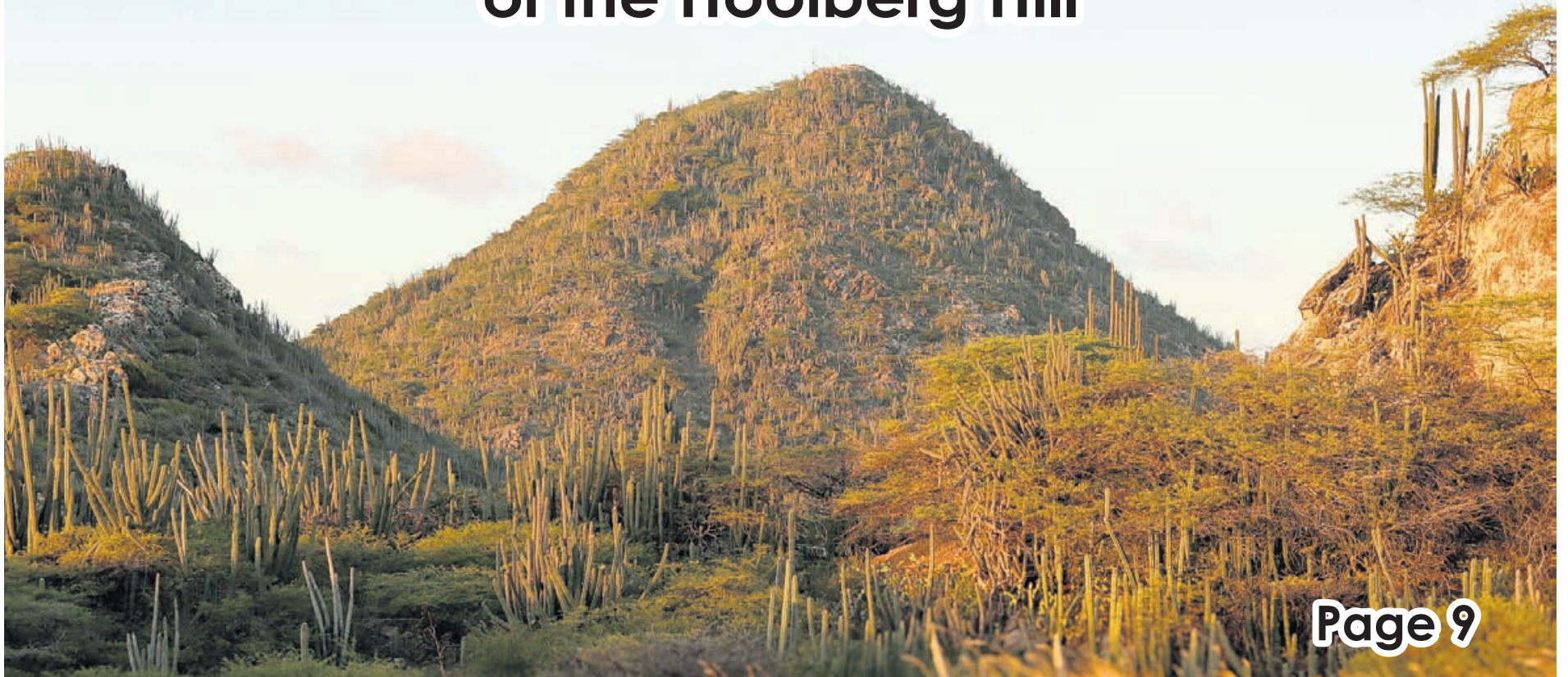




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Page 9



EXPERIENCE ARUBA'S CULTURE
with local shopping, dining & entertainment

Palm Beach, Noord



7PM

WEDNESDAY CULTURAL MUSIC & DANCE SHOW



8PM



8PM

SATURDAY CARNAVAL SHOW



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8:30PM
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U.S. dairy industry muscles up thanks to protein craze

Washington, United States

Whey protein used to be considered a mere byproduct of cheesemaking, but the dietary supplement is now coveted due to high-protein diets popularized across social media -- an explosion that is radically reshaping the American dairy industry.

Long sold as a mix-in powder or protein bar, whey can now be found across U.S. supermarket shelves in products ranging from breakfast cereals and bagels to pretzels and instant noodles.

Some of the biggest food brands have hopped on the trend, like chip giant Frito-Lay offering "Protein Nacho Cheese" Doritos and Starbucks debuting a line of "high protein" beverages. "Seven years ago, a lot of people would take it for training, but now I feel like it's very commonplace for everyone," architectural design coordinator Carly Rowcotsky told AFP. The 25-year-old said she lives an active lifestyle, and takes whey to help repair her muscles after working out.

"I don't have a lot of time to prepare my own meals, so it's just kind of like convenient to have some type of supplement," Rowcotsky said, downing a neon-pink whey protein shake whose label promised 15 grams of protein per serving.

- 'Protein-maxxing' -



Secretary of Health and Human Services Robert F. Kennedy Jr. attends a Cabinet Meeting at Camp David, the presidential retreat, on July 31, 2026 in Camp David, Maryland.

For Chuck Nicholson, a professor of supply chain management at Penn State University, the frenzy is fueled by several factors.

"Social media is really driving a lot of people to think that protein is a really healthy alternative," Nicholson told AFP, pointing to diet trends like "protein-maxxing," in which online users try to maximize their protein intake, often to excessive levels.

On top of that, US demand for whey and other protein supplements "is driven a lot by the GLP-related drugs and the dietary advice that people are getting," he added, as users of weight loss drugs including

Wegovy and Ozempic are advised to increase protein in their diets to preserve muscle mass.

Protein mania is even reflected in the U.S. government's nutrition guidelines, which updated in March to raise the recommended levels of daily protein intake from 0.8 grams per kilogram of body weight to 1.2-1.6 grams per kilogram.

"Protein and healthy fats are essential and were wrongly discouraged in prior dietary guidelines," Health Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. said earlier this year.

More whey, more cheese - However, this upsurge in

whey protein demand is facing a reality check from the dairy industry.

Since whey is a refined product resulting from cheese production, "there's kind of a capacity constraint, both in terms of what the cows are making, the amount of cheese capacity that we have, and the amount of capacity that we have to actually make those products from the whey," Nicholson explained.

Beyond that, the whey sold in consumer products requires specialized, expensive equipment to filter it into high-protein concentrates and isolates.

"For a long time we didn't actually do much with the

whey," Nicholson said. "In some cases, it was fed to animals or was actually thrown away."

The dairy industry foresaw this growing trend, with International Dairy Food Association CEO Michael Dykes saying "dairy companies have invested \$13 billion in new capacity, technology and supply chain optimization" to meet demand.

- White gold -

Joshua White, an expert at dairy product marketer T.C. Jacoby & Co., said despite the increased capacity for whey production, "the market has still demanded more."

Prices have skyrocketed as a result, with industry data showing cost jumps of around 40 percent in recent months, with the largest hike seen for high-concentrate whey protein, which has soared 150 percent in price.

As a domino effect, those higher prices have increased the product's profitability for cheesemakers, incentivizing them to make more liquid whey.

"Sometimes people say, you know, I make the money on the whey and I...cover my costs based on making the cheese," Nicholson said.

An oversimplification perhaps, he added, but "it's definitely true that the return on whey right now relative to the return on cheese is larger." □

White House to host meeting on new AI review regime

Washington, United States

The White House will host a meeting Tuesday with AI executives to discuss a

new voluntary system of government review of the technology's most powerful models, an administra-

tion official said.

The official did not specify who will attend the discussions on the new regulatory regime outlined in an executive order that President Donald Trump signed on June 2.

The central provision of this framework allows companies such as OpenAI, Google or Anthropic to give the government access to their most powerful models for up to 30 days before planned release to the general public.

The order was triggered by concerns over Anthropic's

Mythos model, which the AI startup initially refused to release publicly due to its ability to expose vulnerabilities in computer systems, including those of banks, governments and hospitals.

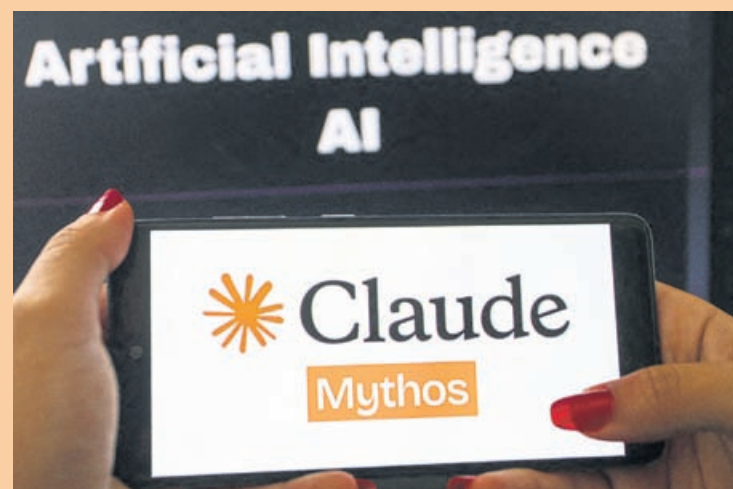
Mythos was eventually released, albeit with restrictions on its use.

