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20 states sue FEMA for canceling grant program that guards against natural disasters

By **DAVID A. LIEB**
Associated Press

Twenty Democratic-led states filed suit Wednesday against the Federal Emergency Management Agency, challenging the elimination of a long-running grant program that helps communities guard against damage from natural disasters.

The lawsuit contends President Donald Trump's administration acted illegally when it announced in April that it was ending the Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities program. FEMA canceled some projects already in the works and refused to approve new ones despite funding from Congress.

"In the wake of devastating flooding in Texas and other states, it's clear just how critical federal resources are in helping states prepare for and respond to natural disasters," said Attorney General Andrea Joy Campbell of Massachusetts, where the federal lawsuit was filed. "By abruptly and unlawfully shutting down the



A family walks by flood-damaged cars in North Plainfield, N.J., Tuesday, July 15, 2025.

Associated Press

BRIC program, this administration is abandoning states and local communities that rely on federal funding to protect their residents and, in the event of disaster, save lives."

FEMA did not immediately respond Wednesday to a request for comment. It

said in April that the program was "wasteful and ineffective" and "more concerned with political agendas than helping Americans affected by natural disasters."

The program, established by a 2000 law, provides grants for a variety of di-

saster mitigation efforts, including levees to protect against floods, safe rooms to provide shelter from tornadoes, vegetation management to reduce damage from fires and seismic retrofitting to fortify buildings for earthquakes.

During his first term, Trump

signed a law shoring up funding for disaster risk reduction efforts. The program then got a \$1 billion boost from an infrastructure law signed by former President Joe Biden. That law requires FEMA to make available at least \$200 million annually for disaster mitigation grants for the 2022-2026 fiscal years, the lawsuit says.

The suit contends the Trump administration violated the constitutional separation of powers because Congress had not authorized the program's demise. It also alleges the program's termination was illegal because the decision was made while FEMA was under the leadership of an acting administrator who had not met the requirements to be in charge of the agency.

The lawsuit says communities in every state have benefited from federal disaster mitigation grants, which saved lives and spared homes, businesses, hospitals and schools from costly damage. □

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First the shoes went back on. Now, at US airport security, more liquid in carry-ons may be at hand

By **REBECCA SANTANA**
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Travelers giddy about being able to keep their shoes on while walking through TSA checkpoints at the airport again may have something else to look forward to: changes to how much liquid they can carry. Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem said Wednesday during a conference hosted by "The Hill" that she is questioning "everything TSA does" and spoke of possible changes to the amount of liquids travelers can tote in their carry-on baggage.

"The liquids, I'm questioning. So that may be the next big announcement is what size your liquids need to be," Noem said. "We have put in place in TSA a multilayered screening process that allows us to change some of how we do security and screening so it's still as safe." She gave no details about precisely what those changes might be or how quickly travelers could expect to see them. Under the Transportation and Security Administration's current guidance, travelers can carry liquids in travel-sized containers 3.4 ounces (100 milliliters) or less per item in their carry-on bag. Those containers must be placed in a one-quart resealable plastic bag. Bigger containers must go in checked baggage, though there are exceptions for medications and baby formula. □

Jill Biden aide invokes Fifth to decline testimony in Republican investigation

By MATT BROWN
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A former senior aide to Jill Biden on Wednesday became the second person to invoke the Fifth Amendment and decline to answer questions from House Republicans who are investigating President Joe Biden's mental state and use of the autopen while in office.

Anthony Bernal, who previously served as chief of staff to former first lady Jill Biden, was subpoenaed for his testimony by the House Oversight Committee. He declined to answer questions, invoking the protections that prevent people from being forced to testify against themselves in government proceedings.

"Well, unfortunately, that was quick," said Rep. James Comer, chair of the House Oversight Committee, after the deposition ended. "I believe the American people are concerned. They're concerned that there were people making decisions in the White House that were not only unelected but no one to this day knows who they were."

Bernal ignored questions from reporters as he entered and exited the House Oversight Committee's



Anthony Bernal, aide to former first lady Jill Biden, arrives to testify before the House Oversight Committee at the Rayburn House Office Building, Wednesday, July 16, 2025, on Capitol Hill in Washington.

Associated Press

hearing room on Capitol Hill. He was accompanied by his lawyer, Jonathan Su, who was a deputy White House counsel to the former president. Su in a statement provided to the committee noted that pleading the Fifth is not evidence of wrongdoing.

The former president has dismissed the inquiries as legally spurious. In a recent interview with the New York Times, Biden said that he delegated responsi-

bilities when necessary as president but was actively involved and knowledgeable of all of his administration's actions, including on granting clemency.

"I consciously made all those decisions," Biden said.

Comer has sought testimony from nearly a dozen former Biden aides as he conducts his investigation, including former White House chiefs of staff Ron Klain and Jeff Zients;

former senior advisers Mike Donilon and Anita Dunn; former deputy chief of staff Bruce Reed, former counselor to the president Steve Ricchetti, former deputy chief of staff Annie Tomasini and a former assistant to the president, Ashley Williams. On Tuesday, Comer also subpoenaed Annie Tomasini, a former White House deputy chief of staff, to appear before the committee on July 18. She is the third former official to be

subpoenaed by the committee.

Democrats have been dismissive of the Republican probe as mere political theater.

"They still look like losers," said Rep. Jasmine Crockett, D-Texas, who sat in on Bernal's committee deposition.

But many Republicans see the investigation as a top priority for their caucus and a politically salient issue for voters ahead of the mid-term election. The Trump White House has launched its own probe into Biden's age while Senate Republicans have also held hearings on the topic.

"This is corruption at the highest level, because if you cannot answer a simple question about Joe Biden's capabilities, then that further demonstrates that he was not in charge of his administration," said Rep. Byron Donalds, R-Fla., who sat in on Bernal's deposition.

Donalds said "every member of the Biden administration, at this point, needs to be subpoenaed," including Vice President Kamala Harris and Jill Biden.

Comer did not rule out seeking testimony from Harris or members of Biden's family. □

Trial opens against Meta CEO Mark Zuckerberg and other leaders over Facebook privacy violations



Meta Founder and CEO Mark Zuckerberg speaks at LlamaCon 2025, an AI developer conference, in Menlo Park, Calif., Tuesday, April 29, 2025.

Associated Press

By MARYCLAIRE DALE and BARBARA ORTUTAY

Associated Press

WILMINGTON, Del. (AP) — An \$8 billion class action investors' lawsuit against Meta CEO Mark Zuckerberg and company leaders current and former began Wednesday, with claims stemming from the 2018 privacy scandal involving the Cambridge Analytica political consulting firm.

Investors allege in their lawsuit that Meta did not fully disclose the risks that Facebook users' personal information would be misused by Cambridge Analytica, a firm that supported Donald Trump's successful Republican presidential campaign in 2016.

Shareholders say Facebook officials repeatedly and continually violated a

2012 consent order with the Federal Trade Commission under which Facebook agreed to stop collecting and sharing personal data on platform users and friends without their consent.

Facebook later sold user data to commercial partners in direct violation of the consent order and removed disclosures from privacy settings that were required under consent order, the lawsuit alleges. The fallout led to Facebook agreeing to pay a \$5.1 billion penalty to settle FTC charges. The social media giant also faced significant fines in Europe and reached a \$725 million privacy settlement with users.

