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Judge blocks order barring asylum access at border and gives administration two weeks to appeal

By **REBECCA SANTANA AND ELLIOT SPAGAT**

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP)—A federal judge said Wednesday that an order by President Donald Trump suspending asylum access at the southern border was unlawful, throwing into doubt one of the key pillars of the president's plan to crack down on migration at the southern border.

But he put the ruling on hold for two weeks to give the government time to appeal.

In an order Jan. 20, Trump declared that the situation at the southern border constitutes an invasion of America and that he was "suspending the physical entry" of migrants and their ability to seek asylum until he decides it is over.

U.S. District Judge Randolph Moss in Washington said his order blocking Trump's policy will take effect July 16, giving the Trump administration time to appeal.

Moss wrote that neither the Constitution nor immigra-



A volunteer walks along a road next to the border wall separating Mexico and the United States in Jacumba Hot Springs, Calif., Jan. 19, 2025.

Associated Press

tion law gives the president "an extra-statutory, extra-regulatory regime for repatriating or removing individuals from the United States, without an opportunity to

apply for asylum" or other humanitarian protections. The Homeland Security Department did not immediately respond to a request but an appeal is likely.

The president and his aides have repeatedly attacked court rulings that undermine his policies as judicial overreach. The ruling comes after illegal border crossings have plummeted.

The White House said Wednesday that the Border Patrol made 6,070 arrests in June, down 30% from May to set a pace for the lowest annual clip since 1966.

On June 28, the Border Patrol made only 137 arrests, a sharp contrast to late 2023, when arrests topped 10,000 on the busiest days. Arrests dropped sharply when Mexican officials increased enforcement within their own borders in December 2023 and again when then-President Joe Biden introduced severe asylum restrictions in June 2024.

They plunged more after Trump became president in January, deploying thousands of troops to the border under declaration of a national emergency. Trump and his allies say the asylum system has been abused.

They argue that it draws people who know it will take years to adjudicate

their claims in the country's backlogged immigration courts during which they can work and live in America.

But supporters argue that the right to seek asylum is guaranteed in U.S. law and international commitments even for those who cross the border illegally. They say that asylum is a vital protection for people fleeing persecution a protection guaranteed by Congress that even the president doesn't have the authority to ignore.

People seeking asylum must demonstrate a fear of persecution on a fairly narrow grounds of race, religion, nationality, or by belonging to a particular social or political group.

In the executive order, Trump argued that the Immigration and Nationality Act gives presidents the authority to suspend entry of any group that they find "detrimental to the interests of the United States." Groups that work with immigrants the Arizona-based Florence Project, the El Paso, Texas-based Las Americas Immigrant Advocacy Center and the Texas-based RAICES filed the lawsuit against the government, arguing that the president was wrong to equate migrants coming to the southern border with an invasion.

And they argued that Trump's proclamation amounted to the president unilaterally overriding "... the immigration laws Congress enacted for the protection of people who face persecution or torture if removed from the United States."

But the government argued that because both foreign policy and immigration enforcement fall under the executive branch of government, it was entirely under the president's authority to declare an invasion.

"The determination that the United States is facing an invasion is an unreviewable political question," the government wrote in one argument. □



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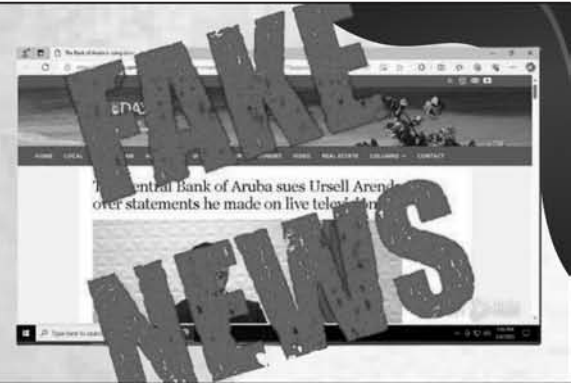
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New CIA report criticizes investigation into Russia's support for Trump in 2016

By DAVID KLEPPER and ERIC TUCKER

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A declassified CIA memo released Wednesday challenges the work intelligence agencies did to conclude that Russia interfered in the 2016 presidential election because it wanted Republican Donald Trump to win. The memo was written on the orders of CIA Director John Ratcliffe, a Trump loyalist who spoke out against the Russia investigation as a member of Congress. It finds fault with a 2017 intelligence assessment that concluded the Russian government, at the direction of President Vladimir Putin, waged a covert influence campaign to help Trump win. It does not address that multiple investigations



CIA Director John Ratcliffe departs a classified briefing for senators at the Capitol on Capitol Hill, Thursday, June 26, 2025, in Washington.

since then, including from the Republican-led Senate Intelligence Committee in 2020, reached the same conclusion about Russia's

influence and motives. The eight-page document is part of an ongoing effort by Trump and close allies who now lead key govern-

ment agencies to revisit the history of a long-concluded Russia investigation, which resulted in criminal indictments and shadowed most

of his first term but also produced unresolved grievances and contributed to the Republican president's deep-rooted suspicions of the intelligence community. The report is also the latest effort by Ratcliffe to challenge the decision-making and actions of intelligence agencies during the course of the Russia investigation.

A vocal Trump supporter in Congress who aggressively questioned former special counsel Robert Mueller during his 2019 testimony on Russian election interference, Ratcliffe later used his position as director of national intelligence to declassify Russian intelligence alleging damaging information about Democrats during the 2016 election even as he acknowledged that it might not be true. □

Associated Press

Air defense missiles among weaponry U.S. is withholding from Ukraine, AP sources say

By LISA MASCARO and AAMER MADHANI

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Trump administration will hold back delivering to Ukraine some air defense missiles, precision-guided artillery and other weapons as part of its announced pause to some arms shipments amid U.S. concerns that its own stockpiles have declined too much, officials said. The details on the weapons in some of the paused deliveries were confirmed by a U.S. official and former national security official familiar with the matter. They both requested anonymity to discuss what is being held up as the Pentagon has yet to provide details.

The pause includes some shipments of Patriot missiles, precision-guided GMLRS, Hellfire missiles and Howitzer rounds.

Elbridge Colby, Defense Department undersecretary for policy, said the decision to halt some weapons comes as Pentagon officials have aimed to provide Trump "with robust options to continue military aid to Ukraine, consistent with his goal of bringing this tragic war to an end."

"At the same time, the department is rigorously examining and adapting its approach to achieving this objective while also preserving U.S. forces' readiness for administration defense priorities," Colby added in a statement.

The decision was greeted with some pushback from Republican and Democratic boosters on Capitol Hill.

Rep. Brian Fitzpatrick, R-Pa., in a letter to Trump on Wednesday requested a briefing from the White House and Pentagon to explain the pause. Fitzpatrick is a co-chair of the Congressional Ukraine Caucus. "We must build up our own defense industrial base here in the U.S. while simultaneously providing the needed assistance to our allies who are defending their freedom from a brutal invading dictator," the Pennsylvania representative said in a post on X. "To not do both is unacceptable."

Ohio Rep. Marcy Kaptur, another co-chair of the Ukraine Caucus, blasted the move that came just days after Russians forces

launched one of the biggest air assaults on Ukraine since it launched the war more than three years ago. □



Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth speaks during a news conference at the Pentagon in Washington, Sunday, June 22, 2025, after the U.S. military struck three sites in Iran, directly joining Israel's effort to destroy the country's nuclear program.

Associated Press

Military veteran gets a life sentence for plotting an FBI attack after his Jan. 6 arrest

By **MICHAEL KUNZELMAN**

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A military veteran was sentenced Wednesday to life in prison for plotting to attack an FBI office and assassinate law enforcement officers in retaliation for his arrest on charges that he was part of the mob that stormed the Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021, court records show.

