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'Strategic distraction?' Trump ramps up AI memes ahead of midterms

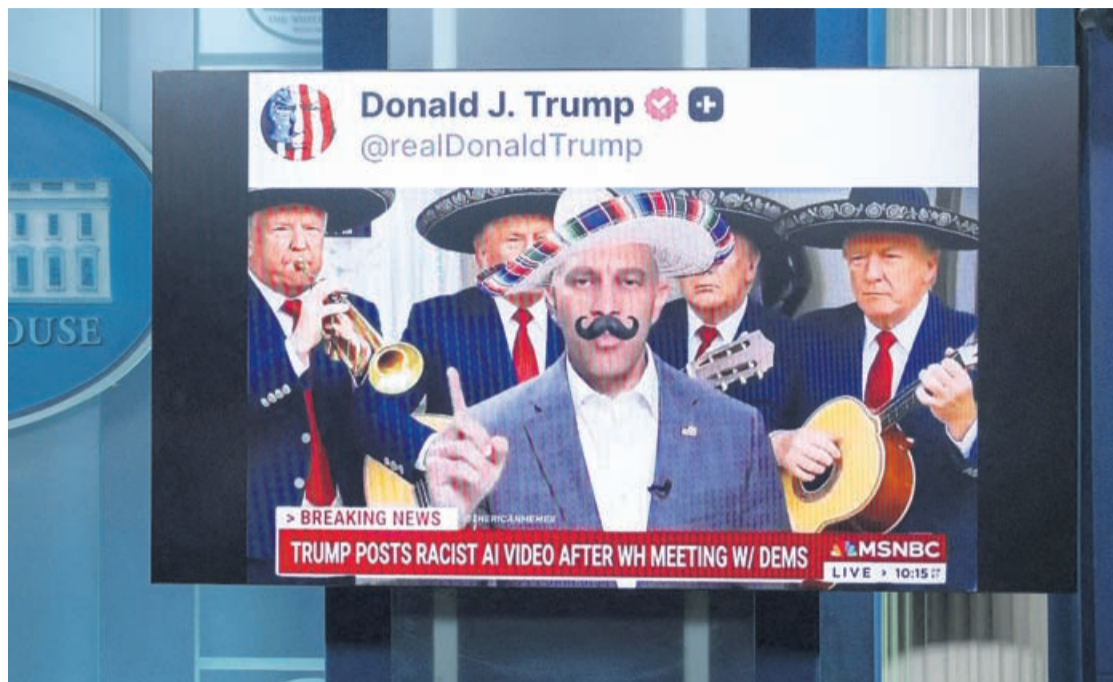
Washington, United States

From handcuffed extraterrestrials to an orbital missile command center U.S. President Donald Trump is unleashing a relentless stream of AI-generated imagery that analysts view as an effort to dominate the attention economy ahead of perilous midterm elections. Artificial intelligence has transformed Trump's Truth Social feed into a cascade of memes skewering his political rivals and glorifying himself, with the communications style echoed across his administration.

The attention-grabbing posts come as Trump's approval ratings slide to new lows ahead of elections in November, in which his Republican Party is seeking to maintain its narrow control of Congress.

Trump is "facing many problems that he has failed to solve," including an unpopular war with Iran and inflation, Todd Belt, director of the political management program at George Washington University, told AFP.

"So, he's flooding the information environment with positive images of himself, particularly images that



A screen displays AI-modified videos of House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries (D-NY) and U.S. Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-NY) that were shared on social media by President Donald Trump in the Brady Press Briefing Room at the White House on October 01, 2025 in Washington, DC.

make him look large and in charge."

For a president facing multiple challenges, Trump has averaged about 20 posts a day on Truth Social this year, researchers say, with many of those posts sometimes part of late-night tirades featuring AI-generated imagery.

During one particularly active stretch last weekend, one post showed Trump riding horseback beside George Washington, next to

a race car, with the White House in the background.

Another depicted an enlarged image of Trump towering over Greenland beneath the words "Hello, Greenland!"

Trump has raised alarm by repeatedly threatening to take over Denmark's autonomous territory, saying it is vital for national security.

- 'Diverting attention' -

Another image showed

Trump looming over warships, dressed as a military commander clad in gold armor, as fighter jets flew overhead.

Trump may be attempting to control the narrative with such AI-generated imagery, some observers say, even as he triggers backlash -- such as with his now-deleted post depicting himself as Jesus Christ.

"Trump's AI trial balloons are yet another strategic

distraction, reducing public dialogue to the most banal issues in hopes of diverting attention from more important topics of the day," Nora Benavidez, senior counsel at the advocacy group Free Press, told AFP.

"If we are busy debating his likeness to Christ or some other AI-generated savior image, Trump hopes we might not have the time or energy or solidarity to challenge his latest war or rising unaffordability and gas prices."

Other analysts say the AI messaging could seek to rally his support base and campaign through trolling.

- 'Illusion is powerful' -

"Trump is posting these to generate emotion," Cory Alpert, a researcher at the University of Melbourne, wrote in a report.

"His followers are not seeing actual truth, but a version of reality that they want to believe is true. The illusion is powerful."

Underscoring the strategy's potential appeal to younger voters, similar AI-driven messaging has also been adopted by other arms of the Trump administration as well as by some of the president's political rivals. □

Kennedy Center drops Trump name from website

Washington, United States

The Kennedy Center on Monday dropped U.S. President Donald Trump's name from the website of the performing arts venue. The building in the nation's capital that houses the Kennedy Center continues, however, to display Trump's name on its facade for the time being.

A federal judge ruled last month that the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts had been illegally renamed after Trump and that his name must be taken down.

A furious Trump reacted by saying he was giving up control of the venue, which he seized at the start of his second term last year by naming himself chair-

man. In December, the center's governing board, which Trump stacked with his allies, voted to rename itself the "Trump Kennedy Center" and the Republican president's name was added to the facade in

large letters above that of Kennedy.

The center's website had also featured Trump's name alongside that of Kennedy but that was no longer the case on Monday.

Judge Christopher Cooper,

in his May 29 ruling, said only Congress has the right to change the center's name and gave the administration 14 days to remove Trump's name from the facade and any materials linked to the venue.

Cooper also issued a temporary block on Trump's demand to close the Kennedy Center for two years of renovations, which was due to start in July.

Trump lashed out at the judge and said he was washing his hands of the "dying" venue.

"Unless I am free to do what I do better than anyone else, bring this Institution back, physically, financially, and artistically,

I have no interest in continuing what could only be a hopeless journey into 'NEVER NEVER LAND,'" he said on Truth Social.

Since returning to the White House, Trump has taken repeated measures to put his name and image in official spaces -- an abrupt break with US political tradition.

The disbanded US Institute of Peace has been renamed after Trump and his face stares down from huge banners outside the Department of Justice and Department of Agriculture. The Trump administration is also seeking to have his image on a \$250 bill to celebrate the country's 250th anniversary of the declaration of independence from Britain. □



Merchandise in the gift shop of the Donald J. Trump and John F. Kennedy Memorial Center for the Performing Arts on June 5, 2026 in Washington, DC.

Sky-high ticket costs can't cool the cauldron of Madison Square Garden

New York, United States

Soaring ticket prices and extra security for US President Donald Trump do not alter the electric energy of fabled Madison Square Garden as it hosts games three and four of the NBA Finals.

The New York Knicks, chasing their first basketball championship since 1973, take a 2-0 lead over the San Antonio Spurs into Monday's game three of the best-of-seven series, with game four to follow on Wednesday. Ticket prices have skyrocketed out of the reach of most New Yorkers, but the self-proclaimed "World's Most Famous Arena" will still be packed to the rafters, with celebrities at courtside and Trump attending at least for game three.