Now shareholders want Zuckerberg and others to reimburse Meta for the FTC fine and other legal costs, which the plaintiffs estimate total more than \$8 billion. □

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Ex-NYPD commissioner sues NYC mayor, alleging he ran police department as a 'criminal enterprise'

By **JAKE OFFENHARTZ**
Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — New York City's former interim police commissioner is suing Mayor Eric Adams and his top deputies, accusing them of operating the NYPD as a "criminal enterprise."

In a federal racketeering lawsuit filed Wednesday, the ex-commissioner, Thomas Donlon, alleges Adams and his inner circle showered unqualified loyalists with promotions, buried allegations of misconduct and gratuitously punished whistleblowers.

It is the latest in a series of recent lawsuits by former NYPD leaders describing a department ruled by graft and cronyism, with swift repercussions for those who questioned the mayor's allies. In a statement, City Hall spokesperson Kayla Mamelak Altus called the allegations "baseless," blasting Donlon as a "disgruntled



Interim New York Police Commissioner Thomas G. Donlon attends a news conference outside the United Nations Headquarters, Sept. 20, 2024.

Associated Press

former employee who when given the opportunity to lead the greatest police department in the world proved himself to be ineffective."

Donlon, a longtime FBI official, was appointed last fall by Adams to stabilize a department shaken by federal investigations and high-

profile resignations. He stepped down less than a month into the job, after federal authorities searched his home for decades-old

documents that he said were unrelated to his work at the department.

During his brief tenure, Donlon said he uncovered "systemic corruption and criminal conduct" enabled by Adams and carried out by his hand-picked confidants who operated outside the department's standard chain of command.

Their alleged corruption triggered a "massive, unlawful transfer of public wealth," the suit alleges, through unearned salary increases, overtime payments, pension enhancement and other benefits.

In one case, Donlon said he caught the department's former top spokesperson, Tarik Sheppard, improperly using his rubber signature to give himself a raise and promotion. When Donlon confronted him, Sheppard allegedly threatened to kill him. □

Federal court says Arkansas can enforce ban on critical race theory in classrooms

By **ANDREW DeMILLO**
The Associated Press

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. (AP) — A federal appeals court ruled Wednesday that Arkansas can enforce its ban on critical race theory in classrooms, ruling the First Amendment doesn't give students the right to compel the state to offer its instruction in public schools. A three-judge panel of the 8th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals vacated a preliminary injunction issued against the ban, one of several changes adopted under an education overhaul that Republican Gov. Sarah Huckabee Sanders signed in 2023.

The prohibition is being challenged by two teach-

ers and two students at Little Rock Central High School, site of the 1957 desegregation crisis. A federal judge had granted the injunction to the students but



In this Sept. 26, 1957, file photo, members of the 101st Airborne Division take up positions outside Central High School in Little Rock, Ark.

Associated Press

not the teachers. "Just as ordinary citizens cannot require the government to express a certain viewpoint or maintain a prior message, students cannot oblige the government to maintain a particular curriculum or offer certain materials in that curriculum based on the Free Speech Clause," the judges ruled. Attorneys for the teachers and students said they were disappointed in the ruling.

"It gives us pause and concern about a steady erosion of individual rights and protections in this great country," attorney Mike Laux said in a statement. "Nonetheless, major aspects of this lawsuit remain

viable, and they will proceed in due course."

Critical race theory is an academic framework dating to the 1970s that centers on the idea that racism is embedded in the nation's institution. The theory is not a fixture of K-12 education, and Arkansas' ban does not define what constitutes critical race theory. Republican Attorney General Tim Griffin praised the court's ruling.

"With its ruling today, the 8th Circuit continues to ensure that the responsibility of setting curriculum is in the hands of democratically elected officials who, by nature, are responsive to voters," Griffin said in a statement. □

France, U.K. and Germany would restore U.N. sanctions on Iran next month without progress on a deal

By **EDITH M. LEDERER**

Associated Press

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — The United Kingdom, France and Germany have agreed to restore tough U.N. sanctions on Iran by the end of August if there has been no concrete progress on a nuclear deal, two European diplomats said Tuesday.

The three countries' ambassadors to the United Nations met Tuesday at Germany's U.N. Mission to discuss a possible Iranian deal and reimposing the sanctions. The matter also came up in a phone call Monday between U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio and the foreign ministers of the three countries, according to two U.S. officials. The State Department said after the call that the four had spoken about "ensuring Iran does not develop or obtain a nuclear weapon."

The officials and diplomats spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss private conversations.

The U.K., France and Germany are part of an agreement reached with Iran in 2015 to rein in its nuclear program, from which President Donald Trump withdrew the U.S. during his first term, insisting it wasn't



The United Nations flag flies on a stormy day at the U.N. during the United Nations General Assembly, Sept. 22, 2022.

tough enough.

Under the accord that lifted economic penalties on Iran in exchange for restrictions and monitoring of its nuclear program, a so-called "snapback" provision allows one of the Western parties to reimpose U.N. sanctions if Tehran does not comply with its requirements.

French Foreign Minister Jean-Noel Barrot said Tuesday that the three Euro-

pean countries would be justified in reapplying sanctions.

"With regard to Iran, the minister reiterated the priority of resuming negotiations to establish a long-term framework for Iran's nuclear program," the French Foreign Ministry said in a statement after a meeting of EU foreign ministers in Brussels. "Without a verifiable commitment from Iran by the end of August at the

latest, France, Germany and the U.K. will be justified in reapplying the UN sanctions (snapbacks) that were lifted 10 years ago."

The diplomats did not provide details of the deal being sought. Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said in recent days that Tehran would accept a resumption of nuclear talks with the U.S. if there were assurances of no more attacks, following Israeli and

U.S. strikes on its nuclear facilities.

He said there should be "a firm guarantee that such actions will not be repeated, stressing that "the attack on Iran's nuclear facilities has made it more difficult and complicated to achieve a solution."

The United States and Iran held several rounds of negotiations over the Iranian nuclear program before the Israeli strikes began in June. Trump and his Middle East envoy, Steve Witkoff, said last week that talks would happen soon, but nothing has yet been scheduled.

Araghchi, whose country insists its nuclear program is for peaceful purposes, said in a July 2 CBS interview that "the doors of diplomacy will never slam shut."

Iran's U.N. Mission had no comment Tuesday on the threat of renewed sanctions if there is no deal.

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian said last week that the U.S. airstrikes so badly damaged his country's nuclear facilities that Iranian authorities still have not been able to access them to survey the destruction. Iran has suspended cooperation with the IAEA. □

Associated Press

At least 15 injured in Russian attack targeting energy infrastructure in Ukraine



In this photo provided by the Ukrainian Emergency Service, firefighters try to put out a fire following a Russian attack in the Kharkiv region of Ukraine, Tuesday, July 15, 2025.

Associated Press

By **ILLIA NOVIKOV**

Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Russia pounded four Ukrainian cities overnight into Wednesday, injuring at least 15 people in an attack that mostly targeted energy infrastructure, officials said. The latest bombardment in Russia's escalating aerial campaign against civilian areas came ahead of a Sept. 2 deadline set by U.S. President Donald Trump for the Kremlin to reach a peace deal in the three-year war, under the threat of possible severe Washington sanctions if it doesn't.

No date has yet been publicly set for a possible third round of direct peace talks between delegations from Russia and Ukraine. Two previous rounds delivered no progress apart from prisoner swaps.

