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NIGHTLY THEMED WATERSHOW

Trump's fireworks made Washington world's most polluted city

Washington, United States

Washington was briefly the most polluted major city in the world, according to IQAir data, after a massive Independence Day fireworks show touted by the Trump administration as "awesome."

Pyrotecnico, the company hired by the White House's Freedom 250 organization, had set a goal of breaking a world record by launching 850,000 fireworks, though experts had warned that setting off so many in just 40 minutes could pose serious health risks.

July 4 fell during a record-breaking heat wave that upended the parades, block parties and barbecues that traditionally mark the day the United States celebrates its break from Britain.

The display of colorful explosives, intended as the day's climax, was delayed by over an hour due to a thunderstorm, finally kicking off just before midnight.

Washington's pollution monitors began registering spikes around 8pm on Saturday, signaling local fireworks displays. But levels of fine particulate matter rose dramatically during the main show, leaving people watching downwind with



A fireworks display is seen during the "Salute to America" Independence Day celebration on the National Mall in Washington, DC, in the early morning hours of July 5, 2026.

an obscured view as smoke came billowing their way.

Fine particle pollution defined as smoke and particles 2.5 micrometers in diameter that can penetrate deep into the lungs, causing acute injury but also long-term disease peaked at over 200 micrograms per cubic meter at one monitoring site, city-collected data reviewed by AFP showed.

The Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) 24-

hour standard caps exposure at 35 micrograms per cubic meter.

"Code Purple" alerts, denoting air quality considered very unhealthy for everyone, not just at-risk groups, blanketed much of the city as well as the wider region, including neighboring Virginia and Maryland. And according to data compiled by Swiss company IQAir, which relies on a variety of public and private sources, Washington was the world's most pol-

luted major city between around 3am to 5am on Sunday July 5.

It is currently in 41st position, with Jakarta, Kinshasa and Addis Ababa occupying the first three spots.

- 'Fireworks are awesome' -

Asked for comment, EPA press secretary Brigit Hirsch told AFP: "Fireworks are awesome and we hope everyone enjoyed the incredible shows in and around our nation's capital to celebrate 250 years of

America."

The EPA under Trump's second term has touted its deregulatory actions and advocated on behalf of polluting industries.

Heavy rain helped clear the smoke, and conditions had returned to normal by around noon on Sunday, amounting to what scientists called a lucky break.

"We dodged a bullet. It was very bad, but it could have been substantially worse," Russell Dickerson, an atmospheric scientist at the University of Maryland, told AFP.

Ahead of the event, Pyrotecnico told AFP they were aiming to break the current world record for the largest firework display, which was set on New Year's Day 2016 in the Philippines with around 811,000 fireworks.

But it wasn't clear if they had achieved it.

A Guinness World Records spokesperson confirmed to AFP it had received an application from the Washington event.

"At this stage, we are not able to confirm whether the record has been achieved. We will only be able to do so once the evidence has been submitted and fully reviewed by our Records team." □

Trump touts latest White House renovation: a new helipad

Washington, United States

U.S. President Donald Trump on Monday confirmed that work was underway to build a "beautiful" new helipad at the White House, in his latest personally directed redesign to the iconic building. The helipad is situated on the South Lawn, where presidents and their family for decades have been photographed strolling across the grass to board or exit awaiting "Marine One" helicopters.

The contractor has been asked to speed up work to be finished ahead of an upcoming state visit, apparently that of Chinese President Xi Jinping in September, the Washington Post reported.

"So now we're building a helipad, beautiful helipad,

and it's got the seal of the White House on it in granite, carved granite, it's... really a beautiful thing," Trump told reporters.

The landing site aims to solve problems associated with the new fleet of presidential helicopters built by

Sikorsky, Trump said.

While it has been widely reported that the helicopters' exhaust scorches grass, Trump added Monday that the airflow is so powerful, the lawn actually "gets ripped out."



Construction of a new helipad on the South Lawn of the White House continues on July 01, 2026 in Washington, DC.

"So they landed the helicopter, and half of the grass was sitting in front of the Oval Office front door. The rest of it was scattered all over," he said.

Sikorsky has agreed to pay for the project, Trump said, because the company felt "a little guilty" about the lawn issue. "It's about \$5 or \$6 million they're paying the full cost, and when I heard they were paying the cost, I went out and said, 'let's do a beauty, let's not just do a piece of concrete and paint it white,'" he said.

The Post however reported a project cost of at least double \$13 million which also includes renovations of the South Portico and adjacent driveway.

- Corinthian columns -

Simultaneously, work is continuing on a much larger White House project Trump's addition of a massive ballroom.

The project has seen Trump tear down the historic East Wing, and has prompted a legal dispute over major alterations going ahead without congressional approval. Speaking later to a group in the historic White House Rose Garden which Trump has remade into a patio similar to his Mar-a-Lago estate in Florida he lamented the lawsuits.

"In this world we're living, especially if your name is Trump, you get sued," he said.

He claimed that the legal suit had led to a top secret "tremendous military center" being built under the ballroom to be revealed. □

For Trump's World Cup, 'America First' collides with world's game

Washington, United States

The United States famously is less passionate about soccer than most countries, but with President Donald Trump in charge, the world's game has turned into another diplomatic battleground.

Trump, who has relished the US role as co-host of the World Cup, acknowledged he reached out to FIFA which rescinded a red card handed to US star Folarin Balogun.

Trump also cast aspersions on the reputation of the Brazilian referee who issued the red card, even while insisting that "I don't like to create controversy."

Much like when Trump imposed trade tariffs, belittled leaders or questioned NATO, his intervention on the red card caused Europeans to close ranks.

The foreign minister of Belgium, which now faces a full U.S. squad in their knockout match Monday, called the FIFA U-turn "incomprehensible." FIFA promptly rejected Belgium's appeal.

EU sports chief Glenn Mulcaire said such decisions "belong to sporting bodies,



A rodeo participant lights an America First firework featuring the likeness of President Donald Trump on the box following the Independence Day rodeo on July 04, 2026 in Sutherland, Nebraska.

not politicians." Balogun was handed the red card during a U.S. victory against Bosnia, a staunchly pro-American country, where an X account backing the players described FIFA and the United States as a "mafia." Secretary of State Marco Rubio, who said that the United States got "screwed" by the red card, joked that the episode may

come up at a NATO summit this week.

"Maybe they're trying to get an international incident," Rubio said.

Rubio, a sports lover more known for commentary on American football, said Belgium should be happy to play against a full U.S. squad rather than have a tarnished match.

"I just hope that the match will go on, everyone will be

at full strength and the winner will be the winner," Rubio said.

- Trump playbook -

Trump, with his motto of "America First," has unabashedly brandished raw US power to get his way, even at the risk of annoying allies.

He has threatened to seize Greenland and the Panama Canal and tried to neu-

ter the International Criminal Court with sanctions on judges whose rulings the United States opposes.

Trump said he raised the red card with FIFA chief Gianni Infantino, who has allied himself closely with the Republican billionaire, renting space in Trump Tower in New York and even presenting the president with an inaugural "FIFA Peace Prize."

"Trump has no integrity and of course he would try and use his position to influence the outcome," posted Cyrus Janssen, an online commentator on world affairs.

"It's what he has done in every other situation in life, including when he tried to steal the 2020 election," he said.

Infantino said he told Trump that the review was independent.

But the optics apparently were too much even for Infantino's predecessor Sepp Blatter, who resigned in 2015 after a U.S.-backed corruption probe.

"Football must never become a playground for political power," Blatter posted. □

Democrat in key U.S. Senate race denies sex assault claim

Washington, United States

Scandal-hit US Senate candidate Graham Platner whose insurgent rise has drawn comparisons to President Donald Trump denied a sexual assault allegation Monday that threatens to derail one of Democrats' best chances of flipping a Republican-held seat.

Politico reported that Jenny Racicot, a 41-year-old Maine resident who previously dated Platner, accused him of forcing her to have sex in late 2021 despite repeated objections. Platner, a Marine veteran, oysterman and political newcomer who won the state's Democratic primary last month, rejected the allegation.

In a video message posted to X after the report was published, Platner called

the allegations "troubling, serious and false."

"Regardless of the inaccuracy of the reporting, but mindful of the political reality it will inflict, we are taking the time to reflect on the best path forward for the state that I love, the people that I love, the movement I belong to, and the goal of defeating Susan Collins," he went on, referring to the Republican incumbent.

