



The Prikichi: Aruba's national bird



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OAK CREEK, WISCONSIN —

In the heart of Oak Creek, a town where the winter winds usually bite harder than the local news, something remarkable has taken root. It didn't involve a grand municipal project, a corporate takeover, or a multi-million dollar donation. Instead, the transformation of this community began with a single, handwritten note tucked inside a well-worn, library-bound copy of *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn*. The note, written on a simple piece of yellow legal pad paper, was discovered by a high school junior named Leo during a late-night study session. It read: "This book kept me company when I felt like the world had forgotten I existed. If you're holding this, know that you aren't alone either. Pass it on."

What started as a solitary, anonymous gesture of kindness has snowballed into what locals are now calling "The Oak Creek Book Chain." Within months, the Oak Creek Public Library

has evolved from a quiet repository of books into the beating heart of a grassroots movement that is fundamentally altering the town's social fabric.

Library director Sarah Jenkins, who has managed the branch for nearly twenty years, says she has never seen anything like it. "Initially, we thought it was a fluke—a one-off 'Post-it' note left by a sentimental reader," Jenkins explained, gesturing toward a now-overflowing display near the entrance titled The Hope Shelf. "But then it happened again. And again. By the third week, books were being returned not just with notes, but with pressed flowers, handmade bookmarks, and even five-dollar gift cards for the local coffee shop tucked into the back covers."

The "Hope Shelf" operates on a simple, self-sustaining logic: take a book that speaks to you, read the message left by the previous borrower, and when you return it, add your own

The small-town library that borrowed hope: A community rebuilt by books

piece of encouragement for the next stranger. It has turned the act of reading—traditionally a solitary endeavor—into a silent, town-wide conversation.

The movement has provided a vital lifeline for the town's most vulnerable populations, particularly its senior citizens. Oak Creek, like many Midwestern towns, has seen its younger generation migrate toward larger cities, leaving behind an aging population that often struggles with isolation.

Martha Higgins, an 82-year-old widow who has lived in the same bungalow on 5th Avenue for five decades, says the library has become her primary social outlet. "I found a note in a mystery novel three weeks ago from a young man who said the story helped him get through a particularly grueling week of midterms," Martha said, her eyes twinkling. "I wrote back to him on the same slip of paper, telling him that at my age, every week feels like a midterm, but we keep going anyway. We've been 'pen pals' through that one book for a month now. I don't know his face, but I know his heart. It makes the world feel a little less empty when I turn off my lamp at night."

The ripple effect has extended far beyond the library's brick-and-mortar walls. Across the street, "The Perk Up," a small family-owned coffee shop, has seen a 50% increase in its "suspended coffee" program—a system where customers prepay for a drink for someone who might be struggling.

Owner Mike Russo attributes the surge in generosity directly to the library's influence. "People come in here after browsing the stacks, and they're just... softer. They're more patient in line. They're looking for ways to pay it forward," Russo noted. "I had a customer last Tuesday who paid for the next ten people behind him just because he'd found a particularly moving poem in a book across the street. Kindness is a muscle; the more this town exercises it, the stronger it gets."

The movement has even caught the attention of local law enforcement. While Oak Creek has always been a relatively safe community, local police chief David Miller notes a subtle shift in the "temperature" of the town. "We're seeing fewer disputes between neighbors and a general increase in community cooperation," Miller said. "It turns out it's a lot harder to be angry at your neighbor when you realize you might be sharing

the same favorite book."

As news of the "Book Chain" spreads on social media, Jenkins has received calls from library directors as far away as Oregon and Maine, all looking to replicate the Oak Creek model. However, Jenkins insists that the success of the program isn't about a specific marketing strategy or a clever display.

"It's about the vulnerability," she says. "In a world that is increasingly digital and often very polarized, people are hungry for something real. A handwritten note is a physical bridge between two people. We didn't build this; the people of Oak Creek built it. They just used our books as the foundation."

As the first snow of the season begins to dust the streets outside, the library is busier than ever. Inside, the hushed silence isn't the cold, stifling quiet of an institution, but the warm, expectant silence of a community waiting to see what the next chapter holds.

The Oak Creek Book Chain proves that you don't need a massive budget to rebuild a community. Sometimes, all you need is a library card, a pen, and the courage to tell a stranger that they aren't alone. □

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



ASHEVILLE, NORTH CAROLINA —

In a sun-drenched training yard on the outskirts of Asheville, a formerly "unadoptable" German Shepherd mix named Buster is proving that everyone deserves a second chance. Just six months ago, Buster

was days away from being euthanized at a high-kill shelter. Today, he is the newest graduate of the "Rescue Ranks" program, a unique initiative that pairs shelter dogs with military veterans suffering from PTSD.

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

"The beauty of Rescue Ranks is that it's a dual-rescue," Miller explains, watching Buster execute a perfect 'stay' command for his new handler, a veteran named Elias. "We're saving these

dogs from the brink, and in return, they're providing a sense of purpose and security to men and women who have given everything for this country."

The training process is rigorous, lasting twelve weeks. Veterans and their dogs work together daily, learning not just basic commands, but specialized tasks designed to mitigate the symptoms of PTSD. Dogs are trained to create physical "buffer zones" in crowded places, wake their handlers from nightmares, and provide deep-pressure therapy during panic attacks.

For Elias, who spent years

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

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

Canadian wildfire sends hazardous smoke spewing into U.S.



Smoke from wildfires burning in Canada blankets the Chicago metropolitan area on July 16, 2026.

New York, United States

Out-of-control wildfires were raging Thursday in the Canadian province of Ontario, sending dangerous smoke spewing into the United States where millions of people were exposed to the unhealthy air. U.S. states near the Canadian border including Minnesota, Wisconsin, Michigan and Illinois were particularly choked, as the Northeast including New York was also experiencing deteriorating air quality.

On Thursday afternoon, tracker IQAir listed Minneapolis, Detroit and Chicago as the top three most polluted cities in the world.

A thick, hazy cast hung over New York, where state authorities warned of fine particulate matter from the fires that would make the outdoors "unhealthy" for everyone across the New York metro area and Long Island. Even worse air enveloped the central and western regions of the state.

Authorities encouraged New Yorkers to spend as little time outside as possible, with Mayor Zohran Mamdani warning of the "serious threat" of heavy heat and unsafe air. Libraries and train stations were offering free masks, while hundreds of cooling centers were open across the city for those without access to air conditioning.

"This could become the most significant smoke event in New York City since 2023, and conditions will be closely

monitored for any deterioration," the city's Department of Emergency Management said.

That year, the city's skies turned an eerie orange, with the air quality index reaching a dangerous 465.

- 'Our chests feel tight' -

In the Midwest, current index levels were already far beyond that figure, according to the US Environmental Protection Agency tracker. Chicago along with Toledo, Ohio, and areas in Minnesota relatively close to the fires were well into the 700s on the air quality index, with much of the rest of the upper Midwest also experiencing AQI levels in the worst category of "hazardous."

Erin Lucey, 38, works on her family's organic vegetable farm in south-central Wisconsin and spent the morning harvesting zucchini, beans and cucumbers, among other tasks, with laborers wearing masks in muggy heat to filter out the hazy smoke blanketing the area.

"Our chests feel tight," she told AFP, saying the smoke combined with recent searing heatwaves and parched fields left conditions feeling "eerie."

"We are all thinking of the delicate balance of grow-

ing food in this type of future, and remarking how we can't imagine what it will be like here in 100 years," she said. "If people were outside like us working and seeing how everything looks, if they didn't have the convenience of air conditioning, we would be making much faster changes to address the climate crisis," she added.

The Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy said it expected the dangerous conditions to continue through Friday, and that "our best model for smoke only predicts out to 48 hours." "That model is currently showing improvements on Saturday, but it is likely that smoke will linger and recirculate for a while," the agency said.

