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It might do other leaders some good to take a cue from (Finnish PM Sanna Marin) and mingle with their citizens outside of campaign rallies and photo ops. It would be prudent for them to try to relate to young people rather than (ignore or) judge them.

SABRINA MADDEAUX, A11

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# BEST leave it alone



ISTOCK / GETTY IMAGES

## CANADIANS ARE ALL FOR BEST-BEFORE DATES, REPORT SAYS, EVEN IF THEY LEAD TO FOOD WASTE

LAURA BREHAUT

The next time you're about to pitch an unopened bottle of ketchup, can of soup or half-empty carton of eggs just because the best-before date has passed, consider this: The term "best before" is not synonymous with "toss after."

Best-before dates are an indicator of quality, not safety. Past-dated foods may lose freshness or flavour, and their texture might change, but these differences do not necessarily mean they're no longer fit to eat.

Labelled on everything from cartons of milk to salad kits and vacuum-sealed fish fillets, best-before dates are omnipresent. According to Health Canada, they're mandatory on almost all prepackaged foods that will stay fresh for up to 90 days.

Some people use the terms "best before" and "expiry" interchangeably. Unlike the former, though, expiration dates should be heeded.

Date labelling can be confusing, and this confusion leads to food waste.

British grocers, including Waitrose and Marks & Spencer, have recently removed best-before dates from packaged fruit and vegetables, reportedly to help people waste less.

But would Canadians be willing to do the same? Not yet.

According to a new report by Dalhousie University's Agri-Food Analytics Lab (AAL), most Canadians are against scrapping best-before dates to reduce food waste.

"Canadians are addicted to best-before dates. The results are basically showing that right now," says Sylvain Charlebois, director of the AAL. "Essentially a quarter of Canadians would be able to live without (them)."

Canada's food safety system is among the world's best, and Canadians have confidence in it, explains Mark Juhasz, an AAL research associate. A strong food safety culture could help explain the difference in attitudes.

See **FOOD SAFETY** on A2

## Court stops mandatory drug tests of airport firefighters

'HIGHLY INTRUSIVE'

TOM BLACKWELL

An Ontario court has struck down the Ottawa airport's plan to conduct unannounced, random drug tests on its firefighters, citing a lack of evidence the group has a substance-abuse problem that would justify such a "highly intrusive" invasion of privacy.

The Divisional Court also dismissed the airport's suggestion that Canada's legalization of cannabis had made it any more likely firefighters would show up at work impaired.

The ruling is the latest in a string of cases on the thorny issue of workplace drug screening, and underscores the contrast between Canada's approach and American law, which generally gives employers much more leeway to demand tests.

"It's almost universally referred to as the Canadian model. In the U.S., they've struck a different balance," said lawyer Sean McGee, who represented the fire crew's union.

See **TESTING** on A6



## HOUSING

PRICED OUT OF CANADA'S BIGGEST CITIES, MILLENNIALS ARE WILLING TO RELOCATE.

Page FP1

## Potash goes from Liberal outhouse to 'geopolitical' gold

ANJA KARADEGLIJA

OTTAWA • Potash has become "geopolitically essential" internationally after Russia's invasion of Ukraine, Finance Minister Chrystia Freeland said Wednesday on a tour of a potash producer in Saskatchewan.

"Farmers around the world depend on our potash ... and that means that millions and millions of people depend on the work that is being done here. At a time when Russia and Belarus are

quite rightly being shut out of the global economy because of Vladimir Putin's barbaric invasion of Ukraine, the work being done here is more important than ever."

Freeland said she gets "asked at international meetings about Canada and our ability to supply some of the strategic resources that the world no longer wants to buy from Russia."

See **POTASH** on A6

**Fertilizer ban makes no sense. Comment, FP10**



## CANADA

TOP COURT NOMINEE DREAMED OF JOB SINCE SHE WAS 9.

