



Birds of Aruba: The Great Egret



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Aruba Birdlife Conservation

LIVE ENTERTAINMENT 7 DAYS A WEEK

PROFESSIONAL COMPLIMENTARY
PICTURES ON TUESDAY AND FRIDAY

SUNDAY:

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

MONDAY:

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

TUESDAY:

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

WEDNESDAY:

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

THURSDAY:

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

FRIDAY:

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

SATURDAY:

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



Happy Hour
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A view of the ongoing construction of a planned ballroom at the White House, as seen from the Washington Monument observation deck in Washington, DC on July 23, 2026.

U.S. court orders halt to Trump ballroom construction

Washington, United States

An appeals court on Friday upheld an order halting work on Donald Trump's prized White House ballroom, setting up another battle in the Supreme Court over the limits of presidential authority.

The US Court of Appeals for the DC Circuit, which had allowed construction to continue while it considered the case, agreed with a lower court that such a massive White House overhaul required the explicit consent of Congress.

It stayed its own decision for two weeks to give Trump time to ask the Supreme Court to intervene.

The Republican president lashed out after the 2-1 ruling, calling it "horrendous, politically motivated, and unlawful."

The two judges in the majority were appointed by Democratic presidents, while the dissenter was nominated by Trump himself.

The president vowed in a lengthy social media post to immediately appeal to the Supreme Court, while reiterating his argument that the entire project represented a matter of national security.

Trump initially touted the construction of the ballroom as being necessary to host galas, but has since repeatedly pointed to the concurrent addition of an underground military bunker and other security features.

Under the district judge's initial order, work was to be allowed to continue only on a limited set of structures, including those that were underground.

"This holding has nothing at all to do with whether the proposed ballroom is desirable, or not, as a matter of policy. This ruling does not even necessarily mean that the Defendants may not ultimately construct the ballroom," the majority wrote Friday.

"What it does mean is that the Defendants may not do so during the district court's expeditious litigation without securing Congress's authorization, as the Constitution and laws require." Trump, who has repeatedly complained that the White House lacks sufficient space for grand galas such as state dinners, unilaterally ordered construction of the massive ballroom.

Work on the project began last year with the sudden demolition of the White House's entire historic East Wing.

Since then, photos have shown significant work on a basement complex, with some concrete walls rising up above ground.

Trump has insisted that the ballroom will be privately financed, but media reports in June showed that significant taxpayer funds were going to the project, which could cost as much as \$600 million.

While the White House initially cited a \$200 million price tag for the project, it quickly doubled the estimate to \$400 million.

The ballroom is just one of Trump's pet projects to leave his mark on Washington by the time he leaves office in 2029, along with a renovation of the Lincoln Memorial Reflecting Pool and other parks, as well as the construction of a gigantic arch.

Several of the projects have similarly faced legal challenges, but the ballroom project would be the first to reach the Supreme Court. □



Federal Reserve Board Governor Lisa Cook participates in a board meeting at the Federal Reserve on March 19, 2026 in Washington, D.C.

Trump renews effort to remove U.S. Fed Governor Lisa Cook

Washington, United States

U.S. President Donald Trump is moving forward with an attempt to remove Federal Reserve Governor Lisa Cook over mortgage fraud allegations, according to a White House letter seen by AFP on Friday, after the Supreme Court batted him back in June.

"You are hereby provided notice that the President is considering removing you from your position," reads a letter from the White House to Cook dated August 5 and signed by Deputy Chief of Staff Dan Scavino.

Cook has been given 21 days from the date of the letter to respond to unproven allegations that she made false statements on mortgage applications -- charges that she has denied.

Trump has launched an unprecedented assault on the independence of the Federal Reserve in his second term, opening a criminal probe against previous chairman Jerome Powell and attempting to fire Cook.

His move to dismiss Cook was the first such attempt by a president in the U.S. central bank's 111-year history.

The Supreme Court ruled in June that Trump did not have the power to dismiss Fed governors "for any reason, or no reason."

The U.S. central bank is a non-partisan institution that makes monetary policy for the world's largest economy, with governors appointed by the president after a Senate confirmation process.

The Supreme Court made special mention of the importance of the Fed's independence.

The court said it decided the case "on the narrow ground that the President failed to afford Cook the procedural protections to which she was entitled by statute."

It did not rule on the underlying mortgage fraud allegations.

Trump reacted angrily to the June verdict, saying on social media he would take "appropriate action immediately" against Cook.

The White House letter details the allegations against Cook, asserting that "at a minimum, this conduct was grossly negligent and demonstrates that you are unfit for the office."

Referencing the Supreme Court's decision, in which judges ruled that Trump had tried to fire Cook without giving her an opportunity to respond to the allegations, the letter demands she do so by August 26.

Cook, the first Black woman to serve as a Fed governor, has consistently denied the allegations against her. □

Meta ordered to pay \$567M in U.S. over 'public nuisance' child harm

San Francisco, United States

A U.S. state court has ordered Meta to pay \$567 million and limit some features for children on its Facebook and Instagram platforms, saying the social media giant had created a "public nuisance" that endangered young users.

The ruling in New Mexico on Thursday adds to a previous fine of \$375 million in the same case in March, when a jury found the social media giant liable for making youths vulnerable to predators on its platforms.

While Meta said it would appeal, the decision sets a precedent at a time when dozens of other US states are pursuing lawsuits alleging harms to children and their mental health, including a major trial against Meta set to open in California next week.

