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# Americans impacted by climate change demand answers from lawmakers

## Washington, United States

Some vote Republican, others Democrat. They are retirees, barely adults, or accompanied by young children.

And all are scarred by natural disasters that are becoming all too frequent as the world heats up.

Dozens of Americans hailing from across the country including states like Hawaii, Louisiana and Vermont descended on Washington this week as part of the organization "Extreme Weather Survivors," a group noteworthy not least for its diverse makeup.

Among them is Gayle Nicholls-Ali, who lost her home more than a year ago in the fires that devastated Los Angeles.

But she and her husband Rasheed remain mired in red tape, unable to begin rebuilding.

"It's just been one disappointment after another," the 69-year-old told AFP, having ventured with some 70 others to the nation's capitol to meet with congressional representatives. "We thought they would protect us," she said. "Not at all."

The group gathered in Washington to meet with



Climate survivors pose in front of the "Summers Stolen" exhibit, organized by the Extreme Weather Survivors organization in Washington, DC, on June 24, 2026.

lawmakers and express concern over the government's lack of preparations against the immediate and future threats of climate change.

Kylie Nidever, 36, saw her neighborhood ravaged by catastrophic floods in central Texas that killed 135 people, including many children.

"You wouldn't necessarily think that a flood survivor and a fire survivor have things in common," she told AFP.

"But we absolutely do."

### - Feeling of abandonment -

The group's discussions see the same patterns keep cropping up.

People share accounts of overwhelmed emergency services, and a feeling that public authorities have abandoned them.

They speak of a lack of aid, which often means reconstruction in the wake of disasters proves impossible. And there is simmering anger.

"How do you respond to people who say, 'This is just the weather?'" asked a participant during one such discussion.

"I just want to slap their face."

And a fire survivor sitting nearby, his voice raspy, says he finds it all "terrifying" because "every story is the same."

There is a persistent fear among members of the group that these scenarios will play out again and again.

They agree that climate change is making these weather extremes more frequent and more intense. About a decade ago such events causing more than \$1 billion in damages happened approximately once every 2.7 months in the US, according to the organization Climate Central.

Now they're happening about every two weeks.

"If recovery takes years and these events happen more and more and more... what does that mean for our country?" asked Sierra Lindsey Kos, the co-founder of Extreme Weather Survivors.

### - 'We can be resilient' -

The situation is all the more concerning given that the US president, Donald Trump, is an avowed skeptic of climate change.

Since returning to the White House, he has cut funding for climate research and natural disaster response and prevention.

"We have to continue to do more, because at this point we're all at risk," Jessica Calix, 41, told AFP.

She lost her San Diego home in a flood in January 2024, and ever since has lived with her son in a trailer. □

## Trump to mark U.S. 250th anniversary at Mount Rushmore

### Washington, United States

U.S. President Donald Trump will travel to Mount Rushmore next week for an Independence Day celebration beneath the carved faces of four of his revered predecessors, organizers said Thursday, as the Republican puts his personal stamp on events marking America's 250th anniversary.

Trump is due to headline a July 3 fireworks display at the South Dakota memorial, where the massive, granite likenesses of George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Abraham Lincoln and Theodore Roosevelt loom over the Black Hills.

The event is expected to feature military bands, flyovers, tributes to the armed

forces and a speech by the Republican president on the eve of the July 4 holiday.

It will be the first fireworks display at Mount Rushmore since 2020, when Trump also attended during his



The busts of U.S. presidents George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Theodore Roosevelt and Abraham Lincoln tower over the landscape at Mount Rushmore National Monument on June 12, 2026 in Keystone, South Dakota. U.S. President Donald Trump is scheduled to visit the monument on July 3, as the nation celebrates its 250th anniversary.

first term.

"Together, we will throw the biggest birthday party ever for our nation and celebrate America's legacy of freedom, liberty, and justice for all," said South Dakota Governor Larry Rhoden.

The visit adds another high-profile spectacle to a 250th anniversary program that Trump has increasingly shaped around his own taste for pageantry, patriotism and political theater.

He has already headlined a rally-style kickoff for the Great American State Fair on the National Mall, hosted a mixed martial arts event at the White House and planned a major July 4 celebration in Washington.

The Mount Rushmore appearance carries particular resonance for a president who has long shown fascination with monuments, presidential symbolism and his place in history. A Republican ally introduced legislation last year proposing that Trump's face be added to Mount Rushmore, an idea the president has previously mused would be "a good idea."

His administration has also pursued other efforts to leave his mark on Washington's public spaces and institutions, adding his name to the Kennedy Center's facade and branding, before a judge ruled that the move was illegal.

Mount Rushmore itself remains contested ground. □

## 'Alligator Alcatraz' detention center shuts in US: official

### Ochopee, United States

The controversial "Alligator Alcatraz" immigration detention center -- a costly Florida facility that became a symbol of U.S. President Donald Trump's deportation drive -- has shut down after less than a year in operation, officials said Thursday.

Florida Governor Ron DeSantis, appearing at the remote Everglades site with White House border czar Tom Homan, said the facility no longer held any detainees and had fulfilled the emergency role it was built to serve.

The facility drew fierce criticism from lawyers, families, civil rights groups and human rights advocates, who accused the government of holding detainees in harsh conditions and denying them meaningful due process.

"Alligator Alcatraz fulfilled the role that it was designed to serve," DeSantis said, adding that it had helped remove "many, many dangerous people" from Florida and the United States.

The center was assembled in just eight days in June last year with bunk beds, wire cages and large white tents at an abandoned airfield in



Tents and wired fencing are seen before Florida Governor Ron DeSantis holds a press conference at the South Florida Detention Facility, nicknamed "Alligator Alcatraz," at the Dade-Collier Training and Transition Airport in Ochopee, Florida, on June 25, 2026.

the Everglades, home to a large population of alligators.

Trump, who has vowed to deport millions of undocumented migrants, visited the detention site after its July 2025 opening, boasting about the harsh conditions and joking that the reptilian predators will serve as guards.

DeSantis said in May that

more than 22,000 people had been processed or staged for deportation through the site.

Officials said the last detainees had either been transferred to other centers or deported, after federal and state authorities initially described the removals as a safety measure linked to the start of hurricane season. Vendors hired to operate the site had been told to

begin full demobilization, according to U.S. media reports, bringing down the curtain on an experiment once promoted by Trump and DeSantis as a possible model for other states.

Environmental advocates and the Miccosukee Tribe challenged the project, saying construction at the isolated Dade-Collier Training and Transition Airport had damaged the fragile

Everglades ecosystem and threatened protected species.

The site's cost became another flashpoint.

Estimates put the price tag at more than \$1 billion, and the federal government has approved hundreds of millions of dollars in reimbursement, though Florida has not yet been fully repaid.

### - Legacy -

The future of the land is now emerging as a new fight.

Miami-Dade Mayor Daniella Levine Cava said Thursday her administration would explore transferring county-owned land at the airfield to the National Park Service or other Everglades restoration partners.

She said the property's remote location, limited aviation value and high maintenance costs made it a poor long-term airport asset, while its position beside one of the world's most important wetlands made conservation a better option. "Once this facility is decommissioned, we have an opportunity to permanently protect these lands for Everglades restoration and ensure they remain protected for generations to come. □

## U.S. government pledges \$150 million in aid for Venezuela earthquake

### Washington, United States

The United States said Thursday it was mobilizing \$150 million in aid for Venezuela after two powerful earthquakes killed at least 188 people and left hundreds injured, as rescuers around the world raced to provide help.

The State Department said the package would include \$50 million in new bilateral awards to aid groups already working in Venezuela, as well as a \$100 million contribution to a UN humanitarian fund for the country.

The funding will support organizations including World Vision, Samaritan's Purse, Catholic Relief Services, International Medical Corps, the International Organization for Migration and the

World Food Program, the department said.

Washington is also deploying a Disaster Assistance Response Team and two urban search-and-rescue units from Fairfax County, Virginia, and Los Angeles County, California.

"We have a whole-of-government response. It'll be big, it'll be fast, and it'll be effective," US Secretary of State Marco Rubio said on a visit to Bahrain, telling reporters the American military would play a "big logistical role."

U.S. Southern Command said it was working with the State Department to support the relief operation, with the U.S. military providing airlift, logistics and other capabilities.

The aid push follows back-to-back 7.2 and 7.5 magnitude earthquakes that struck near Venezuela's Caribbean coast on Wednesday, collapsing buildings, damaging the country's main airport and prompting warnings of heavy casualties.

