



A brief history of the California Light House



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U.S. vows campaign to end ICC 'threat' to Americans

Washington, United States

The United States on Monday announced a sweeping campaign against the International Criminal Court (ICC) that could include further sanctions and other measures, accusing it of posing "an intolerable threat to US sovereignty." The Trump administration said it would pressure other countries to withdraw from the court, marking a sharp escalation in the U.S. effort to isolate the Hague-based institution and starve it of political and financial support.

"The ICC and its friends are waging a war against our country, not with bullets or missiles, but with statutes, compacts and the force of so-called international law," U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio said in a video statement.

The State Department said in a statement that the campaign will "systematically disable the ICC's ability to operate, target American servicemen or officials, or otherwise threaten American sovereignty."

The U.S. has previously targeted individual court of-



US Secretary of War Pete Hegseth and US Secretary of State Marco Rubio accompany US President Donald Trump (not seen) during a press conference following the annual NATO Summit at Presidential Complex in Ankara, Turkey on July 8, 2026.

officials it deems a threat to U.S. interests, but the new "whole of government" campaign will pressure other nations "to withdraw from the ICC and cut off any financial support to the court," a State Department official told AFP on condition of anonymity.

- 'Threat to America' -

In February 2025, shortly after President Donald Trump returned to office, Washington slapped asset freezes and travel bans on several ICC officials over an arrest warrant issued for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu over the war in Gaza.

But on Monday, the State Department focused on what it called the ICC's "intolerable threat to US sovereignty," saying the court "claims the authority to prosecute and even imprison American servicemen and officials operating on behalf of America's national interest."

"Americans never signed up for this, and all American presidents since the ICC's ratification have maintained that the ICC does not have jurisdiction over Americans," the department's statement said. Rubio added that the ICC "threatens every aspect of our political and legal system," and that it has moved from being a "narrow backstop" charged with prosecuting "only the gravest offenses...when a nation's courts were unable."

In addition to levying further travel and financial restrictions on people associated with the court, the State Department official said: "We will watch with interest which nations join ranks with us against this threat to Americans who are willing to risk their lives to protect others."

"While the calls are intended to highlight the ICC's abuses and the risks posed to Americans and other nations, nations that refuse to reject the ICC's false authority while relying on US assistance are likely to come under increased scrutiny," the official said. □

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Late U.S. senator's sister appointed to fill vacant seat

Washington, United States

South Carolina Governor Henry McMaster on Monday appointed the late Republican senator Lindsey Graham's younger sister to complete his term, hours after President Donald Trump publicly urged him to choose her.

Darline Graham Nordone will serve in the U.S. Senate until Graham's term expires in January, following his unexpected death at the weekend at the age of 71.

"It's my honor to ask his little sister Darline Graham to finish his work for him now," McMaster said while announcing the appointment.

"Lindsey has always been there for me, and now I will be there for him," Nordone added. "My brother was the most amazing person, outstanding leader and just a genuinely good man."

Trump had earlier recommended Nordone for the role, describing the appointment on his Truth Social platform as a "fabulous tribute" to Graham, a prominent foreign-policy hawk and close presidential ally.

Graham never married or had children and was exceptionally close to his sister. Their mother died when he was 20 and Nordone was 12, followed less than two years later by their father's death from a heart attack. Graham, then 22, formally adopted his 13-year-old sister, helped her finish school and largely raised her. Nordone later recalled that Graham had wrapped his arms around her after their father's death and promised that he would always care for her. □

Protected but deported anyway, as Trump goes after 'dreamers'

Houston, United States

Jose Contreras felt safe from deportation under a program launched years ago under Barack Obama, but the Trump administration expelled him anyway. The day Contreras got the shocking news, at a routine immigration hearing, he said officials laughed when he asked for a stay extension because his wife was about to have their first child.

"They looked at me like I had a third eye," Contreras told AFP. He was deported to Honduras that same day, and spent 118 days there until he made it back, thanks to a court order.

Contreras is one of several hundred people caught up in a particularly sad and frustrating chapter of President Donald Trump's aggressive and sometimes violent crackdown on undocumented immigrants. People like Contreras came to America as minors but never got citizenship or residency. Still, this is the only country they call home.

And they are supposed to benefit from a program



José Contreras, 30, poses for a photo in Edinburg, Texas, on July 10, 2026.

launched in 2012 called DACA, or Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, designed to protect such people from deportation and let them live and work in America as they try to upgrade their immigration status.

DACA is estimated to be protecting around 500,000 people, popularly known as "dreamers," according

to government figures.

But the Trump administration has arrested at least 343 of them and deported at least 86, according to an NGO called Home is Here, quoting a letter from the Department of Homeland Security to Congress.

On January 2 Contreras was handcuffed when he showed up for his immigration hearing, put on a

plane and flown to his native Honduras.

"I was a DACA recipient. I was a dreamer. Then I got deported," Contreras said. His son was born in Texas, without him, in late February.

"I lost it, you know. I fell to the ground. And then I cried," he said. "Because I wasn't planning to not be there for my son."

- 'Unlawful and inhumane' -

Then there is the case of 42-year-old Maria de Jesus Estrada, who came to America at age 15 and lived in California until her life, too, abruptly changed at an immigration hearing she attended with her 23-year-old daughter.

Walking into a room with six immigration agents, she was told to put her hands behind back and prepare to be arrested, right then and there. Panicking, she asked for a minute.

"I need you guys to give me a minute. I said, 'I'm not gonna resist anything. I just need a minute. I need to hold my daughter. I need to hug my daughter.'"

She was deported to Mexico later that day.

In both cases, immigration officials said Contreras and Estrada were deported because they had orders to that effect pending from when they were much younger.

And in both cases, U.S. courts ultimately ruled their deportation illegal and ordered they could return, which they did. □

U.S. appeals court revives private cases alleging Tylenol link to autism

New York, United States

A U.S. appeals court on Monday vacated the dismissal of hundreds of private lawsuits against Tylenol-maker Kenvue that allege scientifically unproven ties of the painkiller to autism.

Judges at Manhattan's second circuit of appeals sent the previously dismissed cases back to a lower court for further proceedings, after ruling that a district judge had improperly excluded expert witness testimony.

The plaintiffs argue that Tylenol use during pregnancy can lead to autism or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder in children. Scientific research has not identified causality between taking the painkiller and the development of those conditions in chil-

dren.

The issue came into the spotlight last year as US President Donald Trump vehemently urged pregnant women not to take Tylenol over the unsubstantiated link to autism.

Some public health experts have described Trump's attacks on the drug as unscientific and dangerous. Acetaminophen is the primary active ingredient in over-the-counter medications including Tylenol.

It is considered the safest option for treating pain and fever in pregnant women, as other medications, including aspirin or ibuprofen, present proven risks to the fetus as do untreated fevers.

The judges behind Monday's ruling emphasized

that their decision in no way offered scientific advice or the basis for public health policy.

"We are not deciding whether there is a general causal relationship between acetaminophen and ADHD and/or ASD," they wrote. "And we are certainly not deciding the approach that policymakers concerned with protecting public health should take to regulating the use of acetaminophen."

Their role, they said, was to determine whether certain expert testimony should have been admitted. And they ruled that "the district court exceeded its discretion" in excluding some of the plaintiffs' expert witnesses.

A Kenvue spokesperson told AFP that the procedural



Tylenol (Acetaminophen) tablets are sold in a drugstore in Toronto, Ontario, Canada, on January 17, 2026.

al ruling "does not change the fact that credible, independent science shows no proven link between taking acetaminophen and autism or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)."

"Science matters, and we stand with the many public health and medical professionals who have reviewed the science on this topic and agree. We now

have another opportunity to show that the plaintiffs' experts' opinions are unreliable and should not be allowed in this case."

Kenvue was spun off from Johnson & Johnson, which had sold Tylenol for decades, in 2023.

It was announced in 2025 that Kimberly-Clark, the paper and personal care products giant, would acquire Kenvue. □

Christopher Nolan returns with “The Odyssey” blockbuster

Paris, France

A colossal budget, a stellar cast and based on one of the greatest stories in Western literature: Christopher Nolan's latest film “The Odyssey” should be one of this year's biggest blockbusters.

