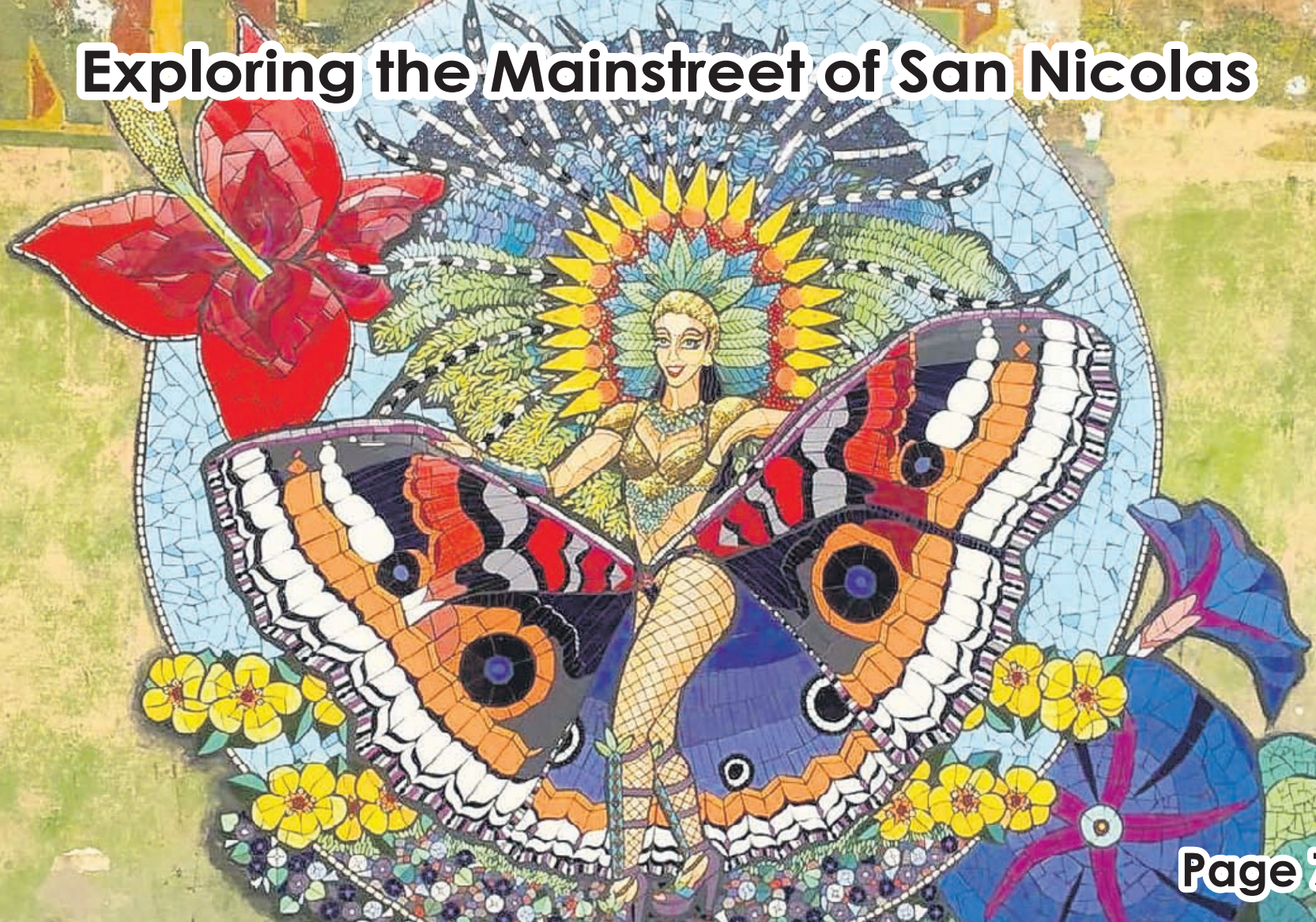


Exploring the Mainstreet of San Nicolas



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U.S. Democratic Party rattled by left-wing successes

Washington, United States

From New York to Michigan, recent election wins by progressive candidates have shaken up the Democratic Party, as it vies to regain control of Congress in November, before battling for the White House in 2028. After Zohran Mamdani stormed to victory in New York's mayoral race last year, Abdul El-Sayed's triumph in Michigan's Democratic primary for a US Senate race marked another stepping stone for the party's bold left-wingers. These progressives are starting down moderates who are usually backed by the party's top brass.

"This is just the beginning," left-wing influencer Hasan Piker, who campaigned for El-Sayed, told Politico.

"We will hopefully continue this movement all across the United States of America."

For Todd Belt, a professor of political management at George Washington University, left-wing candidates are breaking through because "they're giving some people something to vote for and not just against."

"A lot of the progressives are talking about real solutions to the affordability crisis...whereas a lot of the moderates are depending upon the fear" of continued rule by President Donald Trump's Republicans,



U.S. Democratic Senate candidate from Michigan, Abdul El-Sayed speaks during a press conference in Detroit, Michigan on August 5, 2026.

Belt told AFP.

Belt also cited frustration felt by many Democrats about their party's current path. "The party is not standing up to Donald Trump as much as Democrats would like, and so they would like a change in leadership," he said.

- 'Deeply troubling' -

But while progressives are celebrating, some moderates are wringing their hands with worry.

"It is deeply troubling to see radical, far-left candidates winning in places that are potentially presidential

swing states," Jonathan Cowan, the head of the centrist Third Way group, told The New York Times. Where does the anxiety come from?

Moderates worry that if Democrats field polarizing candidates, skittish voters will abandon the party at a pivotal moment, with Congress and the presidency up for grabs.

Keen to exploit that fear, the Republican Party has already moved to depict left-wing candidates as dangerous extremists who could hurt the United States in the long run.

After El-Sayed was declared the winner over four-term congresswoman Haley Stevens on Wednesday, Trump said the victory for the "communist loser" was "great news" for Republicans.

- 'Critical test' -

Indeed, the left-wing insurgents still need to win at the midterm ballot box in less than three months -- and it's not a done deal.

Election data analysis site Decision Desk HQ on Thursday shifted its prediction in El-Sayed's race against former Republican con-

gressman Mike Rogers from "Leans Democrat" to "Toss Up."

Belt calls the November midterms a "critical test" for progressives.

If they can break through in key swing states like Michigan, "the progressives will have a real strong argument that they should be at the forefront of leadership for the Democratic Party moving forward," the professor said.

In a sign of the party's deep internal divide, Cowan said that Third Way would spend about \$15 million from now until 2028 to combat the socialist influence among Democrats, and specifically Mamdani's Democratic Socialists movement.

"We are preparing for the next war that is coming," he told the Times.

With Democratic votes on the line, and some worried that the party's traditional voters could pass on both centrist and progressive candidates, some are calling for unity.

"The Democratic Party is a coalition that spans everything from center to socialist," the vice president of the centrist Searchlight Institute think tank, Tre Easton, said on X.

"Each part needs the other. Our voters aren't looking for ideological supremacy. They're looking for purpose and leadership." □

Trump signs order targeting 'birth tourism'

Washington, United States

U.S. President Donald Trump on Thursday made another attempt to curb

birthright citizenship, signing an order targeting those who he said enter the country under the

guise of tourism while actually intending to give birth. "They've taken birthright citizenship and they've made a joke out of it," Trump told journalists in the Oval Office.

The U.S. Supreme Court struck down his previous effort to restrict the constitutionally granted right in a late June ruling that Trump described as "very unfortunate."

"We're making adjustments because it's very unfair," he said.

The president signed an executive order last year decreeing that children born to parents in the United States illegally or

on temporary visas would not automatically become U.S. citizens.

Lower courts blocked the move, ruling that under the Citizenship Clause of the 14th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, nearly everyone born on U.S. soil is an American citizen.

The Supreme Court agreed in a majority opinion penned by Chief Justice John Roberts that was joined by two other conservative-leaning justices and the three liberal-leaning justices.