But in June the Commerce Department ordered Anthropic to suspend all foreign access to its Claude Fable 5 and Mythos 5 models, citing national security concerns linked to a reported jailbreak users

successfully blowing past guardrails designed to contain them.

The company was forced to take both models offline entirely for more than two weeks before access was gradually restored.

The new AI assessment regime marks an about-face for the Trump administration, which had adopted a hands-off approach to AI development on grounds the government should not hinder innovation in the race with China to lead in the AI field. □





A Boeing 737 MAX 7 taxis at Boeing Field, on March 16, 2018 in Seattle, Washington, after making its first flight.

U.S. regulators grant long-awaited Boeing 737 MAX 7 certificate

New York, United States

More than eight years after Boeing organized the maiden flight of the 737 MAX 7, the aircraft has won certification, U.S. authorities announced Monday. The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) announced certification of the smallest version of the single-aisle MAX plane, a process that had been significantly prolonged by new requirements under federal legislation following two fatal MAX crashes in 2018 and 2019. Boeing shares added to earlier gains following the regulator's announcement, which the company had telegraphed in recent weeks as a landmark in its comeback.

"This important certification validates the rigor of our airplane's design and recognizes the determination and resilience of our 737 MAX development team," said Stephanie Pope, president of Boeing Commercial Airplanes. "Our team stayed focused on completing all requirements and delivering a safe and more capable airplane to our customers." FAA approval follows "almost a decade of extensive review" following "years of sustained work to resolve complex technical issues," the agency said. Boeing had originally in-

tended to commence deliveries in 2019 on the 737 MAX 7, which has a maximum of 172 seats.

But that timeframe fell by the wayside after the two fatal crashes, which were followed by a near-catastrophic January 2024 Alaska Airlines flight in which a fuselage panel blew out mid-flight.

To win certification, Boeing completed 441 flight tests over 686 test flight hours. A contributing factor to the two fatal MAX crashes was the poor design of an anti-stall system known as the Maneuvering Characteristics Augmentation System (MCAS) that activated improperly and prevented pilots from regaining control of the planes.

US prosecutors charged that Boeing misled FAA regulators about MCAS, resulting in no reference to the system in manuals and pilot training materials. Monday's announcement marks Boeing's first new aircraft certified since the safety problems that have engulfed the company in recent years.

Boeing is also close to winning certification for the 737 MAX 10, the largest in the MAX family with a maximum of 230 seats.

The certification process has included FAA reviews of a revamped enhanced angle of attack (AOA) sen-

sor after a defect contributed to the 2018 and 2019 crashes.

Capitol Hill hearings exposed weak government oversight of Boeing as a factor in the MAX crashes, leading to 2020 legislation requiring the company to install new AOA sensors on the entire fleet of over 2,300 MAX planes within two years.

- Ramping up -

With the certifications moving ahead, Boeing expects to ramp up MAX production in the coming period. The company said Monday it is "readying the first airplanes" for delivery to launch customer Southwest Airlines.

Chief Executive Kelly Ortberg, who joined Boeing in August 2024 after the Alaska Airlines incident, has emphasized close adherence to quality control and key performance indicators. The company has worked closely with the FAA, which greenlighted MAX production increases from 38 to 42 and then from 42 to 47. Ortberg told analysts last week he did not foresee problems with Boeing's supply chain in lifting monthly MAX production to 52 jets. "I think it's going to get harder as we go from 52 to 57 and beyond that. We'll just have to see how well we're all collectively doing," Ortberg said. □



Acting U.S. Attorney General Todd Blanche testifies during a Senate Judiciary Committee hearing on his nomination to be Attorney General, on Capitol Hill in Washington, DC, on July 15, 2026.

Trump attorney general pick says has reached deal with senators after standoff

Washington, United States

The U.S. acting attorney general said Sunday he had reached an agreement with lawmakers and issued an order officially scrapping a \$1.8-billion compensation fund that has led to a standoff over his Senate confirmation.

Todd Blanche's announcement came after the Senate Judiciary Committee pushed back a vote on advancing his nomination owing to his weeks-long dispute with Republican Senators John Cornyn of Texas and Thom Tillis of North Carolina.

Cornyn and Tillis have said they will withhold support for Blanche until President Donald Trump's administration rescinds plans for a \$1.8 billion "anti-weaponization" fund for people claiming they have been victims of politically motivated prosecutions.

"My team and I have met with committee members and Senators over the past several weeks and addressed any concerns or outstanding questions," Blanche wrote on X.

"We have enjoyed good faith discussions, and as a result issue the following order and update with regard to the May IRS settlement," he added.

A signed order attached to Blanche's post said: "The Attorney General's May 18, 2026 Order establishing the Anti-Weaponization Fund... is rescinded and shall have no force or effect.

"This Order establishes, beyond any doubt, that there is no Fund."

In a separate statement attached to the same post, Blanche's office clarified part of a May 19 order that shielded Trump and his family from certain tax claims, saying it "applies by its terms only retroactively."

The anti-weaponization fund stemmed from an extraordinary settlement between Trump and his administration over the illegal disclosure of his tax records. It offered the president, his family and businesses broad protection from tax audits and other government claims.

Opponents argued it had no clear legal basis, little public oversight and could be used to reward loyalists, including defendants convicted of crimes related to the January 6, 2021, assault on the US Capitol by Trump supporters.

Blanche had previously said the fund would not proceed, but Cornyn and Tillis demanded a formal written commitment preventing its revival and language narrowing the tax protections. □

U.S. northwest battles wildfires after Spokane neighborhoods scorched

Spokane, United States

Wildfires supercharged by drought and intense heat tore through the northwestern US city of Spokane, forcing the evacuation of 65,000 people and reducing hundreds of buildings to cinders, as firefighters raced Monday to contain the flames.

Aerial flybys revealed somewhere between 700-1,110 structures have been lost since the fires broke out over the weekend, authorities said, with anxious families awaiting news about when they could return. Three fires have combined to burn 8,026 acres (3,248 hectares) in the Spokane area of Washington state according to InciWeb, a federal interagency information system, with firefighters making use of cooler temperatures, higher humidities and thick smoke to make "significant gains" against two of them. Local officials said so far no one has been reported hurt. Cooler temperatures were



A Virgin Mary statue remains untouched in front of a burned out residential home in the Balboa neighborhood of Spokane, Washington, on August 2, 2026.

expected Monday and Tuesday, though the respite will be brief, with a warming trend resuming mid-week that will raise temperatures into the mid to high-90's Fahrenheit (mid-30s Celsius) with relative humidity in the lower teens. Video of the fire aftermath on Sunday showed scores

of homes burned to the ground, with only their brick fireplaces and foundations remaining, while other houses nearby escaped practically unscathed. "Just driving around looking at the homes it's just one of the most heartbreaking things I've ever seen in my life," Spokane resident

Geoff Beadles told AFP, after evacuating with his fiancée and two dogs.

- More frequent fires -

Authorities are attempting to make contact with 14 people whom they have failed to reach by cell phone but are not yet presumed missing, Sheriff John

Nowels told a press conference Monday.

"I think the estimate is potentially up to 65,000 people we had to move out of these areas, and if you think about what that entails, the fact that we were able to get people out of those areas within several hours in an active fire zone is pretty incredible," said Nowels.

Mayor Lisa Brown said authorities were combing the city block by block to assess damages and potential reignition, and couldn't tell people yet when they could return home.

"It could be weeks, depending on where your home and property is," she said.

"I think from a historical standpoint, this is likely the worst natural disaster in Spokane's history," Washington Governor Bob Ferguson added.

Ferguson, who has been speaking with President Donald Trump, said he was awaiting the approval from the federal government

'Spider-Man' breaks record for domestic box office debut

Los Angeles, United States

"Spider-Man: Brand New Day" had the biggest debut weekend of all time at the domestic box office, updated figures for the United States and Canada showed Monday.

The latest entry in the Marvel superhero franchise with British actor Tom Holland once again in the titular role earned \$360 million, up from Sunday's estimate of \$355 million, production company Sony

Pictures said. That haul put "Brand New Day" ahead of the previous record-holder, Disney's "Avengers: Endgame," which debuted in 2019 with \$357 million not adjusted for inflation. The updated domestic figures also bring the film's total global debut to \$932 million, still in second-place to the gargantuan \$1.2 billion earned by "Endgame."

Directed by Destin Daniel Cretton, "Brand New Day" sees Peter Parker (Holland) living in isolation after he erased his identity from the world and struggling with changes to his mutant powers.