"Those were the goals when we launched this campaign, and they remain my goals today."

The allegation lands at a perilous moment for Democrats, who view Maine as a central battleground in their effort to regain control of the Senate in November's midterm elections.

Collins, a six-term Republican and one of her party's few remaining moderates in Congress, is among the Democrats' top targets.

Platner's victory in the Democratic primary was hailed by supporters as proof that a blunt anti-establishment message could break through with voters frustrated by cautious, establishment politics.

But his campaign has also alarmed some Democrats who fear his personal baggage could make it harder to defeat Collins in a state where independents and moderate voters often decide elections.

Politico said Racicot alleged that Platner entered her rural Maine home uninvited while deeply intoxicated and forced himself on her.

The latest report follows

earlier controversies over old online comments, sexually explicit messages, a tattoo resembling a Nazi symbol that Platner later covered up, and allegations that he had mistreated women.

Platner has acknowledged past struggles with undiag-

nosed PTSD and alcohol abuse, but has denied physically harming former partners.

His supporters argue that his flaws are part of a redemption story and that voters are drawn to his authenticity. □



Democratic U.S. Senate candidate Graham Platner and his wife Amy Gertner wave to supporters as they arrive to Platner's Primary Election event on June 9, 2026 in Blue Hill, Maine.

'Country Roads' stars as unofficial U.S. anthem at World Cup

Washington, United States

At this World Cup, the host U.S. team's stirring unofficial anthem is...a 1971 folk song?

John Denver's "Take Me Home, Country Roads" has been an unexpected hit among fans, with U.S. matches culminating in 70,000-strong sing-alongs.

Evoking a kinder, gentler America of a bygone era, the ringing renditions have stirred emotions in a country riven by sharp political division under President Donald Trump.

"You can all kind of unite under how it's, you know, America the beautiful and everyone can kind of sing it in harmony no matter who you are," said U.S. fan Drew Bastinelli, who came from Oregon to attend celebrations in Washington for America's 250th birthday.

Packed stadiums singing as one about home being "the place I belong" feels like a breath of fresh air at a time when Americans are deeply anxious over concerns like inflation, health



A general view of the atmosphere at the ceremony posthumously honoring John Denver with the 2,531st star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame on October 24, 2014 in Hollywood, California.

care and an unpopular war with Iran.

Trump-backed "Freedom 250" festivities in Washington have drawn partisan crowds, with thin turnout for a much-touted Great American State Fair on the National Mall. World Cup stadiums, in contrast, have been filled day after day

with jubilant fans.

The "Country Roads" appeal lies in the way it conveys "a kinder, simpler era with less conflict and division," said Doug Hartmann, a sociology professor at the University of Minnesota.

"It is not just nostalgia that is at work in this song but also its ambiguity, its vague-

ness the fact that 'country roads' and 'home' are not clearly defined...means that everyone can hear and place and feel themselves therein."

- 'Impossible not to sing' -

The song's starring role at this World Cup wasn't completely random. US Soccer

had submitted to FIFA a postgame playlist that also included Bon Jovi's "Livin' on a Prayer" and Neil Diamond's "Sweet Caroline."

"We were looking for songs that were both representative of American artists and would be great sing-alongs for the crowd," US team spokesman Michael Kammarman said.

With England claiming "Sweet Caroline" first, World Cup 2026 executive Amy Hopfinger chose the well-known John Denver song to close out the June 19 US 2-0 win over Australia. As the first notes played, the sellout crowd of 66,925 started singing, quickly drowning out the loudspeakers.

A similarly passionate serenade followed the victory over Bosnia and Herzegovina on July 1 that sent the Americans into the round of 16, a game watched by a record 33.5 million US viewers.

Coach Mauricio Pochettino was seen pumping his fist and singing along with gusto. □

Disney taps back catalogue again for live-action 'Moana'

Paris, France

Disney's reliance on its back catalogue of characters and franchises will be underlined again next week with the release of a live-action version of "Moana", a remake of the Polynesian-themed animation hit that is only a decade old.

The original "Moana" from 2016 follows a young Polynesian girl who sets off on an adventure across the ocean, accompanied by the demigod Maui, to save her people and their atoll. A sequel came out in 2024 and a third animated instalment is in the works, while the new live-action version starring Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson will hit screens worldwide from Wednesday.

It is a shot-for-shot rehash of the original, with the same songs and similar dialogue, directed by Thomas Kail of "Hamilton" fame.

"The way that the movie

breathes is so different than animation the way that you fill a frame is quite different and I think there's an opportunity to access emotion in a distinct way," he told AFP.

With a budget estimated at 200-250 million dollars, the film is banking on spectacular special effects to draw in crowds at a time when animated sequels

"Toy Story 5" and "Minions & Monsters" are riding high at the box office.

- Nostalgia -

Remakes and franchises have become a cornerstone of modern Hollywood production, despite criticism that they are a sign of declining creativity and risk-taking by the industry's big beasts.

Concepts and characters that are already familiar to viewers are seen as bankable profit-makers by under-pressure studios, while offering attractive merchandising, games and other spin-off possibilities. Disney's appetite for live-action re-makes of its animated hits was whetted by the huge success of 2010's "Alice in Wonderland" by Tim Burton, which grossed more than a billion dollars worldwide.

"Aladdin," "Beauty and the Beast," and "Lilo & Stitch" have each broken the billion-dollar level at the box office since.

"Overall, they've done very well, especially the films based on the Disney Renaissance of the 1980s and 1990s," said Stephane Durand, a pop culture and Disney specialist in France.

"The biggest hits are films that recreate the original almost shot for shot," he

explained. "For people interested in storytelling, it's pretty poor. But as long as the films make a billion dollars, it will go on."

Not all have been a hit, however.

"The Little Mermaid" (2023) earned a lacklustre reception, while "Snow White" (2025) proved a disappointment.

"Studios need to ensure that the charm of the original is retained and need to be extremely judicious with their creative license," Caroline Reid, a journalist at Forbes magazine specialised in the film and entertainment industries, said. But even those that don't draw crowds to cinemas can still turn out to be commercial hits thanks to the rise of streaming.

"Many of the live-action remakes that don't succeed at the box office are hits on streaming. 'The Little Mermaid' is a good example of this," Reid said. □



View of atmosphere at the Los Angeles Premiere of Walt Disney Animation Studios' "Moana 2" at the El Capitan Theater in Hollywood, California on November 25, 2024.

'Not a museum': Slovak UNESCO village strains under tourism

Vlkolínec, Slovakia

"Private property. No entry", "No photography" read the signs on a gate set up in front of a traditional log house in Vlkolínec, a UNESCO-listed Slovak village visited by tens of thousands of tourists a year.

"Are we in a zoo or something?" 68-year-old pensioner Anton Sabucha protested to AFP, nodding to the signs outside his house. Tourists are "going wherever they want, taking pictures and peering around" every day, he complained. He said he and other villagers felt like extras on a film set and he wanted Vlkolínec's UNESCO World Heritage status removed.

Sabucha, the oldest resident, is one of just 17 people who live year-round in the village, struggling to preserve its authenticity and its inhabitants' privacy in the face of the tourism boom.

Vlkolínec, which comprises some 45 wooden houses, attracts around 100,000 tourists a year according to official estimates.

They wander among the houses painted mostly in shades of white, yellow or brown and go biking or hiking in the surrounding hills of



Tourists take photos of traditional log houses at the UNESCO-listed Slovak village of Vlkolínec, near the Central Slovakian town of Ruzomberok on June 6, 2026.

central Slovakia.

- Doctor Zhivago -

UNESCO recognised Vlkolínec in 1993. Two other sites with traditional log houses also have heritage status in neighbouring Hungary and Czech Republic.

Besides stopping at the church, belltower and the granary, tourists can visit the UNESCO centre, which hosts small exhibitions on nature and history and

showcases films shot in the village, including the 1965 classic "Doctor Zhivago".

For the tourists' benefit, Vlkolínec puts on traditional craft demonstrations, from sewing folk costumes and gingerbread decorating to mowing and haymaking. It also stages harvest festivals and reenactments of traditional weddings.

But Sabucha said several of these customs were never genuinely even part of

Vlkolínec's past and others were no longer practiced.

"They're showing them something that's no longer here," he grumbled.

While most residents are not lobbying for the UNESCO label to go, however, they do want their grievances addressed, according to Jan Ondrik, chairman of the Vlkolínec civic association.

