

**Important notice for visitors of the natural pool Conchi**



Page 8

Aruba's ONLY English Vacation Newspaper

## Group of dolphins spotted at Sarah-Quita Beach; ACF urges to keep distance



Page 9



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## Spirit exit likely to lead to higher U.S. airfares, experts say

### New York, United States

The demise of ultra low-cost carrier Spirit Airlines is expected to add further upward pressure to US fares, according to experts.

Launched in 1992, the company is responsible for the "Spirit Effect" in which bare-bones service opens up travel to a broader slate of customers otherwise priced out of the market.

Spirit's business model of stripped-down travel that

includes no free meal service, baggage transport or other extras played a "unique and disruptive role in the industry," the U.S. Department of Justice argued in 2023, as it sought to block a merger with JetBlue.

"When Spirit enters a new route, prices for consumers across all airlines tend to fall and demand for air travel goes up," according to the DOJ.

It said Spirit's arrival in a market led to an immediate 17 percent drop in fares, while its exit led to an average 30 percent increase.

But Spirit's halting of operations on May 2 has added to worries about higher airfares, as ticket prices already rise over soaring jet fuel costs due to the Middle East war.

Jet fuel costs for US airlines surged 56 percent in March



The self-service check-in kiosks of Spirit Airlines stand idle with a message to customers after the company ceased global operations at Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood International Airport in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, on May 2, 2026.

from February and 30 percent from the year-ago period, the US Department of Transportation said this week.

Jan Brueckner, an emeritus economics professor at the University of California, Irvine, predicted that airlines would continue to offer "basic economy" fares originally unveiled to compete with Spirit and other budget carriers.

"But they may raise" the ticket price, Brueckner said. "I don't think these tickets are going away necessarily, just that they might be less attractive."

Aviation expert Richard Aboulafia of consultancy AeroDynamic said there's "no question in some markets fares will probably increase."

### - Disruptor -

"For more than a decade, Spirit played a disruptive role, forcing incumbents to respond with lower fares and more granular prices," said Richard Masler, head of analysis for the Centre for Aviation.

The industry began mobilizing on Saturday as Spirit shut down, rebooking passengers but also trying to capitalize on Spirit's most

profitable routes.

This effort to cover market included other low-cost carriers such as Breeze, Avelo and Frontier, which have typically priced a bit higher than Spirit.

Airlines added service in markets now abandoned by Spirit, or increased their offerings in places where they were in direct competition.

"Spirit played a meaningful role in providing affordable travel to a wide range of consumers in an industry dominated by four major airlines," Frontier CEO James Dempsey said on a conference call with analysts.

Frontier plans this summer to add nine routes, plus 15 more daily departures across 18 former Spirit routes.

The increased service should boost a key revenue benchmark by three to five percent at Frontier, while capacity will grow six to eight percent, said Frontier Chief Financial Officer Robert Schroter.

Spirit forced other carriers to "price differently," said Bradley Akubuiro, a partner at advisory firm Bully Pulpit International. □

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# Climate risks fuel insurance costs, squeezing U.S. households even inland

## Flat Rock, United States

After Tony Dunn lost his home in a California wildfire, he moved to mountainous North Carolina to avoid more climate disasters. But his neighborhood was devastated in a hurricane six years later and insurance costs are climbing. He is among a growing number of US homeowners feeling the pinch from insurance as disasters linked to climate change reach them more frequently, even away from the coast. Dunn, 69, counts himself as lucky that his new home was not damaged in Hurricane Helene as his neighborhood was wrecked.

But that has not stopped his homeowners' insurance premiums from surging almost 30 percent to nearly \$4,400 a year since Helene in 2024.

"It was a bit of a shock when we got the insurance bill last year," Dunn told AFP.

He worries about further increases but said: "As much as it costs, you don't want to be without insurance." After he and his wife lost their home in the 2018 California Camp Fire, which claimed 85 lives, insurance payouts helped them rebuild their lives.

While coastal states like Florida have tended to face the worst of price hikes, inland areas have also seen costs rise in recent years following hail storms, wind damage and other disasters.

Climate change is enhancing conditions conducive to the most powerful hurricanes and it intensified Helene, a study by the World Weather Attribution scientists network found in 2024. In Henderson County, where Dunn lives, homeowners paid an average of \$1,979 for insurance in 2024, an 86-percent surge from 2018.

Nationally, rates skyrocketed 58 percent over the



Homes under construction in Marshall, North Carolina, on April 9, 2026.

same period, according to researchers Benjamin Keys and Philip Mulder, who led a study released last year. The hit to premiums tend to be larger in areas facing growing climate risk. Dunn worries about people who forgo insurance coverage as costs rise. "They're going to have nothing," he said. "Something needs to be done."

### - 'A shock' -

Inland states like Iowa and Nebraska have also seen sharp cost hikes as climate risks mount.

Rates in Nebraska jumped 20 percent between 2023 and 2025, while those of hail-prone Iowa were up 54 percent, according to Insurify.

A 2025 working paper involving researchers from Columbia Business School, Harvard Business School and others found the average US household "underinsured at mortgage origination, with only 70 percent of the rebuilding costs covered by the insurance contract."

"We are increasingly inching towards a situation where insurers would need to charge much higher prices because climate risk is going up," said Ishita Sen, one of the researchers behind the paper. But households' willingness

are "not catching up," partly due to financial constraints.

Dee Dee Buckner in Marshall, North Carolina, told AFP she has considered doing away with homeowners' insurance.

"If they go up any higher, I can't," said the 60-year-old.

Buckner lost her home during Helene when the French Broad River swelled and flooded downtown Marshall with over 12 feet (3.7 meters) of water.

"There's been rain from hurricanes that's come in here before, but nothing of this magnitude ever. It was just a shock to everyone," she said. □

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# Cannes honours Jackson, Middle Earth wizard who 'transformed' cinema

**Sydney, Australia**

"The Lord of the Rings" maestro Peter Jackson brought laughter and tears to the Cannes Film Festival Tuesday as he was given a lifetime achievement award for his big-screen epics that have also delivered a tourism bonanza to his native New Zealand.

In a thrilling moment for fans of the Tolkien epic, American actor Elijah Wood, who played the hero Frodon Baggins in the trilogy, presented him with the honorary Palme d'Or.

Jackson was typically self-deprecating as he accepted the award to a prolonged standing ovation, saying it was a "stunning surprise, miraculous... I am not a Palme d'Or sort of guy."

"I have been trying to work out why I won" only to realise "this morning that this is the Cannes Film Festival's way of apologising for not giving 'Bad Taste' (his first film at Cannes), the Palme d'Or" in 1988, he joked.

