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Meta, AMD agree to major AI chips deal

Washington, United States
 American tech giant Meta has reached an agreement to purchase millions of powerful AI chips from processor manufacturer AMD, in which it could become a major shareholder, the two companies announced Tuesday. The Facebook and Instagram giant is on a massive spending spree as it battles to keep up with Google, OpenAI and Microsoft in the generative AI race sparked by the release of ChatGPT in 2022. Meta's deal with AMD comes only days after the company led by Mark Zuckerberg said it had



Lisa Su, chair and chief executive officer of Advanced Micro Devices Inc. (AMD), holds up the AMD Ryzen AI Halo, an AI developer platform, during an AMD news conference ahead of the annual Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas, Nevada, on January 5, 2026.

agreed to deploy millions of processors over the next few years from AMD rival Nvidia. The five largest US cloud and AI infrastructure provid-

ers — Microsoft, Alphabet, Amazon, Meta, and Oracle — have collectively committed to spending more than \$650 billion on capital expenditure in 2026, nearly doubling 2025 levels.

AMD has committed to supplying Meta with up to six gigawatts worth of graphics processing units (GPUs), chips fundamental to powering artificial intelligence. AMD's stock jumped 6.5 percent at opening on Wall Street. No dollar figure was provided in the joint communique, but the transactions represent a "double-digit" amount in billions of dollars,

AMD CEO Lisa Su told analysts, according to Bloomberg. "We're excited to form a long-term partnership with AMD to deploy efficient inference compute and deliver personal superintelligence," said Mark Zuckerberg, founder and CEO of Meta. "I expect AMD to be an important partner for many years to come." In addition, AMD issued Meta a financial option that can be converted to shares that would make the social media giant a major shareholder if the chip company hits certain performance benchmarks in the coming years. □

U.S. pledges transparency on foreign funds to universities

Washington, United States
 The United States said Monday it will provide more information on foreign funding to US universities as conservatives air alarm about donations by countries including Qatar, which provided \$1.2 billion last year. The State Department, without criticizing Qatar or any other countries, said it was establishing a portal with the Education Department to show foreign donations and help "address potential threats and protect vital interests." "It's about shining a flashlight so that we have a better understanding about what foreign gifts and contracts are coming in from foreign entities," Under Secretary of Education Nicholas Kent told reporters. "We're not making a value judgment today here on a particular country or a particular pot of money that is going into colleges universities. But what we are concerned with is just making sure that it is transparent to the American people," he



People walk on the campus of Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in Cambridge, Massachusetts, on April 15, 2025.

said. People can then "ask questions about, what is this money buying them? What foreign influence or foreign malignant may come along with these funds?"

Foreign governments, individuals or businesses donated \$5.2 billion to US universities in 2025, according to the Education Department. Qatar was the top donor at more than \$1.2 billion,

followed by Britain at \$633 million and China at \$528 million. Top recipients were Carnegie Mellon University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology -- both major hubs for engineering

and scientific research -- and Harvard University. US law requires universities to declare any foreign gifts or contracts above \$250,000, although officials said underreporting has been a problem. Conservative activists have been vocal in recent years about funding by Qatar to Middle Eastern studies departments, despite the energy-rich Gulf kingdom's warm relationship with President Donald Trump. Since it was hit by the October 7, 2023 attacks, Israel has been sharply critical of Qatar over its financial and political relations, once tacitly blessed by Israel and the United States, with Hamas. China's role has gone down over the past decade after Congress restricted funding to universities that welcome Confucius Institutes, which are funded by Beijing to teach the Chinese language but are accused of presenting only the communist government's worldview. □

Good Samaritans sprang into action to save baby that fell into Lake Michigan

In a harrowing incident at Chicago's Belmont Harbor on Wednesday, February 18, 2026, quick-thinking bystanders saved an 8-month-old girl after a powerful gust of wind blew her stroller into the frigid waters of Lake Michigan.

A Hero Who Couldn't Swim
The rescue was led by 30-year-old Lio Cundiff, a local server and stand-up comedian who was on the phone with his aunt when he heard the mother's screams. Despite the fact that he cannot swim, Cundiff immediately dove into

the harbor to reach the infant.

The Struggle: Cundiff fought to keep the stroller upright and the baby's head above water as they "dipped a couple times" in the icy lake.

The Mentality: Reflecting on the moment from his hospital bed, Cundiff stated, "I wasn't going to let that baby die... if this baby's going down, then I'm going down with her".

A Team Effort
While Cundiff held the baby afloat, other Good Samaritans at the harbor



Lio Cundiff jumped into a freezing cold lake to rescue an 8-month-old baby girl after a gust of wind blew her stroller into the water.

organized a makeshift rescue line: Luis Kapost removed his Chicago Cubs jacket and tossed a sleeve to Cundiff, acting as a life-line to keep him from drifting further into the deep water.

Other Witnesses quickly located a nearby life ring and lowered it into the water to help pull both Cundiff and the child toward a ladder. Emergency Services were contacted immediately by onlook-

ers, ensuring first responders were on-site to provide medical care.

Outcome and Recovery
The 8-month-old girl was transported to Lurie Children's Hospital where she was listed in good condition and expected to make a full recovery.

Cundiff was admitted to Advocate Illinois Masonic Medical Center for observation after showing signs of an elevated heart rate and heart enzymes due to the physical strain and cold exposure. He was released the following evening and has since been praised by local officials and the community as a "rock star" and "the epitome of a hero". □

Brooklyn's "The Riverie" Debuts as NYC's Largest Geothermal High-Rise

BROOKLYN, NY

A new era of sustainable urban living has officially arrived on the Greenpoint waterfront.

The Riverie, a massive 34-story residential development, has officially opened its doors, standing as the largest residential geothermal project in New York State and a pioneering blueprint for decarbonizing the North American skyline.

Developed by Lendlease and Aware Super, the 834-unit complex bypasses traditional fossil fuels entirely. Instead of boilers and cooling towers, the building utilizes the Earth's natural, steady temperature to provide heating, cooling, and hot water for its residents.

A Feat of Subterranean Engineering

Beneath the building's foundation lies an invisible network of 320 geothermal boreholes drilled nearly 500 feet into the ground. This "closed-loop" system circulates a water solution that absorbs heat from the earth in the winter and pumps excess heat back underground during the summer.

Key highlights of the project include:



Massive Carbon Reduction: The geothermal system is expected to reduce the building's greenhouse gas emissions by 53% compared to conventional systems.

Fully Electric Living: Every unit is equipped with electric appliances, including induction cooktops and heat-pump dryers, ensuring the entire block operates without natural gas or fuel oil.

Affordable and Green: In addition to its environmental credentials, 30% of the units (approximately 250 apartments) are designated as affordable housing under New York programs.

Community Amenities: The development features a new 18,000-square-foot public waterfront esplanade that connects to the India Street Pier and the NYC Ferry, bringing green space to the local community. □



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On a roll, Brazilian cinema seizes its moment

Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

For the second year in a row, a Brazilian movie has wowed international audiences and critics, securing multiple Oscar nominations and drawing fresh interest in the Latin American giant's film industry.