"Locals feel the municipality is doing more for the

tourists than for residents," he told AFP.

Vlkolínec doesn't have adequate access roads, parking areas or public toilets needed to cater for the crowds that descend on it. So some visitors may actually "relieve themselves in someone's garden", said Ondrik, who occasionally finds a tourist wandering into his own house.

- Living village -

Miroslav Parobek, 62, head of the cultural and tourism department of Ruzomberok city, which administers the site, rebuffed complaints that the village has lost the qualities for which it gained UNESCO status.

"This is not an open-air museum. It is a living village," he insisted.

He said there were no plans to seek a UNESCO delisting and Ruzomberok was trying to address residents' complaints.

Villagers get an annual 400-euro (\$450) "animation contribution" to compensate for the disruption engendered by tourism, he added.

Vlkolínec's population has shrunk by more than 300 people over the past 150 years. □

U.S. streamers launch new legal fight against French content rules

Paris, France

American streaming platforms Netflix, Disney+ and Amazon's Prime Video said Monday they had filed legal appeals challenging new rules requiring them to allocate 20 percent of their investments in France to animation, documentaries and live performances.

The rules are part of wide-ranging state-backed protection of the French cultural sector that require broadcasters to invest in a range of artforms that have lower commercial potential than classic TV drama or film.

The US streamers are seeking an amendment to a government decree which, since 2021, has required foreign video platforms to finance French audiovisual production and cinema

with a slice of their revenue. Starting in January of this year, an updated version of the decree requires that 20 percent of their annual investments in France be allocated to animated programming, documentaries and live performances.

"These new rules suddenly double our obligation to invest in these genres, target streaming services exclusively and end up dictating our content offerings without taking audience ex-

pectations into account," Pauline Dauvin, vice president of Netflix France, said in an opinion column published in Le Monde newspaper.

The platforms separately filed appeals for "abuse of power" before the Council of State, France's supreme administrative court, after seeing an informal appeal to the prime minister's office turned down, they told AFP, confirming a report by Satellifacts website.

"These new rules go too far ... When regulation takes precedence over editorial freedom, then diversity becomes an exercise in conformity, to the detriment of public expectations," said Dauvin, who noted that Netflix annually spends "250 million euros on series, films and French documentaries."

"Our appeal to the Council of State does not call into question our commitment to French creative production -- on the con-

trary," said a spokesperson for Amazon, the owner of Prime Video, in a statement to AFP.

"It aims to ensure a balanced, fair and legally sound regulatory framework, in the interest of the public, (content) creators and the industry," the U.S. firm continued.

The appeals come with Netflix recently having announced it wants to work toward capping mandatory investments in French content, currently set at the equivalent of 20 percent of revenue in the country.

"This is not a sustainable system for us. It is disproportionate to what we want and can do in France," the platform recently told AFP. This latest appeal comes on top of other legal actions by the American giants. □



This combination of file pictures created on July 6, 2026 shows the Netflix logo in Los Angeles, California on October 7, 2025, the Disney+ logo in San Diego, California on July 24, 2024, and the Prime Video logo in Los Angeles, California on June 22, 2022.

Coffee with a view: tourists flock to Starbucks overlooking North Korea

Gimpo, South Korea

The contrast cannot be starker: selfie-taking tourists sipping coffee at Starbucks an icon of globalization and capitalism while looking out over reclusive, communist North Korea.

Welcome to Aegibong Starbucks in Gimpo less than an hour's drive from South Korea's capital Seoul but a world away from its closed-off northern neighbor less than two kilometers (1.2 miles) across the Han river.

Perched on a hilltop beneath the Aegibong Peace Ecopark observatory where telescopes peek into the secluded state, the shop has drawn tens of thousands from South Korea and abroad since opening in November 2024.

Kim Jong-hyun, who lives in San Diego and was visiting South Korea with his family, said it was the irony of the contrast that drew him to the hilltop.

"When I heard there was a Starbucks here, I naturally thought I had to come and see it for myself. It's quite unusual," he told AFP.

Customers need to book ahead to enter the park



A visitor walks past a Starbucks store offering a view of North Korea at a South Korean observation deck at Aegibong Peace Ecopark in Gimpo on July 1, 2026.

that houses the coffee house.

They then travel from a parking lot in a shuttle operated by park authorities and cross a military checkpoint guarded by armed South Korean marines.

The journey is part of the experience walking the last stretch inside South

Korea while looking out on agricultural and mountain landscapes in a country whose outside image the government under Kim Jong Un seeks to manage entirely.

Very few foreign journalists or tourists mainly from allies Russia and China can enter North Korea, and then under tightly controlled con-

ditions. South and North Korea are technically at war because their 1950-53 conflict ended in an armistice rather than a peace treaty. The nations are separated by an ironically-named Demilitarized Zone.

The South, an important US security ally, rose from the ruins of war to become an advanced economy home

to Samsung Electronics and other tech giants.

But the North -- ruled with an iron fist by a third-generation leader -- is crippled by sanctions over its pursuit of nuclear weapons.

- 'On a different scale' -

James Seymour, an Irish tourist, told AFP the scene from the lookout point was one of "polar opposites."

"We're from Belfast and we're kind of used to war... the Troubles and all that if you know what I mean," he said, referring to the sectarian conflict that gripped Northern Ireland in the late 20th century.

But standing near the border, sipping coffee from a global chain while looking at the North's nondescript low-rise buildings, was "on a different scale completely", he said.

"You couldn't get any more American than Starbucks and you couldn't get any further than America than, you know... North Korea."

The number of visitors to Aegibong Peace Ecopark has more than doubled since the Starbucks opened, according to figures provided by park management.

The number of foreign visitors last year rose 275 percent to 56,829 from a year earlier, with Chinese tourists accounting for the largest share, nearly a third.

Lee Chun-woo of the Gimpo Cultural Foundation, which oversees the park, told AFP the increase was "totally attributable to the Starbucks store".

- 'Death to Communism' -

Starbucks Korea said it chose the setting for the "scenic confluence of the Han and Imjin rivers" that offer visitors a "unique place to relax amid nature". In a statement to AFP, it did not mention the proximity of the 136-square-metre (1,464 square foot) store to North Korea. But Chung Yong-jin, chairman of the Shinsegae Group that operates Starbucks Korea under a licensing agreement, has been more vocal about the South's secretive neighbor. □

Kenya 'Birdman' is internet hit but worries health officials

Nairobi, Kenya

A formerly homeless man in Nairobi has become a viral sensation after years of rescuing and living with injured birds, but authorities are worried about disease risks.

Rodgers Oloo Magutha

found purpose and an escape from the depression of living on the streets by caring for his avian friends. By 2024, he was living in central Nairobi when massive protests erupted all around him, and images of Magutha walking calmly

through the unrest with a kite on his head made him an internet sensation.

He now has a one-room home on the outskirts of the city, as well as tens of thousands of followers on TikTok and Instagram who watch him living alongside kites, crows, storks and many other birds.

They wander freely around his home, and flock around him as he walks through the streets where he earns a modest living from collecting scrap and recycling.

"I love rescuing birds," he told AFP, describing himself as an "urban bird enthusiast".

They love him in return. He has rescued more than 20, including a marabou stork, cattle egret, African sacred ibis, and a barn owl, who have all become companions over the

years. Lately, however, his passion has drawn criticism.

Nairobi city officials called on him to release his current companions after a video of him eating with them from the same plate raised fears of a health hazard.

Magutha dismissed the concerns.

"I've been living on the streets where we've been eating together, we've been sleeping together in the cold, but nothing ever happened to me," he told AFP.

He also insisted that the birds are free to leave whenever they are ready. "The mission started for me to rescue them, to give them a safe space where they can stay without any disturbance, where they can feel free," he said. □



Rodgers Oloo Magutha, 28, popularly known as Nairobi Birdman, caresses some of the wild birds under his care before feeding them at his one-room apartment in Kayole, a low-income neighborhood on the outskirts of Nairobi, on July 4, 2026.

Basic driving rules on Aruba: Roundabouts

(Oranjestad)—Have you ever felt confused when you're driving on the highways or backstreets of Aruba? Then we present a simple guide to some of the basic rules of Aruban traffic, along with some tips for things to look out for.