- Evacuations in Canada -

In Canada, the latest data shows there are more than 130 active fires in northwestern Ontario, with at least 60 out of control.

Authorities there have formally requested additional assistance from the federal government, in particular seeking air support to evacuate remote communities. The Ontario Provincial Police said 15 communities and their surrounding areas have been evacuated so far. □

U.N. agency warns cost of a healthy diet has spiked 25% since 2021

United Nations, United States
The cost of a healthy diet has increased 25 percent in the past five years, putting it out of reach for one-third of the global population, according to figures released Wednesday by the United Nations. The increased cost of food makes a healthy diet require an average of \$4.28 purchase power parity dollars per person per day, per the UN Food and Agricultural Organization's 2026 State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World report.

"As a result, 2.69 billion people -- almost one in every three people in the world -- still cannot afford a healthy diet," Maximo Torero Cullen, the FAO's chief economist, told a

press conference at U.N. headquarters in New York. The full report will be presented July 21 at the organization's headquarters in Rome.

The costs are not distributed equally -- staple foods such as beans and grains, for instance, account for 13 percent of the cost of a healthy diet, while animal products account for nearly 30 percent, and fruits and vegetables make up 16 percent.

"The challenge therefore is not to produce enough calories, it is making nutrient-rich foods more affordable," Torero said, adding that local food production would greatly reduce the costs associated with a healthy diet.

In Africa, costs would be reduced by almost 80 percent with locally produced foods versus a standardized global food basket. The FAO economist recommended redirecting government subsidies toward more nutrient-rich foods than cereals, like rice and wheat. He also noted that the investment in local infrastructure and logistics would significantly reduce costs, as "between 70 and 75 percent of the cost of a healthy diet is generated after food leaves the farm."

Torero said the part of the world with the highest costs was Latin America, specifically the Caribbean, possibly due to the emphasis on exporting food products rather than cre-

ating enough to lower local prices.

For the coming year, Torero highlighted two uncertain factors that could affect food prices: the closure of the Strait of Hormuz, which

would further disrupt the global fertilizer supply, and the impacts of the "very strong" El Nino weather pattern, which is expected to peak toward the end of 2026. □



Health and Human Services Secretary Robert Kennedy announces new dietary guidelines for the United States, focusing more on protein and minimizing added sugars at the White House in Washington, D.C., United States, on January 7, 2025.

Xi to present China's AI dream at major conference

Shanghai, China

President Xi Jinping presents China's vision for the development and regulation of artificial intelligence on Friday, at a major conference showcasing cutting-edge technology he hopes will soon rival that of the United States.

Chinese AI models are gaining ground on the most powerful offerings from the United States, while attracting global users with lower costs.

But how to govern the booming sector has become a key topic, as concerns over the deployment of AI in military combat, or its potentially nefarious use by hackers or terrorists grow.

Xi will speak at the World Artificial Intelligence Conference (WAIC) in Shanghai on Friday, with his first attendance at the gathering underlining the strategic importance Beijing is placing on AI.

It is "the most important annual event for understanding the direction of China's AI industry", although does not yet have global "must-attend" status, said Poe Zhao, founder of analysis publication Hello China Tech.



People walk past signage for the World Artificial Intelligence Conference (WAIC) in Shanghai on July 16, 2026.

"The United States retains a clear lead in advanced chips, frontier computing infrastructure and the most capital-intensive model development," Zhao told AFP. But "China is its closest and most comprehensive competitor", Zhao added.

The four-day event draws more than 1,000 of the country's tech firms together with officials, researchers and other industry figures. Around 3,000 products will be on display, from pow-

erful semiconductor systems for AI computing to a smartphone that can autonomously operate apps on command.

But all eyes will be on Xi's vision of how the world should handle the potential impact of AI on cybersecurity and conflict, as well as on jobs and the world economy.

- From AI models to everyday use -
Premier Li Qiang an-

nounced at last year's WAIC the establishment of a China-led organisation for international AI cooperation, but few details have emerged.

This year, Xi is expected to expand on that idea.

"China opposes drawing lines on the basis of ideology and technological blockades," foreign ministry spokesperson Lin Jian told a news briefing on Thursday, in an apparent reference to restrictions imposed on

Chinese tech imports by the United States and European Union.

"Taking this conference as an opportunity, China will have candid exchanges with all parties and build consensus... so that technological progress can truly promote the development and prosperity of human society," he said.

Leaders including UN chief Antonio Guterres, Cambodia's Hun Manet and Thailand's Anutin Charnvirakul are expected to attend the conference, which will lay out the cutting edge of China's AI technology.

Among this year's highlights at WAIC are MiniMax's M3 model, the first phone equipped with an autonomous AI agent, and Huawei's Atlas 950 "super-node", a cutting-edge AI architecture for learning and reasoning.

"The main theme will be the transition from AI models to systems that can be deployed at scale" in everyday life, said Hello China Tech's Zhao.

AI agents tools capable of conversing with users, but also of managing software or performing complex tasks will also take centre stage, he added. □

Nvidia's Huang says AI growth at 'beginning' despite tech rout

Tokyo, Japan

Nvidia chief Jensen Huang gave a confident projection of sustained demand for artificial intelligence Thursday as worries over how long the boom will last drag stocks down.

"Most technology cycles last anywhere from 10

to 15 years before it kind of plateaus. We are at the beginning of this one," the US chip giant's CEO told reporters in Tokyo.

"Is it going to flatten out? It will never go down, just as electricity never went down," he said, adding

that semiconductors will be the world's largest industry, as part of its "social fabric".

Tech shares in Asia and Europe extended falls Thursday, as anxiety grows among traders that the AI rally has run its course.

Huang, CEO of California's Nvidia -- the world's most valuable company as governments and tech firms race to build AI data centres crammed with powerful silicon chips has struck several deals in Japan this week.

Nvidia and Kawasaki Heavy Industries will co-develop AI-powered robots for use in shipbuilding, the Japanese firm said Thursday.

The aim is to use the robots in welding, painting, inspection and material handling as part of a

"next-generation digital shipyard using physical AI and digital twin technology", Kawasaki said in a statement.

"Japan's shipbuilding industry currently faces serious challenges, including a declining number of skilled workers and labor shortages driven by the falling birthrate and ageing population," the company said.

"At the same time, global efforts to reduce environmental impact are driving worldwide demand for low- and zero-carbon vessels, making it an urgent priority for the shipbuilding industry as a whole to expand construction capacity and improve productivity."

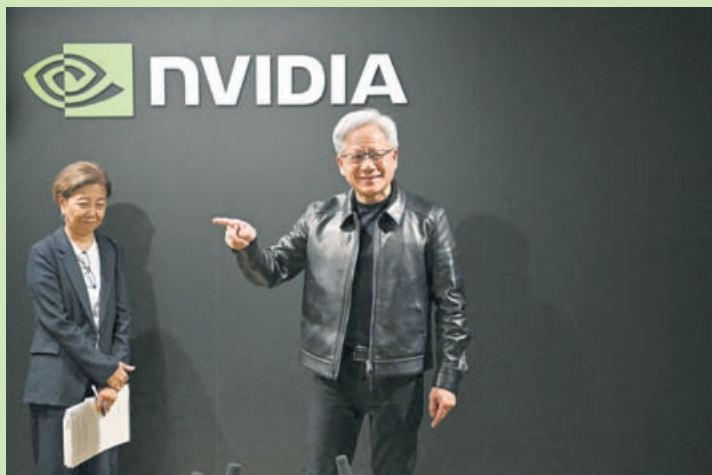
Nvidia also said Thursday it would sell 27,500 AI chips

from its cutting-edge Rubin series to Noetra, a new consortium of firms including SoftBank and Sony, for a government-supported project to develop a homemade AI model for robotics.

Other tie-ups announced included a collaboration on robotics with Japan's Fujitsu and others.