Russia launched 400 Shahed and decoy drones, as well as one ballistic missile, during the night, the Ukrainian air force said. The strikes targeted northeastern Kharkiv, which is Ukraine's second-largest city, President Volodymyr Zelenskyy's hometown of Kryvyi Rih in central Ukraine, Vinnytsia in the west and Odesa in the south.

"Russia does not change its strategy," Zelenskyy said. "To effectively counter this terror, we need a systemic strengthening of defense: more air defense, more interceptors, and more resolve so that Russia feels our response."

Trump on Monday pledged to deliver more weapons to Ukraine, including vital Patriot air defense systems, and threatened to slap additional sanctions on Russia. It was Trump's toughest stance toward Russian President Vladimir Putin since he returned to the White House nearly six months ago. □

Europol-coordinated global operation takes down pro-Russian cybercrime network

By **MIKE CORDER**
Associated Press

THE HAGUE, Netherlands (AP) — A coordinated international operation has hit the infrastructure of a pro-Russian cybercrime network linked to a string of denial of service attacks targeting Ukraine and its allies, the European Union's police agency Europol announced Wednesday. Codenamed Eastwood, the operation targeted the so-called NoName057(16) group, which was identified last month by Dutch authorities as being behind a series of denial-of-service attacks on several municipalities and organizations linked to a NATO summit in the Netherlands.

Europol said that the cybercrime network was also involved in attacks in Sweden, Germany and Switzerland.

The police agency said the international operation "led to the disruption of an attack-infrastructure consisting of over one hundred computer systems worldwide, while a major part of the group's central server infrastructure was taken offline." Law enforcement and judicial authorities from



The Europol headquarters in The Hague, Netherlands, Wednesday, Oct. 10, 2018.

Associated Press

France, Finland, Germany, Italy, Lithuania, Poland, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the Czech Republic, the Netherlands and the United States took simultaneous actions against offenders and infrastructure belonging to the pro-Russian cybercrime network, it said. Western officials have accused Russia and its proxies of staging dozens of attacks, sabotage attempts and other incidents

across Europe since the invasion of Ukraine, including cyberattacks. The Associated Press is tracking them in a detailed map that shows the breadth of efforts to sow division in European societies and undermine support for Ukraine.

As part of the latest operation, judicial authorities in Germany issued six arrest warrants for suspects in Russia, two of them accused of being the main leaders

of the group, Europol said. Five of them were identified on Europol's Europe's Most Wanted website.

One suspect was placed under preliminary arrest in France and another detained in Spain, Europol said. The Paris prosecutor's office said one person is in custody in France and communications equipment has been seized. No charges have yet been filed. In the United States,

the Federal Bureau of Investigation was involved in the operation.

The attorney general's office in Switzerland, which is not an EU member country, said in a statement Wednesday that joint investigations between Europol and Swiss federal police helped identify three leading members of the group, which is alleged to have targeted more than 200 Swiss websites.

Swiss prosecutors opened a criminal case over the incidents in June 2023, and since then identified several other denial-of-service attacks attributed to the activist group. The attacks included a video address by Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy to the Swiss parliament and the popular Eurovision Song Contest, held in Basel earlier this year.

Europol said members of the cybercrime group initially targeted Ukrainian institutions, "but have shifted their focus to attacking countries that support Ukraine in the ongoing defence against the Russian war of aggression, many of which are members of NATO." □

Cuban labor minister resigns after her suggestion beggars were pretending sparked backlash

By **ANDREA RODRÍGUEZ**
Associated Press

HAVANA (AP) — A Cuban minister who sparked criticism after saying that there are no beggars in Cuba, only people disguised as such, resigned Tuesday. Cuba's Presidency said in a post on X that Minister of Labor and Social Security Marta Elena Feitó Cabrera "acknowledged her errors and submitted her resignation."

Feitó made the comments Monday before deputies in a National Assembly committee. The comments went viral, prompting calls for Feitó's impeachment and a wave of criticism in a country experiencing a tough economic situation

in recent years.

Even Cuban President Miguel Díaz-Canel was critical. Without mentioning her by name, but refer-

ring to the meeting at the National Assembly committee where Feitó participated, Díaz-Canel said on his X account: "the lack of



A man culls through garbage collecting aluminium cans for recycling, in Havana, Cuba, Tuesday, July 15, 2025.

Associated Press

sensitivity in addressing vulnerability is highly questionable. The revolution cannot leave anyone behind; that is our motto, our militant responsibility."

The economic crisis in Cuba has increased social vulnerability and led to unusual scenes for the island, such as people especially the elderly begging or scavenging through garbage, or some cleaning windshields at corners.

"We have seen people, apparently beggars, (but) when you look at their hands, look at the clothes these people are wearing, they are disguised as beggars, they are not beggars," Feitó said before the National Assembly commit-

tee. "In Cuba there are no beggars."

She added that people cleaning windshields use the money to "drink alcohol."

Feitó also lashed out against those who search through the garbage dumps, saying they are recovering materials "to resell and not pay tax."

Until a few years ago, despite the poverty, there were no signs of begging or homelessness on the island thanks to benefits that have now been greatly reduced. The pension of a retiree is about 2,000 Cuban pesos per month, roughly \$5 on the informal market, and just under the cost of a carton of eggs. □



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tails. Sip on a Blackberry Mojito and dance under the stars, because at Drunken Fish, every meal comes with a side of rhythm.

Drunken Fish Kitchen is open during the week from 11am till 11pm. On Fridays and Saturdays from 11am till 12am. While the bar team entertains you at the weekend till 2am. Daily Fish Has daily happy hours from 5pm-7pm and from 9pm-10pm.



Ever heard of the cah'i orgel? A key instrument in Aruban folklore music

(Oranjestad)—The cah'i orgel music box is an important and unique instrument that is used on the ABC islands in the Dutch Caribbean. This instrument is a staple in our folklore music, and its significance in the traditions of Aruba has and continues to bring together the old and young.

The origin of the cah'i orgel is said to have come from Europe around 150 years ago. A cross breed between the barrel piano and the organ, the most popular stories said that the instrument

came from either England or Germany, but made its way to Italy down to Venezuela, where in 1881, Mr. Horatio Sprock (1866-1949) from Curacao was first introduced to it. After that, Sprock made his own cah'i orgel "Josefina", and successfully debuted it on the streets of Barquisimeto. Back in Curacao, he started his own cah'i orgel business along with his brother Luis. In Aruba, it is said that the cah'i orgel was introduced by Rufo Wever, who later in his career became one of the composers for the Aru-

ban national anthem.

Rufo Wever was a young musician in 1937 when he established his own cah'i orgel business on the island. Before that he experimented with his uncle's cah'i orgel, and he over the years he learned to build and repair the instrument. In fact, he was incredibly skilled in this, and he was one of the few to have recognized from the start that the cah'i orgel is an instrument that needs preserving.

As mentioned, the cah'i or-

gel is a music box. made from mahogany wood, it contains a cylinder with a maximum of eight music pieces. By rotating the lever on the front side of the box, the cah'i orgel produces music similar to that of a piano, and is accompanied often by someone else playing the "wiri", a percussion instrument made out of steel and reminiscent to the Spanish guiro. Back then, you would often also find someone playing the triangle alongside the cah'i orgel and wiri. In Aruba, the cah'i orgel and wiri is used for traditional music genres,



such as the Aruban waltz, tumba, mazurka and more.

Fun fact: another name for the cah'i orgel is the "tingilingi box." □

Source: "E Cilinder Magico entre Aruba y Curaçao" by Marilyn Alcalá-Wallé, Herta Parabirsing-Balentina and Nidia Rosaria-Wallé.