The bearded director also gently poked fun at Wood as they embraced on stage, saying, "So glad you have grown a little bit of facial hair."

Jackson compared Wood's new look to Clark Gable. "If someone does



**New Zealand director, screenwriter and producer Peter Jackson receives his Honorary Palme d'Or from U.S. actor Elijah Wood during the Opening Ceremony at the 79th edition of the Cannes Film Festival in Cannes, southern France, on May 12, 2026.**

a remake of 'Gone with the Wind', it could be your role," he said.

With his unkempt hair and a predilection for going barefoot on set, the 64-year-old Oscar winner has taken on a string of cinematic challenges armed with an eye for detail and dazzling special effects.

"He has permanently transformed Hollywood cinema and its conception of the spectacle," said Cannes director Thierry Fremaux, when the award was first

announced in March. "But Jackson is not only a great technician; he is above all a tremendous storyteller."

An only child born in the small town of Pukerua Bay near the New Zealand capital Wellington, he was captivated at the age of eight when the 1933 version of "King Kong" appeared on the family's black-and-white television.

"Ask me today what I think of King Kong and I will tell you that it is one of the most perfect pieces of cin-

ematic escapism," Jackson said in a 2006 biography. His first film, as an eight-year-old, was a war movie shot with schoolmates in the back garden with his parents' Super Eight camera. He poked holes in the celluloid to simulate gunfire.

While working as an apprentice photographic engraver on Wellington's Evening Post newspaper aged about 18, Jackson bought a copy of "The Lord of the Rings" to read on a long train trip.

"I kept saying to myself: 'This book could make a really great movie.'" Within a few years, he took a first step into the industry.

## - Hobbits, elves -

In his early 20s, the director bought a Bolex 16-millimetre camera and made the low-budget horror, "Bad Taste", which was shown at Cannes, praised by critics and sold in 30 countries.

Jackson met his life partner Fran Walsh at a screening of the movie, and she would go on to collaborate on his films, including the blockbuster "The Lord of the Rings" trilogy. They have two children. Jackson thanked all three as he accepted the Cannes award. The director won international renown with the 1994 drama thriller "Heavenly Creatures" starring Kate Winslet and based on the true story of two schoolgirls who murder one of their mothers. In 1998, he secured financial backing to put "The Lord of the Rings" on the big screen.

New Line Cinema committed to the three films of Tolkien's tale with Jackson as director and New Zealand as the majestic location a choice that the country would tap as a major tourism draw. □

## Singer FKA twigs to play Josephine Baker in biopic of anti-racist legend



**FKA Twigs performs at the Mojave Tent during the 2026 Coachella Valley Music and Arts Festival on April 19, 2026 in Indio, California.**

**Cannes, France**

British music star FKA twigs is to play Josephine Baker in a new biopic of the Roaring Twenties icon who became a hero of the French Resistance and the American civil rights movement.

The movie will tell the "incredible story of the magnificent, incomparable" dancer and singer, its producers said at the Cannes Film Festival, which starts Tuesday. Born into grinding poverty in St. Louis, Missouri, Baker became one of the first global superstars. But she refused to perform before segregated audiences in the United States and spent much of her life in France.

She was the first black woman to be given a place in the Pantheon, where France's national heroes are buried, after helping the French Resistance during World War II and also spying on the Nazis for the British

and U.S. intelligence services.

FKA twigs, who is also a singer and choreographer, said Baker's "extraordinary legacy is such an inspiration to me and to so many people".

"I cannot wait" to bring "her fight, her love, her losses, her talent and her heroism to the big screen," the Grammy winner added.

As well as aiding the Allied fight against fascism, Baker was a leading voice against racial discrimination in her homeland, and spoke alongside Martin Luther King Jr. at the 1963 march on Washington.

The movie, by rising French director Maimouna Doucoure of "Cuties" fame, will start shooting later this year.

Producers StudioCanal said they had worked with Baker's sons, Jean-Claude Bouillon Baker and Brian Bouillon Baker, on the script. □

## New London museum woos younger visitors

### London, United Kingdom

A new London museum conceived with and for under-30s is seeking to draw younger generations by tackling themes such as climate and gender.

A honey-coloured concrete jumble of a building now rises on the site of the former 2012 Olympic Park, in the east of the British capital.

The V&A East, which opened on April 18, is the newest outpost of the beloved 174-year-old Victoria and Albert Museum, and aims specifically at younger audiences.

Just a few metres (yards) away stands the Storehouse, open for almost a year, which allows the public to get close up with the museum's vast reserves. Yet the two V&A offshoots could hardly be more different.

The Storehouse aims to be as exhaustive as possible, brimming with objects of every kind.

The V&A East meanwhile opts for restraint – just 500 objects are on show, displayed in an airy, light-filled space with large picture windows.

In its two free permanent galleries are shoes by punk fashion icon Vivienne Westwood and a dress by 18th-century English designer Anna Maria Garthwaite one of the first wom-



Ballet costumes for 'Because We Must (1987)' by Australian artist Leigh Bowery, created with corset-maker Mr Pearl, are pictured on display as part of the 'Music is Black: A British Story' exhibition at the V&A East Museum in East London, on April 29, 2026.

en designers.

They feature alongside contemporary works by artists from east London and beyond, including pioneering fabrics inspired by designer Althea McNish's African-Caribbean heritage.

### - 'Woke' museum? -

"When we started thinking about the idea of making a museum focused on young adults, we did a lot of consultation with them for years," Brendan Cormier, chief curator, told AFP.

"We talked about the design of the galleries... and then we talked about the

collections," he said.

The museum, in the making since 2012, decided to focus its exhibitions on the worldview of younger visitors, revolving around themes such as health, identity and community.

According to UK culture ministry figures from July, only 31 to 37 percent of people aged 16 to 24 visited a museum in the 12 months to March 2025, compared to 41 percent of adults.

The opening of the space comes as the role of museums in exploring social issues undergoes new kinds

of scrutiny, notably in the United States.

US President Donald Trump's administration announced in August it would review certain exhibitions in Washington museums, accusing them of "wokeness" and "ideological indoctrination".

In London, more than 30,000 young people were involved in the concept some through their schools, others by directly visiting the museum.

A visit to the museum is like "following a thread", said Cormier.

"An object catches your

eye, you go and learn more about it, and you uncover a new story, a whole new world."

### - 'Dive into the unknown' -

"It's quite unnerving," murmured Londoner Amy Richard, 27, visiting with her father, a retired railway worker.

