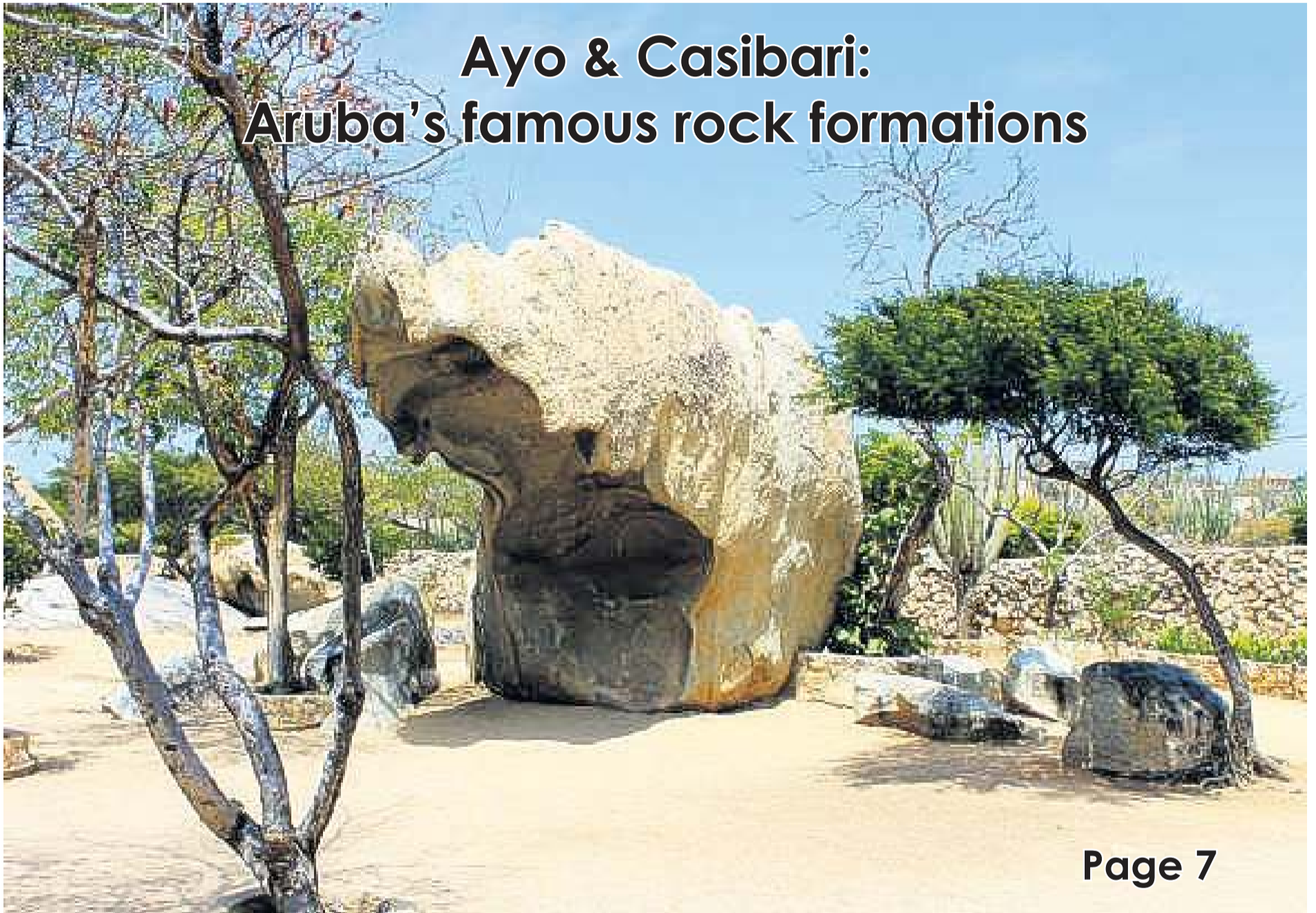


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## Judge considers whether Florida's 'Alligator Alcatraz' detention center violates environmental law

By **DAVID FISCHER** and **MIKE SCHNEIDER**

Associated Press

**MIAMI (AP)** — A federal judge heard arguments Wednesday over whether to stop construction of an immigration detention center built in the middle of the Florida Everglades and dubbed "Alligator Alcatraz" because it didn't follow environmental laws.

Until the laws are followed, environmental groups and the Miccosukee Tribe said U.S. District Judge Kathleen Williams should issue a preliminary injunction to halt operations and further construction. The suit claims the project threatens environmentally sensitive wetlands that are home to protected plants and animals and would reverse billions of dollars' worth of environmental restoration.

The lawsuit in Miami against federal and state authorities is one of two legal challenges to the South



**David Mourer and Rana Mourer pose for a photo in front of a sign reading "Alligator Alcatraz" outside the Dade-Collier Training and Transition Facility, Saturday, July 12, 2025, in Ochopee, Fla. Associated Press**

Florida detention center which was built more than a month ago by the state of Florida on an isolated airstrip owned by Miami-

Dade County.

A second lawsuit brought by civil rights groups says detainees' constitutional rights are being violated

since they are barred from meeting lawyers, are being held without any charges, and a federal immigration court has canceled bond

hearings. A hearing in that case is scheduled for Aug. 18.

The detention facility has ignored a review process required by the National Environmental Policy Act, and the lawsuit was meant to assert the public's rights to make sure environmental harm does not occur, Eve Samples, executive director of Friends of the Everglades, testified in court Wednesday. Samples noted that her organization was founded in 1969 by environmentalist Marjory Stoneman Douglas in response to a failed effort to build a massive airport in the same location.

An attorney for the state of Florida questioned Samples during cross examination about whether Friends of the Everglades had filed any lawsuits or taken legal action against the airport or its owner, Miami-Dade County, over the past decade. □

## Justice Department releases new list of so-called sanctuary jurisdictions



**Anti-Trump protesters march to Trump Tower as they rally for a number of issues, including immigrant rights, the Israel-Hamas war, women's reproductive rights, racial equality and others, on the day of President Trump's Inauguration, Monday, Jan. 20, 2025, in Chicago.**

Associated Press

By **TIM SULLIVAN**

Associated Press

The Justice Department identified some three dozen states, cities and counties as so-called sanctuary jurisdictions on Tuesday, two months after the federal government quietly removed a much longer list that included many localities that support the Trump administration's hard-line immigration policies. The earlier, typo-riddled list was met with pushback from across the political spectrum, with officials often saying it wasn't clear why their jurisdictions were included. The new announcement doesn't appear to threaten consequences beyond what the federal government is already doing. Attorney General Pamela Bondi warned in the announcement that the department would "continue bringing litigation against sanctuary jurisdictions and work closely with the Department of

Homeland Security to eradicate these harmful policies around the country."

"Sanctuary policies impede law enforcement and put American citizens at risk by design," she said. The new list is composed overwhelmingly of Democratic jurisdictions, including states like New York, California and Connecticut, cities like Boston and New York City and a handful of counties, including Baltimore County, Maryland, and Cook County, Illinois. There's no clear definition of sanctuary jurisdictions, but the term is generally applied to state and local governments that limit cooperation with federal immigration authorities. The administration never fully explained the errors in the first announcement, which included hundreds of jurisdictions, including places that had voted overwhelmingly for Trump and at least one that had declared itself a "non-sanctuary city." □

# Trump wields influence over GOP and keeps potential successors vying for his favor

By MEG KINNARD  
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Although President Donald Trump has not directly said he thinks JD Vance should be the heir to his “Make America Great Again” base of support, he acknowledged this week that his vice president is probably the favorite to succeed him “at this point.”

But even as he promoted Vance, Trump also made sure to mention Secretary of State Marco Rubio, telling reporters at the White House on Tuesday that his administration’s top diplomat is “somebody that maybe would get together with JD in some form” on a future political ticket.

The remarks reflect the massive influence the Republican president currently has over his party. They also serve to promote two of Trump’s top advisers without telegraphing the president’s singular preference for a successor. Not definitively anointing Vance, or any other Republican, keeps those hoping to succeed Trump vying for his favor, both inside his administration and in the wider Republican field of possible contenders.

It’s early for the 2028 presi-



President Donald Trump arrives to speak before signing an executive order about the 2028 Los Angeles Olympic Games, in the South Court Auditorium of the Eisenhower Executive Office Building on the White House campus, Tuesday, Aug. 5, 2025, in Washington, as Vice President JD Vance watches.

dential field to begin forming, and other contenders will ultimately emerge. A challenge for anyone wading into the race, even with strong Trump connections, will be staying in the president’s good graces for the duration.

Speaking with reporters following an executive order signing at the White House, Trump was asked if Vance were the “heir apparent to

MAGA.”