Trump's bid to end birthright citizenship is part of his wider campaign to limit immigration, which in-

cludes expelling millions of undocumented migrants and removing deportation protections from nationals of more than a dozen countries.

The 14th Amendment states that "All persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States."

It does not apply to those not subject to U.S. jurisdiction the children of foreign diplomats, for example and under U.S. law, visas can already be denied if a consular officer believes the applicant is traveling to the country for the primary purpose of giving birth. □



White House Deputy Chief of Staff Stephen Miller (L) smiles as U.S. President Donald Trump holds signed executive orders in the Oval Office of the White House in Washington, DC, on August 7, 2026.

U.S. Senate panel votes to hold top Covid expert Fauci in contempt

Washington, United States

A Republican-led U.S. Senate committee on Thursday voted to hold the country's former top infectious diseases official Anthony Fauci in contempt of Congress, in an escalation of efforts to blame him for potential Covid-19 pandemic missteps. On the advice of his lawyers, Fauci last week had invoked his constitutional right to stay silent to prevent self-incrimination under antagonistic questioning from Republican senators, as they probed him over unsubstantiated claims that the origins of the pandemic were covered up.

The party-line vote advances the extraordinary effort to prosecute the 85-year-old career government scientist, who spent decades as the nation's top expert in infectious diseases.

It stems from an initiative by Republican Senator Rand Paul, who had subpoenaed the now-retired Fauci to testify before the Senate Homeland Security Committee.

Prior to the hearing, Paul released thousands of pages of the immunologist's personal diary.

Fauci indicated his lawyers believed Paul intended to entrap him in a slip-up that could result in perjury



U.S. Senator Ron Johnson, Republican from Wisconsin, and Chairman of the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Senator Rand Paul confer ahead of a Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs business meeting to consider pending calendar business on Capitol Hill in Washington, DC, on August 6, 2026.

charges, so Fauci opted to invoke his Fifth Amendment right not to answer.

Paul, the committee's chairman, has signaled he intends to send the panel's recommendation straight to the Justice Department, which can decide whether to take the case.

Contempt resolutions generally go through the full Senate, and bypassing that route would bring fresh scrutiny on accusations that President Donald

Trump's administration aims to persecute its perceived political foes.

Democrats on the panel voiced their disdain over the vote, with Senator Gary Peters accusing Paul of a "rushed investigation."

He said the vote could "harm our ability to conduct future investigations and disregards constitutional protections long recognized by the U.S. Senate, all without making a

reliable case that there is a legal basis for holding Dr Fauci in contempt."

- Legal maze ahead -

Paul has charged that under Fauci's watch at the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, the U.S.-funded "gain-of-function" research in China triggered the spread of Covid-19.

The senator insists Fauci lied about that to Congress, an allegation which he has re-

peatedly denied.

More than six years after the pandemic's onset, the debate over whether Covid-19 leaked from a lab remains intense. Fauci has maintained that the virus had natural origins, even if he's said he is open to the idea of a lab leak.

Paul now says that Fauci is ineligible for protection under the Fifth Amendment, because former president Joe Biden granted the doctor an unconditional pardon for public service actions dating from 2014 through January 19, 2025.

Republicans say the pardon already protected him from perjury.

But law scholars are split on the issue that opens the door to a murky legal maze pitting the reach of a presidential pardon against the scope of the Fifth Amendment. Law professor Tracey Maclin of the University of Florida told AFP that if the Senate panel had truly wanted Fauci to speak frankly, they would have offered him immunity. Several Democrats on Thursday had unsuccessfully pushed for a delay on the vote, arguing that the panel should hear from legal experts. □

Contagious measles case reported in California theme park

Los Angeles, United States

Recent visitors to the popular Universal Studios theme park in California may have been exposed to measles, the local health department said, as cases of the once-eradicated disease soar in the United States. A person with a contagious case of measles was at the theme park on July 26, the Los Angeles County health department warned in a social media post late Wednesday.

It advised anyone who was at the park between 10:00 am (1700 GMT) and 9:00 pm to check if they are properly vaccinated against measles and contact a doctor and monitor for symptoms if they are

not.

For pregnant women, infants, and people who are immune-compromised, the health department recommends contacting a doctor "regardless of vaccination history."

Thousands of tourists from around the world visit Universal Studios every day. It welcomed 8.8 million visitors in 2024, according to the latest available figures.

The announcement comes as the United States experiences its highest number of measles cases in 35 years, against a backdrop of declining vaccination rates and growing distrust in health authorities.

Since 2026 began, 2,318

confirmed cases of the highly contagious illness have been recorded, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reported late last month.

That surpasses the total for 2025, a year that had already shattered records, with 2,289 cases and three deaths, including two young children.

Measles causes fever, respiratory symptoms and skin rashes.

In some cases, it can also lead to more severe complications, including pneumonia and brain inflammation, which can lead to serious long-term impacts and death.

In 2000, measles was de-

clared eradicated in the United States, thanks to vaccination.

U.S. President Donald Trump's health secretary, Robert F. Kennedy Jr, is

accused of contributing significantly to the crisis by spreading anti-vaccine sentiment and fueling fears of well-studied and proven immunizations. □



Universal Studios Hollywood is both a film studio and theme park in Universal City.

Istanbul cymbals: From Ottoman war tool to pulse of global music

Istanbul, Turkey

The rhythmic clanging of hammers on bronze echoes through the Istanbul workshop where three craftsmen are landing blows with astonishing precision to transform featureless metal discs into highly prized handcrafted cymbals.

First used by Ottoman military "mehter" bands to frighten and demoralise the enemy, cymbals were a useful tool for an empire on the warpath.

But it would take the skill of a 17th-century Armenian alchemist called Avedis Zildjian to transform them into a percussion instrument whose exotic sound would first captivate Europe's classical composers and then shape the world of jazz.

Although cymbals existed long before Zildjian, he developed a unique alloy and special process for treating the metals that made them less fragile, winning plaudits in 1623 from the Ottoman sultan who let him set up a workshop.

"It's really hard to make good cymbals because they're consistently being crashed, so to make something that wasn't brittle which could withstand continuous use is quite an achievement," explains ethnomusicologist Audrey Wozniak, who specialises in Turkish musical traditions.



A worker hammers a cymbal at a workshop in Istanbul on July 30, 2026.

The secret was passed down through the generations and although the original Zildjian operation left Istanbul for America in the dying days of the Ottoman Empire, others who learned from the Zildjian masters have continued the tradition.

Today, Istanbul remains the centre of excellence for cymbals, where a handful of brands still produce hand-hammered bronze using techniques developed more than 400 years ago.

- 'A cymbal's soul' -

"We are producing 100-percent handmade cymbals with traditional methods,

without using electricity or gas, only coal and wood," explains Mehmet Ozturk, sales rep at Bosphorus Cymbals on Istanbul's northern outskirts, who says casting a cymbal takes up to a week.

First is the casting stage. Most cymbals are made of a copper and tin alloy that is melted into molten bronze which is poured into moulds and cooled into disc-shaped blanks.

Moving swiftly, a worker using a long-handled peel places the blanks into the glowing furnace then removes others that are put through a rolling mill in a cycle repeated up to 15 times to compress and spread

the metal which is then water tempered.

"Every stage is crucial," explains master cymbal-smith Hasan Seker, a burly 56-year-old who co-founded Bosphorus Cymbals in 1996 and is sweating after hauling glowing blanks into and out of the furnace.

"We use copper and tin and one more ingredient which is secret. Even though it's in very small quantities, it gives the cymbal a different character in terms of consistency and sound," he told AFP.

After punching out the raised bell and cutting it to size, what looks like the now recognisable cymbal must

undergo the all-important hammering process.

"Not a single blow is random," he explains as a trio of craftsmen land expert strikes that create the darker more complex tones so prized by jazz drummers.

This is where a man's emotional state is poured into his work, says Seker, who began working in the trade aged 12 as a summer job.