"You don't come here to see specific things, but rather to wander through a space and let yourself be surprised. I like that."

Her father, Mark, was examining a pair of Nike trainers in the sustainability section, which traces the changes in materials used in fashion. "You mustn't be afraid to dive into the unknown," he joked.

Will that be enough to lure more young adults to museums?

U.S. museologist and researcher Kevin Coffee sees the project as "a first step". For him, the low attendance of young people has less to do with a lack of interest and is "more about an offer that often fails to meet their expectations and cultural practices".

A temporary exhibition, "The Music is Black: A British Story", runs until January 2027. Visitors receive connected headphones, and the soundtrack shifts as they wander through the space, turning it into more of an immersive concert. □

## Former Ecuadoran top diplomat enters race for U.N. chief

### United Nations, United States

Ecuadoran former foreign minister Maria Fernanda Espinosa has become the fifth candidate to enter the race for the next head of the United Nations, the UN General Assembly spokesperson told AFP on Tuesday.

Espinosa was nominated by Antigua and Barbuda, and joins four other candidates already nominated to succeed UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, who stands down at the end of the year.

"We received materials from Antigua and Barbuda yesterday (Monday) afternoon," said the spokesper-

son, La Neice Collins.

The Ecuadoran, who was also her nation's defense minister, served as president of the General Assembly from September 2018 to September 2019.

The other contenders to become the next UN chief are Chile's Michelle Bachelet, Argentina's Rafael Grossi, Costa Rica's Rebeca Grynspan and Senegal's Macky Sall.

Those four were publicly interviewed by member states in April, and any new candidate will also undergo this process.

Following a tradition of geographical rotation that is not always observed,

Latin America is in line to provide the next UN chief. Many states are also advocating for a woman to hold the position for the first time.

The General Assembly, where all UN member states are represented, elects the secretary-general for a five-year term, renewable once.

But they can only do so on the recommendation of the UN's highest decision-making body, the Security Council, which is due to begin its selection process by the end of July.

Particular power rests with the council's five permanent members – the Unit-

ed States, China, Russia, the United Kingdom and France which each can veto decisions.

Whoever is selected for secretary-general will begin their term on January 1, 2027. □



Maria Fernanda Espinosa, the Ecuadorian candidate seeking to oust actual Organisation of the American States Secretary General, Luis Almagro, is seen before an interview with AFP journalists in a Washington, DC hotel on February 6, 2020.

# Wild peacocks bring delight, despair to Italian village

## Punta Marina, Italy

Dozens of preening peacocks looking for love have colonized a seaside village in Italy, strutting their stuff for the ladies but infuriating human residents with their spring mating season screams.

The birds, with their iridescent, sweeping trains, perch on rooftops and fences across Punta Marina, a village on the Adriatic Sea coast in the Emilia Romagna region, east of Bologna.

Their booming numbers have split the town in two -- one side thinks they should be left alone; the other wants them taken to more suitable pastures.

The once-revered creatures appear throughout nearby Ravenna's prized mosaics as a symbol of immortality -- but 81-year-old Marco Manzoli, a retired bus driver, said they were essentially delinquents who poo a lot.

"The population has boomed over 30 years and it's too big now: they disrupt sleep, disrupt traffic and dirty the ground with ice-cream-like excrement, which we then step in," Manzoli said.

Nearby, six peacocks saunter through a crossroads, gazing at their reflections in parked cars and shop win-



This screen grab taken from an AFP Video on May 12, 2026, shows a wild peacock standing on a roof in Punta Marina, north-eastern Italy.

dows.

"The peacocks climb onto the cars... and scratch them," Manzoli said, creating fears "tourists won't come on holiday anymore unless they have a garage to park their car in."

Though there has been no official head count, the birds are reported to number some 120.

### - 'Something magic' -

Pastry chef Claudio Ianiero, 64, told AFP that peacocks have long lived in the pine forest behind the village, but began seeking safety

from predators by nesting in the gardens of abandoned houses.

"Out there they have many natural enemies, such as wolves and foxes. Here however, they have none, and they are proliferating in a way that is difficult to control," he said.

As a peacock neared the window of the bakery, eyeing the buttery croissants displayed inside, Ianiero denied frenzied media reports of an invasion, a sanitary emergency, or locals being forced to move away.

The chef, who boasts pea-

cock biscuits among his delicacies, says locals have lived in harmony with them for years.

The crested birds, in their myriad blues, are "something magic" for Punta Marina, he said.

But Mara Capasso, a 57-year-old supermarket cashier, said she had neighbours woken nightly by mating calls.

The peacock problem had "split the town into two factions", she said.

The birds should be "taken to pine forests, woods, places where they can be

in their habitat, because they should never live on concrete.

"They need to be in their natural environment," she said.

### - Peacock 'ranger' -

Ravenna city council has toyed with various strategies to manage the population over the years.

But an attempt to relocate them in 2022 fell through largely due to opposition from animal rights groups.

It may have more success now, for "we are getting adoption offers from all over Italy," Ianiero said.

Though the council launched a campaign in 2024 to instruct locals and holidaymakers on how to live alongside the birds such as not feeding them local Emanuele Crescentini said more must be done.

Kitted out in a fluorescent orange jacket, 50-year-old Crescentini said he had appointed himself a peacock "ranger", walking the streets to protect the birds from irate locals.

"There's plenty of space in Punta Marina, they could spread out everywhere and cause no trouble at all," he said.

"We could set an example of intelligent and mature coexistence. It can be done." □

# Emperor penguins in focus as Antarctic talks start in Japan

## Tokyo, Japan

Greater protections for endangered emperor pen-

guins and how to manage growing tourism will top the agenda at talks on Antarc-

tica opening in Japan on Tuesday.

The annual meeting comprises the original 12 nations that signed the Antarctic Treaty -- which now has 58 parties -- as well as 17 others that conduct substantial research activity there. The continent and its abundant wildlife are protected under the 1959 treaty, which designates it as a land of science and peace, while freezing territorial claims.

"The discussions taking place here in Hiroshima are especially important at a time when Antarctica is increasingly affected by global challenges such as climate change," Fran-

cisco Berguno, executive secretary of the Antarctic Treaty Secretariat, told a news conference.

Berguno warned the continent "plays a critical role in regulating the Earth's climate and oceans," and urged "long-term thinking, careful management, and international trust".

"Decisions taken here help ensure that human activity in Antarctica remains carefully managed, environmentally responsible and scientifically driven," he added.

Around 400 government officials and researchers from some 50 countries, including the United States, China, Russia and Ukraine, will take part in the meeting,

according to Jiji Press.