State Department officials said Washington was coordinating with interim Venezuelan authorities, aid partners and the private sector to assess needs and deliver assistance in the crucial first days after the disaster.

The U.S. response comes as ties between Washington and Caracas have warmed in recent months after American forces captured former president

Nicolas Maduro in January and the Trump administration began working with an interim government led by Delcy Rodriguez.

The United States joins a growing international relief effort.

Spain, France, Germany, Switzerland, the Netherlands, Mexico, Brazil, Colombia, Chile, Cuba and others have offered rescuers, medical personnel, aircraft or humanitarian supplies. □



View of a damaged building following a twin earthquake in Los Corales, La Guaira state, about 38 km northwest of Caracas, on June 25, 2026.

## Spice Girls' debut 'Wannabe' turns 30, amid reunion talk

**London, United Kingdom**

The Spice Girls burst onto the music scene with the release of their infectious debut "Wannabe" 30 years ago on Friday, carving a place in pop history championing Girl Power, and leaving their mark on fashion and global culture.

The British group of five young women formed in 1994, and the irrepressibly catchy "Wannabe" was released on June 26, 1996, initially in Asia. It shot swiftly up the charts to number one in Britain, the United States and dozens of other countries.

"They weren't just a throw-away pop band," Dominic Mohan, a former editor of The Sun tabloid who covered the British music scene at the time, told AFP.

"They were very spirited and they had quite strong messages as well, about feminism and about girl power and about being who you are".

And he said of "Wannabe": "It's one of those records, as soon as you hear it you realise that it's going to go down in history."

He has curated an exhibition at the Barbican Centre



**Members of the British pop group the Spice Girls - Posh Spice, Victoria, Scary Spice, Mel B., Ginger Spice, Geri, Baby Spice, Emma and Sporty Spice, Mel C. - pose before presenting their first film "Spice World the Movie" in Madrid on December 18, 1997.**

in London entitled "1996: 30 Years on" running until mid-September, which features the Spice Girls and some of their iconic looks.

Band member Mel B loaned the leopard-skin catsuit she wore to belt out "Wannabe" at the 1997 Brit Awards, where the song won two prizes.

Unlike previous girl groups in matching outfits, each of

the five Spice Girls had their own individual style.

Mel B, short for Melanie Brown, also known as Scary Spice, wore animal prints, Posh Spice Victoria Adams, now Beckham, had a bob and dark dresses and Baby Spice Emma Bunton preferred pastels and bunches.

Mel C, Melanie Chisholm

or Sporty Spice, favoured sports gear and Geri Halliwell, or Ginger Spice due to her red hair, wore a short, short Union Jack dress and boots for the Brits performance.

"Wannabe" with its catchy refrain "I'll tell you what I want, what I really, really want" and its insistence that "friendship never ends" became an anthem

for a generation of young women. It has been played almost 1.5 billion times on Spotify.

The anniversary has revived talk of a possible reunion, although the bandmates have not all performed together since the 2012 London Olympics.

"It's our 30th anniversary, I do think we should be doing something," Brown told the Press Association this month.

"We're all talking about it", but "nothing has been confirmed".

The women are said to have remained close, with four of them joining celebrations for Emma Bunton's 50th birthday earlier this year.

### - 'A punk feel' -

In a sign of their lasting legacy, current stars including Taylor Swift, Dua Lipa, Adele and Charli XCX have cited their music as an influence.

"There's a tendency, I think, for people to look back and think Spice Girls were really bubblegum pop," Joel Gray, a lecturer in media, art and communications at Sheffield Hallam University, told AFP. □

## Olivia Wilde looks at evolving relationships in 'The Invite'

**Los Angeles, United States**

As she directed and starred in the sexy romantic comedy "The Invite," Olivia Wilde took a deep dive into discussions about relationships and how they survive conversations her co-stars joined with open arms. "There was an amazing kind of collective catharsis," Wilde told AFP at the Hollywood premiere of her new film, in which she shares the screen with Seth Rogen, Edward Norton and Penelope Cruz.

"I think we all walked away feeling like we had gained a little bit of knowledge, a little perspective from each other, because everyone had been so vulnerable."

"The Invite," which had its world premiere at the Sundance festival earlier this year and will be released

in select U.S. cities on Friday, tells the story of two couples at different moments in their relationships.

When the frustrated and tired Joe and Angela (Rogen and Wilde) host the charismatic Hawk and Pina (Norton and Cruz) for a dinner party, the night takes some unexpected turns. The film is both funny and dark, and allows view-

ers to ponder their own relationship issues.

"It was a really great and honest examination of how relationships evolve as the people in them evolve," Rogen told AFP.

The 44-year-old actor coming off a banner year of awards for his Hollywood satire "The Studio" said relationships are always box office gold because "it's high stakes, very personal,

very relatable."

### - 'Really relatable' -

The cast said the film works because of its screenplay, written by Rashida Jones and Will McCormack (who also wrote 2012's "Celeste & Jesse Forever").

The movie was inspired by the work of Spanish director Cesc Gay, who wrote the play "The Neighbors from Upstairs," which was made into the Spanish-language film "Sentimental" in 2020.

Jones, also known for acting in "Parks and Recreation," said the film clicks "even though we're talking about very dysfunctional people and dysfunctional relationships" or maybe even because of that fact.

"We tried to layer things into those relationships that

didn't feel only dramatic, but also really relatable to anybody who's been in a long-term relationship, and I think people see themselves in it," she said.

The script attracted Cruz to the project. The Spanish Oscar winner said she could not stop laughing when she first read it.

"I'm always looking for smart comedies, comedies that move you which is a genre that isn't the easiest for sure," she told AFP.

Beyond offering audiences a good laugh, the 42-year-old Wilde -- in her third directorial effort -- wanted to convey some life lessons. For starters, relationships change, just like the people in them, and both parties need to accept those changes if the relationship enters a new phase. □



## Bulgaria's milk farmers falter in former yogurt empire

### Dzhebel, Bulgaria

"When the city starts feeding the countryside, it means the country is done for," farmer Emil Deliev said from southern Bulgaria's mountains where small dairy farms are vanishing one after another. Despite its long tradition, the farming output of Bulgaria -- the European Union's poorest member -- has been falling as production costs are eating into margins.

In shops, Bulgarian fruit and vegetables are gradually being replaced by imported products.

Milk production has taken a particularly hard hit, oddly enough in a country whose reputation is closely tied to yogurt.

"This will be our last year," Deliev said, driving his cows to pasture in the Rhodope mountains.

His farm in a meadow close by the village of Sofiytsi in southern Bulgaria backs onto the wooded slopes of the mountain range associated with the mythological musician Orpheus.

The 59-year-old Deliev raises nearly 100 cows there, but after almost 20 years spent with his animals, he too is thinking of giving up.

He blames the purchase price of milk, which is too low, and subsidies that are too small and mostly benefit large grain producers.



**Bulgarian livestock farmer Emil Deliev, 58, walks through a meadow as his cows graze near the village of Sofiytsi, in Dzhebel municipality, southeastern Bulgaria on June 9, 2026.**

Data from the EU's statistical office, Eurostat, show the number of dairy cows in Bulgaria fell by around 40 percent between 2010 and 2024.

Local data has shown the same goes for production -- in 2024, Bulgaria produced 687.6 million litres of cow's milk, a drop of nearly 20 percent against 856.1 million litres churned out in 2020.

### - 'The last in the village' -

In turn, the Bulgarian Commission for the Protection of Competition (CPC) said that imports of milk and dairy products have risen by 43

percent since 2020.

"The simplest explanation is the decline in the total number of cows and the closure of many small farms," economist Adrian Nikolov of the Institute for Market Economics (IME) told AFP.

Productivity has not been high enough to offset this decline, he said, notably because of rising fodder prices, workforce shortage and higher wage costs.

"The labels say 'Made in Bulgaria', but there is less and less Bulgarian milk in the country," said Deliev.

Deliev has held out until now, with the help of his wife and

his son who has a degree in agronomy, but he no longer sees a future.

"It has become a pain," he said.

Deliev makes several thousand euros a month selling milk, but it is barely enough to cover production costs.

"We're the last in the village. There used to be three farms, now we're the only one left," he said.

### - 'Food sovereignty' -

Deliev added that European Union aid redistributed by local authorities is destined largely for grain farms geared toward exports,

which hurts livestock farmers. There are no available data to show the extent to which yogurt sold as Bulgarian is made with imported milk.