Taiwanese-born Huang, 63, visited a Tokyo arcade on Wednesday with Sega executives and thanked the Japanese video game maker for saving Nvidia with a \$5-million investment in the 1990s.

"If not for what Sega did for Nvidia and what Irimajiri-san did for Nvidia, Nvidia would not be here today," Huang said, referring to Sega's former president Shoichiro Irimajiri. □



Nvidia CEO Jensen Huang attends the Q&A session with the media during Nvidia/Japan AI Ecosystem Reception in Tokyo on July 16, 2026.

In Senegal, a feverish ancestral hunt beckons the rain

Fatick, Senegal

Against a frenzy of drums, chanting and gunfire, a few hundred Serer men parade about in a trance-like state, brandishing the day's hunt jackals, monitor lizards, monkeys and birds in hopes of hastening Senegal's rainy season.

Ndiaye Ndiaye, a district in the western city of Fatick, on Monday hosted the 723rd edition of its annual hunt, known as the Miss de Diobaye, a centuries-old tradition believed to bring rain and protect the community.

The ritual, which belongs to the country's Serer ethnic minority, also heralds the start of the farming season. However it has been disrupted in recent years by deforestation, modernisation and climate change that is causing the rains to arrive later.

Wearing a camouflage vest, Ousseynou Laye Di-one returns on his motorbike from his seventh Diobaye hunt alongside eight other young men in scorching heat.

"We chase the animals on motorbikes", the 26-year-old firefighter said, explaining that "when we're 100 meters (330 feet) from the animal, we shoot at it and sometimes we hit it head-on".



Hunters gather after arriving to the Ngor Siid Ndour Arena, where they will display their catch to community members, as well as traditional and political leaders, during the Diobaye Hunt in Fatick, on July 13, 2026.

The hunters share the catch by hacking off pieces with machetes and hanging them from their belts.

Only Serer men who have undergone initiation rites are allowed to take part in the mystical hunt.

The day before the event, a traditional seer, known as a saltigue, predicts which animal must be killed in order to trigger abundant rain. The secret is shared only among the initiates. Legend has it that the practice began seven cen-

turies ago during a terrible drought, when a seer foretold the return of rain only if a specific animal was killed. On the evening when that animal was hunted down, heavy rain fell on Ndiaye Ndiaye, bringing a bountiful harvest and a tradition was born.

- Martial parade -

The young men's return to the district is marked by a spirited martial procession, accompanied by drums and chanting. Adorned with protective

vines and eyes rolled back in ecstatic trances, the hunters bash their machetes and fire their rifles and pistols to ward off evil spirits. "The Miss is a moment of catharsis, a violent purification of space, entrusted to the youngest men", said Sobel Dione, an anthropologist specialized in Serer culture.

From a safe distance, women and children, generally in high spirits but sometimes startled by the gunfire, watched the frenetic procession.

"It's a celebration", exclaimed various members of a group of women.

As the parade drew to a close, hunters gathered by family to dance before traditional and religious leaders as well as state officials, brandishing their weapons. "It's a source of pride for me to represent my community and take part in the culture", said 19-year-old Mamour Diaw, his face painted white. "Our millet fields need it".

- Climate change and deforestation -

Over the centuries, the Miss de Diobaye has had to adapt to the changing physical environment and times.

Dressed in an elegant suit with a rifle slung over his shoulder, 56-year-old Ousseynou Ndour has seen the tradition evolve.

"Hunting methods have shifted with the introduction of motorbikes. In the past we walked barefoot through the bush, without guns", he told AFP.

The once vast forest of Diobaye has been reduced to a sprawling plain dotted with sparse trees, depleted by human-driven deforestation and soil Stalinization. Antelopes and rhinos once hunted by ancestors no longer exist in the region. □

Bayeux Tapestry suffered no visible damage during journey: French official

Paris, France

The medieval Bayeux Tapestry suffered no visible damage during its journey to London for an exhibition after leaving France for the first time in over 900 years, a French culture ministry official told AFP on Thursday. "I can confirm that there has been no visible alteration and that the tapestry has travelled well," said Delphine Christophe, Director General for Heritage and Architecture, who is currently at the British Museum in London.

Depicting the 1066 Battle of Hastings and the invasion by William the Conqueror's Norman army, it is widely thought to have

been made in England before being transferred to Bayeux in France.

It is believed to be the first time the fragile, 68-metre (224-foot) embroidered tapestry has left France since then, and the first time it has been moved in over 40 years.

It will be displayed at the British Museum from September 10 to July 11 next year, with tens of thousands of tickets already sold.

The tapestry was transported on July 10 to the British Museum for a one-year loan agreed in 2025 by French President Emmanuel Macron.

Taken to London under tight security by truck from western France, the 11th-century work had been kept in a specially designed double case to limit vibrations and maintain constant temperature and humidity levels.

It was removed from the case on Thursday and fully unwrapped, Christophe said.

"The removal went very smoothly and involved several dozen people," she said, adding that the number included both British and French experts.

A more detailed assessment will be conducted soon to verify its condition. Christophe however ex-

pressed confidence, saying: "If there had been a problem, we would have

noticed it because we saw it in its entirety, completely unfurled." □



A worker pushes a specially designed crate carrying the Bayeux Tapestry into the British Museum in central London early on July 10, 2026, as the 11th-century artwork depicting the 1066 Norman conquest of England arrives ahead its first UK exhibition from September.

'No rest': Indonesians overworked and abused on foreign fishing vessels

Cirebon, Indonesia

Lured by promises of good money working aboard a foreign fishing vessel, Akhmad left Indonesia and headed out to sea, enduring months of abuse and exploitation while being cut off from the world.

Indonesia is one of the top contributors of labour for the global fishing industry with several hundred thousand migrant workers, according to government figures.

Many are recruited online and assigned to foreign-flagged ships without being properly informed about their rights, leaving them vulnerable to abuse, experts say.

Akhmad, 25, who left Cirebon on Indonesia's Java island in 2022, told AFP he would get as little as four hours of rest a day while working on a Chinese-flagged tuna fishing vessel. "There was no rest. (We) must keep working," said Akhmad, who like many Indonesians goes by one name. "It was very tiring. My eyes hurt... If I was slightly sleepy, I was ordered to wake up and work."

Crew members had little communication with the outside world and faced



This picture taken on June 10, 2026 shows Jamaludin, a former crew member of a Chinese fishing vessel, showing a photo on his phone screen displaying shark fins during an interview with AFP at the traditional port of Bungko Lor hamlet in Cirebon, West Java.

regular verbal and physical abuse on board, Akhmad said, recalling the captain once beating a colleague accused of stealing fish they had caught.

In addition to tuna, Akhmad said the crew would also catch sharks, cutting off their fins before throwing them back into the ocean. The practice known as finning is mostly banned across many fishing zones

and countries, including the United States and the European Union, but remains a lucrative business activity in some parts of the world.

Jamaludin, an Indonesian man who worked on a different Chinese-flagged vessel between 2018 and 2020, said he was forced to follow the captain's orders to harvest shark fins despite knowing that it could be illegal.

The 29-year-old said the captain would hurl verbal abuse at him for a delay in installing fishing gear, for example, or if any tool was missing.

Jamaludin said he once saw the captain ordering a fellow crew member to resume work despite an injury to one of his hands that exposed his flesh and bones. "I was stressed, (but) what can I do? I'd already gotten here," he said.

Jamaludin's passport was withheld by the captain, and he feared he would face a penalty for quitting early, leaving him little choice but to see out the remainder of his contract.

- 'No way out' -

Both Jamaludin and Akhmad were working on vessels operating off West Africa which unloaded fish in Senegal's capital Dakar.

The port on the Atlantic coast has served as a regional finning hub in recent years, according to a report issued Thursday by London-based NGO Environmental Justice Foundation (EJF).