Among the most closely watched issues this year will be the status of emperor penguins, which last month the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) declared endangered.

Conservation group WWF is urging the animal be designated a specially protected species at the Hiroshima meeting, which could put restrictions on shipping and tourism that are adding pressure to the penguins.

Their numbers have plummeted primarily due to climate change that causes the sea ice where they live, hunt and breed to break up earlier in the year. □



Executive Secretary of the Antarctic Treaty Secretariat Francisco Javier Berguno (L) and Chairperson of ATCM48 Hideki Uyama (R) hold a press conference after the opening ceremony of the 48th Antarctic Treaty Conference of the Consultative Parties (ATCM48) at the Peace Memorial Park in Hiroshima on May 12, 2026.

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### Museum of Industry Aruba

The Museum of Industry is located in San Nicolas. This museum presents the history of gold, aloe, phosphate, oil and tourism through elaborated displays and multimedia installations.

The Museum of Industry is situated in the Water Tower and narrates Aruba's industrial history which began in the 19th century. The Water Tower was built in 1939 and consists of three sections: the substructure, the high-rising vertical shaft, and the tank at the top. The Water Tower was purchased by the Monuments fund in 2003 so it could be restored and preserved as one of Aruba's monuments. The Museum of Industry is part of Aruban Museum Foundation (FMA), which is a foundation that maintains, preserves, and protects the Aruban cultural sector, history, and nature. The museum of Industry is open daily from 9 am till 6 pm.

For more information check out their Facebook page: Museum of Industry Aruba.

### Archaeological Museum of Aruba

The Archaeological Museum of Aruba is located at Schelpstraat 42 in downtown Oranjestad. The renovated historic Ecury complex in downtown Oranjestad has been transformed from a family home to a

modern museum that preserves Aruba's Amerindian cultural heritage. This 21st century museum is especially designed to preserve valuable artifacts dating back to the Pre-Ceramic period of 2500 BC.

In the late 1980's AMA identified its need for an adequate housing for its collection and activities. After studying various options, a project proposal was drawn up, including the acquisition and restoration of historical buildings in downtown Oranjestad.

These historical buildings were formerly the property of the Ecury family. The "Ecury Complex", is a cluster of single and two-story historic buildings, mainly Dutch colonial architecture from the late 19th and 20th century on a plot of approximately 1,700 m2.

In 1997 the Aruban Government bought the complex for the National Archaeological Museum project. In 2004 a financial agreement was signed with the European Development Fund and in 2006 restoration and construction work began on the monumental buildings and the new to build exhibition space. In December 2007 the key to the complex was delivered and the museum's employees moved to the new location. The final design for the exhibit was completed in November 2007 and the permanent exhibit, financed by the Aruban Government and the Union of Cultural Organizations (UNOCA), opened in July 2009.

At the new location the National Archaeological Museum Aruba uses approximately 500 m2 for its permanent exhibit. This exhibit

showcases archaeological objects and conveys modern exhibition techniques information on the origin and culture of the first inhabitants of the island. The new permanent exhibit gives the visitor an insight into the cultures that inhabited the island in Pre-Historical and Early Historical times. The museum regularly hosts public seminars, special exhibitions and workshop for visitors to enjoy.



The museum is open daily from 9 am till 5 pm.

Museum Aruba or website: [www.manaruba.org](http://www.manaruba.org)

For more information check out the Facebook page National Archaeological

Editor's note: Pictures are property of the respective museums. □

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

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



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

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

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## Important notice for visitors of the natural pool Conchi

(Oranjestad)—Aruba Conservation Foundation informs that repair and restoration works have begun on the main stairs leading to Conchi. During this period, temporary access stairs will be available while improvements are carried out.

The ACF would like to extend their gratitude for your patience and understanding as they work to improve the experience and safety of the area for both nature and visitors alike. If you wish to visit Conchi located in the Arikok National Park, please keep in mind there are two entrance points:  
San Fuego (Santa Cruz): Open from 8:00am to 3:30pm  
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## Group of dolphins spotted at Sarah-Quita Beach; ACF urges to keep distance

(Oranjestad)—Monday afternoon, reports surfaced on social media that a group of dolphins had reached the coast near Palm Beach and Sarah-Quita Beach, where they were swimming so close to shore that one dolphin reportedly got stuck in the sand. The community and activists immediately reported the incident online, and the Aruba Conservation Foundation published a warning Tuesday urging people to keep their distance and help protect these mammals.



According to some sources, the case was first reported on Reddit, where it was reported that the incident happened unexpectedly. Shared images showed people helping some of the dolphins change direction and swim back out to sea.

Videos that appeared on social media also caught the community's attention, and hundreds of people began sharing their theories about why a group of dolphins had appeared near our shores.

Aruba Today contacted the Aruba Marine Mammal Foundation for its expert opinion on what may have caused the incident. However, by the time this issue closed, no response had been received, possibly because the AMMF was actively working with ACF on site to help the mammals.

Although theories in the comments varied, many users agreed that this phenomenon is not a free attraction. The Aruba Con-

servation Foundation also emphasized the fragile condition the dolphins are in, and urged the community to keep their distance.

As ACF explained in its Facebook post, the dolphins are under a great deal of stress and need a calm environment in order to recover. Therefore, the organization emphasized that this is not an "attraction" or an opportunity to take pictures.

At the time of publication, it was reported that one

dolphin was injured and that marine wildlife experts from ACF and AMMF were on site monitoring and assisting the situation. ACF clarified that one dolphin had been left behind and was having trouble keeping itself afloat in the water. For that reason, the team on site has been working in shifts to support the creature.

ACF is urging the community to do its part in this case and maintain a respectful distance from the area. This is especially relevant

for people operating jet skis or boats, or practicing kiteboarding and windsurfing in the area. It is important to avoid loud noise, drones, and group activities near the area, since the dolphin needs a quiet and peaceful environment in order to recover. In addition, people are being asked not to enter the affected zone and to respect the instructions of the experts on site.

In the past, the Aruba Marine Mammal Foundation (AMMF) had explained that the shallow waters in areas such as Malmok, Palm Beach, Eagle Beach, Surfside, Southreef, Mangel Halto, and Roger's Beach are coastal zones where dolphins may seek refuge when they are vulnerable or fleeing from threats in the sea. Dolphins that are weak, injured, exhausted, or nursing are often accompanied by others in these areas. That is why the organization warned that disturbing dolphins in such situations can be dangerous for both the animals and people. Hands-on help should be left to the experts. □

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Episode CCCLII- 352

## Island Heritage Spotlight

Aruba's history runs far deeper than most visitors realize. On Etnia Nativa, we trace the island's ancient paths each week, uncovering traditions and stories that continue to shape its cultural roots. In this episode, we explore Aruba's colonial past—from Horses' Bay to Oranjestad—and the enduring legacy of its earliest settlements.