“I think most likely, in all fairness, he’s the vice president,” Trump said. “I think Marco is also somebody that maybe would get together with JD in some form.”

It’s too early obviously, to talk about it, but certainly he’s doing a great job and he would be, probably favorite at this point.”

When Trump selected the

then-39-year-old Vance over other more established Republicans including Rubio as his running mate last year, many theorized that Trump was planning for the future of his political movement, angling for a vice president who could carry MAGA forward.

Vance has embraced the role at every turn, doing the president’s bidding on everything from his relation-

ship with Ukraine to the fight over records related to the Jeffrey Epstein sex trafficking scandal.

Trump, meanwhile, has not hesitated to give Vance high-visibility assignments. As the White House promotes mid-decade redistricting efforts in Texas and acknowledges it would like the notion to expand to other states Vance is expected Thursday to discuss redrawing district lines with Gov. Mike Braun during a trip to Indiana. While there, Vance will also headline a fundraiser for the Republican National Committee, which he serves as treasurer.

In June he traveled to Los Angeles to tour a multi-agency Federal Joint Operations Center and a mobile command center amid clashes between protesters and police and outbreaks of vandalism and looting following immigration raids across Southern California. And earlier this year, Vance was in swing congressional districts in his role as lead cheerleader for Trump’s signature tax cut and spending law, an assortment of conservative priorities that Republicans dubbed the “One Big, Beautiful Bill.” □

Associated Press

## Homeland Security removes age limits for ICE recruits to boost hiring for Trump deportations

By REBECCA SANTANA  
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Department of Homeland Security said Wednesday that it is removing age limits for new hires at the agency responsible for immigration enforcement, as it aims to expand hiring after a massive infusion of cash from Congress.

The department said in a news release that it would waive age limits for new applicants so “even more patriots will qualify to join ICE,” the agency responsible for finding, arresting, detaining and removing people who are in the U.S. illegally.

The agency is at the center of the Trump administration’s efforts to carry out President Donald Trump’s mass deportation agenda. Earlier this summer Congress passed a spending bill that gives ICE money to hire 10,000 more staff.

Currently, ICE applicants must be 21 years old and no older than 37 or 40, depending on what position they are applying for.

In an interview with Fox & Friends, Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem said applicants could be as young as 18.

“We no longer have a cap on how old you can be or you can continue at age

18, sign up for ICE and join us and be a part of it. We’ll get you trained and ready to be equipped to go out on the streets and help protect families,” Noem said.

The department said all recruits would have to go through medical and drug screening and complete a physical fitness test.

ICE earlier announced a recruiting campaign aimed at finding and hiring the deportation officers, investigators and lawyers it will need to meet its hiring goals.

As part of that campaign the agency is offering an eye-catching bonus of up

to \$50,000 for new recruits as well as other benefits like student loan forgiveness

and abundant overtime for deportation officers. □



Federal agents escort a man to a transport bus after he was detained following an appearance at immigration court, Tuesday, July 22, 2025, in San Antonio.

Associated Press

# Army sergeant shot 5 fellow soldiers at Fort Stewart, official says

By **RUSS BYNUM** and **MIKE CATALINI**

Associated Press

**FORT STEWART, Ga. (AP)** —

An Army sergeant opened fire at Fort Stewart on Wednesday, shooting five soldiers and prompting a brief lockdown at one the country's largest Army bases, officials said.

Few details were immediately available about what led to the gunfire, but the suspect is an Army sergeant, according to a U.S. official. The official was not authorized to publicly discuss details of the investigation and spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity.

The injured soldiers are stable and recovering, said Brig Gen. John Lubas. The Army won't release names pending notification of family members and they won't speculate on motive, Lt. Col. Angel Tomko said at a news conference.

Officials identified the shooter as logistics Sgt. Quornelius Radford. A telephone number listed for Radford in public records rang unanswered on Wednesday.

The shooter opened fire at his workplace, officials



A sign outside the main gate of Fort Stewart, Georgia, is shown on Wednesday, Aug. 6, 2025. Associated Press

said. Soldiers in the area who witnessed the shooting "immediately and without hesitation" tackled the shooter, Lubas said.

This latest act of violence on a U.S. military installation sites that are supposed to be among the most secure in the country again raised concerns about safety and security within the armed forces' own walls.

The Army said it's investi-

gating the shooting. There were still many unanswered questions, including the condition of the soldiers, the scope of their injuries, the name of the shooter as well as any possible motive. The injured were treated and then moved to Winn Army Community Hospital, base officials said in a Facebook post, adding there's no threat to the community.

Some of the wounded were also taken to Memorial Health University Medical Center in Savannah, said spokesperson Bryna Gordon. The hospital is the top-level trauma center for coastal Georgia. Gordon said she didn't know how many people were being taken to the hospital or what their conditions are. Law enforcement was sent to the 2nd Armored Bri-

gade Combat Team complex shortly before 11 a.m. Wednesday. The shooter was arrested at 11:35 a.m., officials said.

The lockdown lasted about an hour. After it was lifted, cars began to move through the normal security checkpoint at the fort's main gate.

The Army's 2nd Armored Brigade Combat Team was created in 2016 when the service added more than 200 vehicles to an infantry unit of roughly 4,200 soldiers. Also known as the "Spartan Brigade," the Army has called the unit its "most modern land fighting force."

Located about 40 miles (64 kilometers) southwest of Savannah, Fort Stewart is the largest Army post east of the Mississippi River. It's home to thousands of soldiers assigned to the Army's 3rd Infantry Division and family members.

White House and Defense Department officials said President Donald Trump and Secretary Pete Hegseth had been briefed on the shooting.

The FBI was at the fort to help investigate, said Deputy Director Dan Bongino. □

# Massive central California wildfire keeps growing and becomes state's largest blaze of the year

**SANTA MARIA, Calif. (AP)**

— Rising temperatures on Wednesday posed new challenges for firefighters who have made incremental progress against a massive wildfire in central California that injured four

people as it became the biggest blaze in the state so far this year.

More than 870 remote homes and other structures at the northern edge of Los Padres National Forest are threatened by the Gifford

Fire, which grew only slightly overnight after burning out of control for days.

The fire has scorched at least 131 square miles (339 square kilometers) of Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo counties, with just 9% containment. It surpassed the 126-square-mile (326-square-kilometer) Madre Fire, which erupted last month in southeastern San Luis Obispo County, as the state's largest fire of 2025.

Crews working in steep, inaccessible terrain will be dealing with temperatures in the mid-90s (35 Celsius) on Wednesday and above 100 (38 Celsius) on Thursday, said Capt. Scott Safechuck with the Santa Barbara County Fire Department.

"We have hot weather,

and we have low relative humidity," Safechuck said Wednesday. "So we expect extreme fire behavior." Luckily, winds are expected to remain relatively calm, he said.

Wildfire risk will be elevated through the weekend across much of inland California as the heat wave intensifies. The southern part of the state has seen very little rain, drying out vegetation and making it "ripe to burn," the National Weather Service for Los Angeles warned in a statement. Triple-digit temperatures (around 38 Celsius) are forecast for the Sacramento Valley.

A dozen major blazes are burning statewide, and officials warn the threat will only grow in August and September, typically the

most dangerous months for wildfires. Across the Sierra and northern parts of California, months of little to no rain are "pushing conditions toward critical levels faster than usual," according to a wildfire forecast by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, or Cal Fire.

"In Southern California, the threat is driven by persistent drought, high grass loads, and weakening coastal moisture," Cal Fire said.

More than 2,200 personnel are battling the Gifford Fire, which grew out of at least four smaller fires that erupted Friday along State Route 166, forcing closures in both directions east of Santa Maria, a city of about 110,000 people. The causes of the fires are under investigation. □



An air tanker drops retardant on the Gifford Fire burning on Monday, Aug. 4, 2025, in Los Padres National Forest, Calif. Associated Press

## College applications rise outside U.S. as Trump cracks down on international students

By SYLVIA HUI  
Associated Press

**LONDON (AP)** — In China, wait times for U.S. visa interviews are so long that some students have given up. Universities in Hong Kong are fielding transfer inquiries from foreign students in the U.S., and international applications for British undergraduate programs have surged.

President Donald Trump's administration has been pressuring U.S. colleges to reduce their dependence on international enrollment while adding new layers of scrutiny for foreign students as part of its crackdown on immigration.

The U.S. government has sought to deport foreign students for participating in pro-Palestinian activism. In the spring, it abruptly revoked the legal status of thousands of international students, including some whose only brush with law enforcement was a traffic ticket. After reversing course, the government paused new appointments for student visas while rolling out a process for screening applicants' social media accounts.

