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SETAR

Florida launches statewide Animal Abuse Registry to protect pets and communities

FLORIDA — In a landmark move for animal welfare, Florida has officially launched a statewide Animal Abuse Registry, a move aimed at preventing convicted animal abusers from adopting or purchasing pets. This public, searchable database marks a significant shift in how the state addresses animal cruelty, positioning Florida as a leader in a growing national movement toward stronger legal protections for animals.

The registry, which went live this week, functions similarly to other public safety databases. It requires individuals convicted of certain animal cruelty offenses ranging from felony neglect to organized dog fighting to register their information with the Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE). This information, which includes the offender's name, photo, and the nature of their crime, is now accessible to animal shelters, rescue groups, and pet stores across the state.



Puppies sleep in a cage at an ASPCA (American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals) center on July 18, 2024 in New York City.

A shield for the vulnerable

For years, animal advocates have argued that a lack of communication between jurisdictions allowed known abusers to move from one county to another to obtain new ani-

mals. "This registry closes the loophole," says Elena Rodriguez, a director at a prominent Miami-based rescue. "In the past, we had to rely on a 'gut feeling' or independent background checks that didn't always catch out-of-state

or out-of-county convictions. Now, we have a centralized tool to ensure our animals are going to safe, loving homes."

The legislation behind the registry, often referred to as "Dexter's Law" in local circles after a high-profile

abuse case, received bipartisan support in the state legislature. Lawmakers emphasized that the registry isn't just about protecting pets; it's about community safety.

The link to public safety

Criminologists and law enforcement officials have long noted the "link" between animal cruelty and interpersonal violence. Studies often show that individuals who intentionally harm animals are statistically more likely to commit violent crimes against humans.

"By identifying and tracking those who commit acts of cruelty against animals, we are also identifying individuals who pose a risk to the broader community," said State Senator Mark Thompson during the bill's signing. "This registry is a proactive tool for public safety. It allows us to monitor patterns of behavior before they escalate into even more tragic situations." □

Trump allows LGBTQ pride flag to fly again at Stonewall

New York, United States The Trump administration has given the green light for the LGBTQ rainbow flag

to once again fly above New York's Stonewall, a US national monument to the struggle for gay equality, a

rights group that sued for its return said Monday.

The administration had taken down the flag in February from the listed site in Manhattan, under a National Park Service edict prohibiting the display of flags other than the Stars and Stripes, with some limited exceptions.

The Stonewall National Monument commemorates riots that erupted in June 1969 after a police raid on the Stonewall Inn, a gay bar in Manhattan's Greenwich Village, an inciting event in the history of US LGBTQ activism.

According to the Washing-

ton Litigation Group, which initiated legal proceedings in New York to demand the return of the rainbow colors, the administration agreed, under a settlement, to reinstall the flag permanently.

"The government has acknowledged what we argued from day one: the Pride flag belongs at Stonewall. The flag will be restored and it will fly officially and permanently. And we will remain vigilant to ensure that the government sticks to the deal," said Alexander Kristofcak, lead counsel for plaintiffs and a lawyer with Washington Liti-

gation Group.

The case they argued, which the administration accepted, is that unofficial flags can be permissible on certain sites -- as long as their display is justified by a historical context.

The removal of the Stonewall rainbow flag had provoked the anger of LGBTQ groups and many local elected officials.

Activists erected a replacement flag in protest. Since returning to the White House, US President Donald Trump has put the brakes on LGBTQ rights progress particularly on the rights of transgender people. □



The rainbow Pride flag flies at the Stonewall National Monument on April 13, 2026, in New York City.

Inside the fireproof vault housing U.S. movie history

Culpeper, United States

Once upon a time in the golden days of Hollywood, the movies were bigger, the stars brighter and the celluloid they were filmed on was, well, explosive.

Which is why the US Library of Congress maintains a special, fireproof vault in Virginia, near Washington, DC.

There, the highly combustible nitrate film used from the dawn of cinema in the 1890s until the early 1950s has a permanent home, rarely accessed by the public but toured by AFP.

Lost movies on the volatile but durable medium are still being discovered and preserved in the facility. And thanks to digitization, the lost treasures can also be safely viewed for the first time in decades.

Some 145,000 film reels are stored in strictly fireproof conditions in a vast, chilly vault at the library's National Audio-Visual Conservation Center in Culpeper, Virginia.

It is crammed with cinematic treasures that rekindle warm memories of an era when movies ruled.

The vault's leader, George Willeman, reeled off the names of classics with negatives there: "Casablanca," Frank Capra-directed films like "Mr. Smith Goes to Washington," and the grand-daddy of all action movies, "The Great Train Robbery" from 1903.

Down a spartan corridor so long it seemed to recede into the distance, he unlocked a series of cell-like steel doors.

Inside each of the 124 cells there's one dedicated just to the Disney archive were floor-to-ceiling cubby holes.

Each one held film canisters containing negatives and prints, all arranged meticulously: packed tight to prevent canisters from opening, but far enough apart to prevent any fire from spreading.

Since being set up in 2007 in a former US Federal Reserve building in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains, the vault has maintained a perfect no-



Nitrate Film vault Leader George Willeman explains how the different functions of the vault work at the Packard Campus of the Library of Congress's National Audio-Visual Conservation Center in Culpeper, Virginia, on April 2, 2026.

fire record.

- Film nerds' delight -

Nitrate film is just part of the center's collection of more than six million items of moving images and recorded sound. They also have supporting scripts, posters and photos.

Willeman, who sports a button badge with the invocation to "Experience Nitrate," said the Library of Congress began preserving the medium when in the 1960s, "it was discovered that so much film was being lost" due to fires and defunct companies throwing negatives away.

With the American Film Institute, the library began collecting and copying nitrate film, including the holdings of big Hollywood studios RKO, Warner Brothers, Universal, Columbia and Walt Disney.

They also tapped the personal collections of film icons like movie impresario and silent era star Mary Pickford and motion pictures inventor Thomas Edison, whose early studio produced hundreds of films.

"We're 50 some years in, and it (the collection) just keeps growing," Willeman said.

With the arrival of digital media, the mission has ex-

panded beyond preservation for purists and cinema historians who say movies just look better on nitrate footage to putting old films online.

"Now we can make them available for everybody, which to me, being the film nerd I've been since, like, third grade, is just amazing." Nitrate film made by early artisans often preserves better than the later safety film, said Courtney Holschuh, nitrate archive technician.

At a workstation with no light bulbs or exposed batteries either of which could ignite dust or gas from vintage film Holschuh recounted how last September she carefully peeled apart a cache of 10 vintage reels donated by a retired schoolteacher. □

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Sony Pictures offers sneak peek of 'Spider-Man: Brand New Day' at CinemaCon

Las Vegas, United States

Sony Pictures Entertainment kicked off CinemaCon on Monday with a sneak peek of "Spider-Man: Brand New Day" and a new installment of "Jumanji".

Tom Rothman, president and CEO of Sony Pictures Entertainment, unveiled two posters for the latest Spider-Man film starring Tom Holland and Zendaya, set to hit American theaters on July 31.

The release comes four years after "Spider-Man: No Way Home" became the studio's highest-grossing film with approximately \$1.9 billion in global box office receipts.

"It feels like nothing we've ever made," Rothman said at the Colosseum Theater in Las Vegas, before introducing lead actor Holland, who joined virtually.

"It's the most emotional Spider-Man movie we've ever made, and in some ways, the most grown up," said Holland, who plays the arachnid superhero.



(L-R) Producer/writers Chris Miller and Phil Lord pose with directors Bob Persichetti and Justin K. Thompson as they promote the upcoming film "Spider Man: Beyond The Spider-Verse" during Sony Pictures Entertainment photo call during CinemaCon at The Colosseum at Caesars Palace in Las Vegas, Nevada, on April 13, 2026.