Aruba's colonial past is a story of hardship, endurance, and survival, sustained by native knowledge, maritime trade, and strategic ambition. The area around—and later beyond—Horses' Bay gradually became settled, primarily by descendants of the old Curaçao elite families connected to the WIC. This history is etched into the very soil of Horses' Bay, Playa, Rancho, Para Mira, Ponton, and the surrounding areas, forming the foundation of what would eventually become Oranjestad.

In the eighteenth century, Aruba was sparsely populated by Europeans. Only the commander, his family, and a few officials of the West-Indische Company (WIC) called the island home. Yet, as trade with mainland America picked up, Horses' Bay—a beach where horses disembarked and which offered superior nautical advantages compared to Commander's Bay Harbour in Savaneta—gradually became the island's new hub for mooring and unloading cattle.

Jewish merchants from Curaçao soon established homes on the high ground near Horses' Bay, toward what is today Ponton. The bay itself remained untouched by European settlement and was dominated by a small Amerindian village along a narrow sea inlet. It was not until 1796–1797, with the construction of the first WIC battery, that the first European dwellings appeared, marking the beginning of permanent settlement.

Plans to fortify Horses' Bay date back to 1762, driven by fears of privateer attacks, but high costs delayed construction. Meanwhile, growing trade reinforced the area's importance, prompting the commander to move his residence to a vantage point near the bay, overlooking both the harbor and the Amerindian settlements to the north.

Jan van der Biest Jr., commander from 1772 to 1782, was buried at Ponton, though his grave was later partially obscured by masonry repairs. His brother Harmen succeeded him until 1791, followed by Jacobus Pellicorne Porrier and Borchard Specht, who married into the commander's family and continued the Utrecht lineage.

By the early 19th century, a visiting historian could still examine remnants of the commander's house, including the flagpole socket. Though prominent families had departed, goats and cows grazed nearby, and a clear view stretched across the strait to Paraguaná's isthmus and St. Ann's Hill—a quiet reminder of the island's colonial roots.



The first buildings in Oranjestad appeared in 1797, and within thirty years, a small town had taken shape. The houses were modest, mostly one-floor structures, except perhaps the commander's residence. Roofs varied: some fully tiled, others shingled, and the dwellings of the less wealthy were roofed with maize stalks, palm leaves, or the traditional mud mixture known as torto. Pre-constructed cane-and-branch cottages also dotted the landscape, while brick houses—almost all whitewashed with deep orange tiles—signaled wealth and status.

By 1827, growth had slowed. Oranjestad was divided into east and west halves. The eastern quarter, toward Dakota, had 77 houses, 33 of which were brick, marking the fashionable area. The western waterfront held 108 dwellings, with only 23 brick homes.

Disorderly construction plagued the town. Despite an 1822 regulation, some houses were built dangerously close to Fort Zoutman—less than fifty yards from its cannons, making it impossible for the garrison to fire on hostile ships without endangering residents. One house even stood just thirty meters away, blocking control



of the surrounding countryside during times of unrest.

Today, these traces—from Horses' Bay and Ponton to the streets of early Oranjestad—offer a vivid window into Aruba's colonial era, a story of trade, defense, and the gradual imprint of European settlement on an island shaped as much by its people as by its rugged landscape. □

From 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.

Personal experiences with Etnia Nativa are available by appointment:

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 etnianaativa03@gmail.com

## Alto Vista chapel and its link to Aruba's origins

According to *Etnia Nativa*, in the 18th century most of the inhabitants of Aruba were indigenous who lived on the north coast, one of the largest communities lived in Alto Vista.

As they were very religious, they had a chief with the name of Antonio Silvester who guided them in the Christian life and it was he who decided to build a stone chapel with a roof of corn rods, which would serve as a place of prayer. In 1750 it was blessed by Father Algemesi who came from Coro-Venezuela and appointed Domingo Antonio Silvester as the island's first prosecutor in the name of the Spanish crown and Rome. In 1752 the prosecution passed into the hands of Antonio Silvester's son-in-law, Miguel Álvarez, who continued to guide the parishioners in their prayers.

According to the book, *The History of Alto Vista* by R.H. Nooyen, it is not known when Domingo Antonio Silvester came to Aruba from Venezuela. The elders believe Antonio was a Spaniard. In 1780, father Joseph



Antonio de la Vegal called Bernardino Silvester, one of Antonio's sons with his wife Anna Cathalina Tromp, "neighbors and naturals of the island Aruba" and thus they became natives.

At the end of the eighteenth century many inhabitants the island died as a result of the black fever epidemic and since people believed that the Alto Vista area was the most infected, they began to build their homes

further south within the Noord area, so the town of Noord began to grow into a community till getting its own Church. However religious festivals continued to be celebrated at this sacred native place, with the custom of arriving in procession to Alto Vista.

Two-hundred years after the beautiful time of Alto Vista, people can no longer see much of the town of Alto Vista from 1750. With

a lot of work they found the old foundations of the Church of the Queen of the Holiest Rosary to build a new chapel on the same place. The entire surrounding area was empty and desolated, making it hard to imagine that Alto Vista was a town at all. A hundred years later, people can see the remains of around twenty houses, some made of stone and others of clay. Nowadays, only around six of these

houses remain.

South of the chapel in the yard two graves can be observed, there was the cemetery which father Pablo de Algemesi blessed. It is not certain, but it is believed that the two graves belong to Antonio Silvester and Miguel Alvares, according to Nooyen. About 50 meters near the chapel there are still the markings of an old house, where Antonio and Bernardino Silvester would have lived. About 200 meters from the chapel there is a water tank which the locals call Tanki Cacique. In the past this tank was closed. But mostly water was brought out from the Poz di Noord, a well dug in the sand.

The chapel can be viewed from basically any point in the north side, even from Paradera and Sero Plat. All the historical remains around the chapel provide us with an idea on how the old people of Alto Vista used to live. Don't miss the opportunity to visit a place of historical significance with a window to Aruba's past. □

## Enjoy one of the best views on Aruba at the top of the Hooiberg Hill

**(Oranjestad)**—If you are a regular hiker, or maybe want to spice up your morning work out session, then you might enjoy one of the most popular climbing sites on the island: The Hooiberg Hill. Accompanied with a 600-step staircase, this hill overlooks a great part of the island, the Caribbean sea, and sometimes even the Santa Anna mountain located in the coastal state of Falcon in Venezuela, providing one of the best views you can get on Aruba.

located at the center district of the island, Santa Cruz, the Hooiberg Hill is the second highest point on the island at 165 meters above sea level (or about 540 feet above sea level). The highest point is Jamanota Hill at 189 meters (620 feet), located in the Arikok National Park.