The U.S. remains the first choice for many international students, but institutions elsewhere are recognizing opportunity in the upheaval, and applicants



An Emirati student arrives at the building of the University of Wollongong in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, Dec. 28, 2009.

are considering destinations they might have otherwise overlooked. The impact on U.S. universities and the nation's economy may be significant.

New international enrollment in the U.S. could drop by 30% to 40% this fall, according to an analysis of visa and enrollment data by NAFSA, an agency that promotes international education.

That would deprive the U.S. economy of \$7 billion in spending, according to the analysis. Many internation-

al students pay full price, so their absence would also hurt college budgets.

Britain stands to gain as the US takes 'a massive hit' As the second most popular destination for international students, Britain is positioned to benefit.

The country's new Labour government has vowed to cut migration, and officials have imposed time limits on post-study visas allowing graduates to stay and work. But admissions consultants say the United Kingdom is still seen as the most

welcoming of the traditional "big four" English-speaking destinations in higher education the U.S., U.K., Canada and Australia.

After declining last year, the number of international applications for undergraduate study in the U.K. this fall grew by 2.2%, official figures show. A record number of applications came from China, up 10% compared with the previous year. Applications from the U.S. also reached nearly 8,000 students an increase of 14% and a 20-

year high.

Acceptances of international students for graduate programs in the U.K. grew an estimated 10% from last year, driven by demand for business and management courses in particular, according to data from UniQuest, which works with many British universities on admissions.

Data showing the extent of any impact will not be available until fall, said Mike Henniger, CEO of Illume Student Advisory Services, a consultancy that works with colleges in the U.S., Canada and Europe. "But the American brand has taken a massive hit, and the U.K. is the one that is benefiting," he said.

Staying in Asia is becoming more popular

Demand from Chinese students has risen rapidly for universities places in Hong Kong, Singapore and Malaysia, said Will Kwong, managing director of AAS Education, a consultancy in Hong Kong. Many Western universities have offshore campuses there that are more affordable than going to the U.S. or U.K.

"Opting for study in Asia has been a trend since the easing of COVID-19," Kwong said. "But obviously it's been exacerbated by the change of administration in the U.S." □

Associated Press

## Egyptian minister calls West's response to Gaza suffering shameful

**ATHENS, Greece (AP)** — Egypt's foreign minister, on a visit to Greece on Wednesday, described the international response to the escalating humanitarian crisis in Gaza as shameful and urged powerful Western nations to increase pressure on Israel.

"The international community should be ashamed of the tragic situation unfolding in Gaza and the devastating actions being carried out by Israel," Egyptian Foreign Minister Badr Abdelatty told reporters in Athens.

"What is unfolding is a human tragedy, and the suffering witnessed is a stain on the conscience of the international community," he said.

Widespread reports of hunger in Gaza have heightened international concern

over the devastating consequences of Israeli military operations launched nearly two years ago, following deadly attacks by Hamas-led militants inside Israel on Oct. 7, 2023.

The Egyptian minister described Israel's military campaign in the territory as a "systematic genocide," but reiterated his government's position that it "firmly rejects any displacement of the Palestinian people from their ancestral lands." Abdelatty held a two-hour meeting with Greek Foreign Minister Giorgos Gerapetritis to discuss a planned undersea electricity grid connector between the two countries and an ongoing dispute between Greece and Libya over sea boundaries for offshore oil and gas exploration. □



Egyptian Foreign Minister Badr Abdelatty speaks to reporters with his Greek counterpart George Gerapetritis after their meeting in Athens, Greece, Wednesday, Aug. 6, 2025.

Associated Press

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# Russia asks Central African Republic to replace Wagner with state-run Africa Corps and pay for it

By **JEAN-FERNAND KOENA** and **MARK BANCHEREAU**  
Associated Press

**BANGUI, Central African Republic (AP)** — Officials in the Central African Republic have said that Russia has called on the country to replace the private Wagner mercenary group with Moscow's state-run Africa Corps and requested payment for further security services.

The Central African Republic's government has been reluctant to agree to Moscow's demands, because it sees Wagner as more effective and they prefer to pay for services with minerals, not in cash.

For years, Wagner has been in Central African Republic, where they are protecting President Faustin Archange Touadera and his government, and helped him win a 2023 constitutional referendum that could extend



In this image taken from video, President of the Central African Republic Faustin-Archange Touadera arrives at a polling station in Bangui, Central African Republic, Sunday, July 30, 2023. Associated Press

his power indefinitely. In exchange, they've enjoyed access to the country's rich minerals, including gold. But Russia has been trying to transition from Wag-

ner to Africa Corps since Wagner's leader, Yevgeny Prigozhin, was killed in a plane crash in 2023. The Wagner mercenaries were replaced earlier this year in

Mali. A Central African Republic military official told The Associated Press on Tuesday that the Russian deputy defense minister made the demands about

a shift to Africa Corps and payment for its services earlier this year during several visits to the country.

The official said government authorities are reluctant to agree, because they believe the private-run Wagner would be more effective than Africa Corps, which is under direct command of the Russian defense ministry.

Wagner has "connections with the officers, are feared operationally and have the resources," said the official, who wasn't allowed to publicly discuss the matter so spoke on condition of anonymity. The military official said that according to the Russian demands, the Central African Republic "must not only cover the costs of Africa Corps personnel, but also pay significant sums of money to Russia, amounting to billions of CFA francs (millions of dollars)."

# About 300 migrants start walking north in southern Mexico, but goal is not U.S. border

**TAPACHULA, Mexico (AP)** — About 300 migrants walked out of this southern Mexican city Wednesday, hoping to move north, even as the activist who helped organize them remained in police custody over allegations of human trafficking.

Mexico President Claudia Sheinbaum said that Luis García Villagrán, the leader of a local nongovernmental organization arrested Tuesday in Tapachula, "is not an activist." She said he was tied to trafficking people, "that is the crime." Sheinbaum said Wednesday during her daily news briefing that there had been an arrest order pending for García Villagrán for

years. It was unknown why the outspoken and very public figure hadn't been

arrested earlier. The group of migrants that left Tapachula, near the



Migrants carry signs that read in Spanish: "Exodus for justice. Migrant," as they walk out of Tapachula, Chiapas state, Mexico, where they had been waiting for months to legalize their status or receive asylum, but have been unable to do so, Wednesday, Aug. 6, 2025.

Associated Press

border with Guatemala, earlier Wednesday was small in comparison to migrant caravans in years past. There has been very little movement of migrants in public since U.S. President Donald Trump took office in January, though migration numbers had been falling even prior to that.

Those walking Wednesday said their goal was not reaching the United States, but rather central Mexico. They complained that they had been waiting for months to legalize their status or receive asylum.

In recent years, the Mexican government has worked to contain migrants in southern Mexico far from the border with the United

States. At times, this strategy has swollen migrant numbers in Tapachula until hundreds set out walking in protest. Chiapas is Mexico's poorest state and migrants complain there is little work or available housing.

Johnny López of Ecuador walked with his wife and three children, including a baby born in Tapachula while they awaited a determination on their asylum application, which was eventually rejected. Now they planned to travel to Mexico City where López hoped to find work to support his family.

The migrants were escorted by immigration agents, police, marines and paramedics.

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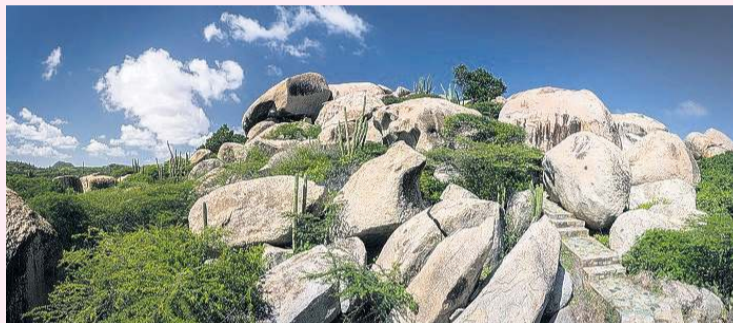
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**Ayo & Casibari: Aruba's famous rock formations**

(Oranjestad)—The Ayo and Casibari Rock Formations are known locally as one of the crucial sites to have in your "off-road" trip itinerary. These naturally formed rock formations as just one of the few places on the island that hold a rich history of our culture and of our ancestors.