Edward Kelley was one of the first rioters to breach the Capitol. Nearly two years later, Kelley made plans with another man to attack the FBI office in Knoxville, Tennessee, using improvised explosive devices attached to vehicles and drones, according to prosecutors.

Last November, a jury convicted Kelley of conspiring to murder federal employees, solicitation to commit a crime of violence and influencing federal officials by threat.

Kelley received a pardon from President Donald Trump for his Jan. 6 convictions, but a judge agreed with prosecutors that Trump's action did not extend to Kelley's Tennessee case. That makes Kelley, who is from Maryvale, Tennessee, one of only a few Capitol riot defendants



Rioters storm the West Front of the U.S. Capitol, Jan. 6, 2021, in Washington.

Associated Press

remaining in prison after the Republican president's sweeping act of clemency. U.S. District Judge Thomas Varlan handed down Kelley's life sentence during a hearing in Knoxville, according to court records. The judge denied a request for Kelley to be released pending the outcome of an appeal.

Prosecutors had recommended a life sentence for Kelley, saying he was remorseless and incapable of rehabilitation.

"On the contrary, Kelley

not only believes the actions for which he was convicted were justified but that his duty as a self-styled 'patriot' compelled him to target East Tennessee law enforcement for assassination," they wrote.

Kelley served in the Marine Corps for eight years. He was deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan before his 2015 discharge from the military. On Jan. 6, 2021, Kelley was captured on video helping two other rioters throw a Capitol Police officer onto the ground and using a

piece of wood to damage a window, according to the FBI. He was the fourth person to enter the Capitol through a broken window, the FBI said.

After a trial without a jury, a federal judge in Washington convicted Kelley last November of 11 counts stemming from the riot. Before Kelley could be sentenced, Trump pardoned him and hundreds of other convicted Capitol rioters.

Kelley argued that his pardon was broad enough to cover his conduct in the

Tennessee case, but the judge disagreed. Varlan said Kelley's crimes in the Tennessee case were separated from Kelley's conduct on Jan. 6 "by years and miles." Prosecutors reached the same conclusion.

In other Jan. 6 cases, however, Trump's Justice Department has argued that the pardons apply to separate convictions. For instance, prosecutors concluded that a Kentucky man's pardon for storming the Capitol also covered his conviction for illegally possessing guns when FBI agents searched his home for the Jan. 6 investigation. Kelley has been jailed since December 2022. His lawyer, Mark Brown, said Kelley did not hurt anybody or directly threaten anybody with violence. Brown urged the judge to reject prosecutors' request to apply a "terrorism enhancement" in calculating his client's sentence.

"Kelley does not deserve the same sentence as an actual 'terrorist' who injured or killed hundreds or thousands of America citizens," Brown wrote.

Kelley's co-defendant, Austin Carter, pleaded guilty to a conspiracy charge in January 2024. □

Columbia student data stolen by politically motivated hacker, university says

By **JAKE OFFENHARTZ**

Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — A politically motivated hacker



Students sit on the front steps of Low Memorial Library on the Columbia University campus in New York City, Feb. 10, 2023.

Associated Press

breached Columbia University's data systems last week, stealing troves of student documents while briefly shutting down the school's computer systems, a university official said.

The June 24 cyberattack prompted widespread network outages on campus, locking students and staff out of their email accounts, coursework and video conference software for several hours.

On the same day, images of President Donald Trump's smiling face appeared on several public monitors across the Manhattan campus.

A spokesperson for Columbia declined to elaborate on the political motivations behind the attack. But they described a highly sophisticated "hacktivist" who had gained access to private student records in an attempt to further a political agenda.

The spokesperson said it was unclear if the Trump photo display was connected to the data breach. "We are investigating the scope of the apparent theft and will share our findings with the University community as well as anyone whose personal information was compro-

mised," the school said.

The cyberattack comes as Columbia remains in the crosshairs of the Trump administration, which has threatened to pull \$400 million in federal funds over what it claims is the school's failure to protect Jewish students.

Negotiations over a possible settlement are ongoing. The university has already agreed to a host of changes demanded by Trump, including placing its Middle East studies department under new supervision and overhauling its rules for protests and student discipline. □

The Dalai Lama says he plans to reincarnate, ensuring the institution will continue

By SHEIKH SAALIQ

Associated Press

DHARAMSHALA, India

(AP) — Tibetan spiritual leader the Dalai Lama on Wednesday said the centuries-old Tibetan Buddhist institution will continue after his death, ending years of speculation that started when he indicated that he might be the last person to hold the role.

Speaking at prayer celebrations ahead of his 90th birthday on Sunday, the Nobel Peace Prize-winning spiritual head of Tibetan Buddhism said that the next Dalai Lama should be found and recognized as per past Buddhist traditions, while signalling that China should stay away from the process of identifying his successor.

The Dalai Lama's succession plan is politically consequential for most Tibetans who oppose China's tight control of Tibet and have struggled to keep their identity alive, in their homeland or in exile. It is also profound for Tibetan Buddhists who worship him as a living manifestation of Chenrezig, the Buddhist god of compassion.



Tibetan spiritual leader the Dalai Lama presides over an event celebrating his 90th birthday according to a Tibetan calendar at the Tsuglakhang temple in Dharamshala, India, Monday, June 30, 2025, ahead of his birthday according to the Gregorian calendar on July 6.

Associated Press

The decision, however, is expected to irk China, which has repeatedly said that it alone has the authority to approve the next religious leader. It insists the reincarnated figure must be found in China's Tibetan areas, giving Communist authorities power over who is chosen.

Many observers believe

there eventually will be rival Dalai Lamas one appointed by Beijing, and one by senior monks loyal to the current Dalai Lama.

Tenzin Gyatso became the 14th reincarnation of the Dalai Lama in 1940. He fled Tibet when Chinese troops crushed an uprising in the Tibetan capital Lhasa in 1959 and has been living in

the town of Dharamshala in India since then, helping establish a democratic government-in-exile while also traveling the world to advocate autonomy for the Tibetan people.

Tibetan Buddhists believe the Dalai Lama can choose the body into which he is reincarnated, as has happened on 14 occasions

since the creation of the institution in 1587. He has reiterated in the past that his successor would be born outside China.

The Dalai Lama laid out his succession plan in a recorded statement that was televised at a religious gathering of Buddhist monks in Dharamshala.

He said the process of finding and recognizing his reincarnation lies solely with the Gaden Phodrang Trust a non-profit he founded in 2015 that oversees matters related to the spiritual leader and the institute of the Dalai Lama.

"No one else has any such authority to interfere in this matter," he said, adding that the search for a future Dalai Lama should be carried out in "accordance with past tradition."

Asked Wednesday about the Dalai Lama's announcement, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning at a daily news briefing said "the reincarnation of the Dalai Lama must adhere to the principles of domestic search in China" and "approval by the central government." □

Belarus frees more prisoners while simultaneously cracking down on dissent

By YURAS KARMANAU

Associated Press

TALLINN, Estonia (AP) —

Belarus' authoritarian President Alexander Lukashenko announced pardons for 16 more prisoners on Wednesday, a gesture that comes as the unrelenting crackdown on dissent continues.

The newly pardoned prisoners were convicted on a variety of criminal charges, including extremism a charge often used against dissidents and government critics in Belarus. Human rights advocates welcomed the release of the prisoners, but stressed that it is taking place as more people are being arrested in politically driven cases. Last month, the Belarusian

government pardoned and released 14 prisoners, but at least 60 more people were arrested on politically motivated charges, said Pavel Sapelka, a rights advocate with the Viasna human rights center, the country's oldest and most prominent rights group. Sapelka, in conversation with The Associated Press, compared the situation in Belarus to "revolving doors, where new political prisoners take the place of those released."

Mass arrests and convictions of government critics in Belarus have continued since 2020, when Lukashenko was handed a sixth term in office in an election that the opposition and the West denounced

as rigged.

