

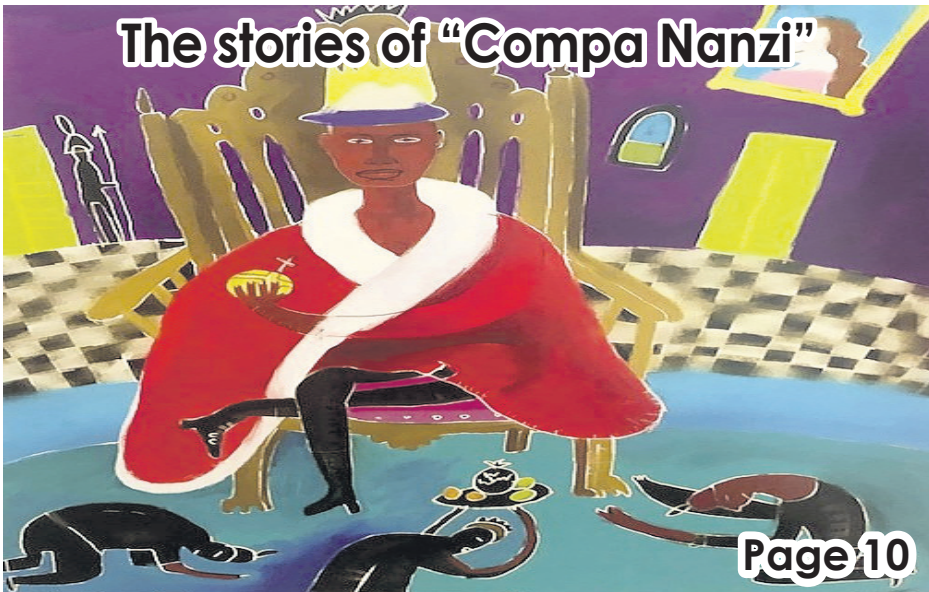


Visit the historic museum at Fort Zoutman!



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The stories of "Compa Nanzi"



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The Warawara: Soaring through the blue skies



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LIVE ENTERTAINMENT 7 DAYS A WEEK

PROFESSIONAL COMPLIMENTARY
PICTURES ON TUESDAY AND FRIDAY

SUNDAY:

MARRYBELL MADURO
SINGER
6:30 TO 8:30 P.M.

MONDAY:

ANDERSON BAHAMON
SINGER
6:30 TO 8:30 P.M.

TUESDAY:

JEAN PAUL
SAXOPHONIST
6:30 TO 8:30 P.M.

WEDNESDAY:

MAILLEYN ALVARADO
VIOLINIST
6:30 TO 8:30 P.M.

THURSDAY:

MARRYBELL MADURO
SINGER
6:30 TO 8:30 P.M.

FRIDAY:

MAILLEYN ALVARADO
VIOLINIST
7:00 TO 9:00 P.M.

SATURDAY:

RICKY THOMAS
GUITAR
6:30 TO 8:30 P.M.



Happy Hour
12-1 / 4-6 / 9-10



Wildfire smoke engulfs millions in U.S. ahead of World Cup final

New York, United States

Dense wildfire smoke billowing down from Canada and northern Minnesota set off unhealthy air quality alerts across the United States on Friday, triggering concern over the weekend's World Cup final outside New York.

U.S. President Donald Trump lashed out at Canada -- where authorities said more than 200 fires were burning out of control on Friday -- calling the pollution "totally unacceptable."

Detroit, in the U.S. Midwest, remained the most polluted city in the world, according to tracker IQAir. Washington and Chicago weren't far behind, and officials warned against spending unnecessary time outside. In New York and neighboring New Jersey, where the World Cup football final will be played on Sunday in an open stadium, the metro area was experiencing air that could be unhealthy for sensitive groups, an improvement after smog on Thursday made the Manhattan skyline barely visible. But the National Weather Service (NWS) warned the smoke may thicken over-



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

night into Saturday morning.

Tournament organizers are "monitoring closely," White House World Cup task force executive director Andrew Giuliani told a briefing.

Peter Mullinax, a meteorologist for NWS, told AFP that winds over the Great Lakes could push more smoke into the Northeast, which could keep skies hazy.

He said forecasts for that region do expect some improvement.

"I don't believe that this should be as impactful as if you might be playing a game today," Mullinax said.

The issue for Sunday's game, said Joel Dreessen, an air quality forecaster for the state of Maryland, is whether more smoke spills south after weekend storm systems.

"Some of the models are starting to indicate that we'll start to pull down some smoke," he told AFP. Trump said he would call Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney "to find out what they are going to do about" the smoke.

"The United States is being unnecessarily invaded by filthy, polluted, and unhealthy air, the quality of which is dangerous, and totally unacceptable!" Trump

wrote on Truth Social.

- Traveling toxicity -

In cities across the Midwest and Northeast, people wore masks outdoors to filter out the dangerous air. In New York, libraries and train stations were handing them out for free.

Chris Carlsten, who studies the health impacts of fire smoke at the University of British Columbia, told AFP that the fine pollution particles from wildfires are particularly impactful on the lungs, whereas vehicle pollution skews slightly towards heart impacts.

He said plumes can be filled with wood and vegetation debris but also paint, plastic or metal.

And as smoke plumes travel, they undergo "photochemical aging," a series of reactions that Carlsten said "seem to make, from everything we understand in the chemistry, the aerosol more toxic."

The upper Midwest that is closer to the fires has faced especially bad air, with parts of Michigan, Minnesota and Wisconsin all recording air quality readings deep into the "hazardous" range for days. □

U.S. links Taco Bell lettuce to diarrhea-causing parasite outbreak

New York, United States

U.S. officials on Friday pinned the source of a diarrhea-causing foodborne parasite as shredded iceberg lettuce used by the fast food chain Taco Bell.

A federal investigation by the Food and Drug Administration traced the contamination back to a single supplier of iceberg lettuce from Mexico, which was used by Taco Bell locations in five states, according to a statement from the Centers for Disease and Control.

The CDC said that more than 1,644 people in five states -- Indiana, Kentucky, Michigan, Ohio and West Virginia -- were confirmed to be infected with cyclosporiasis, which can cause "explosive diarrhea," among other symptoms.

There have been no deaths and 94 hospitaliza-

tions related to that outbreak, the health agency said.

The CDC said that those illnesses were lab-confirmed and linked specifically to the outbreak at Taco Bell locations in those states.

The figure does not en-

compass all cyclosporiasis infections arising from other causes.

The CDC did not name the supplier, but Taylor Farms which has production facilities across the US, and in Canada and Mexico said Friday it had sold the lettuce to Taco Bell.



Packages of Taylor Farms salad greens are displayed at a Safeway store on July 16, 2026 in Kings Beach, California.

The company said it was "voluntarily removing all iceberg lettuce sourced from central Mexico."

"While the FDA traceback is indicating a specific independent farm, which represents less than one percent of the US's iceberg lettuce supply, as the potential source of the outbreak, we have removed all iceberg lettuce from the region indefinitely," it said in a statement.

The company said none of its branded salads or kits were associated with the outbreak, nor did any of its kits contain iceberg lettuce.

- Cooking reduces risk -

In its own statement, Taco Bell said it also had voluntarily removed "potentially impacted lettuce from a supplier in select states."

"The affected ingredient

from our supplier is being indefinitely removed from our supply chain nationwide and will be replaced within 24 hours in select states," the company added.

Federal officials warned against eating shredded iceberg lettuce from Taco Bell in the five states mentioned.

Untreated, cyclosporiasis could last more than a month. It is generally not life-threatening, but can cause dehydration.

In the past, foods including bagged salad mixes, fresh cilantro, fresh basil, raspberries, snow peas and scallions have been linked to cyclosporiasis.

Officials across the country recommend thoroughly washing produce or, even better, cooking it, as heat higher than 158F (70C) kills the parasite. □

U.S. wants to globalize fight against far-left 'terrorism'

Washington, United States

The United States on Thursday launched a scathing attack on left-wing extremists, with Secretary of State Marco Rubio calling for global cooperation to fight a "new wave of this old evil."

In opening remarks at a ministerial meeting on "The Resurgence of Political Terrorism," Rubio said that "far-left terrorism" had become a "blind spot" after the scrutiny on jihadist extremism following the September 11, 2001 attacks.

"Even today, the very idea that far-left terrorism could be a serious threat is treated as a right-wing fever dream or, worse, as a dangerous fascist conspiracy," he said. Citing an increase in leftist attacks in Europe and the United States since 2016, Rubio called for boosting cooperation to combat an ideology he described as "a poisonous resentment cloaked in the language of equality and justice."

Rubio -- a fierce anti-communist whose parents fled Cuba -- said leftist extremism draws its inspiration from a "hatred for civilization itself."