"Today's decision is a victory for every parent who has worried about what social media is doing to their child and every child who deserves to grow up safer online," New Mexico Attorney General Raul Torrez said. "This case has always been



Images of deceased children are displayed at the 'Lost Screen Memorial', an art installation of large-scale smartphones featuring 50 children who lost their lives due to online harm, in Los Angeles, California on February 13, 2026.

about protecting children, standing up for families, and making sure that one of the world's largest technology companies cannot profit from practices that endanger young people without consequence." It was the first time a U.S. court has found a social media firm guilty of creating a "public nuisance", amid thousands of lawsuits

claiming Meta had put children at risk. Around three-fourths of the \$567 million payment ordered Thursday will be earmarked for a mental health treatment fund, to be paid over five years. The remainder will be allocated to programs for "awareness and prevention" of potential dangers to youths and ensuring

Meta implements the ordered changes.

- Limits on 'like' counts -

Judge Bryan Biedscheid said in his ruling that teenagers were particularly susceptible to features designed to capture and boost engagement such as autoplay, infinite scrolling, "like" counts, push notifications and algorithmic rec-

ommendations.

He ordered Meta to limit push notifications and usage to 90 hours a month for users under 18, or around three hours daily on average, and to block certain notifications altogether during school hours.

It must also hide "like counts" and pursue efforts to ensure children in New Mexico who are under 13 are not allowed to join Facebook or Instagram.

Meta will also have to provide the court with updates twice a year regarding its efforts to comply.

"We disagree with the ruling and will appeal," Meta told AFP in a statement.

It said it remained "confident in our record of protecting teens online and will continue to defend ourselves against claims that misrepresent the facts".

- More trials loom -

During closing arguments, prosecutor Linda Singer told the jury that Meta had concealed internal findings about the risks to young people, even as its algorithms directed adults toward content posted by teens. □

U.S. Senate passes sweeping Russia sanctions bill

Washington, United States

The U.S. Senate on Friday passed a sweeping sanctions package targeting Russia's energy revenues. The legislation now heads to the House of Representatives, though a vote there will not take place until at least early September due to the congressional summer recess.

The package would impose sanctions on Russian officials, oligarchs, financial institutions and the so-called shadow fleet used to evade restrictions on Moscow's oil exports. It would also allow President Donald Trump to set tariffs of up to 500 percent on Russian imports, including gas and oil.

Crucially, the sanctions

would enable Trump to impose tariffs of up to 100 percent on goods from major purchasers of Russian oil and gas, including countries such as China and India.

Supporters say choking off energy income is essential to weakening Russian President Vladimir Putin's ability to finance the war in Ukraine, now in its fifth year. If adopted into law, Putin himself would be among those targeted by the sanctions, as well as other top officials.

The bill was named after the late Senator Lindsey Graham, who died on July 11 after spending more than a year building support for it.

Shortly before his death, Graham announced he had reached an agreement with the White House on a revised version of the text, including the extension of existing sanctions authority aimed at restricting funding for Iran's energy and weapons sectors. For the late senator's sister Darline Graham, who replaced him in Congress, the final adoption of the bill will not only honor her brother, "but will also promote peace by cutting off the funding fueling Russia's war machine."

Democratic Senator Jeanne Shaheen, a member of the Senate's Foreign Relations Committee, said the bill "hits Russia's energy and financial sectors very



Senator Lindsey Graham questions witnesses on cyber threats to the United States and the alleged election interference and hacking by Russian operatives during a Senate Armed Services committee hearing at the U.S. Capitol in Washington, USA on January 5, 2017.

hard."

"Vladimir Putin only understands strength, and he only responds to pressure," Shaheen added. "This legislation represents our best opportunity to finally bring Russia's war machine to its knees and to force Putin to the negotiating table." Russia's embassy in the

United States had condemned the bill, saying it "does the current US administration a disservice." Moscow is also under increased European pressure, with the E.U. last month agreeing to a new round of sanctions albeit watered down from harsher earlier proposals. □

Show must go on for ballerinas in crisis-hit Cuba

Havana, Cuba

Cuban ballerina Laura Kamila Rojas is dancing her way through the transport woes, lengthy power cuts and economic hardship that now define daily life on the Caribbean island.

Twirling and pirouetting as a soloist with the National Ballet of Cuba (BNC), the usually shy 25-year-old transforms into a commanding performer onstage.

Rojas nabbed the coveted position a year ago, but it hasn't been easy.

The Afro-Cuban dancer is balancing a pivotal moment in her career with fuel shortages that have drastically curtailed Cuba's cultural scene, along with every other walk of life.

"It has been a bit difficult," she told AFP.

"The blackouts sometimes keep me from getting any rest, but I always do whatever I can. I get up and tell myself that I can do it, and I keep moving forward."

- 'This is what we love' -

Ballet has featured prominently in Cuban cultural life since the 1959 Revolution, which democratized ac-



Dancer Laura Kamila Rojas, 25, performs on stage during a performance of "Coppelia" by the National Ballet of Cuba at the Teatro Nacional de Cuba, in Havana, on May 8, 2026.

cess to the arts.

Overseen by the late ballet legend Alicia Alonso, the country developed its own school and proudly maintains one of the world's most prestigious companies.

Rojas has become a star of the scene and received enthusiastic accolades from the hard-to-please crowd following her role

as Swanilda, the heroine of the comedic 1870 ballet "Coppelia."

"Bravo, Kamila!" the audience cried after a flawless sequence of turning jumps during an April performance at Havana's National Theater.

Born in Jesus Maria, a working-class neighborhood with a strong Afro-Cuban influence, Rojas' life was im-

bued with song and dance from day one.

With a mother who danced in a folkloric group directed by her father, their daughter's decision to pursue pointe work over the family tradition surprised everyone.

Now, her enduring passion has encountered countless obstacles as a result of

the severe fuel shortages in U.S.-blockaded Cuba.