Speed limit

Legally, the speed limit on the four-lane highways is 80 km/h. This speed limit also counts for the main roads that are connected to the highways. The minimum speed is 50 km/h. Most people drive around 60 km/h on the main roads and about 70 km/h on the highways. There are also areas that indicate a speed limit on a sign; these are usually around populated and school areas.

The four-lane highways contain the left-lane, also known as the "fast" lane for each direction. Here is where vehicles can drive up to the maximum speed. However, legally it is not permitted to drive for long periods of time on the left lane. This lane is primarily designed for drivers to switch lanes before a roundabout, for example, if your exit on the roundabout is on your far left. The general lane to drive in—both at maximum and minimum speed—is on the right lane.

Roundabouts

Speaking of roundabouts, it is important to know where you have to enter and drive on the roundabout to make your exit. A good rule of thumb is to count the exits starting from your right side. So, exit 1 would be on your right; exit 2 would be straight ahead; exit 3 would be on your far left and exit 4 would lead to the road paralleled to the one you're on, heading in the other direction.

Most roundabouts have these 4 exits, so they are relatively simple. When you're driving on the four-lane highway, it is important to know when to switch to the left lane to make your exit: if your exit is on your far left (exit 3), then you need



to switch to the left lane on the high way before nearing the roundabout so you can take the path that leads you directly to your exit. If your exit is on your right or if you're going straight ahead, you can keep driving in the right lane of the highway.

It's also important to know that vehicles about to enter the roundabout must yield to those already on it. A good rule of thumb is to look out if someone is coming from your left side.

However, other roundabouts can be quite tricky to navigate...

Watty Vos Boulevard (the "paperclip" roundabout)

Probably the biggest roundabout on the island, the "paperclip" roundabout on the Watty Vos Boulevard is one of the trickier roundabouts that could—and has—caused confusion among both tourists and locals. However, once you take a good look at it, it's fairly simple. The basis is just the same as a regular roundabout (left exit? left lane! etc.), but instead of having four different exits like on a regular roundabout, now you have two extra; one on the right and the other on the left side of the roundabout. The rules don't change at all, you

just have to keep an extra eye open.

Airport roundabout

Ah, yes. The infamous airport roundabout. The favorite roundabout amongst local, because of its easy (hard) lanes that never (always) cause confusion among drivers. Sarcasm aside, this roundabout can be tricky to enter, especially when you're driving from the direction of the airport heading. When you're driving away from the airport reaching the roundabout, you'll be faced with three lanes. The far right lane is to take the exit 1 out heading east (right lane of highway). The middle exit is

used for exit 1 (left lane of highway), 2 and 3. The far left exit is used to only exit on exit 3 (left lane of highway) and 4.

"Las Americas" roundabout

The Las Americas roundabout is located farther west from the airport roundabout. This roundabout may look like a regular roundabout—and for the most part, it is. However, when you are driving from the east going in the direction of town, please take note that there are two exits on your right.

When you're driving towards this roundabout, you'll notice that the road becomes wider, splitting into two lanes. The right lane is used to take the first and second exit on the right. If you want to exit straight ahead, you must drive on the left lane!

It's always scary to drive in new places where the traffic may look and work differently, but once you get it right once, you'll get the hang of it in no time. Additionally, all roundabouts and roads on Aruba have signs and arrows painted on the road to help guide you. So take your time, keep your eyes open and don't forget to wear a seat belt! ☐



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 beau-



ty essentials and services for hair, nails, and makeup, 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 Cantina, 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. □

Planning on snorkeling? Get to know our Candelchi!

ORANJESTAD—If you're ever planning on snorkeling during your vacation on Aruba, you may spot fish that you can't recognize.

One of these may be the "Candelchi" (Squirrelfish), a common, yet shy fish that swims all year long in the waters of Aruba.

Let's talk about the names of fish. Do you know your fish? The Department of Agriculture, Livestock, and Fisheries, known as Santa

Rosa, offers this informative article that illustrates some fish and their names in Papiamentu.

tween the scales along the body. They have hard fins and are always armed. Over at our sister island Curaçao, they are called "bari di clabo" (nail barrel) for that reason.



Candelchi, Squirrelfish, *Holocentrus adscensionis*:

Candelchi actually refers to the entire squirrelfish family or, as some say, when we say candelchi, we mean several different species but without distinguishing them by species. In this picture, we are showing the most common one in our waters, which is called squirrelfish in English or scientifically known as *Holocentrus adscensionis*.

Under candelchi, we in Aruba generally refer to all the different species of squirrelfish. They all look alike and it's really difficult to distinguish between them. The squirrelfish family is distinguished by the following characteristics. They are heart-shaped with pink or red hues and often show heart-shaped streaks be-

In our waters, there are 7 to 8 types or species present and they are sometimes caught and seen occasionally. They can be distinguished by different marks such as color on the dorsal spine or marks on the body.

In Aruba:

Candelchi are found on reefs or areas with structure in the water where they can hide. Although they prefer to hunt for food at night, they are also active during the day. They are edible and delicious when prepared dry and crispy with lime. It is particularly challenging to scale the fish, which is why it is not one of the favorites among fishermen. They often live in groups. □

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National Park Arikok: Aruba's biggest nature conservation

The National Park Arikok comprises almost 18 % of the island. Its rugged terrain, desert-like hills filled with tall cacti, breathtaking coastline and protected local flora and fauna welcome you to be explored. There are numerous animals to discover, for example the bright blue Cododo or mighty Warawara.

The national park Arikok takes you on a memorable journey of the islands past offering unique geological, cultural and historical sites. These can all be enjoyed and explored either on your own or during guided tours. A wide variety of educational and informative programs and fun activities is available.

Did you know that four of the seven species of sea turtle lay their eggs on Aruba's beaches? In the national park, a Least Tern (*Sternula antillarum*) keeps a strict eye on a very special event taking place below on the beach: A majestic Leatherback (*Dermochelys coriacea*) heading back to the ocean after laying her eggs during breeding season. Sea turtles prefer nesting in the cool and dark hours of the night. And hatchlings usually wait for the cue of cooling surface sand before emerging.

Nature Conservation

The protected area of National Park Arikok was officially established in 2000. Arikok National Park is a 34 square kilometers (7907 acres) of natural area, located at the north-eastern



part of Aruba which contains examples of most of the island's flora and fauna against a backdrop of great geological complexity. We are proud to state that approximately 18% of the total land area of Aruba is assigned as a National Park, to protect and preserve the flora, fauna, geology and historical remains present within Arikok National Park.

The Landscape

There is a great geological variety within the park. The main aspects are the rough hills of the volcanic Aruba lava formation, the mysterious rocks of the batholithic quartz-diorite/tonalite, and the limestone rocks from fossilized coral. The two tallest hills on the island are situated within the park. Jamanota hill 188 meters (617 ft) and Arikok hill 176 meters (577 ft), from which the name of the park is derived.

The line of the permanently wind-and-wave beaten North Coast is broken by several bays (boca's). Most of them are small yet impressive

inlets at the mouth of dry riverbeds. Some of these bays (boca's) are spectacular sights, adorned with white, sandy beaches and sand dunes, as is the case at Boca Prins and Dos Playa.

Arikok is also home to Conchi, Aruba's most important natural attraction; also known as The Natural Pool. The journey to the Pool is and adventure by itself and only possible by foot, horse, or 4x4 vehicle. As of 2020, ATV's and UTV's are not allowed in the park due to its significant impact on nature.

Cultural and Historical components

There are a number of sites within the park that attest to the history of Aruba. The Caquetío Indians left rock paintings in Cunucu Arikok and Fontein Cave.

Old plantation (Cunucus) sites tell the story of an active yet challenging agricultural past.

These Cunucus were also residential areas for the few

families that worked the land. These families found ways to survive in the difficult conditions, and were able to erect their homes with materials found in the area. Two of these adobe houses have been restored. Park rangers are learning many of the old building techniques in order to preserve this unique Aruban mud-house. At Cunucu Arikok and near Plantation Prins you can find these adobe houses.