The shiny trappings are just part of the allure of the 58-year-old venue.

But on Sunday evening, five people were wounded in a stabbing at Penn Station, located directly underneath the arena -- a reminder of the security concerns that also lurk ahead of major

events in New York.

The Garden is one of America's most storied venues -- where the yellow-tinged lighting and vintage photos of Muhammad Ali and the Rolling Stones displayed on the concourses nod to its place in sports and entertainment lore.

"There's nothing like seeing a basketball game at Madison Square Garden," said John Guercio, a 60-something accountant and self-proclaimed lifelong fan of the Knicks.

NBA Hall of Famer Bill Bradley, who won titles with the Knicks in 1970 and 1973, says New York fans are the key to MSG's enduring spirit. "It's a very loud audience, enthusiastic audience, critical audience, knowledgeable audience," Bradley said. "And when they get into the game they can carry the team."

But, as Bradley knows all too well, the fans can turn against one of their own -- or even against the entire roster.

Thrust into a position that

was not his, Bradley had to endure the jeers of frenzied aficionados at the start of his professional career, along with spitting and tossed coins.

He was embraced, he recalled, "as soon as we started winning."

- 'Still awesome' -

"The fans are just brutal here," said Guercio, who remembers a 2000s rough patch marked by six straight seasons without a playoff berth and the "dirt chanting" directed at coach Isiah Thomas.

"You come here, you've got to have tough skin," Guercio said.

"That's why players like playing here, because if you can win here, you can win anywhere."

Today's Knicks have won the hearts of fans with a gritty style that saw them reach the Eastern Conference finals last season and build a 13-game winning streak in the current playoffs.

"They're likable, they're easy to love, they're easy to root for," said superfan Anthony



New York Knicks fans gather outside Madison Square Garden ahead of the NBA Finals game 3 between the New York Knicks and the San Antonio Spurs in New York on June 8, 2026.

Donahue.

Unlike some of the past Knicks heroes, from Walt Frazier to Charles Oakley to Latrell Sprewell, these Knicks do not boast larger-than-life personalities.

But "they play hard, they never give up," said Donahue.

"I don't think they're out partying. They're not being stupid. They're themselves," he added. "And New York has wrapped our arms around them."

Donahue does not believe that the eye-watering ticket prices have eroded MSG's DNA.

Although it's now hard to find a ticket for less than

\$7,000 on the resale market for Monday's showdown, he noted that prices are much lower for season ticket holders.

"I've been at every playoff game this year," Donahue said. "The Garden, the crowd's still awesome."

Rich Swann, who has been attending games for more than 30 years, draws a distinction between the regular-season and post-season vibe.

"During the regular season, you've got people who just come into games, it's a thing to do. Tourists come in," Swann said.

"Playoff atmosphere has been different. Playoff atmosphere is real." □

From shelter to service: The 'rescue ranks' program changing lives

ASHEVILLE, NORTH CAROLINA — In a sun-drenched training yard on the outskirts of Asheville, a formerly "unadoptable" German Shepherd mix named Buster is proving that everyone deserves a second chance. Just six months ago, Buster was days away from being euthanized at a high-kill shelter. Today, he is the newest graduate of the "Rescue Ranks" program, a unique initiative that pairs shelter dogs with military veterans suffering from PTSD.

The program, founded by former Army Sergeant Leo Miller, is built on a simple philosophy: "Two souls, both feeling a bit lost, finding their way back together." Miller, who struggled with his own transition to civilian life, realized that the discipline of dog training provided the structure he was missing, while the unconditional loyalty of a dog pro-



vided the emotional safety he needed.

"The beauty of Rescue Ranks is that it's a dual-rescue," Miller explains, watching Buster execute a perfect 'stay' command for his new handler, a veteran named Elias. "We're saving these dogs from the brink, and in return, they're providing a sense of purpose

and security to men and women who have given everything for this country."

The training process is rigorous, lasting twelve weeks. Veterans and their dogs work together daily, learning not just basic commands, but specialized tasks designed to mitigate the symptoms of PTSD.

Dogs are trained to create physical "buffer zones" in crowded places, wake their handlers from nightmares, and provide deep-pressure therapy during panic attacks.

For Elias, who spent years struggling to leave his house,

Buster has been a literal lifesaver. "Before Buster, I felt

like a ghost in my own life," Elias says, his voice thick with emotion. "Now, I have to get up. I have to go for walks. I have to be present because he's counting on me. He doesn't see a broken soldier; he just sees his best friend."

The program is entirely funded by community donations and local grants, ensuring that veterans receive the dogs and the training at no cost. Local businesses have stepped up too, with a nearby pet food company providing a lifetime supply of kibble for every graduate.

As the sun sets over the Blue Ridge Mountains, Miller watches the newest class of recruits. "People always ask who's rescuing who," he says with a smile. "At the end of the day, it doesn't matter. What matters is that neither of them is alone anymore." □

Turkmenistan's 'heavenly' horses at the heart of fervent state cult

Ashgabat, Turkmenistan

Trainers clad in ornate uniforms and traditional white fur headgear led golden-bedecked stallions round a stage arena at an annual horse beauty pageant in the ultra-closed Central Asian state of Turkmenistan. The ancient and endangered Akhal-Teke is the subject of a fervent state cult in the desert nation, built up by horse-loving Gurbanguly Berdymukhamedov, ex-president and official father of the nation.

AFP was given rare access to the competition, held at an equestrian complex in the capital Ashgabat and presided over by strongman president Serdar Berdymukhamedov, Gurbanguly's son.

Crowds of men in matching tracksuits clapped in unison and waved national flags as sand-coloured stallion Hankerven, adorned with jewellery and a traditional carpet, clinched the top prize.

"There are no beauty contests for women in Turkmenistan but there are for horses," said Ashir, a 70-year-old breeder.

"We Turkmen are known for



Turkmenistan's President Serdar Berdymukhamedov holds two Akhal-Teke stallions during an Akhal-Teke breed beauty contest in the Turkmen capital of Ashgabat on April 25, 2026.

our carpets and horses," he told AFP at his stud farm not far from the capital.

"That is why our flag features carpet motifs and our coat of arms depicts the Akhal-Teke."

- Foal rap -

The Turkmen authorities discourage residents from speaking without permission to foreign media, with outside journalists rarely al-

lowed into the reclusive country.

Human rights monitors rank the energy-rich former Soviet republic among the world's most isolated and closed states, alongside Afghanistan and North Korea.

Turkmenistan's ruling duo Gurbanguly and Serdar Berdymukhamedov hold a tight grasp on power.

Criticism and opposition of

their dynasty are outlawed and the state apparatus has crafted intense personality cults around them.

Horse-obsessed Gurbanguly has churned out numerous books about Akhal-Tekes and even penned a rap song in honour of one of his foals.

"You are like the wind at daybreak, you are like a cherished vision," he sings in a direct address to the

horse, named Rovach.

"You are an inspiration... more precious than gold." Another of his horses was named in the Guinness Book of Records for the fastest 10-metre dash while on hind legs a sprightly 4.19 seconds.

State-controlled media hail the horses as a "strategic priority" and "the unshakable foundation of national identity".

The country's official motto for 2026 is "Independent neutral Turkmenistan is the homeland of purposeful winged horses".

They are widely referred to as "heavenly horses" -- a moniker based on a legend about an Akhal-Teke horse beating a falcon in a mythical race.

- 'Glistens' -

The vast majority of the estimated 4,000-7,000 Akhal-Tekes worldwide are in Turkmenistan's state-run stud farms.