Every day, Rojas looks for a way to get to her dance studio, located in the Vedado neighborhood five kilometers (three miles) away from her home.

"If necessary...I'd come on foot," said the young dancer with angel wings tattooed on her back.

Company buses are now only available on performance days due to fuel shortages.

Previous all-day rehearsals have also been scaled back to just four hours, as a way to save electricity and give the dancers time to get home.

"But the demand on us is the same," said Rojas.

"We all want to be here, because this is what we love," she added as she prepared for a practice session.

- 'Out of reality' -

A lack of sleep makes the challenging work even trickier.

At night, the use of air conditioning or even a fan to offset the intense summer heat has become impos-

sible due to outages. Mosquitos also have to be reckoned with.

But "when I dance, I forget everything," said Rojas.

"Anything can happen, but my thing is dancing."

BNC director and prima ballerina Viengsay Valdes, 49, takes pride in this attitude that prevails across the company.

"They have a lot of talent and a real desire to dance, and that is essential," she said.

Despite a slump in Cuba's cultural activity, the Ballet has forged ahead with rehearsals and performances.

"The dancer needs the stage," said Valdes. "If they stop, that body has to be trained all over again."

The efforts have not gone unnoticed the theater's 2,000-seat hall almost reaches capacity during shows, whose schedules have been adjusted depending on electricity availability. □

Singer Carly Simon diagnosed with Parkinson's: statement

New York, United States

American singer Carly Simon, known for hits like "You're So Vain," revealed on Monday that she has been diagnosed with Parkinson's disease.

The 83-year-old confessional lyricist said in a statement that she had "been

learning how to live with Parkinson's disease" and that she had also been treated for skin cancer.

Parkinson's disease is a chronic, degenerative neurological disorder that affects the body's motor system, often causing shaking and other difficul-

ties in movement.

Worldwide, about 10 million people have the illness, according to the Parkinson's Foundation.

"It has taken me some time to understand the diagnosis, to adjust to it, and to decide how much I wanted to say about it publicly," Simon wrote.

"Parkinson's is different for everyone, and it can be unpredictable. Some days I'm so tired I can't get the day moving at all. On others, it gives me a little more room to move, think, work, and feel like myself.

"The problems began with arthritis in both knees and one hip. I eventually had all three joints replaced, out with the old and in with delicate bouquets of metal and plastic."

After three replacement surgeries, she said, "I assumed my difficulty walking was simply an unfortunate and rather ironic part of the recovery process."

The celebrated singer-songwriter said she had found sanctuary in music, and that during that period she even began recording a new album, "Comes in Waves," her first new collection of original tracks since 2008, to be released on August 14.

Simon said that at the same time as her Parkinson's diagnosis, she was treated for a facial basal cell carcinoma.

"The cancer was removed, but the surgery affected my appearance and made me more self-conscious about being seen in public," she said in a heartfelt statement. □



U.S. singer Olivia Rodrigo performs under a photo of Carly Simon, on stage during the 37th Annual Rock and Roll Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony at the Microsoft Theatre on November 5, 2022, in Los Angeles, California.



People walk up a dried out path in the grass, turned yellow-brown due to a lack of rain, backdropped by the skyline of central London, on Primrose Hill in London, on August 7, 2026.

Food security fears mount as U.K. farmers battle drought

Shimpling, United Kingdom

Giant dust clouds rose from a green-red combine harvester as it crawled across a parched field, a sign that something was awry with UK farmer John Pawsey's land.

"It suddenly, completely dried out," Pawsey said. For weeks the drought "just seems to have gone on for ever" on his farm in the eastern county of Suffolk. English farmers have been contending with the driest July ever recorded by the Met Office weather agency unwelcome news for those like Pawsey who have only seen paltry yields of crops such as oats, wheat and vetch.

Concern over food security has gripped Britain's headlines amid a series of heatwaves this year.

"All of our fears were realized when we got our combines into the field and realized that actually the yield was ... between 25 and 30 percent down," Pawsey said.

His family has tilled the Suffolk soil since a Scottish great-grandfather moved there, one of many farm workers who flocked south following the late 19th century agricultural depression. Like his ancestors, Pawsey, 62, is navigating a turbulent future.

"I am worried about the coming years," he admitted.

The drought is the most recent weather-related challenge to hit the nation's farmers over the past five years.

Food growers must learn to adapt, Pawsey urged, adding dynamic farmers should view the changing climate as an "opportunity."

His organic farm has experimented with new crops, like fava beans and chickpeas more suited to hotter, drier climates, and techniques to build resilience such as pairing two different crops in the same field to force them to grow as they compete for space and nutrients.

The government needs to support farmers in "making a transition" towards using similar methods, Pawsey argued.

Food security expert Timothy Benton endorses farming less intensively, saying "a more circular, diverse farming system" would be more secure and less dependant on imports of such things as fruits and fertilizers. "Climate impacts will become greater," Benton told AFP, adding "food systems will have to change". "We're not investing enough in the forms of technological innovation to address a larger crisis," he said.

Benton argued: "Food is not just food, it's what you grow, produce and the

products and processes needed to bring it to the general population."

- Different menu -

Climate change could also force Britain to change its eating habits, said Nicola Cannon, professor at the Royal Agricultural College. She has been growing soya with the aim of introducing it to more British farms. Dinnertime staples have been hit especially hard by the drought. This year's pea yield was only "50 percent of what we wanted," Cannon said.

They had little chance to grow, as there has been "very little moisture since March," she added.

On Pawsey's Suffolk farm, an entire crop of quinoa failed.

"We just had no rain," he said. "The only things that started growing were docks (leaves) and thistles."