Tens of thousands of people took to the streets in protest, in the biggest demonstrations that the

country had ever seen. Authorities unleashed a violent crackdown, detaining and beating thousands and driving many more

into exile abroad. The suppression of dissent drew international condemnation, and the U.S. and the European Union imposed sanctions on Belarus.

As of Wednesday, Viasna has designated 1,164 people behind bars as political prisoners. The number includes 38 journalists and the group's founder, Ales Bialiatski, who won the Nobel Peace Prize in 2022. At least eight political prisoners have died behind bars. Lukashenko, who in January secured another term in office in another election the opposition denounced as a sham, has recently been pardoning some political prisoners, seeking to improve ties with the West. □



Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko attends a meeting of the Supreme Eurasian Economic Council on the sidelines of the Eurasian Economic Forum in Minsk, Belarus, Friday, June 27, 2025.

Associated Press

Hong Kong proposes recognizing same-sex partnerships formed overseas

By KANIS LEUNG

Associated Press

HONG KONG (AP) — Hong Kong's government on Wednesday proposed a registration system that would recognize same-sex partnerships formed overseas, granting such couples more rights in the city.

In a document submitted to the legislature, the Constitutional and Mainland Affairs Bureau said the proposed system would allow registration for same-sex adult couples who have married, formed civil partnerships or civil unions overseas, provided these relationships were legally recognized in those jurisdictions and one of them is a Hong Kong resident.

After the registration, the couples would have rights including the ability to participate in medical decisions for their loved ones, provided consent is given. For mentally incapacitated adult patients, their partners can take part in the decisions as guardians.



Hong Kong's pro-democracy activist Jimmy Sham poses for photos after being released from prison in Hong Kong, Friday, May 30, 2025.

Associated Press

They would also enjoy the right to handle after-death matters for their partners, including claiming the bodies and deciding whether their remains can be used for medical treatment, education or research. Same-sex couples cannot

get married or register for civil partnerships in Hong Kong.

But authorities recognize same-sex marriages registered abroad for taxation and civil service benefits and other practical reasons, such as dependent

visas.

Many of the government's concessions were won through legal challenges and the city has seen growing social acceptance toward same-sex marriage in recent years.

The government proposal

came in response to the top court's landmark ruling in 2023 in favor of a framework for recognizing same-sex couples' rights. The ruling did not grant full marriage rights to same-sex couples but was a partial victory for prominent pro-democracy activist Jimmy Sham, who fought a five-year legal battle over the recognition of same-sex marriages registered overseas.

Sham, who was sentenced to over four years for his role in an unofficial primary under a Beijing-imposed national security law, was released from prison in May. In an interview with The Associated Press, Sham said heterosexual couples were not required to register their marriages overseas to get the recognition locally and questioned why same-sex couples had to do so. He also suggested that the government allow same-sex couples to enjoy equal prison visiting rights as heterosexual couples. □

Venezuelan lawmakers declare U.N. human rights chief persona non grata

CARACAS, Venezuela (AP)

—Venezuela's ruling party-controlled National Assembly on Tuesday declared Volker Türk, the United Nations high commissioner for human rights, persona non grata, criticizing the U.N. official for failing to protect

the rights of Venezuelan migrants deported by the Trump administration to a prison in El Salvador.

The rare diplomatic designation has no immediate practical effect but reflected the broader anger of President Nicolás Madu-

ro at the U.N. agency that monitors and defends human rights. It comes just days after Türk said his office has documented increasing arbitrary detentions, enforced disappearances and torture under Maduro's government.

"Türk turns a blind eye to atrocious crimes," said National Assembly President Jorge Rodríguez, who is also Maduro's chief negotiator with the U.S. "He does nothing for the human rights of Venezuelans in the United States and El Salvador." El Salvador is holding 252 Venezuelans deported from the U.S. in a maximum-security prison. Türk recently urged the U.S. to halt deportations of Venezuelans who may be at risk of arrest in their home country and raised concerns about the lack of due process in mass de-

portations from the U.S.

The ire of Venezuela's National Assembly appeared to have been energized by Türk's speech to the Human Rights Council in Geneva last Friday.

Türk raised alarm over an intensifying crackdown on civil liberties in the wake of Venezuela's parliamentary elections in June and the unrest that followed Maduro's disputed re-election last year echoing past statements of concern from his agency and other watchdogs.

Electoral authorities loyal to the ruling party declared Maduro the winner of the July 2024 presidential election despite credible evidence to the contrary.

"I am very concerned by detention conditions, including people being denied access to medical care, and lacking access

to food and water," he told the council last week.

"Some prisoners were subjected to incommunicado detention."

Lawmakers called on Maduro to withdraw Venezuela's membership from the Human Rights Council while Türk remains in his post. Türk's office offered no immediate response to the National Assembly decision. The move Tuesday raised new questions over the status of the U.N. human rights office in Venezuela's capital of Caracas, which partially resumed operations last December months after Maduro's government forced it to close and expelled its staff, accusing the agency's employees of aiding "coup-plotters and terrorists" as tensions surged in the run-up to the presidential election. □



U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCR) Volker Türk speaks during a press conference at the European headquarters of the United Nations, in Geneva, Switzerland, Wednesday, Feb. 12, 2025.

Associated Press

Aruban fauna: The Prikichi



For a small island, Aruba sure has a lot of unique treasures. Among these,

we have the prikichi that are unique to our island. These have evolved to perfectly adapt to our desert climate and make Aruba their home. At the same time, they are part of what makes Aruba truly one of a kind.

Prikichi (parakeet, *Aratinga pertinax*)

The Prikichi is the national bird of Aruba. On Aruba, Bonaire, and Curaçao, parakeets can be found, but each of the three islands has a different breed. The Yellow-shouldered Amazon parakeet that we have on Aruba is also found along the coast of Venezuela. Unfortunately,



there is interbreeding between the breeds due to cage birds from, for example, Curaçao being released on Aruba. The parakeet population on Aruba is in danger due to extensive deforestation occurring on the island because of the growing population.

The prikichi weighs be-

tween 90 to 100 grams. It has a greenish-brown head with some yellow around the eye. The back and wings of the parakeet are dark green, and the underside of the body is a lighter shade of green. There is also a bit of blue in the wings. The parakeet's beak is gray/black.

Parakeets often use ter-

mite nests as breeding sites. Parakeets are found in all natural environments (mondi) of the island. It defends itself by flying away and loud cries. Parakeets eat seeds from the pods of the Kwihi tree, Divi Divi, and columnar cactus. They also consume natural fruits. Its main predators are boa constrictors, humans. □

Aruba's first Ombudsman and what she can mean for you

(Oranjestad)—Last year Aruba marked a milestone with the introduction of the first Ombudsman of Aruba. Jurima Bryson, appointed on October 1st 2024, is proud to represent Aruba and is prepared to help both locals and tourists with their concerns.

What is the role of the Ombudsman?

In a nutshell, the Ombudsman is the middle man between you and government or semi-government agencies. This means that as a local or as a visitor of Aruba, you can file a complaint to the bureau of the Ombudsman against government and semi-government agencies.

Already left the island? No problem. The Ombudsman of Aruba can still receive and handle your complaint even from abroad. You only have to provide a way for them to reach you.

Because this is the first time Aruba has an Ombudsman, the bureau office is still not in operation, but Ombudsman Bryson assured that the office will be open sometime in the second half of the year. In the mean time, you can follow the bureau on Instagram and Facebook. "We provide almost daily information so they can understand the role of the Ombudsman, what she can do for them and which kinds of complaints they can submit."