"When someone is hammering, he might hit softly, then something comes to mind, he gets angry and hit harder. Those variations in the metal's surface, the reservations, the tension patterns diversify the sound. In a way, he gives the cymbal it's soul."

Over the years, Seker has met countless grateful musicians, some of whom come on "a pilgrimage" to the workshop whose grubby walls are lined with ageing posters of jazz drummers like Jeff Hamilton, Stanton Moore and Ari Hoenig.

- 'Every one is different' -

Inside Nardis Jazz Club, a dimly lit venue with an intimate feel in the shadow of Istanbul's Galata Tower, a jazz trio is rehearsing ahead of an evening show with a singer.

For drummer Derin Bayhan, he would only ever use Istanbul-made cymbals because they're "100 percent handmade" and each one has a unique sound. □



A folder of music streaming apps, including Spotify, Deezer, Apple Music, Amazon Music, YouTube Music, and SoundCloud, is displayed on a smartphone screen placed on a reflective surface onto which a streaming catalog homepage is projected, in Creteil, France, on May 22, 2026.

New York, United States

Several major music industry organizations on Friday unveiled a labeling system for content created with

generative artificial intelligence that they would like to see widely adopted.

The International Federation of the Phonographic

Music industry launches AI-generated content labels

Industry (IFPI) and the Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA) announced the voluntary labels alongside six other groups including the Grammys.

"Fans want to know whether and how generative AI has been used," the chief executives of IFPI and RIAA said in a prepared statement.

"These labels will provide an immediately understandable and easily scalable approach to transparency."

They unveiled two labels. The first would indicate

music that is primarily "AI-generated" -- cases where artificial intelligence "was used to generate the entirety or the primary portion of the creative elements of the recording."

This includes tracks generated "entirely" from AI prompts, as well as lead vocals and "key" instrumental tracks that are AI-generated, according to the statement.

The second label applies to "AI-assisted" music recording which are still "created substantially by humans and expresses human creativity" but contain "some

expressive elements" that were generated with AI.

However, humans must perform the lead vocals and primary instrumental tracks.

This voluntary labeling system is designed for "broad, global adoption," including on streaming services. Music streaming site Deezer systematically flags tracks generated with AI, which the company recently said appear in close to half of new uploads. In June, it launched an "AI music detector" which it said is 99.8% accurate. □

'Don't have to hide': Thai IDs, legal work give hope to Myanmar refugees

Nakhon Sawan, Thailand

Next to a mound of black earth, Myanmar refugees feed soil and rice seed into a clacking conveyor machine that arranges them into ready-made planting trays for Thai farms.

The farmworkers are among their Thai boss's newest employees, with a fresh sense of job security after Thailand began permitting Myanmar refugees living in camps to work legally and granting them non-citizen identity cards. "I do not tire from the work. I can do it," Ney La Jaw, 25, told AFP.

He spent much of his life confined to the Mae La refugee camp, the largest of nine temporary shelters along the border with Myanmar, according to the United Nations.

But he now lives and works more than 200 kilometres (124 miles) away on a farm in Thailand's Nakhon Sawan province, earning around 3,000 baht (\$90) per week – a life-changing sum for many refugees.

"I send all of my money home to my mom" in the camp, he said.

After decades of being barred from leaving the camps and working legally, Myanmar refugees and their children began receiving non-citizen Thai ID



This photo taken on August 5, 2026 shows Karen refugees from the refugee camps along the Thai-Myanmar border, who recently acquired Thai ID cards granting them permission to work, transporting seedling trays of germinated rice alongside Thai labourers at a rice farm in Nakhon Sawan province.

cards in June, a step away from statelessness and towards gainful, legal employment.

About 4,600 people from Myanmar living in camps have sought permission to work legally from October 2025 to July this year, the Thai interior ministry said. They are a fraction of the about 80,000 people who have fled conflict-torn Myanmar and live in the camps, according to UN figures.

Myanmar migrants have long toiled in neighbouring

Thailand, but the country's civil war, triggered by a 2021 military coup, has sent even more fleeing across the border.

Myanmar's leader, ex-junta chief Min Aung Hlaing, arrived in Bangkok on Thursday, with the two nations signing an agreement on labour cooperation.

- 'My own future' -

In Prachinburi province, AFP journalists saw 15 displaced people collect their new ID cards at a district office in July, smiling and

taking photos of the pink documents to send to their families.

"After getting the card, I don't have to be afraid anymore when travelling around," said Gay Lah, a Myanmar refugee who fled to a Thai camp with her family at the age of six. She said her job as a scaffolder was tiring but going smoothly.

"I want to work hard, save money, buy a place, build a house and then bring my family out of the camp, that's what I imagine," she

added.

Sit Nyein Aye also fled Myanmar as a child and lived most of his life "in misery" in another border camp.

Being allowed to work in construction and having an ID card gave him the chance to start fresh.

"Since I have the opportunity, I'm going out to work," the 27-year-old said. "I have my own future."

- 'Self-reliance' -

The UN refugee agency (UNHCR) welcomed Thailand's move to issue ID cards in June, calling it a "landmark step towards inclusion, protection and self-reliance for one of the world's most protracted refugee populations".

Thailand's porous borders and reputation for religious and cultural tolerance have long drawn those seeking sanctuary, but Bangkok does not legally recognise refugees or offer asylum. However, the government began authorising legal employment for longstanding refugees last year, with more than 5,500 refugees joining the workforce since October, UNHCR said in June. Phil Robertson, director of Bangkok-based Asia Human Rights and Labour Advocates, said the shift was a "huge step forward" and "long overdue".

Syria self-sufficient in wheat for first time since before war: official

Damascus, Syria

Syria has reached self-sufficiency in wheat production for the first time since before the country's civil war erupted in 2011, an official told AFP on Thursday, after years of reliance on imports.

As well as the war hitting the agriculture sector hard, Syria has seen drought in recent years, with the United Nations saying 2025 saw the country's worst climate conditions in decades, also impacting wheat-growing land.

"There won't be any need for (wheat) imports this season," said Ahmed Qa-

doun, deputy general director of the Syrian Grain Establishment, adding that Syria had last been self-sufficient in 2010.

On Wednesday, state news agency SANA reported that the grain establishment had received 2.7 million tons of wheat from across Syria during this year's harvest, exceeding the national annual requirement of 2.55 million tons.

Before the civil war erupted in 2011, Syria was self-sufficient in wheat, producing an average of 4.1

million tons annually.

But after the conflict and drought disrupted production, Syria's former ruler Bashar al-Assad used to rely on imports, particularly from ally Russia for wheat. Syria's new authorities took power in 2024, and the country said last year that it had received wheat shipments and donations from countries including Russia and Iraq.

During the war, the former authorities also competed with a semi-autonomous Kurdish administration to buy wheat from farmers across fertile lands in the northeast outside govern-

ment control.

In January, Syria's Kurds and Damascus agreed a

deal to integrate Kurdish forces and institutions into the state.



Workers use pitchforks and a tarp to gather harvested wheat before roasting it in a field on the outskirts of Aleppo, Syria, on May 18, 2026.



‘Stretch our money’: Romanians face highest E.U. inflation

Calarasi, Romania

At the weekly market in the southern Romanian town of Calarasi, Florica Vasile goes from vendor to vendor loading her shopping trolley with vegetables the locals say are cheaper than anywhere else in the city.

As the country struggles with the European Union's highest inflation, she and other shoppers complained that rising prices were forcing difficult decisions about what to cut.

"I was supposed to go for a thyroid check-up in January," Vasile, a 56-year-old housewife, told AFP, saying she used the money instead for food and the electricity bill.

"We stretch our money a little more," she added. "Of course I'm worried."

Dumitru Baldovin, a 63-year-old construction worker also at the market, expressed the same caution.

"Instead of two litres of oil, I buy one litre and make it last... We're tightening our belts," he said.

Prices have risen across Europe in the wake of the Middle East war that sent oil and gas costs soaring, but Romania has recorded inflation rates three times higher than the EU average.