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## Ottawa tries to shield details in Russian turbine court action

OTTAWA • The federal government is moving to shield "sensitive or potentially injurious information" from disclosure during a court challenge of its decision to return a turbine repaired in Montreal to a Russian energy giant.

In an application to the Federal Court, the attorney general seeks confirmation that information flagged by the Justice Department must not be disclosed in the turbine legal proceedings.

In early July, Foreign Af-

fairs Minister Mélanie Joly issued a permit to Siemens Energy Canada authorizing it to service turbines used by Russian state-owned gas company Gazprom, despite sanctions against Moscow over its invasion of Ukraine.

Ukraine has criticized the Canadian government for agreeing to a request from Germany to exempt Siemens from the sanctions.

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**Deadly attack hits Ukraine on Independence Day. A8**

COMMENT

## Canada sets our policy, not China

Trudeau's jab at pro-Taiwanese diplomacy

ADAM ZIVO

Last Friday, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said during a news conference that his government will ensure that Canadian parliamentarians planning to visit Taiwan as part of an upcoming trade mission "reflect" on the "consequences" of their visit. Trudeau's euphemistic jab at pro-Taiwanese diplomacy was reprehensible, undermining the independence of Canada's parliamentary associations and tacitly validating China's threat this week to punish Canadians should the visit occur.

Earlier this month, U.S. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi visited Taiwan as part of a larger diplomatic delegation. She was the highest-ranking American official to visit in decades, which infuriated China and led Beijing to retaliate with large-scale military exercises in the region, which included shooting missiles into the waters surrounding Taiwan.

In this context, Trudeau's remarks could reasonably be interpreted as discouraging new visits to Taiwan in an effort to placate China — especially considering that the Chinese embassy issued a statement late Tuesday warning that Beijing might take "forceful measures" against Canada. But anyone who truly "reflects" on the "consequences" of diplomatic engagement with Taiwan will see that such engagement is necessary for asserting Canada's sovereignty and values.

Canadian parliamentarians have a well-established tradition of visiting Taiwan through the Canada-Taiwan Friendship Group (CTFG), one of dozens such friendship groups that exist for various countries and regions. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, parliamentarians would visit Taiwan twice a year.

Past outreach has paid off handsomely — Taiwan is Canada's fastest growing trade partner in Asia, with total bilateral trade growing by an astounding 47.9 per cent between 2020 and 2021. As of last year, Taiwan was Canada's 11th largest trading partner, putting it ahead of such countries as Australia and Spain.

See **ZIVO** on A10

**China insists Canada respect its territory. A5**

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## HISTORY

## Fossil may boost case for earliest ancestor

Creature walked upright, climbed trees, study finds

MADDIE BURAKOFF

NEW YORK • More than 20 years ago, scientists discovered a seven-million-year-old skull that they concluded belonged to a creature who walked upright and was our earliest known ancestor. Not everyone was convinced. Now, the researchers are back with more evidence they say strengthens their case.

Their new study published Wednesday analyzed arm and leg fossils found near the skull in Africa, looking for signs of walking on two feet instead of on all fours. When early humans started walking upright, it marked a key moment in our split away from apes.

In the paper in the journal *Nature*, researchers again place the creature just on the human side of that evolutionary divide. The fossil species, named *Sahelanthropus tchadensis*, walked upright while still being able to climb around in trees, they reported.

The species has been dated to around seven million years ago, which makes it the oldest known human ancestor, by a long shot. That's about a million years older than other early known hominins.

But it's been a source of fierce debate since the fossils were first unearthed in Chad in 2001.

Researchers — also led by scientists at the University of Poitiers in France — initially looked at the fossil creature's skull, teeth and jaw. They argued that the creature must have walked on two feet and held its head upright, based on the location of the hole in the skull where the spinal cord connects to the brain.

Other experts weren't swayed.

The latest work includes a thigh bone that was not linked to *S. tchadensis* at first and went unstudied for years. Other researchers at the French university found the bone in the lab's collection and realized it probably belonged to the fossil species.