Follow the ombudsman on Instagram: @ombudsmanaruba and Facebook: Ombudsman Aruba □



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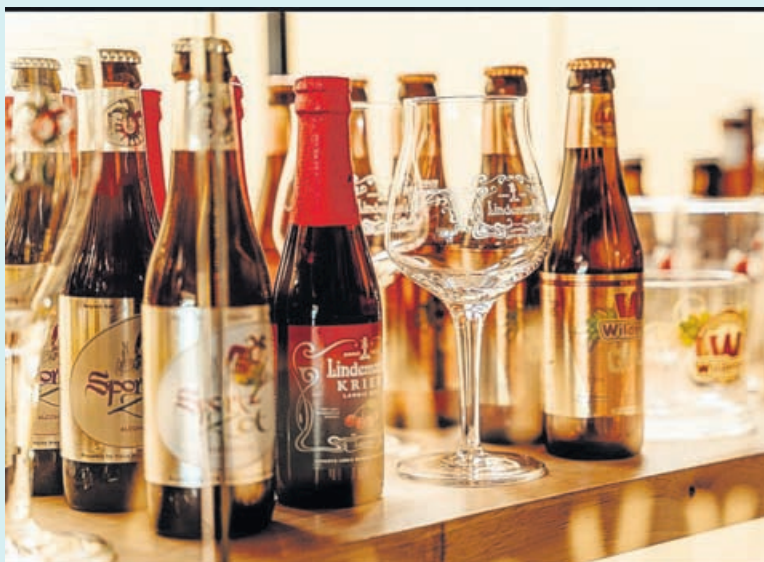
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Only \$29 for a Full Rack of Ribs Glazed in Belgian Beer & Barbecue Sauce!

(Palm Beach, Aruba) — Looking for the perfect place to fuel up before the fireworks this 4th of July? Celebrate Independence Day with bold flavors and festive vibes at L'Avenue, the only Belgian-owned bistro in Aruba—located right in the heart of Palm Beach, just steps from the island's biggest firework shows, top resorts, and stunning beaches.

Enjoy a 4th of July dinner special for just \$29, featuring a full rack of fall-off-the-bone ribs, slow-cooked and glazed with rich Belgian beer and barbecue sauce. Served with crispy Belgian fries and tangy Brussels sprouts coleslaw with bacon bits, it's the perfect start to your night of celebration. Pair it with handcrafted cocktails, a curated wine list, and the biggest selection of Belgian beers on the island—because great food deserves great drinks.



L'Avenue just celebrated their first anniversary—and with big success! In only one year, this cozy European-style bistro has quickly become a must-visit dining destination for both locals and visitors. As the sister restaurant of Papillon—an Aruba dining icon for over 15 years—L'Avenue brings tradition, bold flavors, and a touch of European elegance to the Palm Beach culinary scene. Leading the kitchen is Executive Chef Juan Ludena, whose refined techniques and creative flair elevate every dish.

L'Avenue is also famed for its signature fresh mussels, flown in directly from Europe and served in classic pots with house-made sauces. And no meal is complete without indulging in the authentic Belgian waffles, topped with your choice of chocolate sauce, fresh strawberries, whipped cream, or ice cream.

Located at The Cove Mall in Palm Beach, L'Avenue offers a chic, air-conditioned indoor dining space that's perfect for families, couples, and friends looking to enjoy a relaxed yet refined meal.

Celebrate big, eat well, and be just steps away from the best fireworks in Aruba.

Call +297 695 400
Email info@lavenuearuba.com



Or simply pass by—and don't hesitate to ask for Heidi, the owner from Brugge, who would love to share her passion for Belgium and its unique cuisine with you! □

Visit the natural bridges of Aruba!

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

The bridge was formed during thousands of years, cut and crafted by the wild waves that crash into the coral stone walls of the coast. Before its collapse, this bridge measured 30

meters in length and 7 meters in height, making it the biggest natural bridge in the Caribbean at the time. For many years, this site was also a frequently visited beach, as the bridge had a small opening through



which the water would flow into the tiny beach.

Unfortunately in 2005, the bridge collapsed, and the little beach dried up. Despite this, this site remained a tourist attraction, with



many visitors walking along the coral cliffs of the bridge to see the spectacular view of the northern coastline and the Caribbean Sea. Visitors can also still visit the souvenir shop on the left of the bridge entrance.

While the natural bridge no longer is functional, there is now a smaller natural bridge very close. This bridge is often called the "Baby Bridge" or "Daughter Bridge". □

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Aruba to me

ORANJESTAD — You are back and we would like to portrait you! By inviting you to send us your favorite vacation picture while enjoying our Happy Island.

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

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

For today we received a lovely message from Lynette Burns.

She wrote to us saying: "Aruba to me is visiting every year to go fishing with our friends on the Lucky Star. Brian caught a mahi mahi and a HUGE Bonita. Colin caught a massive wahoo! And Brian Sr caught a delicious looking mahi mahi."

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



Food culture in Aruba

(Oranjestad) - Like many other cultures, an important aspect of the Aruban cultural identity is our connection to food and food traditions. The local food traditions consist of a melting pot of different cultural and religious eating habits and dishes.

Breakfast, lunch and dinner

The routine of breakfast, lunch and dinner on the island is one that does not completely follow a European or American routine, despite the major influences from these parts of the world on our culture and way of living. When it comes to the three important meals of the day, most of the Aruban population follows a Latin-American influenced routine.

Breakfast

Breakfast in Aruba is quite simple: a cup of coffee or tea, some bread, and sometimes an egg. Sometimes, due to the need of a quick "to-go" breakfast, you may also find many snack trucks and cafes that sell sandwiches, pastechis (meat pie), arepas and empanadas early in the morning.

Main Meal

The main meal is typically eaten in most households around noon or in the afternoon. This can consist of meat, fish, and chicken—stewed or fried—with funchi (polenta) or rice with stewed vegetables. Often, fried or boiled plantain or pan bati (Aruban pancake) is included. Stews are a staple in Aruban cuisine and can be largely influenced by Latin-American and Latin/Afro-Caribbean Stews. Some of the more unique stews and soups from the ABC Islands* include sopi di bonchi cora (red kidney bean soup with pig tail), sopi mondongo (tripe soup), carni stoba (beef stew), comcomber stoba (West Indian gherkin stew) and much more.

Dinner Time

Dinner time can vary significantly from household to household. Unlike the U.S. or in Europe, dinner time typically does not consist of a whole (warm) meal. Instead, the evening "meal" can typically consist of something lighter, like a sandwich, though it is not uncommon to see leftovers from the main meal reheated and eaten again. Tea and coffee are often also

served with the evening snack.

(Religious) Holidays

Christmas is probably the biggest global holiday, and every culture has its own spin on what their Christmas cuisine entails. In Aruba, our Christmas cuisine is again largely based on Latin-American influences, most notably from Venezuela. Ayacas and the famous pan di ham* are two crucial holiday dishes, along with stuffed turkey, roasted glazed ham topped with pineapples, arroz con pollo (rice and chicken) and potato salad, among other items. Traditional drinks include ponche crema (Aruban eggnog), chuculati pinda (hot chocolate with peanut butter), and homemade fruit punch. Desserts include bolo di pistachio (pistachio cake), bolo di cashupete (cashew cake), quesillo (flan), bolo preto (dark fruit cake), drigidek (gingerbread), pan boyo (bread cake) and more.

Snacks and tasty delights

Besides meals and dishes that are eaten on the dinner table, Aruba also has a food tradition that includes snacks and other tasty delights that



you may easily find around the island. These include, Saco*, basket, pastechi, kroket, deditos, Johnny cake and more. These snacks are usually sold at local snack trucks and cafes, often located on the side of the road. In the area of Tanki Leendert and Tanki flip, for example, there are many of these trucks parked on the side of the road and often open until late at night—offering tasty and filling snacks post night-life fun. □

*ABC Islands: Aruba, Bonaire and Curacao

*Pan di ham: Derived from the Venezuelan Pan de Jamon (rolled up bread with ham, raisins and olives)

*Saco: Saco literally means "bag". Saco contains fried potatoes, plantains, chicken (and ribs) and a Johnny cake, served in a paper bag.