As he tries to reconnect with former girlfriend MJ (played by Zendaya, who is Holland's real-life wife)

and best friend Ned (Jacob Batalon), Spider-Man must go toe-to-toe with a new force threatening New York City.

Mark Ruffalo, Florence Pugh, and Sadie Sink also join in the film, which precedes the release of "Avengers: Doomsday" in December.

Variety called the "Brand New Day" opening "mind-boggling," while noting it and "Endgame" are the only two movies to ever earn \$300 million in a single weekend.

The Spider-Man debut is also notable given its competition with Christopher Nolan's latest blockbuster "The Odyssey," which had dubs on IMAX screens.

"Brand New Day" is set to begin its IMAX run this coming weekend. □



(L-R) US actress Sadie Sink, US actor Jon Bernthal, British actor Tom Holland, US actress, singer Zendaya and US actor Jacob Batalon attend the premiere of Columbia Pictures' "Spider-Man: Brand New Day" at the Dolby Theatre in Hollywood, California, on July 27, 2026.

of assistance including for search and rescue, debris removal, medical supplies and assistance, temporary sheltering and emergency power.

"I'm very optimistic that they will grant it, and hopefully very soon," he added. Ferguson declared a state of emergency on August 1, citing drought conditions that have stretched four consecutive years, unusually high temperatures and high winds exacerbating record-setting wildfires.

Human-caused climate change is increasingly creating conditions for more frequent and intense wildfires, through increased heat, extended drought, and a "thirsty" atmosphere that enhances the drying of organic matter.

It is a vicious loop, with increased wildfires releasing massive amounts of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere, accelerating planetary warming. □

'Damn hot': Last summer for Japan cosplay extravaganza

Nagoya, Japan

Shawn, like her sister Whitney dressed as a character from "Demon Slayer", has two words to describe the weather as she waits to watch the grand parade at this year's annual cosplay extravaganza in Japan: "Damn hot".

"I have had about five of these (bottles of water). I have on full sleeves, socks, and whoo! When we first came outside we were just drenched in sweat," the Houston, Texas native told AFP at the World Cosplay Summit in Nagoya.

But relief is coming for the upwards of 250,000 people from all over the world who attend the WCS every year to embody manga, animation or video game characters.

From next year, the three-day event in the central Japanese city will be in November in pleasant autumn temperatures, as opposed to the oppressive 40C (104F) forecast for this Sunday, the final day.

"Since around the end of the COVID pandemic, Japan has been getting increasingly warmer," said Tokumaru Oguri, chief executive of the WCS.

"The heat can genuinely put people's lives at risk, so first of all, we ask each individual to take every possible precaution themselves, by making sure they are in good physical condition, getting



Cosplayers gather at the Osu Shopping Street before the Osu Cosplay Parade, during the second day of the World Cosplay Summit 2026 in Nagoya on August 1, 2026.

enough sleep and staying hydrated," Oguri told AFP.

- Monsters to memes -

A Japanese journalist coined the term cosplay -- combining costume and play -- in 1984 after seeing people dressed as monsters and aliens at a sci-fi convention in Los Angeles.

The concept exploded in Japan before morphing into a global phenomenon in the 1990s and 2000s.

Typically people dress up as characters -- human or otherwise -- from movies, series, comics, pop culture, fantasy, roleplay or computer games.

But cosplayers can also embody everything from fast

food brands, internet browsers and memes to intangible ideas like gravity or hunger, while also experimenting with gender.

Scientists say human-induced climate change is increasing the frequency and intensity of extreme heat events in Japan and elsewhere.

Japan had its hottest summer on record last year and in recent weeks many places have had "kokushobi", a new official classification meaning "cruelly hot days". Thousands of people, many of them elderly, needed hospital care.

But although some people at the WCS still go all out -- one participant was en-

closed in a huge "Castle in the Sky" robot soldier outfit in Saturday's parade in a covered but stifling shopping arcade -- many adapt their costumes.

"Orena", 40, from France, said she deliberately chose to make her outfit -- Haku from Studios Ghibli's animated movie "Spirited Away" -- from linen and cotton to keep cool.

She will be co-representing France on Sunday at the climax of the WCS, when acts flying in from 41 countries ranging from Peru and Saudi Arabia to Latvia will be judged on costume craftsmanship, dramatic performance, and character recreation.

"At major competitions such as the World Cosplay Summit, people tend to want to wear costumes that involve a certain level of technical complexity and often have several layers," the electrical technician told AFP.

"When it gets hot, there comes a point when you cannot take off any more layers (of costume)," the 40-year-old said. "There is the risk of feeling unwell, but even when it comes to makeup and wearing wigs, we sweat, and it quickly becomes very difficult."

- 'Deal with it' -

"Most of the cosplayers that will be joining the parade today will definitely have more comfortable (costumes) because they're going to walk under the heat of the sun," said Jeffery Quiban, or "OPet", portraying fire demon Hiei from "Yu Yu Hakusho".

"You need to deal with what you wear and wear it comfortably," the 35-year-old teacher told AFP, brandishing a sword and wearing blood-red contact lenses. Having the event in November will allow people to go all-out, said his performance partner Krizel Guiral, or "Zhel", dressed as Youko Kurama, the red-headed fox demon from the same Japanese manga and anime classic. "I think it would be really exciting to see different kinds of costumes," the 38-year-old nurse told AFP. □

Spain defends Ceuta sovereignty after Moroccan migrant rush

Ceuta, Spain

Spain on Monday insisted its sovereignty over Ceuta was "unquestionable", after tens of thousands of migrants irregularly entered the north African territory from Morocco in an unprecedented and deadly surge.

Madrid has avoided criticising Rabat over last week's mass arrivals, which some commentators have interpreted as a means for Morocco to pressure Spain.

Morocco does not recognise Ceuta and Madrid's other territory in north Africa, Melilla, as Spanish and has claimed sovereignty over them since its inde-

pendence in 1956.

Answering a question during televised remarks on Monday, Spain's Foreign Minister Jose Manuel Albares said: "That Ceuta and Melilla are an integral part of Spain's territory is unquestionable, for the whole world."

Most of the estimated 50,000 people who rushed into Ceuta -- most having swum by sea around the border barrier -- have since returned to Morocco.

The Spanish central government's delegate in Ceuta, Miguel Angel Perez, said Monday that 2,500 of them were estimated to still be in

Ceuta.

Ceuta's top official Juan Jesus Vivas put the figure at between 3,000 and 5,000. Dozens were enduring squalid conditions in a warehouse complex, including 29-year-old Nadia. "We don't have water to wash or shower. The showers and toilets have been closed. Frankly, we're suffering terribly," the Moroccan told AFP.

Her compatriot, Asia, who had also reached Ceuta from Morocco, added: "There's dirt and mould. The toilets are filthy. Many people use them, and there

aren't enough for everyone."

The charity Save the Children said "about 1,000" of the remaining migrants from last week's arrivals were minors who were "unprotected".

It said Ceuta's child protection system had capacity to look after just 100.

- 'Long process' -

Spanish authorities said the toll of 72 people found dead in their waters had not risen on Monday.

Of those, "first we have to identify them, which is the first big problem, because many of them came with-

out any identification," said a source in the Spanish government delegation in Ceuta who asked not to be named.

"Then we have to find out who their families are" through the Moroccan authorities, the source added. "Then the bodies will have to be identified by the families. So it could be a long process."

Some analysts suggested Morocco might have allowed migrants to cross the border to put diplomatic pressure on Spain, which has recently improved ties with Rabat's arch-enemy Algeria. □

Millions of Thais banish the booze for Buddhist Lent

Samut Sakhon, Thailand

With her palms pressed together and her head bowed, Wassana Nak-umma vowed to give up alcohol for three months, joining millions of Thais in an abstinence campaign blending public health with spirituality. The 42-year-old housewife, who took the pledge at a Buddhist temple in Samut Sakhon, west of Bangkok, admitted she used to be a "heavy drinker".

"I used to get so drunk that my kids had to clean up my vomit," she told AFP candidly.

But a concerned relative persuaded her to join a campaign to give up alcohol during Khao Phansa, a three-month period of reflection observed by Buddhists akin to Christian Lent. "I still craved it. Whenever I saw people buying liquor or beer at stores, I would look at them and want to drink like them," she said.

"But I held back, telling myself it was only three months. After that three-month period, I realized, 'Hey, I can do this! Next year, I must do it again'."

That was in 2024. Wassana went back to drinking, but in moderation, and this week joined hundreds in Samut Sakhon to pledge abstinence for her third year. Avoiding drugs and alcohol is a key precept of Buddhism.

But Thailand, where more than 90 percent of the population identify as Bud-



Wassana Nak-umma (L) pledges to abstain from drinking alcohol for three months at the beginning of Buddhist Lent at Wat Nong Song Hong Buddhist temple in Samut Sakhon province on July 30, 2026.

dhist, has the third highest per capita consumption of alcohol in Asia, according to 2024 data from the World Health Organization (WHO). It was to address this paradox that the so-called Buddhist Lent campaign began in 2003, and last year it claimed more than eight million adherents.