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Nestled in the heart of Palm Beach, Aruba, L'Avenue brings a fresh breeze of Belgian charm to the Caribbean. Just over a year since its grand opening, this intimate bistro has quickly made its mark with its warm hospitality, authentic cuisine, and elegant yet approachable ambiance.

Whether you're strolling through Palm Beach after a morning at the beach or looking for a special dinner spot, L'Avenue welcomes you with an inviting terrace, stylish décor, and the comforting aroma of Belgian classics crafted to perfection. It's a place where locals, travelers, food lovers, and beer connoisseurs come together — united by a love for great food, heartfelt service, and that unmistakable European flair.

At L'Avenue, every dish tells a story — one of tradition, seasonality, and bold yet balanced flavors. From crispy croquettes and perfectly poured Belgian beers



to steaming pots of fresh mussels flown in weekly, the menu offers something both comforting and surprising. Lunch includes a variety of sandwiches—with a healthy selection of bread options—if you're going for a light meal, but just like their dinner selection, also includes steak, chicken, fish, and even rabbit if you're craving a bit more of L'Avenue's exquisite menu. And let's not forget their wide selection of Belgian beer and European wine to complete the tasty experience! But that's not all! L'Avenue is offering their guests their Early Bird Special, available every day from 4pm to 7pm. Enjoy this affordable and delectable 3-course meal special at a comfortable price of \$29.50 per guest, which includes a selection of their fine in-house wine.

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tion of premium Belgian beers, and an atmosphere that balances European elegance with island ease make it one of the most talked-about dining spots in Aruba.

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Another Treasure of Aruba's Beaches: Sea Glass!

NOORD - It is hard to imagine this happening today, but years ago people dumped all kinds of refuse straight into the ocean, including old cars, and their household garbage, which of course included lots of glass. Over the next 30 years the pounding waves cleaned the beach, by breaking down everything but glass and pottery. The pounding waves washed the trash up and down, back and forth. Tons of polished, broken glass pieces were created by the pounding surf. These smoothened, colored glass particles then settled along the sea shore in millions, and that is why you can find these beautiful and colorful pieces on the north shore beaches of Aruba.

Especially on the strip on white sand between the famous Natural Bridge"

and the huge red anchor close to "Grapefield" beach you will be able to find your own pieces of sea glass. The sea glass that was created is the product of a very long and interesting process. It can take anywhere from 10 to 30 years to make sea glass. The name for any piece of glass that finds its way to the ocean and tumbles around in the water long enough is "Sea glass."

The colorful pieces of glass are being used for decoration, handcrafts and jewelry!

Once glass makes its way into the ocean, the glass is broken up into shards and is tumbled around in the water, where sand and other rocks act like sandpaper to smooth out its rough edges. Sometimes as the sea glass is passed through fire, it

becomes fire glass, the rarest of sea glass with certain inclusions, just like precious gems.

For years, the water beat against the different kinds of trash being dumped. Glass, household appliances and even motor parts were discarded on the beach. The waves and weather conditions wore down the overwhelming amount of garbage in the water, creating millions of beautiful smooth rocks.

It's hard to believe the short-sighted mistakes we were making that could have potentially ruined these beautiful beaches. But thanks to natural processes, the ocean transformed the trash into the sea glass.

Each colored gem on the beach has its own story.

The ruby red glass stones are typically

from old car tail-lights.

Then, the sapphire rocks are the remnants of broken apothecary bottles. The most common and the easiest to find are the brown (Amstel & Polar beer), green (Heineken & Balashi beer) and clear glass which are the soft much loved "soft drink" bottles.

Funny, how trash can change into treasures!

Everybody knows that you are not allowed to take local shells home, but the people working at the airport have no problem you taking sea glass home. A few of those pieces make great souvenirs. You can place them in a wine glass or large bottle for decoration and every time you look at it a smile will light up your face thinking back of your unforgettable Aruba vacation!

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Bucuti & Tara is grateful to be ranked once again among the Caribbean's best by Travel + Leisure



Bucuti & Tara Beach Resort, Aruba's premier adults-only enclave, is proud to be recognized once again in the Travel + Leisure 2025 World's Best Awards. As the only Aruban resort named among the Top 25 Resorts in the Caribbean, Bermuda, and the Bahamas, Bucuti & Tara is deeply honored to represent Aruba and remains dedicated to delivering meaningful experiences through its signature refined island hospitality.

A Benchmark of Excellence in What Makes the World's Best Awards Matter

The Travel + Leisure World's Best Awards are among the most coveted honors in the travel industry. Nearly 180,000 readers submitted over 657,000 votes rating more than 8,700 properties worldwide. Resorts are evaluated for their service, loca-

tion, rooms and amenities, food, and overall value. Each response is rated from "poor" to "excellent," with final scores reflecting the overall average across these criteria. What sets the winners apart is their ability to create lasting memories, where every detail contributes to an experience that stays with you long after check-out.

The Only Aruba Resort to Make the 2025 List

To be the only resort in Aruba recognized in this year's Travel + Leisure World's Best Awards among thousands of esteemed properties worldwide is a powerful reflection of what today's travelers truly value. Beyond exceptional service and a serene beachfront setting, guests are choosing a carbon-neutral resort that actively reinvests in its environment, its community, and its people. Bucuti

& Tara continues to earn global recognition not just for the experience it provides, but for the deeper sense of belonging, serenity, and purpose it fosters.

Romance, Wellness, and Sustainability at the Heart of every Step

Bucuti & Tara's continued evolution is fueled by a constant drive to innovate with purpose, while staying true to its three core pillars: romance, wellness and sustainability. The result is an experience that feels both deeply personal and consciously crafted.

Among recent highlights:

- Reimagined Elements Restaurant. Bucuti & Tara's flagship restaurant, Elements, the resort's beloved beachfront dining experience has been thoughtfully refreshed, blending romance

and sustainability with elegant dining that continues to earn critical acclaim.

- Expanded Wellness Program. Guests now enjoy an even more holistic approach to wellness, including a new open-air yoga deck nestled in nature, along with programs focused on fitness, nutrition, and mindfulness.
- Elevated Dog Experience. Furry companions are welcomed in style with tailored amenities, a dedicated Dog Concierge, and their own taste of luxury. The resort now offers a curated three-course dog menu featuring gourmet chef-prepared dishes, alongside comfort items and personalized pampering with its elevated dog experience. □

Learn more by visiting Bucuti.com.

Watch out for Blue Crab Migration near Savaneta



(Oranjestad)—The department of nature & environment in Aruba are urging motorists to watch out for blue crabs crossing the road in Pos Chiquito to make their way to the ocean.

They added a new bright yellow road sign with "Land Crab Crossing" to remind people to be cautious while driving on the highway on Pos Chiquito with

blue crabs.

Blue crabs in Aruba are found plenty near the beach areas, especially in Pos Chiquito, because of the amount of mangroves. They are known to dig holes deep in the beach sand in seek of humidity.

The diet of blue crabs consists of decomposed trees, insects, scorpions and rest of dead animals.

Nesting season for blue crabs is between June & July.

Why protect blue crabs?

Because they are of high value for the ecology of the mangroves. Conserving the blue crabs is crucial for the preservation of mangroves.