Park Management

The Aruba Conservation Foundation (ACF), formerly known as Aruba National Park Foundation, manages the national park. This foundation was established in July 2003. In February 2017, mangrove and wetland RAMSAR site #198 Spanish Lagoon was annexed to Arikok National Park due to its importance as a feeding and breeding area for water birds and as a nursery area for a variety of marine organisms. With this addition, the areas under management increased by 70 hectares while the amount of spe-

cies of flora and fauna to be conserved to over 250. On December 21st, 2018 (AB 2018 no. 77) Parke Marino Aruba – currently consisting of four marine protected areas (MPAs) – was officially established and subsequently brought under management of ACF. In 2019, preliminary management plan for marine were introduced for Parke Marino to conserve reefs, seagrass beds, and mangrove forests and in 2020 ACF was given additional management areas such as the Saliñas (Druif, Malmok, Cerca, Palm Beach, Bubali etc.) and also additional areas such as Rooi Manonchi, Ser'I Teishi etc. Managed areas can be seen here: <https://acf.aw/>.

Visit the National Park Arikok to see the wonder of Aruba's nature. The visitor center in San Fuego and entrance in Vader Piet (San Nicolas) is open daily from 8:00 AM to 16:00 PM. Contact the ACF via e-mail, info@acf.aw or call +297 585 1234 for more information.



Cas di Torto



Cas di torto (also called cas di lodo or cas di bara) is a traditional building technique from Aruba. It refers to a type of houses made of mud with rounded corners. These houses were usually found around the plantations. The few structures that still exist are the

oldest structures that are left standing in the country.

The technique probably came over from the Venezuelan Paraguaná Peninsula in the 18th century. Existing houses date back 150 years. Until 1925 many houses on Aruba were built

using this technique, afterwards it fell into disuse. In 2005 there were 62 cas di torto houses left, of which only four were in good condition.

The skeleton of the houses is made up of round wooden poles placed with



distances of 1.5 feet between them. Branches are interwoven between them, completing the structural support. On this basis, loam is applied, mixed with sand, water and paragrass. This is then coated with aloe vera juice, which gives the white color and helps to protect against the weather.

On top of the poles pieces of wood are fitted that serve as the base for the roof beams. Until 1815 the roofing usually consisted of corn (maize) stems, afterwards the nuclei of columnar cacti were used. The floor is made of loam,

mixed with cement or cow dung.

The houses were usually divided into a kitchen, a living room, a porch and a bedroom. In the kitchen would be a wooden or metal barrel for storing water that was collected in small rain ponds. Around this barrel a thick loam wall would be erected. Often large families would live in these houses; people would sleep on mats on the floor.

If you visit the Arikok National Park you will be able to see a very nice cas di torto. □

Fun facts about the 'Lisinbein'

The 'Lisinbein' (Scolopendra gigantea), also known as the Giant Centipede, is one of the largest centipedes in the world and is found in Aruba. Its size and hunting prowess make it a fascinating, if often misunderstood, creature.

Despite its fearsome reputation, it plays a crucial ecological role that often goes unnoticed.

As an apex invertebrate predator, Scolopendra gigantea helps maintain balance in the ecosystem.

Moreover, they themselves are a food source for birds such as the Crested Caracara (Warawara) and the Aruba burrowing owl (Shoco).

It controls populations of smaller invertebrates and even small vertebrates, ensuring that no species overpopulates, which could disrupt local biodiversity. Its presence can indicate a healthy, functioning ecosystem. Its sensitivity to environmental changes makes it a bioindicator of ecological balance.

It can reach an impressive length of up to 30 centimeters (approx. 12 inches) and live for around 5 to 10 years in the wild. Its size and longevity makes it a significant and long-term part of the ecosystem.

A mother's love

In Scolopendra species, the 'mother' typically exhibits maternal care by curling around her eggs and newly hatched young. She stays coiled around the clutch, protecting it from predators and fungi, which are serious risks in the moist environments these centipedes often inhabit. The mother maintains a clean environment for the eggs by carefully grooming them, which helps prevent fungal growth that could endanger the brood. This behavior may continue until the young centipedes have undergone their first molt, making them more capable of independent survival.



This form of parental care is beneficial in increasing the survival rates of offspring, as the mother's protection provides a safe 'environment' during their vulnerable developmental stages. It's a fascinating adaptation because it shows a form of care that resembles more complex behaviors observed in vertebrates.

No bark, but all bite!

The lisinbein is known locally for having a really painful sting. While venomous, the Lisinbein is generally not aggressive toward humans unless provoked. Its role as a guardian of balance in the ecosystem helps protect the natural beauty of Aruba by keeping the ecosystem in harmony. Editor's note: Information and pictures provided by Ms. Natasha Silva from the Aruba Conservation Foundation. □

Feeling parched? Grab refreshment by the side of the road!

(Oranjestad)—Touring the island in the blistering heat can leave one feeling rather thirsty and looking to cool off. Luckily there are a few stands along the roads of Aruba that can offer you just what you need: a nice, refreshing beverage!

These "coconut stands" can be found at several locations on the island, where you can cool off with delicious smoothies, drinks, snacks, and of course, fresh coconuts!

Packed with natural electrolytes, coconuts are a fantastic choice for hydrating yourself under the blazing Aruban sun. Coconuts also contain antioxidants that can help reduce stress and protect your cells. So while you're having fun exploring the island, know you are well-protected with a fresh-cut coconut in your hand. □

The Bushiribana Gold Mill Ruins and its history

(Oranjestad)—The Bushiribana Gold Mill Ruins is one of the most visited places by tourists on the island, as it lies along the northern coast line near the mini pool and on the way to the Natural Bridge. Despite its seemingly plain appearance, this ruin represents one of the most important histories of the island: The Aruban Gold Rush.

Built in 1872 by English company Aruba Island Gold Mining Company Ltd, the gold mill at Bushiribana was constructed in the area where most gold was found by locals. The story of gold on Aruba actually dates back to 1725, when a first exploration for gold on the island was commissioned by the Dutch West India Company. Under the leadership of Mr. Paulus Printz, a three-year search was conducted on Aruba, to no avail. Though they found some gold, it was enough to motivate a further search, and the assignment was discontinued by Printz himself.



It wasn't until 100 years later, in 1824, when a young boy found a lump of gold while out herding his father's sheep. His father took it to a local merchant who then sold the lump for \$70. Unbeknownst to the boy

and his father, they quite literally struck gold, and as word got out, a gold fever spread among the locals who started searching for more gold. About 25 pounds worth was found.



At the same time, the Aruban government took immediate actions, and informed Curacao that gold was found. At first, everyone could look for gold, as long as they sold it to the government. However, after some time, the government decided to implement stricter rules and banned local search parties.

Over the years, concession-holding had seen different companies from around the world, all of which used primitive methods to dig and carve out gold from the rocks. Aruba Island Gold Mining Compa-

ny Ltd. was no different, but used a unique method that involved grinding the rocks and letting the dust be blown away by the strong northeast wind, leaving clumps of gold behind. The next step was melting the gold and letting it attach to quicksilver in order to obtain pure gold. All these processes were done at the Bushiribana Gold Mill.

The gold mill itself had a short life-span: only 10 years in service, but its structure remained relatively solid till this day, and is now a historical remnant. □

Sources: Etnia Nativa

Lessons from our elders: Plants and fruits for medicinal use



(Oranjestad)— Though western medicine is now widely used for common illnesses and to keep our bodies healthy and happy, it is still very common in every household in Aruba (and around the world) to have staple home remedies that is passed on through generations. Here are some tips that our elders have passed on to us over the years.

Sweet potato

According to our elders, sweet potato is mostly useful for low blood pressure.

People who suffer from low blood pressure were advised to eat sweet potato 2 to 3 times a week. However, if you have high blood pressure, it is best not to eat too much sweet potato, as this raises blood pressure. Sweet potatoes are also great for people who work hard labor jobs, and it's been said to be aid blood circulation in the body, as well as help those with hemorrhoids or diarrhea.

Many of our elders opted to plant sweet potatoes themselves, mostly because of

how easy it was to do so. Cut the end of a sweet potato let it sit in shallow water until it starts to sprout. Then you may plant it in the ground. Sweet potatoes need plenty of water to grow, especially in the first week in the ground. It was said that once you start to notice the ground crack underneath the flowers, it is time to harvest. This should happen around month 3.

Pomegranate

Pomegranates are also

one of the easier fruits to plant and harvest. Originated from Persia, this plant can grow almost everywhere. In Aruba, there are many homes that have a tiny or big pomegranate tree. You may be wondering what the difference is between a small and big pomegranate tree, for which the answer is based on harvest time. Tiny trees produce tinier pomegranates that can be harvested early on. Contrarily, big trees produce bigger

pomegranates, but they need enough time to fully ripen before harvesting, otherwise you might end up with bitter seeds. Pomegranate trees are also very easy to plant. In essence, if you just throw the seeds on the ground, they could grow into a tree.