It is however certain that dairy products, a central part of the Bulgarians' diet, have cost 20 to 30 percent more on average than in the rest of the EU for more than a decade, said economist Nikolov.

While the rest of the food basket as a whole remains cheaper than in other EU countries, Bulgaria's entry into the eurozone on January 1 has heightened concerns about purchasing power.

In May, the country posted the eurozone's highest annual inflation rate of 6.3 percent, according to Eurostat's flash estimate.

Prime Minister Rumen Radev, who won April's general election with a pledge to combat inflation, introduced discounts of at least 15 percent on certain basic foodstuffs in early June, in cooperation with major retail chains.

But Milena Dragijska, head of the Lidl Bulgaria supermarket chain, said this solution was only temporary.

She said the country needed "deep structural reforms" to strengthen national agricultural production and achieve some form of "food sovereignty". □

## Swedish minister breaks ground bringing baby to EU talks

### Brussels, Belgium

Sweden's environment minister brought her baby to an EU meeting Thursday, in a barrier-breaking move she said showed it was possible to be both "a present minister and a present mother". Romina Pourmokhtari arrived at the ministerial talks in Luxembourg with her three-month-old son, Adam, in a sling with a pram-pushing aide in tow -- becoming the latest public figure to shake up conventions around motherhood and work.

"Happy also to be an example of not having to choose between being a present minister and a present mother," the 30-year-old told journalists as Adam rested on her chest.

"There are many things that

make Europe a wonderful place to live. One of them being just this, that we can have the possibility of attending meetings and attending to my child."

Her French colleague Monique Barbut promptly gave her a gift -- a baby onesie. An EU official said it was thought to be the first time a baby was brought to one of the bloc's ministerial meetings.

Mothers are particularly affected by the challenge of juggling work and childcare, with studies showing women tend to miss out on promotions, career opportunities and higher earnings after having a child.

Spain's Climate Minister Sara Aagesen welcomed Pour-

mokhtari's decision to bring "little Adam" to the environment talks in a social media post.

"The best illustration of why we are here: working today to leave a better planet for those who will inherit it tomorrow," she posted alongside a photo of mother and child at the meeting.

In a bid to make the lives of female lawmakers easier, the European Parliament recently changed its internal rules to allow new mothers the right to vote by proxy. Pourmokhtari is not the first politician to highlight maternity struggles.

In 2018 former New Zealand leader Jacinda Ardern won accolades for bringing her three-month-old daughter, Neve, to the United Nations



**This image released by the European Union (EU) on June 25, 2026, shows Sweden's Minister for Environment and Climate Romina Pourmokhtari (L) speaking with Deputy Permanent Representative of Portugal at the EU Monica Lisboa as she cares for her child during an EU environment ministerial meeting in Luxembourg.**

General Assembly in the first such appearance by a baby in the organisation's history.

A year earlier Larissa Waters

made Australian political history by becoming the first woman to nurse her newborn baby in the nation's parliament. □

# Greek families receive keepsakes of Holocaust victims

## Athens, Greece

A watch, a wallet, a ring: personal effects taken from Greek prisoners at a German concentration camp were returned to their descendants on Thursday, 81 years after the Holocaust. Kaiti Kerasiotis's eyes filled with tears as she held in her hands the watch of her husband Evangelos after an emotional ceremony at the Greek foreign ministry. He was deported in May 1944, aged just 19, to the Neuengamme concentration camp near Hamburg. Decades later, Greek school pupils taking part in a historical memory campaign found his elderly surviving spouse.

"I can't believe it," she murmured, speaking to reporters, surrounded by her children and grandchildren, as she recalled the evening she was contacted by the pupils.

"I took out the photos I had put away. I went back into the past and I told myself he had not been forgotten after all."

### - 'Participatory remembrance' -

The restitutions in Athens were part of the #StolenMemory campaign launched in 2016 by the Arolsen Archives -- the world's most comprehensive records on victims and survivors of Nazi camps.



Relatives of Dimitris Vafeiadis react as they receive his personal belongings during a ceremony for the return of personal belongings of Greek prisoners from Nazi forced labor camps to their families, held as part of the international StolenMemory campaign, at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Athens on June 25, 2026.

Greek pupils were tasked with tracing the families of prisoners deported between 1943 and 1944, in a project with the Greek foreign and education ministries.

"As camp survivors become ever fewer, new, more participatory forms of remembrance must be developed," said the Arolsen Archives' director, Moritz Wein.

Interest in such personal stories shows no sign of waning, Wein added. Requests from families seeking traces of relatives deported to Nazi camps have surged over

the past two years.

"The role of archives in the age of artificial intelligence and the distortion of history is all the more important."

### - Lost uncle's watch -

Secondary school pupils in Evosmos, near the northern city of Thessaloniki, which once had a large Jewish community, spent months searching municipal archives, police records and Greek Red Cross files to trace Evangelos Kerasiotis's family.

From Neuengamme, Evan-

gelos was transferred to the Salzgitter-Druette labour camp and then to Bergen-Belsen, where British forces recorded his presence after the liberation.

He returned to Greece in August 1945 and joined the police, but died aged just 24 from a heart condition linked to his ordeal in the camps.

Nearly 70,000 people -- 86 percent of Greece's Jewish community -- were killed during the Nazi occupation of Greece from 1940 to 1944. Today the community num-

bers around 5,500.

Panagiota Galani recovered a watch that belonged to her uncle, Georgios Sagmatopoulos, who was deported to Germany at 24. Her mother and grandmother had searched for him for years and only received confirmation of his death in 1962.

"We have always lived with the shadow of this uncle who never came back," she said. "My grandmother would have been very moved to see this watch again."

### - 'Dehumanised' -

To find the descendants of Nikolaos Fassoulotis, a Cypriot living in Greece who was deported in 1944, pupils in Athens sent dozens of emails and made numerous phone calls before locating one of his daughters in Cyprus.

The former deportee, who died in 2000, had rebuilt his life and had six children on the island.

Konstantina received her father's bracelet, engraved with the names of his two children from a first marriage.

"I hope one day to find traces of my father's family," she said, her voice breaking.

Wein handed her a bag filled with documents that belonged to her father: camp registration papers, notes on forced labour and more. □

# Schools in Tokyo suburb to get bear sprays



Bear spray is seen at a store in Hanamaki, Iwate prefecture on October 24, 2025.

## Tokyo, Japan

A Tokyo suburb has announced an emergency spending plan to buy 700 anti-bear sprays for schools and community organisations, the local government

told AFP on Wednesday, as the animals increasingly encroach into built-up areas around Japan.

Japan saw a record 13 people killed by bears last fiscal year, according to

the environment ministry, and five more fatalities and 20 people injured between April 1 and May 30 this year. Hachioji is on the outskirts of the vast Japanese capital region and at weekends draws Tokyoites to its popular hiking trails into the nearby forested mountains.

Eleven sightings or signs of bears have been reported there since April, with a motion-activated camera capturing footage of a black bear around a residence on April 29, broadcaster NHK reported.

The city will spend 15 million yen (\$93,000) on sprays, movable electric fences and devices that make high-pitched sounds, local government spokesman

Ryosuke Sato told AFP.

It is also planning to draft an action plan to call in hunters and take other measures in case bears appear in local neighbourhoods.

"By closely working with police and hunters, we are drafting a manual on how to deal with bears should they come to our streets," Sato added.

In the latest fiscal year ending in March, bear sightings nationwide topped 50,000, more than double the previous record set two years earlier, according to official data.

In recent months there has been a jump in sightings after the bears emerged from hibernation, as well as

incidents of bears entering urban areas.

Earlier this month all schools closed in Utsunomiya, north of Tokyo, after a bear roamed the city and evaded dozens of police officers and hunters for four days before being captured.

Before that another bear described as "extremely intelligent" -- it opened a window and turned on a tap -- attacked four people at two factories in Fukushima and remained at large for days. National and regional governments are trying to clear bushes along riverbanks and areas between neighbourhoods and mountains, including in Hachioji, to prevent bears from coming to urban areas. □

# Planning on visiting Aruba? Make sure you have your ED card!

(Oranjestad)—When traveling to any country, it's important to make sure you have the right documents with you. For Aruba, one document that always seems to confuse people is the ED card. Scammers have taken advantage of the confusion, with dozen of fake and identical website overcharging visitors. To avoid this happening to you, here's a brief guide on how to obtain the ED card the right way: What website to use and how much it actually costs.