The staircase that run on the side of the hill was first built in 1951, when Mr. Eduardo Tromp constructed it. At that time, the staircase consist-



ed of 900 steps. Over time, as the steps faced erosion, the government decided to renovate these stairs in 1991. This new project delivered the newer staircase with only 587 steps. However, don't be

fooled—it may still be a work out to get on top. In addition, there is now a gazebo placed halfway up the stair for a little rest. The view at this resting stop is also a sight to see.

The best time to climb the hill would be early in the morning or right before sunset, as it may not be as hot. However, the hill is of course open all day, every day. □

**CROSSWORD**

By **THOMAS JOSEPH**

**ACROSS** 39 Sounds of

1 Common allergen suffering

5 Marshy areas Egyptian goddess

9 Tubular pasta 41 Border

10 Dark 1 College award

12 Be of one mind 2 Turmoil

13 Take care of 3 Furtive fellow

14 Visions 4 Abound

16 Nile 5 Tour carrier

17 Cubicle fixture 6 Wallet bill

18 Texting tools 7 Sparkles

21 So far 8 Does nothing

22 Formal 9 Rice field

23 Docking spots 11 Spinning toys

24 Sacred beetle 15 Flows

26 Wallet bill

29 Apollo Theater setting

30 On this spot

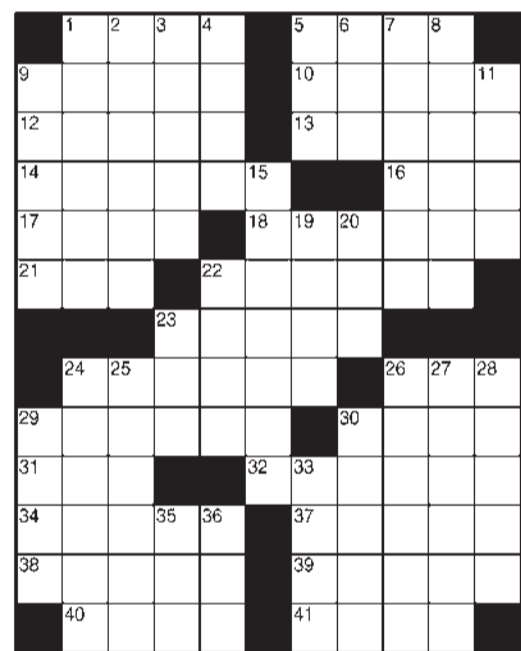
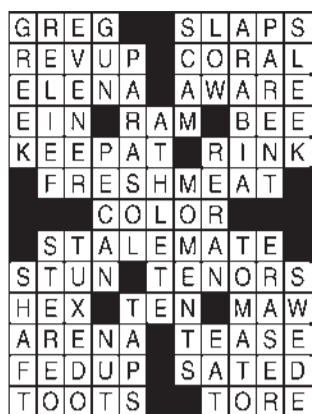
31 Had supper

32 Prepares veggies

34 Cache

37 Planet's path

38 Knight's wear



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.

**1-16 CRYPTOQUOTE**

KD RCEII JWDXBJUD MDBESRD  
NCD EXB JV NCD UJXEI  
SLTWDXRD TR IJLO, MSN TN  
MDLHR NJKEXH ZSRNTBD.

— MMENTL ISNCDX FTLO ZX.

**Saturday's Cryptoquote:** THE BAD NEWS IS TIME FLIES. THE GOOD NEWS IS YOU'RE THE PILOT. — MICHAEL ALTSHULER

**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, su-

permarkets 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**

02 SAT	CARIBBEAN PRINCESS	Arrival: 8:00   Departure: 22:00   Berth: C
05 TUE	CELEBRITY SILHOUTTE CARNIVAL MAGIC	Arrival: 08:00   Departure: 17:00   Berth: B Arrival: 9:00   Departure: 22:00   Berth: C
06 WED	GRANDEUR OF THE SEAS	Arrival: 11:59   Departure: 23:00   Berth: C
12 TUE	CARNIVAL HORIZON GRANDEUR OF THE SEAS	Arrival: 8:00   Departure: 22:00   Berth: B Arrival: 8:00   Departure: 23:00   Berth: C
19 TUE	ADVENTURE OF THE SEAS GRANDEUR OF THE SEAS	Arrival: 7:00   Departure: 23:00   Berth: B Arrival: 8:00   Departure: 23:00   Berth: C
20 WED	ALLURE OF THE SEAS CARNIVAL VISTA	Arrival: 7:00   Departure: 16:00   Berth: I Arrival: 7:00   Departure: 16:00   Berth: C
21 THU	CARNIVAL VENEZIA	Arrival: 9:00   Departure: 22:00   Berth: C
26 TUE	CARNIVAL HORIZON GRANDEUR OF THE SEAS	Arrival: 8:00   Departure: 22:00   Berth: B Arrival: 8:00   Departure: 23:00   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**

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

Difficulty: ★★★

5/13

**Answer to previous puzzle**

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

Difficulty: ★★

5/12

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# Middle East conflicts a danger for whales off S.Africa: study



This aerial view shows southern right whales (*Eubalaena australis*) swimming off the coast of Infanta, near the Breede River estuary, on October 21, 2022.

## Johannesburg, South Africa

Conflicts in the Middle East are increasing dangers for whales off South Africa by shifting sea traffic into their habitats and heightening the risks of collision, researchers told AFP.

The rerouting of shipping around South Africa and away from the Red Sea and Suez Canal since late 2023 has "substantially increased" the chances of ship strikes, they said in new research.

South Africa's southwestern coast supports globally significant populations of whales as well as increasingly busy shipping corridors, according to a paper presented to an International Whaling Commission (IWC) meeting this month.

This "extensive spatial overlap" amplifies the chances of collisions, said the paper, presented by University of Pretoria whale unit lead researcher Els Vermeulen.

Some global sea traffic was diverted from the Red Sea route following the November 2023 hijacking by Houthi rebels of a British-owned vehicle carrier, the *Galaxy Leader*, near Yemen.

Subsequent attacks and the US-Israel conflict with Iran, which has blocked transit through the Strait of Hormuz, have led shipping companies to reroute more of their vessels around the Cape of Good Hope.