In a short clip shown at CinemaCon, where film studios bring in their stars and offer a sneak peek at their upcoming slate, Holland's Peter Parker faces the consequences of the decisions he made in the previous film, which ended on a cliffhanger.

Not only do his friends have no idea he exists, but his girlfriend MJ played by Zendaya has a new love interest.

Expectations for the film are high, with its trailer gaining millions of views since its release last month.

The film, directed by Des-

tin Daniel Cretton, will star Mark Ruffalo, Jon Bernthal and Sadie Sink.

Sony Pictures Entertainment also unveiled a first glimpse at "Spider-Man: Beyond the Spider-Verse", the animated spin-off due to hit theaters in June 2027.

It closed its presentation

with a clip from the third installment of "Jumanji".

Dwayne Johnson, Jack Black and Kevin Hart said that "Jumanji: Open World", set for release in December this year, will feature tributes to the late actor Robin Williams, who starred in the first film of the popular franchise.

- Box office optimism -

Sony Pictures Entertainment's presentation marked the start of CinemaCon, which this year focuses on optimism over the year's strong start at the box office.

Rothman celebrated the progress, but noted that sales have not yet reached pre-pandemic levels.

"We all have urgent work to do," Rothman said. "For our part, that means delivering a variety of great films to all kinds of audiences. But you, my friends, have an urgent part to play."

"Affordability is by far the hardest. Going to the movies must become affordable again," he added. □

Oasis, Phil Collins and Luther Vandross among Rock Hall inductees



Musician Phil Collins speaks onstage at the 25th Annual Rock And Roll Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony at the Waldorf Astoria on March 15, 2010 in New York City.

Los Angeles, United States

Dad rocker Phil Collins and reformed Britpop princes Oasis led the 2026 class of Rock and Roll Hall of Fame inductees who were announced on live U.S. television on Monday.

Billy Idol, chanteuse Sade, metal legends Iron Maiden and Manchester outfits Joy Division and New Order were also honored, along with hip hop collective Wu-Tang Clan and velvet-voiced crooner Luther Vandross.

The announcements of the honorees came in a live episode of the "American Idol" competition, helmed by rockers Pat Benatar and Neil Giraldo.

"Induction into the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame is music's highest honor," said the organization's chairman John Sykes.

"We look forward to celebrating these remarkable artists at this year's ceremony it's going to be an unforgettable night."

The induction ceremony which doubles as a star-studded concert gala rife with tributes to the honorees will be held November 14 in Los Angeles.

Eligible nominees into the Rock Hall must have released their first commercial recording at least 25 years prior to being nominated.

Phil Collins, Luther Vandross, and Wu-Tang Clan are first-time nominees. Billy Idol, Iron Maiden, Joy Division, New Order, Oasis, and Sade have all been nominated in the past, but were not selected for induction. The 2025 class of inductees included Outkast, White Stripes and Cyndi Lauper. □

Greece's ancient sites get climate-change checkup

Athens, Greece

Worsening wildfires, soaring heatwaves and rising water levels have prompted Greek officials to take a closer look at protecting priceless archaeological sites that draw hundreds of thousands of visitors each year.

The monuments, scattered across the country, earn Greece millions of dollars in tourism revenue.

But many of the sites are in rural areas and officials believe better planning is needed in case large crowds of tourists need to be evacuated in an emergency.

After a three-year study by some of the country's leading scientific institutions, the Greek culture ministry has earmarked 19 monuments that most urgently need protection against natural threats, with several more to be bolstered by 2030.

The ministry says it is the first time a nationwide evaluation of this scope has been attempted.

The sites under scrutiny include Olympia, habitually threatened by forest fires, the ancient theatre of Delphi, where rockslides are a concern, and the sanctu-



A photograph shows the Parthenon Temple at the top of the Acropolis hill in Athens on November 15, 2022.

ary of Dion which is prone to flooding.

Olympia Mayor Aristides Panagiotopoulos told AFP that protecting the birthplace of the Olympics, which houses the ancient stadium, a sprawling sanctuary and two museums, requires "constant vigilance".

"Our concern remains acute, as the area of Ancient Olympia is extensive,

with a large expanse of greenery and dense, often unregulated, spontaneous vegetation," Panagiotopoulos said in an email. "Despite the significant interventions that have been carried out, it is clear that they are not sufficient on their own to cover all needs."

In 2007, wildfires in Olympia decimated the natural environment around the archaeological site and left

over 40 dead in the broader region of Elis.

Panagiotis Lattas, the head forester for the region of Elis, told AFP that more recently, major fires have broken out in the area in 2021, 2022 and 2024.

Lattas noted that significant rainfall this year generated additional vegetation that must be cleared in both urban and agricultural areas before wildfire season.

"This year, after a very large

amount of rainfall about 40 percent above the annual average and with the hot and dry conditions expected during the dry season, vegetation will be particularly abundant," he said.

- Long-term plan -

Greece has already reduced visiting hours at its most popular archaeological site, the Acropolis in Athens, to shield visitors from heatwaves during the warmest hours of the day. But the increasing frequency of extreme events calls for something more extensive.

From 2022 to 2025, scientists at the National University of Athens and the National Research Foundation examined past and present climate and geological conditions at the 19 sites, looking at prior damage to help determine future vulnerability to extreme events.

Exposure to fire, floods, heatwaves and rising sea levels were studied by a team of climatologists, geologists, engineers, conservators, architects and building material experts. □

Maradona's birthplace repurposed as soup kitchen for Argentina's hungry

Buenos Aires, Argentina

Diego Maradona would be happy, his fans say. The childhood home of the late Argentine football legend has been transformed into a soup kitchen for people squeezed by President Javier Milei's austerity policies.

The needy can also ask for clothing at 523 Amazor street in the Buenos Aires suburb of Fiorito, where the player dubbed Argentina's "Golden Boy" grew up in grinding poverty.

In this neighborhood of around 50,000 people living in modest brick homes, dozens of murals depict key moments in the career of the illustrious number 10, who died in 2020 at the age of 60.

On Tuesday, a new trial for criminal negligence will begin of the seven-strong medical team that was caring for Maradona in his final days, as he was recovering from brain surgery.

In Fiorito, neighbors come and go to "Diego's house," as they call it, lugging containers which volunteers fill with chicken stew or other meals cooked in giant cauldrons in the yard. Cumbia music Maradona's favorite genre blares from speakers.

If he were alive "Diego would say there is a lot of hunger and we have to help, because the need is so great," Diego Gavilan, one of the kitchen's beneficiaries, told AFP.

- 'Can't make ends meet' -

Gavilan collects cardboard and scrap metal for a living but it no longer puts food on the table.

He started coming to the soup kitchen after Milei was elected in December 2023 and embarked on a radical free-market agenda of deregulation and steep cuts to public spending.

"You can't make ends meet," Gavilan said.

Although statistics show a decrease in poverty under Milei, mainly due to a sharp drop in inflation, family finances are in crisis, according to Central Bank reports.

A surge in imports and a collapse in consumption have resulted in the closure of over 20,000 busi-

nesses, according to official reports.

Gavilan said he was glad to accept help from Maradona's old home.

"He suffered so much hunger here as a child. For the people of the neighborhood to receive a plate of food is special," he said. □



Alejandro, a volunteer, prepares a stew for neighbours in need at the yard of the childhood home of the late football star Diego Maradona, now transformed into a soup kitchen, in Villa Fiorito, Buenos Aires province, Argentina, on April 9, 2026.

Chinese slimmers trade lost fat for beef



The photo taken on March 23, 2026 shows male participants queuing up to get weighed and have their waist measured at a local community center in Wuxi, in eastern China's Jiangsu province.