The government, which has run the biggest budget deficit in the bloc for years,

has created new taxes to tackle the shortfall and removed price caps on electricity.

That led to a 55 percent surge in electricity bills in May from a year earlier, and contributed to real wages falling by almost seven percent that month as salaries did not keep up with inflation that hit 11 percent.

Inflation slipped to 10.4 percent in June and analysts expect it to fall further this year, but is still the highest in the E.U..

- 'Thieves' -

Romanians now spend a third of their income on food, compared with just 14 percent in Germany, said Laurian Lungu, president of Consilium Policy Advisors Group, an economic think tank.

Businesses say eroding purchasing power has severely crimped spending in the country of 19 million people, where the average salary is 1,100 euros (\$1,300). Disagreements over austerity measures also led to a collapse of Romania's pro-EU governing coalition in May.

Debate over a new wage law for public-sector workers has exacerbated tensions, leading to a three-day healthcare strike in July on fears that bonuses would be cut.

A new government has yet

to be formed in the eastern European nation, where far-right groups have seized on the popular anger.

In Calarasi, many people blame politicians across the political spectrum for failing to rein in inflation.

"They keep taking from the pocket of the regular people to make themselves billionaires," said Marin Zainea, 75, noting that his pension was less than 400 euros a month.

"They are the worst of thieves," Zainea added while selling fruit and vegetables from his own garden for some extra cash.

"I go to a supermarket just to look around," he said. "If I don't have any money, that's what I do I look and don't buy anything."

- Full warehouses -

President Nicusor Dan, a pro-European centrist, tried to address people's concerns last weekend after Romania avoided a downgrade of its credit rating by Fitch to "junk", or below investment grade.

"Purchasing power has declined but Romania is stabilising financially, and things will get better," Dan said in a video posted on social media. This week he signed into law a bill reducing taxes on diesel and capping commercial markups on both diesel and petrol, a bid to keep energy costs in check. □



This photograph shows smoke rising in the sky in Correns, southeastern France on July 31, 2026, as the fire restarted today in the Var, picking up 'in scale' fuelled by the mistral.

French winemakers dread 'smoky taste' after wildfires

Correns, France

Brushing his hand over crackling vine leaves, French winemaker Gregory Guibergia was relieved a wildfire only scorched the edge of his vineyard but he feared its smoke would ruin this year's vintage.

In the last row of his fields in southeastern France, the wind rustled through the brown leaves of vines that overheated during a blaze that swept the region this summer.

But plants further away were largely intact, with enough green leaves for their grapes to continue to mature in time for harvest next week.

Guibergia said he was lucky after several wildfires in the surrounding Var region in recent weeks, which sent thousands of people fleeing including Hollywood star George Clooney and his family and destroyed more than 6,000 hectares (15,000 acres) of land.

But "the big question is whether or not we will have a burnt taste during the wine making", Guibergia told AFP. "We won't know straight away."

He is one of many winemakers to be worried in France's main rosé-producing region, where flames have destroyed hundreds of some 30,000 hectares of vineyards, according to expert estimates.

Guibergia, who has been in the business for 25 years, said he planned to pick the grapes and turn them into wine in several separate batches to help limit damage from any contaminated fruit.

But he still dreads the possibility the product of his 25-hectare vineyard in the village of Correns could be declared undrinkable, and that he'd be unable to sell some 90,000 bottles.

- Lab tests -

In the surrounding region, experts have been testing grapes to see if they are still fit for wine.

"An hour or two of exposure is enough to trigger glycosylation, or the binding of smoke to the sugars in the grapes," said oenology consultant Clement Prelat, who is advising winemakers in the area.

"This smoky taste will only reveal itself after fermentation."

Lucie Demirdjian, another winemaker in the neighbouring village of Ponteves, was among those waiting for results from the laboratory before harvesting.

She said he had lost 11 of her 18 hectares in a wildfire, and didn't want to spend any money on harvesting surviving vines if the wine would be tainted.

"We know what to do for frost or hail, but not wildfires," she said.

At least, "we can detect the precursor of the smoky flavour beforehand". □

Exploring the Mainstreet of San Nicolas

SAN NICOLAS— At Just 11 miles southeast from Oranjestad you will enter the city San Nicolas, also known as Sunrise City or Chocolate City. A city that is rich in authentic culture and island charm. San Nicolas is Aruba's second largest city and was once a bustling company town dominated by the oil industry since the early 1930's.

Over the course of four decades, its demographics had changed immensely due to a stream of Afro-Caribbean and South American workers who came to fill the jobs in the oil refinery between the 1920's until the 1960's. To this day traces of the multicultural influences in culinary offerings and customs, housing and population are clearly visible in San Nicolas – more than anywhere else on the island.

Flow of history

If you are looking for history San Nicolas has it.

The Museum of Industry is situated in the Water Tower in San Nicolas and narrates Aruba's industrial history which began in the 19th century. Here you will learn about gold, aloe, phosphate, oil and the tourism industries which made San Nicolas once a bustling

business center. Experience the touching stories of those who were part of this history.

The Community Museum holds a remarkable collection that spans millennia. Ancient fossils stand next to tableaux of an authentically recreated colonial kitchen and bedroom and 19th-century barbershop, just to name a few of the items of old-time Aruba that has been preserved. A collection of artifacts and other objects of artistic, cultural, historical, or scientific importance can be found here for the purpose of education or enjoyment.

The new San Nicolas

In the shadow of the refinery, an art capital is quietly beginning to grow. This is the new San Nicolas, a place that is starting to become a magnet for all that is young, cool and hip in Aruba. Indeed, San Nicolas has all of the ingredients of an emerging cultural hub — varied history, interesting architecture, and, perhaps most importantly, an urban layout that makes it walkable. As you walk around, the streets are silent but the walls are loud, filled with bright, colorful murals painted by a collection of artists from around the world. □



Aruba's Bocas: home to the rarest fossil reefs on the planet!

(Oranjestad)—If you've been to the northern coast of Aruba already, you've probably noticed how the ground differs entirely from the sandy beaches on the southern part of the island. These hard surfaces, with sharp bumps and holes are actually fossilized coral reefs, of which its growth and changes can be traced back to the last glacial period.



On May 30 2023, geoscientists, Dr. Patrick Boyden from the Marum research faculty at the University of Bremen, Prof. dr. Alessio Rovere from the Ca' Foscari University of Venice and Prof. dr. Gianfranco Scicchitano, from the University

of Bari Aldo Moro, presented their research on these fossilized coral reefs at the University of Aruba. Their focus for their research included studying the health and formation patterns of these coral reefs, and to investigate how these reefs

have responded and can respond to fluctuating sea levels or extreme weather, like hurricanes and tsunamis.

Through underwater and land surveillance, and 3D models of the reefs, they

were able to narrow down when these formations started to take place. They were also able to track the fluctuation of sea levels during the past hundred or even thousands of years, and the effects that this fluctuation has had on the coral reefs of the windward side of Aruba.

These findings can certainly put things into perspective. The ground on which we have walked many times on the northern part of the island hold such rich history, history that dates back to a time that most of us cannot even imagine. As the scientists themselves have pointed out, these fossilized reefs on the windward side

are truly an incredible and rare remnant of geological history, as they provide a clear view of how these reefs have formed.

This research is also important for the future of coral reefs on the island. By studying rising sea levels and climate impact on these coral reefs, we are able to take concrete action in protecting and preserve our coral reefs. So, if you are ever visiting one of the bocas or driving along the northern part of the island, please be conscious to help protect our natural historical remnant. Oh, and wear (coral-friendly) sunscreen! □



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



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

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

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

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Visit the island's popular cave sites!

(Oranjestad)—Among the endless sea of dark brown sand and cacti, there are two caves hidden in the outskirts of San Nicolas, in the north-eastern area of the island. These caves, The Quadirikiri cave and The Fontein Cave are open to visitors of the Arikok National Park, so if you ever decide to take an "off-road" tour in the park, be sure to visit these prehistoric caves.