Source: Voeding, voedingsgewoonten en gerechten op Aruba (Nutrition, Food Traditions and Dishes on Aruba) by Biblioteca Nacional Aruba

The stories of "Compa Nanzi"



(Oranjestad)—The most popular character you may hear about in the Caribbean is Anansi, known locally on Aruba as "Compa Nanzi". Local children grew up hearing the tales of the conniving spider, and his legacy forms part of the oral narrative tradition that is common in Aruba.

Although the stories are most popular in the Caribbean, "Compa Nanzi" is not entirely unknown globally, especially not in the West African region. Brought to the "new world" by enslaved Africans from Ghana, the historical thread of how Nanzi was introduced on Aruba follows the enslaved Africans in Curacao during the colonial era, which saw the biggest population of enslaved Africans in the Dutch Caribbean.

The stories of Compa Nanzi were a sign of hope for freedom among the slaves, who passed around different stories involving the famous spider through word of mouth, due to not being able to express their native culture in the new world. These stories were a way to not only preserve their culture, but it acted as a medium for relief during the harsh treatment to which they were subjected to.

It wasn't until the end of the nineteenth century that the stories of Nanzi were written down in different languages. However, not all stories are completely alike in every country, as is the risk of oral story telling. However, one thing will always be dominant in Compa Nanzi's stories: his sneaky ways to get what he wants!

How Nanzi fooled the king

One day Nanzi was taking a stroll near the castle of Shon Arei, the king. He had this sudden urge to walk in. He didn't think too much about it and committed to what he had in mind. It was a warm afternoon, and the castle personnel were taking their afternoon nap. Even the soldier guarding the castle door was fast asleep, snoring so loud that his beard bounced up and down on his chin. Nanzi just slipped past him, looked back for a moment then walk right on in.

Nanzi stumbled upon the king's quarters. With all his excitement he sat in the king's throne, and put on his crown that was hanging on the side of the throne. It was very hot that day, and it wasn't long until Nanzi too fell asleep, right there on the king's throne. He was so deep in sleep and snoring so loud, that even when the king found him in his seat, Nanzi did not even notice.

Shon Arei was flabbergasted by the sight of Nanzi on his throne, wearing his crown. How disrespectful! "Soldiers, get him!" he commanded. Nanzi was sound asleep, but when the soldiers picked him up, he jumped from fright. By then though, the soldier already had him in their hold.

"Put him in a sack, stitch it up and throw him in the ocean!" the king said furiously. Two soldiers immediately entered the chamber, took the crown off Nanzi's head and pushed him in a sack.

Nanzi was terrified; it looks like this time he

won't get away with his schemes. To get to the ocean, the soldier walked a long distance, and where beginning to feel very thirsty. Luckily they passed by a pub, and decided to have a nice cold beer. They set the sack with Nanzi in it outside and went to enjoy the refreshments. Nanzi was still trembling with fear in the sack. What is that he hears? A herd of sheep walking by?

"Compadre, listen here!" Nanzi screamed as loud as he could. The sheep herder got close to the sack. "What is this?"

"Man, there is something very beautiful in here that you can see. It's very rare and strange, but indeed, there is something so beautiful in here that you've never seen or will ever see," Nanzi told the herder.

The herder, very dumb, believed Nanzi's word. "Let me see!" he said.

"Well if you must insist," Nanzi said, "I'll let you take a look, but only for a quick second." The herder opened the sack, and Nanzi immediately jumped out. Before the herder could even take a look into the sack, Nanzi pushed him in it, and the herder fell head first in.

Nanzi didn't waste any time, and closed off the sack real tight. He then picked up the herder's hat and starting walking behind the traveling sheep as if nothing happened. After a little while, the soldiers headed back outside to continue their journey. As they picked up the sack, the poor herder started screaming to let him out, but the soldiers ignored him, thinking it was Nanzi.

Shon Arei went strolling a while later. He thought to himself: "This time Nanzi could not get away with his foolishness. He probably drowned in that sack ages ago." That is why, when he saw Nanzi walk behind the herd of sheep on the street, he was flabbergasted again. "Nanzi! Aren't you suppose to be at the bottom of the ocean floor?"

"I was, Your Majesty," Nanzi replied. But you know what, there is so many things to see down there in the sack! Like this herd of sheep. Seeing that they had no herder, I started walking behind them and gained their trust pretty quickly. At the bottom of the ocean there are so many wonderful things, like diamonds, and bags of gold. Chests of silver and other precious stones," Nanzi told the king. "What is that you say?" the king was intrigued. "I want to see it too!"

The king immediately demanded to his soldiers to be put in a sack and be placed in the ocean. Naturally, Shon Arei died because of this. He was never found again. Nanzi followed the soldier back to the castle, where sat once again on the late king's thrown and put his crown on. He took possession of all of Shon Arei's belongings, and lived the rest of his life as king. □

Story and pictures are from "Kon Nanzi a Nek Shon Arei (i otro kuentanan antiano di e araña sabi)" by Nilda Pinto.



The legend of the Kibrahacha tree

(Oranjestad)—As the climate begins to dry up here, the Kibrahacha is ready to bloom. Known locally for its bright, yellow flowers, this special tree only blooms for three to four days only. Scientifically known as *Tabebuia billbergii*, and in English as the Yellow Poui, this tree is native to the Caribbean islands of Aruba, Bonaire and Curacao, and is considered among locals as one of the most spectacular trees on the island. But did you also know that the beautiful yellow flowers have a story behind them?

The Kibrahacha is said to have extremely hard wood—so hard that it can break an axe. In fact, that's what its name means in Papiamentu: "kibra" (break) "hacha" (axe). The flowers bloom around April and May, but this only last for about three to four days, as the flowers start to fall off and the tree starts growing its green leaves. The Kibrahacha is especially particular, as it's the



only one among its neighboring trees to start blooming first.

The legend of the Kibrahacha Written by Hubert (Lio Booi)

One day Aterima, who lived west of the hill Sero Warawara, woke up one day to find her father sleeping in his hammock, suffering a bout of terrible fever. Her mother was very worried, and as was the custom in the olden days, asked Aterima to go fetch Kudawechea, who was an epistemophile, to come see his father.

Aterima wasted no time and went to go fetch Kudawechea. Upon telling Kudawechea that her father was sick, he immediately accompanied Aterima back to her hut, where he encountered her father in a bad state. Not willing to waste any time, he told Aterima that the only thing that can cure her father is a home-made potion made out of the Kibrahacha flower. At the time the Kibrahacha was not yet in her blooming season, but the stubborn Kudawechea was determined to bring back Aterima's father back to health, and so off they went to the nearest Kibrahacha tree.

When they arrived at the tree, they saw that it was covered head to toe in thorns, with only a few closed flowers at the very top. Kudawechea, experienced veteran in all things Aruban flora and fauna, told Aterima to start plucking the thorns of the tree to climb to the top where the flowers are.



Aterima, just as determined to save her father, didn't hesitate to start.

To her surprise, every time she plucked a thorn of the tree, a bright, yellow flower bloomed in its place. The thorns were hard to pluck out, but Aterima continued plucking with enthusiasm and wonder at the unfolding sight before her. Not too long after she was able to fill her entire satchel with the yellow flowers. Kudawechea, satisfied to see Aterima so happy and encouraged to help her father, took her back to her hut.

Upon arriving back at the

hut, Aterima's mother quickly made a tea out of the flowers and gave it to her sick husband. Miraculously, after just one sip of the tea, the father's fever left his body immediately, and he opened eyes and sprung up feeling new.