**Ayo**  
 The Ayo Rock Formation is located in the northern part of the island, right on the road that leads you to the Black Stone Beach, and close to the Natural Bridge. The Ayo is a fenced terrain that consists of several giant boulders, resting neatly on top of or side by side each other, adding gorgeous natural architecture to the surrounding "mondi"\*. This is also one of the few sites

to contain prehistoric markings of our indigenous ancestors. The Ayo Rock formation contains stairs that lead you to the top of the highest boulder, offering a breath-taking view of the Aruban backyard. The Ayo is usually quiet, as it is situated farther away from the busier parts of the island. However, this is just another charm of the site: the quiet area and the refreshing breeze offer a sense of comfort and peace. Casibari

Probably the busier rock formation site, the Casibari is situated more in the center of the island, much closer—and more accessible—to the general public. Just like Ayo, Casibari is a fenced area containing several boulders that lay on top or lean on each other. The best aspect of the Casibari Rock Formation is the accompanying view when you climb up the top of the round, flat bolder. For this position, you can see the majority of the

island and the ocean in the south. Right in front of the entrance, there is the Casibari Café and Grill, a great place to get refreshments and snack before continuing your off-road adventure!

no guides at the sites to help you climb the rock. So, do be careful when trudging on the boulders, and make sure to befriend any roaming goats you see along the way!

\*Mondi: what we call our Aruban wilderness. We don't have forests, or deserts, but we do have mondi! .□

Both sites are open free to the public, 24 hours a day. However, unless you are taking a trip with a professional tour guide, there are



**Rent a dog for a day**

**Enjoy a happy day and contribute to a good cause with Luna**

ORANJESTAD - This summer, Luna Foundation, a local foundation dedicated to education, awareness, animal welfare and rescue, has introduced their 'Rent a Dog' program. This gives you the opportunity to take one of their sanctuary's dogs for a fun day out, a different and happy opportunity to do something with your family or kids, and that contributes to a good cause!



Luna Foundation explained on their social media channels that dogs have a higher probability of being adopted after a fun adven-

ture. "This summer, make a difference in a pup's life by taking one of our sanctuary

dogs out for a morning of fun!" they said. "Whether it's a beach stroll, grabbing some takeout, or just cuddling and napping at home— it all counts." According to Luna, every little adventure gives the dogs a break from the sanctuary and a better chance at finding their forever home.

If you're in Aruba and are looking for something different and fun, while also contributing to make someone's day a little happier, please contact Luna Foundation through their website, website [www.luna-aruba.com/dogs](http://www.luna-aruba.com/dogs).□



# The Casino at St. Regis Aruba invites you to “Exquisite Bingo” every Saturday and Sunday morning with \$5,000 in prizes and a \$25,000 progressive jackpot

**Palm Beach – The Casino at St. Regis Aruba invites you to “Exquisite Bingo,” taking place every Saturday and Sunday at 8:30 AM. Doors open at 7:30 AM to give you the opportunity to purchase bingo cards for \$20. When you buy 2 bingo cards, you’ll receive a third one completely free.**

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cure their cards early, we offer a pre-sale every Friday and Saturday from 3:00 PM to 8:00 PM. Please note that cards are limited.

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## Aruba to me



**ORANJESTAD — You are back or still enjoying your vacation?... 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](mailto: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. ☐

|  |   |  |   |  |
|--|---|--|---|--|
| <p>BELGIAN BISTRO<br/><b>L'AVENUE</b><br/>- ARUBA -</p> <p><b>COUPON</b></p> <p>1 FREE BELGIAN BEER WITH LUNCH</p> | <p><b>EARLY BIRD</b></p> <p><b>EVERYDAY</b></p> <p>11AM TILL 7PM</p> <p><b>\$32.50</b></p> <p>3 -COURSE INCL. GLS OF WINE</p> |  <p>BELGIAN BISTRO<br/><b>L'AVENUE</b><br/>- ARUBA -</p> | <p><b>LIVE</b></p> <p><b>MONDAY</b></p> <p><b>MARISELA</b></p> <p>6.30-9PM</p> <p><b>THURSDAY</b></p> <p><b>JARIO-SAX</b></p> | <p>BELGIAN BISTRO<br/><b>L'AVENUE</b><br/>- ARUBA -</p> <p><b>COUPON</b></p> <p>20% DISCOUNT ON DINNER</p> |
|--|---|--|---|--|

## Experience the modern twist of tradition at L'Avenue Belgian Bistro Aruba!

(Oranjestad)—Nuzzled up in a cozy nook of The Cove Mall in the sun-kissed paradise of Palm Beach, L'Avenue takes you on a journey to experience the true flavors of Belgium. Offering a selection of traditional Belgian and French cuisine, this bistro brings the old into the new against a backdrop of laid-back luxury.



The new kid on the block, L'Avenue currently holds a unique position in the

island's culinary scene; being the only Belgian-owned, Belgian restaurant

on the island. This winning hand is not obtained by many, and L'Avenue's delicious menu and wide selection of Belgian beer, and European and New World wine emphasizes the bistro's unique vision to bring Europe into the palm of your hands!

beloved by both locals and tourists. Crafted by Chef Juan Ludeña and his team, enjoy a superb variety of classic Belgian and French dishes served with a touch of innovation for lunch and dinner, including stews,

steak-house quality meat and their famous Moules-frites, served with a variety of delicious and rich broth.

As if that wasn't enough, enjoy your meal under warm, starry lights accompanied by live music performances every day, seated either in a relaxing and cool interior area of the restaurant, or outside against a backdrop of the bright, colorful lights of the Palm Beach strip!

More information L'Avenue is situated at The Cove Mall in Palm Beach and is open every day from 11am to 10pm for lunch and dinner. To book a reservation or ask for more information, please contact their phone line at +297 6996400, send an e-mail [info@lavenuearuba.com](mailto:info@lavenuearuba.com), or visit their website at [lavenuearuba.com](http://lavenuearuba.com). □



Once part of the famous Taste of Belgium restaurant, L'Avenue offers a new point of view and brings a fresh life to what was once

## Forgotten gems Open air movie theaters

(Oranjestad)—During the span of over 100 years, Aruba only saw five open air movie theatres. Now practically obsolete on the island, these theaters were once frequently visited by locals and migrants in the 20th century.

The first open air theater was constructed in 1920 and was commissioned by Shon Eduard (Eddy) de Veer. This theater was located at the Hotel Colombia in Oranjestad, which is now where the Aruban census office is located. The theater was simple; it only consisted of a screen, and visitors had to bring their own chairs to enjoy

the popular silent movies of the time.

American migrants who worked in the refinery and lived in the Lago Colony in Sero Colorado also had their piece of the pie with their Open air Theatre, which formed part of the Esso Club, also known as the Pan-Am Club. It was at this theater that "Talkies" were first streamed, movies with sound. This theater mostly streamed American blockbusters for the American expats, this way making sure that these migrant were not missing out on entertainment from their home land.



In the 1950's and 60's, Savaneta saw their own open air theater, located in front of the Marinier's Kazerne (Marine Barracks). This theater was mostly visited by the neighboring marines, who didn't have much entertainment other than movies at that time.

The last and most recent

open air theater was constructed in the form of a drive-in theater. A popular American concept, the Drive Inn located in Balashi was a hot spot for teenagers, who had the habit of cramming all their friends in one car to go see the movies. For this phenomenon there was a separate price that you had to pay called

the "car crash".

This theater closed around 2012, but was re-opened during the pandemic in July 2020, where movies were streamed on a gigantic screen set up in front of stacked containers. However, this nostalgic form of entertainment did not last very long as it was closed again only a year or two later. Nowadays you can still see the stacked containers when you drive near the bridge in Balashi.

Source: "De kolibrie op de rots en meer over de geschiedenis van Aruba" by Evert Bongers. □

## Sun catcher: Turnip-tailed gecko

**ORANJESTAD – Colorful or camouflaged, you're bound to encounter a variety of lizards basking in the sun or scurrying on their way in our island. One of these is the trump-tailed gecko, or 'Pega Pega'.**

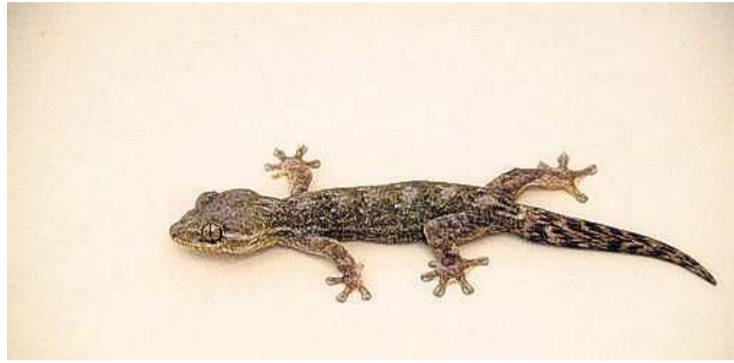
Aruba, as a desert island, is home to an incredible variety of unique and colorful species. Among them we can find different lizards, most of which have South American origins. But there are a few exceptions.

### Turnip-tailed gecko

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

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

The undersides of its toes are covered in lamellae, which are used as friction pads to cling to smooth vertical surfaces. Some can even walk around completely upside down. Its toes are covered with ridges, which are peppered with millions of microscopic bristle-like structures called setae that attach and detach when the animal wills



them to, and they never get gunked up.