Compared to bones from other species, the thigh bone matched up better with upright-walking humans than knuckle-walking apes, according to the study.

"There is not one feature. There is just a total pattern of features," co-author Franck Guy said of their analysis at a press briefing.

Still, the debate over the species is likely to continue.

Ashley Hammond, a scientist at the American Museum of Natural History in New York, said more research is needed to find the creature's place on the evolutionary tree.

"I'm not fully convinced yet," Hammond said. "This could still also be a fossil ape."

Rick Potts, director of the Smithsonian's Human Origins Program, said the thigh bone puts the species on "better footing" as a possible early human ancestor. But the real confirmation comes down to a common saying in the field: "Show me more fossils."

The Associated Press



SABINE RIFFAUT, GUILLAUME DAVER / FRANCK GUY / PALEVOPRIM / CNRS / UNIVERSITE DE POITIERS VIA THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

This illustration provided by the University of Poitiers in August shows different modes of movement practised by *Sahelanthropus tchadensis*. Researchers have found evidence it's the earliest human ancestor found so far.

## We waste more food than U.S.

FOOD SAFETY  
Continued from A1

How often Canadians look at best-before dates depends on the food category, the report found. Of the 1,508 Canadians surveyed in August, 73 per cent always refer to best-before dates on dairy products, 69 per cent on seafood and 66 per cent on meat.

At the other end of the spectrum, 32 per cent look at dates on non-perishable packaged foods and 39 per cent on produce.

Openness to buying products without a best-before date also varied widely by food category. Sixty-eight per cent of Canadians would buy produce without a best-before date, but only 15 per cent would be willing to do so with dairy products.

People trust their judgment with fruit and vegetables, says Charlebois. With animal-based foods, "not so much."

Juhasz attributes these findings to people's attitudes toward risk. "(There's) a big distinction between produce and dairy. It's almost twice as much of a concern over the importance of best-before dates. And that probably has a lot to do with the sense of risk, let's say, of getting sick from eating sour milk, or milk gone bad."

Canadians' acute reliance on best-before dates with dairy could be a product of past experiences with milk souring before the date had passed, Charlebois highlights. It may also be partly due to misconceptions.

According to Second Harvest, you can consume milk up to two weeks past the best-before date (unless your senses tell you otherwise). Yogurt is safe to eat for at least one to two weeks past the best-before date, food



DANIEL LEAL / AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES FILES

In the U.K., grocers have encouraged shoppers to "use the sniff test" with cow's milk and trust their judgment with fresh food products in the absence of date labelling.

scientist Jeffrey Farber told the *National Post* in 2020; opened hard cheese will last three to four weeks (up to six months unopened) and butter up to a month, says Alberta Milk.

Comfort zones vary from person to person, says Juhasz. If the primary grocery buyer is immunocompromised or pregnant, shopping for kids or seniors, they are likely to make different decisions than a healthy, single 20-something-year-old, for instance.

Economics also comes into play. "Best-before dates help people save money, because you can actually use time to your advantage," says Charlebois.

"Every one of us has considered time as part of our grocery experience," he adds. Whenever you reach to the back of the dairy case for the most recently stocked carton, you're attempting to buy as much time as possible.

Buying close- or past-dated food, on the other hand, can result in significant savings. If you buy a tub of yogurt the day before the best-before date, for example, the grocer could offer up to 50 per cent off.

"If there are no best-before dates, how do you offer discounts to consumers? And I think a lot of Canadians would wonder how food economics would work without best-before dates,"

says Charlebois.

Forty-four per cent of Canadians have bought past-dated food at a discount, 65 per cent have thrown out unopened food because its best-before date had passed and 78 per cent have eaten food after its best-before date.

Here lies a paradox in the findings, the report's authors say. While many Canadians buy and eat past-dated food, others toss it.

Income factors in as well, says Juhasz. "With food inflation and inflation in general, people are probably more cost-sensitive, and will likely be for the next half-year to year — hopefully not much longer."