An official at the State Organisation for Turkmen Horses told AFP the breed was "on the brink of extinction", hailing the "interest" that has been shown from the country's leaders. □

Chile's once-dirty Mapocho river enjoys new lease on life

Santiago, Chile

Some 1,000 people jogged along the banks of the Mapocho River in Santiago one Sunday afternoon, an activity that would have been unthinkable a few years ago due to its heavily polluted waters.

For decades, 97 percent of Santiago's waste ended up in the 110-kilometer river flowing through the city, which almost resembled an open-air sewer as its stench forced passersby to hold their noses.

Now, the Chilean capital's almost 10 million residents are breathing a sigh of relief after a novel sanitation process has transformed the once-dirty waterway.

"It's a source of pride to bring back something that had been all but lost, but is now in perfect condition," Eulogio Cancino, 58, breathlessly told AFP at the

finish line of a 10-kilometer (six-mile) race organized to celebrate the river's reinvigoration.

Twenty kilometers upstream, at the river's source in the locality of La Ermita, agronomist Joaquin Moure of the Mapocho Vivo Foundation celebrates the nutrient-rich body of water, whose 12-year cleanup project concluded in 2010.

"It contributes to diversity and is a refuge for nature and for human beings," Moure told AFP.

- Zero-waste -

The public-private decontamination project, which the United Nations honored during COP24 in 2018, involved the construction of a 28-kilometer tunnel that channels wastewater to treatment plants.

The treated water is re-

turned to the riverbed and used to irrigate crops, thereby eliminating the risk of typhoid or hepatitis -- diseases that were common when irrigation relied on wastewater.

"We use all the waste to produce gas (and) power the plant, and the sludge is turned into fertilizer for agriculture," said Cristian Schwerter, director of planning and engineering at the water supply company Aguas Andinas, which is part of France's Veolia group.

- New lease on life -

The Mapocho is also enjoying a new lease on life in the form of around 80 endemic, native and exotic species that are proliferating in and around the river. One thriving creature is an endemic catfish species, measuring just a few cen-

timeters, and which only survives in clean water.

Its return indicates that "everything that supports life is in good condition," according to biologist Natalia Sandoval of the Center for Applied Ecology.

The Mapocho is "safe for him," said Moure, cradling the minuscule fish in his hand.

Although it was declared an "urban wetland" in

January a title recognizing its environmental value and need for protection rubbish remains discarded along stretches of its banks.

The river runs through 16 municipalities, and "fragmented territorial administration" makes protection more complicated, warned Margarita Jans, an architect at Diego Portales University. □



Runners rest by the Mapocho River after taking part in a race along its banks in Santiago on May 17, 2026.

Picturesque Malta set to 'implode' as concrete jungle devours all

Valletta, Malta

Farmer Annalisa Schembri is battling to save a wheat field from developers in Malta, where a construction boom is engulfing lands and villages, with even historic UNESCO sites in jeopardy.

"Sometimes I wake in the night and think, 'My God, what if the diggers have come?'" Schembri, 42, told AFP after months of campaigning to prevent a road being laid across the plot. The tiny Mediterranean island is the most densely populated country in Europe, and approvals for new buildings are soaring despite scandals dogging the development sector. Malta sparked outrage last month over its decision to demolish a 19th-century British barracks to build a five-star hotel and housing complex, and experts warn the prehistoric Santa Verna Temple is also under threat from encroaching, pool-side luxury units.

UNESCO issued a warning last year over the capital Valletta's World Heritage site status. But activist Andre Callus told AFP the "eating up of agricultural and green spaces" was an even bigger threat to the import-heavy country, which is



This photograph taken on May 29, 2026 shows a view of the Silema district from la Valletta in Malta.

on the front line of climate change and has few natural resources. Malta's thriving economy, skyrocketing population and vast numbers of tourists around four million in 2025 are causing "massive development pressures on the land", said Callus, a member of rights campaign group Moviment Graffiti. The country's population has grown nearly 30 percent over a decade. People "suffocating" in over-developed towns are now escaping to the countryside and building there too, Callus said.

- 'Major threat' -

Schembri's farming roots go back three generations, but her family donated the land decades ago to the Catholic Church, which in the 1990s gave it to the government to administer. Because the field in the southern part of Malta used to belong to them, the family paid a token rent. "The feeling was that farming is top priority for the country, we need it for food, for security, so the government protected us," she said. But a 2006 change in the

law meant plots across Malta could be built on. And as most farmers in Malta do not own the land they work, they cannot protect the fields, making the development push a "major threat to farming", Callus said.

With a nearby site earmarked for housing, developers won permission to tarmac over the field Schembri farms. She launched a fierce media campaign and eventually the government promised the road would not be built though planning per-

mission for it still stands. It is not just "fertile, pristine agricultural land" that developers are destroying, said Schembri, who also grows tomatoes, marrows and melons. Over-construction affects water as well, a massive issue in the island country, where rainfall is the only source of natural freshwater. "It doesn't rain in Malta anymore. There is water scarcity, but we destroyed wells, we destroyed underwater tables," Schembri said. "Water is the main source of food, and we're losing all of that," she said.

- 'Loophole' -

Located off the coast of Sicily, Malta has suffered record draughts in recent years, and is highly vulnerable to desertification, which is aggravated by intensive urbanization. "This stratospheric level of growth has an impact on everything; on land, on the sea, on quality of life, and on inequalities because it creates a lot of wealth for some," Callus said. The Labour party, which won a fresh mandate at a general election last month, has promised to pause contested projects while they are being challenged in court. □

U.K. govt warns big tech over nude images sent by children

London, United Kingdom Tech giants must stop children in Britain from being able to send and receive nude images on their de-

vices, or be forced to do so by law, the government said Monday. Britain's interior ministry said it was giving compa-

nies including Apple and Google three months to introduce safety features to block children from taking and accessing naked photos on phones and tablets. If they do not, the government will introduce legislation to "force them to activate the technology", the Home Office said in a statement. "This is not an impossible challenge," Prime Minister Keir Starmer told delegates at the London Tech Week conference. "These are some of the most innovative companies in the world and I believe they can solve it, but if they choose not to, then we will act and we will change the law, because

when it comes to the safety of our children, standing by is not an option," he added. The Labor government said technology companies had a "moral responsibility" to "protect children from coercion, abuse and sextortion". It said any future legislation would include fines for companies that fail to comply and possibly even criminal liability for tech bosses. A law change would stop children from being able to access pornography, while also making it more difficult for child abusers to target children, it said. The government cited

analysis by the Internet Watch Foundation charity that found 91 percent of online child sexual abuse reports recorded in 2024 contained self-generated content from children themselves. The interior ministry noted that Apple recently rolled out age verification requirements for UK users, making it the first company to activate safety features by default for under-18s. But nudity detection is not applied to the camera, third-party messaging apps such as Snapchat or search functions, meaning children can still take, view, share and save such pictures, it said. □



Britain's Prime Minister Keir Starmer delivers a speech at London Tech Week in London on June 8, 2026, on government plans to use technology to boost growth.