In terms of medicinal use, pomegranate skins are said to have a few benefits for our health. According to customs, pomegranate skin tea can help those that suffer from diarrhea. Dried pomegranate skin tea is also good for people who have worms. Pomegranate flowers can be boiled to make a drink and this can be used for irritated gums; just take a swig and let the tea sit in your mouth for a couple minutes. □

Source: Remedi i Kustumber di nos Bieunan (Medicine and Customs of our Elderly) by Dinah Veeris

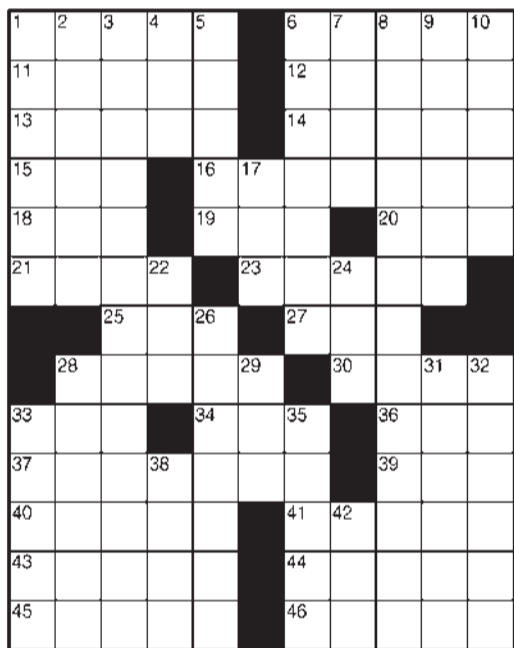


CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH



- ACROSS**
- 41 Blown away
 - 1 Beer amounts
 - 6 Pet store buys
 - 11 Birth-related
 - 12 Calendar entry
 - 13 Texas landmark
 - 14 Joyful
 - 15 Under the weather
 - 16 Underwear type
 - 18 Maui souvenir
 - 19 Naughty act
 - 20 Wisdom bringer
 - 21 Headliner
 - 23 Sculpting medium
 - 25 "Platoon" setting
 - 27 Bro's sibling
 - 28 Moving about
 - 30 Endure
 - 33 Nest egg acct.
 - 34 Bashful pal
 - 36 First numero
 - 37 MIT rival
 - 39 Boar's mate
 - 40 Michelle or Malia
- DOWN**
- 1 Slow movers
 - 2 Bill holder
 - 3 Soppres-sata, e.g.
 - 4 Whale group
 - 5 Casino machines
 - 6 Sticks
 - 7 Declare
 - 8 Knack-wurst, e.g.
 - 9 Incense
 - 10 Fashion
 - 17 That guy's
 - 22 Maze runner
 - 24 Motor need
 - 26 Home of many OPEC nations
 - 28 Mecca setting
 - 29 Bird of myth
 - 31 Deceived
 - 32 Castle parts
 - 33 Pics to click
 - 35 Vouchers
 - 38 Govt. agents
 - 42 Goose egg



3-10

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.

3-10 CRYPTOQUOTE

S G B Q B ' N Y K S G H Y D C K Q B
B C Z T Q Q T N N H Y D S G T Y S K G T O B
B T Q Y B E S G B E H N P T O K Q K P T
A B Q R B A S H O B T Y H C T I .

— CHRGTBI RGTZKY

Cryptoquote: YOU'VE GOT TO JUMP OFF CLIFFS ALL THE TIME AND BUILD YOUR WINGS ON THE WAY DOWN. — RAY BRADBURY

Helpful tips for your stay on Aruba

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

Electrical power



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

Drinking water

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

Supermarket hours

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

Safety

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



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

JULY CRUISE SHIP SCHEDULE

07 TUE	CANIVAL HORIZON Arrival: 8:00 Departure: 22:00 Berth: B GRANDEUR OF THE SEAS Arrival: 8:00 Departure: 23:00 Berth: C
08 WED	FREEWINDS Arrival: 8:00 Departure: Berth: E
12 SUN	FREEWINDS Arrival: Departure: 24:00 Berth: E
14 TUE	GRANDEUR OF THE SEAS Arrival: 8:00 Departure: 23:00 Berth: B ADVENTURE OF THE SEAS Arrival: 11:30 Departure: 23:00 Berth: C CARNIVAL VISTA Arrival: 13:00 Departure: 23:00 Berth: I
15 WED	ALLURE OF THE SEAS Arrival: 7:00 Departure: 16:00 Berth: I FREEWINDS Arrival: 8:00 Departure: Berth: E
19 SUN	FREEWINDS Arrival: Departure: 24:00 Berth: E
21 TUE	CARNIVAL HORIZON Arrival: 8:00 Departure: 22:00 Berth: B GRANDEUR OF THE SEAS Arrival: 8:00 Departure: 23:00 Berth: C

SUDOKU

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

King Classic Sudoku

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

Difficulty: ★★

Answer to previous puzzle

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

Difficulty: ★

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7/6

Japan space probe skims asteroid in test for planetary defence

Tokyo, Japan

A Japanese space probe performed a flyby of a near-Earth asteroid on Sunday, in a test mission for technology that could help protect the planet from space rocks.

The fridge-sized Hayabusa2 was due to fly within 800 meters (0.5 miles) of asteroid Torifune, Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA) scientists said earlier, a trial run to see whether such a probe could deflect a potentially dangerous space rock away from Earth.

The mission comes after NASA deliberately smashed a spacecraft into the 160-metre-wide Dimorphos asteroid in 2022, successfully altering its orbit around a larger space rock.

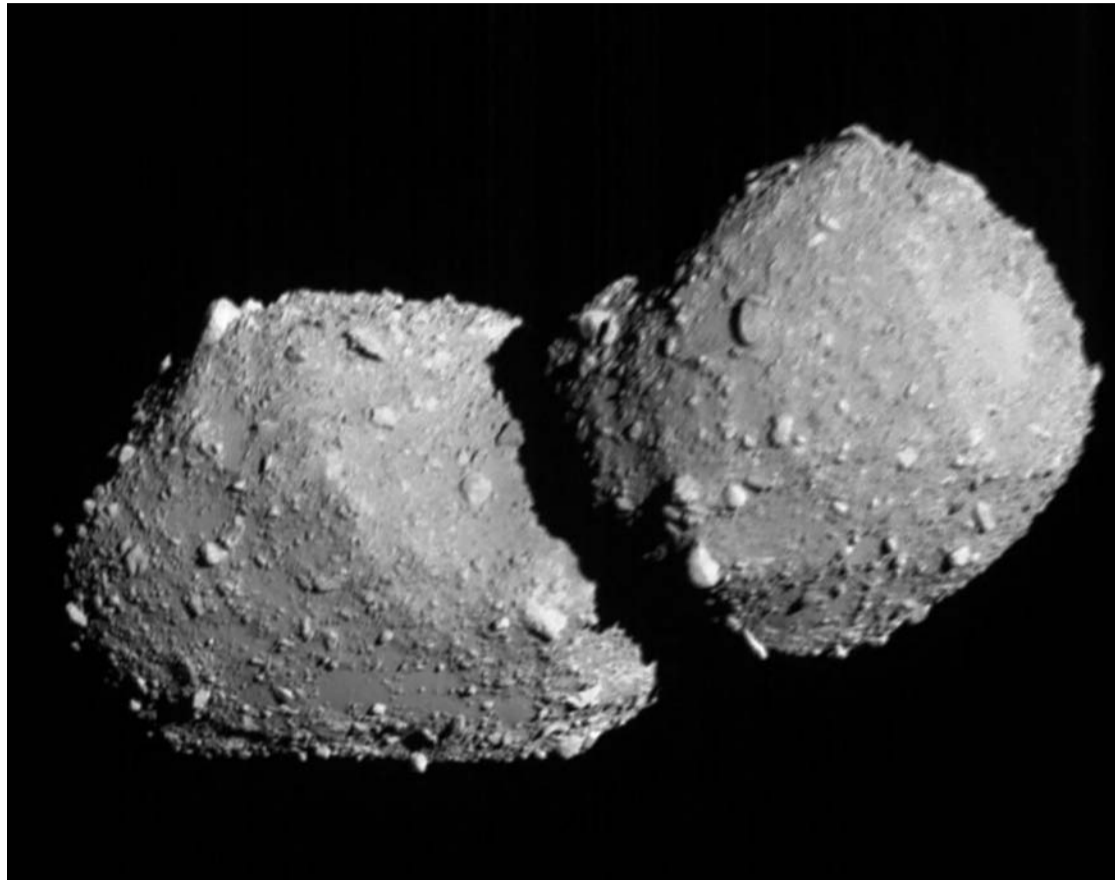
Moving at a speed of more than 18,000 kilometers (11,185 miles) per hour, Hayabusa2 was not intended to collide with Torifune. Instead, scientists wanted to assess whether they could precisely control the trajectory of the probe, should it ever need to perform a deflection.