Over two hours and 52 minutes, the Oscar-winning maker of “Oppenheimer” adapts Homer's epic Greek poem of the same name, recounting the action-packed return of mythical character Odysseus to his island home Ithaca.

It stars Matt Damon in the lead role, alongside a who's who of Hollywood stars, including Anne Hathaway, Tom Holland, Zendaya, Charlize Theron and Robert Pattinson, who delivers a memorable performance as the villainous Antinous.

At a cost of a reported 250 million dollars, it features the epic battle of Troy as well as encounters with the one-eyed monster Cyclops and sorceress Circe, all shot at various locations around the Mediterranean on the highest-resolution IMAX camera.



British-U.S. film director Christopher Nolan and British film producer Emma Thomas pose on the red carpet upon arrival to attend the world premiere of the film ‘The Odyssey’ in London on July 6, 2026.

“It was a difficult film. It should be difficult: it's the Odyssey, it should be hard, and that's fine,” Nolan told a select group of film journalists last week including AFP ahead of the world premiere in Paris.

- Reviews -

Full reviews for the film are currently embargoed

ahead of the worldwide release from Wednesday, but early reactions on social media from critics who were invited to private screenings or the premieres have been broadly positive.

Los Angeles Times film editor Joshua Rothkopf called it “a return home to the robustly entertaining action

movies that cinema was invented to tell.”

IndieWire editor-at-large Anne Thompson predicted that the film would be a strong contender for best picture at the Oscars next year, adding that Matt Damon “could win best actor”.

“My high expectations were met,” she wrote on

social media.

Damon depicts a fragile, confused and ultimately regretful Odysseus returning from his heroics in the victorious siege of Troy.

“He's definitely complicated, and he definitely makes decisions that aren't always the right ones, which makes him very flawed and very human,” Damon told AFP at the premiere.

The story, one of the foundational texts of Western literature, is “about homecoming and family and war and death and all of these things that are kind of universal themes in living a life,” Damon added.

Nolan sees a parallel between Odysseus and Robert Oppenheimer, one of the leaders of the Manhattan Project to develop the atomic bomb, who was depicted in his 2023 best picture winner.

“The parallel I found that I thought was interesting was the idea of a person who carries the guilt of shifting the world on its axis ... somebody who has changed the world, and not for the better,” Nolan told journalists. □

Twelve U.S. states sue to block Paramount's Warner Bros. takeover

Los Angeles, United States

California and 11 other U.S. states on Monday sued to block Paramount Skydance's \$110 billion takeover of Warner Bros. Discovery, calling the largest merger in Hollywood history a threat to competition in film and television.

The lawsuit, filed in federal court in northern California, marks a dramatic turn in the regulatory battle over the deal and a direct challenge to the Trump administration's Justice Department, which approved the merger last month without requiring any divestitures or concessions.

California Attorney General Rob Bonta, who is leading the coalition, said the combination of two of Hollywood's five major film distributors would lead to “higher prices, lower quality, and less content” for

audiences.

“In this country, no one is above the law,” Bonta said. “California and our sister states are fighting for free and fair markets, not rigged markets. America has no kings in government or our economy.”

The states allege the deal violates the Clayton Act, the federal law that bars

mergers likely to substantially reduce competition. The democratic led states joining California in the suit are Arizona, Colorado, Connecticut, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Oregon and Washington.

According to the complaint, the combined

company would control roughly 27 percent of wide-release theatrical film distribution and about 27 percent of basic cable channel licensing.

The coalition has asked the companies not to close the transaction until the legal challenge is resolved, and warned it would seek a temporary restraining order if they refuse.

Paramount last month secured the green light of federal antitrust authorities, handing a major win to a media empire financed by one of President Donald Trump's closest billionaire allies.

The approval was a coup for Paramount chief executive David Ellison, whose father, Oracle co-founder Larry Ellison, largely financed the takeover.

The elder Ellison, one of the world's richest men, is a close ally of Trump.

The combined company would control a sprawling roster of assets, including CNN, Warner Bros. Pictures and the HBO Max streaming service.

Hundreds of actors and directors have signed a letter opposing the merger, warning it would choke production in an industry already battered by years of consolidation and cost-cutting.

The takeover saga began last year, when streaming giant Netflix and Paramount went to war over Warner Bros. and its prized back catalog.

A wary Tinseltown reluctantly lined up behind Netflix as the lesser of two evils, only to watch Paramount keep raising its bid until the streamer walked away.

The European Commission, the European Union's antitrust watchdog, has given itself until July 22 to decide on the acquisition. □



CEO of Paramount Skydance David Ellison attends the premiere of Paramount Pictures' “Billie Eilish - Hit Me Hard and Soft: The Tour” at Village Theatre in Westwood, California on May 6, 2026.

'Almost like gold': water debate rages on Italy's Aeolian Islands

Vulcano Porto, Italy

Without natural drinking water, residents of Italy's Aeolian Islands are mulling whether to build more desalination plants that will also cater to the large number of tourists, or continue bringing in water by ship.

An existing desalination plant with large white silos on Vulcano, one of the archipelago's eight islands, has made it autonomous for drinking water.

But another island, Stromboli, still depends on ships with water cisterns. When they can't dock in bad weather, "We're left without water," restaurant owner Angelo Mirabito, 66, told AFP.

In the summer, the influx of visitors is a challenge for the Aeolian Islands, which have only around 15,000 year-round residents.

In 2024, the last year for which official data is available, the number of tourist arrivals on the islands lying to the north of Sicily was 146,000 people.

"For 10 years, we have been producing a constant 300,000 cubic metres



A man works in the desalination plant of Vulcano island, part of the Aeolian archipelago off Sicily, on July 9, 2026.

per year" of drinking water, said Fabio Pupillo, an engineer for Sopes, the company that manages the desalination plant in Vulcano. The cost of the drinking water produced by desalination plants on the Aeolian Islands is around two euros per cubic metre.

Water brought by ship is around 14 euros per cubic

metre cost covered by the defence ministry which organises the supply route.

- 'Extremely precious' -

Italy is second to Spain in the EU for desalination capacity, accounting for around 7.6 percent of daily EU production, according to data from the think tank The European House Am-

brosetti.

The country currently produces a little more than 657,000 cubic metres per day of desalinated water thanks to 341 plants.

On the Aeolian islands of Alicudi, Filicudi, Panarea and Stromboli, a plan for four new desalination plants proposed by the local municipality is proving

divisive.

Some associations and local residents say there is not enough data on the environmental impact in an area with fragile ecosystems.

Giuseppe Amato, a campaigner on water issues in Sicily for environmental NGO Legambiente, said that using desalination plants on small islands was "an appropriate response, particularly taking into account the various hydrological crises brought about by the global climate crisis". But, those plants need to be planned well and used wisely, he said.

Amato questioned whether the desalination plant proposed for Filicudi should be built for the 250 permanent residents or for the "maximum number of tourists that Filicudi can have during the peak of the season".

In a letter last month to the municipality of Lipari and the Sicily region, the environmental foundation Marevivo called the authorisation procedure for the desalination plants to be suspended. □

Kenya Rastafarians hope for freedom to smoke

Nairobi, Kenya

Beneath portraits of their Pan-African heroes, including the man they worship as God incarnate, Ethiopia's former emperor Haile Selassie I, Kenya's Rastafarians hold hands and pray a court will let them smoke cannabis legally.

Rastafarians practise meditation using marijuana, and Kenyan members of the movement are awaiting a ruling by the High Court on July 15 on whether they will be allowed to smoke it under the right of freedom of religion.

The Rastafari movement's followers often recognisable by their long dreadlocks identify as mystical, Pan-Africanist, anti-colonialist, and vegetarian.

Kenya effectively recognised the movement in 2019 when a court ruled that expelling a school pupil because of her dreadlocks violated her religious

rights.

But local Rastafarians say they are still harassed by police due to a 1994 law that makes possession of weed punishable by 10 years' imprisonment and a substantial fine.

"Every time I walk on the street, someone will come and want to intimidate me and say, 'Hey Rastaman, stop'," said Moses Mudachi Isavwa, who goes by his Rastafarian name of Ras Masinde.