Best spots to view the sunset

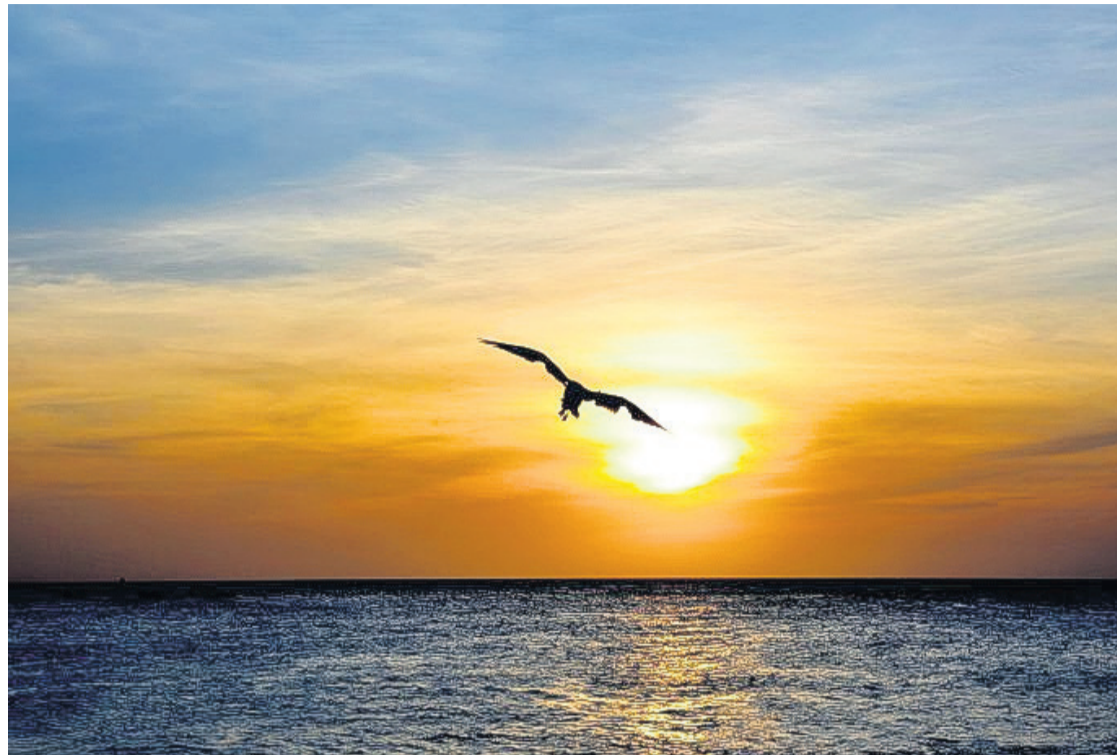
(Oranjestad)—What can be more romantic than surprising your partner with a date watching the sunset? Aruba's sunset leave many speechless, and luckily, the best spots to view the sunset are entirely accessible and easy to find. Here are some of the best places to view the sunset on the island.

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 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 sunset. 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. □

It's Tern season, and ACF is calling for their protection

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

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

The terns breed mainly in the Baby Beach area and along the north coast of Aruba. Baby Beach is a particularly special site for terns, since this is where they carry out their reproduction rituals. Referred to as a "discotheque" by Natasha Silva, the point of



Baby Beach near the open water is where a large group of terns spends the season searching for their partner—for life—to reproduce.

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

Their nests are divided into two specific sites on our island. The first is the reefs near the refinery in San Nicolas. These reefs become home to the terns, where they lay their nests either on the sand or in the small bushes around the reefs. These reefs are

"off-limits" to the public; one of the only areas in Aruba that is completely protected by law.

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

The chicks have a natural behavior to "freeze" in place

when they sense danger. This puts them at risk of being stepped on. For this reason, ACF is making a call to the community and authorities to help protect our historic birds.

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

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

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





Po-Ké Ono Brings Bold Asian Fusion to Aruba's Dining Scene

Innovative eatery blends island culture with modern Asian cuisine



Oranjestad, Aruba – In a culinary landscape known for its diversity and creativity, Po-Ké Ono stands out as a vibrant and contemporary addition to Aruba's restaurant scene. With locations at Azure in Palm Beach and the Renaissance Marketplace in Oranjestad, the concept introduces a refreshing take on Asian fusion dining—casual in style, yet refined in execution.

Established in 2020, Po-Ké Ono was envisioned as a space where flavor, culture, and creativity intersect. The menu features an array of signature dishes including poke bowls, steamed bao, and sushi, crafted with precision and a focus on freshness. Drawing on Asian influences, the restaurant delivers bold flavors in an approachable format, appealing to a broad audience of locals and visitors alike.



The ambiance is designed to be welcoming and relaxed, with a philosophy centered around accessibility and enjoyment. Whether dining indoors or grabbing a quick bowl on the go, guests can expect a consistently high standard in both service and cuisine. With extensive menu options, including selections for vegan diners, Po-Ké Ono caters to a wide range of tastes and dietary preferences.

While the concept leans

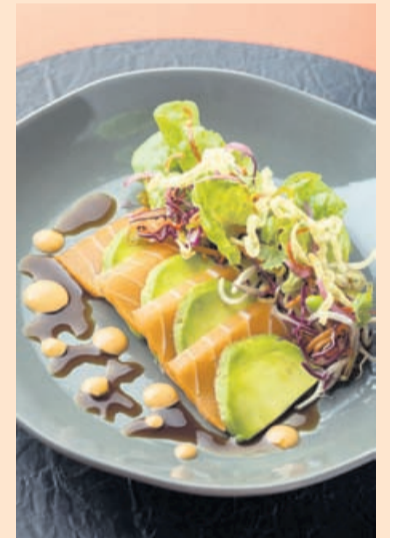


into fast-casual dining, the quality of ingredients and thoughtful preparation reflect fine-dining roots. Many of the restaurant's core ingredients are sourced locally, emphasizing sustainability and support for Aruba's agricultural community. The result is a dining experience that honors both the island's spirit and the culinary traditions it draws inspiration from.

Open daily from 11:00 AM to 10:00 PM, Po-Ké Ono con-

tinues to gain recognition as one of the island's premier destinations for sushi, poke, and bao. Its growing popularity is a testament to Aruba's evolving food culture—one that embraces global influence while staying rooted in community and craft.

For those seeking a modern taste of Asia in the heart of the Caribbean, Po-Ké Ono offers a flavorful and memorable experience worth exploring. □



Fun facts about cacti hedges “Trankera”



(Oranjestad) – When off-roading in inland Aruba, you may notice some cacti hedges around various properties or lined up by certain pathways. These man-made hedges are called “trankera” and play an important role in maintaining our flora and fauna.

The trankera dates to colonialism, where settlers established several 'cunucu' (farm) on the island. People either used stone walls or trankera as a fence to ward off strangers and wild animals that can feed on the cunucu vegetation or cattle.

Nowadays, trankeras are less common, and those that still stand are often not maintained. On the surface this seems like a bad development, however this proved to be beneficial for our flora and fauna. Naturally developed flora around the hedges offers more shelter for fauna. Another aspect is the propagation process. When pruning hedges, flowers and seeds were removed, which limits propagation to a minimum.

So, though trankeras don't play that big of a role in Aruba's agriculture anymore, our environment still reaps the benefits of these long-standing natural structures. □



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Discover the Best of Paseo Herencia



Shopping

Paseo Herencia invites you to shop at an easy island pace in a charming open air setting, where international style meets local creativity. Browse fashion, fragrances, footwear, jewelry, skincare, and souvenirs all in one relaxed stroll. Find well-known brands such as Tommy Hilfiger, Calvin Klein, Aldo, Carmen Steffens, and Psycho Bunny, then stop by Pandora to turn Aruba themed charms into keepsakes you can take home. For something truly one of a kind, explore locally handmade gifts and artwork at The Artist Co-op and Olla Gallery, where island inspired pieces and personalized options add a meaningful touch. Lumiere Candles adds to the local charm with Aruba inspired candles, perfect for bringing a little island warmth back home.