More than 60 delegations from Europe to Asia joined the event, where US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent and White House Deputy Chief of Staff Stephen Miller also spoke. "You are here because your political leaders are being attacked and stabbed and shot in your streets," Rubio told the del-



U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio makes opening statement during an event titled "Ministerial on the Resurgence of Political Terrorism" at the U.S. Department of State on July 16, 2026, in Washington, DC.

egates, "because your businesses have been bombed, because your railways have been sabotaged, because your police officers have been beaten and burned."

- Right-wing terror absent -

Rubio and Miller made no mention, however, of right-wing violence which, according to a comprehensive 2025 report by the Center for Strategic and International Studies, has been a far larger problem in the United States the past 30 years.

The CSIS report acknowledged there has been an increase in left-wing terrorist attacks and plots over the past decade.

But it said "such violence has

risen from very low levels and remains much lower than historical levels of violence carried out by right-wing and jihadist attackers."

The administration of US President Donald Trump has targeted Europe in particular, calling it an "incubator of terrorist threats."

Rubio gave several examples of violent acts blamed on leftist groups in Europe, including the sabotage of the French rail network for the opening of the 2024 Olympic Games in Paris and the killing of French far-right activist Quentin Deranque in February.

According to a State Department fact sheet, there were 21 attacks in the European

Union attributed to "far-left and anarchist terrorists" in 2024, compared to 24 attacks from jihadists.

- Antifa -

The "Antifa" movement, short for "anti-fascist," has also been targeted by the Trump administration, which designated it a "domestic terrorist organization" last year after the assassination of conservative influencer Charlie Kirk. However, experts say it is a nebulous movement of left-wing activists that is more of a political ideology than an organized group.

In the United States, the movement gained traction after Trump's first election in 2016, and many conserva-

tives blamed riots and protests in 2020 after the death of George Floyd on anti-fascist protesters.

In his remarks, Miller launched a virulent attack on "leftists," saying they were spreading a "cancer" in society.

"Not one of the people that is demonstrating looks like a normal person," he said. "They're all deformed in some way in their appearance, in their dress, in their mannerism."

Critics accuse Trump himself of inciting violence.

On returning to the White House last year, he pardoned more than 1,000 of his supporters who had stormed the US Capitol on January 6, 2021.

Shortly after Thursday's meeting, Rubio announced visa restrictions on members of "far-left terrorist" groups.

Eleven congressional Democrats told Rubio in a letter that the administration's focus on far-left extremism was "troubling" and appeared to stray from previous Republican and Democratic administrations' concerns about how "racially-motivated violent extremism" posed a threat to the United States.

"The State Department has made no indication that it is taking an apolitical and comprehensive approach to countering violent extremism," wrote the lawmakers, led by the House Foreign Affairs Committee's top Democrat, Gregory Meeks. □

SpaceX abruptly scrubs Starship test flight

South Padre Island, United States

SpaceX on scrubbed on Thursday what was to be its first Starship flight since the company went public, abruptly calling it off just as the booster began to ignite.

"Some of the engines didn't start, triggering an automatic launch abort. Now offloading propellant," company head Elon Musk said on X.

"To be confident of a good flight, 2 Raptors will be removed & replaced. Most probable launch timing is early next week," he added in a later post.

The flight was to be the mammoth rocket's 13th overall.

When it eventually takes off, the flight aims will be similar to those of a mostly successful voyage carried out in May, which debuted the latest edition of the powerful Starship, its third-generation model.

The goals of that test were essentially to demonstrate the new designs in flight.

But it was not without a few glitches, including engine issues with the Super Heavy booster that necessitated a crash into the Gulf of Mexico rather than a precision return.

The company said there have been "several modifications to hardware and software to address issues seen on the previous flight." SpaceX will aspire the next time around to execute a launch, ascent, stage separation, boostback burn and landing burn of the booster offshore without any hiccups.

The upper stage will deploy 20 Starlink V3 satellites, and SpaceX said it will test out a relight of a Raptor engine in space.

It will also test upgrades to Starship's heat shield.

The flight will be the first



This screen grab from a SpaceX live webcast shows SpaceX's Starship rocket ten minutes before its scheduled launch from Starbase during the 13th test flight in South Padre Island, Texas, on July 16, 2026.

after Musk's SpaceX went public on Wall Street in June, with a record initial public offering.

On Thursday, SpaceX stock closed at \$131.11, below

its IPO price of \$135.

The rocket company has rapidly expanded its satellite internet service and voiced lofty ambitions for AI data centers in space. □

Petula Clark, 93, hopes real singers will survive the AI tide

Collonge-Bellerive, Switzerland

Veteran British star Petula Clark hopes artificial intelligence will never be able to replace the warmth and emotion of a real singer.

At 93, the "Downtown" legend still relishes the connection between audience and performer, and the humanity in delivering a vocal two things AI songs might eliminate.

"We're all very worried about that, and they're actually saying eventually AI will have emotion, and even that's a little worrying where do we go from there?" said Clark.

"For the future, it's a little puzzling, to say the least," she told AFP in an interview. Asked if the human feel in a song was irreplaceable, she said: "We like to think so. Who knows? The way things are going, maybe everything is going to be replaced anyway. I hope not. I find the whole thing a bit scary."

"There's been a lot of electronic stuff, computers in studios for quite a few years, and we're OK, we're still here. But how much lon-



Britain's singer, actress, and songwriter Petula Clark poses during the Festival du Livre a Collonge - LAC (Books at Collonge) literary festival, in Collonge-Bellerive, near Geneva on June 6, 2026.

ger?"

- London concert plans -

Clark said her singing register was now lower, but the magic was still present.

"My voice, it has changed," she explained.

"But it hasn't changed in whatever it has: it's there. It's come down a little bit, but I kind of like it!"

"What I do is very personal,

and it's mine; nobody can be me," she said.

"It comes from the heart."

Clark said there were plans for a concert in a London theatre, possibly later this year.

"It's going to be something very important for me, and very emotional too. It may be my last one; who knows?," she said.

"But I'm really looking for-

ward to it, getting back to an audience. There's nothing quite like the communion with an audience."

- Ear for melody -

Clark met the French publicist Claude Wolff in 1957, they married in 1961 and in a very rare step for a British or U.S. artist, she fully embraced French songs, becoming a major star in

France too.

When seeking out new songs, Clark said it was "always the melody" that caught her ear, "because melody is international".

Indeed, her 1964 signature hit "Downtown", which sold millions and earned her a Grammy award, had no lyrics when she first heard composer Tony Hatch playing it on the piano.

"Some songs just have it. If we knew what it was, we'd all be singing them!" she said.

"We knew it was a good song, but we had no idea that it was a monster song."

"Some songs live on and live on."

Clark still listens to music every day mostly classical music and jazz.

"I like Adele very much. I think she's a wonderful singer, very good songwriter," she said.

- 'Is That You, Petula?' -

After making her debut as child star on BBC wartime radio in 1942, Clark's career took many turns.

She starred in films alongside Alec Guinness, Fred Astaire and Peter O'Toole

Danny Boyle's Murdoch biopic to open Venice Film Festival

Rome, Italy

A film about press baron Rupert Murdoch's transformation of the British media by "Trainspotting" director Danny Boyle will open this year's Venice Film Festival

in September, the festival announced on Thursday.

"Ink" tells the story of Murdoch's purchase of The Sun tabloid in 1969, which he turned into the best-selling newspaper in the

country through a mix of sport, sex and right-wing politics.

The Australia-born media mogul is played by Guy Pearce ("Memento", "The Hurt Locker"), with his first The Sun editor Larry Lamb played by Jack O'Connell ("Sinners").

It is set in 1969, "the year we first walked on the moon -- and the year Rupert Murdoch & Larry Lamb launched a newspaper that was to change the world far more", Boyle said in a joint statement with the Venice Film Festival.

The film, based on a play of the same name by screenwriter James Graham, will premiere on the opening night of the festival which runs from September 2-12. Boyle won a best director Oscar for "Slumdog Millionaire" and has a string

of hits to his name, including "28 Days Later" and its sequel "28 Years Later".

He previously turned his lens on another historic business figure in "Steve Jobs", a 2015 feature about the founder of Apple.

The full line-up for Venice, one of the big three European festivals alongside Cannes and Berlin, is expected to be unveiled next week. Hollywood favorites George Clooney and Ellen Burstyn ("The Exorcist", "Interstellar") are to be given lifetime achievement Golden Lion awards this year.

"This festival is without question my favorite and to be given the Golden Lion is a tremendous honor. It also probably means I'm old, but I'll take it," Clooney, a regular in Venice, said in a statement last week. □



Danny Boyle speaks onstage during CinemaCon 2026- CinemaCon Film Showcase at The Dolby Colosseum at Caesars Palace during CinemaCon, the official convention of Cinema United, on April 13, 2026, in Las Vegas, Nevada.

and appeared in musicals in New York and London.

"An Evening with Petula" in concert was the first colour transmission on BBC One television in 1969.