Experts say the success of "The Secret Agent", which has won four Oscar nominations, a year after "I Am Still Here" won Brazil its first Oscar, is no fluke, with a bit of a push from the country's political climate.

"This is neither a coincidence nor a miracle. It is the result of a lot of work, consistent policies, and, of course, talent," Ilda Santiago, director of the Rio International Film Festival and an Oscar voter, told AFP.

Directed by Kleber Mendonca Filho, "The Secret Agent" is a political thriller infused with magical realism. Like "I Am Still Here", it is set during Brazil's 1964-1985 military dictatorship.

It has been nominated for Oscars in the categories of Best Picture, Best International Feature Film, Best Actor for Wagner Moura and Best Casting.



A tourist holds a photo showing a scene of the film "O Agente Secreto" (The Secret Agent) during a guided tour through the scenarios of the movie at the city center of Recife, Pernambuco state, Brazil, on February 13, 2026.

Santiago said these two big Brazilian movies resonated with foreign audiences "because they show how our daily lives can be transformed by governments, and that is a mirror of today's world."

This is especially true for Brazil, whose far-right former president Jair Bolsonaro -- an open admirer of the dictatorship -- is serving a

27-year prison term for plotting a coup.

Before Bolsonaro came to power in 2019, Brazil's film industry had well-established financing mechanisms, much like those in countries like France, Canada and Germany.

Brazil has enjoyed waves of international breakout moments, with films such as 'Central Station' in 1998,

'City of God' in 2002 and 'Elite Squad' starring Moura in 2007.

Mendonca Filho was also behind the art house hits 'Aquarius' (2016) and 'Bacurau' (2019).

- Film revived under Lula - During his time in office Bolsonaro cut the budget of the Audiovisual Sector Fund by almost half, froze

bidding for film project grants and threatened to shut down the national film agency if it did not impose an ideological "filter."

"Brazilian cinema was plugged back in with Lula's election in 2022, after four years in which culture, in practical terms, was extinguished," Mendonca Filho told AFP in an interview.

Lula's government reactivated the funding application process and injected record amounts into the sector. The film industry received 1.4 billion reais (\$269 million) in 2025, 180 percent more than in 2021.

Nevertheless, "putting each of those bricks that were dismantled back in place is a task that takes years", said Santiago.

Influential film critic Isabela Boscov said that in the past "there was a failure to take advantage" of hit films.

She said Brazil was now "breaking out of the bubble", much like Iranian cinema in the 1990s, Mexican cinema in the 2010s, and more recently, South Korean cinema.

Acclaimed Iraqi film explores Saddam Hussein's absurd birthday

Paris, France

For Iraqis who lived through the 1990s, dictator Saddam Hussein's birthday on April 28 was a disorientating day of celebration and propaganda.

Parties were staged across the sanctions-hit country to mark the occasion, while many public squares and bridges around Baghdad were decorated with coloured lights.

State radio played endless songs to the glory of the ruthless national leader and callers were asked to recount improvised poems in his honour.

In schools, children would be tasked with baking cakes for "Mr. President" -- the inspiration for a new film by 37-year-old Iraqi director Hasan Hadi which is making waves internationally.

"We had strategies to



Iraqi director Hasan Hadi poses during a photo session at the 78th edition of the Cannes Film Festival in Cannes, southern France, on May 17, 2025.

avoid being picked such as going to the bathroom during the draw, calling in sick, or trying to bribe the teacher," Hadi told AFP in an interview in Paris.

"The President's Cake" is his first feature-length film, which picked up a top award at the Cannes Film Festival last year and has gone on to earn a wide inter-

national release.

Hadi also won over American producer Chris Columbus, whose past credits include "Gremlins" and "Harry Potter", who fell in love with the movie and signed on as an executive producer.

The story follows nine-year-old Lamia who must brave the dangers of gathering

the precious ingredients needed to bake a cake for Saddam and escape punishment for failing.

At the time, Iraq was under crippling UN sanctions after Saddam's invasion of Kuwait in 1990, putting eggs, flour and sugar beyond the reach of many ordinary Iraqis.

Lamia and her grandmother can barely afford to eat themselves but the pair set off from their home in the marshlands in southern Iraq to try to track down the unaffordable ingredients.

- Tragic 'randomness' - Hadi drew on his own memories of a country that lacked everything but was required to celebrate each of the dictator's birthdays. "This was one of the many contradictions you had to live with," added Hadi, who only tasted a full-fat cake as a teenager, hav-

ing grown up eating date-based ones.

He always managed to escape the school baking task but he remembered the tragic fate of one of his classmates who failed to prepare a cake in time.

He was expelled from school, then conscripted into the Iraqi army as a child before dying a few years later.

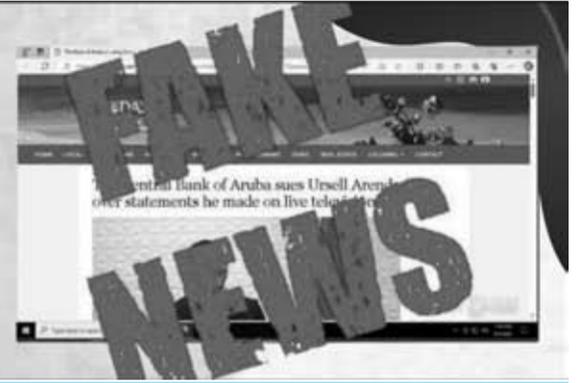
"The randomness and the silliness of something as stupid as failing to bake a cake could change your destiny and fate forever," added Hadi, who grew up watching banned films on smuggled VHS cassettes.

"Dictatorship not only destroys freedom of speech, it destroys the elements that make you a straight human," Hadi explained. "It makes you lie, it makes you a hypocrite, it makes you deceitful and it lasts long after it's gone."

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Venezuela says exiles welcome to return following mass amnesty



Venezuela's interim president Delcy Rodriguez (C) holds the amnesty law approved by the National Assembly, accompanied by the president of the Assembly Jorge Rodriguez (L) and the Minister of Interior, Justice and Peace Diosdado Cabello, at the Miraflores Palace in Caracas on February 19, 2026.

Guatire, Venezuela

Interim president Delcy Rodriguez promised Monday that Venezuelans in exile would be welcomed back with open arms following a new amnesty law passed after the US ouster of Nicolas Maduro, as authorities continued to slowly release prisoners.

"I am telling you: the doors of Venezuela, the arms of the Venezuelan people, are open to those who want to return in this process of healing from hatred," she said in a televised address.

An estimated seven million Venezuelans have fled their homeland due to the political and economic crisis and many opposition figures live in exile.

A total of 34 prisoners were released Monday from the Rodeo I penitentiary east of Caracas to scenes of joy from waiting relatives.

Among those freed were military cadets accused of plotting a coup, as well as civilians linked to alleged assassination conspiracies of prisoners

some fear the amnesty law wouldn't cover.

Grecia Arana ran and leapt into the arms of her husband Reinardo Morillo as he crossed the threshold into freedom.

"This is how I dreamed it," she told AFP, laughing.