"At 6:35 pm (0935 GMT)... Hayabusa2 conducted a flyby of Torifune and the spacecraft is working normally," a JAXA spokeswoman told AFP, declining to give her name.

Online footage supplied by JAXA showed scientists applauding in a control room.

"I was nervous, I felt on edge the whole time... But I'm really glad we were able to see it through to the end," one of the scientists told the JAXA broadcast.

If it is confirmed that the space probe indeed came within 800 meters of Torifune, the mission would be one of closest flybys of a near-Earth asteroid ever. "It's as difficult as trying to shoot through a one-yen coin somewhere within the area stretching from Okinawa to Hokkaido," Yuya Mimasu of JAXA said earlier, referring to Japan's



This handout image taken by the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA) on July 5, 2026 and released by Jiji Press on July 6, 2026 shows a view of the asteroid Torifune during a flyby of the Hayabusa2 space probe.

southernmost and northernmost islands.

- Bare rock or sand? -

Cameras on board Hayabusa2 are also recording data from the asteroid's surface including geographical features, its texture and temperature vital information for a potential planetary defense mission. "Is the surface consisting of bare rock, or cover(ed) by boulder fields or sand beaches? Only images

taken by a spacecraft can reveal this information," Patrick Michel, project scientist at the European Space Agency, told AFP prior to the flyby.

"If we want to deflect an asteroid by an impact, the response is not the same if the asteroid is behaving like a sponge or if it behaves like a very solid material," he said.

The space probe's mission is not based on any actual threat to Earth from an asteroid. □



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

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ARUBA TODAY NEWS



U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres delivers the opening speech of the first Global Dialogue on AI Governance, in Geneva on July 6, 2026.

Don't let AI shape humanity's future: U.N. chief

Geneva, Switzerland

The United Nations chief called Monday for a global governance system to shape artificial intelligence for the good of humanity, warning against allowing the technology to "vibe-code" our future itself.

With AI advancing at "run-away speed", UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres cautioned that "an experiment is being run on our own societies, without a plan and without consent".

"That is not sustainable," he insisted, speaking in Geneva at the opening of the first Global Dialogue on AI Governance.

The two-day event is bringing together more than 4,000 participants, representing governments, tech companies, academia and civil society, to launch an inclusive discussion on how best to harness a technology that is already rapidly transforming our world. "The question is whether we will shape this transformation together, or let it shape us," Guterres told the gathering.

He warned that AI systems were "no longer tools awaiting instruction".

"They are writing code, acting online and making choices with less and less human oversight," he said.

"Our institutions were built to govern machines that follow commands. They

are not ready for machines that decide."

Guterres voiced concern at how AI was obscuring what is true and false.

He also warned there was a growing tendency to leave important tasks up to the technology and blindly trust the results.

So-called "vibe-coding", or using AI to tell a machine what you want instead of coding it yourself, "can do wonders", he acknowledged.

"But we cannot vibe-code the truth. We cannot vibe-code the future of humanity."

- Major risks -

Another risk flagged by Guterres was the concentration of power in a handful of AI companies and in a handful of countries.

Most countries "have had no say in decisions that will shape their futures", he warned.

Countries, he said, now faced a stark choice, "between governing by design and drifting by default".

The U.N. chief highlighted the potential of AI technologies for everything from accelerating development to improving healthcare and providing broader access to education.

But he insisted developments needed to be guided by several key priorities, including safety and respect for human rights, to

ensure that people everywhere reap the benefits.

He called for "common methods to evaluate and verify risks" and jointly-agreed standards, particularly for ensuring the safety of children accessing AI systems.

"We do not let medicine reach a child until it is proven safe. We test every toy," Guterres pointed out.

He called for an AI Child Safety Pledge, requiring companies to prove that any system accessible to children is safe and has zero tolerance for sexual abuse. The systems must also connect any child showing signs of distress to real human support, he said.

"No child should be a guinea pig for unregulated AI," he insisted.

- 'Killer robots' -

Boosting AI capacity and access in developing countries was also key, he said, to ensure that the existing, deep digital divide does not "harden into an AI divide".

Guterres said he would urge the UN General Assembly to create a Global Fund for AI, "to build skills, data and affordable computing power everywhere". General Assembly President Annalena Baerbock said it was "crystal clear" that the fund would be established, but did not provide specific amounts. □



South Korean President Lee Jae Myung (C), Samsung Electronics Chairman Lee Jae-yong (R) and SK Group Chairman Chey Tae-won (L) hold hands after a briefing announcement of public-private collaboration projects at the presidential Blue House in Seoul on June 29, 2026.

South Korea to use AI tax windfall to fund public projects

Seoul, South Korea

South Korea's government plans to use a windfall in tax income from artificial intelligence chipmakers to set up a fund for public infrastructure projects, the presidential office said.

Rising global demand for advanced memory chips used in AI data centers has helped South Korean semiconductor giants post record profits this year, boosting national economic growth.

The success of Samsung Electronics and SK hynix in particular has led to a corresponding increase in government tax revenues.

During a meeting between the government and the ruling party on Sunday, presidential chief of staff Kang Hoon-sik said the "future response fund" would help finance large-scale projects centered around AI and the semiconductor industry.

It would also help to reduce inequality and support young people in accessing housing, founding startups and finding jobs, he said in comments shared with AFP on Monday.

"The excess tax revenue generated from the semiconductor boom at this critical moment for Korea's future should not be spent carelessly," Kang said.

He did not reveal how much money would be in the fund, but said the government would review how to use it at a fiscal strategy meeting this month before seeking public input.

In an interview with the Dong-A Ilbo daily published Monday, Kang said some would be used to expand the infrastructure that supports chip factories, such as electricity and water supplies.

Samsung's shares surged more than 170 percent and SK hynix's more than 300 percent in the first half of the year -- taking both firms' market capitalization past \$1 trillion.

Samsung is expected to announce strong preliminary second-quarter earnings on Tuesday, while SK hynix plans to raise 45 trillion won (\$29 billion) through a Nasdaq listing.

Both firms are involved in a massive public-private investment of 800 trillion won (around \$520 billion), announced last week, to build a new semiconductor fabrication hub in the southwest.

South Korea's AI semiconductor boom has fuelled debate over how the tax windfall should be used. □

Pogacar back in 'special' yellow after Tour de France stage three victory

Les Angles, France

Reigning champion Tadej Pogacar won the third stage of the Tour de France on Monday to snatch the "special" leader's yellow jersey from rival Jonas Vingegaard.

The world champion and Vingegaard are dead level on time but Pogacar took over the race lead by virtue of his better finishing positions in the opening three stages.

It was Pogacar's 22nd Tour stage victory and his 10th in the Pyrenees.

The 27-year-old Slovenian finished two seconds ahead of the Dane and also earned four more bonus seconds than Vingegaard to wipe out his six-second deficit from the start of the day.

"Of course, to take the yellow jersey is the dream for any cyclist of any age," said Pogacar.

"For me it's, I don't know which time already, but every time I can get it again on my shoulders, it feels really special."

Former Giro d'Italia winner Richard Carapaz came past French teenage



UAE Team Emirates - XRG's Slovenian rider Tadej Pogacar cycles to the finish line to win the 3rd stage ahead of Team Visma | Lease a Bike's Danish rider Jonas Vingegaard (rear) during the 113th edition of the Tour de France cycling race, 196 km between Granollers and Les Angles in southern France, on July 6, 2026.

prodigy Paul Seixas to take third in the same time as Vingegaard at the end of a 196km stage which started in Granollers, Spain and finished in Les Angles in the French Pyrenees.

Despite a plea from organisers for fans to stay away because of raging wildfires just 70 kilometers away from

the finish, there were plenty of people by the side of the roads in France.