- Spiritual anchor -

The start of Khao Phansa on Thursday was a joyous affair in the rural province of Samut Sakhon, featuring offerings to monks and traditional dances.

Dozens of people also paraded through the village on "salengs" -- scooters with sidecars used locally to transport coconuts -- brand-

ishing placards featuring images of healthy, smiling livers.

Phayom Raksa solemnly recited a pledge that touched on the teachings of the Buddha, and mentioned Thailand's king and the well-being of the nation.

The 66-year-old former coconut farmer stopped drinking entirely after participating in the campaign for the first time six years ago.

"My kids were ashamed of me -- their dad got drunk every day and didn't care about them," he told AFP, saying that he also spent all his money on alcohol.

But he now urged others to follow his example, saying: "I'd like everyone to try doing what I did -- to think and look

at positive things."

Abstinence campaigns have gathered ground in many countries in recent years, notably the trend to pursue a "Dry January" after Christmas and New Year's Eve excesses.

They are often linked to an increased focus on healthy behavior.

But Ubolwan Kongsawang, a regional volunteer with Thailand's Stop Drinking Network, said the Buddhist Lent campaign provides a "spiritual anchor" that boosts motivation.

"When individuals take a pledge before a Buddha image, at a temple, or within their community, they feel bound to honor their word," she said.

- 'Beyond Lent' -

Organisers of the campaign have revamped their messaging this year, emphasising how giving up or even cutting down alcohol consumption can result in improved health, better relationships -- and crucially, save money.

"Our goal is not necessarily total abstinence for everyone," said Dr. Pongthep Wongwatcharapaiboon, director of the Thai Health Promotion Foundation, a government agency.

"Many reduce their consumption and discover the health benefits, which is already a success."

Thailand in December relaxed decades-old restrictions on selling alcohol in the afternoon, which were originally intended to stop government employees drinking on the job.

But it remains banned on religious public holidays and around elections.

One advertisement for the Buddhist Lent campaign focuses on the social pressure to drink, in a culture where alcohol is everywhere, from funerals to festivals.

"We are trying to transform the drinking culture itself, not just reduce individual consumption," says Teera Wacharaprannee, head of the Stop Drinking Network.

"Our strategy is to continue beyond Lent, supporting villages and communities to reduce alcohol in daily life." □



This handout photograph taken and released by the Iraq's Kurdistan Region Presidency on August 3, 2026 shows Syria's President Ahmad al-Sharaa (R) speaking with the President of Iraq's Kurdish region Nechirvan Barzani during their meeting in Damascus.

Damascus, Syria

Syria's President Ahmed al-Sharaa met Monday with Nechirvan Barzani, leader

of Iraq's autonomous Kurdistan region, as official sources told AFP the talks aimed to advance an integration

Iraqi Kurdish leader in Damascus for talks on Syria Kurds' deal: sources to AFP

deal between Damascus and Syria's Kurds.

Syrian state news agency SANA said Sharaa received Barzani at the presidential palace in Damascus, in the first visit by the head of Iraq's Kurdistan region following the December 2024 ouster of longtime Syrian ruler Bashar al-Assad.

After clashes between Syrian Kurdish fighters and the new authorities' forces in January this year, the two sides reached a deal to integrate Syrian Kurdish institutions and forces into the state.

During the fighting, Barzani

met Kurdish leader Mazloun Abdi, chief of the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Force (SDF), in Kurdistan's Erbil in a US-backed meeting.

Sharaa's office said he and Barzani on Monday discussed "strengthening cooperation and coordination, especially economic... in a way that contributes to supporting security and stability".

Barzani meanwhile said in a statement that he affirmed his "support for a stable and united Syria, where the rights of all ethnic and religious communities are protected".

He added that they discussed "the importance of Syria playing a constructive role in advancing regional peace and security".

A Syrian official source had earlier told AFP on condition of anonymity that the pair would discuss the January deal and "procedures for integrating" the SDF into the state.

A Syrian diplomatic source, also requesting anonymity, told AFP that the one-day visit would mainly deal with "following up on the agreement between the state and the SDF". □

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

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

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

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What you should note:

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

START

and maintenance of the local waste water plant. First things first, make sure you have the right website. The official website for the ED card is www.edcarda-aruba.aw. It is important to note that there are NO alternatives for this website; this website is the ONLY way you can obtain an official ED card. Other websites that may look similar are not official and may possibly be a scam. Be careful not to fall for the trap! Next up, make sure you have the right information with you when you apply for an ED card. You should have on hand:

1. A valid passport

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

We mentioned a \$20 contribution mandatory for every visitor. Keep in mind that this is a YEARLY fee; so if you plan on visiting Aruba

more than once this calendar year, you would only have to pay the first time around.

Other important info

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

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

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

Papiamento words and phrases you may want to know!



(Oranjestad)—Aruba is a melting pot of different nationalities, cultures and languages. Primarily for this reason, the average Aruban can understand and speak Dutch, English and Spanish relatively well. However, as much as we pride ourselves in being able to communicate with almost everyone, we cherish our native tongue Papiamento above all else. Want to learn some common words in our language? Here are a few basic words and phrases that can get you a hat tip from

an Aruban.

When you arrive at the airport in Aruba, one of the first words in Papiamento you may encounter is "Bon bini." Bon bini in Papiamento means welcome, and is probably the most famous Papiamento word for tourists.

Hi! Bye!

To be fair, there is no unique way to say "hello" in Papiamento at least not officially. We often just use the English "hello" or "hey", or Dutch "hallo" to greet

someone. We do however, always follow it up with "con bay?" or "con ta?" Con bay is a shortened version of "con ta bay?", which essentially means "how are you?"

The word "con" in Papiamento means "how?" and is pronounced with a rounder "o" sounds, like in the English word "cone". "Ta bay" refers to how you are doing.

When we say goodbye, we use the word "ayo" (not like the Ayo Rock Formation, but also...kinda?). We may also use "te oro", which means "see you later".

Greetings during the day

Most, if not all, languages have different ways to greet according to the time of day, and Papiamento is no different. Since Papiamento is heavily influenced from Portuguese and Spanish, some of these phrases may look very familiar.

Bon dia is used in the morning, up to about noon. Bon dia essentially means good morning. The word "bon" means "good", and while "dia" does not directly mean "morning" in English, it is used often to refer to the morning time.

Bon tardi

In the afternoon to early evening hours, we use "bon tardi" to greet people, which means "good afternoon". "Tardi" actually comes from the word "atardi", which directly translates to "afternoon". However, the shortened "tardi" is used to keep the rhythm on the phrase. And the same could be said for our last greeting of the day.

Bon nochi.

You guessed it, "bon nochi" means "good night". Just like "tardi", "nochi" is actually the shortened version of the word "anochi".

Yes...no...maybe?

The affirmative and negative expression is very simple in Papiamento. Just like Spanish, our yeses are "si" and our no's are "no". Pretty easy right? If you want to gain some extra points from younger locals, you can also say "se", which is a more casual affirmative used mostly by the younger generation.

However, do note: some older generations may find this improper and not respectful, so keep that in mind.

Thanks man...

Lastly, a word that we can also say more often is "danki", which means literally "thank you". "Danki" is derived from the Dutch word "bedankt". Though we don't really have a translation for "I appreciate it" in English, we do use "masha danki" to convey the message. "Masha" means "a lot" or "very", so "masha danki" means "thank you very much". ☐

Discover the Best of Paseo Herencia



Shopping

Paseo Herencia invites you to shop at an easy island pace in a charming open air setting, where international style meets local creativity. Browse fashion, fragrances, footwear, jewelry, skincare, and souvenirs all in one relaxed stroll.

Find well-known brands such as Tommy Hilfiger, Calvin Klein, Aldo, Carmen Steffens, and Psycho Bunny, then stop by Pandora to turn Aruba themed charms into keepsakes you can take home. For something truly one of a kind, explore locally handmade gifts and artwork at The Artist Co-op and Olla Gallery, where island inspired pieces and personalized options add a meaningful touch. Lumiere Candles adds to the local charm with Aruba inspired candles, perfect for bringing a little island warmth back home.

For a special accessory, discover permanent jewelry at Gloria Feliciana, crafted locally for everyday wear. For island wellness, Aruba Aloe offers locally made skincare and gifts created with aloe grown right here on the

island. Beauty lovers can visit Maggy's for favorite beauty essentials and services for hair, nails, and makeup, perfect for a quick refresh before dinner or a night out.

A World of Flavors

Dining at Paseo Herencia fits every moment of the day, from breakfast to late night bites. Start at Che Bar, serving breakfast from 7:30 AM and continuing throughout the day with comforting favorites, including classic Neapolitan style pizza.