Watch out for crossing blue crabs on the highway near Pos Chiquito & Santo Largo □



The Lionfish And its threat to our marine wild life

(Oranjestad)—Despite its colorful and striking appearance, the lionfish has become a Caribbean-wide problem for Atlantic sea life. The Aruban marine wild life is also affected by this beautiful dilemma, as it is foreign to our waters and has become a danger to our local fish and reefs.

Originating from the Indo-Pacific Ocean, the lionfish is a relatively small fish. It has no teeth, but it does protect itself against predators using its sharp, colorful spikes. It is said that the sting of a lion-

fish can be up to 100 times more painful than that of a bee's sting.

Its natural predators in the Indo-Pacific are sharks and barracudas, but in the Caribbean Sea, local fish do not recognize the lionfish as part of their diet. In other words, the lionfish has no predators in the Caribbean Sea. And this becomes a major problem for our local marine life; if there are no predators to stimulate population control of lionfish, these fish can continue to reproduce and expand

to other parts of the Atlantic, become more invasive and dangerous for other types of fish.

For Aruba, the lionfish is a problem especially for our local coral reefs. According to Patrick van Brakel, lionfish expert and hunter from the Hunting Lionfish Aruba foundation, every reef has a "cleaning station"—tiny fish that eat algae and other types of waste on a reef, thus maintaining the reef's health and providing food to the fish population in the area. However, as the lionfish feeds off of these tiny fish, it becomes harder for the coral reef to maintain its health.

Patrick also shares the origins of lionfish in the Caribbean Sea. It is theorized that the introduction of these fish in the Atlantic happened in Florida, where people would buy lionfish from across the world to keep in their aquariums. However, lionfish grow, and as these buyers realized



that the fish were too much upkeep, they were let out into the ocean to roam free. From continental USA, the lionfish travelled to and invaded the entire Caribbean area, from Aruba, Bonaire and Curacao up to New York. In Aruba, lionfish were discovered in 2009.

Controlling the lionfish population is challenge, as each female fish can lay up to 40,000 eggs a day. Luckily, we have people like van Brakel who dedicate their lives hunting and capturing these invasive species, using them for consumption and

jewelry making.

They are caught with a hand spear, an object resembling a garbage picker with 4 sharp prongs. These spears are used like a sling shot to catch lionfish from a distance. These fish are then put into a collecting tube and taken out of the water. Van Brakel not only catches them himself, but also cooks them for locals and tourists at The LionFish Snack Aruba in Paradera. This way, he does his part in protecting the local wild life. □



Place names in San Nicolas and their origins

(Oranjestad)--If you're ever taking a tour of Aruba, San Nicolas would definitely be on your itinerary. From relaxing on the white, sandy beaches of Baby and Roger's Beach, to exploring the prehistoric caves of Quadirikiri and Fontein, you are taking in a full view of what San Nicolas has to offer. But did you know that you are also passing through areas whose names have historical origins? Here are a few place names in San Nicolas and their origin story.

Sero Colorado

On your way to Baby or Roger's Beach, you'll pass by the famous Red Anchor at what was once the entrance to the Colony residential community and be greeted with red soiled hills by the coast. This is Sero Colorado. Named after the 30-meter, deep red, limestone hill, "Sero Colorado" translates to "Colored Hill". Sero Colorado has deep historical ties with the once-thriving phos-



phate industry in the area. Matter of fact, there are still underground shafts and passages deep in Sero Colorado from the time of phosphate mining. In 1958, the refinery at the time, Lago, adopted this name for the residential section of its employees.

Vader Piet

Another well visited area, Vader Piet is located in the Arikok National Park. Recogn-

izable sites within this area includes the Wind Mills and the Quadirikiri Cave. The origin of this name is part historical and speculation, as there are slight deviations from what actually happened.

In 1829, Pieter Lampe was a planter and the person responsible for governing this remote area. As the story goes, Pieter was well known

and beloved for his kindness and good treatment of his employees, and was therefore also called Vader Piet (Father Piet). However, he was tragically murdered—some speculate at the hands of a slave. For his work and good heart, the area was named after him.

San Nicolas

Of course we can't forget San Nicolas itself. Much like

Vader Piet, the origin of the name San Nicolas has so far two different accounts. In the literal sense, "San Nicolas" translates to "Saint Nicolas", leading many to believe that this district was named after a Spanish saint. Though one account does support this with the theory that the district was named after the saint by Spanish colonizers, the other account is much less divine, but does refer to an influential figure in the area.

Nicolaas van der Biest was a successful landowner during the time of the phosphate boom in late 19th century Aruba. Back then, landowners (most, if not all of them men) were referred to as "Shon" by their subordinates. So, the district was originally named after Shon Nicolaas. Over time, the name evolved into what is now San Nicolas. □

Source: "Aruba: Short History" by Dr. J. Hartog.

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.

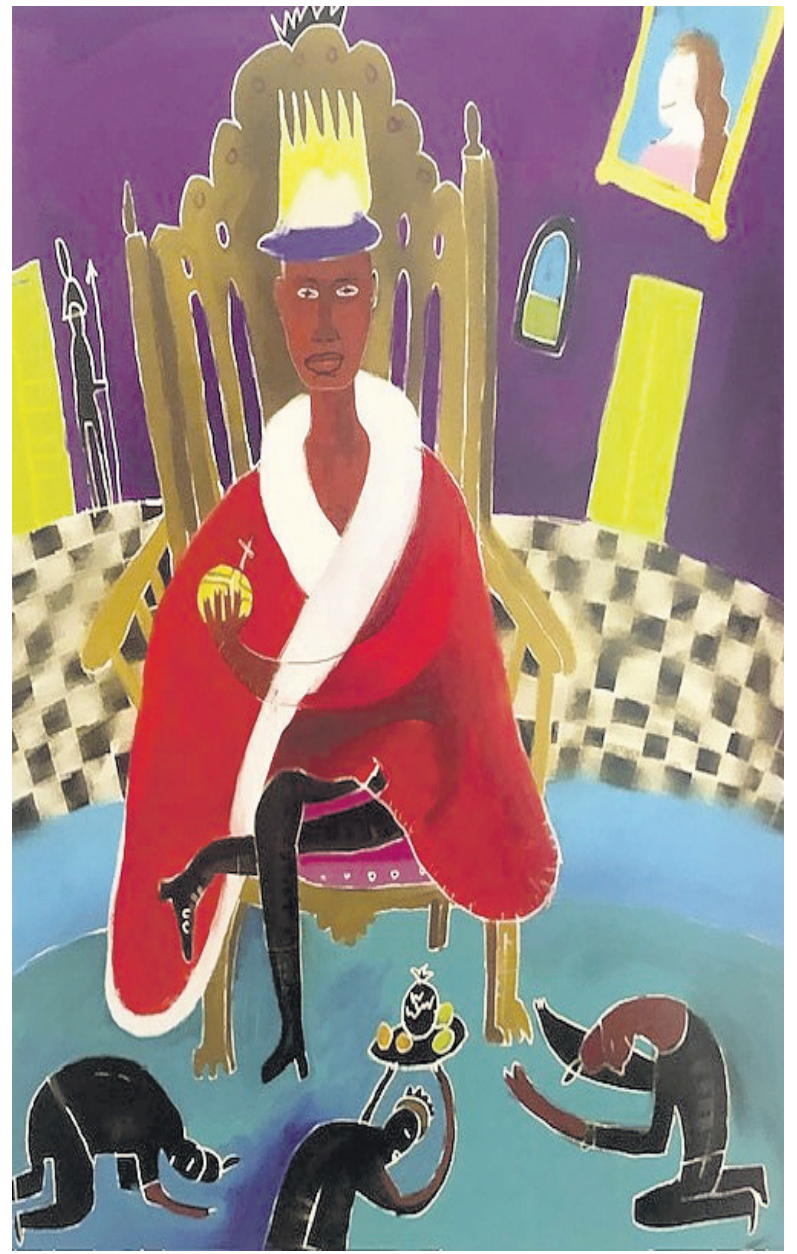
Nanzi didn't waste any time, and closed off the sack real tight. He then picked up the herder's hat and starting walking behind the traveling sheep as if nothing happened. After a little while, the soldiers headed back outside to continue their journey. As they picked up the sack, the poor herder started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