The organisation's CEO Steve Trent said that abuse and mismanagement were "systemic" across the Chinese distant-water fishing fleet, and to a lesser extent the Taiwanese one, which together dominate the sector.

Migrant fishers easily find themselves in debt before beginning work, effectively trapped in bonded labour, said EJF's head of research, Callum Nolan.

Limited access to the outside world while at sea makes it difficult to seek help, he added. □

After arrests, Hong Kong issues warning to booksellers

Hong Kong, China

Hong Kong's security chief said on Thursday that booksellers must ensure the items they sell "do not endanger national security", a day after authorities

arrested five over "seditious" material.

National security police searched two bookshops on Wednesday and arrested five people under

suspicion of displaying and selling "items with seditious intent", the latest in a string of crackdowns on independent bookshops.

AFP reporters saw officers lead a woman in handcuffs to a van and taking away several boxes from Have a Nice Stay, a bookshop run by former journalists.

The city's security chief Chris Tang told reporters on Thursday: "If you are a bookseller, you have a responsibility to ensure that the books you sell do not endanger national security."

"I believe booksellers bear this responsibility," he said, comparing it to food vendors being required to ensure the goods they sell

do not "contain poison or breach the law".

Authorities have cracked down on bookshops over alleged "seditious" material under Hong Kong's homegrown national security law, passed in 2024 in addition to broader legislation imposed by Beijing after democracy protests seized the financial hub in 2019.

Tang did not provide details on which publications breached the rules, but said books that incite hatred against authorities would be considered unlawful.

"The law is very clear. If you break the law, you have crossed the red line," he said.

Tang reiterated that officials would not compile a list of banned books, saying authorities would focus on the content of the books rather than the titles. A day before the police raid, Have a Nice Stay shop said it would close in August, citing "the elusive red line" as a factor, in a reference to blurry rules on what books are considered illegal.

"Our capacity is limited. We cannot possibly review every book, let alone judge which ones are 'problematic'," the shop said in a Tuesday statement.

"For us, books are a space for knowledge and ideas, and this space ought to be boundless." □



In this picture taken on April 2, 2023, people visit the 'Have a Nice Stay' bookstore in Hong Kong.

The history and meaning of the Aruban florin

(Oranjestad)—Aruba Today loves to share parts of the Aruban culture with our readers, diving into (historical) facts of Aruba, its culture and way of living. In this article, we'll look at the Aruban florin: its history, design and symbolism.

In Aruba, we know the 5, 10, 25 and 50 cent coins, along with the 1 and 5 Florin coin. Aruban Florin bills include the 10, 25, 50, 100, and rarely, the 200 bills. In Papiamentu we call our currency Florin, but the umbrella term for money is 'placa'. Cents are called 'cen' (pronounced: seng), both in the singular and plural form. Most coins are circular and their size depend on their worth. However, the 50 cent coin is easily recognizable by their square shape, as is the 5 Florin coin by their golden color. Every coin has the Aruban emblem carved on it, with the other side displaying the worth of the coin. The bigger 1 and 5 florin coins, however, contain the carving of the emblem on one side, while displaying the side profile of the Dutch king, Willem-Alexander, on the other side. When his mother, Princess Beatrix, was reigning queen, it was her profile that was carved on the two coins.

Outdated Aruban coins and their names

In the past, Aruban coins had distinctive names and also varied in worth. For example, a 5-cent coin was once called 'Dos Placa'; 10-cent coins were called 'Debchi'; 25-cent coins were called 'Diez Placa' and the 50-cent coin was once called 'Yotin' (pronounced: jo-teen). We also used a distinctive coins worth 2 ½ cents, called placa too. However, this last coin is no longer in use and has become a relic of Aruban money. Back then, the 5-Florin coin used to also be square, but now it is circular.

Aruban bills: their design and symbolism

The Aruban Florin collection contains a variation of colorful bills, displaying incred-



ibly detailed and beautiful designs that tell the story of Aruba on a single piece of paper.

Prior to 2019, the Aruban Florin bills were relatively simpler in design compared to now, but still included beautiful designs and colors, often depicting local animals. These past designs were made by the Aruban artist Everino Fingal in 1990 up to 2019. Between 1990 and 1993, the 5 Florin coin was a bill. The Fingal designs also included a 500-Florin bill, which has now been discontinued.

In 2019, the Central Bank of Aruba commissioned a new design of the Aruba Florin bills, this time selecting artist and former art teacher, Nigel Matthew, to present his new design. Matthew kept the tradition of including local animals and the familiar colors on the bills. However, he included additional designs that represent the Aruban culture and link to the Indigenous inhabitants that were the first to set foot on the island.

Current design and symbolism

10 florin

On the 10-florin bill, you can see a Tortuga blanco (white turtle). The blue color symbolizes the blue Caribbean Sea. You can also see the ruins of the Bushiribana Gold Mill Ruins, a coral motif, and the symbols of Cas Floria (traditional Aruban house design) with a

piece of mosaic.

25 florin

On this orange bill, you can see an Aruban medicinal plant called Shoshoro. The birds Trupiaal, Shoco, rock drawings, and the symbols of Cas Floria with a piece of mosaic are also depicted. There is also a Purun di ceramica (clay pot), in reference to the relics left behind by our indigenous ancestors.

50 florin

On this bill, we see the Cododo (blue lizard found on the ABC islands), Cangreu di tera (land crab), Willem III Tower, and again the symbols of Cas Floria with a piece of mosaic, as well as a beach plant called Banana di rif. The colors are pink/purple.

100 florin

This bill is green in color, representing nature. Here we see the Yuwana (Iguana), Aloe, Toteki (lizard), the

symbols of Cas Floria with a piece of mosaic, and a dance group performing the Baile di cinta (folkloric dance with silk ribbons).

200 florin

There is another bill with a value of 200 dollars. The brown color symbolizes the earth of Aruba. Here we see the Dornasol and the Warawara—both local birds, along with the symbols of Cas Floria with a piece of mosaic, the Tuna cactus plant, and the Caha di orgel (folkloric instrument, used for many traditional songs).

Extra fact:

The word "florin" is supposedly named after the Italian city of Florence or it's a reference to the Italian word "florino", both explanations related to historical Italian currencies. □

Source: Placa, placa, placa by the National Library of Aruba (BNA).



Aiyanna Savinelli: “Aruba has become my second home”

(Oranjestad)—Aruba is not just some tiny vacation island in the Caribbean. For thousands of people, both local and from abroad, it's home. The Aruba Today team are committed to offering the best of Aruba has to offer, but we also love hearing from you directly!

We would like to introduce you to Aiyanna Savinelli, a long time visitor who shared with us her love for our tiny rock.

Aiyanna tells us that from a very young age, Aruba has been part of her life. Since she was a little girl, she and her family traveled to the island multiple times each year now that's what we call real love!

For Aiyanna, Aruba is not just a familiar travel destination it's a place that has shaped her in ways she never expected. She expressed how fortunate she has been to return again and again, not only watching the island evolve over the years, but also growing up with it. For Aiyanna and her family, Aruba has become a very special place.

Second home

As the years passed, she formed friendships with people all over the is-



land restaurant staff who watched her grow up, hotel employees who remembered her every time she returned, local business owners, and friends who have become like extended family. As Aiyanna put it, every visit feels less like arriving at a destination and more like coming home to people who have become an important part of my life.

Aruba has also become her biggest inspiration. Aruba's beauty, kindness, and peaceful atmosphere have inspired her love of photography, fashion, travel, and creativity. Today, while balancing school, she's had the opportunity to model at fashion events in New York, Miami, and the Hamptons, and also work toward becoming an



entrepreneur. No matter where those opportunities take her, Aruba remains the place that inspires her most.

Whenever someone asks her where my favorite place in the world is, her answer has always been Aruba not simply because of its beautiful beaches or breathtaking sunsets, but because of its people. The

friendships she's built over the years are what make the island so special to her, she said.