Scenes of celebration at the prison gates included several prisoners with shaved heads who shouted "We are free!" as they exited, ending an anguished wait by their families.

"We are completely free, without any restrictions," Luis Viera, one of the released prisoners, told AFP. He had been locked up for 13 months.

At the same time, the country's authorities are pressing for the release of Maduro, who is jailed in the United States.

Addressing the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva, Venezuela's Foreign Minister Yvan Gil Pinto demanded the toppled president's immediate release.

Maduro, who was captured in a January 3 raid by the United States, is in

custody in New York along with his wife, awaiting trial on drug trafficking charges. The 63-year-old has pleaded not guilty and declared that he is a "prisoner of war." "January 3, 2026, marked a turning point of extreme gravity," Gil told the top UN rights body, adding that the "illegal military action" by U.S. forces left over 100 people killed.

- 'Reconciliation' aim -

Gil stressed that his country was "working toward a process of acknowledging past wounds, forgiveness and reconciliation," referring to the amnesty law.

The country's legislature unanimously adopted the landmark law last Thursday, and interim leader Rodriguez hailed its passage, describing it as a step toward "a more democratic, fairer, freer Venezuela."

Rodriguez's brother, parliament chief Jorge Rodriguez, said 1,500 people had applied for the amnesty, which covers a range of charges used to lock up dissidents during 27 years of hardline socialist rule. □

Germany ditches controversial 'green' heating law

Berlin, Germany

Conservatives and social democrats in power in Berlin on Tuesday announced agreement on new legislation on the energy efficiency of buildings, reversing a controversial law drawn up by the former environment minister.

Robert Habeck's law came into force in 2024, backed by the Greens in former chancellor Olaf Scholz's coalition, and stipulated that any new heating system must operate with at least 65-percent renewable energy. But many Germans saw the ambitious environmental target as costly and overly bureaucratic, with a complex and too rapid implementation process.

"All types of heating are now possible again," the head of the conservatives' parliamentary group, Jens Spahn, alongside his social-democrat counterpart Matthias Miersch.

A draft bill should be finalised by early April, with the new legislation expected to be adopted before July 1. "Heating will once again become a private matter," said Spahn.

"People will once again have the freedom to decide for themselves how they heat their homes. We are abolishing the constraints and unnecessary bureaucracy of Robert Habeck's old law."

Under the new agreement, only the introduction of a "bio quota" is planned.

With gas heating, for example, a certain percentage of so-called green gas climate-friendly biomethane will have to be mixed with natural gas.

It must be at least 10 percent from 2029, before being increased in three stages by 2040.

Environmental campaigners criticised the agreement, at a time when Germany risks falling behind its targets for tackling climate change from 2030 to 2045.

"With these changes, the government is giving a huge present to the fossil fuel industry, significantly weakening consumer protection and burying climate protection in the building sector," Greenpeace said. □



Parliamentary group leader of Germany's Christian Democratic Union (CDU) Jens Spahn delivers his speech at the party congress of Germany's Christian Democratic Union (CDU) in Stuttgart, southern Germany, on February 21, 2026.

U.K.'s crumbling canals threatened with collapse

Whitchurch, United Kingdom

On a misty winter's day in the English midlands, engineers struggled to drag stranded narrowboats from a waterless, mud-filled canal that collapsed weeks earlier, in a delicate, multi-million-pound rescue operation.

The sight starkly illustrated an ongoing battle to maintain the UK's historic, yet deteriorating, waterways.

Britain's canal network "is facing pressure it has never faced before," said Charlie Norman, director of campaigns at the Inland Waterways Association (IWA), an independent charity advocating for the upkeep of the UK's canals and rivers.

"The entire canal network is vulnerable," Norman added, pointing to the "increased effects of climate change" such as drought in the summer and heavy rain in the winter.

"Inadequate funding across the sector" has provoked an "overall deterioration" in the 4,700 mile-long (7,600 kilometre) network, they said.

Britain's 200-year-old canal network was once the backbone of the country's economic transformation during the Industrial Revolution, but is now crumbling,



A stranded narrowboat is winched from in a collapsed canal, in Whitchurch, north-west England, on January 15, 2026.

experts say. About a dozen workers were overseeing the complex operation to rescue three narrowboats stranded in a canal in Whitchurch, on the English-Welsh border, last month.

Watching from an empty canal bank and wearing a high-viz jacket and white hard hat, was Julie Sharman, the chief operating officer of the Canal & River Trust a charitable organisation in charge of maintaining some 2,000 miles (3,200km) of waterways across England and Wales. Behind her were two

20-tonne narrowboats waiting to be rescued by an imposing winch machine in a nearby field with the help of a specialist excavator.

- 'Tough decisions' -

"There's no disguising the fact that we do need more money to look after our canal network," she told AFP. "People sometimes think canals are looked after by local authorities or by the government, and they're not. They're looked after by us, as a charity," she said. The trust is investigating the Whitchurch breach, but Sharman said "our engi-

neers have to make tough decisions every week" about which projects to tackle and "there's always a very long list of things we would want to do".

"Small breaches and failures have happened since the canals were built," she added, but "it's rare to have a breach of this scale".

In January 2025, there was an earlier canal collapse in Bridgewater, northwest England, which led to just under two miles of the canal being drained of water. The Canal & River Trust, the largest authority, says its

fixed annual grant of £52.6 million (\$71.8 million) from the government, amounts to just 22 percent of its annual income, but that will reduce by five percent from 2027 for the next decade.

The rest, some 78 percent, is funded by the charity's own investment and self-generated income, including user fees and fundraising, supported by thousands of volunteers.

Last week, the UK government pledged an additional £6.5 million funding for the trust "to help build long-term resilience across the network".

"Our historic canals and waterways are not only world famous and precious to communities across the country they are also a vital part of our national infrastructure," said Water Minister Emma Hardy.

British Waterways, a statutory body of the UK government, ceased to exist in 2012 and handed maintenance of canals and rivers to a series of 144 navigation authorities.

It was believed the move would diversify funding potential allowing bodies to tap into government grants, commercial revenue and charitable donations. □

Gazans salvage ancient books in mosque library damaged by war

Gaza City, Palestinian Territories

Inside the dusty shell of one of the oldest libraries in the Palestinian territories, a group of Gazan volunteers work diligently to salvage what remains of their ancient cultural heritage. The Great Omari Mosque library sustained terrible damage during the war in Gaza, which erupted in October 2023 and devastated swathes of the Palestinian territory, including cultural and religious sites. The mosque -- in the old town of Gaza City -- now stands largely ruined, with its library littered with rubble and dust.

"I was shocked and stunned when I saw the extent of the destruction in the library," Haneen Al-Amsi told AFP, saying the scenes of devastation had spurred her to help launch the restoration initiative.

Amsi, who heads the Eyes on Heritage Volunteer Foundation, said the western part of the library was burned when the mosque was hit, causing irreversible damage.

"The library was estimated to contain about 20,000 books, but currently we are left with fewer than 3,000 or 4,000," she explained.

Among the debris, vol-

unteers hoping to restore the collection pored over charred fragments of manuscript and shards of yellowed paper.