They are variable in coloration, from a mottled dark gray to orange-brown, and are capable of changing color depending on their mood and surroundings. Mottled and banded markings aid in camouflage against tree bark. They are harmless and fragile; you can hold one in your hands as long as you are VERY gentle.

Never put pressure on its tail because it will surely

drop as a measure to try to distract the predator, and they are different from other lizards because they're long-lived, talkative, lack eyelids, and their small scales are situated next to each other like cobblestones rather than overlapping as is the case in most other lizards.

Turnip-tailed Geckos are insectivorous and feed on cockroaches, grasshoppers, beetles, flies, mosquitoes, and spiders, which

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

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

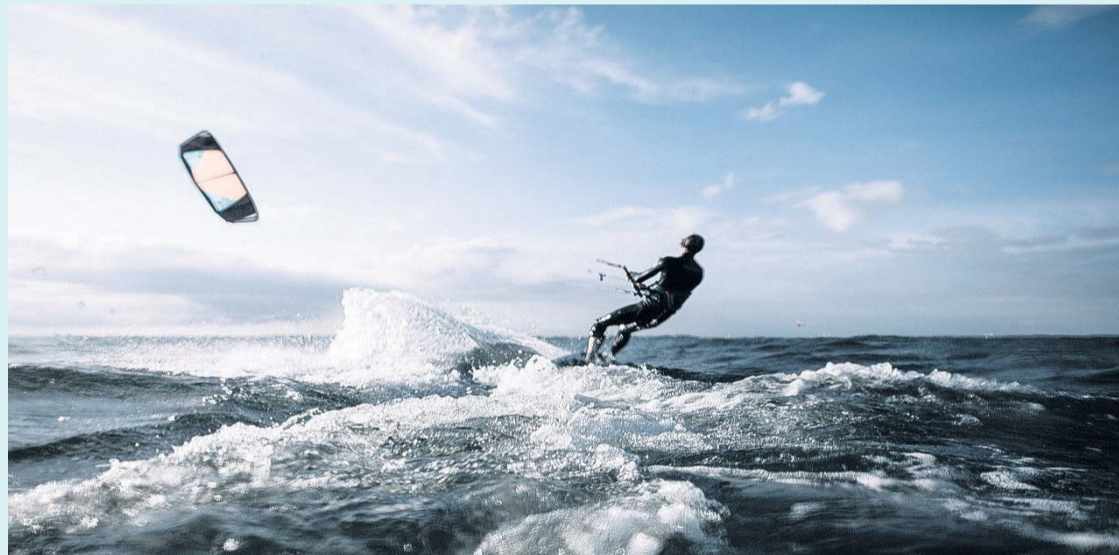
Images: Some images are from Aruba Birdlife Conservation. □

## Surf's Up: Favorite places to catch waves in Aruba

**ORANJESTAD – Whether you are a salt-seasoned surfer looking for a thrill, or just looking to wet your toes in a little ocean adventure, Aruba has amazing places to learn and practice surfing! Although more known for the calmer waters of Palm Beach, Eagle Beach and Mangel Halto, Aruba also has some special places to thrill your senses.**

Because of strong winds and breezes, Aruba is perfect for wind and kite surfing. You will surely notice kites in the air as you drive around the wilder, rougher areas on Aruba's east side.

There are plenty of surf shop rentals to help you with your gear, and there are also a lot of tutors if you're looking to try for the first time and



need a little help. These can be found around the island, and will surely come in hand if you're wanting to try a new experience!

With that said, here are Aruba's favorite surf spots! Andicuri

Andicuri is recognized as

the best place for body boarding. Because of the rough waves, this beach is better suited for those with more experience in surfing. However, the beach with two bluffs – one on each side – is worth a visit, if only to watch the exciting show presented by the surfers.

To go to Andicuri, you will need a 4x4 vehicle and drive from the ex-Natural Bridge Center. Alternatively, you can make it an adventure by going on a hike! The scenery is unique and beautiful on its own.

Reaching Andicuri Beach can be an adventure in itself, as it can be difficult to find and is only accessible

by 4x4 vehicle or walking from the ex-Natural Bridge center, but the impressive scenery makes it all worthwhile!

**Arashi**  
Arashi, a beach located close to the California Lighthouse, is a good spot for learning and having fun – if you're lucky! The waves at Arashi are usually calm, but with just the right weather, a swell forms attracting all the local surfers to the area.

**Boca Grandi**  
Boca Grandi is at the most southern spot in Aruba, and is a popular spot with experienced surfers. Close to the famous Red Anchor and

our beloved Sunrise City – San Nicolas, a trip to Boca Grandi can easily turn into an all-day trip to this area of the island. With a beautiful beach (although it is not allowed to swim here, because of strong currents), you can enjoy a relaxing time combing the beach for driftwood, coral, and little crabs and snails.

**Hadicurari**  
Known locally as Fisherman's Hut, here is where you will find most of the action for surfers in Aruba. With a variety of surf shops and schools in this area, you will find it easy to get in on the action. Hadicurari is also the site of the Aruba Hi Winds World Challenge, which takes place usually in June/July, and it is the largest windsurfing competition in the Caribbean!

**Malmok**  
If you're a beginner, this is your spot. There are also various shops to rent gear and receive lessons, facilitating learning and just trying out a new experience. The beach is also popular for paddleboarding and other watersport activities. □



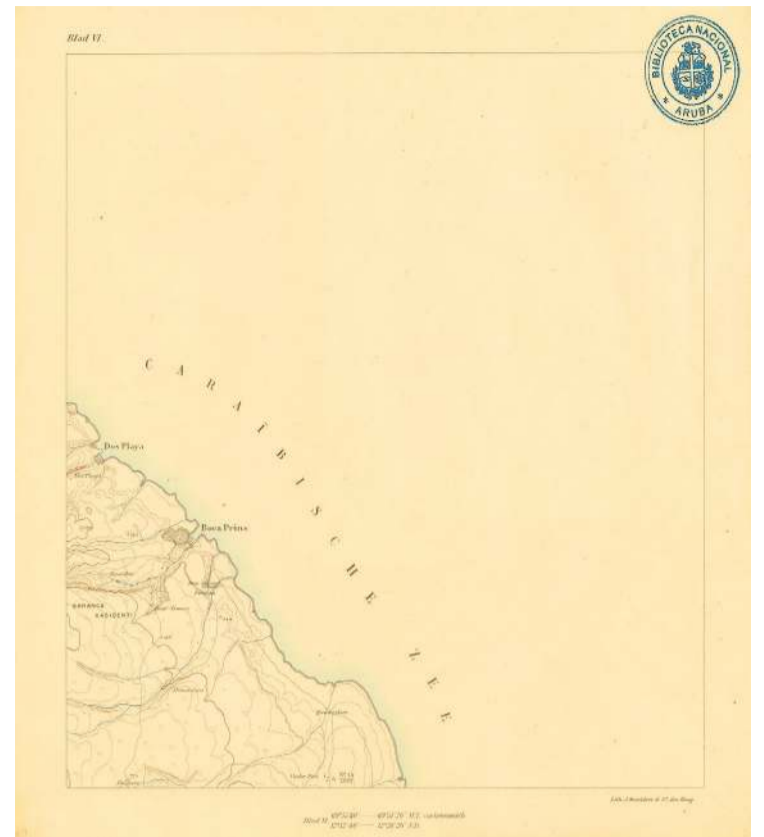
# Aruba: the legend behind its name

**(Oranjestad)—Most folkloric tales and legends in Aruba revolve around our indigenous ancestors, who came from mainland Venezuela, and discovered the island and made it into their new home. This particular legend tells the story of the birth of the Aruba name.**

The legend follows the life of Arua, an indigenous Cacique originally from Aroa in the Falcon state in Venezuela in the year 50 AD. Arua had a son around the year 70 AD with his wife Shira, who they named Corobori. When Corobori was old enough, he joined his father on the usual boat trip to the islands of Curacao and Bonaire to gather salt.

On their way back to Mainland Venezuela, they were caught up in a heavy rain storm—a side effect from a passing, but far away, hurricane. Of course, because of the lack of motors and sail, their boat was left in the mercy of the heavy winds. After a while, the storm started to pass, and the clouds began to clear up. Finally able to see around them, the Cacique spotted land approximately an hour away. So, they started to row in that direction until they reached the coast.

Once they arrived on what they thought was Venezue-



la, they decided to stay the night and fix their kayak. The next morning, the Cacique ordered his son and a few warriors to go find any sign of population in the area: "Corobori," Arua said. "Don't come back without news. It's in your hands how long we stay here till we find our family. So, if you need to take a week to gather information, we will wait for you."