Wuxi, China

In a community centre in eastern China, Shu Fangqiang shrugged off his jacket and stepped onto a scale, one of hundreds of locals signing up for an unusual weight loss program "Trade Fat for Beef".

The rules are straightforward: for every half kilogram he loses, Shu will receive the same weight in boneless beef, or 1.5 kilograms (3.3 pounds) of beef on the bone.

The program is one of many springing up across China, backed by local authorities anxious to tackle rising obesity rates, which are fast becoming a pressing public health issue.

Participants who are already keen to lose weight say the initiative is an added bonus.

"Even without the beef, I wanted to lose weight for my health," said Shu, whose body mass index (BMI) of 30 is classified as obese.

More than a third of Chinese adults were overweight in 2022, and around 8.3 percent were obese, according to the World Health Organization (WHO), compared with the United States, where 72.4 percent of adults are overweight and 42 percent are obese.

However, the number of obese people in China has tripled between 2004

and 2018, according to the Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention.

If current trends continue, the share of overweight and obese Chinese adults could reach 70.5 percent by 2030, the National Health Commission (NHC) says, whose obesity criteria is stricter than the WHO's.

"This opportunity just came at the right time, so I signed up," Shu said.

Participants of the campaign in the city of Wuxi were weighed once in March, and will return in January 2027 for a second and final weigh-in.

They will then be rewarded with expensive cuts like ox-tail if they lose more weight though the total amount of free meat available is capped at 10 kilograms (22 pounds).

Organizers say more than 1,000 people have registered since the Wuxi campaign started in March with thousands more turned away for not meeting local community residence requirements.

Queues for weigh-ins reached up to a dozen people at a time in both the men and women's sections, an AFP journalist saw. At the front of the queues, participants stepped on weighing scales which displayed their height, weight and BMI.

Staff members then measured their waists, logged their data on a form and used an encouraging stamp to mark it and to cheer participants on.

An on-site doctor offered personalised medical advice.

- 'Flab for potatoes' -

Similar grassroots initiatives have also surfaced in other localities across the country, with many shared widely on social media.

In the southwestern province of Yunnan, slimmers can take part in the "Flab for Potatoes" program and if they shrink their waistlines considerably, can upgrade to chicken.

Countrywide, popular supermarket chain Yonghui has invited customers to register their losses over 10 days by weighing themselves in-store.

They can then trade every 1.5 kilograms lost for half a kilogram of beef, crayfish or kiwi.

When AFP visited the Wuxi community centre, banners at the weigh-in urged participants to slim down steadily rather than quickly, and to aim for health over thinness.

Organizers also posted warnings against weight-loss drugs, self-induced vomiting and extreme fasting, with doctors on hand to offer guidance. □



The Zimbabwean Bird, a soapstone sculpture of national significance, is visible with a Zimbabwean flag at a repatriation handover event at the Iziko South African Museum, in Cape Town, on April 14, 2026.

S.Africa returns stolen human remains, sacred carving to Zimbabwe

Cape Town, South Africa

South Africa on Tuesday handed back to Zimbabwe ancestral human remains and a centuries-old stone carving of its sacred national emblem, the Zimbabwe bird, stolen more than 100 years ago during the colonial era.

The restitution was part of a worldwide push for the repatriation of artefacts looted from African countries during colonisation.

Eight coffins draped in the Zimbabwean flag stood at an event for the handover in a Cape Town museum which was attended by officials from both countries.

Little was known about the remains except that they were of people who had been exhumed as "scientific specimens", officials said.

One was believed to have been a tribal chief whose skull and jaw were collected in 1910, culture minister Gayton McKenzie said.

"He was somebody's leader, a lot of people's ancestor. He has been sitting in the museum drawer for 116 years," McKenzie said.

Another was believed to be a man murdered over accusations of witchcraft.

"They were removed from their graves -- not found, not donated," McKenzie said.

Once repatriated, the remains would be returned to "where they belong", Zimbabwean government representative, Reverend Paul Damasane, said.

- Identity and spirit -

The soapstone carving of a Zimbabwe bird that was returned at the event was the first of several looted from the stone ruins of the ancient complex of Great Zimbabwe built in the 11th to 13th centuries, officials said.

A British explorer had ripped it from its pedestal in the late 19th century and sold it to British mining magnate Cecil John Rhodes, the 1890-1896 prime minister of the Cape Colony.

It was displayed at Rhodes's Cape Town estate which was bequeathed to the government on his death in 1902.

Nearly "140 years since the first one was taken and sold to Cecil John Rhodes, that very same statue ... is finally making its journey home," South Africa's culture ministry said. □

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Iconic anchor with a special look – for a limited time!

ORANJESTAD – You might have noticed this iconic Aruban landmark looked a little different this time. Instead of its usual bright red color, the large anchor at the south east coast was flexing Aruba's flag colors.

At the south east coast of the island, standing alone on a windswept and barren land stands a popular Aruba landmark – a large anchor. It overlooks the sea just beyond, watching over the shipping lanes. It stands there in memory and in honor of all seamen who have lost their life at sea.

And recently, it was repainted to show Aruba's flag colors. This is because this year marks the 50th anniversary of Aruba's flag and anthem! Official government sources informed us that this change is temporary, although they couldn't say exactly how long the anchor will be dressed in Aruba's flag colors.

Where to find the anchor? The anchor is a "must see" landmark when you visit Aruba. It is among the most photographed historical landmarks for the island. You want to make sure you add this stop on your itinerary when you're visiting the south coast of Aruba. The large anchor against the backdrop of the deep blue Caribbean Sea and the azure blue skies, make a great backdrop for your vacation pictures.

The anchor is located at the entrance to Gate 6 to the former Lago Colony. It is on the outskirts of Seroe Colorado, on the south east point of the island at the "T" junction to Baby Beach.



Depending on where you are staying on the island, follow the signs that indicate the way to Baby Beach. Once you reach the T-junction, it will be right in front of you.

About the anchor Size

It will be hard to miss the anchor, it's huge! The anchor that weighs 21,772 kilos is approximately 10 feet 6 inches wide and 15 feet, 6 inches tall.

On the anchor there are some numbers. The 4112 and 4115, which are believed to be the serial numbers that refer to the "fluke" or horizontal and vertical parts of the anchor, respectively. The number 21772K refers to the weight of the anchor in kilos.

This type of anchor was manufactured by Hoesch Dortmund Horde, at a foundry located in Germany.

Where did the anchor come from?

There are a number of stories as to the origins of the anchor, which one do you think it was? (Unfortunately the mystery has never been solved, so your imagination can pick which one you

think it might be!)

Story 1:

"According to Mr. Manuel M. Curiel, an ex-Lago Tug Captain, a fully laden VLCC (Very Large Crude Carrier) was seeking a mooring at the 15-mile anchorage, known as Bara, on the southern part of the island. This is the usual shallow mooring location for ships awaiting orders, etc. The weather was rough with strong current. The normal procedure is that they would walk out three shackles (about 90 feet) until the anchor touches the bottom while the chain must rest on the bottom. Subsequently, they will walk out some extra shackles and when the ship starts to swing or lean on one side, the anchor is properly set. Because of the rough weather, unfortunately they did not get the time to walk out the extra tackles and because of the tension exerted on the winch, it broke, and they lost the anchor and its chain."

Story 2:

"Mr. Curiel also said that at one time a small tanker with a Korean crew, while lifting their anchor also lifted another anchor near the inner harbor. When the

ship asked for assistance, he went with his tugboat along with a barge, to help. But eventually they had to cut the chain and let the anchor go to the bottom because they could not untangle them."

How did the anchor become a landmark?

