure back-to-school shoppers with deals and 'buy now, pay later' plans

By **ANNE D'INNOCENZIO**
and **CORA LEWIS**
AP Business Writers

NEW YORK (AP) — Mass market retailers in the U.S. are plying shoppers with offers for computers, clothes and other back-to-school essentials at affordable prices. To seal the deal, they are marketing "buy now, pay later" services as a way for customers to spread out the cost of going back to class in style.

The strategies for securing sales are on display to coax consumers, particularly those in lower income brackets, into spending during the retail world's second-most important period behind the winter holidays, retailers and analysts said. Various forecasts project back-to-school sales this year will be about the same or lower than last year.

Even as inflation has come down, the costs of food, rent and other necessities remain much higher than before the coronavirus pandemic. High interest rates have made it more expensive to carry a credit card balance. Savvy shoppers across the income spectrum have proven willing to shop second-hand and to buy store labels and brands,



Shoppers pass clothing from Walmart's No Boundaries brand at a Walmart Superstore in Secaucus, New Jersey, Thursday, July 11, 2024.

Associated Press

which are typically cheaper than nationally advertised brands.

"Inflation is the main thing dictating the change in my spending," Jasleen Reyes, 43, a mother of three who works as a hotel operations manager and lives in New York City's Harlem neighborhood, said.

"Before it wasn't so bad. Now, I have to watch every dollar."

For Reyes, that means look-

ing for more discounts, particularly when it comes to getting sneakers and jeans for her children. She also planned to use a "buy now, pay later," or BNPL, plan to buy a laptop for her 24-year-old son, a college student, and school uniforms for one of her teenage daughters. Reyes estimates she will spend \$3,200-\$3,400 on back-to-school items this year, about \$1,500 more than last year mainly be-

cause of the laptop. She uses credit cards but prefers the four installment BNPL option because it splits up her costs over two months, interest-free, instead of adding them to a monthly bill that would accrue interest if she were unable to pay off the balance right away.

Unlike gifting holidays such as Christmas and Valentine's Day, the back-to-school period is dominated by spending on essentials

like class supplies and replacing clothes and shoes that kids have outgrown.

But like the winter holidays, the back-to-school shopping season keeps starting earlier. One reason is Amazon's Prime Day. Rivals hoping to capture some of the online behemoth's momentum have helped make July a good month for discounts. Target, for example, offered 20 school supplies, including notebooks and colored pencils, that together cost less than \$20. The discount retailer moved the sale to the third week of June from the first week of July a year ago.

More people are using "buy now, pay later" services heading into the back-to-school season. In June, \$6.75 billion worth of online purchases in the U.S. were made with BNPL services, a 14.3% increase from the same month a year ago, according to Adobe Analytics data.

Many shoppers appreciate the flexibility of "buy now, pay later," but consumer advocates have expressed concerns that the growth of the payment method may reflect financial stress and ultimately leave Americans in more debt. □

Court holds up Biden administration rule on airline fees while the carriers sue to kill it

NEW ORLEANS (AP) — Consumer advocates are criticizing an appeals court decision that blocks a new U.S. Transportation Depart-

ment rule requiring airlines to more clearly disclose fees when they advertise prices for a flight.

A three-judge panel on the

5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in New Orleans said Monday the rule "likely exceeds" the agency's authority "and will irreparably harm airlines."

The judges found the rule to be too detailed in its restrictions. They granted a request by airlines to temporarily block the rule while a lawsuit filed by the carriers plays out.

The Biden administration published the rule, alongside another dealing with airline refunds, in April as part of a campaign against what it calls junk fees. The Transportation Department said the rule would save consumers more than \$500 million a year.

Consumer advocates were

dismayed with the court's ruling. Caroline Ciccone, president of the group Accountability.US, said the new rule "is beyond reasonable for an industry notorious for nickel and diming families to help fuel executive compensation and bonuses." Ciccone said Tuesday that the judges were "all too happy to give the airlines what they wanted at the expense of everyday consumers."

The industry trade group Airlines for America, which joined the lawsuit against the rule, declined to comment.

Under the rule, airlines and ticket agents would be required to disclose fees for checked and carry-

on bags and canceling or changing a reservation. Airline websites would have to show the fees the first time customers can see a price and schedule.

Six carriers including American, Delta and United, along with Airlines for America, sued in May to block the rule. The trade group said then that the rule would confuse consumers by giving them too much information when buying tickets.