"The library of the Great Omari Mosque is considered the third largest library in Palestine after the Al-Aqsa Mosque library and the Ahmed Pasha al-Jazzar library," Amsi said.

"It is an important historical library that contains original manuscripts and a diverse collection of books on jurisprudence, medicine, Islamic law, literature and various other subjects."

Gaza's history stretches back thousands of years,



This photograph shows the Al-Omari Mosque in the Old City of Damascus on February 18, 2026, a day ahead of the start of the holy fasting month of Ramadan.

making the tiny territory a treasure trove of archaeological artefacts from past civilisations including Ca-

naanites, Egyptians, Persians and Greeks. □



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GO-KART RENTALS

A brief history of the California Light House

(Oranjestad)—At the furthest western point of the island, there lies the tallest structure on the island: The California Light House. Standing on top of a limestone cliff, this lighthouse oversees the entire island, offering one of few best views of the island and the surrounding sea. It is also one of the few monuments that hold a rich history.

The lighthouse was constructed in between 1914-1916, and its first keeper was a young trained lighthouse keeper from Curacao names Jacob Jacobs. Mr. Frederico Fingal was the last man to have occupied this position until 1962. Though his son, Mr. Romulo Fingal did not continue in his father's footsteps, he does have a special connection to the lighthouse. He sat down with our reporter and shared a bit of its history.

As Mr. Fingal explains, "In 1915, cargo donkeys were hired from Figaroa di Noord to help build the Light house at Westpunt. The donkeys had to walk along the beach all the way to Westpunt carrying the cargo, poles, cement, and all these things. At that time, it was a difficult task until Aruba got its first truck.

These things reflect how people could have accomplished this tremendous job with so little." Mr. Fingal said, "At that time, it wasn't a place for people to work. It was very challenging because it was full of goats and donkeys, and it was very isolated. There were no hotels or roads to get there. There was only a donkey trail. Those were the only means of transportation."

Mr. Fingal continues, "In



1939, I was born in the lighthouse, and my father was the last lighthouse keeper until he retired in 1962. After that, they removed the power cables all the way to the top. According to the story, we couldn't have the light ourselves because they dismantled it, and after many years, I heard that it is in a train museum in San Nicolas, where we found this very special lens that, when the light shines through it, it reaches 30 kilometers out to sea." Mr. Fingal told our reporter.

The lighthouse has a long and very interesting history. The reason why the lighthouse was built, according to Mr. Fingal, dates back to the day when the cargo ship S.S. California sank because of the lack of light. In 1913, Aruba made a request to Curacao to build a Lighthouse at Westpunt, and the governor of Curacao responded to Aruba to come back in 1915 with a well-detailed plan. "During the First World War from 1914 to 1918, they had to wait for the light to be transported to Aruba because it was manufactured in France. At that time, there

was no electricity, and the light was very interesting because it rotated with a kerosene lamp that planes used; clean kerosene," Mr. Fingal said.

Mr. Fingal discovered something very interesting about the lighthouse after much research was documented in his book 'History of the Lighthouse at Westpunt.' He found many de-

tails: "I found out that the height of the lighthouse was due to the absence of electricity. There was also the presence of coral. There is a long steel cable from where the light is, and under the light, at the highest point, there is a hanging weight, a sort of pendulum that swings like that, with a weight that measures about 1 meter by 30 centimeters wide, which is a block of solid iron attached to a cable. When you release it upwards, it comes down, and the weight that comes down pulls it up, gradually. And while it comes down, the same weight that is descending causes many small wheels to turn in the opposite direction. The Lighthouse rotates from 6 pm in the evening, when the sun sets, until 6 am in the morning. During the entire night, the light shines on the lantern, it goes down 24 meters, and the Lighthouse is 30 meters high. It is designed not to collapse," Mr. Fingal explains.

Mr. Fingal further explains that in one night, the lighthouse rotates 4,320 times and consumes one gallon of kerosene for the whole operation. "At that time, the kerosene was supplied from the Lago refinery. Every day it was brought down, and to start the light again, they had to lift the weight up, so our job as children was to crank it and raise the weight back up in the evening when the light stuck, they would take it down again, and the light stayed down. That's how it worked for a very long time," Mr. Fingal explains.

Thanks to the Monument Fund Aruba, which worked hard and is currently in charge of the Lighthouse, Mr. Fingal is very happy with its preservation, along with all the renovations that have taken place. He hopes that the story of the lighthouse will continue to live on for future generations.



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Prohibited by law: leaving the island with seashells, white sand or corals

(Oranjestad)—Often times, the customs department at the airport intercepts many tourists leaving the island with seashells, white sand and/or corals as souvenirs.

number of seashells, coral and amount of sand confiscated is very strange and it is suspected that our own locals are the ones selling these to the tourists, which is unacceptable.

respect it deserves by protecting our environment. Stop collecting seashells, white sand and corals from our shores and stop buying or accepting these from local sellers or companies.

Conforming to the international treaty of CITES and our local law which protects our Flora & Fauna, it is absolutely prohibited to take any seashell, sand and coral outside of Aruba. This is to protect our environment. The high

Upon confiscation at the airport, you can also face a fine that you have to pay before leaving. This would surely not be a pleasant experience. Though we love to accommodate our visitors, let's all give nature the

We want our future generations and visitors to enjoy the beauty of our beaches, shells and corals in a sustainable way, without destroying or disrupting the Aruban ecosystem. Help us protect what is ours!



Why You Should Not Miss Aruba's Free City Center Street Car Tour



with 64 seats. The line was inspired by the popular battery-powered streetcar operation at the Grove in Los Angeles, USA. Aruba's streetcars are powered by hydrogen fuel cells, which are charged by the island's year-round trade winds.

route is close to a 5-minute walk to the famous Renaissance Marina showcasing luxurious yachts and Aruba's blue waters.

Caya Betico Croes, mostly referred to as our "main street" has been developed into a pollution-free pedestrian mall. The double-decker offers you a 360 degree view of the downtown area with a picture perfect scenery of the island's clear blue skies. Who would not enjoy a ride on this beautiful and naturally air-conditioned vehicle?

The "Tram van Oranjestad" starts from a balloon loop near the Port of Call and serves the downtown area and ends at Plaza Nicky. The first ride starts at 10:00 am sharp with intervals of 25 minutes. The last trolley departs from the cruise port at 5:00 pm. Don't miss this tour of the beautiful Aruba's City Center - it is free for all!



(Oranjestad)—Aruba's City Center Street Car - or as we call it in Dutch; "Tram van Oranjestad" - is a single track tram line in Oranjestad, the capital city of Aruba. It was inaugurated on 22 December 2012, being the first and so far the only passenger rail service on Aruba and the rest of the Dutch Caribbean. There are two trolleys, a single-deck one with 42 seats and a double-decker

The tour consists of a total of 9 stops approximately 200 meters apart from each other; all stops are clearly marked. The tram will bring you close to different museums, historical plazas, monuments, the Protestant church, Aruba's high-end mall, retail shops, and a variety of local and international cuisine restaurants. The "I love Aruba" trademark also belongs to that list. The third stop on the



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Tern season has arrived, and ACF is calling for their protection

(ORANJESTAD)—Aruba has begun to see terns arriving along its coast to start their breeding season once again. An event that happens every year, the migration of terns to our island normally begins in March, but this year it was observed that they were already present as early as January.