She has now written her autobiography, entitled "Is That You, Petula?" -- John Lennon's words when she visited his Montreal bed-in for peace in 1969, ending up on the single "Give Peace A Chance".

"It's been a long life, and a very exciting life, and a very sad life, and a very happy life," she said.

Clark has lived in Geneva since the mid-1960s and spoke to AFP at the Collonge Book Festival in the Genevan countryside.

Those queuing to meet her included a starstruck 21-year-old man clutching a 1980s vinyl album.

Clark said she hoped she had brought happiness to people throughout the decades.

"They've made me happy, too," she said. □



This picture taken on June 30, 2026 shows Yasuo Yamazaki, a representative of a citizens' group expressing concerns about the construction of the data centre, posing next to a protest flag reading, 'Do Not Push Forward with the Data Centre Construction!'

Opposition to data centers grows in cramped urban Japan

Tokyo, Japan

The more Yoriko Kitagawa learns of a massive data centre to be built near her home in Hino on the outskirts of Tokyo, the more she worries.

"This is a terrible plan," the 94-year-old told AFP.

The explosion in resource-hungry data centers housing the hardware "brains" of artificial intelligence is fuelling unease worldwide, with New York State and Australia the latest jurisdictions to announce new rules.

Opponents of data centers in the United States have called for a "national day of protest" on Saturday to "protect our hometowns, our wallets, and our way of life".

Japan, with some of the most densely populated cities among advanced economies 80 percent of the country is mountains has a particular problem: a shortage of suitable urban space to build the facilities. One centre is even planned next to the famous Tokyo Tower.

In Hino, the height of two of the three planned buildings has been cut by a fifth to 63.5 meters (208 feet), but they still will tower over nearby houses, blocking the sun for some.

"As someone who lives next to the site, I'm most worried about a fire that could be triggered by the massive amount of batteries," said 69-year-old campaigner Yasuo Yamazaki.

"Heat from the data centre is also worrisome, as well as noise," he told AFP.

He also frets about a potential explosion due to a stockpile of fuel on site for a backup generator. Developer Mitsui Fudosan plans a "green buffer zone" of up to 78 meters with trees and a stream, reducing the noise, the heat and the "oppressive feeling", said an official in charge of the project.

"One approach is to set the building back from the street and... to arrange greenery so that, at eye level, its presence doesn't feel so overwhelming," he told AFP.

"It may be difficult to have a 100-percent consensus with everyone, but we will do our best," he said, noting that the company has held regularly held meetings with residents.

- AI-friendly -

Trillions of dollars are being spent on data centers to train and run AI models and provide cloud storage for humanity's zettabytes a

unit equivalent to a trillion gigabytes of digital information.

Japan has big plans in the field, including for 10 million AI robots operating by 2040, aiming to become "the most AI-friendly country in the world".

It wants to develop its own sovereign AI models and infrastructure to avoid over-reliance on the United States and China, the sector's runaway leaders.

Partly to meet a projected increase in power demand from AI, Japan is moving to revive its nuclear power sector, 15 years after the Fukushima disaster.

But despite being a large and politically stable economy with good telecoms infrastructure, Japan has "important constraints", said Trung Ghi, energy and utilities consultant at Arthur D. Little.

"Suitable large-scale land near demand centers is limited, particularly because Japan is mountainous and major demand is concentrated around dense urban areas," Ghi told AFP.

Having data centers near end-users is important -- not least for the ultra-speed of response needed for financial trading, streaming or gaming. □



The renovated building of the former military dormitory, popularly called "Kukurica" (Corn), which is set to be the new headquarters of the Ministry of Defence of the Slovak Republic, is pictured during the media presentation in Bratislava, Slovakia, on July 16, 2026.

'Overpriced Dubai skyscraper': Slovaks outraged by ministry's \$61M HQ

Bratislava, Slovakia

Slovakia's defence minister has come under fire for his lavish taste in architecture after unveiling his ministry's new 27-storey headquarters, with many criticising the cost of the 53-million-euro (\$61 million) renovation.

Known popularly as the "corn" because of its resemblance to the summer barbecue staple, the towering former communist-era barracks' facelift is already under scrutiny for potential misuse of the central European country's public funds.

"It's pretty, isn't it?" beamed the minister, Robert Kalinak, one of Prime Minister Robert Fico's closest allies, as he opened the building in the capital Bratislava to the public on Thursday.

Many disagreed. "An overpriced Dubai skyscraper" was among the many critical comments on social media, while lawmaker Gabor Grendel of the opposition Slovensko party called it "the most expensive corn in the world".

The prosecutor's office is already investigating a criminal complaint regarding the 958,000-euro renovation of the tower's surrounding 700-metre wall, for which workers were painting a brick-effect concrete facade instead of laying brick cladding. Kalinak has denied any wrongdoing.

Visitors to Thursday's public unveiling were treated to price tags on display throughout the building, listing both market prices and what the ministry said it claimed it had paid instead.

- Eye of Sauron memes -

According to the ministry, a sofa originally listed at 4,500 euros cost taxpayers around 2,000 euros, while a coat rack was reduced from 620 euros to 330 euros. A small kitchenette installed on each floor cost nearly 8,000 euros, excluding appliances.

In the meantime, the tower's 400,000-euro outdoor LED screen has been turned off for months after online memes re-imagined it as the baleful eye of Sauron's fortress of Barad-dur from "The Lord of the Rings".

Opposition lawmaker Veronika Remisova said the lavish spending on the minister's new office was inappropriate at a time when the government is tightening the public finances, accusing Kalinak of living a "sheikh's lifestyle". □

Saving Gaza's past, one artifact at a time

Khan Yunis, Palestinian Territories

Armed with paintbrushes and wearing surgical gloves, volunteers inside a large tent in Gaza delicately brushed dust from a stone mosaic before placing it into storage, part of an effort to preserve cultural heritage hit by war.

More than 160 historic and cultural sites across the Palestinian territory have been damaged during the conflict between Israel and Hamas, according to the United Nations.

Many of these artifacts date back thousands of years.

"Several mosaic artworks have been lost or destroyed, either completely or partially," said Mohammed Abu Lahia, a Palestinian visual artist taking part in the preservation efforts in the south Gaza city of Khan Yunis.

"It is important that we work to revive this art, remind our children and our community, and send a message to the world that we are committed to our heritage and our Palestinian cause."

Beyond archaeological treasures, more recent cultural artifacts are also at risk of being damaged or buried beneath rubble from shelling and airstrikes.

More than 90 percent of



A staffer from the Mayasem Association for Culture and Arts puts back together a piece of pottery, as others repair and scientifically-restore a number of artifacts collected during the war in Gaza, at the cultural heritage storage facility, currently based in a tent in Khan Yunis in the southern Gaza Strip, on July 11, 2026.

Gaza's buildings have been damaged or destroyed during the conflict, according to the UN.

Over the centuries, Persians, Greeks, Romans, Byzantines and Ottomans all left their mark on Gaza, creating a rich historical landscape of churches, mosques, ports and artifacts, many of which have suffered damage during the conflict.

"This stone is a piece called a mortar, and it was used for grinding grains and herbs. It is approximately

5,000 years old," said Muhammad Abu Lahia, a cultural heritage guide with the Mayasem Association for Culture and Arts, the NGO leading the preservation efforts.

Behind him, artifacts already catalogued for safekeeping were stacked on wooden shelves inside weatherproof plastic containers.

- Preserving the past -

With Israel maintaining tight controls over goods entering the Gaza Strip restric-

tions that have at times contributed to severe shortages of food and other supplies volunteers have had to work without professional conservation equipment.

Instead, they gently removed dust from mosaics using ordinary paintbrushes and built a makeshift scanning station by mounting a camera above a box lined with black craft paper.

The improvised scanner allowed volunteers to digitize old photographs and paper documents, which

were then uploaded to a computer for preservation. Not everything entering storage is ancient.

Many items date from the 20th century, including the late Ottoman period, the British Mandate and the Egyptian administration. Their owners sought to save them from destruction or loss after being displaced.

"This is a paper archive containing maps of Khan Yunis and structural maps of the Khan Yunis area from the time of the British Mandate," said 29-year-old volunteer Taghreed Hajjari.

At one table, three women painstakingly rearranged hundreds of fragments to recreate a contemporary mosaic, using a printed copy of the original artwork as a guide and trimming excess stone with carpenter's pincers.

Many artifacts, however, remain beyond the so-called "Yellow Line", which separates territory under Hamas control from areas held by the Israeli forces.

Israel says it now controls more than 60 percent of the Gaza Strip, up from about half when the ceasefire took effect in October last year.

Volunteers say retrieving artifacts from Israeli-controlled areas remains extremely difficult. □

Brazil toughens rules on gambling ads as bets explode

Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

Brazil on Friday made it mandatory for gambling advertisements to carry warnings about addiction and money loss, tightening regulations on a sector that has exploded in recent years, dragging many into debt.