Shortages of certain foods may result if drought conditions continue, National Farmers' Union president Tom Bradshaw told the BBC.

"We have taken our food supply for granted for far too long," he warned.

Lower yields make farming less profitable, meaning farmers will lack capital to invest in adaptation and experimenting with new crops. □



Ibrahim al-Dabba (C), head of the Beekeepers Cooperative in the Gaza Strip, tends to beehives with his sons on the roof of a destroyed building in Gaza City's Tel al-Hawa neighbourhood, where the displaced family has taken refuge, on August 5, 2026.

Gaza beekeeper starts again on rooftop amid ruins of war

Gaza City, Palestinian Territories

Perched on the edge of a rooftop high above Gaza City's bombed-out landscape, Ibrahim al-Dabba lovingly tends his community of bees, cultivating a rare source of hope among the ruins of the Israel-Hamas war.

Al-Dabba and his sons, donning protective netted hats and wielding metal bee smokers, gently inspect the neat rows of teeming hives.

As each frame of honeycomb is lifted out, hundreds of bees buzz lazily above the shattered urban neighbourhood an incongruous setting for an apiary, but one the veteran beekeeper had little option but to choose.

Al-Dabba, who heads the Beekeepers Cooperative in the Gaza Strip, said the war which erupted in October 2023 obliterated the Palestinian territory's beekeeping culture. "We had more than 40,000 beehives and more than 450 beekeepers" before the war, he told AFP from the rooftop in Gaza City's Tel al-Hawa neighbourhood.

"The situation was good, with more than 1,000 families making a living through the beekeeping sector," he added.

"The war came and destroyed the beekeeping sector by more than 95 percent because most beekeepers were near the border areas," he explained.

Al-Dabba himself lost some 400 hives, which he had kept in agricultural lands east of Gaza City.

He had no choice but to relocate his remaining 35 or so hives to the roof of a residential building, but admitted the situation was far from ideal. "Bees are supposed to be in a safe, suitable agricultural area, but today the bees are suffering just as we are," he said.

Al-Dabba explained that he could not move his bees back to their previous home because it had been destroyed and the land was now under the control of the Israeli military.

"We cannot approach or enter," he said.

"Just as we are displaced in the streets, the bees are also displaced on the rooftops."

- Hope despite suffering -

The devastating war in Gaza was triggered by Hamas's October 7, 2023 attack on Israel, which resulted in the deaths of 1,221 people, according to an AFP tally based on official Israeli figures.

Israel's retaliatory military campaign in Gaza has killed more than 73,300 people, according to the territory's health ministry, which operates under Hamas authority and whose figures are considered reliable by the United Nations. □

Erratic rains dictate menu at three-star Michelin restaurant in Brazil

Sao Paulo, Brazil

Climate adaptation has reached the world of fine dining: At Tuju, a three-Michelin-star restaurant in Brazil, erratic rainfall keeps its owners on their toes.

Chef Ivan Ralston and his partner, gastronomic researcher Katherina Cordas, spent two years studying local ingredients, mainly from the state of Sao Paulo, but using them at their peak is a challenge.

In a region where summer storms bring chaos and reservoirs run dry in winter, it takes "a lot of flexibility," said Cordas, 38, who runs a culinary research center that the pair created for the restaurant.

Tuju is situated in gastronomic powerhouse Sao Paulo, a megalopolis of 12 million people. In April, it secured its third Michelin star along with another restaurant in the city, Evvai becoming the first two locations in Latin America to earn the top culinary honors.

Tuju offers four menus a year "Humidity," "Rain," "Gale" and "Drought" but they are not tied to fixed dates.

Instead, they follow the rain. "Sao Paulo is usually dry in July, but this year it stayed



A cook works in the kitchen of the TUJU restaurant, in Sao Paulo, Brazil, on July 16, 2026.

somewhat wetter because of El Nino, so mushroom season lasted almost twice as long. You always have to stay alert and adapt," said Ralston.

Tuju's 10-course tasting menu draws primarily on ingredients from small-scale producers across Sao Paulo state. Sardines, pork, artichokes, chestnuts, grapes, guava, capers and more: the products are prepared "with the most modern techniques, emphasizing

creativity and the research work behind the scenes," according to Michelin.

The third star is "like a black belt for karate practitioners," said Ralston, the son of restaurateurs who trained in some of Spain and Japan's top kitchens.

But he insists the accolade has not gone to his head: "The pursuit of perfection is superficial. What we promise is a genuine experience."

- 'Pay attention' -

Ralston leads a team of eight young chefs mostly women who work in silence and perfect synchrony in an open kitchen, dramatically lit at the center of the minimalist dining room.

Cordas, mother of two of Ralston's children, glides between the restaurant's nine green marble tables, attending to diners, who pay 1,650 reais (about \$320) for the tasting menu.

Ralston is frustrated by the

fact that some diners come mainly in search of content for social media.

"Eating is a moment to pay attention to details. My advice would be: stop working on the marketing of living and enjoy life a little more!" The evening begins with cocktails beneath a towering jabuticaba tree, native to Brazil, alongside a glass-enclosed wine cellar housing 5,000 bottles.

It ends on a rooftop terrace with sweeping views, with a taste of chocolates and honey from native stingless bees.

Ralston opened Tuju in 2014 and earned his first Michelin star just months later. A second followed. Then, the restaurant was forced to close because of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Ralston and Cordas embarked on their two-year study of Brazilian cuisine and in 2023 partnered up to re-open Tuju named after a Latin American bird.