The Embarkation/ Disembarkation (ED) card is a pre-registration form required to enter Aruba. The ED Card has been in a requirement for visitors for decades and in 2020 it was digitalized. In 2024, the government of Aruba implemented a sustainability fee for all visitors of the island, which include a \$20 contribution for the

Aruba Online ED Card

The Aruban Government welcomes you and your family to Aruba.

The online Embarkation/ Disembarkation (ED) card is a pre-registration form required to enter Aruba. As per the country's immigration policy, all incoming tourists must fully complete the online ED card application. It's an essential entry requirement that you can complete quickly and easily online. Simply enter your details into the relevant fields, and upon a successful submission you'll receive an affirmation by email. A passenger that claims to be exempted from completion of the ED Card application due to citizenship, must provide basic information to confirm his status. Pursuant to his status he will receive a confirmation by email.

**What you'll need:**

1. A valid passport
2. Personal details
3. Contact information
4. Travel information
5. A valid credit card (Visa, Mastercard or Discover) ⓘ

**What you should note:**

1. The online ED card is not a visa.
2. The successful submission of your online ED card does not guarantee entry into Aruba. On arrival to Aruba, your eligibility for entry will be assessed on its own merits. It is crucial that all information you provide, or on your behalf by a designated third party, must be true and correct, as this is a key factor in your entry assessment.

START

improvement, updating and maintenance of the local waste water plant. First things first, make sure you have the right website. The official website for the ED card is [www.edcardaruba.aw](http://www.edcardaruba.aw). It is important to note that there are NO alternatives for this website; this website is the ONLY

way you can obtain an official ED card. Other website that may look similar are not official and may possibly be a scam. Be careful not to fall for the trap! Next up, make sure you have the right information with you when you apply for an ED card. You should have on hand:

1. A valid passport
  2. Personal details
  3. Contact information
  4. Travel information
  5. A valid credit card (Visa, Mastercard or Discover)
- We mentioned a \$20 contribution mandatory for every visitor. Keep in mind that this is a YEARLY fee; so

if you plan on visiting Aruba more than once this calendar year, you would only have to pay the first time around.

**Other important info**  
We should clarify that the ED card is not a substitute for a visa. Visitors who need a visa for Aruba must apply for both a visa and an online ED card. You can also start applying for the ED card 6 days before your flight.

If you extend your trip, you don't have to reapply for or edit your ED card. However, you must reapply if you missed your flight and/or your flight got canceled and your traveling to the island on another flight.

For more info, visit the official website for ED card of contact the immigration office of Aruba at (+297) 523 7404 or email them at [info@dga.aw](mailto:info@dga.aw)

## 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 repro-



duction 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](mailto:info@acf.aw)

## Weichert® Aruba Realty Celebrates Grand Opening Ceremony, Redefining Aruba's Real Estate Landscape

His Excellency, Minister Geoffrey Wever, US corporate leadership, and local industry partners gather at Palm Beach to launch the island's newest global real estate brokerage.

Weichert® Aruba Realty officially opened its doors last evening in a milestone Grand Opening Ceremony at its newly renovated office in Palm Beach 4Q, unit 115, welcoming approximately 75 guests to witness a defining moment for the island's real estate landscape. The celebration brought together a government minister, the President and Vice President of Weichert® Real Estate Affiliates, Inc. (who flew in from the United States), along with brokers, notaries, lawyers, developers, and community members united by a shared belief: that Aruba deserves a better way to experience real estate.

### A NIGHT FOR ARUBA

The evening began at 5:30 p.m. with a warm reception before the formal program opened with remarks by Jennefer Dirks, General Manager of Weichert® Aruba Realty. Her address set a tone of gratitude and conviction, drawing a clear line between the corporate milestone and the deeper mission behind it. Miss Dirks spoke of an office that is far more than a space with desks and technology; behind those doors, she said, lies an ecosystem of growth and transformation, dedicated to developing the next generation of Aruban real estate professionals and equipping them with worldclass tools.

*"Tonight, we don't just open the doors to a building. We open doors to endless possibilities. A venture of this magnitude is never built alone, and neither is the future we are building for Aruba's real estate"*  
— Jennefer Dirks, General Manager, Weichert® Aruba Realty



### MORE THAN TRANSACTIONS

Victor Acosta, Managing Director and Broker of Weichert® Aruba Realty, followed with remarks focused on execution and market commitment. Acknowledging the months of strategic preparation that preceded the launch, Acosta addressed the room with a clear declaration: "We are not just opening an office tonight. We are setting a new benchmark for what clients can expect when they buy, sell, or invest in Aruba." Bill Scavone, President of Weichert® Real Estate Affiliates, Inc., closed the formal speeches by reflecting on the core culture established by founder Jim Weichert: a system grounded in genuine care and personalized attention, rather than mere transactional volume.

*"We have 15,000 associates and we are a full-service company. We believe in full service—that's the transformational part of this. It is not about transactions. We believe in customers for life, through constant follow-up and personalized attention."*  
— Bill Scavone, President, Weichert® Real Estate Affiliates, Inc.

### THE RIBBON CUTTING

At 7:15 p.m., the ceremony reached its symbolic peak. Agustino Onorato, representing PalmAruba Group, joined His Excellency Mr. Geoffrey Wever, Minister of Finance, Economic Affairs, and Primary Sector; Bill Scavone; and Victor Acosta for the official ribbon-cutting. Following the invocation, guests were invited on an exclusive walkthrough of the state-of-the-art facility. The carefully curated space features modern co-working areas, private consultation rooms, and a welcoming reception showroom highlighting a striking scale model of Caribbean Town— Aruba's flagship residential development by PalmAruba Group.

### BUILT ON STRONG FOUNDATIONS

Weichert® Aruba Realty operates as an independently owned and operated franchise affiliate of Weichert® Real Estate Affiliates, Inc., a global network with of 57 years of residential real estate excellence. The local franchise is backed by PalmAruba Group, the island's premier residential developer. Since its soft opening and blessing ceremony on May 29, 2026, the brokerage has already closed two sales. The founding agent team—Heydi de Cuba, Jeandira Henriquez, Maria Arango, and Frensel Giel—brings this vision to life daily, backed by Weichert's gold-standard training platform and a deep alignment with the Aruban community.

The Grand Opening marks a definitive statement that Weichert® Aruba Realty is open, established, and ready to introduce a sophisticated, relationship-driven approach to the Aruban market. □

## Another house at Alto Vista 69 receives protected monument status

(Oranjestad)—Following the ceremony at Alto Vista 12, Prime Minister Mike Eman continued his tour on Tuesday afternoon with another special moment at Alto Vista 69, the home of Titi Tromp. In the presence of family, friends, and invited guests, the house officially received its Protected Monument designation, recognizing its historical and cultural significance to Aruba.

During the ceremony, Prime Minister Eman emphasized

that the recognition is not only for the building itself, but also for the history of the people who lived there. He highlighted Titi Tromp's important role in raising and guiding several generations, as well as the legacy that the Tromp family has continued to build over the years.

According to the Prime Minister, the house represents far more than bricks and walls. It is a symbol of hard work, perseverance, and community spirit. He noted that

multiple generations of the Tromp family have contributed to Aruba's development and that the history of the house forms an important part of the broader story of the Aruban people.

### A house filled with memories

Richard Tromp, son of Titi Tromp, shared his personal memories of growing up in the house. He recalled how the home and its yard served as a gathering place for children from the neighborhood, where they played, ran around, and formed friendships that have lasted to this day.

According to Richard, the news that the house would receive protected monument status came as a complete surprise to the family. He admitted that the recognition was deeply emotional and said he still feels moved whenever he reflects on the honor.

Alexis Tromp, Titi Tromp's



nephew, also expressed his appreciation for the tribute, describing the occasion as a journey back in time. The ceremony brought back many childhood memories and filled the day with nostalgia.

### Preserving the spirit of Alto Vista

With the installation of the Protected Monument plaque at Alto Vista 69, Aruba has added another important chapter to its efforts to preserve the island's

historical heritage. The designation protects not only a house of architectural and historical value, but also the story of a family that has left a lasting mark on the community.