The 50-year-old is proud that his dreadlocks link him to the Mau Mau, Kenya's independence fighters who fought against British colonial rule and who often sported dreadlocks.

But Isavwa said his dreadlocks, despite their storied history in Kenya, still attract undue persecution from authorities. "I'm fighting for the black men and women and children who have

gone through persecution, they are rotting now in the dungeon... simply because they were found with maybe a spliff of ganja," he said.

"They come to your house and search you. They don't want you to even have two spleens (joints) for smoking," said Rastafari Society of Kenya spokesperson Mwendwa Wambua, 55, who goes by Ras Prophet.

The numbers are uncertain but Wambua says the movement is growing in Kenya, especially among young people.

Days before the court verdict, he and a handful of fellow devotees gathered to sing and smoke as part of their Saturday Sabbath celebrations.

Their modest meeting place in Kibera, one of Nairobi's largest informal settlements, also houses

the Haile Selassie Foundation, named after the last Ethiopian emperor.

His coronation occurred around the time the Rastafari movement was forming in Jamaica in the 1930s, and members see him as a second Jesus Christ come to save black people.

The foundation helps young people avoid crime by training them in practi-

cal skills weaving, beadwork and to teach them about their religion.

While they are still forced to mostly hide from the law, they are optimistic about the case, which has been ongoing since 2021.

As Wambua emphasised: "Smoking weed and marijuana is part of our culture. "We must therefore defend it." □



Rastafarians enjoy a moment of camaraderie after performing meditative chants accompanied by Nyabingi drumming at a Rastafari commune in Nairobi, on July 4, 2026.

EU to limit children's access to social media - gradually

Brussels, Belgium

Children should have "phased and gradual access" to social media, EU chief Ursula von der Leyen said Monday, as experts recommended under 13s only use online platforms under supervision.

The European Union has been mulling a social media ban since a push by EU states, including Greece and France, for limiting access, with pressure intensifying for a bloc-wide ban like Australia.

To help the EU take decisions based on evidence, von der Leyen tasked an expert panel of doctors, academics, youth representatives and parents to give their advice. They delivered their recommendations Monday.

"What we already have is a consensus that there needs to be a start date for the age children can join social media," von der Leyen said, calling for "age-appropriate restrictions".

"This is not about whether children can access social media. It is about whether and when social media can access our children."

A legal proposal will come in the second half of the year, von der Leyen added, but she is expected to



(LtoR) Director of the Department of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, Psychosomatics and Psychotherapy at Ulm University Medical Center Dr Jorg M Fegert, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen and Director at the French National Institute of Health and Medical Research (Inserm) Maria Melchior pose following a press conference on the handover of the final report of the Special Panel on child safety online in Brussels on July 13, 2026.

give an indication of what the restrictions will look like in September.

"We need to consider a phased and gradual access for different age ranges," she said, adding children should only be allowed access to "safe" platforms from the age of 13 onwards.

The report by co-chairs child psychiatrist Jorg Fegert and epidemiologist Maria Melchior offered

a glimpse of how the EU's proposal could look like.

They recommended no screens at all for babies and toddlers, and supervised use of "age-appropriate social media" and devices for children aged between three and 12 by parents or teachers.

And for those aged 13 to 18, they advised "evolving autonomous use" of social media and other digital platforms that have "key

safety features".

Many social media and video sharing platforms, including TikTok and Meta's Facebook and Instagram, are only available to children aged 13 and over.

Platforms "must prove that their services do no harm. In Europe, whoever develops a product is responsible for its safety", von der Leyen said.

"We are convinced that Europe must introduce pro-

fective measures to ensure the safety of children and adolescents in the digital world," Melchior said, standing next to von der Leyen.

The EU has already ramped up the pressure on social media platforms to change in recent months, telling Facebook and Instagram Friday to dismantle their "addictive" features, after a similar warning to TikTok in February.

- Divided EU positions -

The report did not recommend a blanket ban on digital platforms including social media, and von der Leyen did not back such a move.

What the panel found was the Australian ban faced difficulties as children found ways around the limits, forcing the EU to reconsider its approach.

Instead, it wants platforms to remove or limit features like autoplay content, infinite scroll, and push notifications.

The European Parliament in October called for a ban on social media for children under the age of 16, a position some EU lawmakers continued to back although divisions remain over the age. □

Taliban says 'no oppression' of Afghan women after dress crackdown

Herat, Afghanistan

Afghanistan's minister in charge of vice and virtue defended on Monday the crackdown on women's dress code in the western city of Herat, saying it pro-

tected "dignity" and dismissing criticism as propaganda.

"Everything is fine in Herat," Propagation of Virtue and Prevention of Vice (PVPV) Minister Moham-

mad Khalid Hanafi told a press conference in Herat.

"There is no oppression or barbarism here, and the rights of our sisters are protected."

Dozens of women were detained by the Taliban government's morality police in early June on accusations they were violating official dress codes by not wearing the body-cloaking chador or burqa.

That included a hospital worker employed by Doctors Without Borders (MSF), which strongly condemned the detention.

A rare protest against the restrictions was violently dispersed with at least two people killed, according to the United Nations.

Across Afghanistan, wom-

en must be almost entirely covered when they leave home, with many wearing a flowing abaya robe, a Muslim headscarf and a face covering not necessarily the burqa or chador. Hanafi said that "enemies" will portray this as the Taliban's law and order but "it is God's order".

The recent crackdown on women's dress code also impacted businesses as they suffered from a downturn in female customers opting to stay home, according to shopkeepers, drivers and residents.

Women in Herat told AFP that they no longer go out unless absolutely necessary, fearing they could be stopped by the PVPV officers over alleged dress-

code violations.

A 27-year-old woman said she used to take private transport to attend language classes every weekday. Since June, she has barely left the house.

"I've been gripped by fear and terror. I truly gave up everything out of fear," she told AFP.

Since returning to power in 2021, Taliban authorities have imposed a series of rules on women's access to public life, barring them from studying beyond primary school, working in certain professions and visiting parks.

Hanafi defined Herat as "the centre of religion" and its people as "the promoters of religion and sharia". □



The Taliban flag flutters over the Government Office building in Herat on July 13, 2026.

A brief history of the California Light House

(Oranjestad)—At the furthest western point of the island, there lies the tallest structure on the island: The California Light House. Standing on top of a limestone cliff, this lighthouse oversees the entire island, offering one of few best views of the island and the surrounding sea. It is also one of the few monuments that hold a rich history.

The lighthouse was constructed in between 1914-1916, and its first keeper was a young trained lighthouse keeper from Curacao names Jacob Jacobs. Mr. Frederico Fingal was the last man to have occupied this position until 1962. Though his son, Mr. Romulo Fingal did not continue in his father's footsteps, he does have a special connection to the lighthouse. He sat down with our reporter and shared a bit of its history.

As Mr. Fingal explains, "In 1915, cargo donkeys were hired from Figaroa di Noord to help build the Lighthouse at Westpunt. The donkeys had to walk along the beach all the way to Westpunt carrying the cargo, poles, cement, and all these things. At that time, it was a difficult task until Aruba got its first truck.

These things reflect how people could have accomplished this tremendous job with so little." Mr. Fingal said, "At that time, it wasn't a place for people to work. It was very chal-



lenging because it was full of goats and donkeys, and it was very isolated. There were no hotels or roads to get there. There was only a donkey trail. Those were the only means of transportation."

Mr. Fingal continues, "In 1939, I was born in the lighthouse, and my father was the last lighthouse keeper until he retired in 1962. After that, they removed the power cables all the way to the top. According to the story, we couldn't have the light ourselves because they dismantled it, and after many years, I heard that it is in a train museum in San Nicolas, where we found this very special lens that, when the light shines through it, it reaches 30 kilometers out to sea." Mr. Fingal told our reporter.

The lighthouse has a long and very interesting history. The reason why the lighthouse was built, according to Mr. Fingal, dates back

to the day when the cargo ship S.S. California sank because of the lack of light. In 1913, Aruba made a request to Curacao to build a Lighthouse at Westpunt, and the governor of Curacao responded to Aruba to come back in 1915 with a well-detailed plan. "During the First World War from 1914 to 1918, they had to wait for the light to be transported to Aruba because it was manufactured in France. At that time, there was no electricity, and the light was very interesting because it rotated with a kerosene lamp that planes used; clean kerosene," Mr.