Brazil's betting market has boomed since a regulatory framework was established in 2023, accompanied by aggressive advertising both on the streets and online from influencers and sports stars.

Controversy soared during the World Cup, with YouTube channel CazeTV -- which streamed all matches live to millions of people -- showing QR codes to

place bets and recommending specific wagers. After a probe from the country's consumer protection agency, the chan-

nel scaled back such ads. The goal is to "treat betting like cigarettes," said Finance Minister Dario Durigan of the new rules oblig-

ing betting ads to carry warnings.

Official figures show that most people using betting platforms come from poor households.

A study by the National Confederation of Commerce estimated that debt due to betting pushed almost 270,000 families into severe default over about three years.

"The people who bet aren't actually financially stable. They usually want to change their lives and end up believing this misleading advertising," Ana Clara Costa, a 21-year-old market vendor in Copacabana, told AFP.

Some cities are taking the

rules a step further. In Rio de Janeiro, municipal workers this week covered up billboards with the message: "Betting ad REMOVED."

The Gaming and Lottery Association said such measures were an "unfounded attack" and told AFP it would take action against them.

Lawyer Juliana Prates told AFP she has sought to fight the industry since her brother took his own life last year due to gambling debts.

She said she filed a complaint to authorities after football star Neymar promoted a betting brand to his tens of millions of followers but never received a response. □



People stand next to a municipal notice reading "Bet advertisement removed" displayed on a building in the Lapa neighborhood of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, on July 15, 2026.

How Aruban beaches came to be!



(Oranjestad)—We've talked about the best beaches to visit on the island before, but have you ever wondered how Aruba got its white, sandy beaches, and why there's a clear difference between the northern and southern shores? Here are some fun facts about the development of Aruban beaches. How did

Aruba get its white, sandy beaches?

Aruba's beaches have developed over the span of thousands of years. Waves crashing on the rocky formations along our coast line (which consists mainly of coral reefs) have started to wear and tear the reefs over time, resulting in its

gradual breakdown. Fish that feed off corals also contribute to this—one small bite at a time. Over the course of thousands of years, as waves continue to crash and fish continue to eat off the corals, sand starts to accumulate around the area. However, whether the sand stays there is another question



to be answered, and this is where we highlight the biggest difference between the northern and southern coast of the island.

is no sand present—they were swept away with the current!

Why is the north deep, but the south shallow?

The sand that accumulates around a torn coral reef is swept away along with the debris by the ocean stream. However, in areas where it's shallow and the stream is weaker, the sand tends to stick to the bottom faster. This is why the beaches in the south—the areas with weaker stream and shallower ocean floors—has sand that stretches for miles. In contrast, the northern area, where the stream is much stronger and the ocean floor is much deeper, there

Aruba is a continental island. The island actually forms part of South America, and the space between Aruba and the South American continent is simply referred to as land that runs under the ocean. This is why it gets gradually deeper in the south, whereas the ocean floor in the north runs steeply to the bottom.

Source: archival document provided by the National Archive of Aruba (ANA).

Aruban snacks and where to find them

ORANJESTAD — Want to taste something different for a change? How about some Aruban snacks that you can find all around the island? Hop in your car, and go to these locations to find some of the most popular and tasty snacks that are beloved by our locals.

One of the staples of Aruban cuisine and snacks is the Pastechi. Pastechi is a Caribbean fried pastry that is filled with cheese, meat, chicken, veggies and sometimes even fish!

Or perhaps you might want to try a croquette, locally called a "kroket," which is a crusty fried snack with typically a meat and dough mix filling. The Aruban kroket is based on its Dutch counterpart, the "bitterbal".

These two snacks are typically found in all local snack trucks, which can be found all over the island, including on the side of the main road that stretches from San Nicolas to the Hotel Area. You can also find them at local bakeries

all over the island. These places may also sell other snacks and sandwiches too, perfect for on-the-road lunch break.

While you're at it, why not accompany your snack with a refreshing "batido"? Batidos are fruit shakes, typically made with added milk for some creaminess. However, you can also ask to hold the milk. Batidos are commonly found in snack shops too. You may find some batidos along the flea market downtown.

If you are looking for something a bit more fresh and healthy, why not try some coconuts, or shaved ice from local vendors? These vendors carry their little shop at the back of their truck, so they are ever-moving around the island. However, there are a few spots where you can almost always find a coconut/shaved ice vendor:

- Right next to the Red



Anchor in San Nicolas, on the way to Baby Beach.

- Along the main road next to the airport field.
- At the California Light House.
- At the Alto Vista Chapel.

other delights, like the beloved coconut-based dessert "cocada" or peanuts. All in all, in Aruba, you can always find some place to take a break and have a bite of something local, you maybe just might have to look for them! □

These vendors may also sell

Photo credit: wheninaruba.com



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Aruba Tourism Authority honored loyal visitors at Marriott's Aruba Ocean Club!



The Aruba Tourism Authority recently had the great pleasure of recognizing Distinguished Visitors of Aruba. The honorees were respectively honored with a certificate for their years of visits, loyalty, and love for the island of Aruba.

The honorary certification is presented on behalf of the Minister of Tourism as a token of appreciation and to say "Masha Danki" to guests who have visited Aruba 10, 20, or 35 years or more consecutively.

The three levels of honor are as follows:
Distinguished Visitor
(10>years consecutively visiting Aruba)
Goodwill Ambassador
(20>years consecutively visiting Aruba)
Emerald Ambassador
(35>years consecutively visiting Aruba)

The honorees were:
Distinguished Visitors
Mr. Jeff and Mrs. Sherry Courterier from

Ocoee, Florida, United States.

Ms. Keyttin Silva representing the Aruba Tourism Authority, and staff members of Marriott Ocean Club bestowed the certificate upon the honorees, presented them with gifts, and thanked them for choosing Aruba as their favorite vacation destination, as their home away from home.

The top reasons for returning to Aruba provided by the honorees were:

- The people of Aruba.
- Aruba's sun and sand.
- Aruba's amazing water.
- Aruba's great resort.
- "No place like it on earth."

On behalf of the Aruba Tourism Authority, we would like to express our sincere gratitude and appreciation to the honorees for their continued visits to the "One Happy Island".

Visit the historic museum at Fort Zoutman!

(Oranjestad)—Located in the middle of downtown Oranjestad, situated right next to the government building "Cocolishi", is one of the oldest buildings of Aruba: Fort Zoutman. First constructed in 1796, this site has been used (or left unused) in many ways and have survived eras of war and attempted dismantling.

When anyone refers to Fort Zoutman, they are actually referring to two separate buildings that, over the years, have been merged: the fort and the tower. That's right, the iconic 5-story, squared tower was not part of the original structure of the fort, and is actually called "Willem III Toren". Constructed in 1867, this tower was named after the then-reigning king of The Netherlands, Willem III. Willem III Toren was originally a light tower, but after a request from Lieutenant Governor Jan Helenus in 1866, it also became a bell tower.

The fort itself was originally constructed to protect the commerce bay of Paardenbaai from pirates and other disreputable characters roaming the Caribbean Sea. Unlike the Willem III Toren, Fort Zoutman had a more tumultuous past, including the on-and-off reception of unwanted members of the English military several times (The Netherlands was at constant war with England back in the colonial era).



Over the years, both the fort and the tower had functioned as different government center points, including a tax and stamps office. For some time these two buildings also housed a police precinct and jail, and even experienced abandonment until the Cultural Center Aruba Foundation (CCA) petitioned for its renovation in 1964, turning the site into the Historic Museum it currently is.

Despite its small size, The Historic Museum guards a

rich depository of the commercial, military and social history of Oranjestad, offering a glance into how the social culture of the town came to be. If you are interested in history and want to learn more about Aruba, then Fort Zoutman should definitely be included into your itinerary.

The museum is open Monday to Friday from 9am-6pm, and Saturday from 10am-2pm.

Source: The Old Fort of Aruba by Jan Hartog.



2,000,000 Summer Point Giveaway – 20 Winners Daily

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Shalom Hair & Nails Bar | Twist of Flavors | Dunkin Donuts
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Birds of Aruba: Soaring through the blue skies

(Oranjestad)—Aruba's nature is very diverse and is home to several beautiful and majestic wildlife. Among these is the bright Trupial, whose angelic voice is always heard with the rising sun; the cuddly parakeet, always in company of another, and the majestic Warawara, a mighty bird that can be seen soaring in the clear blue skies.



Trupial

Icterus icterus, or known locally as the Venezuelan or Orange Troupial, is a striking songbird whose bright orange feathers can be spotted from a far distance. Known to be the first bird to sing at the first sign of sunrise, this beloved songbird likes to wake up with a tune. But don't let their angelic songs fool you; the Trupial can be a bit aggressive towards any threat, protective over their nesting spots—nesting spots they most likely stole from other birds. Trupials can be seen regularly, often in trees or on top of a cactus.