"Don't worry," Corobori replied. "As soon as we have any information, we will let you know." Armed with arrows and spears, backpacks filled with food and

water containers, they set off. They climbed several small hills, but no sign of a village. They crossed different dry riverbeds, but no sign of anything. When the sun finally descended, they found themselves near a fairly tall hill and decided to climb it for a better view of a village. This hill was called Pan Dushi or Orcuyo, which today we call Hooiberg.

The next morning, they could clearly see that they have landed on an island, but an unfamiliar one at that. When Corobori went back to where his father was waiting, he told him the news: "Father Arua, you have just discovered an island, but it is not Curacao or Bonaire. Far in the south, we saw the big mountains of our homeland Venezuela, which we could have never seen on the other island. This leads us to believe we are on a new island. But that's not all. When the sun came up, we saw in the distance a glowing plain, which we think may be salt."

The Cacique was pleased to hear of his son's findings. He decided to stay a couple days on the newly-discovered island in search for salt. The next morning they ascended Hooiberg again and stayed to see if they could find nearby smoke, indicating an inhabitant village. But they found nothing.

So they went back to their initial arrival settlement, now known as Santo Largo in Savaneta. The next morning they hiked along the Spaans Lagoen near the Mangel Halto Beach and reached the area of Bushiri. There, they boarded their kayaks and heading to what we know now as Malmok, where they found rocks of salt. After a couple days of exploring the island and gathering some salt rocks, they left for Venezuela, where they were reunited with their families.

Throughout the year, they travelled back and forth to Aruba, collecting salt. After a while they settled on the island, generations of families living along the coast. Corobori was the first indigenous inhabitant in our history to explore the entirety of the island.

Arua, after decades as the leader of his tribe, spent his last days on the island. Having reached 80 years old, he called for his family on his death bed. In his hammock, he said: "My children, many years have passed, and I've asked my warrior to bring me back to the island so I can laid to rest. The God of living has given me the gift of life to see my son, grandchildren and great grandchildren. But now he is calling me home. Corobori, my torch is now passed to you. Guide

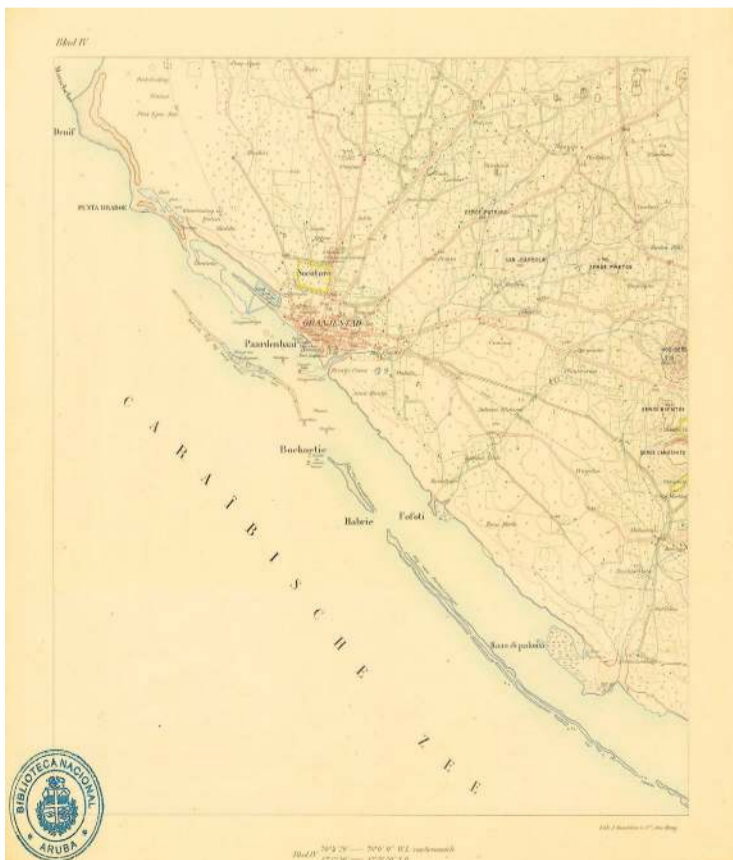
our people, and be the leader you were always meant to become. If one day you leave my island, do not forget that it is also yours. This is my last wish: When I die, bury me in our maize plantation."

And so when the Cacique passed away, his wishes were granted and he was laid to rest in the area we now know as the Paradera Cemetery. Where he used to live, they built the Paradera Church.

And that is the tale of what inspired the Aruba name. In the generations that lived or travelled back and forth to the island, there were many familiar names\*, like Guadiriki, a warrior who was there when the island got discovered and his son, whom he called Huliba; Corobori and his children, Corodori, Camacuri and Turibana, Masiduri; and Malmok, the 13-year-old boy who alerted the Cacique when the Caribes attacked.

Familiar names: all these names are familiar to Arubans, as these are the names of places and plants on the island.

Source: Un storia di e Indjan Arua (A story of the Indian Arua) by Adolf (Dufi) Kock. □



**CROSSWORD**

By THOMAS JOSEPH

**ACROSS** 37 Enemies

1 Like sky-scrappers 38 Mini burger

5 Very serious 39 Opposed

10 "Garfield" dog 40 Endures

11 Left over 41 Roger of "Cheers"

13 Flaring star 14 Irritate

15 Caribbean country 16 Gets older

17 Motor need 18 African country

19 D.C. base-baller, for short 20 Ruby of films

21 Gershon of "Bound" 22 Company symbols

25 Fleet makeup 26 Kitchen appliance

27 Wallop 28 Earth: Prefix

29 African country 30 Witch home

33 Hockey's Bobby 31 Minotaur's home

34 European country 32 Desert spot

35 1998 Winter Olympics site 36 TV spots



**DOWN**

1 Salad servers

2 Love to pieces

3 Pep up

4 Used for support

5 Ice cream treat

6 Shaq of the NBA

7 Except

8 European country

9 Dependent

12 River areas

16 Gets older

21 Overdo it

22 Secure site

23 Comprehensive

24 Eurasian country

25 Rail or quail

27 Pays tribute to

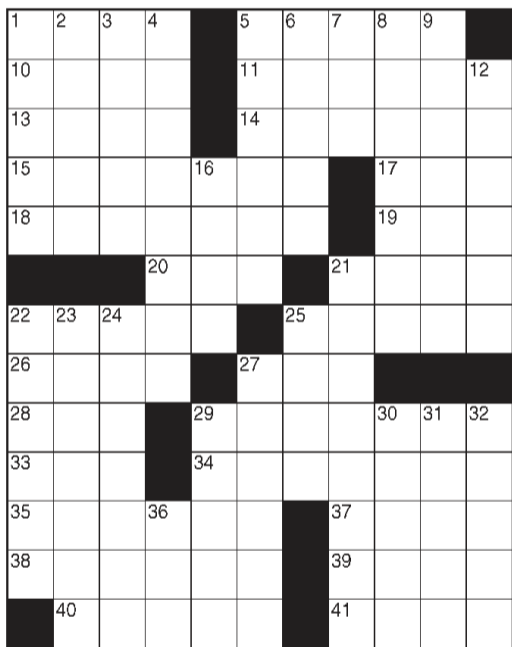
29 Painter Edouard

30 Witch home

31 Minotaur's home

32 Desert spot

36 TV spots



8-14

A XYDLBAAXR  
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.

8-14 **CRYPTOQUOTE**

H O S X I W W S B J N U O H N X

V N R S Q F S B Y S M H N T J T Y

H O T I U O H . — A Q V V Q M S

X H S C S J X

**Cryptoquote:** EDUCATION IS THE PASSPORT TO THE FUTURE, FOR TOMORROW BELONGS TO THOSE WHO PREPARE FOR IT TODAY. — MALCOLM X

**Cruise ship Schedule: Aug 03 - 13 2025**

|     |    |                       | ARR   | DEPT  | BERTH |   |
|-----|----|-----------------------|-------|-------|-------|---|
| SUN | 03 | FREEWINDS - Dept.     | ****  | 22.30 | E     | - |
| TUE | 05 | CARNIVAL HORIZON      | 09.00 | 23.00 | C     | 1 |
|     |    | CARNIVAL MARDI GRAS   | 13.00 | 23.00 | I     | 1 |
| WED | 06 | FREEWINDS             | 06.00 | ****  | E     | 1 |
| SUN | 10 | FREEWINDS - Dept.     | ****  | 22.30 | E     | - |
| TUE | 12 | ADVENTURE OF THE SEAS | 07.00 | 16.00 | C     | 1 |
| WED | 13 | OASIS OF THE SEAS     | 11.00 | 23.00 | I     | 1 |
|     |    | RHAPSODY OF THE SEAS  | 08.00 | 23.00 | B     | 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.