Sometime between 1980 and 1985, three gentlemen (Mr. Wim Martinus – the Harbormaster of Aruba; Mr. August Genser – the ex-Division Superintendent of Lago's Laboratory; and Mr. Willie Davis), were having a conversation with Mr. Charlie Brouns Jr., local businessman. Charlie, who was a visionary and had dreams for developing the San Nicolas area, told these gentlemen that he would like to come up with something innovative for the San Nicolas area to draw tourism to the area.

The "anchor", which at that time was being stored at the Oranjestad harbor, was suggested as an option. Charlie liked the idea! He then contacted the President of Lago for permission to acquire the anchor. He was granted permission and the anchor was then relocated to its present location and dedicated "To All Seamen" on the occasion of the closing of the Lago Oil Refinery on March 31, 1985.

Through the years Through the years the Anchor was slowly weathering from the wind and salt. As time passed, sadly the origin and purpose of the anchor slowly faded away from people's memories.

After Charles Brouns Jr. died on September 15, 2004, his friend Mr. Sam Speziale, requested assistance from

the management of Valero Aruba Refinery to help maintain the monument. The Valero Aruba Refinery graciously sandblasted and painted the anchor and poured a concrete pad around it. On April 17, 2005, the anchor monument was rededicated "To All Seamen" in a formal ceremony in memory of Charles Brouns Jr.

Today, the anchor stands both as memorial to all seaman who have lost their lives at sea, but also as a silent reminder that Seroe Colorado is part of San Nicolas and that San Nicolas is still a vibrant and important part of the island of Aruba.

The best time to visit

When you're planning your visit to the south end of the island, you will want to include in your itinerary the many things to see and do there. The anchor will be just one of these stops, (keep an eye out for our future editions, we publish our recommendations!).

With that being said, I have to say, if you enjoy catching a sunrise, the anchor is one of the best places on the island to catch the sunrise. But in reality, anytime is a good time to visit, depending on your personal schedule. ☐





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Rock stacking and its harmful effects

(Oranjestad)—The organization Aruba Birdlife Conservation has in the past raised concerns about the phenomenon of “rock stacking” in the area of Baby Beach and warned about the dangers it poses, especially for children.

As known, “rock stacking” is not illegal in Aruba, but its impact on nature is harmful as the stones form part of the natural habitat of small animal species living in Aruba’s wilderness. Experts warn that “rock stacking” could even lead certain



species to extinction. In Aruba, much of the “rock stacking” also occurs near Arikok National Park. Although this activity is not illegal in Aruba, it may be

time for park authorities to impose stricter regulations on this activity.

Tourists often believe that the meaning behind this activity is making a wish, but they do not realize its negative impact.

Aruba Birdlife Conservation’s post not only raises alarms about the activity but also now that this phenomenon has reached Baby Beach, some of the stacked stone towers are up to 1.7 meters high, which can be very dangerous, especially for children. □

Papiamentu words and phrases you may want to know!

(Oranjestad)—Aruba is a melting pot of different nationalities, cultures and languages. Primarily for this reason, the average Aruban can understand and speak Dutch, English and Spanish relatively well. However, as much as we pride ourselves in being able to communicate with almost everyone, we cherish our native tongue Papiamentu above all else. Want to learn some common words in our language? Here are a few basic words and phrases that can get you a hat tip from an Aruban.



When you arrive at the airport in Aruba, one of the first words in Papiamentu you may encounter is “Bon bini.” Bon bini in Papiamentu means welcome, and is probably the most famous Papiamentu word for tourists.

Hi! Bye!

To be fair, there is no unique way to say “hello” in Papiamentu—at least not officially. We often just use the English “hello” or “hey”, or Dutch “hallo” to greet someone. We do howev-

er, always follow it up with “con bay?” or “con ta?” Con bay is a shortened version of “con ta bay?”, which essentially means “how are you?”

The word “con” in Papiamentu means “how?” and is pronounced with a rounder “o” sounds, like in the English word “cone”. “Ta bay” refers to how you are doing.

When we say goodbye, we use the word “ayo” (not like the Ayo Rock Formation, but also...kinda?). We may also use “te oro”, which

means “see you later”. Greetings during the day Most, if not all, languages have different ways to greet according to the time of day, and Papiamentu is no different. Since Papiamentu is heavily influenced from Portuguese and Spanish, some of these phrases may look very familiar.

Bon dia is used in the morning, up to about noon. Bon dia essentially means good morning. The word “bon” means “good”, and while “dia” does not directly mean “morning” in English, it is used often to refer to

the morning time.

Bon tardi

In the afternoon to early evening hours, we use “bon tardi” to greet people, which means “good afternoon”. “Tardi” actually comes from the word “atardi”, which directly translates to “afternoon”. However, the shortened “tardi” is used to keep the rhythm on the phrase. And the same could be said for our last greeting of the day.

Bon nochi.

You guessed it, “bon nochi” means “good night”.

Just like “tardi”, “nochi” is actually the shortened version of the word “anochi”.

Yes...no...maybe?

The affirmative and negative expression is very simple in Papiamentu. Just like Spanish, our yeses are “si” and our no’s are “no”. Pretty easy right? If you want to gain some extra points from younger locals, you can also say “se”, which is a more casual affirmative used mostly by the younger generation.

However, do note: some older generations may find this improper and not respectful, so keep that in mind.

Thanks man...

Lastly, a word that we can also say more often is “danki”, which means literally “thank you”. “Danki” is derived from the Dutch word “bedankt”. Though we don’t really have a translation for “I appreciate it” in English, we do use “masha danki” to convey the message. “Masha” means “a lot” or “very”, so “masha danki” means “thank you very much”. □

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

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

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

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

Rufo Wever was a young



musician in 1937 when he established his own cah'i orgel business on the island. Before that he experimented with his uncle's cah'i or-

gel, and he over the years he learned to build and repair the instrument. In fact, he was incredibly skilled in this, and he was one of the few to have recognized from the start that the cah'i orgel is an instrument that needs preserving.

As mentioned, the cah'i orgel is a music box. Made from mahogany wood, it contains a cylinder with a maximum of eight music pieces. By rotating the lever on the front side of the box, the cah'i orgel produces music similar to that of a piano, and is accompanied often by someone else

playing the "wiri", a percussion instrument made out of steel and reminiscent to the Spanish guiro. Back then, you would often also find someone playing the triangle alongside the cah'i orgel and wiri. In Aruba, the cah'i orgel and wiri is used for traditional music genres, such as the Aruban waltz, tumba, mazurka and more. Fun fact: another name for the cah'i orgel is the "tingilingi box." □

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

Best spots to view the sunset

(Oranjestad)—What can be more romantic than surprising your partner with a date watching the sunset? Aruba's sunset leave many speechless, and luckily, the best spots to view the sunset are entirely accessible and easy to find. Here are some of the best places to view the sunset on the island.

California Light House
Of course, being one of the highest points easily accessible to locals and tourists, the California Light House hill not only offers a tremendous view of the sunset, but also a breath taking scenery of most of the island. In the distance you can spot all the hotels, the western shoreline and the wild waves that crash on the northern side of the island.



Manchebo & Eagle Beach Speaking of the western shoreline, the best spots for viewing the sunset on the beach has to be either Manchebo Beach or at Eagle Beach, which stretch along the entire western coast of the island. The sunset on these beaches is truly breathtaking; the sky and ocean look so big and

spacious, and paired with the orange/pink hue of the sunset, the white sandy beaches and the soft sounds of waves crashing—it can only be described as an experience!

Arashi Beach
Another beach that has to be considered as another great spot to view the sun-

set. Arashi Beach is the last beach you will find along the western coast line, just before you drive up the hill to the California Light House. A favorite for surfers and body boarders, the Arashi sky stretches out for miles, lending a spectacular canvas for the sun to create a masterpiece of orange, pink and purple

Hooiberg Hill
These last two options are for more active couples. If you and your partner like to hike, the Hooiberg Hill may be a great place for you to get your daily workout in and enjoy a beautiful view of the sunset and the island as a little reward. Climb on top the 587-step stairs and reach the top to enjoy this incredible scenery.