CROSSWORD

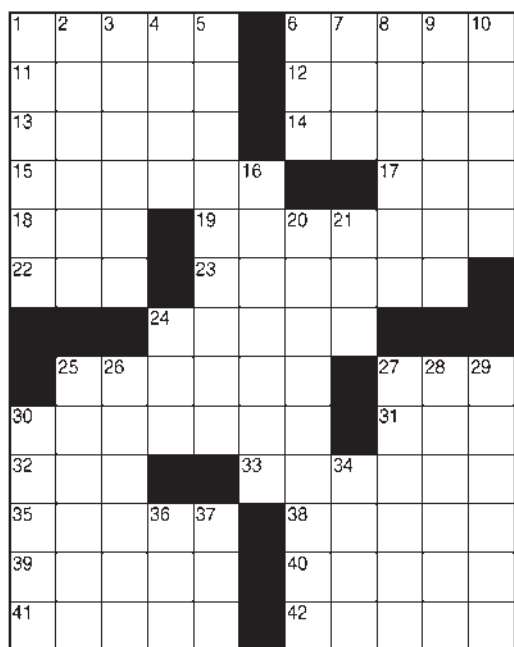
By THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

- 1 Further down
6 Cocoa alternative
11 Under-mine
12 Maui greeting
13 White of TV
14 Works the fields
15 Unbroken
17 Came together
18 Freud topic
19 Involving feeling
22 Bear's lair
23 Jordan neighbor
24 Exercised one's right
25 Brain cases
27 Spot
30 Metal hut
31 Following
32 High times
33 Hunting weapons
35 Following
38 Uniform color
39 Like stuffed animals
40 Belly feature

DOWN

- 41 Distress signal
42 Graceful birds
1 Imposed, as a fine
2 Grove
3 Soup dumpling
4 Writer Ferber
5 Gasps and guffaws, e.g.
6 Pinnacle
7 Completely
8 Dorm sharer
9 Sighed phrase
10 Treat the turkey
16 More scrumptious
20 Works of art
21 Wee bit
24 Mover's truck
25 Recipe amount
26 Raised platforms
27 Digestive aid
28 Late hour
29 Stands for artists
30 Hearty drink
34 Defect
36 Stray
37 Reuben base



7-22

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.

7-22

CRYPTOQUOTE

AQ IMJFQA XF KQZJ PJXMAG
VSQ GMCWAGF KQZJ FXOMABM,
QJ GMAXMF KQZJ JXTSU UQ

TJQV. — WOXBM VWODMJ

Cryptoquote: BEING DEEPLY
LOVED BY SOMEONE GIVES YOU STRENGTH,
WHILE LOVING SOMEONE DEEPLY GIVES YOU
COURAGE. — LAO TZU



Cruise ship Schedule: July 17 - 30 2025

			ARR	DEPT	BERTH	
THU	17	CARNIVAL CELEBRATION	08.00	17.00	C	1
SUN	20	FREEWINDS - Dept.	****	22.30	E	-
TUE	22	CARNIVAL HORIZON	09.00	23.00	C	1
WED	23	CELEBRITY REFLECTION	07.00	16.00	C	1
		FREEWINDS	06.00	****	E	1
SUN	27	FREEWINDS - Dept.	****	22.30	E	-
WED	30	RHAPSODY OF THE SEAS	08.00	23.00	C	1
		FREEWINDS	06.00	****	E	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.



Supermarket hours

Supermarket hours may vary depending on where you are staying on the island. Generally though, most supermarkets are open from 8am to 8 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.



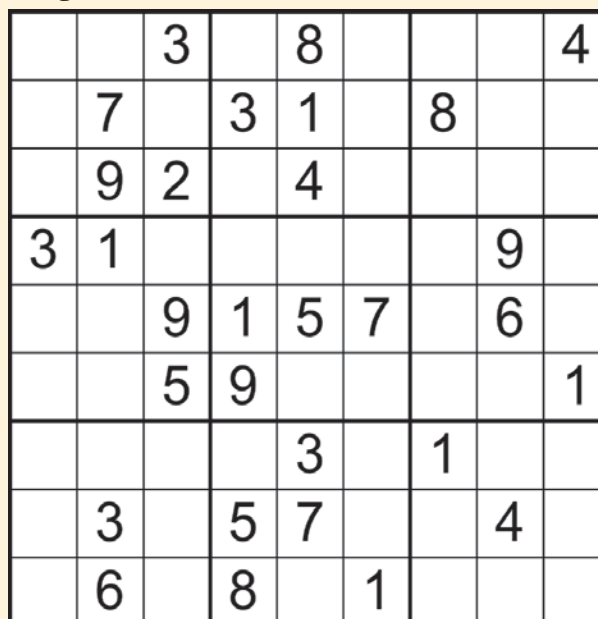
Drinking water

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.

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



Difficulty: ★★★

7/17

Answer to previous puzzle

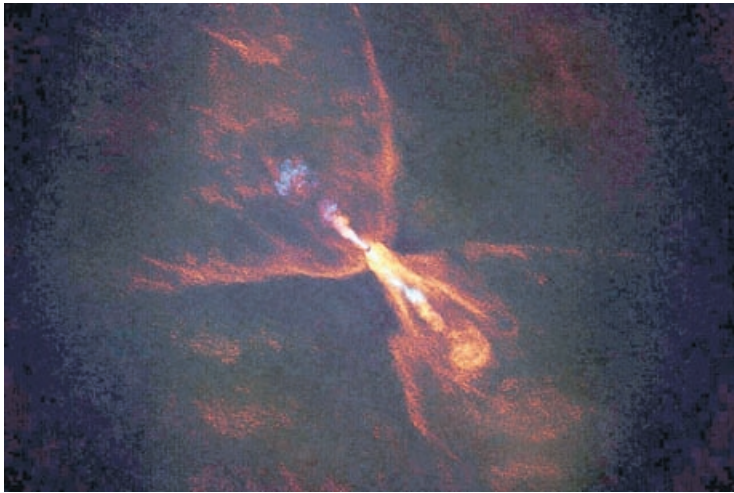
8	2	1	7	6	9	5	3	4
7	4	9	5	2	3	8	1	6
3	5	6	1	8	4	2	7	9
4	1	7	3	9	5	6	2	8
9	6	2	8	1	7	4	5	3
5	8	3	2	4	6	7	9	1
2	7	4	9	3	8	1	6	5
1	3	8	6	5	2	9	4	7
6	9	5	4	7	1	3	8	2

Difficulty: ★★★

7/16

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Astronomers capture the birth of planets around a baby sun outside our solar system



This image provided by the European Southern Observatory on Tuesday, July 15, 2025, shows HOPS-315, a baby star where astronomers have observed evidence for the earliest stages of planet formation.