Fingal said.

Mr. Fingal discovered something very interesting about the lighthouse after much research was documented in his book 'History of the Lighthouse at Westpunt.' He found many details: "I found out that the height of the lighthouse was due to the absence of electricity. There was also the presence of coral. There is a long steel cable from where the light is, and under the light, at the highest point, there is a hanging weight, a sort of pendulum that swings like that, with a weight that measures about 1 meter by 30 centimeters wide, which is a block of solid iron attached to a cable. When you release it upwards, it comes down, and the weight that comes down pulls it up, gradually. And while it comes down, the same weight that is descending causes many small wheels to turn in the opposite direction. The Lighthouse rotates from 6 pm in the evening, when the sun sets, until 6 am in the morning. During the entire night, the light shines

on the lantern, it goes down 24 meters, and the Lighthouse is 30 meters high. It is designed not to collapse," Mr. Fingal explains.

Mr. Fingal further explains that in one night, the lighthouse rotates 4,320 times and consumes one gallon of kerosene for the whole operation. "At that time, the kerosene was supplied from the Lago refinery. Every day it was brought down, and to start the light again, they had to lift the weight up, so our job as children was to crank it and raise the weight back up in the evening when the light stuck, they would take it down again, and the light stayed down. That's how it worked for a very long time," Mr. Fingal explains.

Thanks to the Monument Fund Aruba, which worked hard and is currently in charge of the Lighthouse, Mr. Fingal is very happy with its preservation, along with all the renovations that have taken place. He hopes that the story of the lighthouse will continue to live on for future generations. □



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Casago Aruba was born from a shared passion for elevating the island's tourism experience. Built on a strong foundation of service, hospitality, and a keen eye for quality, the Casago team—backed by over 16 years of experience in the vacation rental and hospitality industry—is on a mission to redefine what luxury and convenience look like for travelers visiting Aruba.

But Casago is more than just a vacation rental platform. It is a full-service property management company, offering seamless experiences for both guests and homeowners alike. While travelers benefit from handpicked accommodations and personalized service, homeowners gain a reliable partner dedicated to the care and performance of their property.

A Stay Tailored to You

Casago Aruba offers more than just stylish villas. Their curated portfolio includes a wide variety of condos, homes, and villas in different sizes to suit all types of travelers—from solo adventurers and couples to large families and groups. Every stay is backed by local expertise, with concierge support, 24/7 guest assistance, and an attention to detail that consistently exceeds expectations.

Casago Aruba: Redefining Island Stays with Full-Service Property Management

Whether you're here to relax on world-famous beaches, explore Aruba's cultural gems, or discover hidden corners of the island, Casago Aruba ensures your getaway is as smooth as it is memorable.

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Behind the scenes, Casago offers a robust suite of property management services designed to help homeowners maximize rental income while minimizing stress.

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- Promotion through Casago's professional booking platform and expert local marketing strategies
- Complete management of check-ins, guest communication, cleanings, landscaping, pool maintenance, and repairs

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- Strategic planning to help homeowners increase profitability and keep their properties in top condition

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Rooted in Community and Sustainability

What truly sets Casago Aruba



apart is their commitment to the local community and to sustainable practices. The team works closely with local businesses and artisans, promotes eco-conscious travel, and supports initiatives that contribute positively to the island's environment and economy.

As one of the fastest-growing vacation rental and property management companies on the island, Casago Aruba continues to expand its footprint—welcoming more travelers, partnering with more homeowners, and raising the standard of hospitality in Aruba. □



Beautiful areas around Aruba



(Oranjestad)—In Aruba, there are tons of activities that to enjoy during your visit, but sometimes you just want to slow down and enjoy the view. Here are some beautiful areas on the island that will have you in awe.

The hidden Natural Bridge

Here in Aruba we have three natural bridges and many see this one on thinking that it's the world famous one but it's not. The why is easy, it's way too dangerous to go down the cliff to reach this beauty and no tour companies will do that. Some people refuse to go down due fear of height. This bridge is located in San Nicolas, behind The Point Lighthouse along the east point coast.

Surfside Beach

This beach was very famous when we were kids and many locals love to swim at this beach. After some years the locals shifted to the more north-west beaches like Eagle, Boca Catalina and Arashi but after the government renovated the whole area it got a new facelift and its back as a family beach and weekends are just amazing at this area.

Natural Bridge at Blackstone Beach

As mentioned, there are three natural bridges and this one is in the Arikok National Park. The other two Bridges you can visit by car but for this one you must have a 4x4 jeep or you will get stuck at the Andicuri Beach. □

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The Lionfish and its threat to our marine wild life



(Oranjestad)—Despite its colorful and striking appearance, the lionfish has become a Caribbean-wide problem for Atlantic sea life. The Aruban marine wild life is also affected by this beautiful dilemma, as it is foreign to our waters and has become a danger to our local fish and reefs.

Originating from the Indo-Pacific Ocean, the lionfish is a relatively small fish. It has no teeth, but it does protect itself against predators

using its sharp, colorful spikes. It is said that the sting of a lionfish can be up to 100 times more painful than that of a bee's sting.

Its natural predators in the Indo-Pacific are sharks and barracudas, but in the Caribbean Sea, local fish do not recognize the lionfish as part of their diet. In other words, the lionfish has no predators in the Caribbean Sea. And this becomes a major problem for our local marine life; if there are no predators

to stimulate population control of lionfish, these fish can continue to reproduce and expand to other parts of the Atlantic, become more invasive and dangerous for other types of fish.

For Aruba, the lionfish is a problem especially for our local coral reefs. According to Patrick van Brakel, lionfish expert and hunter from the Hunting Lionfish Aruba foundation, every reef has a "cleaning station"—tiny fish that eat algae and other types of waste on a reef, thus maintaining the reef's health and providing food to the fish population in the area. However, as the lionfish feeds off of these tiny fish, it becomes harder for the coral reef to maintain its health.

Patrick also shares the origins of lionfish in the Caribbean Sea. It is theorized that the introduction of these fish in the Atlantic happened in Florida, where people would buy lionfish from across the world to keep in their aquariums. However, lionfish grow, and as these buyers realized that the fish were too much upkeep, they were let out into the ocean to roam free. From continental USA, the lionfish travelled to and invaded the entire Caribbean area, from Aruba,



Bonaire and Curacao up to New York. In Aruba, lionfish were discovered in 2009.

Controlling the lionfish population is challenge, as each female fish can lay up to 40,000 eggs a day. Luckily, we have people like van Brakel who dedicate their lives hunting and capturing these invasive species, using them for consumption and jewelry making.

They are caught with a hand spear, an object resembling a garbage picker with 4 sharp prongs. These spears are used like a sling shot to catch lionfish from a distance. These fish are then put into a collecting tube and taken out of the water. This way, he does his part in protecting the local wild life. □

Fun facts about the "transhi" hedges!

(Oranjestad)—When off-roading, you may encounter some houses that have rock hedges, aligned perfectly and held together by cement—or sometimes nothing at all.

These hedges are called "transhi," and have a historical and cultural meaning on the island. Used by cunukeros* around the island back when agriculture played a more dominant role in day-to-day life and survival, these stone hedges represent the resilience of our great-grand parents, who had to make do with what nature gave them.

These stone structures are traditionally placed carefully on top of each other. No cement or

other binding mixture was used to hold the structure together. Though not commonly used for modern homes, the few structures that remain around the island stood the test of time, some completely intact even after decades of rain, wind and urbanization. These stone hedges are a representation of the Aruba's unique farming culture—which valued durability, sustainability and resilience.

*cunukero: Aruban farmers. □

Pictures extracted from the 'Plantage Zorg en Hoop' collection on Coleccion.aw



Origin of Papiamentu- Aruba's native language

ORANJESTAD — Papiamentu, Creole language of ABC (Aruba, Bonaire and Curacao) is from the Cape Verdean Creole family (Cape Verdean language) and was taken to the Caribbean in the 9th century by the Cape Verdeans of that time (linings and slaves), experts in cane culture and sugar production, and who were hired by Jewish entrepreneurs who went to invest in this business in the Caribbean. Cape Verdeans taught this pre-industrial revolution technology (planting cane and producing sugar, which they had learned from Madeirans) to slaves from other African regions, and did so in their language, Cape Verde Creole (Cape Verdean language), hence the language implanted in Aruba, Bonaire and Curacao.