The next morning, they all visited the same Kibrahacha tree that saved the life of Aterima's father and they saw another miracle. The tree was covered again in the same bright, yellow flowers, with not a thorn in sight. And as the legend goes, from that day on, the Kibrahacha tree no longer produced any more thorns. □

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 Nassaustraat, 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 innovations 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 "Typical 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 re-

nowned 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 hypnotechnician, 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. □

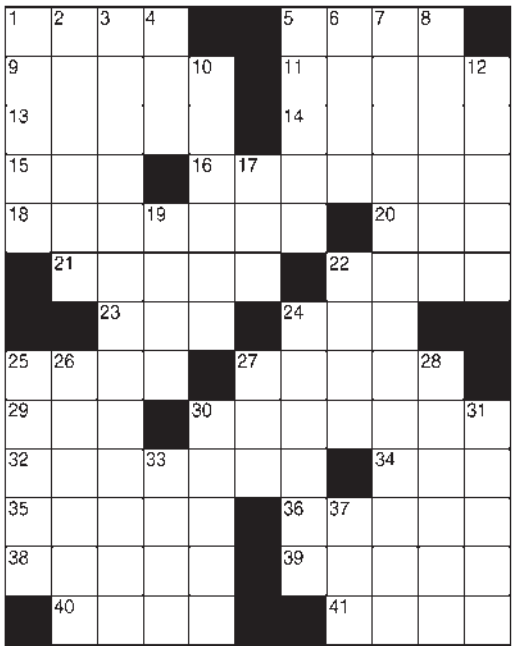
CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

- ACROSS
- 35 Homer
- 1 Diplomatic classic skill
- 5 Speed Thai
- 9 Love affair
- 38 Incline
- 11 By the way
- 39 Avignon's river
- 13 Fencing move
- 40 Till bills

- 14 Singer Travis
- 15 Snaky shape
- 16 "The Faerie Queene" poet
- 18 Some sofas
- 20 Eastern "way"
- 21 Gave out cards
- 22 That woman's
- 23 Music's — Nas X
- 24 Negative link
- 25 Toy store buy
- 27 Football plays
- 29 Greek vowel
- 30 Bests
- 32 Club layer
- 34 Half of hex-
- 41 Termini-
- 8 Make beloved
- 10 Flip
- 12 Pita sand-
- 17 Sulky state
- 19 Kite part
- 22 Hockey's Gordie
- 24 "Don't worry"
- 25 Sub shops
- 26 Verdi opera
- 27 Last mo.
- 28 Leave high and dry
- 30 Dandies
- 31 Some curves
- 33 Packing need
- 37 That woman

STEP GERMES
WAXER IMEAN
ELATE LINDA
AIL SPATTER
TATTER AWE
ENOS LAD
CENT EASY
CON SAWN
ALL BATTER
PLATTER ALA
PUREE DAMON
EDGES SLEPT
DEEDS IDES



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.

CRYPTOQUOTE

OJM ERM GYRCHJ TCPO R KRES
PT GJKT-CJRKUIRYUPM RG
OQED RG YDJW ERM TCPO R
KRES PT NCJRL. — CUEDRCL
BCUVDY

Cryptoquote: I AM OUT WITH
LANTERNS, LOOKING FOR MYSELF. — EMILY
DICKINSON

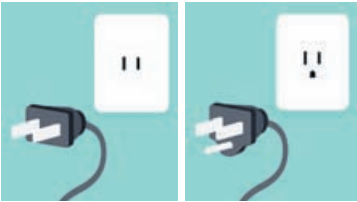
Cruise ship Schedule: July 02 - 16 2025

			ARR	DEPT	BERTH	
WED	02	RHAPSODY OF THE SEAS FREEWINDS	08.00 06.00	23.00 ****	C E	1 1
SUN	06	FREEWINDS - Dept.	****	22.30	E	-
TUE	08	CARNIVAL HORIZON	09.00	23.00	C	1
WED	09	FREEWINDS	06.00	****	E	1
SUN	13	FREEWINDS - Dept.	****	22.30	E	-
TUE	15	ADVENTURE OF THE SEAS	07.00	16.00	C	1
WED	16	OASIS OF THE SEAS CARNIVAL VISTA RHAPSODY OF THE SEAS FREEWINDS	11.00 08.00 08.00 06.00	23.00 16.00 23.00 ****	I C B E	1 1 1 1

Helpful tips for your stay on Aruba

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

Electrical power



Aruba generally operates on 110V to 127V supply voltage and 60Hz. There are also three types of outlets used on the island: type A with two flat prongs; type B with two flat and one grounding



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.

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.

Safety

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

SUDOKU

To play sudoku, use logic to fill the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the numbers 1-9 only once. Puzzle difficulty increases from Monday to Sunday.

King Classic Sudoku

			5		3			1
		8		2	9			7
5				7				
	8			3		7		
3				5	7			2
				8		6		4
		4					7	5
	5				4	9		
		1	2	9	5	4		

Difficulty: ★★★

Answer to previous puzzle

1	8	3	2	7	5	6	4	9
7	4	5	8	6	9	1	3	2
6	2	9	1	3	4	8	5	7
8	9	7	4	2	1	5	6	3
2	6	1	7	5	3	9	8	4
3	5	4	6	9	8	2	7	1
9	3	2	5	4	6	7	1	8
4	1	6	9	8	7	3	2	5
5	7	8	3	1	2	4	9	6

Difficulty: ★★★

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Microsoft's largest layoff in years hits Xbox, sales and other divisions

By MATT O'BRIEN
AP Technology Writer

Microsoft is laying off thousands of workers, its second mass layoff in months and its largest in more than two years.

The tech giant began sending out layoff notices Wednesday that hit the company's Xbox video game business and other divisions.

Among those losing their jobs are 830 workers tied to Microsoft's headquarters in Redmond, Washington, according to a notice sent to state officials Wednesday. The company won't say the total number of layoffs except that it was about 4% of the workforce it had a year ago.

Microsoft said the cuts will affect multiple teams around the world, including its sales division, part of "organizational changes" needed to succeed in a "dynamic marketplace."

A memo to gaming division employees Wednesday from Xbox CEO Phil Spencer said the cuts would position the video game business "for enduring success and allow us to focus on strategic growth areas." Xbox would "follow Microsoft's lead in removing layers of management to increase agility and effectiveness," Spencer wrote. Microsoft employed 228,000 full-time workers as of last June, the last time it reported its annual headcount.

The company said Wednesday that its latest layoffs would cut close to 4% of that workforce, which would be about 9,100 people. But it has already had at least three layoffs this year and it's unlikely that new hiring has matched the amount lost. Until now, this year's biggest layoff was in May, when Microsoft began laying off about 6,000 workers, nearly 3% of its global workforce and its largest job cuts in more than two years as it spends heavily on artificial intelligence.

Microsoft just last month cut another 300 workers



A Microsoft sign and logo are pictured at the company's headquarters, Friday, April 4, 2025, in Redmond, Wash.

Associated Press

based out of its Redmond headquarters, on top of nearly 2,000 who lost their jobs in the Puget Sound region in May, most of them in software engineering and product management roles, according to notices it sent to Washington state employment officials.