Quadirikiri Cave

Known for its two chambers accompanied by a skylight, the Quadirikiri Cave is the most popular cave

among locals and tourists, as it is easy to walk through and provides great lighting for pictures.

Woman in Quadirikiri Cave, Arikok National Park, Aruba As with all prehistoric or ancient sites, there is always a folk legend that adds to the lore and mystery of the site. The Quadirikiri cave is no different. The most well-known legend behind the cave could be considered as Aruba's first love story, as it tells the tale of the undying love between the chief's daughter and her beloved. As legend would have it, the chief

disapproved of his daughter's choice of lover, as he thought him unworthy. Stubborn and filled with anger, the daughter refused to turn away her beloved.

So, the chief decided to lock her up in the Quadirikiri Cave, in hopes that she would soon calm down and turn away her lover. Her beloved, in turn, was locked away in the Tunnel of Love (Now known as the Huliba Cave).

Through the pathways underneath the Tunnel of Love running up to the Quadirikiri cave, the two love birds found each other, and refused to let each other go. Because of their stubbornness, they both died in the Quadirikiri Cave, their ascending spirits burning two holes in the ceiling of the cave. This is why the cave has two holes through which sunlight passes through to illuminate the chamber.

Though there have been discoveries of Amerindian drawing on the wall, these have mostly been ruined by vandalism. However, the Fontein Cave further up north, provides a better glimpse in prehistoric Amerindian paintings.

Fontein Cave

Longer than the Quadirikiri Cave, the Fontein Cave contains pathways that stretch to the limestone walls further down. Here is also where prehistoric drawings can be seen. Though this cave does not have its own legend, this



was speculated to have been occupied—or at least used by prehistoric Arawak settlers on the island for rituals and other spiritual ceremonies.

The Huliba Cave/ Tunnel of Love

The Huliba Cave, formerly known as the Tunnel of Love, was once open to the public, and was the biggest and most accessible of all three caves. This cave had five chambers, including one that is heart-shaped. This cave had narrow stairs that led to long pathways deep into the cave, with a staircase leading to the exit on the other side. In one of the chambers, there used to be the carving of the Virgin Mary, put there for the protection of the cave.

However, the Huliba Cave has been permanently closed for a few years now, as a way to preserve the bat population that lives in the cave. These Long Tongue Fruit Bats and Insect Eater Bats are very im-

portant to the ecosystem of the island. Though this cave is no longer accessible to the public, it surely is interesting to learn more about the history of these caves and the Arawak tribes that resided or utilized them.

Do note that these caves are very dark, humid, hot, and are inhabited by bats. Do wear comfortable clothing and shoes, as the pathways in these caves may be rough and bumpy. Take care to not disturb the bats' habitat. □



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The legend of the Kibrahacha tree

ORANJESTAD—The Kibrahacha is a famous tree known locally for its bright, yellow flowers that blooms for just three days. Scientifically known as *Tabebuia billbergii*, and in English as the Yellow Poui, this tree is native to the Caribbean islands of Aruba, Bonaire and Curacao, and is considered among locals as one of the most spectacular trees on the island. But did you also know that the beautiful yellow flowers have a story behind them?

The Kibrahacha is said to have extremely hard wood so hard that it can break an axe. In fact, that's what its name means in Papiamentu: "kibra" (break) "hacha" (axe). The flowers bloom around April and May, but this only last for about three days, as the flowers start to fall off and the tree starts growing its green leaves. The Kibrahacha is especially particular, as it's the only one among its neighboring trees to starts blooming first.

The legend of the Kibrahacha

Written by Hubert (Lio Booi)

One day Aterima, who lived west of the hill Sero Warawara, woke up one day to find her father sleeping in his hammock, suffering a bout of terrible fever. Her mother was very worried, and as was the custom in the olden days, asked Aterima to go fetch Kudawechea, who was a epistemophile, to come see his father.

Aterima wasted to time and went to go fetch Kudawechea. Upon telling Kudawechea that her father was sick, he immediately accompanied Aterima back to her hut, where he encountered her father in a bad state. Not willing to waste any time, he told Aterima that the only thing that can cure her father is a home-made potion made out of the Kibrahacha flower. At the time the Kibrahacha was not yet in her blooming season, but the stubborn Kudawechea was determined to bring back Aterima's father back to health, and so off they went to the nearest Kibrahacha tree.

When they arrived at the tree, they saw that it was covered head to toe in thorns, with only a few closed flowers at the very top. Kudawechea, experienced veteran in all things Aruban flora and fauna, told Aterima to start plucking the thorns of the tree to climb to the top where the flowers are. Aterima, just as determined to save her father, didn't hesitate to start.

To her surprise, every time she plucked a thorn of the tree, a bright, yellow flower bloomed in its place. The thorns were hard to pluck out, but Aterima continued plucking with enthusiasm and wonder at the unfolding sight before her. Not too long after she was able to fill her entire satchel with the yellow flowers.

Kudawechea, satisfied to see Aterima so happy and encouraged to help her father, took her back to her hut.

Upon arriving back at the hut, Aterima's mother quickly made a tea out of the flowers and gave it to



her sick husband. Miraculously, after just one sip of the tea, the father's fever left his body immediately, and he opened eyes and sprung up feeling new.

The next morning, they all visited the same Kibrahacha tree that saved the

life of Aterima's father and they saw another miracle. The tree was covered again in the same bright, yellow flowers, with not a thorn in sight. And as the legend goes, from that day on, the Kibrahacha tree no longer produced any more thorns.□



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

Despite its fearsome repu-

tation, it plays a crucial ecological role that often goes unnoticed.

As an apex invertebrate predator, *Scolopendra gigantea* helps maintain balance in the ecosystem. Moreover, they themselves are a food source for birds such as the Crested Ca-

Fun facts about the 'Lisinbein'

racara (Warawara) and the Aruba burrowing owl (Shoco).

It controls populations of smaller invertebrates and even small vertebrates, ensuring that no species overpopulates, which could disrupt local biodiversity.

Its presence can indicate a healthy, functioning ecosystem. Its sensitivity to environmental changes makes it a bioindicator of ecological balance.

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

A mother's love

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

This form of parental care is beneficial in increasing the survival rates of offspring, as the mother's protection provides a safe

'environment' during their vulnerable developmental stages. It's a fascinating adaptation because it shows a form of care that resembles more complex behaviors observed in vertebrates.

No bark, but all bite!

The lisinbein is known locally for having a really painful sting. While venomous, the Lisinbein is generally not aggressive toward humans unless provoked. Its role as a guardian of balance in the ecosystem helps protect the natural beauty of Aruba by keeping the ecosystem in harmony.□

Editor's note: Information and pictures provided by Ms. Natasha Silva from the Aruba Conservation Foundation.

Aruba: The island of Aloes

ORANJESTAD – Aloe Vera, a succulent plant species, is renowned for its incredible properties for the skin. It is widely distributed and usually grows in tropical, semi-tropical and arid climates on the planet. But this plant also had a very prominent role in the history of Aruba, and its significance to the island's economy endures to this day.

The leaves of Aloe Vera contain a good amount of gel which when used topically, is great for the skin. Traditionally, Arubans use this gel to treat minor burns and other skin ailments, or just to keep skin supple and looking bright and nourished. Aside from the gel, aloe contains a bitter, yellow substance (called aloin) which is a gentle but powerful laxative, and it is also the origin of the industry of aloe in Aruba.

Aloe vera was introduced in Aruba around 1840, when most of the island's inhabitants were farmers of little means. Dutch Governor Van Raders introduced the plant after it had been introduced in other islands of the Caribbean to cultivate and harvest the aloe to produce the laxative.

Around 1920, about two-thirds of Aruba was aloe fields, earning our island the nickname "The Island of Aloes."