Casibari Rock Formation
If you're a rock climber, you might enjoy watching the sunset on top of the Casibari Rock Formation. It's no Yosemite, but it does offer a fun little exercise to get to the top. But if you prefer not to get your hands a little dirty, you can always use the stairs in the back. hue. □



Article by Etnia Nativa
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Episode CCCXLVIII - 348

Stone, Storm, and Spirit

In this new episode Etnia Nativa shares the resilient legacy of Oranjestad's oldest Catholic landmark: San Francisco Church.

In the heart of Oranjestad—where pastel facades meet the Caribbean sun—stands a monument not only of faith, but of endurance. The Pro-Cathedral of Saint Francis of Assisi, often simply called San Francisco Church, carries within its walls a story shaped by devotion, disaster, and determination.

Each week, Etnia Nativa unveils a new chapter of Aruba's cultural memory. This episode turns back the clock to April 1863, when a Capuchin priest—J.A. te Riele—laid the foundation for what would become one of the island's most iconic spiritual sites. Known locally as "Father Terrible," not for his temperament but for the Papiamentu twist of his name, he envisioned a cruciform church complete with altar and sacristy. The initial stone was ceremonially placed by van den Bossche, using salvaged stones from a nearby plantation wall—an early symbol of renewal and resourcefulness. The first church in Oranjestad was built using local adobe techniques, or *torto*, and was covered with a roof made of earth, maize stalks, and cactus wood. This modest church was destroyed during a heavy rainstorm in 1813. However, the true builders were the people: parishioners who gathered in unity, carrying stones by hand, transforming their faith into physical devotion.

Yet, what was meant to be a day of triumph became a test of resilience. On the planned consecration day—Feast of Saint Francis of Assisi—a violent storm swept through Oranjestad. Torrential rains and fierce winds caused one of the church's stone walls to collapse. The rushed construction, likely using still-damp *manposterie* (coral stone masonry), could not withstand the weight of its own ambition.

What remained standing—the north wall, a modest tower, and the sanctuary—became symbols not



"Image sourced from online archives"

of failure, but of persistence. Within months, the church rose again. For the people of Aruba, building a church was never just construction; it was conviction.

As Father Terrible departed to the Netherlands for medical care, the island faced a shortage of clergy. Churches in Noord, Santa Cruz, and Oranjestad were left to share limited pastoral support. This vacuum eventually welcomed the Dominican order in 1886, who would later preside over the church's solemn consecration.

Driven by missionary zeal, Father Terrible sought to extend his work to the Paraguaná Peninsula, where cultural and linguistic ties with Aruba ran deep—echoes of a time when both

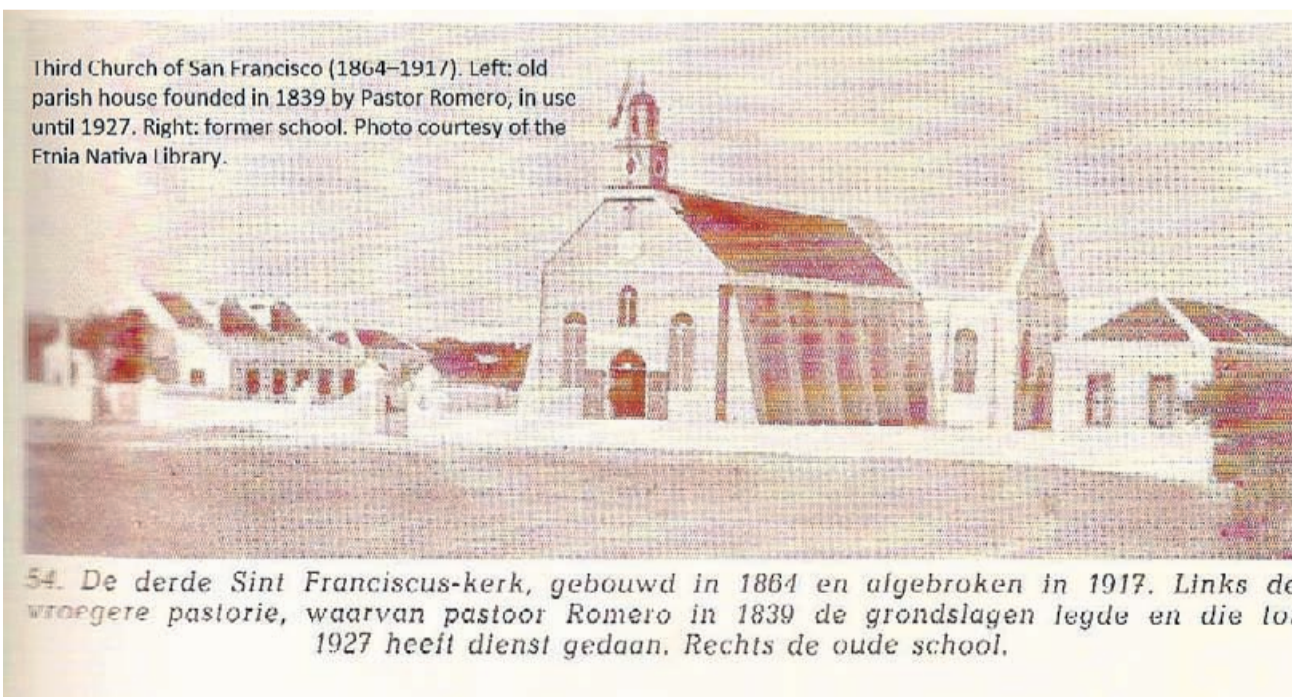
regions were connected under the Caquetio people. Though his mission was short-lived due to ecclesiastical disapproval, it reflected a broader vision of unity across shores.

The original structure, however, would not stand forever. In 1917, it was demolished, making way for a new chapter. By 1919, the church was reborn—this time under the design of Sephanus van de Pavert, echoing the architectural spirit seen in the Church of Santa Anna. Meanwhile, Oranjestad itself was evolving. Protestant and Jewish merchant families, many from Curaçao, were establishing roots, eventually building their own houses of worship. A quiet religious diversity began to shape the city's identity.

Today, the Pro-Cathedral stands not just as a place of prayer, but as a living chronicle. Its stones whisper stories of storms weathered and communities united.

For those eager to go beyond the surface of Aruba's postcard beauty, Etnia Nativa offers something rare: a deeply personal encounter with the island's ancestral soul. Rooted in the lineage of native Aruban families and pre-Columbian heritage, it invites visitors to step into history—not as observers, but as participants.

Because in Aruba, heritage is not just preserved—it is lived. □



Third Church of San Francisco (1864–1917). Left: old parish house founded in 1839 by Pastor Romero, in use until 1927. Right: former school. Photo courtesy of the Etnia Nativa library.

54. De derde Sint Franciscus-kerk, gebouwd in 1864 en afgebroken in 1917. Links de vroegere pastorie, waarvan pastoor Romero in 1839 de grondslagen legde en die tot 1927 heeft dienst gedaan. Rechts de oude school.

Don't just visit Aruba—understand it.
 Whats App+297 592 2702
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The district of Savaneta: A quick history guide to the island's first capital

(Oranjestad)—Before Oranjestad became the island nation's capital, Aruba's first capital was the district of Savaneta. Here is where the cultural identity of Aruba was born, and from where the rest of the island developed into what it is today.

Savaneta is said to have been the first place where the Caquetio inhabitants first stepped foot on the island. Though there isn't hard evidence to back this up, but considering the legend of the Cacique Arua, it is believed that there were already movements on Aruba—and Savaneta—around 88 AD.