Unlike many interesting stories, wanting to link Papiamentu directly to Portuguese, Galician or Castilian (see Papiamentu, on Wikipedia – Portuguese version and Spanish version, where the Portuguese and Spanish, each claim the direct origin of Papiamentu), in fact, this is not true. Papiamentu is not direct from Portuguese, Galician or Castilian, it is from the Cape Verde Creole family (Cape Verdean language). You

can see this best when it's saying obscene words and offending someone, precisely as they say today in both ABC and Cape Verde islands. The obscene words kept the original, had no lexical influence either from Castilian or Dutch. Also the Papi Cristang of Malacca, the Patuá of Macau, and several creoles from the east (from Daman, Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Philippines, Indonesia) and Africa (Casamança, Guinea Bissau, Sierra Leone and Nigeria, these last

two releases to the English), all originated in the Creole of Cabo Verde (Cape Verdean language), which was the French language spoken in Portuguese feitorias on the coast of Africa (from Senegal to Sierra Leone), and which was taken east by the thousands of cable – Verdeans (linings and slaves, already Christianized and speaking Creole) who served as sailors and "slaves of arms" in Portuguese caravels, demanding the east. I don't know why the official

history of Portugal usually omits this fact, which is in the chronicles of the quinrentist chroniclers, but which we never saw in the history of Portugal that we study from primary education to higher education. However, it has always been tried to deceive us, in colonial time, that we were descendants of Viriato (Iberian hero in the fight against the Romans) and the pastors of the Hermini Mountains, but not much speaking of our black-African ancestry.

We Cape Verdeans understand each other very well with these Antillans and Easterns, whose language is from the same Creole family of Cape Verde (Cape Verdean language), speaking their Creole and we ours. Therefore, Papiamentu, Papi Cristang, Patuá Macaense and the creoles, said of Portuguese origin, Daman, India, Sri Lanka, Myanmar, some locations in the Philippines and some places in Indonesia, are creoles of the language family Cape Verde Creole (Cape Verdean language) and indirectly the Galaico-Duriense or Galaico-Portuguese, a language that the people spoke in Portugal in the 6th and 7th century. □

Source: Dushi Aruba



(Oranjestad) – Like many other cultures, an important aspect of the Aruban cultural identity is our connection to food and food traditions. The local food traditions consist of a melting pot of different cultural and religious eating habits and dishes.

Breakfast, lunch and dinner
The routine of breakfast, lunch and dinner on the island is one that does not completely follow a European or American routine, despite the major influences from these parts of the world on our culture and way of living. When it comes to the three important meals of the day, most of the Aruban population follows a Latin-American influenced

routine.

Breakfast

Breakfast in Aruba is quite simple: a cup of coffee or tea, some bread, and sometimes an egg. Sometimes, due to the need of a quick "to-go" breakfast, you may also find many snack trucks and cafes that sell sandwiches, pastechis (meat pie), arepas and empanadas early in the morning.

Main Meal

The main meal is typically eaten in most households around noon or in the afternoon. This can consist of meat, fish, and chicken—stewed or fried—with funchi (polenta) or rice with stewed vegetables. Often, fried or boiled plantain or pan bati

Food culture in Aruba

(Aruban pancake) is included. Stews are a staple in Aruban cuisine and can be largely influenced by Latin-American and Latin/Afro-Caribbean Stews. Some of the more unique stews and soups from the ABC Islands* include sopi bonch'i rabo (red kidney bean soup with pig tail), sopi mondon-go (tripe soup), carni stoba (beef stew), comcomber stoba (West Indian gherkin stew) and much more.

Dinner Time

Dinner time can vary significantly from household to household. Unlike the U.S. or in Europe, dinner time typically does not consist of a whole (warm) meal. Instead, the evening "meal" can typically consist of something lighter, like a sandwich, though it is not uncommon to see leftovers from the main meal reheated and eaten again. Tea and coffee are often also served with the evening snack.

(Religious) Holidays

Christmas is probably the

biggest global holiday, and every culture has its own spin on what their Christmas cuisine entails. In Aruba, our Christmas cuisine is again largely based on Latin-American influences, most notably from Venezuela. Ayacas and the famous pan di ham* are two crucial holiday dishes, along with stuffed turkey, roasted glazed ham topped with pineapples, arroz con pollo (rice and chicken) and potato salad, among other items. Traditional drinks include ponche crema (Aruban eggnog), chuculati pinda (hot chocolate with peanut butter), and homemade fruit punch. Desserts include bolo di pistachio (pistachio cake), bolo di cashupete (cashew cake), quesillo (flan), bolo preto (fruit cake), drigidek (gingerbread), pan boyo (bread cake) and more.

Snacks and tasty delights

Besides meals and dishes that are eaten on the dinner table, Aruba also has a food tradition that includes

snacks and other tasty delights that you may easily find around the island. These include, Saco*, baskets, pastechi, kroket, deditos, Johnny cake and more. These snacks are usually sold at local snack trucks and cafes, often located on the side of the road. In the area of Tanki Leendert and Tanki flip, for example, there are many of these trucks parked on the side of the road and often open until late at night—offering tasty and filling snacks post night-life fun. □

*ABC Islands: Aruba, Bonaire and Curacao

*Pan di ham: Derived from the Venezuelan Pan de Jamon (rolled up bread with ham, raisins and olives)

*Saco: Saco literally means "bag". Saco contains fried potatoes, plantains, chicken (and ribs) and a Johnny cake, served in a paper bag.

Source: Voeding, voedingsgewoonten en gerechten op Aruba (Nutrition, Food Traditions and Dishes on Aruba) by Biblioteca Nacional Aruba

Up for a snorkeling adventure in Aruba? Top 3 shipwrecks to explore

(ORANJESTAD) – Aruba is not only the perfect vacation destination to sit back and relax on the sandy beaches but also has great snorkeling spots for passionate adventurers to explore. On the coast of the island, there are various shipwrecks that have become fan-favorites over the years. Here are the top 3 shipwrecks you should explore.



SS Antilla

Dubbed "The Ghost Ship", SS Antilla is the biggest and most visited shipwreck site off the coast of the island. Located in Malmok, this 400-foot ship's story is one of capture and sabotage during WWII.

After Germany invaded The Netherlands, Dutch authorities ordered the confinement of the ship's German crew, who were ported in Aruba because it needed to find a neutral port. The Dutch ordered the ship to be confiscated, but the German crew had other plans. Taking advantage of a delay

caused by an anticipated armed resistance, the Germans started scuttling the ship, opening her seacock and setting her ablaze.

Eventually, the crew was arrested, but SS Antilla could not be saved by the Dutch forces. The Dutch fired two rounds of their 35mm gun aboard the 'Aruba' at SS Antilla and left her to sink.

The shipwreck can only be reached by boat. The ship is visible from the surface and during your snorkeling trip you'll be surrounded by hundreds of tropical fishes, but the shipwreck alone is

already impressive enough.

SS Pedernales

Like the Antilla, the story of SS Pedernales dates to WWII. Pedernales was used as a lake tanker between Venezuela and Aruba, and sailed under British Flag. At this time, The US and Britain were using Aruba and Curacao as fuel stations for the war ships.

Under operation Neuland (disruption of British and American oil sources), Germany fleets bombed Pedernales. The ship was later cut into three sections, two of which were taken to the US for reconstruction. The re-

maining part stayed in Aruba and was used as target practice. Eventually, the ship became a snorkeling site that has attracted many visitors throughout the years.

Pedernales lies on the northwest coast of Aruba, and is no more than 10 feet under water, making it an ideal site for snorkelers and divers of all levels.

Jane Sea Wreck

The Jane Sea Wreck lies near Palm Island at 100 feet underwater. Jane's story is heavily speculated, making her origin a tale of legends.

Launched in 1959, the 190-foot ship was initially called "Blackthorn". Her last owner, S&D Shipping Ltd. named her Jane Sea. Jane was a cement freighter between Venezuela and Aruba.