Under Commander Jan Helenus Ferguson (1866-1871), aloe experienced a boom, which is why there is a road named after him, which goes through the aloe fields. In the 19th century, Aruba was the main supplier of aloin for laxative, which was imported abroad to the United States

and Europe. The aloin from Aruba and Curaçao was known to be one of the best in the world and was more expensive, which meant that at the time, it had significant economic impact, particularly for the local farmers.

However, by the time the oil industry arrived on Aruba, it changed the labor market on Aruba, shifting away from agriculture. It would be after World War II that aloe would make a comeback. And eventually, as science learned about the amazing properties of aloe gel, the industry shifted from producing laxative to producing skin care. An interesting fact is that in 1951, the production of Aruban aloe amounted to around 30 percent of the total global production!

The impact and relevance



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<https://collectie.wereldmuseum.nl>

of aloe is visible all around Aruba. While most homes will have a few plants for personal use and decoration, houses are also decorated with aloe motifs, and at some point, aloe even featured on post stamps. Around 1920, about two-thirds of Aruba was aloe

fields, earning our island the nickname "The Island of Aloes." And in 1955, the aloe became a part of Aruba's coat of arms, symbolizing prosperity for the island.

Images from the archive of the National Library of Aruba.

Meet an Aruban trailblazers: Padu Lampe



(Oranjestad)—This week we remember one of our most beloved Aruban giant, Juan Chabaya Lampe—better known as Padu Lampe or Padu del Caribe. As one of the most important and renowned artists in the Aruban cultural sphere, Padu's long career led him to be honored today as "the father of culture."

On April 26th, 1920, Juan Chabaya Lampe "Padu Lampe/Padu del Caribe" was born in Nassaustraat, Oranjestad. He grew up in a happy musical environment, and it is because of this that he developed a love for music. Starting

from the age of 12, he was agile in the clarinet, mandolin and cuatro. Henry Lampe, his father, was also a well-known pianist and musician.

In a publication of the informative seminar, "Observer", from August 1st, 1962, Padu's many merits and friendly personality stood out. It was said that he was an excellent pianist with a personal style and full of surprises. Secondly, though the composer was not too familiar with music theory, he showed innovations in his compositions. Lastly, Padu was a promoter of Creole music around the world.

One of the most important moments in Aruban history, in which he was able to witness first-hand, was the first radio broadcast on the island on March 20th, 1954. Here, he was accompanied by Antillean guitarist Julian Coco and Hubert "Loi" Booi.

In the art world, Padu was also a known painter. During his youth, he made several paintings using his



unique style. In 1939, he participated in an art exhibit in New York, where he won a bronze medal for his painting "Typical View of Aruba."

Padu remained a popular artist within the Dutch Antilles and the Caribbean as a pianist, singer, author and painter. Padu Lampe was a local artist who became renowned in Venezuela, Colombia, The U.S. and The Netherlands too. In the 1950s, he sold no less than 50 thousand copies of his long-playing albums (LPs).

Padu Lampe was a multifaceted artist, inspired by his interest in parapsychology and supernatural phenomenon. He wrote three

books in Papiamentu on the subject in 1986, which was published by the Aruban National Printing Press with sponsorship provided by the Prince Bernhard Funds Netherlands Antilles.

Besides that, Padu passed his exam on "Society to Advanced Ethical Hypnosis" in 1964 in New Jersey. He received a certificate as a hypnotechnician, which gave him the authority to practice hypnosis in some states.

Over the course of his career, he received many accolades and awards in Aruba, Curaçao, Venezuela and the Netherlands.

Padu del Caribe passed away on November 29th, 2019, at the age of 99 years old. Padu brought the Aruban culture around the world. His legacy will remain ingrained in the Aruban cultural history, and he will be known forever as one of the most influential trailblazers of our community.

Padu will always be in Aruba's heart, because he had composed various special songs dedicated to the mothers of the island; his song "Sonrisa di un baby" ("A baby's Smile") has been written in three different languages. Padu also wrote our national anthem "Aruba Dushi Tera", along with Mr. Rufo Wever. This song was approved by the government of Aruba and was named the official anthem of the island in 1976.

Other songs that have been considered as being almost a second anthem for Arubans is the special composition he wrote for his wife Daisy Croes called "Abo so". Daisy later passed away in 1994. □

CROSSWORD

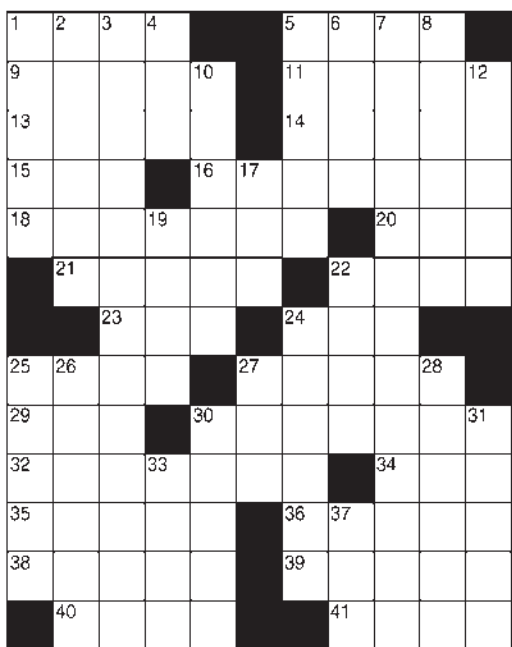
By **THOMAS JOSEPH**

ACROSS

- 38 Play part
1 Church offshoot
5 Vegas game
9 License
11 Site of action
13 Davis of "Thelma & Louise"

DOWN

- 14 Floor squares
15 Longoria of TV
16 Like Ingrid Bergman
18 Law-making bodies
20 Wide shoe marking
21 Some Picassos
22 Cpl.'s subordinates
23 Knee protector
24 GPS screen
25 Needing aspirin
27 Amber source
29 Greek X
30 Fortify
32 Daily grind
34 Busy one in Apr.
35 Door sign
36 Patriot Allen
- 1 Wise ones
2 Late hour
3 Fourth in the lineup
4 Great weight
5 Trio of myth
6 Parched
7 Ace's replacement
8 "Just a moment"
10 Frittered away
12 Arson yield
17 Director Anderson
19 Call it —
22 Go by
24 Brawls
25 Farm units
26 Probability
27 Bird of myth
28 Kathmandu native
30 Uncovers
31 Talks crazily
33 Nevada city
37 "I don't need the details," for short



4-14

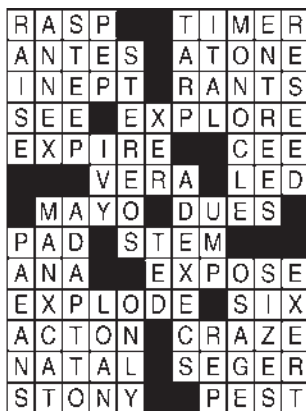
A XYDLBAAXR
is LONGFELLOW

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.

4-14 **CRYPTOQUOTE**

KMFQ SHOU UKUN XQU LEU
MVBK BHAEL H JVMS
YQM W UPLHVAFHNEUO
RMVNLUBBXLHMVN. — CXIBM
VUQFOX

Cryptoquote: WHOEVER IS HAPPY
WILL MAKE OTHERS HAPPY TOO. — ANNE
FRANK



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.

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

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

Difficulty: ★★★

8/6

Answer to previous puzzle

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

Difficulty: ★★★

8/5

Butterflies seek new habitats as climate changes: study



A common yellow swallowtail butterfly (*Papilio machaon*) flies over flowers in Chisseaux, central France, on June 27, 2026.

Paris, France

Climate change is driving shifts in where butterflies are found globally, a major study said Wednesday, with many species moving into new areas while others are retreating from traditional habitats. The study in *Nature Ecology & Evolution* is one of the most comprehensive to date on how butterfly distributions are changing, assessing more than 1,700 species across 105 countries and territories. Researchers found that nearly 80 percent of the reported shifts in the geographic ranges where butterflies were associated with climate change and extreme weather events. Other factors were also driven by human activity: changes in land use, intensive agriculture, urbanization, habitat fragmentation and the introduction of invasive species.