The Caquetios probably made their way to the island either from Venezuela, Colombia or other Caribbean islands in the region, but with good weather it was relatively easy for them to travel back and forth in their canoes. So, since the Caquetios discovered the island, Aruba found her first form of civilization.

It wasn't until 1499 when Aruba met another group of people who set foot on the island: the Spanish explorer Alonso de Ojeda. De Ojeda first took notice of Aruba off the coast of Venezuela, during his exploration of the Latin American



country. This was on August 9th, 1499. However, de Ojeda didn't actually sail to the island till 4 days later, on August 23rd, 1499. This was the beginning of the Spanish era on Aruba (1499-1636).

Alonso usually didn't stop at every island or land he saw, especially not in the Caribbean. He would often take notice of land from afar and continue sailing. However, Aruba

was an exception. He had heard that there were "quebracho" (Kibrahacha) trees on the island, which were commonly used to produce dye or paint. But since these trees could not be found in Savaneta, he continued to search in the area of what is now known as Santa Cruz. The best way to transport the tree barks was via a route passing through Savaneta, and so the first road between Savaneta and Santa Cruz



was made.

The Dutch colonial era (1636-1805)

During the 80-year war between The Netherlands and Spain, Dutch explorers and merchants began to travel to the ABC islands. Once they landed in Aruba, they deported the small Arawakan and Spanish community that was living on the island. This was the beginning of colonization of the ABC islands by the Dutch empire. Around the same, the West Indian Company (WIC) was born. Bonaire and Curacao were mostly used for plantations, where the Dutch had transported slaves from Africa. Aruba, on the other hand, was mostly used to raise cattle and to house the haring factory. The Dutch had often forced the indigenous community to work for them.

In 1636, when the Netherlands won the war against Spain, the country surrendered the islands to the Dutch.

The Dutch administration appointed the island's first commander, an Irish man named N. Williams. Because the Dutch were interested in other Caribbean islands and countries in South America, they imported Dutch merchants and business men, all of whom resided in Savaneta. This way, Savaneta officially became the island's first capital.

However, at the end of the 18th century, the commander at the time, J.R. Lauffer, moved his office to what is now "Horse Bay" in Oranjestad. Because the highest office on the island moved away from Savaneta, the capital lost its title to what was called then Playa.

How Savaneta got its name
The name Savaneta probably has a Spanish origin. It was said that when the Spanish climbed a hill called Yara, they saw that the area was mostly open and had no big trees. In Spanish, such a land area is called a "sabana".

Because of its land surface, Savaneta was a great place to construct cattle farms. From here, the farmer culture on Aruba was born. Before the Aruban Gold Rush and the construction of the Refinery in San Nicolas, most residents were farmers, and Savaneta had many inhabitants that farmed fruits and vegetables. They also continued the tradition of raising cattle, like goat, sheep, pigs and horses. Savaneta was one of the first places on the island to have a general farming culture. From this culture, many other traditions were born, like the Dera Gay Holiday that we celebrate every year on June 24th.

Source: Historia di Savaneta (History of Savaneta) by Adolf "Dufi" Kock.



CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

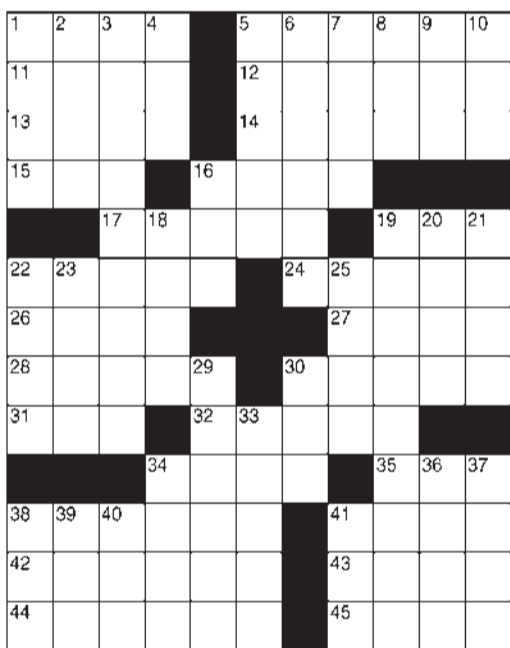


ACROSS

- 1 Wanes
- 5 Try to win
- 11 Enthusiasm
- 12 Shrewd
- 13 Risqué
- 14 Right away
- 15 Bible boat
- 16 Singer Baez
- 17 Left over
- 19 Used to be
- 22 Loser to Truman
- 24 River through Nantes
- 26 Way to go
- 27 Pants part
- 28 "Olympia" painter
- 30 Heart, for one
- 31 Texting letters of shock
- 32 Young pigeon
- 34 Close
- 35 Vacuum's lack
- 38 Perfect place
- 41 Realty unit
- 42 Job ad datum
- 43 Tattoo site
- 44 FBI employees
- 45 "You there!"

DOWN

- 1 Poet
- 2 Yellowstone animal
- 3 Start of a golf stroke
- 4 Crafty
- 5 Mist
- 6 Lebanon neighbor
- 7 School on the Thames
- 8 Merriment
- 9 Mel of the Giants
- 10 Old auto
- 16 Crested bird
- 18 Singer Seeger
- 19 Some offensive players
- 20 Open space
- 21 Glimpsed
- 22 Band sample
- 23 Midterm, for one
- 25 Gumbo veggie
- 29 Casual top
- 30 Unconscious
- 33 Wharves
- 34 Reach across
- 36 Fancy flower
- 37 Budget amount
- 38 Can. neighbor
- 39 Price setting
- 40 Bullfight cheer
- 41 Nile serpent



4-26

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.

4-26

CRYPTOQUOTE

BV NBS GSVZ FSP RFGVQZPWFG

ISRQ ZXUVFTV NXUU MQSCWCUI

FSP RFGVQZPWFG ISRQ NSQGZ.

— VUCVQP BRCCWQG

Cryptoquote: CHOCOLATE COMES FROM COCOA, WHICH IS A TREE. THAT MAKES IT A PLANT. CHOCOLATE IS SALAD. — ANONYMOUS

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.

Supermarket hours

Supermarket hours may vary depending on where you are staying on the island. Generally though, most supermarkets are open from 8am to 9 or 10pm, Monday through Saturday. On Sundays, supermarkets generally close earlier; mostly around 2pm.

Safety

Since February 2024, Aruba has been categorized as the safest country in the

Caribbean by The Telegraph, and many tourist that visit have often told us how they feel safe to explore the island or walk around at night. However, rare incidents do occurs, so keep yourself and your belongings safe.



CRUISE SHIP SCHEDULE

14 TUE	CARNIVAL HORIZON Arrival: 8:00 Departure: 22:00 Berth: C
	NORWEGIAN EPIC Arrival: 8:00 Departure: 17:00 Berth: I
15 WED	BRILLIANCE OF THE SEAS Arrival: 8:00 Departure: 23:00 Berth: B
	SERENADE OF THE SEAS Arrival: 8:00 Departure: 23:00 Berth: C
	FREEWINDS Arrival: 6:00 Departure: **** Berth: E
16 THU	QUEEN ANNE Arrival: 7:00 Departure: 17:00 Berth: c
	STAR PRINCESS Arrival: 8:00 Departure: 18:00 Berth: I
17 FRI	FREEWINDS [Departure] Arrival: **** Departure: 22:30 Berth: E
19 SUN	GRAND PRINCESS Arrival: 9:00 Departure: 17:00 Berth: B
	SCENIC ECLIPSE Arrival: 8:00 Departure: 22:00 Berth: C

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

Difficulty: ★★★

4/15

Answer to previous puzzle

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

Difficulty: ★★

4/14

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Norwegian effectively cured of HIV after transplant from brother

Paris, France

A Norwegian man has been effectively cured of HIV after receiving a stem cell transplant from his brother, doctors announced on Monday. The patient's brother happened to carry a rare, virus-blocking genetic mutation.