Photo Credit: Daniel Ruben Gonzalez

Prikichi (parakeet)



The Brown-throated Prikichi (Aratinga pertinax) became the national bird of Aruba back in 2015, at the request of Aruba Birdlife Conservation. The bright green, adorable parakeet usually flies in flock of 30 or more, but its population has been declining since the 2010s. Prikichis are a shier breed than the trupial, often flying away at the sign of any threat. They use termite nests for breeding spots and feed mostly on seeds from the Kwihi tree, Divi Divi tree and fruits.

Photo Credit: Daniel Ruben Gonzalez



Warawara

The Warawara or Caracara is one of the biggest birds found in the Aruban mondi. At a height of 41 to 60 cm, their wingspan can measure up to 125 cm. Known as the "garbage man", this bird of prey mostly feeds on dead animals. Its coat is dark brown, with a cream-colored neck, orange face, thick beak and long legs. The Warawara prefers to build its nest in the middle of tall cacti and produces a rattling, screaming sound, throwing its head back onto its back while calling.

While these birds are a beautiful sight to behold, it is very important to keep your distance and respect their habitats. This is how we protect our wildlife. By admiring the beauty of Aruba in a safe and respectful manner, we can do our part in protecting our sacred nature. □

Photo Credit: Aruba Birdlife Conservation

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Distinguished Visitor (10>years consecutively visiting Aruba)
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Emerald Ambassador (35>years consecutively visiting Aruba)

The honorees were:

Goodwill Ambassador Mrs. Katherine Lombardo from Bergenfield, New Jersey, United States.

Ms. Keyttin Silva representing the Aruba Tourism Authority, and staff members of Ocean Club bestowed the certificate upon the honoree, presented her with gifts, and thanked her for choosing Aruba as her favorite vacation destination, as her home away from home.

The top reasons for returning to Aruba provided by the honorees were:

- Aruba's beautiful weather and blue water.
- Aruba's gorgeous sunsets.
- Aruba's amazing staff and management.
- Aruba's great food.
- "Friendship made on this beautiful island."

On behalf of the Aruba Tourism Authority, we would like to express our sincere gratitude and appreciation to the honoree for her continued visits to the "One Happy Island". □

The stories of "Compa Nanzi"



(Oranjestad)—The most popular character you may hear about in the Caribbean is Anansi, known locally on Aruba as "Compa Nanzi". Local children grew up hearing the tales of the conniving spider, and his legacy forms part of the oral narrative tradition that is common in Aruba.

Although the stories are most popular in the Caribbean, "Compa Nanzi" is not entirely unknown globally, especially not in the West African region. Brought to the "new world" by enslaved Africans from Ghana, the historical thread of how Nanzi was introduced on Aruba follows the enslaved Africans in Curacao during the colonial era, which saw the biggest population of enslaved Africans in the Dutch Caribbean.

The stories of Compa Nanzi were a sign of hope for freedom among the slaves, who passed around different stories involving the famous spider through word of mouth, due to not being able to express their native culture in the new world. These stories were a way to not only preserve their culture, but it acted as a medium for relief during the harsh treatment to which they were subjected to.

It wasn't until the end of the nineteenth century that the stories of Nanzi were written down in different languages. However, not all stories are completely alike in every country, as is the risk of oral story telling. However, one thing will always be dominant in Compa Nanzi's stories: his sneaky ways to get what he wants!

How Nanzi fooled the king

One day Nanzi was taking a stroll near the castle of Shon Arei, the king. He had this sudden urge to walk in. He didn't think too much about it and committed to what he had in mind. It was a warm afternoon, and the castle personnel were taking their afternoon nap. Even the soldier guarding the castle door was fast asleep, snoring so loud that his beard bounced up and down on his chin. Nanzi just slipped past him, looked back for a moment then walk right on in.

Nanzi stumbled upon the king's quarters. With all his excitement he sat in the king's throne, and put on his crown that was hanging on the side of the throne. It was very hot that day, and it wasn't long until Nanzi too fell asleep, right there on the king's throne. He was so deep in sleep and snoring so loud, that even when the king found him in his seat, Nanzi did not even notice.

Shon Arei was flabbergasted by the sight of Nanzi on his throne, wearing his crown. How disrespectful! "Soldiers, get him!" he commanded. Nanzi was sound asleep, but when the soldiers picked him up, he jumped from fright. By then though, the soldier already had him in their hold.

"Put him in a sack, stitch it up and throw him in the ocean!" the king said furiously. Two soldiers immediately entered the chamber, took the crown off Nanzi's head and pushed him in a sack.

Nanzi was terrified; it looks like this time he won't get away with his schemes. To get to the ocean, the soldier walked a long distance, and where beginning to feel very thirsty. Luckily they passed by a pub, and decided to have a nice cold beer. They set the sack with Nanzi in it outside and went to enjoy the refreshments. Nanzi was still trembling with fear in the sack.

What is that he hears? A herd of sheep walking by?

"Compadre, listen here!" Nanzi screamed as loud as he could. The sheep herder got close to the sack. "What is this?"

"Man, there is something very beautiful in here that you can see. It's very rare and strange, but indeed, there is something so beautiful in here that you've never seen or will ever see," Nanzi told the herder.

The herder, very dumb, believed Nanzi's word. "Let me see!" he said.

"Well if you must insist," Nanzi said, "I'll let you take a look, but only for a quick second." The herder opened the sack, and Nanzi immediately jumped out. Before the herder could even take a look into the sack, Nanzi pushed him in it, and the herder fell head first in.

Nanzi didn't waste any time, and closed off the sack real tight. He then picked up the herder's hat and starting walking behind the traveling sheep as if nothing happened. After a little while, the soldiers headed back outside to continue their journey. As they picked up the sack, the poor herder started screaming to let him out, but the soldiers ignored him, thinking it was Nanzi.

Shon Arei went strolling a while later. He thought to himself: "This time Nanzi could not get away with his foolishness. He probably drowned in that sack ages ago." That is why, when he saw Nanzi walk behind the herd of sheep on the street, he was flabbergasted again. "Nanzi! Aren't you suppose to be at the bottom of the ocean floor?"

"I was, Your Majesty," Nanzi replied. But you know what; there are so many things to see down there in the sack! Like this herd of sheep. Seeing that they had no herder, I started walking behind them and gained their trust pretty quickly. At the bottom of the ocean there are so many wonderful things, like diamonds, and bags of gold. Chests of silver and other precious stones," Nanzi told the king.

"What is that you say?" the king was intrigued. "I want to see it too!"

The king immediately demanded to his soldiers to be put in a sack and be placed in the ocean. Naturally, Shon Arei died because of this. He was never found again. Nanzi followed the soldier back to the castle, where sat once again on the late king's throne and put his crown on. He took possession of all of Shon Arei's belongings, and lived the rest of his life as king. □

Story and pictures are from "Kon Nanzi a Nek Shon Arei (i otro kuentanan antiano di e araña sabi)" by Nilda Pinto.



Lessons from our elders: Plants and fruits for medicinal use



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

Pineapple

Pineapple has more uses than topping it on your Christmas ham. According to elders, the skin of a pineapple is great to use to refresh your body. Clean the skin thoroughly and make tea or warapa* with it. It is said that this tea can also be drank after an operation on the ovaries or uterus. This gets rid of irritation and inflammation.



Arrowroot

Arrowroot is native to tropical America and can be sold as a powder or whole. It is said that you can take arrowroot powder and make a “shal-up” (porridge) for stomach pain or when you’re feeling weak. You can make it with milk too, but it is advised to best use just water. You can also add prunes for a bit of sweetness. Arrowroot shalup is also good to treat an unhealthy gut or for diarrhea.

To make arrowroot shalup, boil a bit of water and add one tablespoon of arrowroot powder and stir continuously until you reach porridge consistency. If you make a shalup with milk, add a pinch of salt. Raw arrowroot powder can be used to powder babies.

Eggplant/Aubergine

Eggplants, or aubergines, are easy to find in



supermarkets around the world and can be grown all year round on the island. Related to potato and tomato, eggplants are good to calm nerves. It can also be used to lower blood pressure, by steeping its leaves in boiled water and drinking it. You can also make eggplant juice to help purify your blood. However, do make sure to drink slowly; let it mix with your spit and then swallow.

Eggplant kataplan* can also be used to treat skin tumors, abscesses and hemorrhoids. Eggplant kataplan can also be used externally to treat arthritis.

*warapa: term referring to a water and sugar solution, a.k.a simple syrup.

*kataplan: porridge-like mixture used externally for wounds or parts of the body that are painful or swollen. □

Place names in San Nicolas and their origins

(Oranjestad)—If you’re ever taking a tour of Aruba, San Nicolas would definitely be on your itinerary. From relaxing on the white, sandy beaches of Baby and Roger’s Beach, to exploring the prehistoric caves of Quadirikiri and Fontein, you are taking in a full view of what San Nicolas has to offer. But did you know that you are also passing through areas whose names have historical origins? Here are a few place names in San Nicolas and their origin story.