For bold traditional flavors, Xixon Spanish Restaurant is a go to for signature dishes such as paella paired with a wide wine selection. If you are craving something modern, Fusion Cuisine brings a creative twist with its original take on sushi. The Lazy Turtle offers comforting classics and craveable appetizers, while Sexy Shrimp adds a sports bar atmosphere to the mix, pairing standout drinks with a diverse menu that is perfect for gathering with friends and watching any game.

As the evening continues, follow your cravings. Enjoy Mexican favorites at Iguana Can-



tina, share Dutch specialties at Pomm's Frites, and finish with something sweet at Mythos or Mimo's roll up ice cream. Starbucks is always nearby for a familiar coffee or an easy refresh between stops.

VIP Cinema

Caribbean Cinemas VIP delivers a premium movie experience on the second floor, easily accessible by escalator. Settle into plush reclining seats and enjoy high quality screens, state of the art projection, and immersive sound. A well stocked concessions counter offers classic popcorn, snacks, and drinks including wine, making it ideal for a laid back movie night or a special outing.

Location and Hours

Paseo Herencia is located in Aruba's high rise area, directly across from Holiday Inn. The mall is open Monday through Saturday from 10:00 AM to 10:00 PM, and on Sundays from 5:00 PM to 10:00 PM. For the latest updates and upcoming events, follow our social media pages and visit our website at www.paseoherencia.com.



Santini and friends: "Aruba to us is about friendship"

ORANJESTAD — You are back and we would like to give you a shout-out by inviting you to send us your favorite vacation picture while enjoying our Happy Island!

Complete the sentence: Aruba to me is Send your picture with that text (including your name and where you are from) to: news@arubatoday.com and we will publish your

vacation memory. Isn't that a special way to keep your best moments alive? Please do note: By submitting photos, text or any other materials, you give permission to The Aruba Today Newspaper, Caribbean Speed Printers and any of its affiliated companies to use said materials, as well as names, likeness, etc. for promotional purposes without compensation.

Last but not least: check out our website, Instagram and Facebook page! Thank you for supporting our free newspaper, we strive to make you a happy reader every day again.

For today we received a lovely message from Bruno and Eileen Santini with daughter Danielle, granddaughter Kaia and friends Elisa and Jazmin from New York and California, USA.

They wrote to us saying: "Aruba to us is about



friendship. It is building caring relationships between people we meet by mutual affection, trust and sharing experiences. Enjoying time together and having respect for our friends, giving support for their needs and desires. Coming to Aruba for 22 years we have been blessed to bring our children, family, and friends to share in our time on Aruba. We have met people from all different walks of life. They are visiting Aruba for

the same reasons as us. The sun, the beaches and all the wonderful attractions and all the great things to do. Through the years, our friendships have grown in depth, we know who they are and who their family is. We know their children and grandchildren.

It's a wonderful experience. Everyone looks forward to coming to Aruba. It's the highlight of their year, greeting old friends

warms our hearts. Everyone is filled with excitement for our new adventures to begin.

The first time we came to Aruba was in 1974. We found Aruba by going to the library and reading about the island. It sounded wonderful; little did we know what it held for us in the future.

All of Aruba is one happy island full of loving, caring, and friendly people. It is true. Whether you're renting a car, shopping for souvenirs, going on a tour, shopping for food or if you need urgent care. All the people on this island are authentic, friendly, kind, and helpful. Aruba has become the gem of the Caribbean."

Thank you for sending us this wonderful message sharing what Aruba means to you with us and our readers! □



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

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*Double Points Tuesday!*Earn
DOUBLE POINTS
all day long!Use your Players' Club card
to play our slots and we'll
DOUBLE your points!

THE SHOPS AT ALHAMBRA CASINO

Auntie Anne's Pretzels | Aruba Aloe | Baskin-Robbins
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The Brownstone Ribs and Seafood | The Market
Shalom Body & Soul Spa | Moments & Memories Jewelry
Magnet Perfume Jewelry & Cosmetics | The Lazy Lizard
Shalom Hair & Nails Bar | Twist of Flavors | Dunkin Donuts
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Aruba's Nature is to be Cherished

The national park Arikok comprises almost 18 % of the island. Its rugged terrain, desert-like hills filled with tall cacti, breathtaking coastline and protected local flora and fauna welcome you to be explored. There are more places on the island that are a preserved area like the Bubali Plas which is a bird sanctuary.



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

Did you know that four of the in total seven species of sea turtle lay their eggs on Aruba's beaches during breeding season? In the national park, a Least Tern (*Sternula antillarum*) keeps a strict eye on a very special event taking place below on the beach: a majestic Leatherback (*Dermochelys coriacea*) heads back to sea after laying her eggs, while another nest laid 2 months ago by the same female hatches. A very rare occurrence of daytime nesting and

hatching. Sea turtles prefer nesting in the cool and dark hours of the night. And hatchlings usually wait for the cue of cooling surface sand before emerging.

Bubali Magic

This beautiful close-up image of the pink bird is courtesy of Michiel Oversteegen of the Aruba Birdlife Conservation. This important foundation showcases and builds awareness of Aruba's birds and other native flora and fauna. You may have seen a 'pink cloud' lately at the Bubali or Spanish Lagoon Wetlands areas? It's most likely to be Roseate Spoonbills (*Ajaia ajaja*) or 'Chucharon Cora' as they are known in Papiamentu. This unusual looking bird forages in shallow muddy water while sweeping its flattened bill from side to side to catch small fish, crustaceans

and other aquatic invertebrates. The Roseate Spoonbill remains an uncommon sight as they are vulnerable to degradation of feeding and nesting habitats (Wetlands).

The afore mentioned is just a part of what Aruba's nature has to offer. We cannot stress enough to go, see for yourself. The island has the most beautiful beaches but it is also worthwhile to go beyond this and get an idea of our entire island. Lately there is a discussion going on about the effect certain activities have on our nature, for example the ATV vehicles cause a lot of dust, noise and leave tire tracks. Animals live in these areas where the vehicles run, often with high speed and with detrimental consequences to flora and fauna. Motorized vehicles are forbidden to drive on the sand dunes in the Northern part of the island and all beaches in Aruba are forbidden for any motorized vehicle. Treasure our island to enjoy it like you do: as a tropical and natural paradise. We truly appreciate it! □



Enjoy one of the best views on Aruba at the top of the Hooiberg Hill



(Oranjestad)—If you are a regular hiker, or maybe want to spice up your morning work out session, then you might enjoy one of the most popular climbing sites on the island: The Hooiberg Hill. Accompanied with a 600-step staircase, this hill overlooks a great part of the island, the Caribbean sea, and sometimes even the Santa Anna mountain located in the coastal state of Falcon in Venezuela, providing one of the best views you can get on Aruba.

located at the center district of the island, Santa Cruz, the Hooiberg Hill is the second highest point on the island at 165 meters above sea level (or about 540 feet above sea level). The highest point is Jamanota Hill at 189 meters (620 feet), located in the Arikok National Park.

The staircase that run on the side of the hill was first built in 1951, when Mr. Eduardo Tromp constructed it. At that time, the staircase consisted of 900 steps. Over time, as the steps faced erosion, the government decided to renovate these stairs in 1991. This new project delivered the newer staircase with only 587 steps. However, don't be fooled—it may still be a work out to get on top. In addition, there is now a gazebo placed halfway up the stair for a little rest. The view at this resting stop is also a sight to see.

The best time to climb the hill would be early in the morning or right before sunset, as it may not be as hot. However, the hill is of course open all day, every day. □

Dining in? Try making some local favorites!

How to make “funchi”



(Oranjestad)—One of the most famous Aruban snacks or appetizers is “funchi hasa” (fried polenta sticks), a super easy meal that adults and children will both enjoy. Here’s how to make it!

Before we start, get to know the basics

What is funchi hasa? Funchi, or Aruban polenta, is a popular side dish for local dishes, like soups, stews and fried fish. Made from a corn flour, water and butter mixture, this appetizer is traditionally eaten alongside a warm meal. However, locals also like to fry sticks of funchi for a quick and filling snack.

Ingredients (measured by heart)

1. Polenta flour/Funchi flour
2. Water
3. Butter
4. Salt to taste

Directions

Bring water to a boil in a medium-sized sauce pan. Add in some salt and butter to taste in the boiling water and let this dissolve and melt. Then, gradually add the flour while stirring with a wooden spoon. The mixture will start to begin to harden pretty fast, so be careful not to add too much. At this phase of cooking, you want a goopy thick mixture, but thin enough so you can continue to stir to get all the lumps out.

After reaching a semi-firm, yet flexible texture, grab a baking pan or any large, deep plate, and pour the mixture in. Be sure that this plate is wet or greased so that the mixture does not



stick to the bottom. Let this cool completely while it firms up for the last time. Once it's cooled you can enjoy it as is, topped with some butter or shredded cheese. Or, you can take it to another level of deli-

ciousness.