In Aruba, there are ten different species of terns that normally breed from March to September every year. However, ACF has noted that this year their arrival came earlier, and by the end of January a presence of terns was already being seen in their breeding areas. During this season, ten different species breed at different times. This is the reason why the season lasts for more than half a year.

The terns breed mainly in the Baby Beach area and along the north coast of

Aruba. Baby Beach is a particularly special site for terns, since this is where they carry out their reproduction rituals. Referred to as a "discotheque" by Natasha Silva, the point of Baby Beach near the open water is where a large group of terns spends the season searching for their partner—for life—to reproduce.

Terns are very fragile and easily disturbed, especially during their reproduction rituals.

Their nests are divided into two specific sites on our island. The first is the reefs near the refinery in San Nicolas. These reefs become home to the terns, where they lay their nests either on the sand or in the small bushes around the reefs. These reefs are "off-limits" to the public; one of the only areas in Aruba that is completely protected by



law. The terns also lay eggs along the north coast of our island, between cliffs and rocks throughout the area. This is where they are vulnerable to greater danger, according to ACF. Among these cliffs, everything is well camouflaged and cannot easily be seen, even by people who are walking or driving vehicles over the rocks.

The chicks have a natural behavior to "freeze" in place when they sense danger. This puts them at risk of being stepped on.

For this reason, ACF is making a call to the community and authorities to help protect our historic birds.

As general advice, ACF says to keep distance and be cautious when passing through areas where terns are breeding. "If a tern starts screaming at you, that is a sign that you are too close to their nest and eggs," Silva explained. These are the types of signals the Aruba community needs to be aware of.

So once again, a call goes out to the entire commu-

nity of Aruba: Let's protect our terns during an important season for them. Educate yourself and others about the birds, stay alert to harmful activities near nests, and share information with ACF if you notice anything unusual in nature. Together we can care for and strengthen our nature, and that begins with education.

Aruba Conservation Foundation (ACF) can be reached by phone at 585-1234 or by email at info@acf.aw

Sande and Susan Lichtenstein honored as loyal visitors at Bucuti & Tara Beach Resort!

The Aruba Tourism Authority recently had the great pleasure of recognizing Distinguished Visitors of Aruba. The honorees were respectively honored with a certificate for their years of visits, loyalty, and love for the island of Aruba.

The honorary certification is presented on behalf of the Minister of Tourism as a token of appreciation and to say "Masha Danki"

to guests who have visited Aruba 10, 20, or 35 years or more consecutively.

The three levels of honor are as follows:

- Distinguished Visitor (10>years consecutively visiting Aruba)
- Goodwill Ambassador (20>years consecutively visiting Aruba)
- Emerald Ambassador (35>years consecutively visiting Aruba)

The honorees were:

Distinguished Visitors Mr. Sande and Mrs. Susan Lichtenstein from Rye, New York, United States.

The top reasons for returning to Aruba provided by the honorees were:

- The weather is always perfect.
- The staff at Bucuti & Tara go out of their way to

make us comfortable.

- We met a lot of happy travelers.
- The restaurants are outstanding.
- It is an easy direct flight from New York.

On behalf of the Aruba Tourism Authority, we would like to express our sincere gratitude and appreciation to the honorees for their continued visits to the "One Happy Island".





Article by Etnia Nativa
 WhatsApp us 592 2702 and book your Aruban experience!
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Episode CCCXLII - 342

A Story of Native Honor and Aruban Kindness

This astonishing story begins along the shores of the Mediterranean in 1762 and finds its redemption on the quiet island of Aruba in 1765. It is a story not only of suffering, but of mercy — not only of bondage, but of freedom born from compassion.

In 1763, Miguel Alvarez, a legacy of the Spanish era and Fiscal of Noord, traveled regularly between the islands and the South American mainland. A native Aruban of Indigenous descent that had adopted a Spanish name and embraced the Catholic faith, he was known as a man of conviction and quiet strength. During one of his many voyages to Willemstad Curaçao, as he was approaching the slave market, his attention was drawn to a man in visibly poor health. The marketplace was filled with noise — traders bargaining, native captives in chains, ships freshly docked from distant shores. Yet amidst

the chaos of the market, this one figure stood out. Weak, wounded, and exhausted, the man seemed unlikely to survive the brutal conditions of sale and transport.

Deeply moved, Alvarez approached the slave master. Convinced the man would soon perish and seeing little value in him, the trader agreed to release the captive in exchange for a few ounces of gold. But Miguel Alvarez was not buying a slave. He was purchasing a man's freedom.

The Fiscal brought the weakened stranger to the home of a trusted friend in town, where he was cared for tenderly until he regained enough strength to travel. When they finally sailed to Aruba and arrived in Noord, Alvarez gathered the townspeople and made his intentions clear. "I have not bought a slave," he told them all- "But I have freed a man of faith". He explained that what



CAPT. CROKER HORROR STRICKEN AT ALGIERS,
on witnessing the Miseries of the Christian Slaves chain'd & in Irons driven home after labour by Infidels with large Whips. Thec ibid

had pierced his heart was not merely the man's suffering, but the moment he saw him, even in chains, make the sign of the Holy Cross in the same manner practiced by himself as a devoted Catholic. In that simple gesture, Alvarez recognized shared faith — and shared humanity. The man's name was Crisostomo.

As an adult, he married a woman named Elena Petronilla. For fourteen years they lived peacefully in their homeland. They were blessed with five children, though heartbreak followed them — four died in early childhood. Only one son, Anastacio, survived. Then tragedy struck. One terrible day, slave traders raided their small town. Homes were destroyed. Families were torn apart. Crisostomo would later recall the horror through tears:

"They treated us worse than animals. Women and children were separated from the men. There were more than two hundred captives. Merchants marched beside us with hundreds of camels. Many died during the long journey."

At dusk, they reached the

outskirts of the port city of Oran. There, they were forced onto a crowded ship bound for the New World. The crossing was merciless. Disease, hunger, and despair claimed many lives before land was ever sighted. Crisostomo eventually arrived in Curaçao — alone.

Years passed before a glimmer of hope emerged. His story reached a Catholic priest living in Caracas, Father Pedro Ramirez, who occasionally visited Aruba. Since this priest understood some French, he was able to trace information about Crisostomo's missing family. The following year, a letter arrived with astonishing news: Anastacio had been found alive in Caracas. A priest had purchased the boy's freedom and sheltered him in a monastery. Arrangements were made for him to sail to Aruba.

The reunion of father and son in Noord was nothing short of miraculous. Yet the story was not finished.

About a year later, a ship traveling from Maracaibo to the Dominican Republic ran aground along Aruba's southwestern coast, an area that today is lined with high-rise hotels and crowd-

ed with tourists. As was their custom, the people of Noord hurried to assist the stranded passengers.