By MARCIA DUNN
AP Aerospace Writer
CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. (AP) — Astronomers have discovered the earliest seeds of rocky planets forming in the gas around a baby sun-like star, providing a precious peek into the dawn of our own solar system. It's an unprecedented snapshot of "time zero," scientists reported Wednesday, when new worlds begin to gel. "We've captured a direct glimpse of the hot region where rocky planets like Earth are born around young protostars," said Leiden Observatory's Melissa McClure from the Netherlands, who led the international research team. "For the first time,

we can conclusively say that the first steps of planet formation are happening right now." The observations offer a unique glimpse into the inner workings of an emerging planetary system, said the University of Chicago's Fred Ciesla, who was not involved in the study appearing in the journal Nature. "This is one of the things we've been waiting for. Astronomers have been thinking about how planetary systems form for a long period of time," Ciesla said. "There's a rich opportunity here." NASA's Webb Space Telescope and the European Southern Observatory in Chile teamed up to unveil these early nuggets of plan-

etary formation around the young star known as HOPS-315. It's a yellow dwarf in the making like the sun, yet much younger at 100,000 to 200,000 years old and some 1,370 light-years away. A single light-year is 6 trillion miles. In a cosmic first, McClure and her team stared deep into the gas disk around the baby star and detected solid specks condensing signs of early planet formation. □

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Quota Club Tel. 525 2672

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Phone Directory Tel. 118

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Schepstraat
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Caya G.F.
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ARUBA TODAY NEWS

Fans say new romance bookstores and online groups are giving the genre some overdue respect

By TRACEE M. HERBAUGH
Associated Press
CAMBRIDGE, Mass. (AP)

— Romance novels have always spiced up quiet nights. Now, a genre that has sometimes been dismissed as a guilty pleasure is bringing readers and writers together through social media, book clubs and a growing number of romance-specific bookstores.

At a recent launch party for Nora Dahlia's enemies-to-friends romance "Pick-Up" at Lovestruck Books, a romance-dedicated store in Cambridge, Massachusetts, a crowd of women sipped cocktails from the bar-café as they browsed the shelves.

After Dahlia's reading, patrons stuck around to mingle, swap contact info and trade author recommendations.

It was a particularly social event for a book talk. But the communal atmosphere is typical of events for romance fans.

Dahlia likened romance readers to "Comic-Con folks," referring to the deep-rooted passion that defines comic-book fandom.

"They're educated on the genre in a real way," Dahlia said. "Many of them started reading romance Danielle Steel, V.C. Andrews, Jude Deveraux as teenagers."

At The Ripped Bodice bookstore in Brooklyn, New York, manager Katherine Zofrea said romance fans who have connected on-



Ashley Dang, an employee at The Ripped Bodice, stocks romance titles at the bookstore in Culver City, Calif., on Thursday, July 3, 2025.

Associated Press

line frequently come into the store to meet in person. Along with author events, the store hosts three different book clubs and a romance comedy night.

"We've had a couple proposals here, we've had a wedding here which was really fun," Zofrea said.

She said customers range "from teenagers who are starting to really get into the romance genres to older folks who have been romance readers for their entire lives and remember way back when they were reading the Harlequins and romance wasn't as widely accepted."

"Now they're loving seeing how widely accepted romance has become."

A boom in romance bookstores

Bookstores like Lovestruck and The Ripped Bodice (which has a flagship store in Los Angeles) have begun popping up all over the U.S., from Wichita, Kansas, to Wilmington, North Carolina, to Hopkinsville, Kentucky.

Of the 157 romance-dedicated bookstores in the American Booksellers Association, more than half opened within the last two years, said Allison Hill, CEO of the trade group for inde-

pendent sellers.

"Romance books have been one of the fastest growing book sales categories in recent years, driven by a number of factors including the need for escape reading and BookTok," Hill said.

And the genre has evolved. "The romance genre is more diverse in every way including character identity and plot," she said.

Lovestruck's owner, Rachel Kanter, called the boom "incredible and honestly, overdue. Romance has always been one of the most commercially successful genres, but for a long time

it didn't get the respect or space it deserved in the literary world."

Romance-specific bookstores, she says, "are places where readers can feel joy, comfort, and connection and where love is taken seriously as a literary theme."

A lifeline during COVID

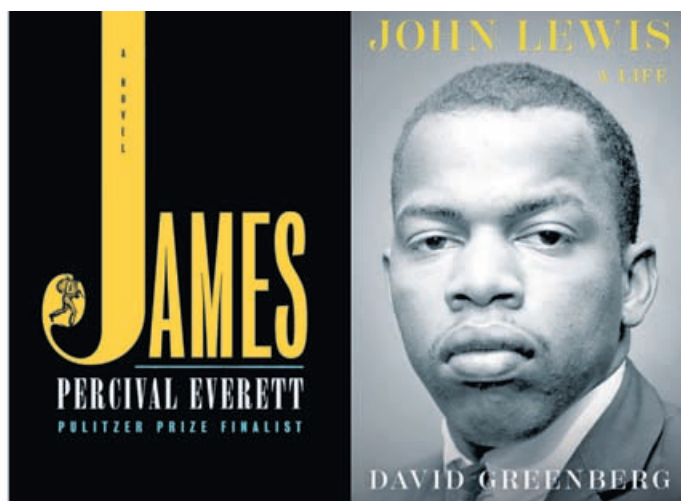
As with many hobbies, romance fandom solidified and expanded after the COVID-19 pandemic.

"The pandemic had pushed so many people toward reading for escape and comfort, and romance became a lifeline for a lot of folks," said Kanter.

"At the same time, there was a wider cultural shift happening people were rethinking what mattered, craving joy and softness, and looking to support indie businesses that reflected their values. Romance, with all its hope and heart, met that moment beautifully," she said.

Reimagining the romantic bond

Romance has countless subgenres hockey romance, Western romance, LGBTQ romance, even romance set on prison planets. But a common theme is their "inherently hopeful storylines," says Elizabeth Michaelson Monaghan, a 52-year-old freelance writer and editor in New York who said she's read "hundreds" of romance novels. "Romance must have a happily-ever-after or at least a happily-for-now." □



This combination of images shows cover art for "James" by Percival Everett, left, and "John Lewis: A Life" by David Greenberg.

Associated Press

Pulitzer-winning novel 'James' is up for another major honor

By HILLEL ITALIE
AP National Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Percival Everett's Pulitzer Prize-winning novel "James" is up for another literary honor.

Everett's dramatic retelling of Mark Twain's "The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn" is a fiction nominee for the 20th annual Dayton Literary Peace Prize, which comes with a \$10,000 cash award. Besides the Pulitzer, "James" has also won the National Book Award and Kirkus Prize.

David Greenberg's "John Lewis," a biography of the late civil rights activist and congressman, is a nonfiction finalist, the Dayton prize foundation announced Monday.

Winners in both categories will be announced in September.

The other fiction contenders are Priscilla Morris' "Black Butterflies," Alejandro Puyana's "Freedom Is a Feast," Kristin Hannah's "The Women," Helen Benedict's "The Good Deed" and Kaveh Akbar's "Martyr!" □

The British Open, golf's oldest major, is always a new experience

By **DOUG FERGUSON**

AP Golf Writer

PORTRUSH, Northern Ireland

(AP) — The crowds following Rory McIlroy for three days at Royal Portrush have been enormous, a reminder of the expectations. On banners and flags and bunting of grandstands there are images of the claret jug, a reminder of what's at stake at the British Open. But add this to the list of what makes golf's oldest championship so distinct from the other majors: Every year it feels like a new experience.