Sao Paulo boasts more Michelin-starred restaurants than any other city in Latin America although the guide rates only cities in Argentina, Brazil, and Mexico. □

Free as a bird: rescue mission returns rare Serbian eagle

Belgrade, Serbia

Feliks, a rare eastern imperial eagle, is again soaring through the skies of his Serbian homeland after being rescued from the clutches of bird smugglers during his

inaugural migration, the national bird society said Friday.

Serbia's Bird Protection and Study Society, which helped return the bird from

its months-long international ordeal, said he had been released back into the wild this week.

After the young raptor first flew the nest in July 2025, experts tracking the protected species' flight path became alarmed when he took an unusual route toward the Middle East.

"At that point, we started to worry because we could see that he was heading towards an extremely unsafe region," Uros Stojiljkovic of the Bird Protection and Study Society of Serbia told AFP.

In late October, Feliks's signal disappeared, with his last location recorded in Syria.

Stojiljkovic said he had originally hoped it was just a faulty tracker, but soon it became clear that he had been kidnapped.

Contacted via a partner organization in Lebanon, the Serbian conservationist said the bird's unnamed captors had demanded a ransom.

"We categorically refused. By doing so, you are effectively supporting that smuggling chain," Stojiljkovic said.

After lengthy negotiations, the bird was handed to a wildlife centre in Beirut, where he remained for six months as plans were made for a safe return.

In June, Serbian troops returning from a peacekeeping mission in Lebanon eventually flew Feliks home on a military plane and brought him to Palic Zoo to recover.

After careful rehabilitation, he was released back to the wild this week.

"We hope he will manage to fly at least as far as the first time, when he reached the shores of Asia and Africa," zoo director Sonja Mandic said in a statement.

Eastern imperial eagles are critically endangered and strictly protected in Serbia, where their number had fallen to as little as just one breeding pair in 2017, according to Stojiljkovic.

Conservation efforts have since helped the population recover, with 29 pairs monitored in 2026.

Stojiljkovic said four chicks had also been born this year, named Jelena, Princ, Atila and Michel.

The last was named in honor of Michel Sawan, head of the Lebanese organization that helped rescue Feliks. □



This handout photo provided by Serbia's Bird Protection and Study Society shows Feliks, a rare eastern imperial eagle, being released into the wild near Subotica, Serbia, on August 7, 2026, following a month-long recovery at a local zoo after being rescued from wildlife traffickers during his first migration.

Why 'Rock Stacking' is more dangerous than you think

(Oranjestad)— "Rock stacking" is not illegal in Aruba, but its impact on nature is harmful as the stones form part of the natural habitat of small animal species living in Aruba's wilderness. Conservation organizations repeatedly warn people not to participate. To understand the growing opposition to the practice of stacking rocks, it is necessary to understand the deep and negative impact behind it.

The act, called rock stacking, has been practiced for thousands of years and was originally used to guide people on hikes or travelers in mountainous regions, as well as for rituals, burials, and memorials. However, the modern trend is quite different. Today, the popularity of rock stacking has less to do with utility and tradition and more to do with social media. An American artist based in Colorado, Michael Grab, noted that the trend really began gaining popularity around 2014 and 2015, before it exploded and became an international art form.

The reasons behind participation vary widely, ranging from something purely practical or a tradition from the past, to an activity for its "beauty." For many, it is about leaving a mark, creating "art," or simply enjoying the process of balancing rocks. In recent times, those who participate in this—especially in Aruba—do so to leave proof of their presence or simply to post on social media.

Although it may seem harmless, there are several problems and negative impacts behind it. One of these is that many animal species hide under rocks to live, reproduce, or escape predators. If you move a rock, you may be destroying a home. If you stack one on top of another, you may expose prey to predators. Whether this is done in nature areas, along the coast, or in desert environments, it can destroy entire colonies and, in the worst case, threaten species that are already endangered.

There are microorganisms and small species such as insects or certain snakes that live in the soil beneath rocks commonly used for stacking. These rocks help trap moisture underneath, allowing the ecosystem to sustain itself. When you remove a rock, the soil is exposed and the moisture can dry up, killing all living organisms that depend on that humid environment.

Additionally, each rock is full of life—everything from aquatic plants to microorganisms attaches to them. Especially when it comes to rocks near the sea, they create habitats for some marine animals. Holes in the rocks can hold eggs,



supporting them until the animals hatch. An expert explained that removing rocks from a fragile environment is essentially the equivalent of removing bricks from someone's house while also taking everything out of their refrigerator.

There is also the issue of erosion and soil damage, because rocks help hold the ground in place, sealing the surface and helping manage excess water, even allowing new life to grow. When these rocks are removed, the soil

becomes loose, significantly increasing the rate of erosion in that area.

This erosion can cause sedimentation in nearby bodies of water, negatively impacting aquatic habitats and water quality.

Rocks along the coast are part of a natural ecosystem and play an important role in protecting the shoreline from erosion and the force of the ocean. When people remove or stack rocks, it affects coastal stability, increases the risk of erosion, and damages ecosystems. According to South African National Parks, this is particularly relevant for an island like Aruba—especially considering that most, if not all, rock stacking on the island takes place near coastal areas.

It is understandable that rock stacking may seem like a fun activity to do while off-roading; however, the survival, protection, and conservation of the island are just as important—if not more so—to ensure that in the future there will still be an island for both locals and visitors. We want our visitors to appreciate what Aruba has to offer—in a healthy and sustainable way. □



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Beaches for the whole family to enjoy!

(Oranjestad)—One of the biggest concerns that parents have when traveling with their children is a guarantee of their safety and healthy enjoyment. Therefore, we thought it would be a great help to traveling parents to list off some of the most family-friendly beaches around the island.