For a special accessory, discover permanent jewelry at Gloria Feliciano, crafted locally for everyday wear. For island wellness, Aruba Aloe offers locally made skincare and gifts created with aloe grown right here on the island. Beauty lovers can visit Maggy's for favorite beauty es-

entials and services for hair, nails, and make-up, perfect for a quick refresh before dinner or a night out.

A World of Flavors

Dining at Paseo Herencia fits every moment of the day, from breakfast to late night bites. Start at Che Bar, serving breakfast from 7:30 AM and continuing throughout the day with comforting favorites, including classic Neapolitan style pizza.

For bold traditional flavors, Xixon Spanish Restaurant is a go to for signature dishes such as paella paired with a wide wine selection. If you are craving something modern, Fusion Cuisine brings a creative twist with its original take on sushi. The Lazy Turtle offers comforting classics and craveable appetizers, while Sexy Shrimp adds a sports bar atmosphere to the mix, pairing standout drinks with a diverse menu that is perfect for gathering with friends and watching any game.

As the evening continues, follow your cravings. Enjoy Mexican favorites at Iguana Can-



tinga, share Dutch specialties at Pomm's Frites, and finish with something sweet at Mythos or Mimo's roll up ice cream. Starbucks is always nearby for a familiar coffee or an easy refresh between stops.

VIP Cinema

Caribbean Cinemas VIP delivers a premium movie experience on the second floor, easily accessible by escalator. Settle into plush reclining seats and enjoy high quality screens, state of the art projection, and immersive sound. A well stocked concessions counter offers classic popcorn, snacks, and drinks including wine, making it ideal for a laid back movie night or a special outing.

Location and Hours

Paseo Herencia is located in Aruba's high rise area, directly across from Holiday Inn. The mall is open Monday through Saturday from 10:00 AM to 10:00 PM, and on Sundays from 5:00 PM to 10:00 PM. For the latest updates and upcoming events, follow our social media pages and visit our website at www.paseoherencia.com. □

Dining in? Try making some local favorites!

How to make "pan bati"

(Oranjestad)—If you're ever up for an Aruban snack, try making another Aruban classic appetizer called Pan Bati. Similar to a pancake both in appearance and cooking, this is a super easy meal that adults and children will both enjoy. Here's how to make it!

Ingredients:

- 2 cups of all purpose flour
- 1 cup grams of fine cornmeal
- 2 tbsp baking powder
- 1 1/3 cup of milk
- 1 pinch of salt
- 2 tbsp of granulated sugar
- Oil for cooking

Instructions:

Add all the dry ingredients in a bowl

first, and stir until well mixed. Then add the milk and beat until reached a pancake-like consistency. If more moister is needed, add some water until reached desired consistency.

In a hot pan with oil, pour in enough batter to cover the bottom of the pan. Just like pancakes, flip the pan bati when one side turns golden brown. When your pan bati is ready, place on a plate and cover with a clean kitchen towel.

Traditionally, pan bati is cut in triangle pieces, and is often eaten as a side dish with soup, fried fish or stews. However, it is also casually enjoyed with some butter and cheese on top! □



Visit the island's popular cave sites!



(Oranjestad)—Among the endless sea of dark brown sand and cacti, there are two caves hidden in the outskirts of San Nicolas, in the north-eastern area of the island. These caves, The Quadiriki cave and The Fontein Cave are open to visitors of the Arikok National Park, so if you ever decide to take an “off-road” tour in the park, be sure to visit these prehistoric caves.

Quadiriki Cave

Known for its two chambers accompanied by a skylight, the Quadiriki Cave is the most popular cave among locals and tourists, as it is easy to walk through and provides great lighting for pictures.

Woman in Quadiriki Cave, Arikok National Park, Aruba
As with all prehistoric or ancient sites, there is always a folk legend that adds to the lore and mystery of the site. The Quadiriki cave is no different. The most well-known legend behind the cave could be considered as Aruba's first love story, as it tells the tale of the undying love between the chief's daughter and her beloved. As legend would have it, the chief disapproved of his daughter's choice of lover, as he thought him unworthy. Stubborn and filled with anger, the daughter refused to turn away her beloved.

So, the chief decided to lock her up in the Quadiriki Cave, in hopes that she would soon calm down and turn away her lover. Her beloved, in turn, was locked away in the Tunnel of Love (Now known as the Huliba Cave).

Through the pathways underneath the Tunnel of Love running up to the Quadiriki cave, the two love birds found each other,

and refused to let each other go. Because of their stubbornness, they both died in the Quadiriki Cave, their ascending spirits burning two holes in the ceiling of the cave. This is why the cave has two holes through which sunlight passes through to illuminate the chamber.

Though there have been discoveries of Amerindian drawing on the wall, these have mostly been ruined by vandalism. However, the Fontein Cave further up north, provides a better glimpse in prehistoric Amerindian paintings.

Fontein Cave

Longer than the Quadiriki Cave, the Fontein Cave contains pathways that stretch to the limestone walls further down. Here is also where prehistoric drawings can be seen. Though this cave does not have its own legend, this was speculated to have been occupied or at least used by prehistoric Arawak settlers on the island for rituals and other spiritual ceremonies.



The Huliba Cave/ Tunnel of Love

The Huliba Cave, formerly known as the Tunnel of Love, was once open to the public, and was the biggest and most accessible of all three caves. This

cave had five chambers, including one that is heart-shaped. This cave had narrow stairs that led to long pathways deep into the cave, with a staircase leading to the exit on the other side. In one of the chambers, there used to be the carving of the Virgin Mary, put there for the protection of the cave.

However, the Huliba Cave has been permanently closed for a few years now, as a way to preserve the bat population that lives in the cave. These Long Tongue Fruit Bats and Insect Eater Bats are very important to the ecosystem of the island. Though this cave is no longer accessible to the public, it surely is interesting to learn more about the history of these caves and the Arawak tribes that resided or utilized them.



Do note that these caves are very dark, humid, hot, and are inhabited by bats. Do wear comfortable clothing and shoes, as the pathways in these caves may be rough and bumpy. Take care to not disturb the bats' habitat. □

Aruba's neighborhoods; the meaning behind their names



Just like any other country, Aruba has unique and beautifully named neighborhoods that all form a part of its culture and development. Many of these names have a historical background and meaning that teaches us about the island and its rich culture every day.

With this series, we want to take you on a journey of discovery, where you'll learn not only the beautiful names but the history behind it that gives it life and meaning.

Anabui/Tierra Del Sol

This neighborhood can be seen on Van Raders map and Werbata as Anna Boei. Anna Boei is a name of which there isn't much information about its origin.

The best historians were able to deduce is that this name came to be because of a miscommunication between Van Spengler and the natives who were living on the island. In the Arawak/Taino language one can find the word Anaiboa, which consists of

Ana meaning flower or the best and Iboa; the juice of a cassava, which together would mean "the best juice of a cassava".

If one assumes that the actual word heard was Ana-boio instead, consisting of Ana meaning the best and Boio (bohio); house, the iteration of Anabui would mean "the best house." This is the origin that has been more or less speculated and assumed for the word Anabui and its meaning.

During the Second World War and later, this area was used as a terrain for training of shooting by militia and later on Korps Mariniers (the marines of Aruba). By the end of the previous century a large part of Anabui was developed to have luxurious villas and a golf course, which lead to it getting the name Tierra Del Sol, Spanish for Land of the Sun. The name is not an official name, but the name of the development project that



took place. It is hoped that the original and 'old' name of Anabui is never lost and now it will be remembered by both locals and tourists.

Angochi

This name can be seen on the Werbata map with little and cursive letters. It is the unofficial name for the area given by a tenant to the land that was rented to him.