Sero Colorado

On your way to Baby or Roger’s Beach, you’ll pass by the famous Red Anchor at what was once the entrance to the Colony residential community and be greeted with red soiled hills by the coast. This is Sero Colorado. Named after the 30-meter, deep red, limestone hill, “Sero Colorado” translates to “Colored Hill”. Sero Colorado has deep historical ties with the once-

thriving phosphate industry in the area. Matter of fact, there are still underground shafts and passages deep in Sero Colorado from the time of phosphate mining. In 1958, the refinery at the time, Lago, adopted this name for the residential section of its employees.

Vader Piet

Another well visited area, Vader Piet is located in the

Arikok National Park. Recognizable sites within this area include the Wind Mills and the Quadirikiri Cave. The origin of this name is part historical and speculation, as there are slight deviations from what actually happened.

In 1829, Pieter Lampe was a planter and the person responsible for governing this remote area. As the story

goes, Pieter was well known and beloved for his kindness and good treatment of his employees, and was therefore also called Vader Piet (Father Piet). However, he was tragically murdered—some speculate at the hands of a slave. For his work and good heart, the area was named after him.

San Nicolas

Of course we can’t forget

San Nicolas itself. Much like Vader Piet, the origin of the name San Nicolas has so far two different accounts. In the literal sense, “San Nicolas” translates to “Saint Nicolas”, leading many to believe that this district was named after a Spanish saint. Though one account does support this with the theory that the district was named after the saint by Spanish colonizers, the other account is much less divine, but does refer to an influential figure in the area.

Nicolaas van der Biest was a successful landowner during the time of the phosphate boom in late 19th century Aruba. Back then, landowners (most, if not all of them men) were referred to as “Shon” by their subordinates. So, the district was originally named after Shon Nicolaas. Over time, the name evolved into what is now San Nicolas. □

Source: “Aruba: Short History” by Dr. J. Hartog.

CROSSWORD

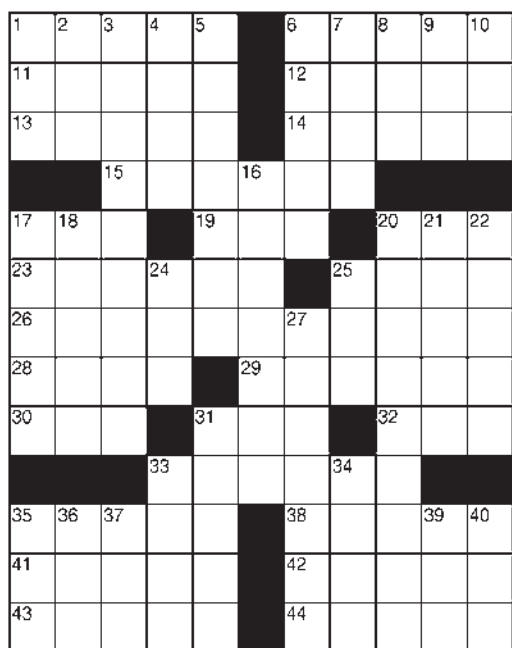
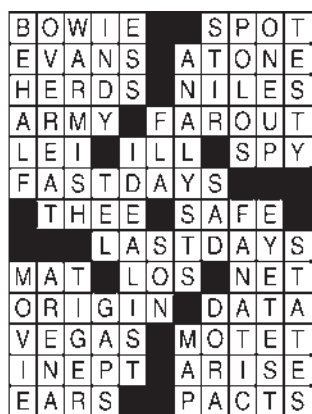
By THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

- 1 Sells for
- 6 Trait carriers
- 11 Cashew family tree
- 12 Glorify
- 13 Bakery come-on
- 14 "Lassie" boy
- 15 Friend of Fozzie
- 17 Wisdom bringer
- 19 Set fire to
- 20 Easy victim
- 23 Moves like a crab
- 25 High point
- 26 Ironed
- 28 Aussie birds
- 29 Go by
- 30 Match part
- 31 Vaccine shot
- 32 Poetic "always"
- 33 Playwright Pinter
- 35 Heathen
- 38 One a-courting
- 41 Blow away
- 42 Dodge
- 43 Himalayan land
- 44 Bit of info

DOWN

- 1 Robert E. Lee's org.
- 2 "— Town"
- 3 Forced from a hiding place
- 4 Not wild
- 5 Bright hue
- 6 "Understand?"
- 7 Way to go
- 8 "Platoon" setting
- 9 Avenue tree
- 10 Pig's place
- 16 Get wrong, in a way
- 17 Cart pullers
- 18 "I want that!"
- 20 Eye-balled
- 21 Tickle
- 22 Friend of Wendy
- 24 — Alamos
- 25 Nabokov novel
- 27 Nudged
- 31 Leigh of "Psycho"
- 33 Mist
- 34 "Damn Yankees" role
- 35 Con-trived
- 36 French friend
- 37 Chatter
- 39 Part of a prof's address
- 40 "Stand" band



3-23

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.

3-23

CRYPTOQUOTE

SZH'G YJKG CZT OZLQZHQ GZ
ATKHU RZV CXZYQTO. DXJHG
RZVT ZYH UJTSQH JHS
SQEZTJGQ RZVT ZYH OZVX.

— XVGWQT AVTAJHB

Cryptoquote: THE ONLY SUBJECT I KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT IS MYSELF, AND I DON'T KNOW THAT TOO CLEARLY. — WILLIAM SHATNER

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

SUDOKU

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

King Classic Sudoku

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

Difficulty: ★★★★★

7/18

Answer to previous puzzle

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

Difficulty: ★★★★★

7/17

Collapse of Amazon soy pact to unleash new deforestation: study

Washington, United States

The collapse of a landmark Amazon soy pact will drive at least 1.4 million hectares (3.5 million acres) of extra deforestation in Brazil over the next decade, releasing carbon emissions equal to Canada's annual output, according to an analysis published Thursday.

The paper, published in Science, examined the rise and fall of the Amazon Soy Moratorium one of the world's most successful voluntary deforestation commitments under which soy traders agreed not to source or finance soy grown on land deforested after July 2008.

When the Moratorium began in 2006, nearly a third of annual soy expansion came from deforestation. After it took effect, deforestation linked to new soy fields fell to nearly zero.

"It generated very positive effects and results," not only environmentally but also by opening new markets, co-author Tiago Reis of World Wildlife Fund-Brazil, told AFP.

"It gave the assurance that soy was not causing more Amazon deforestation."

But the agreement came under attack starting three years ago, driven by lobbying from soy farmers, who filed a \$200 million lawsuit against the traders.

Brazilian antitrust authorities also investigated the Moratorium's signatories over allegations they were behaving like a cartel.

Finally, laws passed by Mato Grosso and other soy-producing states stripped tax breaks from companies that adopted eco-friendly sourcing commitments beyond what the law required.

Though those laws are being challenged in Brazil's Federal Supreme Court, they have effectively dealt the agreement a death blow, with the moratorium abandoned in January.

The forecast is grim, according to the authors, who included researchers from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, DePaul University



Aerial view of an illegal mining area at Tapajos Environmental Protection Area in the municipality of Itaituba, in the Amazon rainforest, in southwestern Para State, Brazil, on May 21, 2026.

and the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign.

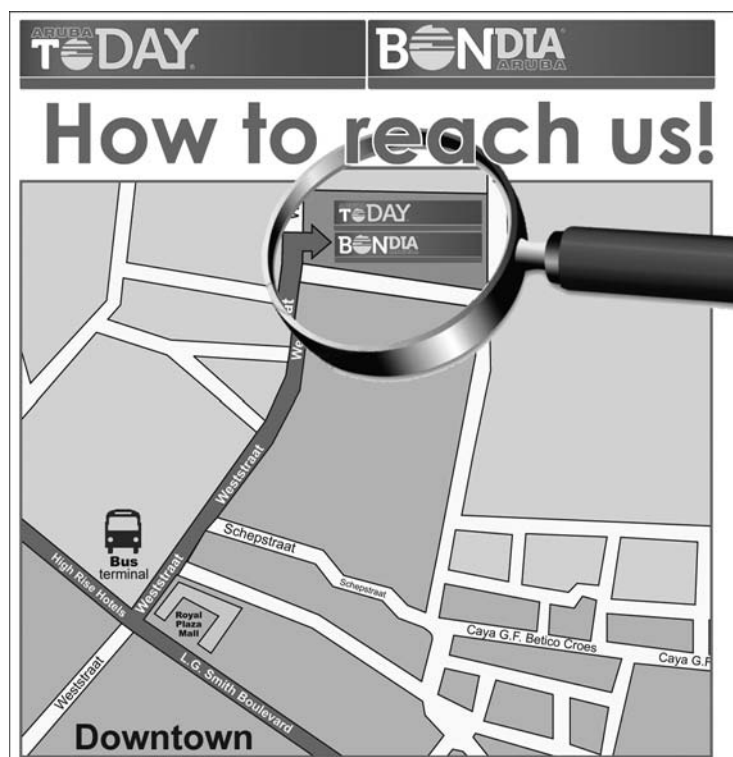
They project 1.4 million hectares of additional deforestation by 2036 roughly two million soccer pitches equivalent to 745 million metric tons of carbon dioxide, which is comparable to Canada's annual greenhouse gas emissions. That's also roughly 17 percent of the total area deforested across the Brazilian Amazon over the past decade.