Baby Beach in San Nicolas

Baby Beach is one Aruba's most popular and visited beaches, and for good reason: This sandy and quiet lagoon is a great place for parents to sit back and relax while their children play in the shallow shores of the beach. Beside the relaxing atmosphere, there are also several services that may accommodate your stay, like a parking lot, sun tent rentals, chairs, bathrooms and a snack bar right at the far left of the beach.

Mangel Halto in Pos Chiquito

Mangel Halto is situated in the back

streets of Pos Chiquito. Though there are several stairs on the sides of the beach cliff leading you down, the best spot for families to hang out is across the bridge, passed the mangrove trees near the entrance sign. Here, there are small and big palapas, perfect for big and small families to set up their belongings. In this area, the shore is also shallow, falling right around your knee before slowly getting deeper: perfect for kids to safely play.

Eagle Beach/Palm Beach

Yet another highly popular beach sites, Eagle Beach and Palm Beach is where most of our visitors go to tan, swim or play in the white sand. Because they are near the low-rise and high-rise hotel areas, these beaches are the most accessible for visitors on foot. These beaches also offer many palapas free to use, but you can also rent chairs and tents. Much like Baby Beach, these sites are one of the best beaches



for your children to play and build sand castles.

Boca Catalina in Malmok

Boca Catalina is a small bay beach near the Malmok beach area further down the hotel areas. Though it may not be a very sandy beach, it is

relatively quiet and tranquil. This is a great place for family to lay down a big blanket and have a little picnic. This is also one of the best places to snorkel, as this area is filled with little fish and corals, even close to the shore. □

Birds of Aruba



ORANJESTAD — On May 11th, 2010, the Aruba Birdlife Conservation was founded with the aim of protecting the biodiversity in general and birds in and around Aruba in particular.

Among other things, the foundation will focus on increasing the survival chances of species of wild birds by promoting their preservation and conservation. The foundation publishes the most beautiful pictures of local birds on their social media that

show us the beauty of Aruba's birds and nature in general. Aruba Today gives you a little peek with the following pictures and descriptions from the foundations Facebook page.

The Great Egret

Serenity in Aruba's National Park, a Great Egret flying in peace. When it is peaceful and quite, beautiful things start happening in nature.



Canadian in the house

The breeding season is over and it's getting pretty cold in North America. Shore birds have started moving southwards as early as July. This wetland beauty wants to keep its toes warm. Our Canadian friends know exactly where they can do so best. A Greater Yellowlegs rediscovering Aruba's Bubali Wetlands.

Cabochon

In its living form of so much more



value than any gemstone. Aruba's smallest and most master of flight. A top pollinator. A hovering Blenchi inspecting the human who just entered his territory. English: Blue-tailed Emerald (male) Dutch: Blauwstaartsmaragdkolibrie (mannetje).

Aruba's to enjoy. Aruba's to protect.

Picture credit: Aruba Birdlife Conservation.

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Aruba's first Ombudsman and what she can mean for you

(Oranjestad)—Ombudsman Mrs. Jurima Bryson, appointed on October 1st 2024, is proud to represent Aruba and is prepared to help both locals and tourists with their concerns.

What is the role of the Ombudsman?

In a nutshell, the Ombudsman is the middle man between you and government or semi-government agencies. This means that as a local or as a visitor of Aruba, you can file a complaint to the bureau of the Ombudsman against government and semi-government agencies. Already left the island? No problem. The Ombudsman of Aruba can still receive and handle your complaint even from abroad.

You only have to provide a way for them to reach you.

To contact the Ombudsman, you can visit the office located at Caya G.F. Betico Croes 149, Oranjestad, Aruba. You can also call at +297 281 6800 or email @ombudsman.aw. for more questions or complaints.

Opening hours

The Ombudsman office is open to the public with no appointment from Monday to Friday from 8:30 to 11:30 am.

Follow the ombudsman on Instagram: @ombudsmanaruba and Facebook: Ombudsman Aruba



Fun facts about the Terns

(Oranjestad)—Throughout the months of January to September, big groups of terns migrate to the island for breeding season. These terns are important seabirds, and their presence on Aruba is a unique phenomenon. Here are some fun facts about terns.

Why terns matter

Terns (Sternchi in Papiamentu) migrate annually to Aruba for breeding season. Our island, hosts 10 different species of terns which is crucial for global seabird conservation. 90% of Caribbean population of Common Tern nest on Aruba, 25% of Global population of Cayenne Tern nest on Aruba and 25% of Caribbean population of Black Noddy nest on Aruba, making their conservation especially important.



Breeding season

The terns breed mainly along the north coast of Aruba as well as the San Nicolas Reef Islands (No-Go conservation zones). Baby Beach is

a particularly special site for terns, since this is where they carry out their reproduction rituals. Referred to as a "discotheque" by Natasha Silva, the point of Baby Beach near the open water is where a

large group of terns spends the season searching for their partner—for life—to reproduce.

In Aruba, there are ten different species of terns, all of which breed at different

times. The ten species of terns that migrate to the island include the Cayenne Tern; Cabot's Tern; Common Tern; Roseate Tern; Least Tern; Brown Noddy; Black Noddy; Sooty Tern; Bridled Tern and the Royal Tern

Main threats to these seabirds are human proximity, kite-surfing, unleashed dogs, ATVs/UTVs, Jet Ski's and pollution.

How to protect them

Aruba Conservation Foundation advises everyone to keep their distance from these seabirds, do not visit the reefs, do not fly drones around nesting areas, keep your dogs on leashes, do not drive on the coastline and do not leave trash thrown about. "Nature has no boundaries and its protection is a shared responsibility." □

The Bushiribana Gold Mill Ruins and its history

(Oranjestad)—The Bushiribana Gold Mill Ruins is one of the most visited places by tourists on the island, as it lies along the northern coast line near the mini pool and on the way to the Natural Bridge. Despite its seemingly plain appearance, this ruin represents one of the most important histories of the island: The Aruban Gold Rush.