The biggest probability that historians believe is that it comes from native descent, during the time in

the 19th century where Mestizos still lived on Aruba. The name can't really be explain and according to books on its history seems to be more of a sign of corruption.

However, it seems to come from combining A(n), which is a generalizing prefix and Goeiza, which means 'the spirit of a living man'. Angochi remains more of a guess. □

This neighborhood's abbreviation is; An.

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 however, 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". □

CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

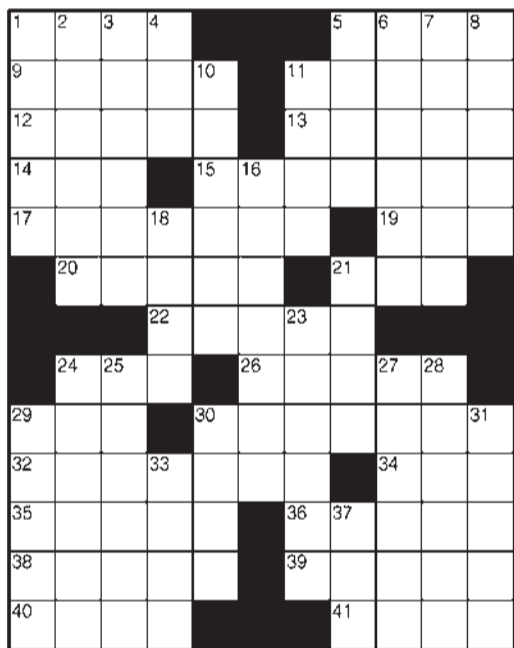


ACROSS

- 39 Like the Capitol masses
- 40 Therefore
- 41 Hardy heroine
- 1 Gum
- 5 Reduced amount
- 9 Homer classic
- 11 Pasta topping
- 12 Black-board material
- 13 Inert gas
- 14 Sewing aid
- 15 Car parts
- 17 Stamp users
- 19 Maiden name label
- 20 Low card
- 21 Sleep spot
- 22 Country division
- 24 Dietary concern
- 26 Coped
- 29 Attach a patch
- 30 Sprees
- 32 Some fast-food chicken
- 34 Guy's friend
- 35 Mexican farewell
- 36 Steer clear of
- 38 Gives for a time

DOWN

- 1 Bits of smoke
- 2 In cahoots
- 3 Wiest of films
- 4 Was inactive
- 5 Cooking fat
- 6 Oregon city
- 7 Got a touch-down
- 8 Good judgment
- 10 Flaw
- 11 Lacking
- 16 Device for book lovers
- 18 Maid's target
- 21 Abacus piece
- 23 Showed fear
- 24 Tributary
- 25 Storefront sight
- 27 Pea or peanut
- 28 Barter
- 29 Hackneyed
- 30 Porgy's love
- 31 Winter gliders
- 33 Ninny
- 37 Auction unit



2-8

A X Y D L B A A X R
is L O N G F E L L O W

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.

2-8 CRYPTOQUOTE

B U S A T U A D X ' R E Z N A R P A
Q U O B T J U ' O U C X T . B U S A H D
Q P Z R E Z N A D R P A O H T A
Q U O R P Q P H B A . — W O Z X N B H X G .
I U X A D

Cryptoquote: IF YOU LIVE TO BE A HUNDRED, I WANT TO LIVE TO BE A HUNDRED MINUS ONE DAY SO I NEVER HAVE TO LIVE WITHOUT YOU. — A.A. MILNE

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.

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 occur, so keep yourself and your belongings safe.

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

JUNE CRUISE SHIP SCHEDULE

02 TUE	GRANDEUR OF THE SEAS Arrival: 8:00 Departure: 23:00 Berth: B
	CARNIVAL MAGIC Arrival: 9:00 Departure: 22:00 Berth: C
09 TUE	CARNIVAL HORIZON Arrival: 8:00 Departure: 22:00 Berth: B
	GRANDEUR OF THE SEAS Arrival: 8:00 Departure: 23:00 Berth: C
	CARNIVAL MARDI GRAS Arrival: 13:00 Departure: 23:00 Berth: I
16 TUE	ADVENTURE OF THE SEAS Arrival: 8:00 Departure: 23:00 Berth: B
	GRANDEUR OF THE SEAS Arrival: 8:00 Departure: 23:00 Berth: C
	SEVEN SEAS MARINER Arrival: 10:00 Departure: 21:00 Berth: I
17 WED	CARNIVAL VISTA Arrival: 7:00 Departure: 16:00 Berth: C
	ALLURE OF THE SEAS Arrival: 8:00 Departure: 23:00 Berth: I
23 THU	CARNIVAL HORIZON Arrival: 8:00 Departure: 22:00 Berth: B
	GRANDEUR OF THE SEAS Arrival: 8:00 Departure: 23:00 Berth: C
30 TUE	GRANDEUR OF THE SEAS Arrival: 8:00 Departure: 23:00 Berth: B
	CARNIVAL MAGIC Arrival: 9:00 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

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

Difficulty: ★★

6/9

Answer to previous puzzle

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

Difficulty: ★

6/8

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Apple tries again on AI, turns to Google for help

San Francisco, United States

Apple unveiled an artificial intelligence overhaul for the iPhone on Monday, turning to Google for help two years after the company stumbled on a first attempt.

The presentation marked Apple CEO Tim Cook's final appearance at the company's annual developers conference. Cook will cede the reins to longtime executive John Ternus in September.

Cook two years ago announced at the same conference that Apple was making a major leap to embrace AI, in a program called Apple Intelligence, as the company faced pressure to join the AI race that had engulfed its US tech giant rivals.

But its promised rollout never occurred fully, with a much-anticipated upgrade to the Siri voice assistant failing to materialize despite the announcements, drawing a lawsuit from some US customers that the company settled earlier this year.

Apple's more deliberate pace in entering the AI frenzy has won praise from some analysts, who credit the company for staying out of the hundreds of billions of dollars in infrastructure spending committed by rivals to build out AI capacity.

The company underlined this narrative at the event, saying it was taking its time to get the technology right. "AI is incredibly powerful technology with the potential to shape society in profound ways, and with proper care, unlock meaningful benefits for people everywhere," Apple's software chief Craig Federighi said in a launch video.

"Still, some appear to be racing forward, seemingly pursuing AI for the sake of AI, without clear regard for the people... that it's ultimately meant to serve."

The company again promised a strengthened Siri dubbed Siri AI with the ability to communicate naturally and track information across apps like Maps and



This illustration photo created in Los Angeles, California, on December 5, 2023, shows Rockstar Games' Grand Theft Auto 6 trailer played on computer screens.

Mail and carry out tasks. Many of the advances Apple announced on Monday have already been rolled out to individual users by Google, with AI-powered features added to Gmail, Maps and its Android operating system for smartphones and tablets. "Apple is making an enormous bet on AI but their bet is that they don't need to spend hundreds of billions per year on AI infrastructure...to reap the benefits," said John Gruber, a closely followed blogger tracking Apple.