Butterflies are considered important indicators of ecosystem health because they are highly sensitive to temperature changes, have short life cycles and depend on specific host plants.

As the planet warms primarily because of the burning of coal, oil and gas some butterfly species are relocating northwards or

seeking out higher elevations in search of cooler conditions.

However, just 22 percent of species showed a shift in elevation.

Overall, 80 percent of species expanded their range while 27 percent experienced range contractions, with some showing different patterns in different regions, underscoring the complexity of responses to climate change.

"This is rather good news as it proves that butterfly species are capable of migrating and shifting their range to adapt to changes," study co-author Jonathan Lenoir, an ecologist from

France's national scientific research centre (CNRS), told AFP.

- 'Trapped' -

Lenoir cautioned that range expansions were easier to detect than contractions because it was simpler to confirm a species has colonized a new area than prove it has vanished entirely from another. Many observations, including those made by citizen scientists, were concentrated in lowland areas and near urban centers, potentially skewing the findings.

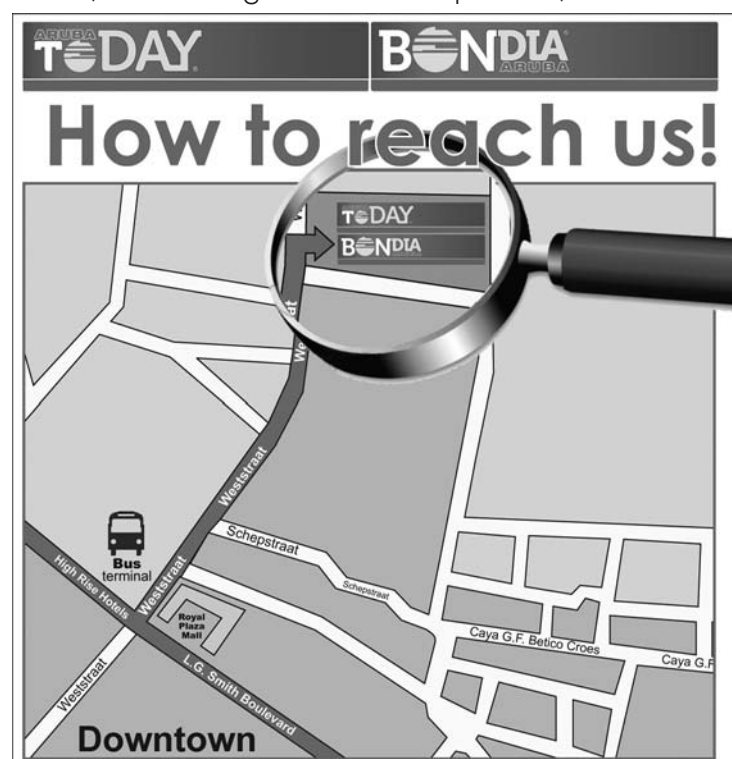
But butterflies could only adapt so far, Lenoir said.

It was possible that beyond a certain warming threshold more butterflies would contract their range, causing "much more rapid and sudden upheavals" among certain species and "potential extinctions".

A 2024 study in *Global Ecology and Biogeography* found that 84 per cent of roughly 270 butterfly species studied in Europe would reduce their range by 2080 if global temperatures keep rising.

"Some butterfly species will not necessarily be able to migrate further north in latitude, or higher up in the mountains, in response to the global rise in temperatures," said Lenoir.

Species endemic to mountain regions on islands could become "trapped" as their habitat is reduced "to almost nothing" with limited options to shift elsewhere, he added. □



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Narcotics Anonymous
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Centre for Diabetes
Tel. 524 8888
Child Abuse Prevention
Tel. 582 4433
Quota Club Tel. 525 2672

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Tiny light, big dream: Harvesting power from soil in Japan

Hitachi-ota, Japan

Glinting in the night, half-way up a hill in Japan, the greenhouse-like "Ku-An" test lab is lit by electricity harnessed from 1,500 wooden boxes of soil and compost.

Designer Satoshi Nakagawa has long battled skeptics, but believes that the technology powering the 800 LEDs has a role to play in solving humanity's energy conundrum.

And, failing that, it at least looks nice and gets people thinking.

"As the population moves toward 10 billion, energy issues will become just as critical as food issues," said Nakagawa, chief executive of design firm Tripod Design.

"Even if it's just a small contribution, I want people to be able to produce their own electricity using the soil around them," the Japanese product designer and engineer told AFP.

The 72-year-old said he has pioneered "micropower collection (MPC)" a way to source tiny dribbles of electrical current from everything from wine to French bread.



This photo taken on May 26, 2026 shows Japanese product designer and engineer Satoshi Nakagawa conducting an experiment to harvest electricity from a block of concrete at his laboratory in Tokyo.

His system uses the same mechanism as the voltaic pile, the world's first electrical battery giving a continuous current invented in 1799 by Alessandro Volta.

It involves inserting electrodes made of materials such as zinc and copper into substances that contain moisture or ions, and then collecting the small but steady electrical currents.

Within eyeshot of the glass-covered "Ku-An", which he has rigged up in the remote town of Hitachi-ota, is "Lu-An", which opened last year.

"Lu-An" has some 2,000 plastic cylinders of soil and compost to give 100 watts of output, enough to power a rice cooker and other appliances.

Nakagawa said the technology could be applied,

for example, in places without power, including after natural disasters.

It could also provide enough electricity for off-grid devices requiring little power, such as sensors to detect pest damage to farmland, overflowing rivers, landslides or even burglar alarms.

Once installed, the technology produces no carbon dioxide, and unlike

other renewables such as solar or wind power is not weather-dependent, Nakagawa said.

- 'Move our emotions' -

Prototype products include a "stand-alone node" a bollard-like object powered by soil which enables data communication with a satellite.

He has also used the technology for art installations with flexible rods that, when speared into the ground, have tips that glow in the dark like fireflies on tall grass.

Professional engineers have said Nakagawa's products can be aesthetically pleasing and thought-provoking, but that his system is not practical.

"Its output is significantly inferior compared with regular batteries or car batteries," said Masayuki Nakao, engineering professor emeritus at the University of Tokyo, who has known Nakagawa for years.

"But what is notable about Mr Nakagawa's works is that the light that he creates has the power to move our emotions. People are moved by it when they see the light. □

Meta chases OpenAI, Anthropic with new AI coding app

San Francisco, United States

Meta entered the race for automated coding tools on Wednesday when it announced a new app for developers of artificial intelligence products, as it competes with other major AI labs for customers and revenue.

Dubbed Muse Code, Meta

said in a blog post that the new product is an agentic coding tool that can perform "complex software engineering tasks" with large amounts of data, including planning, writing and validating code.

Agentic tools are software applications which are

programmed to handle tasks without human supervision, though often someone will still make the final call on decisions or supervise the execution of tasks. Muse Code launched in beta, or in a preview mode.

Meta also released an updated version of its flagship model, known as Spark, which it unveiled in April. The update, called Spark 1.2, is "coding-focused" and available through Muse Code and another developer application called Meta Model API, the social media giant said.

Meta has poured billions into its AI division, now known as Meta Superintelligence Labs, as it attempts to keep up with OpenAI and Anthropic.

Major AI developers are in

a tight race to dominate the sector, not just in pure technical capabilities but also to prove that their heavy spending to meet growing demand will turn into profits.

Amazon, Microsoft, Alphabet and Meta are collectively on track to pour around \$700 billion into AI data centers, chips and computing infrastructure this year.

While chatbots have generated a frenzy around AI since OpenAI launched ChatGPT in late 2022, few people have been willing to pay for them.

However, software engineers and companies are increasingly willing to pay for automated coding tools.

In February, OpenAI said ChatGPT reached 900 mil-

lion weekly active users, including 9 million businesses and 50 million consumers that pay for it.