The ceremony concluded with the official unveiling of the monument plaque, a symbolic act that ensures the story of Titi Tromp and the Tromp family will continue to be preserved for future generations. □



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- Magnet Perfume Jewelry & Cosmetics | The Lazy Lizard
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**'Dera Gay' tradition brings the community together!**

(Oranjestad)—The neighborhoods of Bushiri and Dakota were filled with joy, music, and tradition on Wednesday afternoon during the Dera Gay celebration. As part of the initiative "Let's Celebrate Dera Gay in the Neighborhood," the Government of Aruba, in collaboration with the National Holidays Celebration Commission (CCDN) and UNOCA Aruba, brought the San Juan tradition directly to the community.

The cultural trailer began its route at the Bushiri Complex, where residents of all ages gathered to enjoy a program showcasing Aruban culture. From Bushiri, the celebration continued to the Dakota Community and Sports Center, where a large number of community members actively participated in the various activities.

Throughout the route, Gru-



po Masiduri performed the traditional San Juan dance, while Grupo Cariño provided the musical entertainment. The public also took part in traditional competitions such as candle blowing, the goat call, the hen call, the flag hunt, and Dera Gay, creating an interactive atmosphere where both adults and children could enjoy themselves together.

The community's enthusiasm was evident throughout the event. Many resi-

dents expressed that bringing the Dera Gay celebration directly into the neighborhoods makes it more accessible and strengthens the sense of community. They emphasized that the activities give children the opportunity to learn about and appreciate a tradition that is part of Aruba's cultural identity, while older generations can pass on the customs they inherited. According to the residents, keeping this type of celebration close to home helps preserve Aruba's cul-



tural heritage and encourages greater community participation in national traditions.

The celebration continued on to Mabon Kavel and

concluded with a grand finale at Carnival Village in San Nicolas, where the community came together to celebrate Aruba's cultural heritage. □

**Visit the natural bridges of Aruba!**

(Oranjestad)—After you've visited the Alto Vista Church, the Bushiribana Gold Mill Ruins and the mini natural pool that is located right next to it, you're next up around the northern coast line must be the Natural Bridge. Once the largest natural bridge in the Caribbean, this bridge has been a tourist attraction for many years.

The bridge was formed during thousands of years, cut and crafted by the

wild waves that crash into the coral stone walls of the coast. Before its collapse, this bridge measured 30 meters in length and 7 meters in height, making it the biggest natural bridge in the Caribbean at the time. For many years, this site was also a frequently visited beach, as the bridge had a small opening through which the water would flow into the tiny beach.

Unfortunately in 2005, the bridge collapsed, and the little beach dried up. De-

spite this, this site remained a tourist attraction, with many visitors walking along the coral cliffs of the bridge to see the spectacular view of the northern coastline and the Caribbean Sea. Visitors can also still visit the souvenir shop on the left of the bridge entrance. While the natural bridge no longer is functional, there is now a smaller natural bridge very close. This bridge is often called the "Baby Bridge" or "Daughter Bridge". □



## Fruit Loose & Veggie Boost

# Aruban fruits and vegetables



Fresh fruits make a tropical holiday's picture complete. Whether you see the mango's hanging in the trees or the fresh fruit cocktail on the side table of your pool bed, the link is there: you are in the tropics. Aruba grows her own fruits and veggies and there are some pretty out-of-space local species you may never had heard of, but really healthy and delicious.

### Mispel

This is a fruit with a character (5-10 cm/2-4 inches). It does not ripe until it is picked or falls off the tree. Mispel is hard with a sandpaper like texture when immature, soft and juicy when ripe. It's technically a berry, but contains a skin similar to that of a kiwi. It's grainy and sweet, with a light, musky flavor. The sap or gum from the tree is also a source of 'chicle' the original ingredient used to make chewing gum. Rich in tannins, antioxidants shown to contain anti-inflammatory compounds, and vitamin C, essential for healthy immune function. Season: year-round.

### Kenepa

Ovoid green fruit that grows in bunches on trees up to 30m high. The fruit is related to the lychee and have tight, thin but rigid skins. Inside the skin is the tart, tangy, or sweet pulp of the fruit covering a large seed. The pulp is usually cream or orange colored. Kenepa strengthens the immune system, and prevents the reproduction of bacteria and viruses in the body. This fruit is highly recommended to treat lung infections and urinary tract infections. It also helps to cure insomnia and rejuvenates the nervous system. Season: the fruit typically open during the summer.

### Druif



There is no chance you did not bump into one of the sea grape trees while spending your vacation on Aruba. The sea grape plant is often used in ocean-side landscaping in sandy soil right on the beach and it produces clusters of fruit that resemble grapes. Are sea grapes edible? Yes, they are. Animals enjoy sea grapes and humans can eat them as well, and they are used to make jam. They contain very low calories and sugar, enabling good bacterium to digest food and excrete waste quickly which is effective in preventing constipation. Season: Sep-Oct.

### Shimarucu

Maybe Aruba's most popular wild fruit tree. You may have noticed cars at the side of the road and people picking those red berries. Well, that's Shimarucu. The local habit to stop for these delicious fruits goes from generation to generation. Its fruit's degree of sour depends on the amount of rain it gets. Red Shimarucus tend to taste better than orange. The fruit has super power: a true vitamin bomb. Adults only need to eat 3-4 of these berries to meet their daily recommended amount of Vitamin C. Season: Rainy months (Oct-Jan).

### Tamarind

A delicious, sweet fruit that has a wide variety of uses and applications, both for medicinal and culinary purposes. It is a medium-sized bushy tree with evergreen leaves and fruit that devel-



ops in pods characterized by long, brown shells. Inside is a sticky, fleshy, juicy pulp, which is the Tamarind fruit. Both sweet and sour in taste, the fruit contains a significant level of vitamin C, as well as vitamin E, B vitamins, calcium, iron, phosphorous, potassium, manganese, and dietary fiber. There are also a number of organic compounds that make tamarind a powerful antioxidant and anti-inflammatory agent. Season: March.

When it comes to veggies the island certainly offers a home-grown selection. They taste delicious and have their specific talents to boost your immune system.

### Concomber chiquito

This is a sort of local squash, but looks like a cucumber with prickly skin. The taste however is bitterer than the cucumber and the vegetable is smaller in size but bigger in width. Inside is a soft, fleshy pulp and seeds, just like the cucumber. Concomber chiquito is grown in the island and used in salads and 'stoba' (stew) or on its own in vinegar. The veggie contains multiple B vitamins, including vitamin B1, vitamin B5, and vitamin B7 (biotin). B vitamins are known to help ease feelings of anxiety and buffer some of the damaging effects of stress. Additionally this veggie is rich in two of the most basic elements needed for healthy digestion: water and fiber. Season: year-round.

### Yambo



Family of Okra, also known as 'lady's fingers': a green flowering plant. Okra belongs to the same plant family as hibiscus and cotton. A classic favorite dish in Aruba is Sopi di yambo. It has long been favored as a food for the health-conscious. It contains potassium, vitamin B, vitamin C, folic acid, and calcium. It's low in calories and has a high dietary fiber content. Recently, a new benefit of including okra in your diet is being considered. Okra has been suggested to help manage blood sugar in cases of type 1, type 2, and gestational diabetes. Season: year-round.

### Bonch'i Cunucu

A long, small bean, boiled for a side dish or snack. Long beans have a chewy, crunchy texture—more so than snap beans—and a flavor reminiscent of the dry navy bean or asparagus. Besides stir-fry, soups and salads, the long bean is a good choice for stewing, braising (to remain chewy

and firm), sautéing, shallow frying, and deep frying. With cooking, the long bean's bean flavor intensifies. Long beans are low in calories, about 45 calories per cup, and rich in vitamin A and also contain vitamin C and potassium. Season: year-round.

### Pampuna

In the endless summer of Caribbean living we only have to concern ourselves with a wet season and a dry season. Still we do indulge heavily in the pleasures of pumpkin and enjoy Caribbean pumpkin recipes year round. A popular dish in Aruba is Sopi di Pampuna, don't miss it. This dish is made of pumpkin soup, and parsley. Pumpkins are rich in flavonoid polyphenolic antioxidants such as xanthin, lutein and carotenes and also contain vitamins. Pumpkin seeds are a good source of omega-3 fatty acids, vitamins, minerals and proteins. Pumpkins are used to make desserts, breads and soups. □



## Aruba's cultural and literary development: Then and now

(Oranjestad)—The Aruban culture has seen many substantial developments over the course of a century. With the introduction of the Lago Refinery at the turn of the 20th century, followed by the breakout of the Second World War and the general incentive for political independence during the mid-century, a cultural identity on the island began to take form and have since developed through international and local influences.