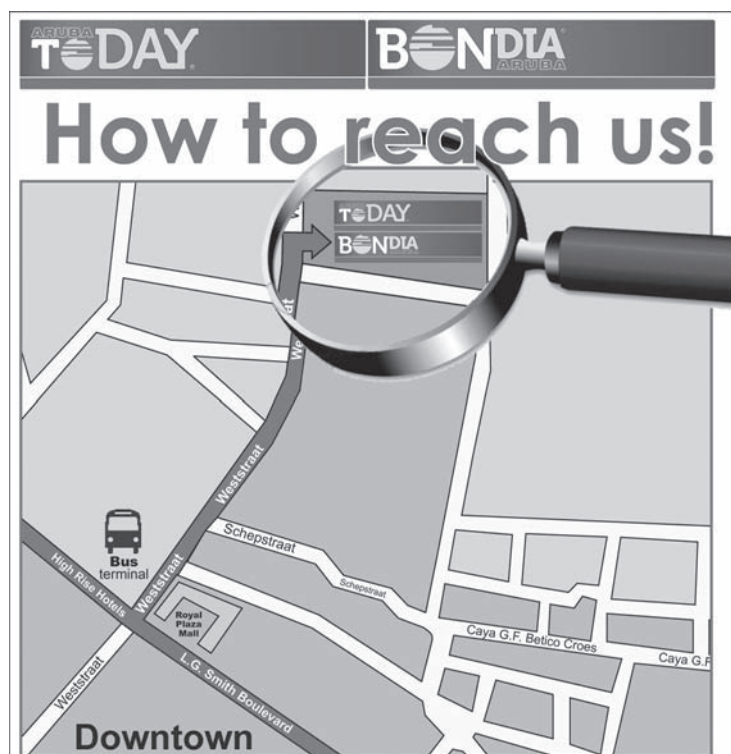
Microsoft's chief financial officer Amy Hood said on an April earnings call that the company was focused on "building high-performing teams and increasing our agility by reducing layers with fewer managers." The company has repeatedly characterized its recent layoffs as part of a push to trim management layers, but the May focus on software engineering jobs has fueled worries about how the compa-

ny's own AI code-writing products could reduce the number of people needed for programming jobs.

Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella said earlier this year that "maybe 20, 30% of the code" for some of Microsoft's coding projects "are probably all written by software."

The latest layoffs, however, seemed centered on slower-growing areas of the company's business, said Wedbush Securities analyst Dan Ives.

"They're focused more and more on AI, cloud and next-generation Microsoft and really looking to cut costs around Xbox and some of the more legacy areas," Ives said. "I think they overhired over the years."



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9am -1pm



Editor
Caribbean Speed Printers N.V.
Aruba Bank N.V. Acc. #332668
Caribbean Mercantile Bank N.V.
Acc. #23951903
RBC Royal Bank Acc. #1330772

Editors

Pilar Flores
Richard Brooks
Angenette Figuereo

Sales

Mark Gomes
Sulaika Croes

Classifieds

classified@cspnv.com

Distribution and Collection

accounting@bondia.com

Social / Website

Juan Luis Pinto

Weststraat 22
T: 582-7800
E: news@arubatoday.com
W: www.arubatoday.com
f @arubatoday



HEALTH

DOCTOR ON DUTY

Oranjestad

Hospital 7:00 pm / 10:00pm
Tel. 527 4000

San Nicolas

Imsan 24 hours
Tel. 524 8833

PHARMACY ON DUTY

Oranjestad:

Sta. Cruz: Tel. 585 8028

San Nicolas:

Centro Medico: Tel. 584 5794

OTHER

Dental Clinic 587 9850

Blood Bank Aruba 587 0002

Urgent Care 586 0448

Walk-In Doctor's Clinic

+297 588 0539

EMERGENCY

Police	100
Oranjestad	527 3140
Noord	527 3200
Sta. Cruz	527 2900
San Nicolas	584 5000
Police Tipline	11141
Ambulancia	911
Fire Dept.	115
Red Cross	582 2219

TAXI SERVICES

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

TRAVEL INFO

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

AID FOUNDATIONS

Aruba Food Bank
Tel. 588 0002
FAVI- Visually Impaired
Tel. 582 5051
Alcoholics Anonymous
Tel. 736 2952
Narcotics Anonymous
Tel. 583 8989
Fundacion Contra Violencia
Relacional Tel. 583 5400
Centre for Diabetes
Tel. 524 8888
Child Abuse Prevention
Tel. 582 4433
Quota Club Tel. 525 2672

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ARUBA TODAY NEWS

Movie Review: In 'The Old Guard 2,' Charlize Theron and Uma Thurman get half a movie

By **LINDSEY BAHR**
AP Film Writer

About 80 minutes into "The Old Guard 2," I found myself wondering how the filmmakers were going to wrap things up. There were a lot of threads dangling with Charlize Theron's gang of immortal warriors, split up and facing extinction, and she still had yet to face off with the new villain, Discord (apparently the first immortal), played by Uma Thurman.

The promise of a showdown between The Bride and Furirosa may not justify the existence of this sequel, now streaming on Netflix, but it was something to look forward to nonetheless. And while they do fight, for a little, something even crazier happens not too long after: The movie ends or, rather, stops mid-climax. An ending was never part of the plan.

This might be an attempt at a cheeky nod to the life of an immortal what is an ending after all, I guess? But unlike the first film, which merely left the door open for the possibility of a sequel, "The Old Guard 2" cuts off mid-movie. Not only is there no option to "continue watching," there's no promise we'll even get an "Old Guard 3."

Moviegoers endure a lot of partial stories in these days of franchise filmmaking, ever desperate for a built-in audience. With some,



This image released by Netflix shows, from left, Henry Golding, Luca Marinelli, Marwan Kenzari, Charlize Theron and Kiki Layne in a scene from "The Old Guard 2."

you know a resolution is coming at a later date, as with "Mission: Impossible" or "Wicked." With others, like "Dune," a part two or three might have been a question mark, but the intention was unambiguously there. There's nothing fun or enjoyable about being surprised that you've been watching a "part one" the whole time, especially on a service that has helped train us to click next episode.

Perhaps that also has to do with the quality of "The Old Guard 2," which feels like a step down from the

first movie, which provided much-needed escapism in the summer of 2020 as we met Theron's Andromache the Scythian (Andy, for short) and welcomed Kiki Layne's new immortal Nile. It ended with Booker (Matthias Schoenaerts) being exiled for a betrayal and the tease that Andy's old companion Quynh (Vân Veronica Ngô), was still alive.

Quynh is, understandably, not thrilled that she was left at the bottom of the ocean for centuries. She wants to punish Andy the most the movie heavily implies that

they were more than sisters in arms, but never quite goes so far as to confirm that their love was romantic, which is especially strange given that it doesn't shy away from letting Nicky (Luca Marinelli) and Joe (Marwan Kenzari) be an out gay couple.

One of the most significant behind-the-scenes changes is that Gina Prince-Bythewood ("The Woman King," "Love & Basketball") ceded directing duties to Victoria Mahoney, who has directed episodes of "Queen Sugar" and "You" and served as second unit

director on "Star Wars: The Rise of Skywalker." Working off Greg Rucka and Sarah L. Walker's screenplay, the movie opens with a lively action sequence in which the immortals attempt to nab an arms dealer. Nicky and Joe are the distractors, getting their own James Bond-esque car chase, while Nile, Andy and Copley (Chiwetel Ejiofor) get more hand-to-hand combat on the property. It sets a fun tone and allows for some (mostly) welcome exposition "remember, you're not immortal anymore" for those who might not have the best memory of something they watched at the height of the pandemic.

But the film never recaptures that energy again and devolves into an increasingly tedious meditation on time, death and the science of why Andy lost her immortality power (which is approaching "Face/Off" levels of insanity). Thurman has a mighty good scowl as the "bad immortal" who long ago decided she didn't have any desire to help the humans who persecuted her kind, but the movie seems to be saving her big moment for later.

Overall "The Old Guard 2" is fine, a bit of a background movie that's probably easy enough to tune in and out of (though Schoenaerts, a standout, gives it some real pathos). □

Australia cancels rapper Ye's visa over 'Heil Hitler' release



Ye, the rapper formerly known as Kanye West, leaves federal court during the trial of Sean "Diddy" Combs in New York, Friday, June 13, 2025.

Associated Press

By **ROD MCGUIRK**
Associated Press

MELBOURNE, Australia (AP) — Ye, the U.S. rapper formerly known as Kanye West, was recently stripped of an Australian visa after he released his single "Heil Hitler," a government minister said on Wednesday. Home Affairs Minister Tony Burke revealed Ye has been traveling for years to Australia, where his wife of three years, Bianca Censori, was born. Her family live in Melbourne. Burke said "Heil Hitler," released in May, promoted Nazism. The song has been criticized as an antisemitic tribute to German dictator Adolf Hitler.