The 63-year-old man, dubbed the "Oslo patient", is the latest in around 10 people worldwide who have gone into long-term remission from HIV after receiving a transplant to treat unrelated blood cancer.

The high-risk procedure normally requires a donor to have a specific mutation of their CCR5 gene, which blocks HIV from entering the body's cells. Only around one percent of people in northern Europe have the necessary mutation.

The Oslo patient, who had been living with HIV since 2006, was diagnosed with a fatal blood cancer called myelodysplastic syndrome in 2017.

His doctors searched for a donor who would help treat both. When they couldn't find one, they chose the man's elder brother.

However, on the day of the transplant in 2020, the doctors were stunned to discover that the brother



Syringes filled up with the drug Lenacapavir are ready to be administered at the Phedisong clinic in Ga-Rankuwa, north-west of Pretoria, on December 2, 2025.

carried the CCR5 mutation. "We had no idea... That was amazing," doctor Anders Eivind Myhre of the Oslo University Hospital told AFP.

- 'Winning the lottery twice' -

The patient said "it was like winning the lottery twice", added Myhre, who was also the lead author of a study describing the case in Nature Microbiology.

Two years after the transplant, the patient stopped taking the anti-retroviral drugs which had been reducing the level of HIV in his body.

The researchers found no trace of the virus in samples of the man's blood, gut and bone marrow.

"For all practical purposes, we are quite certain that

he is cured," Myhre said. Now the Oslo patient, whose name was not revealed, is "having a great time" and has more energy than he knows what to do with, Myhre said.

The painful and potentially dangerous transplant procedure is for people who have both HIV and deadly blood cancer so are not a feasible option for the millions of people living with the virus across the world.



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OTHER

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Urgent Care 586 0448
Walk-In Doctor's Clinic
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Police 100
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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

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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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American Airlines 582 2700
Avianca 588 0059
Jet Blue 588 2244
Surinam 582 7896

AID FOUNDATIONS

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FAVI- Visually Impaired
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ARUBA TODAY NEWS

Mythos AI alarm bells: Fair warning or marketing hype?

San Francisco, United States

Anthropic postponing the release of its new AI model Claude Mythos, said to be so skilled at coding it could be a wicked weapon for hackers, has encountered a mix of alarm and skepticism.

The company is among several contenders in a fierce artificial intelligence race. Promoting the awe of Anthropic's own technology boosts business and enhances its allure in the event it soon goes public, as is rumored.

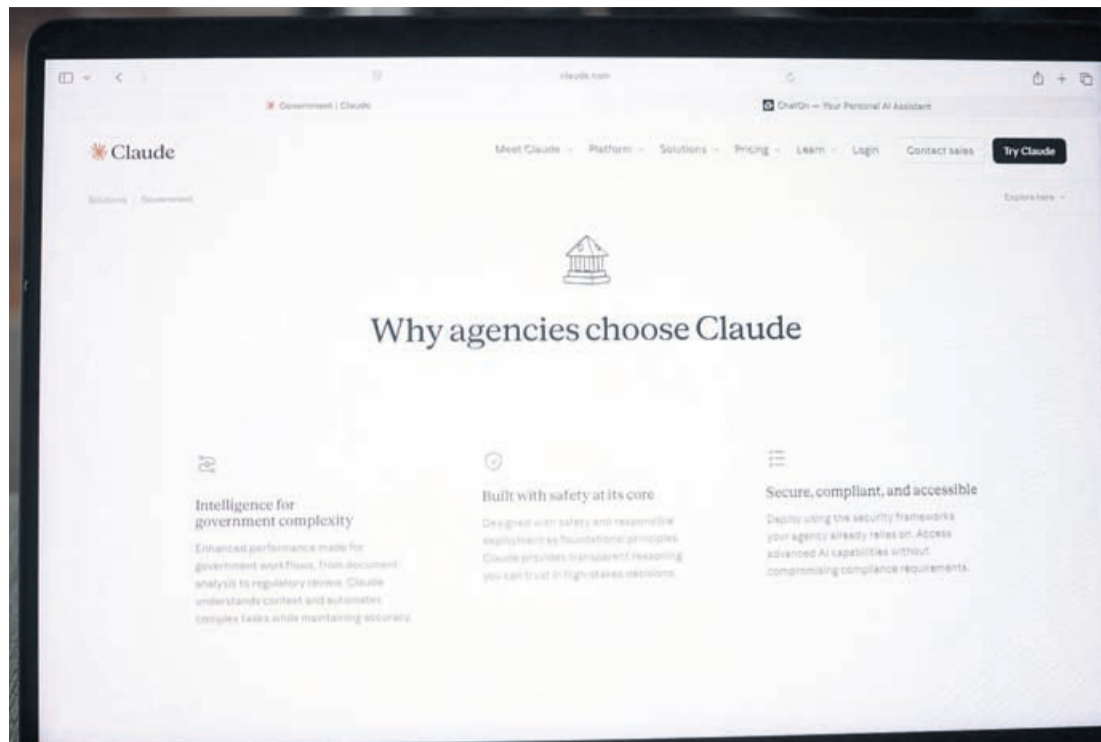
"The world has no choice but to take the cyber threat associated with Mythos seriously," said David Sacks, an entrepreneur and investor who heads President Donald Trump's council of advisors on technology.

"But it's hard to ignore that Anthropic has a history of scare tactics."

Mythos has sparked fears of hackers commanding armies of AI agents able to break through computer defenses with ease.

At this week's HumanX AI conference in San Francisco, Alex Stamos of startup Corridor, which addresses AI safety, acknowledged a real threat from agentic hackers.

And Stamos quipped



In this illustration, the Claude AI website is seen on a laptop on February 16, 2026 in New York City.

about what he referred to as Anthropic's "marketing schtick."

"They have these adorable cutesy cartoons about these products that are so incredibly dangerous that they won't even let people use them," Stamos said of the San Francisco-based startup.

"It's like if the Manhattan Project announced the nuclear bomb within a cute little Calvin and Hobbes cartoon."

The heads of America's

biggest banks met this week with Federal Reserve Chairman Jerome Powell and Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent to weigh the security implications of the yet-to-be released Claude Mythos, according to reports Friday.

"Mythos model points to something far more consequential than another leap in artificial intelligence," Cato Networks co-founder and chief executive Shlomo Kramer said in a blog post.

"It signals a shift that could redefine the balance between attackers and defenders in cyberspace."

A tightly restricted preview of Mythos was shared with partner organizations this week, under an initiative called Project Glasswing. They include Amazon, Apple, Microsoft, Google, Cisco, CrowdStrike and JPMorgan Chase.

According to Anthropic and partners, Mythos can autonomously scan vast amounts of code to find and chain together pre-

viously unknown security vulnerabilities in all kinds of software, from operating systems to web browsers.

Crucially, they warn, this can be done at a speed and scale no human could match, meaning it could be used to bring down banks, hospitals or national infrastructure within hours.

"What once required elite specialists can now be performed by software agents," Shlomo said.

"The immediate consequences will be a surge in vulnerability discovery, a true tsunami" of exploiting known and unknown vulnerabilities.

- 'Agent-to Agent War' -

At HumanX, the apparent consensus was that it makes sense that AI agents already adept at coding will excel at finding weaknesses in software.

"We're not in an era where human beings can write code when we have superhuman (AI models) that are then going to find bugs in it," Stamos contended.

"It's just not possible."

He predicted the coming dynamic will involve humans supervising AI agents to protect networks against hackers using that same technology to attack. □

AI chatbots offer children harm as if it were help, says activist

London, United Kingdom

The head of a prominent anti-disinformation watchdog has warned of the dangers posed by AI chatbots, saying children are particularly vulnerable.