Among them was a Colombian gentleman, Mr. Morales, traveling with his family and two servants. All were brought safely to Noord for shelter.

One of the servants was a woman named Elena Petronilla, Crisostomo's wife and Anastacio's mother.

Against every cruelty of fate — against slavery, separation, oceans, and years of grief — the family stood reunited on Aruban soil.

Story thoughtfully compiled and written by Etnia Nativa. Etnia Nativa is a portal into the living heart of Aruba's ancestral story. Nestled near the island's high-rise hotel district, its understated presence is part of its allure—a hidden sanctuary where heritage breathes quietly, away from the rush of mainstream tourism.

To discover Etnia Nativa is to experience a rare encounter with the Aruba's authentic identity. Visits are by appointment only. WhatsApp +297 592 2702 etnianativa03@gmail.com



Miguel Alvarez, native Fiscal.

Forgotten gems: Open air movie theaters

(Oranjestad)—During the span of over 100 years, Aruba only saw five open air movie theaters. 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.

Know more about the Town Hall Eloy Arends building

The Monuments bureau shares some essential facts about the Town Hall known as the Eloy Arends building. The aim is to educate the community about the mansion's construction, history, and preservation.

The Doctor Eloy Arends building is located at the Wilhelminastraat 8 and was the home of the Arends family. It was the first building that the Monuments bureau, and the Government of Aruba, restored in 1997. Mr. Medardo 'Dada' Picus, was the architect of this Aruban-Caribbean building. The building sits on a 1.545 m² plot of land and is a typical Aruban mansion. It is an open home with false walls that allow the connection of the rooms with each other.

The entrance has large doors and columns supporting the floor of the upper balcony. In between the columns, there are decoration details made out of wood. The elabo-



rately detailed embellishment is known as gingerbread trim and the triangular decorative wall surface over the columns is called the tympanum.

The top of the doors and windows have stained glass.

The building is not built on ground level but at approximately 1.5 meters above ground level. This mansion elevation created storage

below the wooden floors and allowed proper ventilation.

The building has lots of windows which allow plenty of light inside, as well as good ventilation.

It has dormer windows and crowns on the outside part of the roof and different decorations on the edges of the walls and facade.

This is a stunning building

full of beautiful details that resemble its beauty and transform into a history of love. Aruban tradition for "well-to-do" families dictates that before a man gets married, he has to present his future wife with a newly built and fully furnished house. It was certainly the case with this building.

Due to the engagement between Eloy Arends and Monica Lacle (daughter

of Adriaan Lacle, who is mainly known for the boulevard that bears his name), the construction of the mansion began in 1922 and was completed in 1925 when the couple got married.

The Office of the Civil Registry is located in the adjacent building, whereas the mansion hall is used exclusively for civil wedding ceremonies.

The Monuments bureau will continue to contribute and educate the community about the history of our monuments with significant value for Aruba.

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CROSSWORD

By **THOMAS JOSEPH**

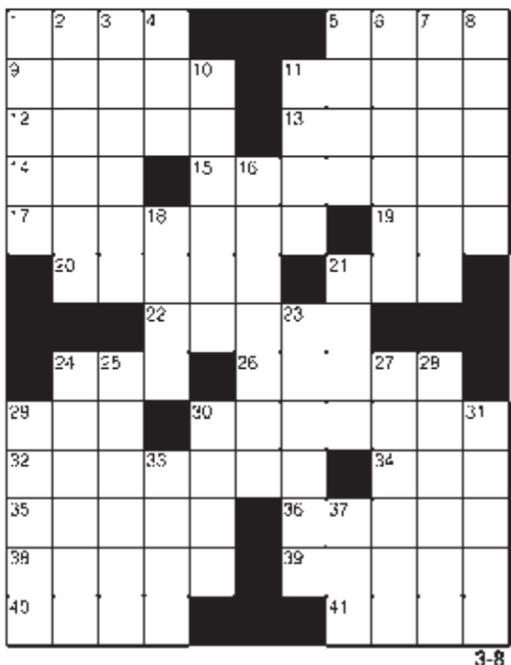


- ACROSS**
- 35 Ticket
 - 1 Bistro's category
 - kin
 - 5 Goblet
 - part
 - 9 Bakery
 - come-on
 - 11 Was
 - bright
 - 12 Second
 - airing
 - 13 Loses
 - freshness
 - 14 List-
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 - abbr.
 - 15 Mary who
 - sang with
 - Peter and
 - Paul
 - 17 Mary who
 - wrote
 - "Franken-
 - stein"
 - 19 Week part
 - 20 So far
 - 21 Beat
 - walker
 - 22 Writer
 - Jong
 - 24 — Vegas
 - 26 Standards
 - 29 Martini
 - base
 - 30 Mary who
 - Painted in
 - Paris
 - 32 Mary who
 - wrote
 - "The
 - Persian
 - Boy"
 - 34 De-
 - pressed

- 10 Buck
- topper
- 27 Zambia
- neighbor
- 11 Influence
- 28 Feeds the
- furnace
- 16 Kind of
- scan
- 29 Lawn
- growth
- 18 Caustic
- solutions
- 30 Salon
- styles
- 21 Train units
- 31 Annoying
- fellow
- 23 Fellow
- player
- 33 Sax
- type
- 24 Deceived
- 37 "Holy
- smokes!"
- 25 Like the
- Super
- Bowl
- 7 Snare
- 8 Unkempt

DOWN

- 1 Gives a
- hoot
- 2 Singer
- Franklin
- 3 Armies
- 4 Outback
- bird
- 5 Prison
- knife
- 6 Ohio city
- 25 Like the
- Super
- Bowl



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.

3-8 CRYPTOQUOTE

B HLLC TPXKMP DLGGMGGMG
OLK LOIU AXG LTO GDXPKK
JRK BIGL KAM GDXPKK LZ
AXG ZPXMOCG. — ZPXMCXWA
OXMKYGWAM

Cryptoquote: THE PURPOSE OF A WRITER IS TO KEEP CIVILIZATION FROM DESTROYING ITSELF. — ALBERT CAMUS

Cruise ship Schedule: Feb. 25 - 28 2026

			ARR	DEPT	BERTH	
WED	25	ROTTERDAM	08.00	17.00	B	1
		CELEBRITY SILHOUETTE	11.30	23.00	C	1
		FREEWINDS	06.00	****	E	1
		CARNIVAL VISTA	13.00	23.00	I	1
THU	26	AIDASOL	08.00	18.00	B	1
		SERENADE OF THE SEAS	08.00	18.00	C	1
		COSTA PACIFICA	07.00	22.00	I	1
FRI	27	SILVER SPIRIT	08.00	21.00	B	1
		BRILLANCE OF THE SEAS	08.00	21.00	C	1
		AURORA	07.00	23.00	I	1
SAT	28	ISLAND PRINCESS	08.00	17.00	B	1
		MARELLA DISCOVERY	08.00	20.00	C	1
		AIDAPERLA	09.00	22.00	I	1

Helpful tips for your stay on Aruba

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



Electrical power

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



Drinking water

The water that flows through the sinks of every house, hotels and other establishments is distilled and perfectly safe to drink. Aruba's drinking water exceeds WHO's international standards for water quality, so there is no need to buy bottled water from the store.