Such outcomes would seriously undermine progress since leftist President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva returned to power in 2023,

with deforestation in the Brazilian Amazon falling to its lowest level in a decade in the first half of the year, according to figures released last week.

Beyond legal deforestation, the report's authors estimate tens of millions more hectares of "undesignated" public forest -- land that is neither protected nor privately or Indigenous held -- could come under pressure from land grabs, given its suitability for soy. Reis explained that while cattle farming is often the initial method of claiming ownership of such land,

soy is actually the strongest indirect driver of Amazon deforestation "because it's the most valuable commodity that can be produced."



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HEALTH

DOCTOR ON DUTY

Oranjestad Hospital
7:00 pm/10:00pm
Tel. 527 4000

San Nicolas IMSAN
24 HOURS
Tel. 524 8833

PHARMACY ON DUTY

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
Ambulance 911
Fire Dept. 115
Red Cross 582 2219

TAXI SERVICES

Taxi Tas 587 5900
Prof. Taxi 588 0035
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ARUBA TODAY NEWS



Eric Lauer #33 of the Los Angeles Dodgers pitches during the first inning against the Colorado Rockies at Dodger Stadium on July 06, 2026 in Los Angeles, California.

Startups bet on AI and a leaner future

Washington, United States

When Eric Lauer needs to hire at Gifty, the online gift-giving platform he runs, he's no longer looking for eager young coders fresh out of college.

He wants "mid-career people who are lazy in a smart way" experienced developers he calls architects who know how to wield AI coding tools to multiply their output rather than write every line from scratch.

"To be an architect, you need that previous world experience, and you need to know all the workflows," Lauer told AFP. Candidates with "no knowledge whatsoever of the workflows" are "a lot less appealing for an organization like ours." It is a calculus playing out across the tech industry as a new generation of AI-powered coding assistants transforms how software gets built.

Companies using tools like Anthropic's Claude Code are letting small teams build products that once required far larger workforces, but also squeezing out the entry-level jobs that young programmers have relied on to launch their careers.

These programs which also include OpenAI's Codex have completely flipped

the script on programming, turning coders from line-by-line typists into "project managers" who can use AI to instantly write, test and fix software with just a simple text prompt.

The switch to AI coding is undeniable. Among developers at small startups surveyed by the industry newsletter The Pragmatic Engineer, 75 percent reported using Claude Code. A quarter of startups in Y Combinator's Winter 2025 batch were built on code that was 95 percent AI-generated, according to Managing Partner Jared Friedman.

- 'Not pulling the trigger' -

Lauer said Gifty's roughly 30 employees get a premium AI subscription costing about \$200 a month "peanuts" stacked against an average salary of \$100,000 a year, and cheap enough to make offshoring "uncompetitive."

Haitham Mengad, co-founder of Stems Labs, said he took a similar approach. "We already had a pretty lean team and very talented engineers, so the approach I took was, let's do more with the people that we have."

Lindsay Euler, vice president of customer success at the software company Espresso, said her team's AI use is saving "millions of

dollars a year."

"I think we'll get to a point where if I have to request headcount, I'll be asked, 'How are you optimizing AI?'" before any new hire is approved, Euler told AFP.

But the efficiency gains reshaping startups are casting a long shadow over the next generation of programmers.

A Stanford Digital Economy Lab study analyzing payroll data from millions of US workers found that employment among 22- to 25-year-olds in occupations most exposed to AI including software development declined nearly 20 percent from a late 2022 peak.

Harvard researchers analyzing resume and job posting data covering some 62 million US workers across 285,000 firms found that junior employment at companies adopting generative AI dropped roughly nine percent relative to non-adopters within six quarters even as senior employment kept rising.

"I think there's a lot of hesitation in hiring right now," said Ian Amit, CEO of the cybersecurity startup Gom-boc AI.

"I'm hearing of a lot of companies that are interviewing multiple candidates across the board but are not pulling the trigger on actual hiring decisions." □



This photograph taken on January 22, 2026, shows signs of Google Search, Google Gemini, YouTube and Google Cloud displayed during the World Economic Forum (WEF) annual meeting in Davos.

EU tells Google to share search data, open Android to AI rivals

Brussels, Belgium

The European Union demanded Thursday that Google share data with other search engines and open up its Android system to rival AI services, but the U.S. giant said the measures would put privacy at risk.

The move is the latest by Brussels against the behemoth as it seeks to flex its muscles over Big Tech.

The order was made under the EU's flagship Digital Markets Act (DMA), which forces the world's biggest tech firms to open to competition in a bid to give users more choice.

The DMA is the bete noire of U.S. President Donald Trump's administration, which accuses Brussels of unfairly targeting American companies.

Brussels said Google must start sharing search data from January 2027 and users would start benefitting from the changes to Android from July 2027.

"Thanks to these measures we hope to see emerging alternatives to Google Search and Google's AI services, such as Gemini, and that users in the EU can enjoy greater choice of services," EU tech chief Henna Virkunen said.

For example, the EU said Android phone users should be able to use their preferred AI chatbot via voice commands, similar to the "Hey Google" command.

- Privacy question -

The EU said sharing search data would "rebalance the playing field" but Google pushed back, saying the measures "introduce unprecedented risks to user privacy, device security, and national security".

But Google's head of global affairs Kent Walker said the EU moves risked "undermining vital privacy and security guardrails for millions of Europeans".

He said AI assistants already could access Android and by sharing search data, "Europeans' private searches would be exposed to unfamiliar companies, without adequate anonymisation of the data and without user knowledge or consent".

A senior European official insisted the EU "took integrity, security and privacy into utmost account", and Brussels said the decision would ensure anonymisation of search data.

The demand is legally binding as part of a procedure launched in January, but it is not a formal probe that could lead to fines.

The scrutiny of Google does not end there, however. The EU could hit Google with a fine next week in a separate investigation under the DMA law, sources close to the matter told AFP, confirming a report in the Financial Times newspaper on Wednesday. □

Swiss rider Schmid cramps up but wins Tour de France stage 13

Belfort, France

Swiss rider Mauro Schmid said that he had to overcome cramps before he beat Colombian Harold Tejada in a two-man sprint finish to win the 13th and longest stage of the Tour de France on Friday.

Briton Tom Pidcock, who finished third two seconds back, was the big winner of the day as he climbed up the standings from 10th to fourth overall.

The Olympic mountain bike champion is now just 4min 15sec behind race leader Tadej Pogacar, and nine seconds off Remco Evenepoel in the final podium spot.

Jayco AlUla's Schmid and Astana's Tejada had broken clear of a 10-man group at the head of the race with 16km to ride and they held off their charging former breakaway companions to contest the sprint finish.

Tejada launched first, but Schmid dragged him back and pipped him to the line after 205km from Dole in the Jura to Belfort in the Vosges.

It was particularly satisfying for Schmid, who lost an almost identical finish to Norwegian Jonas Abrahamson in the 11th stage in Toulouse last year.

"I can't believe it at the moment. It was an incredibly hard day from the start," said Schmid.



Swiss Mauro Schmid of Team Jayco AlUla and Colombian Harold Tejada of XDS Astana Team cross the finish line of the stage 13 of the 2026 Tour de France cycling race, a stage of 205km from Dole to Belfort, on Friday 17 July 2026.

"I felt really good from the start but it was just full gas from the first minute."

Schmid said he had started to suffer cramps with 4km left, and that his attempt to make Tejada lead out the sprint in the final kilometre failed.

"At some point he forced me to the first position," said the 26-year-old.

"I launched a bit late. The first 50 meters I thought maybe it's the same as last year."

"Then when I saw the finish line I found my legs again and just went for it."

Behind them, Pidcock

edged out Maxim van Gils and Brandon McNulty to claim four bonus seconds for finishing third.

He was more disappointed with missing out on the stage win than celebrating his jump up the standings, which he said he does not expect to last with two tough mountain stages to come this weekend and a time-trial on Tuesday.

"Third is frustrating, but it was also a very positive day, so take everything from that," said Pidcock.

"It would be nice to say, yeah, we can defend (fourth place), but for sure

in the time trial I will lose some minutes.