When your funchi is firm enough, cut it into strips (size is up to you). Heat up some oil in a pan and fry those babies up! After frying, you can top it with

some cheese or enjoy it with your favorite dipping sauce.

Photo credit of fried funchi sticks: Jacqueline Felida on Pinterest. □

Aruba’s kite flying tradition

(Oranjestad)—Every year for King’s Day, Arubans gather with friends and family to fly kites. Big or small, paper or plastic, blue skies fill up with these colorful flying contraptions, brightening our yearly celebration of the Dutch

Monarch.

The tradition of flying kites starts at home in the weeks leading up to King’s Day. These kites were traditionally made with things found in the nearby mondi* and in the kitchen at home. Us-

ing dried up cactus sticks for the frame, old news papers, and glue made from flour, water and salt to dry faster (some people even use cornstarch slurry as glue), kids usually make their own kites with their friends, parents or other



close family members. Tails are made from old bed sheets, ripped and tied together to create a long string of fabric trailing behind the back end of the kite. To finish off the process, people used fish lines or thin rope to tie three corners of the kite together. Another long string of rope is tied in the knotted center and bundled up, used to steer the kite as it flies in the air. Decorating the kite was especially important, and children would use paint to create their own designs the more colorful, the better!

People usually fly their kites in big open fields, like empty soccer and baseball fields found all around the island around noon, when the sun is at its brightest. In the past few years, kite flying has become a sport in which groups of people would battle against each other to see whose kite is the biggest, the prettiest, and whose could fly flawlessly and longer in the air. □

*Mondi: Aruban woods.

The Aruban Cunukero: From past to present

(Oranjestad)—Aruba's culture consists of rich historical traditions that make up the Aruban identity and lifestyle. However, the life of the cunukero (farmer) is perhaps the most important aspect of our culture, in a sense representing to locals the true essence of the Aruban.

Historically, cunucus (farms) played a huge role in the early social and economic development of Aruba, and its relevance dates back to the early days of the colonization era. Upon being discovered by Spanish conquistadors in the late 15th century, Aruba was used primarily as a ranch, housing horses and cattle brought from Europe. During the Dutch colonization era where the West Indian Company (WIC) dominated the economic sphere on the island, using the land to set up cattle farms and ranches remained popular.

Anthropologist Sidney Mintz divided Caribbean farmers back in four categories:

- The "squatters", who were mostly comprised of illegal and poor colonists, runaway slaves and deserters who took advantage of the Spanish's weak supervision on Caribbean islands like Cuba and the DR;
- Then you have "Early Yeomen", who were legal farmers who came to the west under contract. Once their contract expired, they were given a plot of land for independent use;
- Proto-Peasants were plantation slaves who were allowed to have a small piece of land to grow food for their own consumption. This was to curb the cost of living on the plantations;
- Lastly you have the "Runaway Peasantries", usually comprised of runaway slaves who acquired farming tools and cattle through stealing or through secret exchanges with other slaves from different plantations.

However, the Aruban cunukeros back then are hard to place, and their history may explain why.

From 1636 (beginning of Dutch colonization era) to before the oil industry in 1924, Aruba's population consisted of mostly farmers. These farmers were mostly indigenous and were characterized as peasants. They weren't allowed to participate in trading, but instead were granted a piece of land to live off of. However, in exchange for this grant, these indigenous



farmers were obligated to work for the WIC, doing daily tasks such as taking care of or hunting cattle—large majority of which were destined for Curacao, clean water tanks and chop wood, among other things.

As much as these farmers were given to opportunity to live "free" with a plot of land, their exclusion from the trading and business world, as well as being deprived the chance to become real property and cattle owners, made them a unique group among Caribbean farmers at the time.

The WIC placed a lot of restrictions on these indigenous farmers—a method to safeguard their cattle deposit on the island. The indigenous farmers were mostly granted less than 7 acres of land. Those who owned bigger land were either once affiliated with the WIC or were colonists who settled on the island to try their luck at farming. In 1767, there were about 120 hous-

es/cunucus on the island.

These Aruban farmers were also limited to the amount of cattle they could keep. Most kept goats as cattle, as only those who were affiliated with the WIC could keep (more) sheep. Of the 76 goat herders on the island, about 45 of them had less than 30 goats, and only 7 of them had more than 60 goats.

It wasn't until the WIC was defunct in late 18th century that these farmers were able to obtain more freedom as cunukeros. After 1824, the government gave these farmers official permission to keep livestock, and the obligations once placed on them were officially discarded.

Because of the dry climate in Aruba, growing food for commercial purposes was not popular. The focus was mainly on cattle herding and taking care of livestock. However, livestock need food to survive, and when Aruba experi-

enced its duper dry climate, many farmers would see a big loss in their livestock, and hence profit.

Although the WIC at one point did try to come up with an initiative to get more people to have land on the island, the climate never really allowed real profit from farming. Because of the climate, Aruban farmers in general could not keep large quantities of livestock. At a certain point toward the end of the 18th century, the climate got so bad that many farmers decided to leave the island for a while.

For this reason, the farming economy on the island remained small. As the years went by and people noticed that these farms could not really produce any sustainable profit, farmers kept their small piece of land just to live off of. This is why the Aruban cunukeros only played a very tiny role into the plantation economy.

In modern Aruba, cunucus and cunukeros still exist on the island, fortunately with more freedom and more opportunity to tap into the agricultural market. These farmers usually sell their produce on a smaller scale, like during farmers' market events and other types of (holiday) events. □

Source: "Arubaans Akkoord: Opstellen over Aruba van voor de komst van de olieindustrie (Aruban Accord: Essays on Aruba Before the Arrival of the Oil Industry)" by Alofs, Luc; Rutgers, Wim; Coomans, Henny E. red.



CROSSWORD

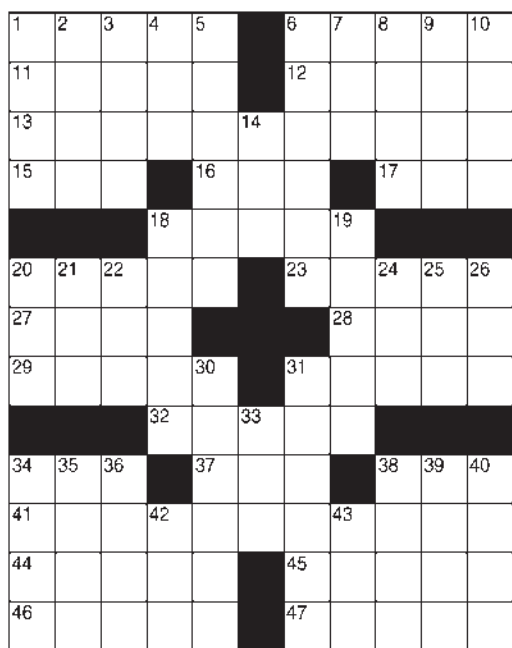
By THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

- 1 Tokyo's nation
6 Houston player
11 Find darling
12 "Over There!" writer
13 Bette Davis film
15 CPR expert
16 Star pitcher
17 Writer Stout
18 Skilled
20 City square
23 Western resort lake
27 Compass point
28 Solitary
29 Church areas
31 Star in Orion
32 Winter quaff
34 Atlas page
37 Unruly group
38 London weather
41 Bette Davis film
44 Shoplifted
45 Work byproduct
46 Castle part
47 Bridge costs

DOWN

- 1 Green stone
2 First person
3 Cruise stop
4 Bible vessel
5 Utah neighbor
6 Agree to
7 Lush
8 Role for Chris Hems-worth
9 Quite un-common
10 Cameo stone
14 Bar rocks
18 Ancient Mexican
19 Shire of "Rocky"
20 Stew sphere
21 Trip around a track
22 Cart puller
24 Sty resident
25 Low bill
26 Sushi choice
30 Grave
31 Hearty
33 Pigeon sound
34 Schooner pole
35 Singing voice
36 Work the fields
38 Sense
39 Egg outline
40 Under-stands
42 Bar order
43 Binary base



4-11

A XYDLBAAXR
is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

4-11

CRYPTOQUOTE

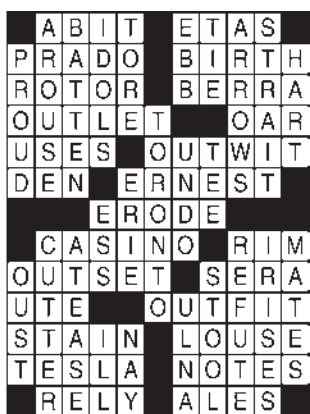
PWC FVOO WYA NCYGDAG

ZADLAYS WX SNA ONWSO

PWC GWY'S SREA. — URPYA

HDASJEP

Cryptoquote: THE ONLY
DEPENDABLE LAW OF LIFE: EVERYTHING IS
ALWAYS WORSE THAN YOU THOUGHT IT WAS
GOING TO BE. — DOROTHY PARKER



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.