"And that's going to have implications on how people are buying their groceries, but also what they're doing with (them). So, hopefully, it's leading to people making the best use of their food."

In the U.K., grocers have encouraged shoppers to "use the sniff test" with cow's milk and trust their judgment with fresh food products in the absence of date labelling.

According to the New Food Sustainability Index, the average Canadian wastes 79 kilograms of food at home each year. That's more than the average American (59 kilograms) and the average Briton (77 kilograms).

National Post

## ODD

## THE PARISIAN CAT HOTEL THAT'S FULLY BOOKED

PARIS • Much as they enjoyed their cats' company during two years of coronavirus lockdown, Parisians have enthusiastically taken up travel again if the reservation register at one Paris cat hotel is anything to go by.

At the Arbre a Chats (Cats' Tree) hotel, prospective guests need to reserve well ahead, as all its 24 "contemporary and comfortable" cubicles are fully booked — although cats who know one another can double up and share a room.

"Unlike last year, this year we were fully booked for August from the end of February," hotel owner Veronica Colson said.

With cats snoozing on couches, sitting high up in the tree-shaped wooden climbing structure in the centre, or observing street life from a ledge by the window, the hotel is in full swing as cat owners rediscover the pleasure of travel.

"We needed a cat hotel where we are sure he will get his medicine and his treatment. Here it will be done without problems," said Anne-Marie Grataloup as she dropped off Monte Christo ahead of one of her regular trips.

In true Parisian style, the hotel has "à la carte" services such as massage, brushing and a transport service to pick up guest. As an extra, the hotel management send owners a picture and a message twice a week about what Whiskers is eating and how it is getting along with the other guests.

"It's like when your kids are in summer camp — you like to know how they are doing, right?" Colson said.

Reuters

DAVID A. KAY  
1940-2022

## Expert helped disprove Iraqi WMDs

'We were almost all wrong,' inspector said

David A. Kay, the weapons proliferation expert who led a CIA-run operation in 2003 that concluded former Iraqi ruler Saddam Hussein had built no weapons of mass destruction, sharply undermining the chief justification for the U.S.-led invasion earlier that year, died Aug. 13 at his home in Ocean View, Del. He was 82.

The cause was cancer, said his wife, Anita Kay.

Kay, a reserved Texan with an international affairs doctorate, became a household name in 1991 while serving in Iraq as chief nuclear weapons inspector for the UN and the IAEA after the U.S. and its allies had liberated Kuwait from Hussein's forces.

The mission of all the UN teams was to search out and destroy any banned nuclear, biological or chemical weapons or materials. In September 1991, Kay's nuclear team launched an unannounced inspection of a military facility in Baghdad to look for incriminating documents about Hussein's efforts to develop nuclear arms.

During the inspection, his 44-person group was detained after attempting to remove documents and videotapes and endured a four-day standoff. As pressure from the UN Security Council and the world grew, the Iraqis let them leave with the items.

The UN teams destroyed Iraq's illicit weapons and programs in the 1990s, but after they were forced out in 1998, the CIA worried Hussein was secretly rebuilding his WMD. After the 9-11 attacks, President George W. Bush portrayed those suspicions as irrefutable evidence of an Iraqi threat to the U.S. and allies.

When the March 2003 invasion toppled Hussein's regime, a Pentagon team searched but failed to find any sign of the weapons of mass destruction. That summer, George W. Bush put the CIA in charge and then CIA Director George Tenet picked Kay to lead the group.

Kay soon concluded that none existed and that the CIA and other intelligence agencies had badly misjudged the evidence. Frustrated by the CIA's refusal to agree, Kay resigned in 2004. Days later, he gave explosive testimony to the Senate Armed Services Committee.

"We were almost all wrong, and I certainly include myself here," he told the panel.

He did, however, tell Bush he believed the invasion was the right thing to do because of the suffering of the Iraqis under Hussein.

The Washington Post



David Kay