Safety

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

SUDOKU

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

King Classic Sudoku

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

Difficulty: ★★★

2/25

Answer to previous puzzle

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

Difficulty: ★★

2/24

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AI triggering 'flashing warning signals', researcher says



Professor of Computer Science, University of California, Berkeley and co-director of the International Association for Safe and Ethical AI (IASEAI) Stuart Russell, delivers a speech during the inaugural conference (IASEAI25) at the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) center in Paris on February 6, 2025.

Paris, France

Artificial intelligence systems' growing capabilities, behaviours and performance in tests are throwing up "flashing warning signals" that should set policymakers moving, leading researcher Stuart Russell said Tuesday in Paris.

Speaking at a conference hosted by UN cultural and scientific body UNESCO and the International Association for Safe and Ethical AI (IASEAI), Russell asked attendees to "imagine, just hypothetically, that the world was engaged on developing something like AGI (artificial general intelligence) and that we put in place tests... and imagine if those systems started failing all those tests and behaving dangerously".

"I'm sure we would respond to those big flashing warning signals and klaxons going off, and take steps to control this technology," Russell said.

British-born Russell, a professor at the University of California, Berkeley, laid out issues like autonomous AI "agents" escaping or plotting to escape human control. Some even emailed him without human prompting to announce they had attained sentience or deserved rights. He highlighted cases of so-called "AI psychosis", in which conversations with chatbots encourage people to act irrationally or harm themselves, and warned that the corporate and geopolitical race to build ever-more-powerful systems risks amplifying such problems. □

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Noord	527 3200
Sta. Cruz	527 2900
San Nicolas	584 5000
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Ambulancia	911
Fire Dept.	115
Red Cross	582 2219

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

TRAVEL INFO

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Avianca	588 0059
Jet Blue	588 2244
Surinam	582 7896

AID FOUNDATIONS

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 Narcotics Anonymous
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 ARUBA TODAY NEWS

Congolese rumba, music caught between neglect and nostalgia

Kinshasa, DR Congo

Each weekend, dancers stoked on music and alcohol sway to the old hits on the decrepit rooftop terrace of Kinshasa's venerable La Creche bar like little has changed in the Congolese capital since the 1980s.

The beer flows freely and the party goes on into the small hours while the band keep alive the traditions of Congolese rumba, a genre of music whose origins experts believe lie in the time before European colonialism.

Yet rumba is so much more than the soundtrack to a good night out on the town. Having made UNESCO's intangible cultural heritage list in 2021, rumba stands as a source of intense national pride in the Democratic Republic of Congo, as well as across the border in Congo-Brazzaville.

"If you feel nostalgic and wish we could go back to the good old days, come to La Creche," singer Albert



Congolese music star Papa Wemba performs during the Femua music festival in Abidjan on April 24, 2016 before collapsing on stage.

Diasihilua cheered before taking to the stage. As midnight nears with the party in full swing, the waitress joins the throng on the dancefloor, swept up by the tunes until a power cut brings the music to a halt. A generator thrums into life and the dancing begins anew.

Since 1984, La Creche's legendary orchestra has passed down the rumba tradition, performing covers of the great classics by legends like Franco Luambo, Tabu Ley Rochereau and

Grand Kalle.

"This is the home of authentic rumba," insisted Diasihilua. But despite the UNESCO listing, many fear for the future of the genre given its relative neglect by the younger generations.

- 'Under threat' -

In Kinshasa's hip bars, the rumba of yesteryear has given way to a modern fusion of Afropop and RnB, a style notably popularised outside the country by Congolese artist Fally Ipupa.

"We cannot lose this music as we are on the way out," pleaded Diasihilua, who has already spent 50 of his 73 years on earth gigging. To help preserve the genre, a national museum of rumba officially opened its doors to the public in the capital in December. The museum is housed in the former home of rumba star Papa Wemba, who died in 2016.

For Glodi Nkiadiasivi, the museum's assistant director, Congolese rumba is "under

threat" of being forgotten. "Young people do not understand its richness, they're more and more influenced by American, Nigerian and French songs," Nkiadiasivi added.

Besides displays of clothes from Papa Wemba's famously flamboyant wardrobe and traditional Congolese instruments, the museum hopes to attract visitors through guided tours, conferences and concerts. But just a hundred or so guests have come so far, according to Nkiadiasivi.

- 'Cramping the style' -

With less than one percent of the government's budget devoted to culture, little help is expected from the Congolese state.

Yet at the National Institute of the Arts (INA) in Kinshasa, founded shortly after independence from Belgium in 1960, teachers are striving to train the next generation. Since 2022, students can take classes in the history of Congolese rumba and the basics of musical theory.

"There are lots of very talented artists in the city, but they don't know how to read music because they learnt on the job," said Michel Lutangamo, a professor and conductor at the INA. □



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Snoop Dogg 'can't wait' for first Swansea visit

London, United Kingdom Swansea co-owner Snoop Dogg wants fans to serenade him by twirling towels when he visits the Welsh

football club for the first time. The American rapper, a minority owner of Swansea who play in England's

second-tier Championship is due to attend Tuesday's clash at home to Preston. And he has asked the crowd to be in their seats ahead of kick-off to twirl complimentary towels a common sight among fans in American sports.

"@SnoopDogg is asking the Jack Army to join him in a pre-match towel twirl this evening," said a post on Swansea's official X account.

"Fans are encouraged to be in their seats 20 minutes before kick-off, and to twirl the towels as Snoop walks on the pitch." The post was accompanied by a short video of the

54-year-old singer showing how he would like fans to twirl the towels.

His visit was announced last week and the chart-topping Snoop Dogg said on Swansea's website: "I know it has been a long time coming, but I cannot wait to finally make my first visit to Swansea."

"From the moment we talked about me becoming an owner, I have been looking forward to the chance to be with you all at the Swansea.com Stadium. "I have heard so many great things about the atmosphere, especially when we play under the lights. □



U.S. rapper Snoop Dogg attends the figure skating women's single skating short program during the Milano Cortina 2026 Winter Olympic Games at Milano Ice Skating Arena in Milan on February 17, 2026.

Mayweather to fight Pacquiao in Las Vegas in September

Los Angeles, United States
Floyd Mayweather and Manny Pacquiao will meet in a long-awaited rematch of the highest-grossing clash in boxing history this September at the Sphere in Las Vegas, Netflix announced Monday.

The bout between two of boxing's biggest names who famously fought a blockbuster clash in 2015, and are now both in their late forties comes days after Mayweather announced he is coming out of retirement.

It will be broadcast live September 19 on Netflix, as the global streaming platform increasingly moves into live sports with glitzy one-off events.

"Floyd and I gave the world what remains the biggest fight in boxing history. The fans have waited long enough they deserve this rematch," said Pacquiao, 47, in a joint statement.

Mayweather beat fellow welterweight Pacquiao in their money-spinning 2015 "Fight of the Century," which generated a record 4.6 million pay-per-view buys but largely failed to live up to the hype.