Olympic champion Remco Evenepoel was eighth at 4sec and remains third overall but fell to 23sec off the lead.

Sunday's stage two winner Isaac Del Toro is fourth overall at 24sec after finishing eighth, with Spaniard Juan

Ayuso (27sec) and Seixas (48sec) rounding out the top six.

After Pogacar let his UAE Team Emirates team-mate Del Toro take the victory on Sunday's finish on the Montjuic hill in Barcelona, this time it was the Mexican who led out his team leader for a decisive sprint to the line.

Pogacar left no doubt that he had his eyes on both the stage victory and the yellow jersey with a dominant win. "It's because of Isaac today (that) I got some extra power in the final," said Pogacar.

"He committed more than 100 percent in the final climb and all the team actually.

"In the middle of the stage we decided that it's possible to go for the stage win and I'm really, really happy that we started the Tour like this."

- No scraps for anyone -

On a day which looked ideally suited to a breakaway, UAE left no scraps for anyone else, leading to some complaints from other teams and commentators that they were killing the spectacle with their domination.

UAE sporting director Mauro Gianetti said the stage was too tough for a breakaway to stay away.

"It was an unfavorable route (for the breakaway) because it was very demanding, there was more than 4,000-metres of elevation gain," said the Italian. □

Gotterup wins PGA John Deere after Kohles splashdown

Washington, United States

Chris Gotterup won the John Deere Classic on Sunday for his third PGA Tour title of the year after co-leader Ben Kohles plunked his approach into water on the final hole.

Gotterup, who began the day five strokes adrift, fired a nine-under par 62 in the last round to finish 72 holes on 20-under 264 at TPC Deere Run in Silvis, Illinois.

"When I come down the stretch, I like to think I'm going to close it out and I did a great job of that today," Gotterup said.

With brother Patrick serving as caddie, Gotterup captured the top prize of \$1.584 million from the \$8.8 million tournament as he heads for Europe to de-

fend his title next week at the Scottish Open.

"To come out here and have Patrick out with me just so awesome," Gotterup said, breaking down in tears. "Just a great week. "He just kept me in it all week. We were joking and having a good time. Just a fun week."

Gotterup took his fifth career PGA triumph and third tour victory of the year after winning January's Sony Open in Hawaii and February's Phoenix Open.

World number 14 Gotterup made nine birdies to shoot the low round of the week, but was still deadlocked for the lead with fellow American Kohles as his rival stood in the 18th fairway.

Kohles, who was chasing

his first PGA Tour title in his 120th tour start, hooked his approach left and into a water hazard, then missed a 45-foot par putt to give Gotterup the victory.

Kohles, ranked 169th in the world, then missed a bogey putt from inside four feet before making a double bogey at 18 and finish two behind Gotterup and one adrift of runner-up Max Homa in a share of third with countrymen Lucas Glover and Lee Hodges.

"I was a little in between. I hit an 8-iron and thought 9 was going to be too short," Kohles said. "I was just trying to hit a three-quarter punch shot. Just tugged it a little, and ended up in the water.

"Tough way to finish, es-



Chris Gotterup of the United States poses with the winner's trophy after winning the John Deere Classic 2026 at TPC Deere Run on July 05, 2026 in Silvis, Illinois.

pecially how I played all day. I'm proud of the way I played. Sucks to just have that happen on the last hole, but learned a lot about myself... and it's only going to make me better going forward."

- 'A good start' -

Kohles made an eagle and three birdies in the first

eight holes to seize a three-stroke lead into the back nine, where he had not made a bogey all week.

A missed four-foot par putt at 11 dropped Kohles back to a share of the lead with Gotterup, who birdied five of the first seven holes on the front nine and three of the first five on the back side. □

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Britain's Arthur Fery reacts to beating Bulgaria's Grigor Dimitrov during their men's singles round of 16 tennis match on the eighth day of the 2026 Wimbledon Championships at The All England Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club in Wimbledon, southwest London, on July 6, 2026.

Britain's Fery stuns Dimitrov, Paolini into Wimbledon quarters

London, United Kingdom
Britain's Arthur Fery defeated fellow wildcard Grigor Dimitrov in a dramatic five-set match to reach the Wimbledon quarter-finals on Monday, after Jasmine Paolini halted Alexandra Eala's run in the last 16. French Open champion Alexander Zverev can seal his first Wimbledon quarter-final appearance when he takes on Jiri Lehecka later, although he made need a quick victory to avoid being forced to return Tuesday by the 2200 GMT curfew. Fery dug deep, with the help of an increasingly partisan home crowd, to clinch a 7-5, 3-6, 4-6, 6-4, 7-6 (10/7) victory over Bulgarian veteran Dimitrov on Centre Court. "First time on this court, five sets against an absolute legend of the game. I grew up five minutes from here, coming to watch matches on this court. It's unbelievable," said Fery, who went to school in Wimbledon. The 23-year-old will face ninth seed Flavio Cobolli

next as he bids to become only the fifth British man to reach the semi-finals in the Open era. Fery, the lowest-ranked man to reach the Wimbledon quarter-finals since Nick Kyrgios in 2014, needed another five-setter to progress after an epic third-round win against Zizou Bergs in the longest match of the event so far. The world number 114 is set to break into the ATP top 100 for the first time after the tournament. It was more last-16 heart-break for former world number three Dimitrov, though, after he was forced to retire injured when leading eventual champion Jannik Sinner by two sets at the same stage last year.

- Cobolli into quarters -
Cobolli continued his strong form by reaching a second straight Wimbledon quarter-final with an impressive 7-5, 7-6 (7/4), 6-3 win over Australian fifth seed Alex de Minaur. The Italian lost the French Open final to Zverev last

month and could meet the German again in the semis. Second seed Zverev rounds off the action on Centre Court as he bids to finally reach the quarters on his 10th visit to Wimbledon, facing Czech 13th seed Lehecka, with a match against Taylor Fritz up for grabs. Fritz, a semi-finalist last year, passed a tricky assignment against flamboyant Kazakh Alexander Bublik on Court One with flying colours. The sixth seed dispatched 10th seed Bublik 7-6 (7/1), 6-4, 6-4 to reach the last eight for the fourth time in five years.

- Paolini battles past Eala -
Italian 13th seed Paolini edged out Iga Swiatek's conqueror Eala with a gritty 6-4, 4-6, 6-3 victory on Centre Court, reaching her first Grand Slam quarter-final since losing the 2024 All England Club final. Paolini will next face Ukrainian 12th seed Marta Kostyuk, who saw off qualifier Ashlyn Krueger in straight sets. □



Summer McIntosh competes in the Women's 400 Meter Individual Medley final during the USA Swimming Pro Swim Series Austin at Lee & Joe Jamail Texas Swimming Center on January 16, 2026 in Austin, Texas.

Canada's McIntosh breaks 200 fly world record, oldest in women's swimming

Montreal, Canada
Summer McIntosh broke the world record in the 200m butterfly on Sunday at the Canadian Swim Championships in Montreal, shattering the oldest world mark in women's swimming. McIntosh, a three-time champion at the 2024 Paris Olympics, won the Canadian 200 fly title in 2mins 1.65secs to erase the prior world record of 2:01.81 set by China's Liu Zige in October of 2009 at Jinan, China. The world record had been the last in women's swimming from the supersuit era, when record books were rewritten by swimmers in polyurethane suits before they were banned in 2010 by world governing body FINA. "As you can see by emotions, this means the absolute world," McIntosh told event broadcasters after the historic victory. "Growing up, this is the one world record that I thought I would never break. "To do it tonight is really special in front of a home crowd. It means the absolute world. I'm in shock right now."

The 19-year-old from Toronto swam the first 50m in 27.45 seconds then charged at the finish as the crowd roared. "The last 50 was pure adrenaline," McIntosh said. "I could hear the crowd going crazy and I knew I was probably under, or close to, world record pace, so that's really what kept me going." McIntosh, whose mother swam in the 1984 Los Angeles Olympics, owns world records in four events, adding her trademark 200 fly to the 200m and 400m individual medleys and the 400m freestyle. She won the 200 and 400 individual medley Olympic golds in addition to the 200 fly title in Paris. Her eight career world titles include crowns last year at Singapore in the 200 and 400 IM, 400 free and 200 fly. McIntosh will be a favorite in multiple events in next month's Pan Pacific Championships in Irvine, California. □