**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 8 or 10pm, Monday through Saturday. On Sundays, supermarkets generally close earlier; mostly around 2pm.



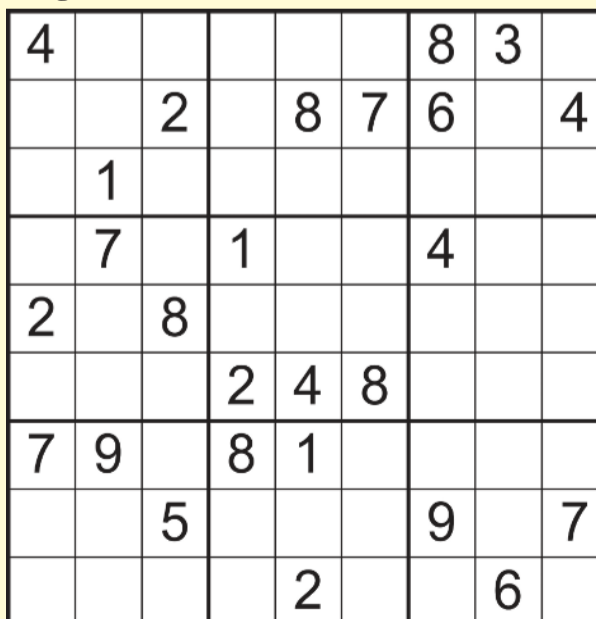
**Electrical power**

Aruba generally operates on 110V to 127V supply voltage and 60Hz. There are also three types of outlets used on the island: type A with two flat prongs; type B with two flat and one grounding prong, and on occasion, type F with two round prong and two earth clips on the side. However, Type A is most commonly found in homes and establishments.

**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: ★★★

8/7

**Answer to previous puzzle**

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

Difficulty: ★★★

8/6

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# McDonald's says its focus on value and a must-have Minecraft meal boosted second-quarter sales



A McDonald's restaurant is visible Tuesday, Aug. 5, 2025, in Arlington, Texas.

Associated Press

By DEE-ANN DURBIN  
AP Business Writer

A focus on value along with hot products like a "Minecraft"-themed meal helped McDonald's turn around its sagging sales in the second quarter.

McDonald's Chairman and CEO Chris Kempczinski said Wednesday that the company's McValue menu, which was introduced in January, is bringing some U.S. traffic back to its stores even as industrywide fast food visits have slowed. The menu lets customers buy one item for \$1 when they buy a full-priced item, and it draws in different customers than McDonald's \$5 meal deal, Kempczinski said.

McDonald's is also seeing a strong response to value meals in Europe and other regions, Kempczinski said.

But the company remains concerned about continuing declines in traffic from consumers with household incomes of \$45,000 or less. Fast food visits by lower-income consumers dropped by double-digit percentages industrywide in the U.S. the April-June period. Kempczinski said lower-income consumers are feeling uneasy about tariffs and their impacts and about the employment outlook. McDonald's is talking with franchisees about ways to reengage those customers, he said. "Too often, if you're that consumer, you're driving up to the restaurant

chicken market share in each of its 10 biggest markets, Borden said.

It was a far different story than the first quarter, when McDonald's U.S. and global same-store sales slumped as both lower- and middle-income consumers cut back. □

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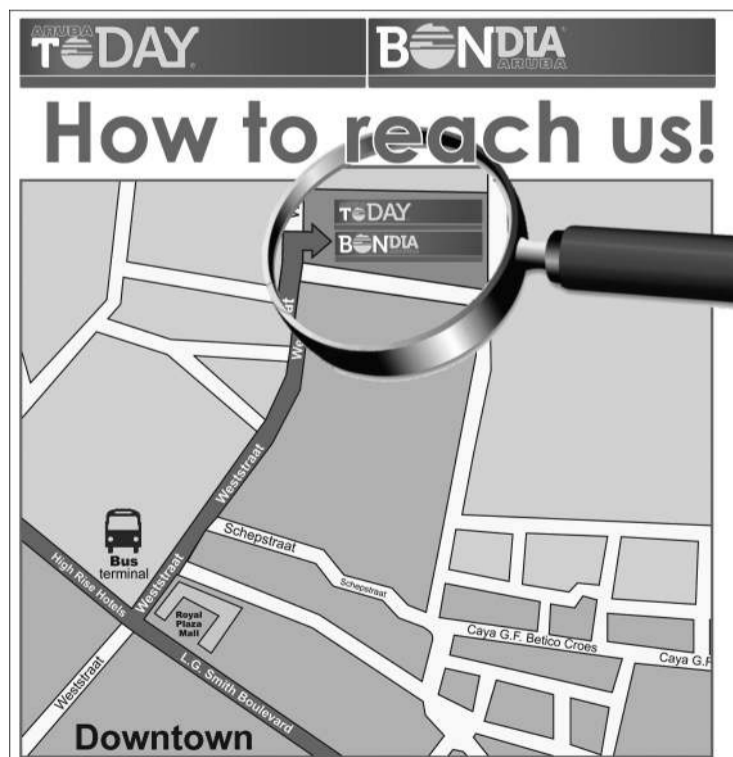
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## HEALTH

### 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. Anna: Tel.586 8181  
San Nicolas:  
Seroe Preto:Tel.584 4833

### 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

### General Info

Phone Directory Tel. 118

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ARUBA TODAY NEWS

## Movie Review: The body-swappers are back! Lohan, Curtis return for chaotic sequel 'Freakier Friday'

By **JOCELYN NOVECK**  
AP National Writer

**It's a tale as old as time** — or at least, a tale Hollywood loves to tell again and again: Body-swapping. It's magical. It's comical. It carries heartwarming messages about walking in another's shoes, and learning about oneself along the way.

So it's hardly surprising that "Freaky Friday," the 2003 version of the 1972 Mary Rodgers novel starring Lindsay Lohan and Jamie Lee Curtis, was a hit. Lohan was endearing and charismatic as an appealing, mildly turbulent teenager, and Curtis was a comic hoot as her control-freak therapist mom. And while there were a few misfires the stereotypical Asian representation has aged badly the film was powered by an easy chemistry between the two stars. So why not revisit the story in 2025? Sequels are often made for far less compelling reasons. The chief weakness of "Freakier Friday" which brings Curtis and Lohan back for an amiable, often joyful and certainly chaotic reunion is that while it hews overly closely to the structure, storyline and even dialogue of the original, it tries too hard to up the



This image released by Disney shows Jamie Lee Curtis, left, and Lindsay Lohan in a scene from "Freakier Friday." **Associated Press**

ante. The comedy is thus a bit more manic, and the plot machinations more overwrought (or sometimes distractingly silly). Then there's the double body-swapping. Because one major swap isn't enough, here we have two sets of swappers a quixotic quartet of lives disrupted during the lead-up to, yes, another wedding! The problem is that sometimes, it's actually hard to keep track of who's inhabiting whom, and therefore why they're doing what.

Not to say that "Freakier Friday," directed with gusto by Nisha Ganatra, doesn't have moments of comic glee. I'll admit to laughing out loud with everyone else older than 30 near me when two teens were trying to locate an adult contact and one of them pulled up Facebook, explaining: "It's like a database of old people!" Touché, guys. These "youngsters" are actually Lohan and Curtis, playing ninth-graders trapped in adult bodies. Before we get to that,

though: We begin 22 years after we last saw Lohan's Anna, playing electric guitar at her mom's wedding. Now a single mom herself with a job managing a young pop star, she's trying to get her daughter up for school. Harper (the excellent Julia Butters) is surprise! an appealing, mildly turbulent teenager. And just like Anna two decades ago, she keeps people out of her bedroom. "Prepare to be triggered!" Anna yells before barging

in. (The dialogue has been duly updated to the present time.)

Driving to school drop-off, Anna is joined by her mom, Tess (Curtis), who has stylish gray hair now and is still a practicing therapist, podcaster and author whose latest topic is "Rebelling with Respect." Dropping Harper off, Anna calls out "Make good choices!" just what mom Tess used to say, natch.

At school, Harper butts heads with transfer student Lily (Sophia Hammons), a budding fashion designer who hails from Britain and is very snooty. Anna is called to see the principal. There, she meets Lily's dishy chef dad Eric (Manny Jacinto), and the two flirt so intensely, the principal herself makes them a dinner reservation. All it takes is one cute dating montage, and poof, Anna and Eric are engaged. But things are still bad between Harper and Lily, whose animosity triggers a weirdly violent, all-school food fight on bake sale day. But they all have a bachelorette party to attend. There, a wacky fortune-teller and barista and business-card maker Vanessa Bayer, in a cameo that perhaps, no definitely goes on too long reads their palms. □

## Emmylou Harris and Brad Paisley are headed for Nashville Songwriters Hall of Fame



Emmylou Harris appears at the MusiCares Person of the Year award ceremony in Los Angeles on Feb. 8, 2019, left, and Brad Paisley poses for a portrait in New York on Nov. 18, 2019.