Anthropic has not disclosed its total users, but the company told TechCrunch in March that its paid subscriptions "have more than doubled this year."

SpaceXAI, a subdivision of Elon Musk's rocket company SpaceX, develops its own chatbot called Grok, and the company announced earlier this year it would acquire coding startup Cursor for \$60 billion.

Microsoft, which has invested billions into both OpenAI and Anthropic, offers coding tools through its business-focused AI app, Copilot, in addition to a developer product, GitHub. □



This photograph taken on March 7, 2024 in Nantes, shows the logo of U.S. social media platform Instagram (L) and U.S. social media platform Threads, both of U.S. company Meta.

Clark, Wilson on USA squad for Women's Basketball World Cup



A'ja Wilson #22 of the Las Vegas Aces handles the ball against Angel Reese #5 of the Atlanta Dream during the second quarter at State Farm Arena on August 03, 2026 in Atlanta, Georgia.

Los Angeles, United States

Three-point sharpshooter Caitlin Clark and Women's NBA scoring leader A'ja Wilson were among 12 women named on Wednesday to the United States team for next month's Women's Basketball World Cup.

American women, who have captured eight consecutive Olympic gold medals without losing a game, will seek their fifth consecutive World Cup crown in Berlin from September 4-13, having taken the past four without dropping a game.

The U.S. roster includes WNBA star guard Clark and her Indiana Fever team-

mate Aliyah Boston, Dallas star Paige Bueckers, Minnesota's Napheesa Collier, Phoenix's Kahleah Copper and Kelsey Plum, Atlanta's Angel Reese and Rhyne Howard, New York's Breanna Stewart and Wilson, Chelsea Gray and Jackie Young from the Las Vegas Aces, who last year won their third WNBA crown in four seasons.

"This is an incredibly talented group that has earned the opportunity to compete in Berlin," said USA Basketball women's national team managing director Sue Bird, who played in a US record five World Cups.

"Wearing a USA jersey is a privilege and I know these 12 players will embrace that responsibility as we go after another gold medal. I can't wait to see what this team accomplishes together."

U.S. women have won 11 Women's World Cup titles. Returning players have won 14 Olympic and nine World Cup gold medals. Boston, Bueckers, Clark, Collier, Howard, Reese and Young will make their World Cup debuts while Copper, Gray, Plum, Stewart and Wilson try to repeat after playing for the 2022 champions, Wilson taking Most Valuable Player honors in the tournament.

Boston, Bueckers, Clark and Reese will make their U.S. major international event debuts.

"It's great to have a team and to have a roster," U.S. coach Kara Lawson said. "These 12 have earned it through their play and their consistency. I couldn't be more excited about working with each of them."

The Americans open group play against China on September 4 and face Italy two nights later and Czech Republic on September 7. □



Manager Dan Wilson of the Seattle Mariners argues with the umpires before being tossed during the eighth inning against the Detroit Tigers at T-Mobile Park on August 05, 2026 in Seattle, Washington.

MLB bans Seattle pitcher Speier three games, manager Wilson one

New York, United States

Seattle Mariners relief pitcher Gabe Speier was suspended for three games and Mariners manager Dan Wilson given a one-game ban on Thursday by Major League Baseball after a benches-clearing brawl. The punishments, including fines of an undisclosed amount, were issued before Thursday's final game in a series at Seattle against Detroit with the incident coming in the Mariners' 4-2 triumph Wednesday over the Tigers. Wilson, who served his suspension in Thursday's contest, and Speier were ejected on Wednesday with MLB saying the bans were a result of Speier's "intentional throwing" at Detroit's Gleyber Torres, who was struck in the left leg in the eighth inning by a 96.3-mph Speier fastball.

It was the second inside fastball in a row to Torres and came an inning after Seattle's Cal Raleigh was hit in the left ribs by a 94.7-mph fastball from Detroit reliever Enmanuel De Jesus.

Speier is appealing his suspension and any discipline will not be imposed until the process is completed. □

Seeds Rybakina, Pegula, Gauff reach third round at WTA Toronto

Toronto, Canada

Second seed Elena Rybakina, third seed Jessica Pegula and fourth-seeded Coco Gauff all advanced to the third round of the WTA 1000 tournament in Toronto on Wednesday.

Australian Open champion Rybakina, of Kazakhstan, began her hardcourt run ahead of the US Open by outlasting Australian Daria Kasatkina 6-3, 5-7, 6-4 in 2hr 33min.

World number two Rybakina began the match by hitting six consecutive winners but also made 58 unforced errors.

"I want to see better serve, the percentage," Rybakina said after coughing up 16 double faults against 15 aces.

"Today in key moments it worked, but still the per-

centage is quite low.

"I'm still adapting a bit to the jet lag and everything, so maybe my energy level could be better."

Rybakina hit back-to-back double faults to drop the second set and three double faults while serving for the match before advancing to face 28th-seeded American Ann Li, who eliminated Canadian wildcard Kayla Cross 7-6 (7/2), 6-3.

"For the first match it wasn't too bad, but of course I want to improve," Rybakina said.

Pegula, who lost in a rain-delayed Washington final on Monday, was also extended in a 3-6, 6-3, 6-2 win over Poland's Magdalena Frech.

"I was just happy with the way I was able to mentally

stay in there," said Pegula, who also beat Frech in the second-round in Washington a week ago.

"It was more of a mental battle just for me figuring out what to do and not get too frustrated.

"Having to face an opponent like that back-to-back is never easy, especially with a quick turnaround this week."

Pegula faces a third-round match against Uzbekistan's Kamilla Rakhimova, whose opponent Katerina Siniakova retired when trailing 6-7 (1/7), 6-0, 5-2.

Two-time Grand Slam winner Gauff cruised into the third round by dispatching fellow American Kayla Day 6-2, 7-5.

"The goal is to peak at the US Open, so I know maybe

this first week I'm not going to be feeling 100 percent," said Gauff, who will face Greece's Maria Sakkari next.

"I feel like by tomorrow I'll be good. I think it was just

a long couple of weeks for me training."

World number five Russian Mirra Andreieva, the French Open champion, cruised past Czech Karolina Pliskova 6-0, 6-2. □



Jessica Pegula of the United States returns a shot to Kamilla Rakhimova of Uzbekistan during day five of the National Bank Open Presented by Rogers at Sobeys Stadium on August 06, 2026 in Toronto, Ontario.



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How Heritage Contributes to the Common Good



Paseo Herencia is proud to announce a donation of AWG 5,000 to support the Government's 'Common Good' initiative, a programme aimed at strengthening the common good of our society. This initiative is based on the vision that a strong community is built together by investing in the values, passion and integral development of our people.

Supporting the community and empowering our youth has always been a key part of the values of Paseo Herencia. As part of its program for years, Gift of Education, established in 2015, Paseo Herencia has continuously invested in the youth of Aruba, firmly believing that education is the primary basis for guiding young people to a successful future.

Paseo Herencia has chosen to support the Back to School project of the Foundation for Our Community, which alleviates the financial burden for students and their families. This is a step that connects perfectly with our vision. "Education is a gift that no one can take away from you", manager of Paseo Herencia expressed.

Since 2015, our goal has always been

to remove financial barriers so that each student has the tools to continue studying. By contributing to the 'Common Good' program, we feel honored to be able to contribute to students in need of support.

A broader mission: Empowering the youth of Aruba

The contribution to the "Back to School" program highlights the overall mission of Paseo Herencia to elevate the local community through four programs:

- Gift of Education: Financial aid for dedicated students with financial limitations.
- Gift of Sports: Supporting youth athletic development and healthy lifestyles.
- Gift of Sports (USA Edition): Expansion of sports opportunities at an international level.
- Gift of Arts: A new initiative designed to stimulate creative talent and artistic expression.

Following these combined efforts and the ongoing collaboration with the community, Paseo Herencia will continue to be a strong support for tomorrow's leaders, innovators and creators. □