"And I'm going to feel my legs tomorrow, that's for sure."

- 'Calculated' Schmid -

The peloton finished 7min 32sec after the stage winner, meaning Pidcock jumped six places, having begun the day almost 12 minutes behind Pogacar. The first two-thirds of the race was all about the green jersey contenders battling for points at the intermediate sprint.

That meant 57 riders got away from the peloton, building up a lead of over

eight minutes at one stage. Belgian Jasper Philipsen pipped category leader Mads Pedersen in the sprint but still trails the Dane by 41 points.

At that point, it was clear that Pidcock had a lot to gain from being in the breakaway beyond simply contesting the stage victory.

The group started to break up on the 5.1km-long Col des Croix climb and then exploded on the 8.9km-long Ballon d'Alsace.

Pidcock was among 10 riders to go over the top in the lead, with 30km still to ride, although a dozen or so other riders were within around half a minute.

Schmid made his move at the end of the descent, with Tejada the only man to react initially. The two worked together until the final kilometre to ensure that one of them would take the victory.

"Mauro is a very calculated rider, he's very smart and just (I'm) stoked for him because to come that close in the Tour de France (last year), you never know if you'll even get that form again," said Jayco sporting director Matthew Hayman. "You never know if you'll get that form, get in the breakaway, and then be in the position to win a stage -- and he's shown his real class today." □

NFL boss teases Japan among 10 new nations for regular-season games

New York, United States

NFL commissioner Roger Goodell named Japan as a place he wants to see the league play a future regular-season contest and said he has 10 new host nations in mind.

In a video released by Sportico on social media, Goodell was asked about global markets where he wants the NFL to play a season matchup that have not yet hosted such a contest.

"I got about 10," Goodell said at the Fanatics Fest in New York's Javits Center. "We had a game in Tokyo but it was a pre-season game so we want to do a regular-season game now."

He was also asked about staging an NFL regular-season game in Italy.

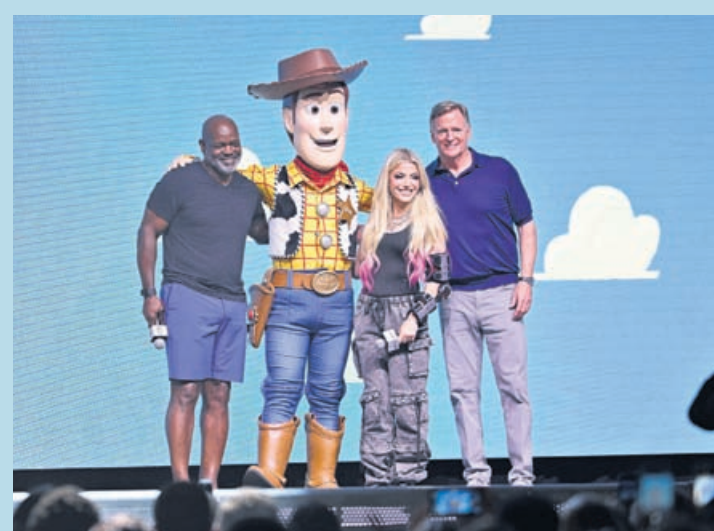
"A lot of people want to see that,"

Goodell said. "That would be fun."

The NFL global markets program links only the Los Angeles Rams to Japan, which could make them a likely choice to participate should an NFL regular-season game be played in Japan. The Rams are also the only team listed for China and South Korea.

The NFL will play its first regular-season game in Paris this year with the New Orleans Saints facing the Pittsburgh Steelers on October 25.

Melbourne, Rio de Janeiro, London, Madrid, Munich and Mexico City will also host NFL regular-season games this year. A long term NFL goal would be to have each team play a game outside the United States every season. □



Emmitt Smith, Alexa Bliss and Roger Goodell, NFL Commissioner speak onstage during the Disney Fan Draft at Fanatics Fest NYC 2026 at Jacob Javits Center on July 16, 2026 in New York City.

Herbert takes Open lead, equals Burns' round of 62

Southport, United Kingdom

Lucas Herbert stormed into the lead at the British Open on Friday after the Australian and American Sam Burns equaled the record for the lowest round in major golf history on Friday with eight-under par 62s. Herbert leads by one shot from Bryson DeChambeau, who ended his run of missed cuts at majors this year in style with a birdie-birdie finish for a 66.

World number 97 Herbert doubled over his putter in anguish as a short attempt for par on the 18th slipped by with the chance to become the first man to post a major round of 61.

Burns followed suit less than an hour later after six birdies on the back nine, including a chip on from the bunker on 18, to move to five under for the tournament.

Under glorious sunshine in Southport on England's north-west coast, Herbert got off to a flying start with birdies on his opening three holes and added three more at the fifth, seventh and ninth to hit the turn in 28, a British Open record for the front nine.

His momentum continued with birdies at the 12th and 13th before a perfect approach set up another three at the par-four 16th for a shot at history.



U.S. golfer Sam Burns lines up a putt on the 9th green on day one of the 154th Open Golf championship at Royal Birkdale Golf Club near Southport in north-west England on July 16, 2026.

Despite a wayward tee shot at the last, he should still have scrambled for a par, but the moment in front of huge crowds seemed to get to the 30-year-old as two tentative putts resulted in his first bogey of the day. "It was not lost on me the amount of history in major championships and the opportunity I had to obviously break the record," said Herbert, who has spent the last two years on the break-away LIV Tour.

"To tie it as well is still some-

thing I'm really proud of." Burns took the opposite route to 62 with a six-under 30 on the back nine to surge into contention. The world number 18 sank a 20-foot birdie at the 17th and then chipped in from the greenside at the last for his share of history.

"I caught myself by surprise," said Burns. "I think the finish there the last three holes was just a bonus."

Both players equal the course record set by Branden Grace the last time the British Open was held

at Birkdale in 2017, one of five previous rounds of 62 at majors.

- McIlroy makes the cut -

Two-time U.S. Open champion DeChambeau had missed the cut in all three previous majors this year and has traditionally struggled at the British Open, but is making the most of the benign weather conditions.

The American outshone playing partner Scottie Scheffler to ensure he starts in the final group with Herbert on Saturday.

World number four Cameron Young is well in the running for his first major at six under par, alongside overnight leader Jackson Suber.

Defending champion Scheffler is four shots back but could easily have been at least in a share of the lead but for a series of missed short putts with birdie opportunities for the world number one.

Rory McIlroy recovered from a difficult opening round of 72, that included six bogeys, to at least put himself in position to mount a surge up the leaderboard over the weekend.

The six-time major champion posted a 67 to move to one under for the tournament.

"I think the main objective today was to be here for the weekend, which I am," said McIlroy. "I think if I can get off to a decent start tomorrow, be four of five under for the tournament, I'll be right in it."

Tommy Fleetwood's late charge was met with deafening roars around his home town with three birdies in the final four holes to get to four under par.

World number three Matt Fitzpatrick and Justin Rose were among the big names to miss the cut. □

Tackling Messi 'huge challenge' for Spain: Merino

East Hanover, United States

Spanish super-sub Mikel Merino said Friday that neutralising the threat of Lionel Messi will be a "huge challenge" as La Roja prepare for their World Cup final showdown against Argentina.

Argentina skipper Messi, 39, has been pivotal in dragging the defending champions into Sunday's final in East Rutherford, orchestrating a 2-1 semi-final victory over England with two assists.

Messi, the tournament's joint top-scorer with eight goals, also inspired a dramatic comeback against Egypt in the last 16, when Argentina fought back from 2-0 down with 11 min-

utes remaining to win 3-2.

"It's a huge challenge, an incredible motivation for me and the whole team," Merino said of facing Messi.



Spain's midfielder #06 Mikel Merino celebrates after his team won the 2026 World Cup football tournament semi-final match between France and Spain at the Dallas Stadium in Arlington on July 14, 2026.

"Being able to play against a side like Argentina, which has already won this trophy, makes the match even more significant, and

I'm very happy to be experiencing this moment," Merino told reporters at Spain's training base in East Hanover, New Jersey. Arsenal ace Merino has played a decisive role in Spain's road to the final, coming off the substitutes bench to score late winners in a last-16 defeat of Portugal and a quarter-final victory over Belgium.

"I have incredible confidence in myself and my abilities, and every time I step onto the pitch, I believe I can make an impact for the team," Merino stated.

"But honestly, it doesn't matter who the hero is; the important thing is that

the team wins in the end.

"When you win a title, it belongs to everyone, not just the starting eleven," he added.

Merino meanwhile enthused about the "impressive" talent of 19-year-old Lamine Yamal, who will face Messi for the first time in a clash representing the past and the future of FC Barcelona.

Merino, 30, predicted that the final would be "an intense match" and that the referee would need to "control the intensity and frequency of challenges and fouls."

"The faster the ball moves between us, the less time the opposition has to commit a foul," he noted. □