"Social media broadcasts to billions, AI whispers to one," Imran Ahmed, who heads the Center for Countering Digital Hate (CCDH), told a disinformation conference this week. "No society should build machines that can meet a child in their loneliest moment and offer them harm as if it were help," Ahmed told the Cambridge Disinformation Summit.

In Wednesday's lecture by video call to his former university, Ahmed cited the case of a UK mother killed

by her own son, allegedly acting on the instructions of a chatbot.

"None of us is immune, when a machine can offer lethal guidance to a young person as if it were fact," he said.



Imran Ahmed, CEO of Center for Countering Digital Hate, a British citizen, poses for a portrait January 2, 2026, in Washington, DC.

Ahmed, a British national who lives in the United States, is among five Europeans whom the US State Department has said would be denied visas.

This comes even though he holds US permanent

residency and his wife and daughters are American citizens.

- 'System under pressure' -

According to the centre's most recent report "Killer Apps", eight out of 10 AI chatbots were willing to assist teen users "in planning violent attacks, including a school shooting, religious bombings, and high-profile assassinations".

Out of 10 chatbots only Anthropic's Claude and Snapchat's My AI consistently refused to assist would-be attackers.

In a 2025 investigation entitled "Fake Friend", the watchdog tested ChatGPT, one of the world's most popular AI chatbots.

"Within minutes, it pro-

duced instructions for self-harm, suicide planning, and substance abuse," Ahmed said, adding in some cases it also generated goodbye letters for children contemplating ending their lives.

Unlike social media and other systems that "just amplify harmful content," AI chatbots generate and personalise it "at the moment of greatest vulnerability".

"The intimacy is deeper and the harm may be harder to detect before it's too late," Ahmed said, adding the systems learn what you fear, what you want, what you are ashamed of and respond in real time, with no human judgement or editorial restraint. □



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Cofidis' French rider Benjamin Thomas cycles before the start of the 7th stage of the Paris-Nice cycling race, 47 km between Le Broc and Isola-Village, on March 14, 2026.

Paris-Roubaix straggler Thomas tells of 'awful' ordeal

Paris, France

Benjamin Thomas is an Olympic cycling champion who has ridden the Tour de France and won a Giro d'Italia stage, but nothing had prepared him for the "awful" cobbles of Paris-Roubaix.

The Frenchman managed to finish the 258km race in 139th and last place, 24-and-a-half minutes behind winner Wout van Aert and only just inside the cut-off limit.

The 30-year-old omnium champion from Paris 2024 was a last-minute addition to his Cofidis team's line-up for the 'Hell of the North' after several teammates had to pull out.

He had never ridden the bone-jarring cobbles of Paris-Roubaix before with its 55km of huge jagged 'pave' stones across 30 different sectors.

"I didn't know any cobbled sectors, I didn't even do the reconnaissance,"

Thomas told AFP.

"All I had was the advice from the guys who told me: stay in the middle of the cobbles and leave a two-metre safety distance in front of you."

His mission for the race was to try to get into the break-away.

"I tried twice but the race was so fast that it's almost impossible to get out of the peloton," he said.

As soon as the cobbled sectors began 95km into the race, Thomas was already at the back of the field and struggling to stay in contact.

His one saving grace was that he neither crashed nor punctured.

"In the first cobbled sector there were a lot of incidents. I started to do the elastic," he said, referring to riders who keep dropping out of a group and then dragging themselves back in.

- 'It's a minefield' -

Thomas admitted that he had felt scared in the fearsome Arenberg forest cobbled section where pre-race favourite Mathieu van der Poel punctured twice and saw his victory hopes go up in smoke.

"When I saw the state of it, I was thinking, 'how do bicycles come out of that in one piece'," said Thomas.

"It felt like my bike was going to snap in half. Every two metres there was a crater, there's not a single cobble that is straight -- it's a minefield.

"I was a bit scared in the Arenberg, yes. I didn't really have any frights on other sectors, just a couple of skids.

"But I cannot imagine what it's like in the rain."

He battled on but on another tough sector, the Mons-en-Pevele, he lost contact with the back of the bunch. □



Azzi Fudd of UConn poses with WNBA Commissioner Cathy Engelbert after being selected with the 1st pick in the first round by the Dallas Wings during the 2026 WNBA Draft at The Shed on April 13, 2026 in New York City.

Fudd reunited with Bueckers after landing No.1 pick in WNBA draft

New York, United States

Azzi Fudd was chosen by the Dallas Wings with the number one overall pick in the WNBA draft on Monday in a move that will see the University of Connecticut star reunited on court with girlfriend and former college teammate Paige Bueckers.

Fudd, 23, was chosen by Dallas after leading the UConn Huskies to the final four of the national collegiate championship earlier this month, where they were beaten by South Carolina.

Fudd had been chasing a second consecutive national college title after playing alongside romantic partner Bueckers in the Huskies 2025 title triumph.

Like Fudd, Bueckers was chosen by Dallas with the number one pick in the draft last year.

"I'm excited to play again with Paige," Fudd said on Monday after her selection at the WNBA ceremony in New York. "She's an incredible person, incredible player and it's gonna be a lot of fun."

Fudd enters the WNBA after an impressive final season in college basketball where she averaged 17.3 points per game, including 117-of-262 three-pointers.

In other draft moves on Monday, the Minnesota Lynx swooped for with the second pick.

The Seattle Storm meanwhile opted for towering Spanish star Awa Fam with the third pick, the 6ft 4in (1.93 meters) 19-year-old from Valencia becoming only the seventh international player in WNBA history to be chosen in the top three of the draft.

"I'm super excited and a little bit nervous," Fam said. "I want to try my best, representing Spain is a little bit special. Being with the national team is always special, and being here in the WNBA was my dream since I was 12." □



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Joshua and Fury in negotiations over November bout: promoter

Britain's Tyson Fury (R) throws a jab against Russia's Arslanbek Makhmudov (L) during their heavyweight 'Clash of the Giants' contest at the Tottenham Hotspur stadium in London on April 11, 2026.

do that," Hearn said.

"My instructions from AJ are to make the fight and that's what we'll be trying to do. I wouldn't really say there are sticking points, but obviously when you receive a contract it's very natural to go back with a lot of stuff.

London, United Kingdom British heavyweight rivals Anthony Joshua and Tyson Fury are on course to meet in a long-awaited bout in November, according to promoter Eddie Hearn.

"It's nothing major, a little bit about who he fights in July, when he fights, where the fight's going to be.

Hearn on Tuesday said he was "pretty sure" the pair will finally meet later this year.

"Fury was trying to palm it off that we've had our warm-up fight against Jake Paul, which I thought was a bit cheeky, but I expect us to fight someone of the same kind of level as Makhmudov and then fight Fury.

Fury made his latest comeback following 16 months in retirement when he defeated Arslanbek Makhmudov on points on Saturday. Following that bout, Netflix announced on social media that the richest fight in British boxing history had been agreed between Fury and Joshua.

"The deal that we've been offered is not to fight Tyson Fury straight away, and that's our preferred option. We're happy with that and we expect to be out in July and then fight Fury in November."

Hearn said the streaming service jumped the gun but he is confident the fight will happen. Joshua first needs to get back in the ring for a warm-up fight after his victory over YouTube star Jake Paul in December in his only appearance in 19 months.

Joshua was involved in a car crash in Nigeria in December that killed two of his close friends. In the next fortnight he is expected to be given the all-clear by medics to resume full training after sustaining injuries in the accident.

"We received the contracts at the end of last week for their proposal of the two fights and we've been going back and forward and we continue to

The 36-year-old has been spending time working on his conditioning in Ukraine with WBC, WBA and IBF champion Oleksandr Usyk. □

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