The panel of judges granted the airlines' request to expedite their lawsuit and said the matter would be moved up to the next available session for oral arguments. □



Passengers wait in a security line at Denver International Airport on Wednesday, Feb. 22, 2023.

Associated Press

U.S. tops South Sudan 103-86 at Paris Olympics, earns spot in men's basketball quarterfinals

By TIM REYNOLDS

AP Basketball Writer

VILLENEUVE-D'ASCQ, France (AP) — In the rematch, the U.S. had an easier time with South Sudan than it did when the teams first met a couple of weeks ago.

Easier. Not easy.

The U.S. clinched a trip to the quarterfinals at the Paris Olympics by beating South Sudan 103-86 on Wednesday night a game that wasn't ever really in doubt but was no romp either. Bam Adebayo scored 18 points and Kevin Durant scored 14 for the Americans, who took control with a 25-4 run in the first half.

Anthony Edwards scored 13 and LeBron James scored 12 for the U.S. Nuni Omot led South Sudan with 21 points, while Carlík Jones scored 18 and Bul Kuol added 16.

The win locked up a knock-out-round berth and the No. 1 seed out of Group C for the U.S., which joined Canada, France and Germany in the quarterfinals. There are seven teams still alive for the other four quarterfinal spots; only



Bam Adebayo, of the United States, reacts after a dunk over Wenyen Gabriel, of South Sudan, in a men's basketball game at the 2024 Summer Olympics, Wednesday, July 31, 2024, in Villeneuve-d'Ascq, France.

Puerto Rico, which faces the Americans on Saturday, has been eliminated from contention to advance. That said, Saturday's game the first between Puerto Rico and the U.S. at the Olympics since an embarrassing 92-73 loss in Athens 20 years ago isn't meaningless for the U.S. A 3-0 re-

cord in group play would give the Americans their best chance at a top-two seed for the knock-out round and, in theory, an easier matchup in the quarterfinals. South Sudan finishes group play against Serbia on Saturday, a game that'll have serious knockout-stage im-

plications for both teams. The draw for the quarterfinals will be held Saturday night, and all four quarterfinal games will be played Tuesday in Paris. South Sudan coach Royal Ivey likened his life to a movie after his team won its Olympic opener over Puerto Rico, and under-

standably so. The story of his team from the youngest country in the world, a group that overcame absurd odds just to get to the Paris Games is a quintessential Olympic one, one that will be talked about for years whether the African nation wins another game in France or not.

That said, if nearly beating the Americans in London on July 20 in an exhibition the 101-100 game where James had to bail out the U.S. at the end was a movie, then this was the sequel. In the movie world, sequels often aren't as good as the originals. Such was the case Wednesday.

The first few minutes after the opening credits weren't bad — South Sudan led 7-6 and 10-8 — but the plot got predictable quickly. Durant made a 3-pointer with about a minute to go in the opening quarter for the first double-digit lead, Adebayo scored inside with 8:42 left in the half to cap what was a 25-4 run, the Americans had a 33-14 lead and there wasn't a ton of drama the rest of the way. □

Associated Press

NFL is moving closer to replacing the chain gang with new technology to measure line to gain

By ROB MAADDI

AP Pro Football Writer

The NFL is moving closer to replacing the chain gang with new technology to measure line to gain.

NFL executive Gary Brantley told The Associated Press the league will test Sony's Hawk-Eye technology during some preseason games. The system most likely wouldn't be ready for full implementation until next season, though it could happen sooner.

"We're in the installation phase for all of our stadiums, really getting them calibrated and up to date," said Brantley, the NFL's senior vice president and chief information officer. "We're just really getting to a place where this system is as accurate as possible and really calibrating across our multiple stadiums.

... We have multiple stadiums with multiple dimensions inside of those stadiums with different age. So we're really just going through the installation of putting in the infrastructure and making sure these cameras are installed."

Sony, which was named the NFL's official technology partner on Wednesday, has expanded its sports technology through Hawk-Eye Innovations to support officiating and the development of on-field and sideline technologies, including a new coach's sideline headset that will debut in 2025.

Its Hawk-Eye tracking services for line-to-gain measurement adds cameras to stadiums to track players, officials and the ball. The optimal tracking system no-

tifies officials instantly if a first down was gained after the ball is spotted by hand.