Instead of building models in-house, Apple hired Google to provide the AI

capabilities for its new capabilities, using a version of the search engine giant's Gemini model rather than any technology developed internally. Google and Apple are already closely tied, with Google paying out tens of billions of dollars every year to be the default search engine on the iPhone's Safari web browser. Apple also touted its parental controls as tech companies face increasing pressure worldwide on child safety and screen addiction. These included beefed-up time allowance tools for children, with special attention to social media

and games. Despite the company's lack of a competitive AI offering, Apple shares have largely defied gravity over the past two years, and the stock is up about 15 percent this year. □

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HEALTH

DOCTOR ON DUTY

Oranjestad Hospital 7:00 pm/10:00pm Tel. 527 4000	San Nicolas IMSAN 24 HOURS Tel. 524 8833
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PHARMACY ON DUTY

Oranjestad: Oduber
Tel. 582 1780

San Nicolas: Seroe Preto
Tel. 584 4833

OTHER

Dental Clinic	587 9850
Blood Bank Aruba	587 0002
Urgent Care	586 0448
Walk-In Doctor's Clinic	588 0539

EMERGENCY

Police	100
Police Oranjestad	527 3140
Police Noord	527 3200
Police Sta. Cruz	527 2900
Police San Nicolas	584 5000
Police Tipline	11141
Ambulance	911
Fire Dept.	115
Red Cross	582 2219

TAXI SERVICES

Taxi Tas	587 5900
Prof. Taxi	588 0035
Taxi D.T.S.	587 2300
Taxi Serv. Aruba	583 3232
A1 Taxi Serv.	280 2828

AID FOUNDATIONS

Aruba Food Bank	Tel. 588 0002
FAVI- Visually Impaired	Tel. 582 5051
Alcoholics Anonymous	Tel. 736 2952
Narcotics Anonymous	Tel. 583 8989
Against Domestic Violence(FCVR)	Tel. 583 5400
Centre for Diabetes	Tel. 524 8888
Child Abuse Prevention	Tel. 582 4433
Quota Club	Tel. 525 2672

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ARUBA TODAY NEWS

U.N. warns of 'deepening crisis' in oceans, urges action

Paris, France

Oceans are in a "deepening crisis" that demands urgent global action, a major UN report warned Monday, with seas warming and rising faster, ice cover shrinking and marine ecosystems under mounting strain.

The culmination of five years of work by 600 international scientists, the 1,352-page tome details the growing toll of climate change, pollution and overfishing in our oceans, which cover more than 70 percent of the planet.

"The ocean is the foundation of life on Earth. But its health is at grave risk as ecosystems and habitats approach or surpass critical tipping points," the United Nations' third World Ocean Assessment (WOA) said.

Oceans play a critical role for the planet, regulating the climate and feeding billions of people.

But the WOA warned of "a deepening crisis, as climate change, pollution, overfishing and biodiversity loss put ocean systems under severe strain".

The findings "demand urgent action, through stronger multilateral cooperation, greater ambition and decisions grounded in the best available science".

The WOA welcomed the entry into force in January of a UN treaty to protect and sustainably use marine life in international waters, saying it "marks a historic milestone for ocean stewardship and multilateral cooperation".

"We cannot keep treating the ocean as limitless," UN



This handout photo taken on March 12, 2025 and released on March 26 by the Minderoo Foundation shows a diver inspecting corals impacted by a bleaching event on the Ningaloo Reef off Australia's west coast.

Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said in a statement.

"We must build a new relationship with the ocean: Grounded in science. Framed by international law. And built on shared responsibility," he said.

- Warming and rising faster -

The report, which mostly covers the period between 2018-2023, paints a stark picture of the state of the oceans.

Around 16 percent of the total increase in ocean heat content recorded since 1955 has occurred since 2018 alone, the assessment found.

The oceans have absorbed more than 90 percent of the excess heat and 30 per-

cent of the CO2 released into the atmosphere by the burning of fossil fuels.

As waters warm, they expand, helping drive sea-level rise alongside meltwater from glaciers and ice sheets.

"The sea level continues to rise at increasing rates," the report said, more than doubling from less than 2.0 millimetres per year before 2015 to 4.3 mm in 2023.

While millimetres might seem small, they "multiply up really quickly", Ian Butler, an Australia-based marine ecologist and joint coordinator of the WOA's group of experts, told AFP.

- Melting ice -

The Arctic Ocean could become ice-free in September by the middle of the century, with the earli-

est such conditions possible in the 2030s under all emissions scenarios, the report said.

"We're seriously looking at an ice-free Arctic Ocean for parts of the year within 10 or 20 years," Butler said. The ice melt in the northern pole is also reshaping geopolitics, opening previously inaccessible shipping routes and heightening competition among major powers including the United States, Russia and China.

In the South Pole, Antarctic sea ice, which had gradually increased between 1979 and 2015, has "rapidly declined" since 2016.

- Marine ecosystems -

Climate change is also reshaping marine life, with some fish species moving

to cooler or deeper waters to survive.

"Some have no future at all because there's nowhere for them to go," Butler said. Coral reefs are among the most threatened ecosystems.

Repeated marine heatwaves and storms "leave little time for recovery and are pushing reefs towards collapse", the report said.

Bleaching events since 2018 have caused widespread coral mortality, with the WOA warning that 90 percent of reefs could disappear if warming tops 1.5C above pre-industrial levels.

- Plastic pollution -

The report called for a reduction in the production of plastics -- an issue at a standstill in international negotiations.

Each year, 52.1 million tonnes of plastic waste spills into the ocean, contributing to an estimated 24.4 trillion microplastic particles. Microplastics are now known to affect more than 4,000 marine species.

- Deep-sea mining -

The report highlighted growing concerns about deep-sea mining and called for a coordinated international response.

While exploration for deep-sea mining is far advanced, no company or nation has started production on a commercial scale.

Critics fear it would smother marine life with waste and the noise of heavy machinery will disrupt oceanic migrations. □

U.S. experienced second-warmest spring on record: NOAA



People enjoy a warm afternoon in the Dumbo neighborhood of Brooklyn on June 04, 2026 in New York City.

Washington, United States

The United States experienced its second-warmest spring on record, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration said Monday, adding that drought remains widespread across the country.

More than half of the 48 contiguous US states -- which excludes Alaska and Hawaii -- experienced a spring among their three warmest in the 132-year record, and the warmest since 2012.

The beginning of the year has also marked the driest since 1988, the US weather agency said.

The island chain Hawaii meanwhile ob-

served the wettest spring in the 36-year record, with more than double the average spring precipitation.

Some other regions also recorded above-average precipitation, but more than half of the contiguous states remained in drought at the beginning of June.

That includes much of the Northwest and parts of the Southwest, northern Rockies and Plains. Forecasters said it is expected to also develop in parts of the Midwest.

The agency's drought outlook expects some improvement across parts of the central and southern Plains, as well as much of the Southwest. □

'I'm in a dream': Tearful Korda wins golf's U.S. Women's Open

Los Angeles, United States
Nelly Korda won the US Women's Open on Sunday, holing a clutch birdie putt at 17 and sealing a one-shot triumph at Riviera Country Club with a heart-stopping short putt at the last.

The world number one edged England's Charley Hull and Mexico's Gaby Lopez for her long-coveted first US Open victory, giving her a fourth major title and her second of the year after she won the Chevron Championship in April.

Korda carded a two-under par 69 for an eight-under total of 276, keeping her nerve as Hull, Lopez and South Korea's Chun In-Gee challenged on the Pacific Palisades course that will host golf at the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics.

After rolling in the nine-foot birdie at the penultimate hole to seize a slender lead, Korda had one more tense moment as her par putt from just inside three feet at 18 circled the cup before dropping in.

"I feel like I'm in a dream. I just can't even explain how much this means to me," a tearful Korda said at the trophy presentation.

Minutes earlier she had



Nelly Korda of The United States poses with the trophy and her caddie Jason McDede after her one shot victory during the final round of the U.S. Women's Open presented by Ally 2026 at Riviera Country Club on June 07, 2026 in Pacific Palisades, California.

covered her face and let out a laugh after watching her final putt make its tortuous way into the cup.

"I mean, your heart rate is going," said Korda, who called it "a nice ice cream swirl to cap off the day".