**Associated Press**

By **MARIA SHERMAN**  
AP Music Writer

Country superstar Brad Paisley and Americana powerhouse Emmylou Harris will be inducted into the Nashville Songwriters Hall of Fame, the organization announced Wednesday.

The new class also includes Steve Bogard and Tony Martin in the contemporary songwriter category, Jim Lauderdale in the contemporary songwriter/artist category and Don Cook in the veteran songwriter category.

They will be formally inducted on Oct. 6 during the 55th Anniversary Nashville Songwriters Hall of Fame Gala held at the Music City Center.

Paisley, a three-time Grammy-winning country music superstar with a whopping 41 songs on the Billboard Hot 100, is known for writing many of his own hits. Those in-

clude "He Didn't Have To Be," "Alcohol," "I'm Gonna Miss Her (The Fishin' Song)," "Letter To Me," and "Remind Me" a duet with Carrie Underwood.

Harris, one of the great American folk singer-songwriters, with 13 Grammys to her name, is known for such hits like "Boulder To Birmingham," "White Line" and "Heartbreak Hill." She was inducted into the Country Music Hall of Fame in 2008.

Bogard is known for radio staples like George Strait's "Carried Away," Rascal Flatts' "Prayin' For Daylight" and Dierks Bentley's "Every Mile A Memory."

Martin also wrote for Strait "Baby's Gotten Good At Goodbye" as well as Jason Aldean ("A Little More Summertime") and Keith Urban ("You Look Good In My Shirt"). Urban himself was recently inducted into the Nashville Songwriters Hall of Fame in 2023. □

# Travis Kelce's transformation: Chiefs star trims down, gears up for another Super Bowl run

By DAVE SKRETTA  
AP Sports Writer

**ST. JOSEPH, Mo. (AP)** — It's easy to see Travis Kelce making plays on the practice fields of Missouri Western State University these days, whether they be those highlight-reel catches, deft maneuvers in the open field or, yes, the occasional pancake block on a running play.

The thing is that there is less of the Chiefs tight end to see.

Kelce won't exactly cop to it leave that to Chiefs coach Andy Reid, who called him "svelte" but the four-time All-Pro trimmed down considerably since the end of last season, when he was last seen walking dejectedly off the turf at the Superdome in New Orleans, the Chiefs having been dismantled by the Philadelphia Eagles in the Super Bowl.

The sting of the loss probably had a lot to do with his offseason work.

You see, some questioned whether the 40-22 defeat might drive the nearly 36-year-old Kelce into retirement, especially given the number of off-the-field pursuits vying for his time. There's the TV shows and films, including the new



Kansas City Chiefs tight end Travis Kelce watches a drill at NFL football training camp Tuesday, Aug. 5, 2025, in St. Joseph, Mo.

"Happy Gilmore" flick, along with his popular podcast and his celebrity girlfriend, the pop superstar Taylor Swift.

Yet instead of calling it quits, Kelce seemed to redouble his efforts. He used the "New Heights" podcast with his brother, retired Eagles center Jason Kelce, to quickly make it clear that he wasn't going anywhere. Then, apparently, he locked himself in

the gym and went to work, trimming down to the kind of shape Kelce was in earlier in his career.

"He's svelte right now. He looks like he's 20," Reid opined. "He's doing a nice job. He's worked hard to get to this spot here." And avoid the spot he found himself in last year. By almost any measure, the season Kelce had would have been deemed a success. He appeared in

16 regular-season games, caught 97 passes for 823 yards and three scores, and stepped back into a go-to role for the offense when the Chiefs lost wide receivers Marquise Brown and Rashee Rice to injuries for nearly the entire season. Yet the measure Kelce uses has never been the same used by others. For one thing, the only thing that really matters to him is the Super Bowl, and the

Associated Press

Chiefs came up short last season. For another, Kelce is accustomed to 1,000-yard seasons and double-digit touchdown passes, the kinds of numbers that have made him an almost certain first-ballot Hall of Famer.

"You know," Kelce said Wednesday, after training camp was moved indoors as a storm swept through, "football is the biggest driving force I've ever had. I love coming out here and focusing on this and trying to get better for another run."

Kelce has always called Missouri Western his "sanctuary," where he can get away from distractions and focus on football.

That hasn't changed as he prepares to enter his 13th season.

"You get out here to St. Joe," Kelce said, "and you're going to training camp, man, it just really signifies like, coming together. The chemistry, the culture that you need to have to keep getting better every single day, every single week throughout the year. "I think you can really just focus in on your craft," he said, "and being the best. You care for the guys around you." □

## Lindsey Vonn hires former ski great Aksel Lund Svindal as coach ahead of Olympic season

**KENNELBACH, Austria (AP)** — Lindsey Vonn has added former ski great Aksel Lund Svindal to her coaching team as she prepares for next year's Winter Olympics. The 40-year-old American skier, who won the gold medal in the downhill at the 2010 Games, returned to the sport last year with a new titanium knee and plans on competing at the Milan-Cortina Olympics in Italy from Feb. 6-22.

Vonn had to cut her career short in 2019 due to a series of crashes and injuries, but then she had two titanium pieces inserted into her right knee before her comeback. Svindal, a two-time Olympic champion, will begin coaching Vonn at a training camp in Chile later this summer, according to a statement released Wednesday by Head, her equipment supplier.

"To have him officially on my team as we push for the Cortina Games is a huge

boost," said the 82-time World Cup winner. "This comeback is about pushing boundaries and proving what's possible, and I believe Aksel will help give me the extra edge I will need on this ambitious journey. I am grateful to have him on my team and I couldn't ask for a better partner."

Svindal won four Olympic medals and is a five-time world champion. He retired after winning silver in the downhill in his final race at the 2019 world championships. He said he was "a bit surprised when Lindsey called me, but mostly honored."

Vonn concluded her comeback season with a second-place finish in a World Cup super-G in March. It was her first World Cup podium spot since March 15, 2018, when she finished third in a super-G. A year later, she earned downhill bronze at the world championships. □



Lindsey Vonn, of the United States, left, and Norway's Aksel Lund Svindal pose with their trophies of the alpine ski, women's and men's World Cup super-G discipline titles, in Schladming, Austria, Thursday, March 15, 2012.

Associated Press

# MLB is calling up its first female umpire, promoting Jen Pawol for Saturday's Marlins-Braves game

By **BEN WALKER** and **RON-ALD BLUM**

AP Baseball Writers

**NEW YORK (AP)** — Jen Pawol is set to become the first woman to umpire in Major League Baseball when she works games this weekend between the Miami Marlins and Atlanta Braves.

Pawol will work the bases in Saturday's doubleheader at Truist Park and the plate on Sunday, MLB told The Associated Press on Wednesday.

Pawol, a 48-year-old from New Jersey, worked spring training games in 2024 and this year. She will become the fifth umpire to debut this year.

"Baseball's done a great job of being completely inclusive," Los Angeles



Home plate umpire Jen Pawol calls a strike during the third inning of a spring training baseball game between the Miami Marlins and Houston Astros, Sunday, March 10, 2024, in West Palm Beach, Fla.

Associated Press

Dodgers manager Dave Roberts said.

"I'll be watching. It's good for the game."

MLB's move comes 28 years after the gender barrier for game officials was broken in the NBA, 10 years after the NFL hired its first full-time woman official and three years after the men's soccer World Cup employed a female referee.

The NHL still has not had any women on-ice officials.

Pawol in 2024 became the first woman to umpire big league spring training games since Ria Cortesio in 2007.

Cortesio spent nine years in the minor leagues, including the last five in the Double-A Southern League, then was released after the 2007 season.

"We had seen her in spring training a lot," Philadelphia Phillies star Trea Turner said. "I don't know much about her or statistics or anything like that, but if she's doing a great job, I love seeing the opportunity for her, and I'm happy for her. I talked to her a little bit in spring training and she seems like a great person and I wish her all the best."

Pawol was an all-state softball and soccer player in New Jersey for three seasons in each sport at West Milford High School. She went to Hofstra on a softball scholarship and became a three-time all-conference pick and was on the USA Baseball women's national baseball team in 2001.

Pawol got a master's degree and was living in the Binghamton area of New York and taking teacher certification classes at Elmira College while still playing on the side.

"I wasn't really satisfied," she said last year.

"Coming off of a huge competitive career, just playing locally, I wasn't getting my fix. And I remember looking at the umpire and being like, I think that's it.

I got to go for that." □



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