Built in 1872 by English company Aruba Island Gold Mining Company Ltd, the gold mill at Bushiribana was constructed in the area where most gold was found by locals. The story of gold on Aruba actually dates back to 1725, when a first exploration for gold on the island was commissioned by the Dutch West India Company. Under the leadership of Mr. Paulus Printz, a three-year search was conducted on Aruba, to no avail. Though they found some



gold, it was enough to motivate a further search, and the assignment was discontinued by Printz himself.

It wasn't until 100 years later, in 1824, when a young boy found a lump of gold while out herding his father's sheep. His father took it to a local merchant who then

sold the lump for \$70. Unbeknownst to the boy and his father, they quite literally struck gold, and as word got out, a gold fever spread among the locals who started searching for more gold. About 25 pounds worth was found.

At the same time, the Aru-

ban government took immediate actions, and informed Curacao that gold was found. At first, everyone could look for gold, as long as they sold it to the government. However, after some time, the government decided to implement stricter rules and banned local search parties.

Over the years, concession-holding had seen different companies from around the world, all of which used primitive methods to dig and carve out gold from the rocks. Aruba Island Gold Mining Company Ltd. was no different, but used a unique method that involved grinding the rocks and letting the dust be blown away by the strong northeast wind, leaving clumps of gold behind. The next step was melting the gold and letting it attach to quicksilver in order to obtain pure gold. All these processes were done at the Bushiribana Gold Mill.

The gold mill itself had a short life-span: only 10 years in service, but its structure remained relatively solid till this day, and is now a historical remnant. □

Sources: Etnia Nativa

Planning on snorkeling? Get to know our Candelchi!

ORANJESTAD—If you're ever planning on snorkeling during your vacation on Aruba, you may spot fish that you can't recognize. One of these may be the "Candelchi" (Squirrelfish), a common, yet shy fish that swims all year long in the waters of Aruba.

Let's talk about the names of fish. Do you know your fish? The Depart-

ment of Agriculture, Livestock, and Fisheries, known as Santa Rosa, offers this informative article that illustrates some fish and their names in Papiamentu.

Candelchi, Squirrelfish, Holocentrus adscensionis:

Candelchi actually refers to the entire squirrelfish family or, as some say, when we say candelchi, we

mean several different species but without distinguishing them by species. In this picture, we are showing the most common one in our waters, which is called squirrelfish in English or scientifically known as *Holocentrus adscensionis*.

Under candelchi, we in Aruba generally refer to all the different species of squirrelfish. They all look

alike and it's really difficult to distinguish between them.

The squirrelfish family is distinguished by the following characteristics. They are heart-shaped with pink or red hues and often show heart-shaped streaks between the scales along the body. They have hard fins and are always armed. Over at our sister island Curaçao, they are called "bari di clabo" (nail barrel) for that reason.

In our waters, there are 7 to 8 types or species present and they are sometimes caught and seen occasionally. They can be distinguished by different marks such as color on the dorsal spine or marks on the body.

In Aruba:

Candelchi are found on reefs or areas with structure in the water where they can hide. Although they prefer to hunt for food at night, they are also active during the day. They are edible and delicious when prepared dry and crispy with lime. It is particularly challenging to scale the fish, which is why it is not one of the favorites among fishermen. They often live in groups. □



Get to know the history of the gold industry on Aruba

(Oranjestad) We have talked about the Bushiribana Gold Mill Ruin before and its brief history during the gold industry on Aruba, but get to know a little more about the history of the “Aruban Gold Rush.”

The first hint of gold on Aruba actually dates back to 1725, when rumors about gold being found in dug up treasure chests of the Spanish colonial era prompted the first official exploration for gold on the island, commissioned by the Dutch West India Company. Under the leadership of Mr. Paulus Printz, a three-year search was conducted on Aruba, to no avail. Though they found some specks of gold, it was not enough to motivate a further search, and the assignment was discontinued by Printz himself.

It wasn't until 100 years later, in 1824, when a young farmer boy named Willem Rasmijn found a lump of gold while out herding his father's sheep in the area of Rooi Fluit on the north coast. His father took it to a local merchant who then sold the lump for \$70. Unbeknownst to the boy and his father, they quite literally struck gold, and as word got out, a gold fever spread among the locals who started searching for more gold.

When the colonial governor in Curacao, Governor Cantz'laar, heard about the news, he sent his adjutant, Capitan van Raders, to start harvesting gold. This was in July 1824. In August of that same year, the governor followed suit to the island, accompanied by high-ranking military officials. When citizens started swarming the area in search for gold, The Netherlands sent more troops to safe guard the gold.

Prominent places where gold was found was in Daimari, Wacobana, Arikok, Rooi Fluit, Hadicou-radi and later West punt, where gold ore was found. Because of a lack in advanced technology and materials to harvest the



gold, the process took a more primitive approach: Clay rocks containing traces of gold were left to dry in the sun. Then, workers would start chipping the clay away on a large canvas to catch the gold particles that were left behind after the wind blew away the dust from the clay.

In the harvest period of 1824-1825, there was a total of 71,000 kilos collected through commissioned harvesting. Locals themselves reportedly found about 25 pounds worth of gold in the

nearby rivers. The following years after that first big harvest, commission work fell off, and in 1828, the director of the goldmines, Johan Gravenhorst, decided to halt harvesting.