Between March 1 and April 24 this year, an average of 89 commercial vessels sailed around southern Africa, compared with 44 over the same period in 2023, according to the International Monetary Fund's PortWatch monitor.

### - No time to adapt -

Environmental scientists, activists and even social media posts have highlighted the dangers of maritime traffic for sea mammals, Vermeulen said. "There have been videos of people on cargo vessels that were going through high densities of humpback whales," she told AFP.

"Obviously, their social

media post was all about, 'Wow, look how many nice whales we see'," she said.

"My heart stopped -- you know that they're striking a couple of whales."

In such cases, the creatures may be unaware of the dangers because they are preoccupied, for example, by feeding, she said.

"The fastest traffic, which poses the greatest strike risk, has increased by a factor of four," said Vermeulen.

"The animals haven't had time to adapt to shipping," said Chris Johnson, global lead of WWF's Whale and Dolphin Conservation initiative.

Blue whales off Los Angeles, for example, merely

sink below the surface when they hear a ship, he told AFP.

"You assume that, if you hear a loud noise, you leave. But that's not the case with some species," he said.

In some cases, changes in whale behaviour -- possibly attributable to climate change -- were putting them in harm's way.

Superpods of humpback whales started feeding seasonally off South Africa's increasingly busy west coast since 2011, said blue economy consultant Ken Findlay, who contributed to the report.

"That is a change that I think plays into an increased risk of ship strikes," he told AFP.

Collisions, which are largely underreported, are a "major cause of mortality for whales," according to a 2024 paper in the journal *Science*. □

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ARUBA TODAY NEWS

# The first 48-team World Cup more opportunities, less jeopardy?

## Paris, France

The 2026 World Cup will be the first to feature 48 teams, with the expansion of the field offering opportunities to several debutants but will FIFA's determination to have more nations participating remove much of the jeopardy which helped make the competition so great?

The expansion is the delivery of a key proposal made by Gianni Infantino not long after he became president of world football's governing body in 2016.

He talked of the importance of giving "more chances for more teams" and indicated that the World Cup needed to be seen as "more than a competition, it's a social event."



**Hungarian forward Sandor Kocsis (L) celebrates as the ball rolls past Uruguayan goalkeeper Gaston Roque Maspoli into the net for a goal as defender Jose Santamaria looks on 30 June 1954 in Lausanne during the World Cup semifinal match between Hungary and Uruguay.**

## - 'Natural evolution' -

Certainly, for much of its history, the World Cup could not be described as genuinely global. It was dominated by Europe and a few South American nations as it settled on a 16-team format until being expanded to 24 in 1982.

Ten of the 16 participants in 1978 were European, while by 1990 in Italy there were 14 European sides out of 24. Africa sent a total of four representatives to the first 11 World Cups before 1982. But even by 1990 there were just two teams each

from Africa, Asia and the CONCACAF zone of North and Central America and the Caribbean.

The expansion to 32 teams from 1998 gave a fairer distribution of places worldwide, but still only five African nations went to Qatar in 2022, while 13 came from Europe.

The move to 48 ensures a more even share without removing qualifying spots from Europe — it now has 16 teams, while there are

10 from Africa, nine from Asia, six each from South America and CONCACAF plus New Zealand.

"It's a natural evolution. We want to make football global all over the world," Arsene Wenger, FIFA's chief of global football development, said in December. "I believe that 48 teams is the right number. It's less than 25 percent for 211 countries who are affiliated to FIFA."

The expansion has allowed some of the world's smallest countries to qualify for the finals for the first time notably the tiny Caribbean island of Curacao with its population of barely 160,000.

"Once in a decade or once every four years, it happens that a small country is the surprise," Curacao coach Fred Rutten told AFP, as he hopes to cause a major upset or two.

Cape Verde, Jordan and

Uzbekistan are other first-time qualifiers. And the new format gives the outsiders a better chance of making it beyond the group stage and into the last 32, the first knockout round.

With the top two in all 12 groups progressing along with the eight best third-placed sides, one win in the first round could suffice to advance.

## - 'Dilution of spectacle' -

But that means the competition will lose much of its early jeopardy, with the leading nations probably not too concerned even if they suffer a defeat straight off -- unlike in 2022 when eventual champions Argentina were genuinely panicking after a defeat by Saudi Arabia.

Seeing a giant go out in the group stage, as Germany have done at the last two World Cups, is likely now a thing of the past.

In 2022 the group stage featured 48 games to eliminate 16 teams. This time there will be 72 matches in the first round to filter out the same number.

To go all the way, teams now have to play eight matches potentially in energy-sapping conditions in a North American summer instead of seven previously, further adding to an already heavy load for leading players.

"I see the argument about increasing representation but I think a 32-team finals was perfect," says Jonathan Wilson, author of *The Power and the Glory, A New History of the World Cup*.

"The biggest problem with this is not really the quality, it's the dilution of spectacle in the first round with eight third-placed teams to go through," he tells AFP, suggesting the group stage may end up "trying peoples' patience".

In addition, he says the risk with another knockout round is that "it might encourage quite dull, cautious football".

For the big teams, the first step is to just make sure you don't unexpectedly slip up early on. □

## Dick Advocaat returns as Curacao coach for World Cup

### Caracas, Venezuela

Veteran Dutch coach Dick Advocaat, who led Curacao to World Cup qualification, will return as

coach for the tournament after his successor Fred Rutten resigned.

"Advocaat is returning," the president of the Cura-

cao Football Federation (FFK), Gilbert Martina, told AFP in a phone message. Advocaat, 78, was in charge when the Caribbean island off the coast of Venezuela reached the finals but resigned three months later because of his daughter's health.

His fellow Dutchman Rutten took over, but Curacao suffered two comprehensive friendly defeats in March, losing 5-1 to fellow World Cup qualifiers Australia and 2-0 to China.

On Monday, the FFK said Rutten, 63, had resigned following "constructive discussions" among federation officials.

Reports in the Dutch media

suggest Advocaat, who will be the oldest coach to take charge of a team at a World Cup, agreed to return to his former role because his daughter's health has improved.

Curacao are the smallest country by population to qualify for a World Cup.

They face Germany on June 14 in their Group E opener, before playing Ecuador and Ivory Coast.