"We're reducing a significant amount of time, 40 seconds for each time of use that basically is making the game that much more impactful," said Neal Manowitz, Sony president and chief operations officer. "And then also the system is accurate down to less than half an inch, which is incredibly, incredibly accurate. Hopefully the fans appreciate the objective view, or at least half the fans each play will be appreciating it."

The NFL has long used two bright orange sticks and a chain to measure for first downs. That method would remain in a backup capacity. Beyond new technology for line-to-gain measure-



Chain gang first down marker during an NFL preseason football game between the New Orleans Saints and the Kansas City Chiefs at the Mercedes-Benz Superdome in New Orleans, Friday, Aug. 9, 2013

Associated Press

ment and new headsets for coaches' communication, Sony is partnering with the NFL to enhance sideline photography, broadcast cameras and production, and more.

"The NFL has incredibly high standards and really what we're talking about in this relationship is together, at the highest level, how do we change the future of sports," Manowitz said. □

LeMahieu has career-high 6 RBIs, Yanks beat Phils 6-5 for 3-game sweep and 5-game winning streak

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — DJ LeMahieu had a career-high six RBIs with a grand slam and two-run double, Nestor Cortes got his first road win this year and the New York Yankees extended their winning streak to five with a 6-5 victory Wednesday that completed a three-game sweep of the slumping Philadelphia Phillies.

Giancarlo Stanton added a pair of hits for New York, which rebounded from a 10-23 slide with its best stretch since eight consecutive wins from May 9 to June 6. The Yankees (65-45) headed home a half-game behind AL East-leading Baltimore (65-44).

"We know we're good and when we play well, we



New York Yankees' DJ LeMahieu, center, celebrates his grand slam with Carlos Narvaez, left, as Philadelphia Phillies catcher Garrett Stubbs, right, looks on during the second inning of a baseball game, Wednesday, July 31, 2024, in Philadelphia.

Associated Press

know we can beat anyone," Yankees manager Aaron Boone said.

Weston Wilson homered

and Nick Castellanos had three RBIs for the Phillies, who have lost four in a row and 11 of 15. Two-time NL

MVP Bryce Harper went 0 for 5 with two strikeouts, hit into a game-ending double play and is in a 1-for-30 slump.

"You know he's going to come out of it at some point; he's such a great hitter," Phillies manager Rob Thomson said. "He's going to start hitting home runs again, and he's going to start feeling good about himself. Maybe he needs a day off to clear his head a little bit."

The Phillies had not been swept in a three-game series at home since July 22-24, 2022.

In a season-long slump, LeMahieu entered with a .173 batting average and 13 RBIs. The two-time batting

champion hit his third career slam and had hit first game with two extra-base hits since last Aug 25.

"It's been a tough go," LeMahieu said. "Today felt good."

He hit an 83.4 mph slider off Cristopher Sánchez (7-7) in the second inning, a 400-drive upheld when a video review determined a fan did not interfere while making contact with the ball. "I was trying to put something in the air, put something in the outfield," LeMahieu said. "Put a good swing on it."

After Philadelphia closed to 4-3, LeMahieu hit a two-run double off in the sixth off José Ruiz.

"Really excited for him," Boone said.

"Obviously, guys know he's grinding, know he's going through it. He was clearly the difference today."

Cortes (5-9) had been 0-5 with a 6.18 ERA in 11 road starts while 4-4 with a 2.47 at Yankee Stadium. He allowed three runs and three hits in 5 1/3 innings with six strikeouts.

Cortes had been 0-4 in six starts since beating Baltimore on June 18.

"His stuff was great," Boone said.

After setting a Yankees record with four home runs in his first three games Jazz Chisholm Jr. went 1 for 4 with a single.

Clay Holmes worked around Kyle Schwarber's leadoff single in the ninth for his 22nd save in 30 chances, his first since July 12. Holmes wasted a ninth-inning lead Tuesday with a run-scoring wild pitch.

"You want to get back out there and help the team win," Holmes said.

Philadelphia nearly took the lead in the seventh when Austin Hays' drive to left off Tommy Kahnle with two on was snared against the wall near the left-field foul pole by Alex Verdugo. After Castellanos' RBI single in the eighth pulled the Phillies within a run, newly acquired right-hander Mark Leiter Jr. stranded the bases loaded by striking out Brandon Marsh. □



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