Her hope is that one day she'll be able to call Aruba home, not just as a visitor, but as a resident who can continue contributing to and celebrating the island that has given her so many wonderful memories and lifelong friendships. □

Why You Should Not Miss Aruba's Free City Center Street Car Tour

(Oranjestad)—Aruba's City Center Street Car – or as we call it in Dutch; “Tram van Oranjestad” – is a single track tram line in Oranjestad, the capital city of Aruba. It was inaugurated on 22 December 2012, being the first and so far the only passenger rail service on Aruba and the rest of the Dutch Caribbean. There are two trolleys, a single-deck one with 42 seats and a double-decker with 64 seats. The line was inspired by the popular battery-powered streetcar operation at the Grove in Los Angeles, USA. Aruba's streetcars are powered by hydrogen fuel cells, which are charged by the island's year-round trade winds.

Caya Betico Croes, mostly referred to as our “main street” has been developed into a pollution-free pedestrian mall. The double-decker offers you a 360 degree view of the down town area with a picture perfect scenery of the island's clear blue skies. Who would not enjoy a ride on this beautiful and naturally air-conditioned vehicle?

The tour consists of a total of 9 stops approximately 200 meters apart from each other; all stops are clearly marked. The tram will bring you close to different museums, historical plazas, monuments, the Protestant church, Aruba's high-end mall, retail



shops, and a variety of local and international cuisine restaurants. The “I love Aruba” trademark also belongs to that list. The third stop on the route is close to a 5-minute walk to the famous Renaissance Marina showcasing luxurious yachts and Aruba's blue waters.

The “Tram van Oranjestad” starts from a balloon loop near the Port of Call and serves the downtown area and ends at Plaza Nicky. The first ride starts at 10:00 am sharp with intervals of 25 minutes. The last trolley departs from the cruise port at 5:00 pm. Don't miss this tour of the beautiful Aruba's City Center it is free for all! □

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Ayo & Casibari: Aruba's famous rock formations

(Oranjestad)—The Ayo and Casibari Rock Formations are known locally as one of the crucial sites to have in your “off-road” trip itinerary. These naturally formed rock formations as just one of the few places on the island that hold a rich history of our culture and of our ancestors.

Ayo

The Ayo Rock Formation is located in the northern part of the island, right on the road that leads you to the Black Stone Beach, and close to the Natural Bridge. The Ayo is a fenced terrain that consists of several giant boulders, resting neatly on top of or side by side each other, adding gorgeous natural architecture to the surrounding “mondi”*. This is also one

of the few sites to contain prehistoric markings of our indigenous ancestors. The Ayo Rock formation contains stairs that lead you to the top of the highest boulder, offering a breathtaking view of the Aruban backyard. The Ayo is usually quiet, as it is situated farther away from the busier parts of the island. However, this is just another charm of the site: the quiet area and the refreshing breeze offer a sense of comfort and peace.

Casibari

Probably the busier rock formation site, the Casibari is situated more in the center of the island, much closer and more accessible to the general public. Just like Ayo, Casibari is a fenced area containing several boulders that lay on

top or lean on each other. The best aspect of the Casibari Rock Formation is the accompanying view when you climb up the top of the round, flat bolder. For this position, you can see the majority of the island and the ocean in the south.

Both sites are open free to the public, 24 hours a day. However, unless you are taking a trip with a professional tour guide, there are no guides at the sites to help you climb the rock. So, do be careful when trudging on the boulders, and make sure to befriend any roaming goats you see along the way!

*Mondi: what we call our Aruban wilderness. We don't have forests, or deserts, but we do have mondi! □

Conchi: Aruba's hidden natural pool

(Oranjestad)—Amongst the countless beaches surrounding the island that are well-known and frequently visited, there is an additional “hidden” natural pools that is situated in the northern coast of the island, two ideal stops in your tour itinerary. This is Conchi.

Conchi (Natural Pool)

For many years, Conchi was the only natural pool that we had on the island. Located in the Arikok National Park, near Boca Keto and the Daimari Ranch, Conchi also known “Cura di Turtuga (Turtle's Cove) or just Natural Pool is reachable with any 4x4 vehicle or by foot if you're up for a long hike. However, since it is part of the National Park, you must first get permission from park management to enter. You would have to purchase a day pass, and receive a wristband as proof of payment. Once you've completed that, you are set!

If you decide to hike from the entrance of the Arikok National Park, this is also possible: do bring plenty of protective clothing and enough water and food—it could take you up to three hours to hike there!

However, when you eventually do get there, you will be greeted with crystal blue water surrounded by a natural rock formation that protects you from the wild waves on the other side. Though the pool is located on the northern side of the island (where the sea is largely rough and largely no suitable for swimming), the pool itself is very calm. It's also relatively deep, and you can climb up the rocks and jump in!

Fun fact: “Conchi” means small bowl in Papiamentu. Once you get there, you may see why we call it that. □



Unique fauna of Aruba

For a small island, Aruba sure has a lot of unique treasures. Among these, we have some subspecies of animals that are unique to our island. These have evolved to perfectly adapt to our desert climate and make Aruba their home. At the same time, they are part of what makes Aruba truly one of a kind.

Cascabel (rattlesnake, *Crotalus durissus unicolor*)

According to the Arikok National Park, Aruba knows two kinds of snakes, the Santanero and the Cascabel. The cascabel belongs to the rattlesnake family. The cascabel is the only venomous snake from Aruba. It has a length of 65cm to 100cm, and is about 4 to 5cm wide. Its color varies from light brown to grey-brown, and its underbelly is white. On its back there are marks that are a little darker, in the shape of diamonds.

Its reproduction is oviparous, meaning the offspring can hatch from their eggs just before, during or immediately after laying.

The cascabel lives mainly in the Arikok National Park. It likes to live in dark places, and is thus found hidden among the limestone rocks and under stones. As a defense mechanism, the cascabel uses its rattle as a warning, and it is not an aggressive animal.

The cascabel feeds on lizards, small mammals such as rats and mice. It paralyzes or kills its prey with its venom, which is injected through a bite. The enemies of the cascabel are donkeys, goats, humans and cars. Humans are the biggest enemy of the cascabel, as they kill

them and destroy their habitat for urbanization.

Shoco (burrowing owl, *Athene cunicularia arubensis*)

The shoco is a small bird which is seldom seen. They are active during the day but are more active later in the day and at night for hunting. These owls have very good night vision and very good hearing. The shoco is the national symbol of Aruba.

The shoco has about 20cm of length, and the females are slightly heavier than the males. They are light brown in color, with many white spots. The belly of the shoco is either white or light brown, and the shoco has striking yellow eyes. Its beak is yellow/green. Young owls do not have white spots and are lighter in color.

The nest of the shoco is a burrow in the ground. If the shoco cannot find a burrow, it will dig one in soft soil. The shoco lays one or two eggs every other day until all the eggs are laid – a shoco can lay up to four eggs. The first owlets hatch after three to four weeks. The shoco owl takes care of the owlets for three months until they leave the nest. Only a few owlets survive.

The owls dig burrows in the ground with low grass vegetation. An owl can live up to nine years.

Its defense mechanism is simply to fly away or retreat to its burrows. They eat mostly insects, mice and lizards, and the main threats to their survival are boas – an invasive species introduced by humans as pets – and humans through destruction



of their habitat.

Prikichi (parakeet, *Aratinga pertinax*)

The Prikichi is the national bird of Aruba. On Aruba, Bonaire, and Curaçao, parakeets can be found, but each of the three islands has a different breed. The Yellow-shouldered Amazon parakeet that we have on Aruba is also found along the coast of Venezuela. Unfortunately, there is interbreeding between the breeds due to cage birds from, for example, Curaçao being released on Aruba. The parakeet population on Aruba is in danger due to extensive deforestation occurring on the island because of the growing population.