The story goes that the Jane Sea arrived one day at the Barcadera Harbor, where Aruban customs discovered several tons of cocaine. The ship was confiscated and petitioned went out for her

owner to claim her. However, several years went by and no one came forward to claim the ship, so dive operators decided to sink her as an artificial reef. This happened in 1988. Jane Sea earned the nick name Jane C, because of the illicit white powder discovered on board.

Jane is now beautifully overgrown with coral and is home to a diverse set of marine life, like turtles, octopus, crabs and sometimes even nurse sharks.

The stories behind these shipwrecks enriches their exploration and offers snorkelers and divers a glance into the past, as well as the beautiful marine life that have molded these wrecks into their home. So, grab your equipment and discover another side of what Aruba has to offer!

We highly recommend you embark on your adventure with the guide of a professional and be sure to take of yourself and Aruba's precious nature. □

Alto Vista chapel and its link to Aruba's origins

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

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

According to the book, The History of Alto Vista by R.H. Nooyen, it is not known when Domingo Antonio Sil-

vester came to Aruba from Venezuela. The elders believe Antonio was a Spaniard. In 1780, father Joseph Antonio de la Vegal called Bernardino Silvester, one of Antonio's sons with his wife Anna Cathalina Tromp, "neighbors and naturals of the island Aruba" and thus they became natives.

At the end of the eighteen century many inhabitants the island died as a result of the black fever epidemic and since people believed that the Alto Vista area was the most infected, they began to build their homes further south within the Noord area, so the town of Noord began to grow into a community till getting its own Church. However religious festivals continued to be celebrated at this sacred native place, with the custom of arriving in procession to Alto Vista.

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



Vista from 1750. With a lot of work they found the old foundations of the Church of the Queen of the Holiest Rosary to build a new chapel on the same place. The entire surrounding area was empty and desolated, making it hard to imagine that Alto Vista was a town at all. A hundred years later, people can see the remains of around twenty houses, some made of stone and others of clay. Nowadays, only around six of these houses remain.

South of the chapel in the

yard two graves can be observed, there was the cemetery which father Pablo de Algemesi blessed. It is not certain, but it is believed that the two graves belong to Antonio Silvester and Miguel Alvares, according to Nooyen.

About 50 meters near the chapel there are still the markings of an old house, where Antonio and Bernardino Silvester would have lived. About 200 meters from the chapel there is a water tank which the locals call Tanki Cacique. In the past

this tank was closed. But mostly water was brought out from the Poz di Noord, a well dug in the sand.

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

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CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS 36 Bothered

1 Narrow 38 Flower

5 Recipe girl, often instruction

9 Ready 40 Invites

for bed 41 Purposes

11 Insertion sign

13 Justice Samuel

14 Take for — (trick)

15 Ethane, e.g.

16 Yoga studio greeting

18 Swimming groups

20 Egg layer

21 Extra

22 Order to Spot

23 Hosp. areas

24 Be litigious

25 "Dam it!"

27 Capital on the Nile

29 Nest egg acct.

30 Fit

32 It doesn't call for drawing

34 "Give — rest!"

35 Down-loadable read

DOWN

1 Some deer

2 Fragrant flowers

3 Spuds

4 Ran into

5 Cons

6 Scarlett's home

7 Some show dogs

8 Drink made from rooibos

10 Gen-erous folks

12 Minute

17 Bar choice

19 Crew members

22 Dia-monds, e.g.

24 Casual shoe

25 Mature

26 Mideast region

27 Soup buy

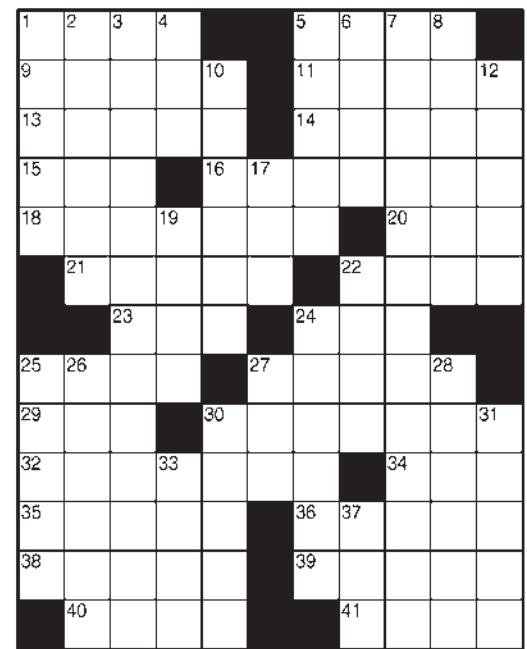
28 Power problem

30 Confis-cates

31 Crew members

33 Pawn

37 Letter after sigma



3-17

AXYDLBAAXR
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.

3-17 CRYPTOQUOTE

VXA ANPM INLJDUK FD ZDXOA

XTR ANPM ZDXMU FD BSQZU.

VXA QNNR BPLJ IPMKPD ANP

DXLZ VNMTSTQ XTR TSQZU.

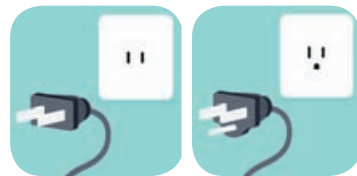
— SMSKZ FBDKKSTQ

Cryptoquote: THE BOND WITH A TRUE DOG IS AS LASTING AS THE TIES OF THIS EARTH WILL EVER BE. — KONRAD LORENZ

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	CARNIVAL 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: 6:00 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: 6:00 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

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

Difficulty: ★★

7/14

Answer to previous puzzle

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

Difficulty: ★

7/13

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From bombmaking to motorcycle tweaks: how Nigerian jihadists use AI

Abuja, Nigeria

Nigerian jihadists have “institutionalized” the use of AI, using it for everything from battlefield strategy to bomb making, according to a new study, in a push for tech-driven efficiency mirroring the world’s largest corporations.

Africa’s most populous country has been entrenched in an insurgency since 2009, and technological advancements by militants are not new.

Jihadists in west Africa and worldwide have long spread propaganda with the aid of the internet and online messaging platforms and more recently adapted recreational drones for combat.

But “AI adoption by terrorist groups has been much faster, more extensive and more systematic than we thought,” Antonia Juelich, the author of the study, said in an interview with AFP on Monday.

“It’s not just some individual commanders who became aware of AI, but they have really institutionalized it, in terms of having dedicated units” working with AI and organizing training on how to use chatbots, she added.

Juelich, a researcher affiliated with Cambridge University, published her study on AI adaptation by Nigerian jihadists last week, based on interviews with ex-militants from both Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) and rival Jama’at Ahl as-Sunnah lid-Da’wah wa’l-Jihad (JAS) better known as Boko Haram.

Foreign trainers “assembled the top people in a room. They used a projector to show how it works on a big screen,” one former ISWAP militant told Juelich. While the internet along with foreign and home-grown expertise from battle-hardened commanders has long been an aide to jihadists, “the step-by-step-instructions” provided by chatbots as well as “being able to ask spe-



Icons for artificial intelligence chatbot applications, including Claude, ChatGPT, Gemini, Grok, DeepSeek, Qwen, Perplexity, Copilot, and Meta AI, are displayed on a smartphone screen in this illustration photo taken in Italy on July 10, 2026.

cific questions” represent something novel, Juelich told AFP.

ChatGPT, Claude, Gemini, Grok, Meta AI and DeepSeek were all recorded as being used by the militants, the study noted.

- ‘AI told us’ -

If the expert-led trainings and top-down organizational focus on AI is similar to some business practices, however, the way jihadists use AI is probably different from seeking help with Evel Knievel-style motorcycle modifications to learning about new and unfamiliar weapons seized in com-

bat.