CRUISE SHIP	
AUGUST SCHEDULE	
02 SUN	FREEWINDS DEPT. Arrival: Departure: 24:00 Berth: E
04 TUE	CARNIVAL HORIZON Arrival: 8:00 Departure: 22:00 Berth: B GRANDEUR OF THE SEAS Arrival: 8:00 Departure: 23:00 Berth: C
05 WED	FREEWINDS Arrival: 6:00 Departure: Berth: E
09 SUN	FREEWINDS DEPT. Arrival: Departure: 24:00 Berth: E
11 TUE	GRANDEUR OF THE SEAS Arrival: 8:00 Departure: 23:00 Berth: B ADVENTURE OF THE SEAS Arrival: 8:00 Departure: 23:00 Berth: C CARNIVAL VISTA Arrival: 13:00 Departure: 23:00 Berth: I
12 WED	ALLURE OF THE SEAS Arrival: 8:00 Departure: 23:00 Berth: I FREEWINDS Arrival: 6:00 Departure: Berth: E
16 SUN	FREEWINDS DEPT. Arrival: Departure: 24:00 Berth: E

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

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

Difficulty: ★★

8/4

Answer to previous puzzle

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

Difficulty: ★

8/3

Strengthening El Nino 'adding fuel to a planet already on fire': U.N. chief



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

United Nations, United States

A strengthening El Nino that could shatter all-time records is "adding fuel to a planet already on fire" and pushing the world into "uncharted territory," U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres warned Friday. "Two months ago, I warned that El Nino was arriving on our doorstep," Guterres told the world body. "Now it is inside the house and turning up the heat."

The El Nino weather pattern warms surface temperatures in the central and eastern equatorial Pacific Ocean, triggering world-wide changes in winds, atmospheric pressure and rainfall patterns, and pushing warmer overall global temperatures. Human-caused climate change can amplify El Nino's impacts because a warmer ocean and atmosphere increase the availability of energy and moisture for extreme weather events, such as heat waves and heavy rainfall. "We have already endured a summer of extremes record-shattering heat domes; apocalyptic wildfires raging in Spain, France and far beyond; thousands of lives lost in the

scorching conditions," said Guterres. "But according to the latest science, this is only a warm-up act." Pacific waters driving the El Nino have never been this warm this early, he said, with a new forecast by the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) finding sea-surface temperatures now averaging 3C (5.4F) above normal.

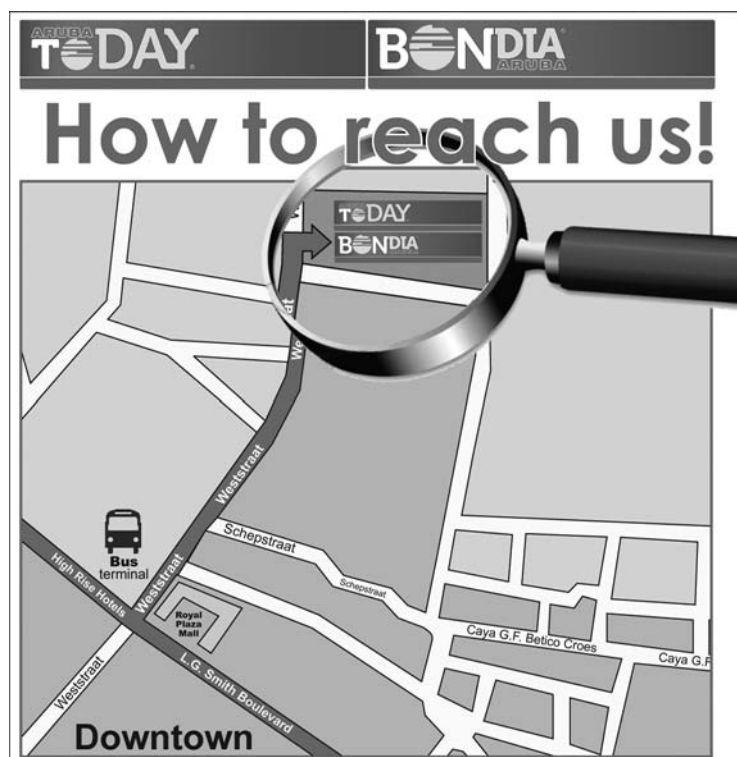
The WMO's outlook shows that through October, nearly every land mass on Earth is expected to be hotter than normal.

"Taken together, that risks shattering every seasonal record and driving even more severe effects world-wide," said Guterres. "We are in uncharted territory." The risks go beyond heat alone, he added. India's monsoon is running well below average, while hotter and drier conditions are forecast from Central America and the Caribbean to parts of South America, South Asia, the Southwest Pacific, Europe and Africa. "The verdict is clear: the climate crisis is in overdrive,"

said Guterres, outlining action required on four fronts. First, protect people from heat with city- and country-wide heat plans and early warning systems, including expanded access to sustainable cooling.

Second, make work safer, with governments setting heat standards so vulnerable workers in the garment industry, for example aren't risking their lives. Third, build protection from extreme heat into the design of cities, homes, schools and hospitals, and factor it into plans and budgets.

Fourth and most fundamentally, "the world must stop fueling the crisis," said Guterres, and roll back fossil fuels that are driving planet-wide heating rather than treating each disaster as an isolated tragedy. □



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ARUBA TODAY NEWS

AI keeps consumer prices high in 'RAMaggedon' chip crunch

Hong Kong, China

Print-outs of articles about the global memory chip shortage are pinned beside a price list at a Hong Kong computer shop, offering an explanation to confused customers feeling the pinch.

Price rises for goods such as laptops and smartphones, with cars potentially next, have been an unwelcome side-effect of the artificial intelligence gold rush and the squeeze is far from over. Samsung Electronics' chief financial officer said this week shortages of microchips that store digital data will likely deepen in 2027 and stay tight through 2028. The crunch has been nicknamed "RAMaggedon" after the components called RAM, or "random-access memory".

It is caused as profit-hungry chipmakers pivot to producing high-bandwidth memory (HBM) -- a more advanced type of computer memory in huge demand to help train and run AI tools. The articles on display at In-Technology Services one of many compact vendors crammed into Hong Kong's Wan Chai Computer Cen-



RAM (Random Access Memory) chips are seen for sale in a computer centre in Hong Kong on July 28, 2026.

tre -- are to inform customers who "don't know what happened," manager Wade Lam told AFP. The centre's shops sell tech equipment of all sorts, from computer parts to gadgets and games consoles. Ken Tam, manager of Videocom Computer, which specialises in custom-built PCs, said business has halved since price rises began in September.

Sixteen gigabytes of RAM used to cost HK\$300-400

(\$40-50) but the price has now hit HK\$1,500, he said. "When it suddenly gets so expensive, customers have a psychological barrier," Tam told AFP. "If they need it, they will buy it," but otherwise they will wait, or "lower their standards" and buy a less high-performing memory chip, he said.

- Chinese competition - Analyst Ellie Wang at the Taiwan-based market research firm TrendForce

said memory prices for PCs and smartphones were up around five to six times compared to a year ago. The AI boom has brought humungous profits and share price jumps to the world's top three memory chip makers: South Korea's Samsung Electronics and SK hynix, along with US giant Micron.

In fourth place is ChangXin Memory Technologies (CXMT), which became mainland China's most

valuable company on Monday when it made its market debut in Shanghai another sign of how red-hot the sector has become. CXMT, as a relative newcomer, "remains in a follower position regarding leading-edge technologies", James Zhao, senior principal analyst at Omdia, told AFP.

HBM is used in data centre servers to support other powerful chips such as those made by US titan Nvidia that execute the dizzyingly complex calculations of AI systems. But when it comes to conventional RAM, and a type for computers called DRAM, "the current supply-constrained market environment" could bring CXMT "late-mover advantages", he said.

At a shopping centre in a different part of Hong Kong, customer Henry Wong, an investment banker, said he had chosen to upgrade the RAM in an older laptop instead of buying a new one with even better specs. "After upgrading the memory, I found it ran really smoothly, and I stopped wanting to buy a new computer," he told AFP. □

Apple launches legal appeal over U.K. demand for user data

London, United Kingdom Apple has filed a new legal challenge against the UK government's latest attempt to gain access to users' encrypted data, the

U.S. tech giant confirmed to AFP on Monday.

The dispute stems from a U.K. government demand that Apple create

a "backdoor" to let authorities snoop on data uploaded by Apple users if required, for example by law enforcement agencies. "As we have said many times before, we have never built a backdoor or master key to any of our products or services and we never will," Apple said in a statement from September, re-shared with AFP on Monday. An Apple spokesperson confirmed the legal appeal, first reported by the Financial Times, but declined to comment further. The UK government did not immediately respond to a request for comment. US media reported last year that the UK had requested access to encrypted data uploaded by any Apple

user around the world. The demand sparked tensions between London and Washington, ultimately prompting the UK to drop its request for global access, then-US intelligence chief Tulsi Gabbard said on X in August 2025.