The much-travelled Advocaat has coached the Netherlands on three occasions and has also taken charge of the United Arab Emirates, Iraq and Serbia among a string of managerial positions. □



**Iraq's coach Dick Advocaat speaks to his players during the 2022 Qatar World Cup Asian Qualifiers football match between Iraq and South Korea, at the Thani Bin Jassim Stadium in the Qatari capital Doha, on November 16, 2021.**



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LeBron James #23 of the Los Angeles Lakers reacts during the fourth quarter against the Oklahoma City Thunder Game Four of the Second Round of the NBA Western Conference Playoffs against the Oklahoma City Thunder at Crypto.com Arena on May 11, 2026 in Los Angeles, California.

## James undecided on future after Lakers bow out of NBA playoffs

### Los Angeles, United States

LeBron James said he will take time to consider his future after the Los Angeles Lakers were swept out of the NBA playoffs by Oklahoma City on Monday in what could turn out to be the final game of his career.

James, 41, delivered a typically defiant performance with 24 points and 12 rebounds but it was not enough to prevent the Lakers from falling 115-110 as the Thunder completed a 4-0 sweep in the Western Conference semi-finals series. The four-time NBA champion is now out of contract with the Lakers and will head into the off season as a free agent with uncertainty swirling around his future.

Some reports have indicated James is ready to extend with the Lakers for what would be a 24th season in the NBA, while oth-

ers have suggested that he may consider heading elsewhere or finally decide to retire from the sport.

James gave little away Monday when quizzed about his plans following a loss in Los Angeles in front of a galaxy of courtside Hollywood stars including Leonardo DiCaprio, Sean Penn and Eddie Murphy.

"I don't know what the future holds for me," James said.

"Obviously as it stands right now, tonight, I've got a lot of time. I'll go back and recalibrate with my family and talk with them, and spend some time with them, and then when the time comes, obviously you guys will know what I decide to do."

James said whether he continues could hinge on whether he felt committed to the grind of playing at the highest level.

"I think for me, it's about the process -- you know, if I can commit to still being in love with the process of showing up to the arena five-and-a-half hours before a game to start preparing."

Whatever James decides, the veteran superstar feels that he has nothing left to prove after a career that has included a plethora of milestones and records that may never be broken. "There's nothing I need to show in this league," James said.

"I've done it all, I've seen it all. So you know, just trying to compete and trying to win championships, I think that's a motivating factor." While James contemplates his future, the reigning NBA champions Oklahoma City are looking ahead to a Western Conference finals showdown with either the San Antonio Spurs or Minnesota Timberwolves for a place in the NBA finals. □



Scottie Scheffler of the United States speaks to the media during a practice round prior to the PGA Championship at Aronimink Golf Club on May 12, 2026 in Newtown, Pennsylvania.

## No.1 Scheffler to start PGA with Rose and Matt Fitzpatrick

### Newtown Square, United States

Top-ranked defending champion Scottie Scheffler will tee off alongside England's Justin Rose and Matt Fitzpatrick when the 108th PGA Championship begins on Thursday at Aronimink.

The PGA of America announced tee times on Tuesday for the event, with four-time major winner Scheffler of the United States joining 2013 US Open winner Rose and 2022 US Open champion Fitzpatrick at 2:05 p.m. (1805 GMT) Thursday off the first tee.

The grouping means Fitzpatrick, a three-time PGA Tour winner this season, will not be joined by younger brother Alex, who is off to a hot PGA Tour start since sharing a pairs win with Matt in April at New Orleans.

Alex Fitzpatrick tees off at the first hole in the first group of the event at 6:45 a.m. Thursday alongside Americans Ben Griffin and Braden Shattuck.

Rory McIlroy, coming off his sixth major triumph last month at the Masters, will start at 8:40 a.m. Thursday off the 10th tee alongside Spain's Jon Rahm and American Jordan Spieth over the 7,394-yard, par-70 layout. The world number two from Northern Ireland will try to become the first player since Jack Nicklaus in 1975 to win the Masters and PGA Championship in the same year. Spieth would complete a career Grand Slam with a victory while Rahm would become the first Spaniard to capture the PGA Championship.

World number three Cameron Young will be joined Thursday at 1:54 p.m. on the first tee by fellow Americans Keegan Bradley, the 2011 PGA Championship winner, and Justin Thomas, who took the PGA Championship in 2017 and 2022.

Xander Schauffele, the 2024 PGA Championship and British Open winner, will tee off on the 10th hole at 8:29 a.m. Thursday alongside fellow American Brooks Koepka, a five-time major winner, and England's Tyrrell Hatton. □

# Sinner dismisses Pellegrino to reach Italian Open quarters, Zverev out

## Rome, Italy

Jannik Sinner's charge towards a first Italian Open title continued on Tuesday after the world number one calmly dispatched countryman Andrea Pellegrino 6-2, 6-3, while Alexander Zverev suffered a shock exit at the hands of another local hero in Luciano Darderi.

Second seed Zverev fell 1-6, 7-6 (12/10), 6-0, the German collapsing to defeat in front of a passionate crowd that roared on 18th-seeded Italian Darderi. But as expected, top seed Sinner outclassed qualifier Pellegrino on centre court in a match which was in truth never much of a con-



USA's Coco Gauff celebrates a point against Russia's Mirra Andreeva in the ATP Rome Open tennis tournament at Foro Italico in Rome on May 12, 2026.

test. The 24-year-old Sinner has now won 31 straight matches in Masters 1000 events to equal Novak Djokovic's record run. "I'm very happy about the outcome, but at the same time I'm very happy for him, I know he's working very hard," said Sinner of Pellegrino. "Tomorrow, a day off is important for me, trying to rest, and then hopefully I'm ready for quarters." Pellegrino's arrival in the last 16 of his home tournament is by far his best result in a Masters 1000 event.

The 29-year-old is set to move up to a career-best world ranking of 123rd after not just making the main draw of a top-ranked ATP tournament for the first time but also getting to face his country's biggest sporting star in front of over 10,000 fans.

Pellegrino received warm cheers as he put in a creditable performance against the dominant force in tennis, and he also showed some deft technique when given room to breathe by Sinner.

But Sinner was never in top gear and still comfortably dealt with Pellegrino to set up a clash with either 12th seed Andrey Rublev or another qualifier in Georgia's Nikoloz Basilashvili.

Should Sinner win a record-extending sixth straight Masters 1000 title, he will be the first Italian to win at the Foro Italico since Adriano Panatta 50 years ago.

With great rival Carlos Alcaraz out injured and Zverev now gone, Sinner is red-hot favourite for victory as he builds towards completing the career Grand Slam at Roland Garros.

Zverev, the 2024 champion in Rome, slumped in three sets as Darderi rallied to his first ever win over an opponent ranked among the world's top 10 players.

"It's my most important win, to beat Zverev at Roma is the most exciting win of my career," said Darderi. □



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