In the pre-industrial era of the 19th century, much could not be said about a cultural identity on the island. Still being a part of a Dutch colonial territory at the same, as well as not having political or economic autonomy (Curacao was the center of commerce, cultural life, and political management of the Netherland Antilles at the time), the small population of Aruba consisted mostly of farmers and fishermen, tending to their crops and their cattle, or going out to fish to provide for their family. As Quito Nicolaas states in his article *Historia di Literatura Arubiano: E Bida Cultural* (Literary History of Aruba: Cultural Life), "during the pre-industrial period, there were no significant economic activity that could have created a cultural ambience, with only one way to generate profit at the time for the subexistence of Aruban families."

It wasn't until the introduction of the Lago Refinery in San Nicolas in 1928, that the island saw a small boom in cultural manifestations and entertainment, as farmers left the 'cunucu' (country) life to work in the refinery, which resulted in Aruba acquiring a different economic pillar. Before this, entertainment and cultural manifestations were mostly experiences by local parishes and the island's elite, who often partook in cultural and entertaining activities around the island, like going to the movie theater or coming together to share poetry on Sundays



after church.

### Literary life

Throughout the 19th century and up until the 1940s, there were also not much trace of a cultural climate for the cultural-literary sector on the island. Primary education was introduced on the island mid-19th century, followed by secondary and higher education around the late 30's and 40's. It wasn't until the 1950s, with the introduction of the E.R.N.A agreement in 1951 and the signing of the Statute in 1954, which allowed more space for and control over the economic and cultural development of Aruba, that the literary life on the island began to grow substantially

compared to decades before. This was in response to local institutions established in the 1940s for cultural and literary growth on the island, but that did not yet capture the attention of the general public. The 1950 brought with it a boom of literary production on the island, like those of V.S. Piternella, as well as migrant authors José Ramón Vicioso y Rings William Rufus, who have also contributed to the literary development on the island. The literary movement was further promoted by local broadcasters Voz di Aruba and Radio Kelkboom, with their regular broadcast of literary works.

The 50s and 60s also saw

the influence of international cultures, especially that of the United States. During this time, because of international influences as well as the continued prosperity of the oil refinery, cultural traditions in Aruba began to really take form and become widespread, as different worldly and local concepts were introduced in the Aruban society. With the establishment of local television broadcast station Tele-Aruba in 1963, and with time and possibilities, local programs such as "Nos Tera" ("Our Land") started to pay more attention to the Aruban culture and worked to form a cultural consciousness in the community. The 1960s also saw the rise of local authors

and artists, who were more comfortable in producing works in our native tongue, Papiamentu, but who also produced works in Spanish, English and Dutch. This new phenomenon was in response to the interaction between economic growth, individual prosperity, cultural life and literary expression.

### The 21st century

Nowadays, international influence on our culture is still prevalent, especially those from Latin America, the United States and The Netherlands. Nevertheless, there also exists a strong cultural identity and traditions that are exclusive to the Aruban culture, often manifesting during traditional celebrations, like Dia di San Juan/ Dera Gay (St. John's Day), Dia di Himno y Bandera (National Hymn and Flag Day), Camping during Easter and much more. With the surge of social media in the last decade, artistic voices, especially those of the younger generation, has become even more prevalent and easily accessible to the community of Aruba through online platforms such as Facebook, Instagram and TikTok. □

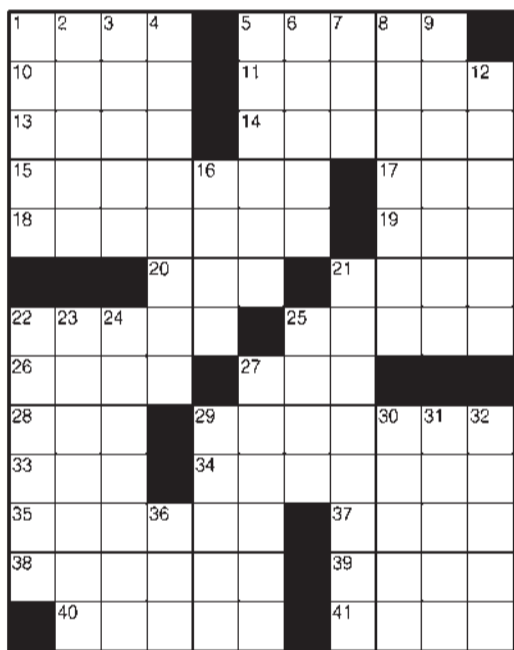
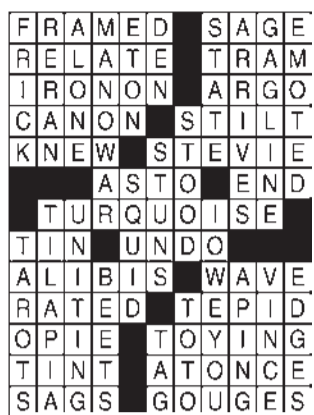


Source: *Historia di Literatura Arubiano: E Bida Cultural* by J.R. "Quito" Nicolaas

### CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

- ACROSS**
- 37 Labor
  - 1 Shaker fill
  - 5 Church feature
  - 10 Inkling
  - 11 Pierced
  - 13 Brooklyn team
  - 14 Rancorous
  - 15 Sparkly stuff
  - 17 Inventor Whitney
  - 18 Members of the graduating class
  - 19 Animal abode
  - 20 CPR expert
  - 21 Music genre
  - 22 Sheriff's group
  - 25 Polite chaps
  - 26 Meter or liter
  - 27 Feeding-time need
  - 28 Skillet
  - 29 Large cactus
  - 33 Lupino of film
  - 34 Animal, informally
  - 35 Roadside eyesore
- DOWN**
- 1 Croons
  - 2 "Hello" singer
  - 3 Admit
  - 4 Most delicious
  - 5 Physicist Einstein
  - 6 Animal abodes
  - 7 Blasting stuff
  - 8 Took, as advice
  - 9 Incumbent's verb
  - 12 Bar orders
  - 16 Big book
  - 21 Contradiction
  - 22 Eye features
  - 23 Trying to lose
  - 24 "My Way" singer
  - 25 Leslie Caron movie
  - 27 Like jail windows
  - 29 Play part
  - 30 Make amends
  - 31 Queen, in Spain
  - 32 Acrylic fiber
  - 36 Cowboy nickname



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.

### 2-27 CRYPTOQUOTE

Q R M G D R M R Z Z E D R X W Z G O R

Z C T D , D C J R E D R X M Z G O R

F Y M N X M N F X S R Z Y G H W R R .

— N X J Y N A C L Y R

**Cryptoquote:** IT IS HARD TO FAIL, BUT IT IS WORSE NEVER TO HAVE TRIED TO SUCCEED. — THEODORE ROOSEVELT

## Helpful tips for your stay on Aruba

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

### Electrical power

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

### Drinking water



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



store.

### Supermarket hours

Supermarket hours may vary depending on where you are staying on the island. Generally though, most supermarkets are open from 8am to 9 or 10pm, Monday through

Saturday. On Sundays, supermarkets generally close earlier; mostly around 2pm.

### Safety

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

## JUNE CRUISE SHIP SCHEDULE

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



Difficulty: ★★★★★

6/26

### Answer to previous puzzle

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

Difficulty: ★★★

6/25

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# 'Master key' vaccine technique may 'prevent next pandemic': researchers

Cambridge, United Kingdom

Known by acronyms that need no explanation, viruses like Covid, Sars and Ebola conjure up images of medics in protective suits and spark fear in populations worldwide.

Vaccines for individual viruses have provided some relief, but new strains pose a constant challenge.

Now, new AI-aided vaccine technology developed by scientists at Cambridge University offer potential immunity against whole families of viruses and could even prevent the next pandemic, according to researchers.

Professor Jonathan Heeney of Cambridge University likened the new technique to having the "master key" for an apartment block.

The main problem with vaccines, he said, was that they were "all historic" so the strain you are vaccinated with might not be the one you end up being exposed to in six months time.

Vaccines were "always chasing the virus", the project lead researcher told AFP in an interview.

"So we're getting rid of that variability by making something that's across the board recognisable by your immune system that should cover you from all these eventualities ... a real big paradigm change," he said.

Canadian Heeney, of the lab of viral zoonotics at Cambridge University's Department of Veterinary Medicine, began work on the project after the 2013-16 Ebola outbreak in west Africa where he was then based.