The prikichi weighs between 90 to 100 grams. It has a greenish-brown head with some yellow around the eye. The back and wings of the parakeet are dark green, and the underside of the body is a lighter shade of green. There is also a bit of blue in the wings. The parakeet's beak is gray/black.

Parakeets often use termite nests as breeding sites. Parakeets are found in all natural environments (mondi) of the island. It defends itself

by flying away and loud cries. Parakeets eat seeds from the pods of the Kwihi tree, Divi Divi, and columnar cactus. They also consume natural fruits. Its main predators are boa constrictors, humans.

Coneu (cottontail rabbit, *Sylvilagus floridanus nigroneuchalis*)

The Eastern Cottontail rabbit (*Sylvilagus floridanus*) was probably brought over to the island by Indian settlers thousands of years ago as a source of food. This rabbit, locally known as Coneu, has spread all over the island and has become part of our ecosystem. The very adaptable Coneu can live in a wide variety of habitats, including Aruba's xeric scrublands, where it typically grazes on weeds and grasses.

The Aruban Coneu has a brownish grey color and a distinctive white belly. This white fur extends to the bottom of the tail which becomes visible as the rabbit runs. These rabbits can grow up to approximately 40 centimeters in length over their short lifespan of 3 years. Cottontail rabbits reach reproductive maturity when they are just 2 to 3 months old. A

female rabbit, called a doe, finds a suitable nest spot under a shrub or rocks and lines it with fur. She can have an average of 3 to 4 litters per year averaging 5 young each. The doe only visits her young once or twice a day to nurse her babies for a period of 2 to 3 weeks. The young reach independence at 4 to 5 weeks.

The Aruban Coneu is an endangered species and protected by Aruban law. The Coneu is thought to have drastically declined due to an increase in human activities, habitat fragmentation and predation by the invasive Boa constrictor as well as feral cats and dogs. However, recently there seem to be more rabbit sightings in rural and wilderness areas and also in the National Park.

This could be linked to a recent decline of the invasive Boa population after the long period of drought. As the Coneu can reproduce very quickly, a short break in predation pressure can lead to a fast increase of rabbits.

These are but a few of Aruba's beautiful inhabitant, which we must all contribute to protect. □



Aruban legends: Frenchman's Pass

(Oranjestad)—If you ever plan on taking a group tour of the island, you may pass through the Frenchman's Pass in Balashi. The Frenchman's pass (known to locals as "Franse Pas") remains a mysterious—and spooky—road of which its legend is told from generation to generation.

The history of the Frenchman's pass—and how it got its name—dates back to the colonization era, when the French tried to colonize the island, but were met with an angry mob of indigenous settlers, refusing to give up their land. However, as the French were heavily equipped with fire arms, the indigenous settlers began to retreat, and hid away in nearby caves. The French colonizers tried to smoke them out of the caves, but the indigenous settlers ended up inhaling too much smoke and most died in those caves. From then on, this passage was known as Frenchman's Pass, and there have been many accounts of spirits roaming the area of Span-



ish Lagoon.

There are many ghost stories surrounding this area, but one of the most famous one involves a lonely hitchhiker, trying to find a ride back home in the dark rainy night.

Sometime after trying to

hitch a ride home, the man saw a car approaching, appearing almost ghost-like in the rain. However, since he needed a ride real bad, he didn't think twice and jumped in. But to his horror, he noticed that there was no driver in the front. Paralyzed with fear, he didn't dare to get

out, and the car started to move.

When approaching a sharp turn, the hitch hiker braced for impact, but just when he thought the car might drive straight off the road and crash, he saw a hand appear out the window and turn the wheel.

For the next few turns, the hand appeared again. After having had enough, the man decided to jump out and he ran to Santa Cruz.

Arriving at a nearby bar, he ordered a drink and began to tell everyone about his experience. Everyone grew quiet, because they realized he wasn't some drunk messing around; he was telling the truth.

Sometime later, two men walked into the bar and one of them noticed the hitchhiker. He called out to his buddy and said: "Look, there's the idiot who sat in our car when we were pushing it!"

French man's pass is one of the few sites on the island that keeps the locals on their toes. While most ghost stories may not have real grounds—or some may even be a set up story for a joke, this pass holds a lot of value to our culture of folkloric story-telling. □

Source: visitaruba.com

Forgotten gems: Open air movie theaters

(Oranjestad)—During the span of over 100 years, Aruba only saw five open air movie theaters. Now practically obsolete on the island, these theaters were once frequently visited by locals and migrants in the 20th century.

The first open air theater was constructed in 1920 and was commissioned by Shon Eduard (Eddy) de Veer. This theater was located at the Hotel Colombia in Oranjestad, which is now where the Aruban census office is located. The theater was simple; it only consisted of a screen, and visitors had to bring their own chairs to enjoy the popular silent movies of the time.

American migrants who worked in the refinery and lived in the Lago Colony in Sero Colorado also had their piece of the pie with their Open air Theatre, which formed part of the

Esso Club, also known as the Pan-Am Club. It was at this theater that "Talkies" were first streamed, movies with sound. This theater mostly streamed American blockbusters for the American expats, this way making sure that these migrant were not missing out on entertainment from their home land.

In the 1950's and 60's, Savaneta saw their own open air theater, located in front of the Marinier's Kazerne (Marine Barracks). This theater was mostly visited by the neighboring marines, who didn't have much entertainment other than movies at that time.

The last and most recent open air theater was constructed in the form of a drive-in theater. A popular American concept, the Drive Inn located in Balashi was a hot spot for teenagers, who had the habit of cramming all their friends in

one car to go see the movies. For this phenomenon there was a separate price that you had to pay called the "car crash".

This theater closed around 2012, but was re-opened during the pandemic in

July 2020, where movies were streamed on a gigantic screen set up in front of stacked containers. However, this nostalgic form of entertainment did not last very long as it was closed again only a year or two later. Nowadays you can

still see the stacked containers when you drive near the bridge in Balashi. □

Source: "De kolibrie op de rots en meer over de geschiedenis van Aruba" by Evert Bongers.



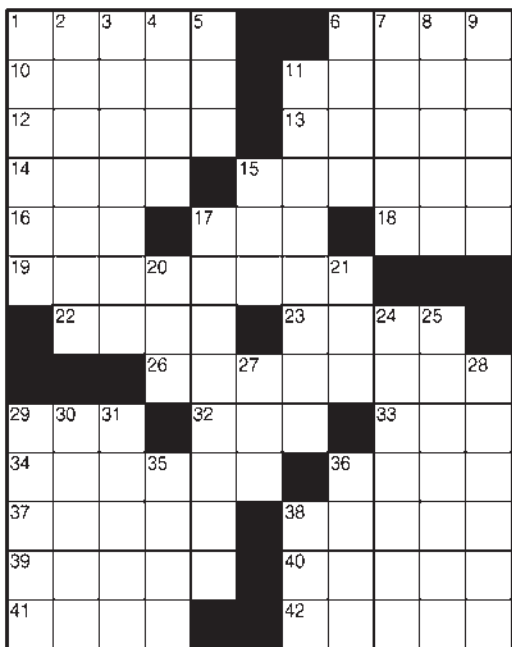
CROSSWORD

By **THOMAS JOSEPH**

- ACROSS**
- 37 Gambling
 - 1 Rocker mecca
 - David
 - 38 Sacred
 - 6 Location song
 - 10 Chris
 - 39 Bumbling
 - of "The
 - 40 Stand
 - Avengers"
 - 41 Corn units
 - 11 Be
 - 42 Accords

PAGES CASAS
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ODES SIR
HEN BANDAGE
OLE RIG MEN
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SILAS ORDER

- DOWN**
- 8 Outdo
 - 27 Junior,
 - 1 Sake
 - 9 Irritable
 - to senior
 - 2 Act the
 - 11 Shrinks
 - 28 Declares
 - glutton
 - 15 Neighbor
 - 29 Studio
 - 3 Balmy
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 - 30 Place for
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 - 20 — Aviv
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 - 21 Down in
 - 31 Bengal
 - 5 Snaky
 - the dumps
 - cat
 - shape
 - 24 Extremist
 - 35 Openings
 - 6 Mix up
 - 25 It may
 - 36 TV
 - 7 Some
 - start
 - explorer
 - shirts
 - with "E"
 - 38 Atlas page



3-22

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.