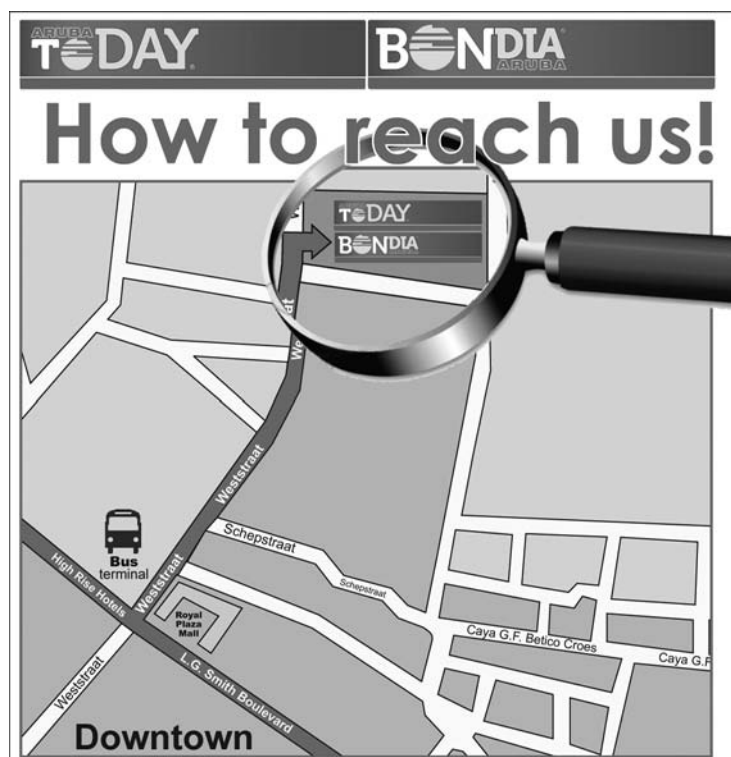
When confronted with trench defenses dug by the military, “We saw in a movie how motorcycles can jump over bridges. We used AI to learn how to do this,” an ex-ISWAP member was quoted in the study as saying.

After repeated practice, “the next time we attacked, we could jump”. In bomb making, chatbots have introduced new types of explosive devices and also helped improve existing ones.

“AI told us what chemicals to put in that made the explosion heavier,” a former

JAS commander said.

Other uses included using AI to study battlefield tactics that could lead to reduced casualties, an ex-ISWAP militant said. □



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ARUBA TODAY NEWS



Team Picnic Post NL Warren Barguil, Julius van der Berg, Pavel Bittner, Frits Biesterbos, Frank van der Broek, John Degenkolb, Robbe Dhondt, Niklas Markl during the Tour de France 2026, UCI World Tour cycling event, Stage 1, Team Time-Trial, Barcelona-Barcelona (19,6 Km) on 4 July 2026 in Barcelona,

Spain French frenzy expected on Bastille Day Tour de France stage

Thiézac, France

Nothing captures the imagination of the French cycling public more than a home winner on Bastille Day.

"It's the national celebration. It's extremely important for us French. It's our day," said Warren Barguil, the last Frenchman to win on July 14, back in 2017.

This year, most of the 29 remaining Frenchman in the Tour de France will have been dreaming of winning Tuesday's 10th stage, a 166.6km run from Aurillac to Le Lioran in the central Cantal region.

Winning on Bastille Day makes a Frenchman an instant Tour legend and their name is forever associated with the date.

"In the moment, we enjoy the victory, but after that, to the fans, people started to call me 'the July 14th winner'," David Moncoutie, who claimed the hilly 12th stage on that date in 2005, said a few years ago.

"When I won in Figeac in 2004, no one called me 'the July 15th winner'!"

"Usually, you don't remember the date of your wins, but I know that one by heart."

Tuesday's stage includes seven categorised climbs, although no behemoth mountains.

Still, the highest peak, the Puy Mary - Pas de Peyrol, rises over 1,500-metres above sea level.

The stage lends itself to a breakaway of tough specialists who have the strength to get over the energy-sapping climbs.

Although much will depend on whether race leader Tadej Pogacar's UAE Emirates-XRG team decide to set up the reigning champion for a stage victory by riding at a break-neck pace.

They have already won three stages in this 113th edition of the Grande Boucle, leading to some complaints from teams and fans alike that they are not giving any one else a chance. Pogacar has won twice on Bastille Day, in 2021 and in 2024.

The latter victory has special memories for him in the shape of the cuddly toy that was given to the stage winners.

"I have the best lion that I keep in my parents house, (it) has a French flag around the chest because I got it on that day, with the yellow jersey," he said on Sunday.

"It's not probably as special a day as for the French riders, but it's been always every year like this.

"For sure, on Tuesday, we

can expect a big fight for stage victory from French riders."

- 'A different day' -

Barguil is the only French rider in the race this year to have won on Bastille Day in fact the only active French rider to have done so.

That 2017 Tour was extra special for Barguil as he won two stages as well as the polkadot 'King of the Mountains' classification. But simply being a Frenchman competing at the Tour on Bastille Day -- even without winning the stage -- is unforgettable.

Barguil rode the Tour in 2019 as French champion and he said that riding in that jersey on July 14 was as special as winning a stage on that date.

"It's different to other days," Barguil said before the Tour started.

"I won a stage (on July 14) and I managed to do it (the Bastille Day stage) in the French champion's jersey.

"With the French champion's jersey, it was (also) completely crazy.

"It's just a different day."

As former sprint king Mark Cavendish used to say, winning any Tour stage can make a rider's entire career. □



U.S. golfer Jordan Spieth attends a press conference held ahead of the 154th Open Golf championship at Royal Birkdale Golf Club near Southport in north-west England on July 13, 2026.

Spieth adamant he has more golf majors left in him

London, United Kingdom

Jordan Spieth refuses to accept the form that led him to win three of golf's major titles has been lost forever.

The American won the U.S. Masters, U.S. Open and British Open in a purple patch from 2015-17, leading many observers to suggest it was just a matter of time before he joined the select band of players who have completed a career Grand Slam of golf's four most prestigious championships.

But while the U.S. PGA has continued to remain elusive for Spieth, so has any other major title.

This week, however, Spieth has another chance to end that drought in a British Open being staged at the Royal Birkdale course near Liverpool -- the scene of his 2017 triumph in golf's oldest major championship.

The intervening nine years have been tough for the former world number one, with injuries and a loss of form meaning Spieth has won just two tournaments since the last of his three majors.

But the 32-year-old hasn't given up hope of adding a fourth major to his name.

"I'll never believe that until I'm at a point in my career where my health or whatever would be that, because if you give up on reaching your ceiling then I don't see a point in playing any more.

"I'll do everything I can to be the very best in the world because I know I can be. I have been. It's nice to have the blueprint."

Spieth's best finish this year is eleventh although there were signs of a reawakening at the Masters when he tied for twelfth, seven strokes behind the champion Rory McIlroy,

"If you are capable of leading in every (statistical) category, then you are capable of doing great things: even this season I've been able to lead in each of the different categories," he said.

"There are things I can do significantly better now than when I was number one in the world, therefore there should be nothing to stop me in my own head to believe that I can reach that again.

"I'm 32, I'm not 42. At 42 you'd really have to sacrifice a lot of things to try and do that. I don't feel like I have to. "I'm always comparing myself a bit to myself at my best, but not to try to be the exact player.

"I know my ceiling is where that level was so I'm going to strive for it with the type of player I am now." □



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'Final before final': France face Spain in World Cup blockbuster

Dallas, United States

Spain will attempt to neutralise one of the most potent attacking arsenals in World Cup history on Tuesday when they take on France in a heavyweight semi-final showdown.

The reigning European champions and Didier Deschamps' French team face off at the AT&T Stadium in Arlington, Texas in what is seen by many as a 'final before the final' featuring the two best sides left in the tournament.

In the blue corner are France, who have progressed serenely to the last four on the back of a multi-pronged strike-force spearheaded by captain Kylian Mbappe - he has scored eight goals in six games.

Mbappe's supporting cast includes Bayern Munich star Michael Olise, Bal-



This combination of files photos created on July 12, 2026, shows France's forward #10 Kylian Mbappe in Foxborough on July 9, 2026 (L); and Spain's forward #19 Lamine Yamal in Arlington on July 6, 2026.

lon D'Or winner Ousmane Dembele and Paris Saint-Germain duo Bradley Bar-

cola and Desire Doue. In the red corner, Spain, who have calmly worked

their way into the semi-finals with their brand of possession-based, relentless



football that has become their trademark under Luis de la Fuente.