The FT reported in October that London had instead requested Apple for access to its British users' encrypted data -- the focus of Apple's latest legal challenge. Many tech platforms pride themselves on being able to guarantee privacy through encryption of messages and other content, and providing access to law enforcement has long been seen as off-limits. Apple stopped offering its

most advanced encryption feature -- known as Advanced Data Protection -- for British users in February 2025. ADP ensures that only account holders can view content such as photos and documents stored in the cloud through end-to-end encryption. Police officials worldwide say encryption can shield criminals, terrorists and pornographers from prosecution even when authorities have a legal warrant for an investigation. But civil rights and privacy advocates, along with many cybersecurity professionals, praise data encryption as a way to protect against wrongful snooping by authorities as well as hackers. □



Apple Inc. is expected to announce a fiscal quarter earnings report on July 30, 2026.



FIFA president Gianni Infantino reacts during the 2026 World Cup Group D football match between USA and Paraguay at the Los Angeles Stadium in Inglewood on June 12, 2026.

Infantino, the FIFA president under pressure after scrapped investor plan

Paris, France

FIFA president Gianni Infantino's ability to brush aside criticism and push through enlarged versions of the Club World Cup and World Cup lent him an air of omnipotence, but a failed private investor plan has left his position under threat for the first time.

When the 56-year-old, who holds Swiss, Italian and Lebanese citizenship, strode onto the pitch with his close friend, US President Donald Trump, after the World Cup final a fortnight ago, his stock could not have been higher.

The largest and most complex edition of the sport's jewel in the crown, featuring 48 teams and spread over three countries, was largely judged a success despite a series of off-pitch controversies.

He had also delivered more money into the coffers of his electorate, FIFA's 211 member associations. The son of Italian migrants, who once said he had been bullied in Switzerland when he was a youngster for having red hair and freckles, was riding high. Infantino has largely limited his media appearances, unlike his predecessor Sepp Blatter.

That rare revelation about being bullied as a child came as he was attempt-

ing to bat off criticism of 2022 World Cup host Qatar's human rights record.

"I am not an Arab, I am not African, I am not gay, I am not disabled," he said.

"But I feel like it, because I know what it means to be discriminated against as a foreigner in a foreign country. As a child I was bullied because I had red hair and freckles."

The lawyer was first elected in 2016 and re-elected unopposed in 2019 and 2023. But has been accused of allowing FIFA to become an autocracy in recent years.

For his critics, this was epitomised by the debacle of the FIFA Forward Enterprise (FFE) plan, announced and then shelved last week.

FFE, very much seen as Infantino's project, envisaged bringing private investment into FIFA's tournaments, including the men's and women's World Cups. Revealed last Tuesday, it was dead in the water by Saturday after a widespread backlash.

Former UEFA president Michel Platini, under whom Infantino served as secretary-general from 2009, has been one of Infantino's most outspoken critics.

"Unfortunately Infantino has become more of an autocrat since the (Covid) pandemic," Platini told English newspaper The

Guardian in January.

"I think he lost the game. There is less democracy than in Blatter's time," added the 71-year-old Frenchman, who was banned from football in 2015 for a payment he received from FIFA in 2011.

- 'Is this money clean?' -

Platini, who has since been exonerated in a Swiss court, portrays Infantino in a less than flattering light.

"He was a good No. 2, but is not a good No. 1," said Platini.

"He worked very well at UEFA but he has one problem: he likes the rich and powerful people, the ones with money."

"It's his character."

Infantino's friendship with Trump, whom he awarded the inaugural FIFA Peace Prize despite widespread ridicule, has come under scrutiny.

One of the most controversial moments of the World Cup was the suspension of US striker Folarin Balogun's one-match ban, which had come after a phone call from Trump, freeing him to play in the last 16 against Belgium.

That Infantino's FFE plan involved the firm of Joshua Kushner, brother of Trump's son-in-law Jared, only added to the impression of his desire to rub shoulders with the powerful. □



Head coach of USA Mauricio Pochettino looks on during the 2026 FIFA World Cup Round of 16 match between USA and Belgium at Lumen Field (Seattle Stadium) in Seattle, Washington, United States on July 6, 2026.

Pochettino to stay as USA coach until 2030 World Cup

Paris, France

Mauricio Pochettino has signed a contract extension to remain the head coach of the United States national team until the 2030 World Cup, US Soccer announced Monday.

The 54-year-old took over in 2024 and led the USA to the last 16 at the recent World Cup, which they co-hosted with Canada and Mexico.

"It has become clear to us that there is tremendous potential to make the men's national team program even stronger," said Argentinian Pochettino, whose coaching staff have also agreed new contracts.

"The passion we experienced from the fans throughout the World Cup only strengthened our belief in what is possible here..."

"We want to try to have a lasting impact on the sport in the country that has welcomed us so warmly and for that impact to extend beyond results on the field."

The Americans won three matches at a World Cup for the first time before being knocked out by Belgium, following a huge controversy over FIFA's decision to suspended striker Folarin Balogun's ban for a red card.

Former Tottenham and Paris Saint-Germain boss Pochettino was named coach two years ago, after previous boss Gregg Berhalter left following a group-stage exit from the 2024 Copa America which the USA hosted.

Pochettino helped turn things around and led the team to the 2025 CONCACAF Gold Cup final, which they lost 2-1 to Mexico.

He had been linked with a return to European club football, but will instead stay with the US until the next World Cup, slated to be largely held in Spain, Portugal and Morocco.

"Mauricio has built a culture where players trust the group, trust the process and trust each other," said US Soccer president Cindy Parlow Cone.

"We saw the impact of that belief in the way the team grew, competed and performed on the world's biggest stage."

The USA have not reached the quarter-finals of a men's World Cup since 2002, and hopes were high a partisan home crowd could carry them to at least that stage. But after the Balogun affair, a fired-up Belgium quashed those hopes last month with a crushing 4-1 victory. □

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Eala powers past Pegula for first WTA title in Washington

Washington, United States Alexandra Eala capped her giant-killing run at the Washington Open with a 4-6, 6-4, 6-0 victory over top-seeded Jessica Pegula on Monday to become the first player from the Philippines to win a WTA title. Eala, ranked 28th, overpowered Pegula over the final two sets as play resumed in the final suspended after lengthy weather delays on Sunday.

The 21-year-old left-hander produced a rock-solid service display and an impressive array of winners to deny third-ranked Pegula a 12th career title and a third this year. She won the last nine games of the contest, surrendering just eight points in the third set. "Just pure happiness," Eala said of her first title, which comes after she agonizingly failed to convert four championship points in

her only prior final at Eastbourne last year. "Oh my gosh, winning a 500, it's insane. It's an incredible milestone for me," she added. "At the beginning of the week, there is no way I would have thought that I would be holding this trophy. Even at the beginning of the year," Eala said. "These things kind of creep up on you and I hold these moments really close to



Alexandra Eala of the Philippines celebrates with the Championship Trophy after winning the women's singles championship match against Jessica Pegula of the United States on the final day of the Mubadala DC Open 2026 at William H.G. FitzGerald Tennis Center on August 3, 2026 in Washington, DC.

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- 'very steep hill' -

Eala is projected to rise to a career-high 20th in the world after a storming run that included victories over Olympic champion Zheng Qinwen, second-seeded Elina Svitolina, third-seeded former world number one Naomi Osaka and defending champion Leylah Fernandez.

"It was a very steep hill," she said. "I knew that the competition was super-strong and my draw was quite tough. So I'm really, really proud. I think I encountered my fair share of obstacles this week."

The scoreboard showed a match time of one hour and 45 minutes, but it took nearly 24 hours to complete.

Pegula had won the first set 6-4 and Eala was up 2-1 in the second on Sunday when officials postponed the finish until Monday after lengthy rain delays.

The pair had waited through a three-hour delay before starting, and once the match was halted it was another five hours before officials called a halt for the day.

"Definitely felt like two dif-

ferent matches," said Pegula, who opened Monday's action with a nervy service hold for 2-2.

"I just felt like I couldn't find my rhythm. I think I was playing much better yesterday, for whatever reason, than I was today, and I think she was playing better today than she was yesterday."

Pegula could make no inroads on Eala's serve and Eala broke Pegula in the 10th game to take the second set and force a third.

The final set was all Eala, to the delight of a vocal contingent of supporters, who turned out in force despite the postponement.

Pegula welcomed the energy of the crowd even in support of her opponent, who has proved a massive draw around the world.

"I just think it's so refreshing and nice to see how well she's handled all of the kind of fandom and stardom that's come with her being from the Philippines and how they've really embraced her," Pegula said.

"It's crazy how she deals with it every single week, which just shows her maturity as a player and as a person." □