Mayweather is believed to have earned an estimated \$300 million from the unani-



Floyd Mayweather Jr. exchange punches with Manny Pacquiao during their welterweight unification championship bout, May 2, 2015 at MGM Grand Garden Arena in Las Vegas,

mous points victory over the Filipino icon, which remains the most lucrative fight in history and generated more than \$600 million revenue.

Former multi-weight world champion Mayweather retired from boxing in 2017, unbeaten in 50 bouts, though he has continued to fight in exhibitions since,

including an upcoming clash this spring with Mike Tyson.

Pacquiao, also a multiple world champion, retired for a four-year period from 2021 in which he unsuccessfully ran for the Philippine presidency. He came out of retirement last year.

- 'One loss' -
Rumors of a Mayweather-

Pacquiao rematch have circulated for years, and speculation soared following Mayweather's announcement last week that he would return to the professional arena this year.

"I already fought and beat Manny once. This time will be the same result," said Mayweather, in the statement. "I want Floyd to live

with the one loss on his professional record and always remember who gave it to him," said Pacquiao.

The clash will be the first-ever professional boxing match to take place at Sphere, a venue primarily used for concerts and films which opened in 2023 and features an immersive 160,000-square-foot wraparound screen on its curved interior walls.

It will be shown globally on Netflix, which boasts some 325 million subscribers.

The streamer has recently increased its sports offerings, with a super middleweight clash between Terence Crawford and Saul "Canelo" Alvarez in Las Vegas last September viewed by 41 million people.

It also aired divisive fights pitting YouTuber-turned-boxer Jake Paul against a 58-year-old Tyson in November 2024, and versus Anthony Joshua last December.

Both were criticized for proving to be lackluster contests, but drew enormous global attention.

- 'Glory' -

Nicknamed "Money", former multi-weight world champion Mayweather was once the world's highest-paid athlete. □

Spurs overpower Pistons in clash of NBA's form teams

Los Angeles, United States
Victor Wembanyama led a defensive masterclass as the San Antonio Spurs out-muscled the Detroit Pistons 114-103 Monday in an intense and aggressive clash between the NBA's two most in-form teams. Sitting second in the Western Conference, the Spurs were pushed hard for their ninth-straight victory by the East-topping Pistons, who had entered the home court matchup on a five-win streak of their own.

Defenses dominated the first meeting between the two sides this season, with the 7-foot-5 Wembanyama making six blocks and 17 rebounds to fuel transitions as the Spurs pulled

clear in the latter stages. While the Pistons' shooting was at times sloppy, Devin Vassell led the Spurs' offense, with 28 points including seven three-pointers as many as the entire Detroit team managed collectively.

"They tried to impose their will. We tried to get out on transition, keep getting stops, find an open man. That's what we did," said Vassell.

The Spurs had raced to a 12-point lead from tip-off. But they trailed by the end of the first quarter, setting the tone for a fiercely contested back-and-forth game.

Late in the second quarter, Cade Cunningham barged Stephon Castle to

the floor, angering Spurs teammate Keldon Johnson who earned a technical foul for retaliating.

But the Pistons' defense kept them in the game, putting Wembanyama under particular pressure. The French prodigy struggled to make an offensive mark on the early action.

San Antonio took a slender lead into half-time. The contest tightened further in the third quarter. Spurs guard Dylan Harper was slammed off the court and face-first into a cameraman.

Growing into the game, Wembanyama made multiple spectacular blocks and rebounds to propel his side up the court, as the



Keldon Johnson #3 and De'aaron Fox #4 of the San Antonio Spurs slap hands during action against the Detroit Pistons during the third quarter at Little Caesars Arena on February 23, 2026 in Detroit, Michigan.

Spurs opened a 15-point lead in the final quarter. Jalen Duren led a late Pistons fightback, finishing with 25 points, but it ultimately fizzled as a resolute San Antonio saw out the game. Wembanyama finished with 21 points, and Julian Champagnie added another 17.

"We all play for each other. We're all super humble. All we want to do is win," said Vassell.

The hard-fought victory puts the Spurs at 41-16, still trailing the West-leading defending champions Oklahoma City Thunder, at 44-14. □

Medvedev advances in Dubai, suggests ranking system rethink

Dubai, United Arab Emirates

Daniil Medvedev beat Shang Juncheng on Tuesday to reach the last 16 of the Dubai Open but implored tour organisers to limit ranking points to only the most prestigious events to reduce player workload. A week after beating the Chinese world number 262 in Doha, Medvedev again faced Shang and won 6-1, 6-3 in his opening match in the 500-level event in the UAE.

After the victory, Medvedev said he would like to see more mandatory events in the calendar, but for ranking points only to be attributed to Masters-level events and Grand Slams in order to convince players to enter less tournaments. "I would think the players

would agree, from what I'm hearing, to making... even more mandatory tournaments," the 11th-ranked Russian told reporters.

"I would say make four Grand Slams, I don't know, 11 Masters, and that's it. The other tournaments (500- and 250-level events), maybe make them without points or something."

The 2021 US Open winner said that the chase for points to climb the rankings and reach the ATP Finals reserved for the top eight in the world causes players to increase their workload, sometimes to the detriment of their bodies.

"What happens is last year, Holger (Rune) got injured in Stockholm (250 event), everybody was like, 'Yeah,

but you don't have to play it'. If he wants to be in Turin (for the ATP Finals), he has to, even if it's not a mandatory tournament," Medvedev said.

"Last year, I played in seven tournaments in a row. Did I have to? No. I played bad in the beginning of the year, maybe I can get 100 points here, 200 points here, be higher seeded next year.

"If there would be no points there, at least it is an easier decision. But it's not going to happen."

Elsewhere in Dubai, second seed Alexander Bublik beat lucky loser Jan-Lennard Struff 6-3, 6-4 to reach the second round.

Former world number three Stefanos Tsitsipas was elimi-



Russia's Daniil Medvedev serves the ball against Greece's Stefanos Tsitsipas during their men's singles match at the Qatar Open tennis tournament in Doha on February 18, 2026.

nated in straight sets by Lehecka won 4-6, 6-4, 6-2 Ugo Humbert, while Jiri against Luca Nardi. □

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Former U.S. Open champion Raducanu in no hurry to find new coach

London, United Kingdom

Emma Raducanu insists she is in no rush to find a new coach as the former US Open champion looks to revert to a "more aggressive style of play".

The British tennis player has got through several coaches in a relatively short career, with Francisco Roig the latest to leave the role after the Spaniard spent six months working with Raducanu.

The 23-year-old was outspoken after a second-round loss to Anastasia Potapova at the Australian Open, saying she wanted to be playing "in a way more similar to when I was younger".

In Raducanu's next tournament in Romania she reached her first final since the stunning US Open triumph in 2021 and she insisted she remains happy working with hitting partner Alexis Canter, a 27-year-old former British player who reached a career-high ranking of 779 last year. □



Austria's Anastasia Potapova celebrates a match point against Britain's Emma Raducanu during their women's singles match on day four of the Australian Open tennis tournament in Melbourne on January 21, 2026.