Justin Thomas contemplated that Wednesday when he finished up his third day playing the course, a practice schedule that is never this full at any other major. "I came to the realization the last couple of years that playing is better, because your ball goes into weird places," he said. "I can go out and chip all day, and get used to the turf and the speed of the greens. But the more you play, the more shots you're hitting in places where you never would in practice. "You get out here in a different wind and it can be, 'Wow, I didn't think I'd be here.'"

There is another element to this major that stands out from the U.S. Open and PGA Championship. Amid the nerves and the pressure of a major is the true joy of playing links golf.

"I feel like I'm learning more and more each time I come over here," said Scottie



A group that includes Shane Lowry of Ireland make their way down the 12th fairway during a practice round for the British Open golf championship at the Royal Portrush Golf Club, Northern Ireland, Wednesday, July 16, 2025.

Scheffler, the world's No. 1 player who is in his fifth British Open. "Each golf course is different, too. Irish links so far is quite a bit different than Scottish links. It's a bit greener over here. You have to play more shots in the air. ... There's a lot of different shots you have to play.

"It's an interesting course," he said. "And from what I've seen, it seems to be really fun to play and very fair."

Fair is a loose word in these parts, with all of the humps and crazy bounces, with pot bunkers to be avoided on so many shots, with a hole like the par-3 16th known as "Calamity Cor-

ner" that lives up to the name by looks alone.

McIlroy isn't sure he got a fair deal in 2019 when his opening tee shot went left, normally not a big deal except at Royal Portrush there is internal out of bounds, and McIlroy went just beyond the stakes, which sent him into a downward spiral a quadruple bogey, a 79 and a short week.

He did not return to the Portrush links in his native Northern Ireland until Monday morning, and then he was out playing all three days of practice.

"I have a real appreciation for how well bunkered it is off the tee," McIlroy said. "It's like, 'OK, I can't hit

2-iron off the tee, but that brings this bunker into play. But then if I hit driver, it'll bring in this bunker.' So you have to take on the shot.

"Some courses that we go to in the Open rota, you can just take the bunkers out of play," he said. "Here, there's always one bunker or another bunker in play. So I think off the tee, it provides a very, very good test."

McIlroy was among those who felt refreshed when he finished the meat of the PGA Tour season five signature events, The Players Championship, three majors, all in a span of three months and arrived in the United Kingdom. The scen-

ery, the temperature, the brand of golf, all of it felt so new, almost like he was starting a new season.

Thomas felt the same way. There is a buzz in the heavy, seaside air off the North Atlantic, no matter how stiff the challenge and how much the weather changes.

The forecast? It's generally been referred to as "mixed," which in these parts tends to mean it changes without notice. The final day of practice was sunshine and breezy. Thomas was playing the 16th while his father showed video of them watching in the final round in 2019, wind and rain ripping so hard that umbrellas were useless.

Thomas remembers standing on the 17th tee and calling over a rules official to ask if they were meant to be playing. He wanted to hit 3-wood off the tee, but it was 209 yards to the fairway and the wind was so strong he didn't think he could get there. So he went with driver, hit some 75 yards off line and made triple bogey.

On his final day of practice, with sunshine and a helping wind, he hit a mini-driver that would have stopped near the front of the green on the 409-yard hole if it hadn't found a bunker.

This is what he loves about links golf. "Not only do the holes change, how easy or hard they are, your lines off the tee can change," he said "You have elevation.□

Associated Press

Lynx beat the Mercury 79-66 to improve to 12-0 at home heading into the All-Star break



Minnesota Lynx forward Napheesa Collier (24) scores on a jump shot against the Phoenix Mercury in the first quarter of a WNBA basketball game, Wednesday, July 16, 2025 at Target Center in Minneapolis.

Associated Press

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — Kayla McBride scored 18 points, Courtney Williams had 12 points, seven rebounds and five assists, and the Minnesota Lynx beat the Phoenix Mercury 79-66 on Wednesday to improve to 12-0 at home this season heading into the All-Star break.

Minnesota, which led 37-33 at the break, made a 3-pointer on three straight possessions in the third quarter to extend its lead to 57-44. Phoenix made four of its first five field goals of the third before missing six straight as Minnesota went on a key run. Jessica Shepard's one-handed putback just before the third-quarter buzzer made it 64-49.

The Lynx made five 3-pointers in the frame to outscore the Mercury 27-16.

Napheesa Collier scored eight of her 10 points in the third and Alanna Smith finished with 11 points for Minnesota (20-4). Williams recorded five-plus assists in her seventh straight game.

Alyssa Thomas had 12 points and nine assists, and Kalani Brown had 11 points and 11 rebounds for Phoenix (15-7). DeWanna Bonner also scored 11 points on 5-of-12 shooting.

Minnesota held an opponent under 40% shooting for the 11th time this season. Phoenix was just 25 of 70 from the field (35.7%).□

Pogačar crashes as Abrahamsen wins Stage 11 of Tour de France after 155-kilometer breakaway

TOULOUSE, France (AP) —

Tour de France favorite Tadej Pogačar crashed near the finish while Norwegian rider Jonas Abrahamsen won the 11th stage on Wednesday.

Pogačar, the three-time champion, crashed with 3.9 kilometers remaining after hitting the wheel of Tobias Johannessen in front. His rivals for the general classification slowed down so he could get back on his bike and rejoin them. Pogačar, who was able to reattach the chain on his otherwise undamaged bike, thanked them for waiting.

"All good, all good," Pogačar said over the UAE Team Emirates XRG radio.



Norway's Jonas Abrahamsen, left, celebrates as he crosses the finish line to win the eleventh stage of the Tour de France cycling race over 156.8 kilometers (97.4 miles) with start and finish in Toulouse, France, Wednesday, July 16, 2025.

Associated Press

"Respect to the peloton, respect to everybody."

Johannessen apologized as he felt responsible.

"I think the whole peloton moved to the right and I just followed the movement of Matteo Jorgenson and some other guys. I think Pogačar was on the radio so we just bumped into each other and I think it's something that happens," Johannessen said. "But I really didn't want him to crash and I don't think any other guy in the peloton wants Pogačar to go down. We just stopped and waited in the group straight away and I hope he's fine."

Abrahamsen, who attacked from the start, beat Swiss rider Mauro Schmid in a photo finish.

A pro-Palestinian protester did not distract either rider as they sprinted for the finish, racing each other at the end after they'd worked together to stay ahead of Dutch rider Mathieu van der Poel's late push to catch them.

It was Abrahamsen's first stage win at the Tour and the first in this race for his team, Uno-X Mobility.

The Norwegian rider wasn't sure he'd even be racing at the Tour when he broke his collarbone in a crash at the Tour of Belgium last month.

"I was crying in the hospital because I (thought) I was not riding Tour de France," the 29-year-old Abrahamsen said.

"But the day after I was on the home trainer and hope I can go to Tour de France and every day I did everything I could to come back and here I'm standing in Tour de France, to win a stage is amazing."

Van der Poel dropped his head and slouched on his bike as he finished 7 seconds behind in third, while the GC group including Pogačar and yellow jersey-holder Ben Healy finished 3:28 back.

Healy, only the fourth Irish rider ever to hold the yellow jersey, still leads by 29 seconds from Pogačar. □



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