### - 'Horse bolted' -

Ebola had previously been seen in the central African Democratic Republic of Congo, not in west Africa and it was initially misidentified as lassa fever, gastroenteritis or cholera.

The west African outbreak eventually claimed around 11,300 lives, according to the World Health Organization (WHO).



A health worker administer polio vaccine as Malawians repatriated from South Africa arrive at Kamuzu stadium, the country's receiving camp on June 18, 2026 before being identified and transported to their districts.

But Heeney said three or four months were spent trying to discover what it was before work could even begin on a vaccine.

"In that time, it spread from Guinea, to Sierra Leone to Liberia, three different countries quickly. The horse had bolted, the fire was raging," he said, adding many health workers were among the victims.

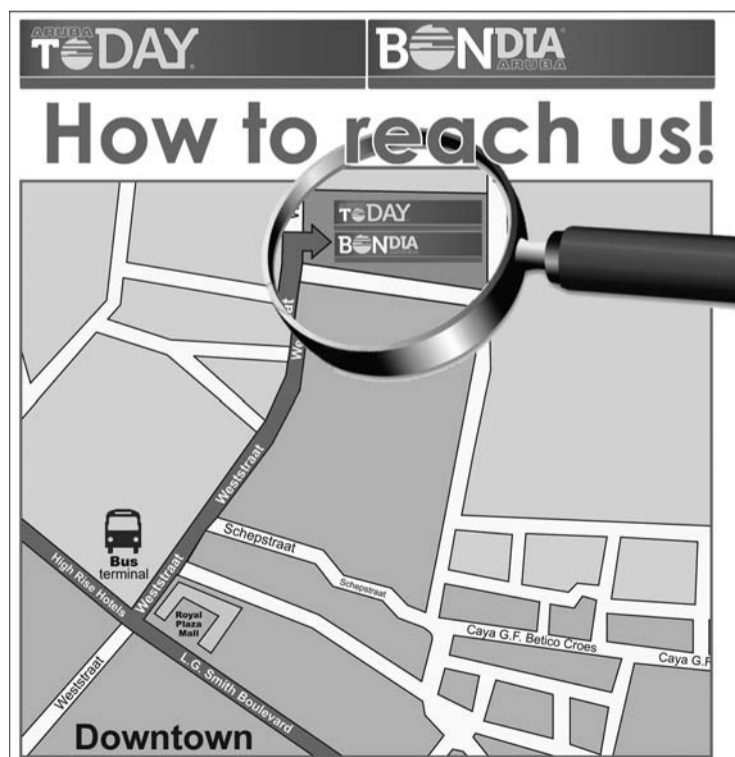
Returning to Cambridge after the west African outbreak, Heeney said there was a determination that "we've got to change the way this works, we can't go through it again".

Harnessing early AI, he said, his team used all the

information they could get about various viruses and brought it together. This allowed them to look for the "similarities and the differences in the important parts of the virus that the immune system responds to", recognising not just one variant but all of them. The new technology was all the more vital given the frequency with which viruses are now emerging due to population growth, greater movement across borders and human encroachment on animal habitats, he said.

Viruses that had previously existed harmlessly, residing in animals that had grown

resistant, were coming into contact with a new species, humans, and "wow, there's no immunity, no natural defences... and the virus goes crazy", he said.



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ARUBA TODAY NEWS

# No price shock for 'GTA VI' as gamers gear up for preorders

## Paris, France

Gamers were relieved to learn there was only a minimal price increase for "Grand Theft Auto VI" when preorders launched at midnight on Thursday, but some fans and retailers criticised the decision not to provide a physical disc.

Predicted to be the biggest-selling cultural product of all time, speculation had been rife that "GTA VI" would cost players far more than a typical high-end title.

In the end, Rockstar and parent company Take-Two Interactive announced a price tag around \$10 higher than base version in the United States, landing at \$80, and \$100 for an "Ultimate" edition with additional content like weapons and vehicles.

Six years of development for "GTA VI" are estimated to have cost up to \$2 billion, which had prompted fears it could cost as much as \$100.

"If there is one game that can price at \$80 without garnering significant player pushback, 'Grand Theft Auto VI' is that game given its massive scale and anticipation," said Andrew Marok of specialist consultancy Raymond James. As preorders went live on Thursday, the price in Europe was 80 euros (\$90). In Japan, the PlayStation store listed the game at 9,800 yen (\$61). In New Zealand, it was listed at NZ\$140 (\$79), similar to the price in Australia.



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

lia. In the UK, it was priced at £70 (\$92).

Preorders have not launched yet in the Americas.

## - Disc disappointment -

Fans of the "GTA" series, which dates back to 1997 when the very first 2D game was released, have been waiting 13 years for a new instalment since 2013's "GTA V".

The 230 million copies moved made "GTA V" the second-best-selling game in history after "Minecraft".

Finally getting his hands on the game "doesn't exactly feel like a real thing that would ever happen", said Red Young, a 26-year-old

Scotsman who helps run fan site GTABase. It "is borderline a miracle."

Anticipation was only stoked by successive delays: first from autumn 2025 to May this year, and next to November. Some players were nevertheless shocked to learn that physical copies sold at retailers would contain a redeemable download code -- likely meaning there will be no disc containing the game data. There were grumbles on social media that the lack of a physical disc would eliminate any second-hand market for the title.

But these days, around 80 percent of game sales on PlayStation and 90 percent

on Xbox are digital versions delivered over the internet, according to specialist firm Niko Partners.

Two independent North American retailers, Video Games Plus and Loot Box Gaming, announced on X that they would not sell the game unless a physical disc becomes available.

"The full launch including pre-orders will be the biggest entertainment launch ever... bigger than any movie, TV series, music concert or album," said Piers Harding-Rolls of the UK-based data firm Ampere Analysis.

Analysts at the investment bank Piper Sandler expect around 45 million units to

have already sold when the game is released.

## - Courting controversy -

That should put "GTA VI" on track to top the record for the fastest cultural product to make a billion dollars in sales, set by its predecessor, "GTA V", in barely three days. Although millions of fans have been kept busy with the multiplayer version "GTA Online", the anticipation for a true successor has been fierce.

The "GTA" saga's action-adventure titles set in a sprawling open world have immersed players in high-definition imaginary cities heavily inspired by American metropolises.

This instalment's Bonnie and Clyde-style protagonists will roam Vice City, a fictional version of Miami.

Each game offers players a huge degree of freedom to either carry out missions that advance the plot, or simply to explore the world on foot or at the controls of a fleet of vehicles -- with the option to explode into gun-blazing criminal mayhem at any time.

The focus on crime has created long-running controversy around the series, with some critics warning about its impact on young gamers. All of its titles are rated for players aged 18 and over under Europe's PEGI classification system. □

# Apple raises prices for MacBooks and iPads, as costs soar over AI



An Apple logo is visible in a store in lower Manhattan on June 25, 2026 in New York City.

## San Francisco, United States

Apple said Thursday it was raising prices for its MacBook computers, iPad tablets and other products, citing spiraling memory and storage costs sparked

by the rise of artificial intelligence.

The price hikes -- the first concrete change stemming from outgoing CEO Tim Cook's repeated warnings about rising costs -- sent

Apple shares plummeting more than 4.7 percent in morning trade.

On its US website, price increases ranged from \$30 to \$300. The 14-inch MacBook Pro, which once sold for \$1,700, now retails for \$2,000, while the iPad Air increased from \$600 to \$750. The Apple TV streaming device rose from \$130 to \$200. For now, the price of the iPhone -- the company's main source of revenue -- remained unchanged.

"The rapid expansion of AI data centers has created an extraordinary surge in demand for memory and storage," an Apple spokesperson said in a statement sent to multiple media out-

lets. "We have never seen a component price increase this much, this quickly." Apple did not immediately respond to AFP requests for comment.

The Cupertino, California-based tech giant -- which notched an all-time revenue record of \$416 billion in the last fiscal year -- insisted it had "shielded our customers from these increases so far" but could no longer do so.

Last week, Cook set the stage when he told The Wall Street Journal that price increases were "unavoidable."

"There's less supply at a time

when consumers want devices and the memory guys are passing along huge price increases," Cook said, deeming the spike in prices a "hundred-year flood."

The rapid buildout of AI data centers has sent the cost of memory chips and RAM skyrocketing -- as the components are found in nearly all electronic devices -- with the chips undergoing quarterly price increases of at least 50 percent since late 2025.