Korda, 27, has had what she called a "complicated" relationship with her national Open, her three missed cuts her most in any

major.

She agonizingly came up short at Erin Hills last year and was under the gun on Thursday after an opening two-over 73.

Tied for the lead to start the day, she was under fire often on a windy Sunday afternoon.

She finally appeared to be on her way when she broke out of a four-way tie for the

lead with her late birdie, her third of the day but her first since the sixth hole.

- 'Grinding out there' -

"This week was definitely a grind," she said.

"I don't even feel like I had my B game. I was just grinding out there.

"And that's what I guess major championships are all about, right? It doesn't

matter if you have your B or C game, you have to be there mentally.

"I think I just did a really good job of staying patient and making those up and downs and then knowing that when I had that little window I was going to be aggressive."

England's Hull, who had thrust herself into contention with an impressive third-round 65, fired a four-under 67 for a seven-under total of 277 and Lopez signed for a three-under 68. Hull also birdied 17 and rattled in a par-saving nine-foot putt at 18 to keep her bid alive, but she ultimately had to settle for her fifth runner-up finish in a major.

"It's just frustrating," said Hull, who launched her round with an 11-foot eagle at the first and rolled in a 16-foot birdie at the third. She had a one-shot lead on eight-under after birdies at 10 and 11, but bogeyed 12 and 14.

"It's pretty annoying, but I played really well the last day," she said.

Lopez had seized a share of the clubhouse lead with her fourth birdie of the day at 18, but didn't get a chance to test herself in a playoff. □

Dane Charmig beguiles Tour Auvergne-Rhone-Alpes with stage two win

Le Puy-en-Velay, France

Dane Anthon Charmig broke clear on the final climb of the long second stage of the Tour Auvergne-Rhone-Alpes on Monday to claim the biggest win of his career.

The 28-year-old was part of a 10-man breakaway on the hilly 234km stage from Saint-Martin-Le-Vinoux to Le Puy-en-Velay.

But as the breakaway companions attacked each other in the final 50km, Charmig timed his move to perfection, just before the last of five summits, and he soloed to victory.

"It's an incredible feeling for me," said Charmig, adding that he hoped this would help him make his team's Tour de France squad.

"I don't get that many

chances each year, so right now, when I have the chance, it's an incredible feeling."

Frenchman Alex Baudin, who won Sunday's mountainous opening stage, kept the overall leader's yellow jersey as he came home in the peloton just over three minutes back.

Frenchman Henri-Francois Renard-Haquin won a four-man sprint for second 41 seconds behind the winner, with Belgian Vlad van Mechelen taking third. The overall contenders, including French teenage prodigy Paul Seixas, the pre-race favourite, finished safely in the peloton ahead of Tuesday's crucial team time-trial.

The race started to sizzle just before the penultimate climb of the day,

the 4.2km-long Cote des Baraques, with Frenchmen Clement Braz Afonso and Baptiste Veistroffer attacking and going clear 47km from the finish line.

Braz Afonso of Groupama-FDJ United dropped his compatriot but was then joined by Spaniard Raul Garcia Pierna and Van Mechelen of Bahrain Victorious on the ensuing descent.

Charmig was among four riders, including Veistroffer, to rejoin the leading trio before the shorter, steeper final climb of the race, the Cote de Saint-Vidal.

"The second-to-last climb was a bit too long for me, so I tried not to panic when the other guys went away," said Uno-X Mobility's Charmig.

"But we worked together

to get back and then the final climb was perfect for my characteristics."

Charmig crested the Cote de Saint-Vidal with a few

seconds advantage over Braz Afonso and Movistar's Garcia Pierna with 12km to ride. □



Uno-X Mobility's Danish rider Anthon Charmig celebrates as he cycles across the finish line to win the 2nd stage of the Tour Auvergne-Rhone-Alpes cycling race (formerly known as the Criterium du Dauphine), 234,3km between Saint-Martin-Le-Vinoux in the French Alps and Le Puy-en-Velay near the Massif Central, on June 8, 2026.

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U.S. player Serena Williams holds a press conference on the eve of the HSBC WTA tennis Championships at Queen's Club in west London on June 7, 2026.

Child's play fuels Serena's return, but singles comeback far from certain

London, United Kingdom Serena Williams said the chance to play in front of her children was the driving force behind her sensational return to tennis as the American legend played down a potential singles comeback. Four years after appearing to end her glittering career, Williams on Monday announced that she will come out of retirement in the doubles tournament at Queen's Club in west London next week. The 44-year-old's shock return has captured the imagination of the sporting world. Fans lined the practice court to catch a glimpse of Williams at Queen's on Sunday, filming the 23-time Grand Slam champion's every move on their phones, while photographers trained their lenses on the her. For Williams, it is a pair of spectators in particular that fuelled her decision to get back on court. She has two young daughters

with husband Alexis Ohanian and is keen for them to see her play in a competitive environment before finally hanging up her racquet for good. Asked why she opted to come back, Williams told reporters at Queen's on Sunday: "For me right now, there are so many elements, you know. "It's really about the kids seeing me play. Olympia is a little bit older, Adira is very young. It's components like that. "It's also, an athlete is the best thing you can be, in the highest place and having an opportunity to still be able to possibly do that one last time is kind of cool and exciting. And so there is a little bit of that too." Granted a wildcard into the Queen's doubles, Williams and Canadian teenager Victoria Mboko face third seeds Erin Routliffe and Nicole Melichar-Martinez in the first round next week. After competing at

Queen's, Williams will take part in the doubles at the Berlin Open from June 15-21. In her first press conference since announcing her return, Williams played down suggestions that she would extend her return to singles competition. But, with Wimbledon looming later in June, she did not completely rule out the possibility of featuring at a tournament she has won seven times. **- 'Nothing to lose' -** "For singles, I can't say yeah and I can't say no. Right now, no. I feel like I probably need to train a little bit more if I want to play singles," she said. "We will see if I get there and if not it is not my journey right now." Williams's return comes 31 years after her first professional match. How did one of the most iconic figures in tennis history decide the lure of the court was still too strong to resist. □



Tatjana Maria of Germany celebrates a game in a match against Sorana Cirstea of Romania during Day 1 of the BNP Paribas Open at Indian Wells Tennis Garden on March 04, 2026 in Indian Wells, California.

Wildcard snub surprises Queen's champion Maria

London, United Kingdom

Queen's champion Tatjana Maria said on Monday she thought she would get a wildcard after having to come through two qualifying matches to begin the defence of her title. The German mother of two became the oldest winner of a WTA 500 title at the age of 37 when she defeated Amanda Anisimova in last year's final as women's tennis returned to London club Queen's for the first time since 1973. Nevertheless, Maria missed out on a wildcard for the grass-court tournament, a warm-up event for Wimbledon, after all four went to British players but she has made it through to the main draw. "I think with all the respect of what I did last year, I was pretty sure to get a wild card or I was hoping to get a wildcard," Maria told reporters having beaten Briton Lily Miyazaki and Uzbek Kamilla Rakhimova to reach the first round. "It was not, like, five years ago, it was last year and especially this tournament and to come back like a champion, I hoped and I thought I would get a wildcard. "I was surprised when I got the message from (tournament director) Laura Robson saying all the wild cards would go to the British players, which I understand of course but you know as a champion, it's tough for me (to accept)." Maria added her two daughters were a particular inspiration before she plays Greek player Maria Sakkari in the opening round on Tuesday. "Yesterday I wanted to win also for my girls to stay as long as possible because they really love to be here and they love the tournament," she said. "A lot of members here (Queen's) came to me and said, 'really we don't understand why you didn't get the wildcard', so it was super nice," she added. □