While individual brilliance has lit up France's campaign, Spain have relied on collective menace - a well-oiled machine founded on the silky passing of midfielders such as Rodri, Pedri and Fabian Ruiz, providing ammunition for teenage winger Lamine Yamal.

It all adds up to a classic clash of styles that will see Spain attempt to sever the supply lines to Mbappe and company by controlling possession, while simultaneously seeking to put pressure on a France defence that has yet to be seriously tested.

While that may be easier said than done, Spain will take encouragement from their recent record against France.

La Roja defeated France 5-4 in a high-scoring UEFA Nations League thriller last year, and also scored a 2-1 semi-final win en route to victory at the European Championship in 2024.

- Nothing to fear -

Yamal, who will go into Tuesday's blockbuster just a day after turning 19, says Spain have nothing to fear. "Obviously we are two great teams, among the best in the world. We'll see what happens, but we have no fear," Yamal said after Spain's 2-1 quarter-final defeat of Belgium in Los Angeles on Friday.

"There are two possibilities either they reach three on-sequence World Cup finals, or we beat them three times in a row. We'll see what happens. We aren't afraid at all."

Spain coach De la Fuente echoed Yamal's message of "no fear". □

NFL seeks to break into Africa with Kenya competition

Nairobi, Kenya

American Football's NFL came to Kenya this weekend for its latest competition on the African continent as it seeks to win converts to the sport.

U.S. sports have increasingly sought to break into the African market, with the NBA launching a high-profile Basketball Africa League in 2019, based in Rwanda.

Recent days saw a third annual flag football competition staged by the National Football League (NFL) in Africa - a non-contact version of the sport that has grown in popularity around the world and will make its Olympics debut at the 2028 Los Angeles Games.

The three-day competition saw Egypt emerge as winners of the men's contest

against teams from Kenya, Ghana, Nigeria and South Africa, while the women's contest was won by Nigeria.

The event also included a talent-spotting session with NFL scouts, looking for the next star to join the league. "Flag football is very accessible, everybody can play it," said Osi Umenyiora, who won two Super Bowls with the New York Giants, and now heads NFL Africa.

"As the NFL looks to expand and keep on growing especially across the continent of Africa... participation is a huge part of it," he said.

"We all know what sport can do for people, it can allow them to escape whatever situation they're in, and give them hope,

and that's what we're trying to do here," he added. Nigeria has already earned itself a place at the flag football world championships in Dusseldorf, Germany in August where it hopes to qualify for the Olympics.

"We have been playing NFL flag football for a long time since 2016 and the game has exploded to 40 teams (in Nigeria), which gives us the edge over other countries in Africa," said Nigerian coach Ephraim Faloughi. □



Players of Nigeria's national women's senior flag football team lift the trophy as they celebrate their tournament victory during the NFL Flag Africa Continental Championships at Nyayo Stadium in Nairobi on July 10, 2026.

Dodgers face Ohtani knee issues in MLB three-peat bid

Los Angeles, United States

The Los Angeles Dodgers are aiming to sort out two-way star Shohei Ohtani's nagging knee trouble as their bid for a third consecutive World Series crown hits the halfway stage.

As the Major League Baseball season reached the mid-season All-Star Game break on Sunday, the Dodgers boasted the best record at 61-36 despite a 5-3 home loss to Arizona. Ohtani, who homered off the first Arizona pitch Sunday, was to skip the All-Star Game and have fluid drained off his left knee, giving him four days to recover before the Dodgers return to the field on Friday against the New York Yankees.

"The knee flared up. Sometimes it calms down," said Ohtani, who indicated his pitching motion could be causing the knee issue. "In terms of the knee, I think it's more of my pitching mechanics. That's something I need to work on."

Ohtani is a candidate for a fifth overall and fourth consecutive Most Valuable Player award, a third in a row in the National League after an American League MVP in his last season with the Los Angeles Angels.

"He has been managing



Shohei Ohtani #17 of the Los Angeles Dodgers celebrates in the dugout after scoring off of a double hit by Tommy Edman #25 during the third inning against the Arizona Diamondbacks at Dodger Stadium on July 12, 2026 in Los Angeles, California.

this quite well, the knee, and so if there's a chance we could be proactive and get it drained... we were going to do that," Dodgers manager Dave Roberts said.

Ohtani is batting .293 with 22 home runs and 58 runs batted in at the plate while as a pitcher he is 8-2 with 95 strikeouts and a 1.79 earned-run average. The Dodgers beat the Yankees in the 2024 World Series and triumphed over Toronto last year.

They could become the

first National League club ever to win the championship final three years in a row, the first overall to do it since the Yankees won from 1998-2000.

Los Angeles reached the All-Star break leading Arizona by 11.5 games in the NL West division, by far the largest margin for any division leader.

Milwaukee, the NL Central leader, ranks second overall on 59-37. Atlanta leads the NL East at 55-40 with Philadelphia, the Chicago Cubs and Miami in wild-card playoff positions with

St. Louis, Arizona and Washington within four games.

In the American League, Tampa Bay leads the AL East and overall at 56-38 with the Yankees second at 54-42 and in the top wild-card spot.

The Chicago White Sox lead the AL Central at 50-45 with Cleveland just behind and the Texas Rangers lead the AL West on 49-47 with Seattle in the final wild-card spot.

Philadelphia designated hitter Kyle Schwarber leads the NL with 32 home runs,

one more than AL leader Yordan Alvarez of Houston. St. Louis outfielder Jordan Walker leads MLB with 74 runs batted in with AL leader Alvarez next on 70.

Miami shortstop Otto Lopez leads in batting average at .334 with San Francisco second baseman Luis Arraez on .331. Tampa Bay's Yandy Diaz tops the AL at .322 with Alvarez next on .318.

- Sanchez, Cease start -

Philadelphia right-hander Cristopher Sanchez and Toronto right-hander Dylan Cease were named starting pitchers for Tuesday's MLB All-Star Game at Philadelphia.

Fatigue kept out Milwaukee pitcher Jacob Misiorowski, who tops MLB with 167 strikeouts to 148 for Cease. Misiorowski also tops MLB with a 1.62 earned-run average.

Milwaukee's Aaron Ashby is 12-2 with the most wins with Sanchez 11-4 and tied for second with Boston's Sonny Gray and Chase Burns of Cincinnati.

Sanchez will be the first Phillies pitcher to start the All-Star Game since Roy Halladay in 2011 and will do so in his home ballpark.

Cease will be the first Toronto pitcher to start the All-Star Game since Halladay in 2009. □

Marlins draft Japanese slugger Sasaki, who now faces MLB decision

Los Angeles, United States

The Miami Marlins selected Japanese slugger Rintaro Sasaki in the eighth round of the Major League Baseball Draft on Sunday, leaving the former high school phenomenon with career choices to make.

Sasaki, who arrived State-side in 2023 as Japan's all-time high school home run leader, has played the last two seasons for Stanford University, his decision to play U.S. college ball making him eligible for both the MLB and Nippon Professional Baseball drafts.

In October, he was drafted by both the Yokohama DeNA BayStars and the



Rintaro Sasaki of the Stanford Cardinal visits a facility of the Fukuoka Softbank Hawks at TamaHome Stadium in Chikugo City, Fukuoka Prefecture, Japan, on July 2, 2026.

Fukuoka SoftBank Hawks with their first-round picks, the Hawks eventually winning exclusive negotiating rights should Sasaki choose to launch his pro career in Japan.

He could also continue to play for Stanford, where he crushed 16 home runs with 45 walks and 50 strikeouts in 2025.

Sasaki, 21, boasts a pedigree instantly recognizable to both Japanese and US students of the game.

He hit 140 home runs for Hanamaki Higashi High School, the alma mater of Los Angeles Dodgers superstar Shohei Ohtani who was also coached there

by Sasaki's father, Hiroshi Sasaki.

Before high school, he played "little senior" youth ball under Ohtani's father, Toru.

The Hawks are hoping he'll opt for a return home before their negotiating rights expire on July 31, but Sasaki has said he is undecided. Sunday was the second day of the MLB draft, which opened with the Chicago White Sox selecting University of California at Los Angeles shortstop Roch Cholowsky first overall.

Texas high school shortstop Grady Emerson went to the Tampa Bay Rays with the second overall pick. □