It will fall to John Ternus to handle the fallout at Apple -- he will succeed Cook as CEO on September 1, just days before the new generation of iPhones is unveiled. □

## Wimbledon men's singles: Three talking points

### London, United Kingdom

Reigning champion Jannik Sinner is a strong favorite to successfully defend his Wimbledon title this year, despite a shock early French Open exit which ended his and Carlos Alcaraz's dominance of men's tennis.

Alexander Zverev took advantage at Roland Garros but has never performed well at Wimbledon, while Novak Djokovic may be running out of time to secure a record-breaking 25th Grand Slam title.

Here, AFP Sport looks at three talking points ahead of the tournament, which starts at the All England Club on Monday:

### Does Sinner have a weakness?

World number one Sinner returns to action for the first time since seeing his 30-match winning streak snapped in dramatic fashion in the French Open second round by Juan Manuel Cerundolo.

The Italian led by two sets and 5-1 in the third before collapsing to a bizarre loss as he faded physically in blistering heat.

Sinner has only lost nine matches since the start of 2025, four of those to currently injured rival Alcaraz. He insisted he was "not dying because of the heat" in Paris, insisting he had been feeling unwell.

But he has failed to deal with



Italy's Jannik Sinner hits a shot at the practice courts at The All England Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club in Wimbledon, southwest London, on June 25, 2026, ahead of the 2026 Wimbledon Championships.

hot temperatures before, including in his last Masters defeat when he retired from his third-round tie against Tallon Griekspoor in Shanghai last year.

Sinner also struggled visibly during the Australian Open earlier this season, before later losing to Djokovic in the semi-finals.

The four-time Grand Slam champion will be happy to see the current heatwave hitting Western Europe being forecasted to end before the start of Wimbledon, where he is still without doubt the man to beat after his final victory over Alcaraz last year.

"It is definitely something I

would love to feel again, I'm not lying, but at the same time, if it's not going to happen, I did it once, and will remember (it) forever," he said in an interview with Stan Sport of his hopes of going back-to-back.

### Djokovic bidding to bounce back

The 39-year-old Djokovic has come close several times to winning a long-awaited 25th major trophy, but at the French Open he suffered his joint-earliest exit from a Slam since the 2017 Australian Open.

Wimbledon will be only Djokovic's fifth tournament

of the campaign as he continues to play a reduced schedule.

The grass courts of SW19 may represent Djokovic's best chance of another Slam success, although he did reach the Australian Open final in February.

But doubts still surround the Serb's fitness and he pulled out of an exhibition grass-court event in London this week, without specifying a reason.

But Djokovic, one short of Roger Federer's record tally of eight men's Wimbledon titles, only played one match on clay in preparation for the French Open and then said

he was "happy with his level" during the tournament.

### Can rising stars build on Paris promise?

Teenagers Rafael Jodar and Joao Fonseca produced some eye-catching tennis with breakthrough runs to the French Open quarter-finals and will be expecting to build on that at Wimbledon. Czech 20-year-old Jakub Mensik also impressed in reaching the semis as a new generation made their mark on a major competition for the first time.

Fonseca's comeback victory in the third round at Roland Garros over Djokovic appeared to be a coming-of-age moment for the Brazilian star.

The 19-year-old's power-packed game looks primed to make an impact on grass and the Brazilian reached the last 32 on his Wimbledon debut last year.

Jodar, 19, has never even played an ATP-level match on grass, but has climbed into the world's top 30 having started 2026 at number 168. Mensik is now back in the world's top 20 and is one of only three men to beat Sinner this year.

French Open champion Zverev has never got past the last 16 in nine previous Wimbledon appearances, leaving the youngsters as perhaps the most likely challengers to Sinner and Djokovic. □

## Dominant Osaka sails into Bad Homburg semis

### Bad Homburg, Germany

Four-time Grand Slam winner Naomi Osaka advanced to the semi-finals of the Wimbledon warm-up tournament in Bad Homburg, Germany after a dominant victory over Ekaterina Alexandrova on Thursday.

The Japanese sixth seed won 6-2, 6-2 in just 59 minutes to reach the final four of the grass court tournament just days from the start of Wimbledon.

Osaka, the world number 15, is one win away from a first grass-court final of her career.

"Obviously I can't say that I've had much experience on grass, but I feel really good right now," Osaka said, adding that coach Tomas Wiktorowski, who started working with her last July, "is helping me understand grass a lot more, so I feel pretty comfortable at this point."

Osaka was broken early in the opening set but swiftly struck back against the unseeded Russian.

Osaka won eight straight games -- a run which included 15 points in a row -- as she took the opening set and ran out to a 3-0 lead in

the second.

The 19th-ranked Alexandrova rallied to win her next two service games but Osaka closed out the match in just under an hour. Osaka will play Chinese world number 52 Wang Xinyu, who reached the final four when eighth-ranked Ukrainian Elina Svitolina pulled out citing exhaustion on Wednesday. Fourth seed Karolina Muchova also made the last four after coming from a set down to beat Dane Clara Tauson 1-6, 6-2, 6-4 on Thursday.



Japan's Naomi Osaka returns the ball to Russia's Ekaterina Alexandrova during the women's singles quarter-final match of the WTA 500 Bad Homburg Open tennis tournament in Bad Homburg, western Germany on June 25, 2026.

Tauson exploded out of the gates and broke the world number 11 three times while dropping just one game in the opening set.

Muchova returned the fa-

vour in the second, breaking Tauson three times to set up a deciding set, which she won to take the match in two hours and three minutes. □



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Nicolas Pepe #19 of Cote d'Ivoire celebrates with teammates after scoring his team's second goal during the FIFA World Cup 2026 Group E match between Curacao and Cote D'Ivoire at Philadelphia Stadium on June 25, 2026 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

**East Rutherford, United States**  
Ecuador squeezed into the last 32 of the World Cup with an upset 2-1 victory over Germany on Thursday as Ivory Coast ended Curacao's fairytale campaign to seal their passage to the knockout rounds.

A nailbiting Group E game between Ecuador and group winners Germany at the MetLife Stadium was settled 13 minutes from time, when Gonzalo Plata jabbed home the winning goal from close-

range for the South Americans. Plata's winner came after Ecuador had recovered after Germany took the lead from a controversial Leroy Sane goal after two minutes before equalising through Nilson Angulo. The result means Ecuador finished Group E with four points, guaranteeing them a place in the last 32 as one of the eight best third-placed teams. Germany had already been

## Ecuador upset Germany to reach World Cup last 32 as Curacao eliminated

assured of winning the group after wins over Ivory Coast and Curacao.

Ivory Coast meanwhile sealed the runners-up spot in Group E after eliminating Curacao in Philadelphia, Nicolas Pepe scoring twice in a 2-0 victory. It is the first time that the west African nation have reached the knockout stage.

Curacao, the smallest country by population ever to play in the World Cup, depart the tournament with one point to finish bottom of the group. The Group E games kicked off another packed slate of six games across the tournament on Thursday which will give more clarity to the shape of the knockout rounds.

The United States have already clinched top spot in Group D and will be looking to end their first round campaign with a victory over already-eliminated Turkey in Los Angeles.

USA coach Mauricio Po-

chettino is expected to rest a number of players saying it was "unnecessary to take a risk" with Chris Richards, Antonee Robinson, Tyler Adams and Folarin Balogun, who are facing suspension if they collect another yellow card. The US have not reached the quarter-finals of a World Cup since 2002, but a strong start has raised hopes they could go on a deep run on home turf.

Australia and Paraguay square off in a battle for second place in Santa Clara. A draw would favour the Socceroos thanks to their better goal difference but would likely be enough to send Paraguay through too.

**- Three-way battle in Group F -**

Group F remains wide open with the Netherlands, Japan and Sweden still able to finish first.

In Kansas City, the Dutch face a woeful Tunisia team

that have suffered successive four-goal defeats and sacked their coach after the opening game.

Herve Renard was parachuted in after Sabri Lamouchi's dismissal in the wake of a 5-1 loss to Sweden but his arrival did nothing to change Tunisia's fortunes, as a 4-0 defeat by Japan knocked them out of the tournament.

Japan are level with the Netherlands on four points going into their clash with Sweden in Arlington. After beginning the World Cup with a bang, the Swedes were hammered 5-1 by the Dutch.

On Wednesday, Brazil clinched first place in Group C with a 3-0 win over Scotland in Miami, where Neymar made his first international appearance since October 2023.

Scotland face an anxious wait to see if they scrape through as one of the eight best third-placed teams. □