3-22 CRYPTOQUOTE

RGL XVTJ QSZDLIR H MVXN
EVJRGHVP EZXSR HQ FJQLTK,
EVC H CXV'R MVXN RGER
RXX ITLEBTJ. — NHTTHEF
QGERVLB

Cryptoquote: IF WE DON'T CHASE THINGS, SOMETIMES THE THINGS FOLLOWING US CAN CATCH UP. — L.M. MONTGOMERY

Helpful tips for your stay on Aruba

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

Electrical power

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

Drinking water



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



buy bottled water from the store.

Supermarket hours

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

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

Safety

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

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

Difficulty: ★★★★★

7/17

Answer to previous puzzle

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

Difficulty: ★★★

7/16

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U.K. launches hi-tech mission to study Greenland ice melt

Harwich, United Kingdom

A team of international scientists sets sail Thursday from Britain for Greenland to study its rapidly melting ice using drones, mini-submarines and autonomous swimming robots.

Greenland's ice sheet, made up of millions of cubic kilometers of freshwater, is melting rapidly due to global warming, and scientists believe it could disrupt key Atlantic currents that control the world's weather.

But because of the hazardous environment, where blocks of ice "calve" or fall off unpredictably, scientists have struggled to study the melt up close. The RRS Sir David Attenborough polar research ship, named after the famed British naturalist and television presenter, was leaving southeastern Harwich with dozens of international scientists on board.

The £20-million (\$27-million) project, led by the British Antarctic Survey, is funded by the UK government.

For around five weeks, the scientists will sail in fjords that fringe southeast Greenland, studying glaciers from all angles.

They will fly drones with high-resolution cameras and lower autonomous robots that can dive hundreds of meters to the seabed and screw themselves to the ice wall.



This photograph shows sea ice forming around icebergs in Disko Bay, not far from Ilulissat, Greenland, on March 15, 2026.

"Marine robots can go right up against the ice... where people cannot go because it would be completely unsafe for them," said project leader Kelly Hogan, a marine geophysicist.

The team wants to capture granular details because scientists still "don't really understand how the ocean water melts the ice", said British marine physicist Mark Inall. Scientists see signs that huge volumes of melting Greenland ice are affecting the powerful currents that move hot and cold water around the Atlantic and help to regulate the climate.

The current UK climate change model for the next century forecasts disruption of one such current, the North Atlantic Subpolar Gyre, within decades, affecting regional fisheries

and marine life.

"Our best models at the moment say these changes could happen as early as the 2040s," said Hogan, a scientist at the British Antarctic Survey.

But she told AFP these simulated scenarios are known to have inaccuracies and the expedition aims to "get the melting Greenland ice sheet really well represented in the models".

"We are directly feeding into the U.K.'s best model for climate prediction, so I think we can make a real difference to that," she said. An ocean scientist who specializes in modeling data, Paul Holland, also from the British Antarctic Survey, will be on board to work directly with the findings, as the "problem is so urgent".

"We don't have time to just wait for scientists to do all of this and then wait for the climate modeling centers to catch up," he said. □

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Fixer upper
Pos chigito
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Property land 395 m2
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Drawing approved for 3 BR 2 bath house
3x 2 BR 1 bath with office
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9015 m2
Price :\$3,000,000
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HEALTH



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Oranjestad: Oduber
Tel. 582 1780

San Nicolas: Aloe
Tel. 584 4606

OTHER

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

EMERGENCY

Police 100
Police Oranjestad 527 3140
Police Noord 527 3200
Police Sta. Cruz 527 2900
Police San Nicolas 584 5000
Police Tipline 11141
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France, England prepare for gloomy World Cup send-off

Miami, United States

France and England will bid a gloomy farewell to the World Cup on Saturday when they face each other in the dreaded third-place play-off in Miami.

Both teams head to Florida still raw from semi-final defeats that have left both footballing nations licking wounds, which, in the eyes of many, were largely self-inflicted.

France, the tournament's outstanding team en route to the last four, were anonymous in the face of a tactical masterclass by Spain on Tuesday and slumped to a 2-0 defeat.

England added another chapter to their long history of World Cup heartache on Wednesday when they surrendered the initiative and a lead to lose 2-1 to Argentina in Atlanta.

France and England must now attempt to summon the remnants of their competitive will and physical reserves for a game that is widely disliked throughout football.



France's forward #10 Kylian Mbappe celebrates scoring his team's first goal with head coach Didier Deschamps during the 2026 World Cup round of 32 football match between France and Sweden at the New York/New Jersey Stadium in East Rutherford on June 30, 2026.

"None of our players and none of the French players want to play this match," England manager Thomas Tuchel said after his team's agonising semi-final defeat.

"They want to play the final. We gave everything to achieve that. Everyone plays to win the World Cup, but that's how it is."

"We have one less day of recovery than France, but we will do it with professionalism."

- Sad footnote for Deschamps -

The match will mark a sad

footnote to Didier Deschamps' long reign as France coach.

Deschamps, who, like Tuchel, has faced stinging criticism for the tactical decisions that marked his team's semi-final defeat, is stepping down as manager after the tournament.

The 57-year-old's departure ends a successful 14-year spell in charge that included a World Cup triumph in 2018, defeat in the final in Qatar in 2022 and a run to the last four in the current tournament.

"There's a third-place finish to play for, so we'll do

everything we can to get it," Deschamps said after France's semi-final loss.

"We're not where we wanted or expected to be. The disappointment matches our ambitions, but we have to accept it. We have no other choice."

Yet while it will be scant consolation, the game might well prove pivotal for the World Cup's Golden Boot race.

France captain Kylian Mbappe is joint top scorer for the tournament alongside Argentina skipper Lionel Messi on eight goals, and will be looking to add

to his tally against an unsettled English defence.

England's Harry Kane and Jude Bellingham -- who are on six goals apiece -- could also enter the running with a big performance at the Hard Rock Stadium.

- Last dance for Kane? -

For England's all-time record goalscorer Kane, the game may also mark the final World Cup appearance of his career.

The Bayern Munich forward turns 33 this month and it is questionable whether he will be around for the 2030 finals.

Kane declined to speculate on his international future following Wednesday's defeat.

"It's too early to talk about that," Kane told reporters.

"I'm taking it year by year and the national team is my pride and joy. It's what I love to do more than anything.... I never want to put a limit on these things."

The match is also an opportunity for Mbappe to move into top spot in the all-time World Cup scoring charts. The Real Madrid striker is currently on 20 goals, one behind Messi on 21.

Much may depend on the strength of the lineups fielded by both teams.

Tuchel is expected to rotate his starting side heavily after what has been a gruelling campaign. □

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Lewandowski MLS debut match postponed by air quality concern



Polish forward #09 Robert Lewandowski is officially introduced during the press conference as a new member of the Chicago Fire FC at Endeavor Health Performance Center ahead of his MLS debut in Chicago, Illinois, on July 14 2026.

Chicago, United States

Polish star Robert Lewandowski's Major League Soccer debut was on hold Thursday after the match between the Chicago Fire and Vancouver Whitecaps was postponed due to air quality issues caused by wildfires.

Smoke from the fires, which are ravaging the Canadian province of Ontario, spread Thursday through the United States with border states including Minnesota, Wisconsin, Michigan and Illinois particularly choked.