"He's been coming to Australia for a long time. He's got family here. And he's made

a lot of offensive comments that my officials looked at again once he released the 'Heil Hitler' song and he no longer has a valid visa in Australia," Burke told Australian Broadcasting Corp.

"We have enough problems in this country already without deliberately importing bigotry," Burke added.

Ye's representative did not immediately respond to a request for comment on Wednesday.

Australia's Migration Act sets security and character requirements for non-citizens to enter the country.

Australia's largest cities, Sydney and Melbourne, have seen a spate of antisemitic attacks since the war between Israel and Hamas began on Oct. 7, 2023. □

Malik Beasley should be in high demand after a career season

By TIM REYNOLDS
AP Basketball Writer

Malik Beasley should be riding high right now, after a season where he became just the fifth player in NBA history to make at least 300 shots from 3-point range in a single season.

Instead, his future seems very uncertain.

He's a free agent and facing some serious off-court issues including being part of an investigation surrounding what's believed to be unusual betting patterns on games and now some unrelated legal matters involving his personal finances. Beasley was a key part of the Detroit Pistons this past season, averaging 16.3 points per game for a team that made the playoffs and was one of the feel-good stories in the NBA winning 44 games after winning only 14 in the previous season.

Some questions and answers about Beasley's current situations and his future:

What are the gambling-related allegations?

Beasley has not been charged with any crime. Federal investigators, who have not commented publicly, are looking into betting patterns surrounding some games Beasley played in during the 2023-24 season when he was with the Milwaukee Bucks. The primary focus of the probe is what are called "prop bets," ones where bettors can wager if a play-



Detroit Pistons guard Malik Beasley reacts during the second half of Game 1 in an NBA basketball first-round playoff series against the New York Knicks, April 19, 2025, in New York.

Associated Press

er will go over or under a certain statistical total like will he score more than 10.5 points, grab 5.5 or more rebounds, that sort of thing.

It is similar to other investigations such as the one that led to the banning of then-Toronto player Jontay Porter from the league. Terry Rozier, who plays for the Miami Heat, was a subject of a similar probe surrounding part of his time with the Charlotte Hornets. Rozier was never charged and never faced any penalty from the NBA.

ESPN reported that one game in question surrounded Beasley's performance on Jan. 31, 2024, and in particular whether he

would get more or less than 2.5 rebounds. Bettors, ESPN was told, wagered large sums that he would not get that many rebounds. But Beasley got six rebounds that night, meaning those "under" bets did not pay out.

What are Beasley's off-court legal issues?

News of the gambling probe broke on Sunday, followed by news of lawsuits two days later including one brought by a sports representation agency that is seeking more than \$2 million in damages.

That suit, brought by Hazan Sports Management Group, says Beasley breached his contract

and failed to fully repay a \$650,000 advance, among other issues. Beasley and that agency parted ways in recent months, even though it negotiated a \$6 million contract for him to play with the Pistons this past season.

"I have been with Malik for a long time, I have seen a lot of people around him come and go, but I have stayed away from any of his financial management or mismanagement or decisions he would make with money," Beasley's criminal defense lawyer, Steve Haney, told The Detroit News.

"I'm his lawyer. I don't get involved in his finances,"

Haney told the newspaper. "You hope to get them around the best business people and planners and management people. Sometimes they do and sometimes they don't."

Other issues that were revealed were issues with rent payments, along with a settlement with a dentist and even a barber who works with a number of NBA players.

What are his NBA prospects now?

The NBA has seen a huge spike in dependency on the 3-point shot in recent years, and Beasley who made 319 of them this past season, one back of Minnesota's Anthony Edwards for the most in the league is an elite 3-point shooter.

Only two players have made more than 1,000 3s over the last four seasons. Golden State's Stephen Curry, the league's all-time 3-point king, is one. Beasley is the other.

This means Beasley should be in high demand, given the fact that he has a skill all teams crave. And the Pistons, according to a person with knowledge of the talks, were prepared to offer Beasley a three-year contract to stay. But given the seriousness of the issues that have come up in recent days, those talks cooled. On Tuesday, Detroit struck a deal to bring in former Miami guard Duncan Robinson another elite 3-point shooter after striking a three-year deal. □

NHL, NHLPA, IOC and IIHF finalize agreement for players to participate in 2026 Olympics

ZURICH (AP) — The NHL, NHLPA and international officials on Wednesday finalized a long-ago agreed-to deal to send players to the 2026 Milan-Cortina Olympics.

The league, union, International Ice Hockey Federation and International Olympic Committee confirmed the participation of NHL players at the games for the first time since 2014. The groups negotiated the agreement and announced it initially last year.

IIHF president Luc Tardif called it "a major step forward for our sport."

The final touches took time to figure out after officials insisted for months they were not concerned about the lack of a signed document.

The deal opens the door for NHL participation to continue in 2030, something that had also been agreed to in February 2024.

Last month, the 12 participating countries unveiled the first six players on their Olympic rosters. The men's hockey tournament at the 2026 Games is scheduled to run from Feb. 11-22. □



Marty Walsh, left, NHLPA Executive Director, and Gary Bettman, NHL Commissioner, conduct a joint press conference before the NHL hockey draft Friday, June 27, 2025, in Los Angeles.

Associated Press

Wimbledon: No. 1 Aryna Sabalenka is the last top-five women's seed left. Carlos Alcaraz wins

By **HOWARD FENDRICH**

AP Tennis Writer

LONDON (AP) — Aryna Sabalenka joked that she'd love it if the upsets at Wimbledon would stop, which makes sense, given that she is ranked No. 1.

She's also the only one of the five top-seeded women still in the bracket after No. 4 Jasmine Paolini, last year's runner-up, followed No. 2 Coco Gauff, No. 3 Jessica Pegula and No. 5 Zheng Qinwen on the way out.

Sabalenka was two points from dropping the opening set of her second-round match three times on Wednesday before asserting herself for a 7-6 (4), 6-4 victory over Marie Bouzkova.



Aryna Sabalenka of Belarus reacts during her second round women's singles match against Marie Bouzkova of the Czech Republic at the Wimbledon Tennis Championships in London, Wednesday, July 2, 2025.

Associated Press

In all, a record-tying 23 seeded players, 13 men were gone by the end of Day 2, equaling the most at any Grand Slam event in the past 25 years.

Five more women joined them by losing Wednesday: Paolini, No. 12 Diana Shnaider, No. 21 Beatriz Haddad Maia, No. 22 Donna Vekic and No. 29 Leylah Fernandez.

"Of course you're going to know the overall picture," Sabalenka said, then added with a chuckle: "I hope it's no upsets anymore in this tournament, if you know what I mean."

She is a three-time Grand Slam champion, with all of those titles coming on hard courts at the Australian Open or U.S. Open. She also was the runner-up to Gauff at the clay-court French Open last month drawing criticism from some over her post-match comments, a flap she and Gauff set aside via social media videos last week but hasn't been past the semifinals on the grass of the All England Club.

On Wednesday, the record-breaking heat of the first two days gave way to rain that delayed the start of play on smaller courts for about two hours, along with temperatures that dropped from above 90 degrees Fahrenheit (32 degrees Celsius) to below 68 F (20 C). At Centre Court, the 48th-ranked Bouzkova went ahead 6-5 in the first set with the match's initial service break thanks to a double-fault by Sabalenka. Bouzkova served for that set, and was two points away from it at 30-15 in that game, again at 30-all, then once more at deuce. But on the last such occasion, Sabalenka came through with a forehand volley winner she punctuated with a yell, followed by a down-the-line backhand winner that was accompanied by another shout.

"That was a tough moment," said Sabalenka, who will face 2021 U.S. Open champion Emma Raducanu next. "Until that point, (my) return wasn't great enough to break her serve. I'm really glad ... everything clicked together and I was able to break her back. I kind of like felt a little bit better." □



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