Thursday's scheduled clash at the Fire's stadium was

pushed back to October 6, the club said in a statement. "The decision to reschedule the match was reached in close consultation with local health experts, MLS, Vancouver Whitecaps FC, and the City of Chicago," the Fire said. Some 40,000 fans had been expected at Soldier Field for a match that was part of MLS's restart in the wake of its World Cup break.

Lewandowski, who arrived from Barcelona after helping the Spanish giants capture the La Liga crown last month, was expected to play his first MLS minutes in a matchup that would

have pitted him against Thomas Mueller, his former teammate at Bayern Munich.

The next opportunity for Poland's all-time leading goal scorer to make his MLS debut will be next Wednesday at Inter Miami, where Lionel Messi is not expected to feature due to his participation in Sunday's World Cup final.

Illinois was among the U.S. states hardest hit by smoke from the fires.

A haze also hung over the New York City area, where Messi's Argentina are to take on Spain in the World Cup final on Sunday. □



Soudal Quick-Step team's Belgian rider Tim Merlier cycles to the finish line to win the 12th stage ahead of Alpecin - Premier Tech team's Belgian rider Jasper Philipsen (L) and Decathlon CMA CGM Team's Dutch rider Olav Kooij (R) during the 113th edition of the Tour de France cycling race, 181 km between Circuit de Nevers Magny-Cours and Chalon-sur-Saône in central France, on July 16, 2026.

Merlier claims hat-trick of Tour de France stage wins

Chalon-sur-Saône, France

Belgian sprint star Tim Merlier trebled up at the Tour de France on Thursday as he won the 12th stage in a chaotic and crash-marred dash for the line.

The Soudal-Quick Step rider edged out Dutchman Olav Kooij and fellow Belgian Jasper Philipsen to claim his third stage win of this year's Tour, and sixth overall.

And he said this win was a bit more special because his partner Cameron and three-year-old son Jules were at the finish line to watch him.

"It gave me some motivation," said Merlier, who brought his son with him to the winner's podium.

"He's still young, but maybe he's going to remember this one later on also. We can show it later."

It was yet another disorganised sprint made even worse when Colombian Fernando Gaviria hit the deck, bringing down several other riders, including the stage 11 winner Søren Waerenskjöld.

Alpecin Premier Tech once again tried to set up Philipsen for the victory but Merlier, as he had done twice before in this 113th edition of the Tour, found a route through the traf-

fic and powered home to take the chequered flag.

Stage five winner Kooij was pushed into second place for the second day in a row. With no other obvious sprint stages left at the Tour, everyone was desperate to give this one a crack. Milan Fretin tried to follow Philipsen's sprint train but was passed by other fast-finishing riders and came home in fifth.

"I don't think I have any regrets today. I took a chance, and at least I still managed to finish in the top five, so I can be happy," he said.

"Today might have been my last chance on the Tour. Maybe we'll have another opportunity on stage 17."

- 'Nice to look at' -

Reigning champion Tadej Pogacar finished safely in the pack at the end of the 179km stage from the Magny-Cours motor racing circuit in Nevers to Chalon-sur-Saône.

He maintained his overall lead of more than three-and-a-half minutes to two-time former champion Jonas Vingegaard.

He said he was planning to keep his powder dry on Friday's 205km-long hilly stage from Dole to Belfort ahead of back-to-back mountain

tests over the weekend. "Tomorrow is a bit (of a) weird stage, it's very long, just one-and-a-half climbs towards the end, finish after (a) descent," the four-time Tour winner said.

"It's gonna be a hard day for us as a team but tomorrow we need to survive as best as possible because then Saturday and Sunday are the bigger days for the GC (general classification).

"Tomorrow we will see what happens but I think the best for us would be to save some energy for Saturday and Sunday."

Around 25km into the stage, Baptiste Veistroffer set off on a breakaway for the third time, and for the second time completely solo.

Three riders counter-attacked and joined him after 57km but by the time he reached the final 50km, all three had dropped away.

A bunch of other counter-attacks in the final 35km saw a group of 14 go clear of an increasingly ragged peloton, but that was reeled in with 24km left.

That was a cue for numerous riders to try their luck on the rapid run-in to the finish but no group committed sufficiently to make their effort stick. □



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

'King' James keeps NBA guessing on next team

New York, United States

NBA superstar LeBron James offered no clues to where he'll play his record-extending 24th season as he appeared live at the Fanatics Fest sports fan festival in New York on Thursday.

James taped an episode of his "Mind the Game" podcast before a jam-packed audience as part of the event, but he dashed hopes he'd reveal his next team almost as soon as he and co-host Tyrese Haliburton took the stage.

Indiana Pacers star Haliburton drew a big cheer when he opened proceedings by asking James if he had a decision to announce.

"We just talked about this in the back," James said.

"OK, OK, I'll leave it alone," Haliburton replied.

The destination of the NBA's all-time leading scorer -- a four-time champion and four-time Most Valuable Player -- has been the focus of feverish speculation since he announced in June that he would leave the Los Angeles Lakers as a free agent after eight seasons and a title in 2020 with the California club.

Some pundits have zeroed in on the Cleveland Cavaliers, the hometown team James led to the 2016 title after winning two titles with the Miami Heat.

But a return to the Heat has also been suggested, along with a move to Philadelphia in the wake of the 76ers' blockbuster acquisition of Boston Celtics star Jaylen Brown.

In the West there's been speculation he could sign with the Golden State Warriors and team up with his long-time friend and rival Stephen Curry, or line up alongside young Minnesota Timberwolves talent Anthony Edwards.

"I've heard Warriors, I heard Philly," James said in answer to a fan question. "We'll see what happens."

In his conversation with Haliburton James discussed the New York Knicks' run to the championship, his own continued love of playing as his 42nd birthday approaches in December and his thoughts on how the league will shape up next season.

"I think the East is going to be very exciting," he said in comments some are sure to count as clues to his thinking.

"I would say this is the first time in a long time that coming into a pre-season that the Eastern Conference will be talked about a little bit more than the Western Conference." □



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Scheffler makes steady start, DeChambeau one off the lead at British Open

Southport, United Kingdom

Scottie Scheffler made a steady start to his defence of the British Open with a two under par 68 as a bogey at the last cost Bryson DeChambeau a share of the clubhouse lead at Royal Birkdale.

Scheffler is two shots back after failing to make the most of a fast start under glorious sunshine and scorching temperatures in England's northwest coast. After his record of 78 successive cuts made dating back four years came to an end at last week's Scottish Open, the world number one looked refreshed with four birdies in five holes between the second and the sixth.

But bogeys at the seventh and par-five 17th dropped him back and a birdie putt at the last came to a halt just inches shy of the hole.

in the round today and wasn't able to make as many birdies as I would have hoped to down the stretch," said Scheffler, who has not won on the

PGA Tour since January. "If I continue to strike the ball the way I did today and just keep giving myself looks, that's part of it. Golf is played over 72 holes,

and I definitely liked what I saw today."

DeChambeau is set to snap his unwanted streak of failing to make the cut at the previous three ma-

jors this year.

The two-time U.S. Open champion has often struggled in the wind of links conditions at the British Open but, with the weather set fair for the next three days, he is hoping to take advantage.

"There's still a lot of golf to be played, but, ultimately from my perspective, I was really excited about the way I played," said DeChambeau.

- McIlroy's slow start -

England's Daniel Brown and South Korean Im Sung-jae set the clubhouse lead at four under.

The world number 136, Brown, also topped the leaderboard after the opening round at Royal Troon two years ago.

Scotland's Robert MacIntyre is among the chasing pack one off the lead after an encouraging round of 67. □



U.S. golfer Scottie Scheffler watches his drive from the 10th tee on day one of the 154th Open Golf championship at Royal Birkdale Golf Club near Southport in north-west England on July 16, 2026.

"I got off to a hot start