Almost 40 years later, the London-based Aruba Island Gold Mining Company Ltd. was granted concession. The firm built their gold mines on Bushiribana, and in the port of Oranjestad a long road that connected the gold mill to the port. The ores themselves came from Sero Plat en

Sero Cristal.

By this point, workers were still using primitive methods to harvest the ores. For example, when someone had to go into the mines, there were no stairs or lifts; the person had to be brought down in a big bucket, with two or more workers holding the bucket by a thick rope above ground.

Aruba Island Gold Mining Company Ltd. reportedly operated until 1899, and right after the Aruba Gold Concession Ltd. was established, coincidentally also based in London. This time, the gold mill in Balashi was built, and more mines were dug up all around the island. The gold ores that were found were transported via track engine, locally called the “trekinchi”. Despite being more equipped for the job, the Aruba Gold Concession Ltd. could not produce any real profit, and so the concession was terminated just eight years later, in 1908.

A local firm, the “Aruba Goud Maatschappij” (Aruba Gold Company) took over the concession,

along with all the materials and equipment. In the beginning, the company saw good profit, and for a while, the island's economy depended primarily on the mining and harvesting of gold. But just like its predecessors, the streak of luck for the Aruba Gold Company came to an end when WWI broke out.

The main reason why production stopped this time was reportedly because of a lack in dynamite for extracting the ores from the mines, as well as a lack in raw materials like German cyanide for the refining process. By the time the war ended, the equipment that was left at Balashi were too old to use again. After the war, gold production on the Aruba was left to a standstill.

According to an issue in Aruba Esso News paper in 1953, Henny Eman wanted to start up digging again, this time using independent miners. He argued that there was proof of more gold to be discovered. Plus, hiring independent miners would boost the island's employment rate.

When it was proven that gold was in fact still present, the executive board on the island promised to fund the project only if the gold dug up proved to be valuable. However, nothing else was reported after this, so it could be concluded that there was no real profitable market on the island anymore.

The ruins of the Bushiribana and Balashi Gold Mills are still standing, and open for the public to visit. These structures offer a glance into the past, to a time where Aruba experienced one of its first wave of industrialization. Today, these structures are persevered as historical monuments. □

Source:

1. “De Kolibrie op de Rots (en meer over the geschiedenis van Aruba)” by Evert Bongers.

2. Aruba Esso News, 1953 issue.



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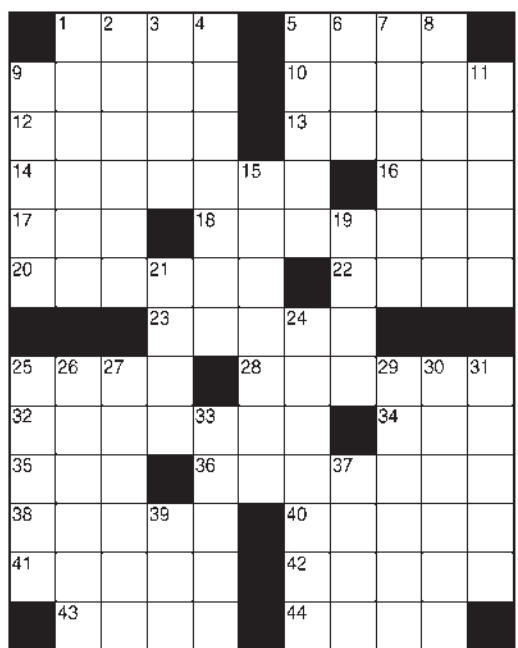
By THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

- 1 Mausoleum
5 Tater
9 Racer
10 Surgery tool
12 Even a little
13 Be penitent
14 Tear up the dance floor
16 Card spot
17 G.I. fare
18 "Don't be ridiculous!"
20 Give one's okay
22 Sole
23 Passionate dance
25 Diva's piece
28 Start
32 "Beat it!"
34 Verb for you
35 Gardner of film
36 Avenge oneself
38 Like the icecaps
40 Choose
41 Select group

DOWN

- 42 Anarchic events
43 Scots' toppers
44 Lacking
1 Spuds
2 Gives an address
3 Not too spicy
4 Deli buy
5 Bias
6 Contrived
7 Annual golf event
8 Turn-down
9 Molten stuff
11 Answer
15 Sign of a healthy dog, maybe
19 Plant part
21 List-ending abbr.
24 Edges of alleys
25 Clearly stunned
26 Rise up
27 Venezia's nation
29 Get for less
30 Puts up
31 Campout sights
33 Story meanies
37 Lamb's alias
39 Cash dispenser



4-15

AXYDLBAAXR
is LONGFELLOW

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

4-15

CRYPTOQUOTE

C Z H X Q Z R P Q U H V ,

V Y T F H Z O J H N Q R J Q

U Y I P M . — B H J H R B H

X H Z M J C

Cryptoquote: YOUR WIDE EYES ARE THE ONLY LIGHT I KNOW FROM EXTINGUISHED CONSTELLATIONS. — PABLO NERUDA

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

Difficulty: ★★★★★

8/8

Answer to previous puzzle

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

Difficulty: ★★★★★

8/7

Total eclipse gives scientists chance to probe Sun's mysteries



People watch a partial solar eclipse at New Brighton, a coastal suburb of Christchurch, on September 22, 2025.

Paris, France

Scientists plan to use a total solar eclipse that will be visible in Spain next week as a rare chance to learn more about the stormy, unpredictable nature of our star.

When the Moon blots out the Sun on August 12, teams will leap into action studying its magnetic field, atmosphere and furious weather that sometimes causes disruptions back here on Earth.

There is a long history of using eclipses to make scientific breakthroughs.

It was while watching an eclipse on May 29, 1919 on the West African island of Principe that British astronomer Arthur Eddington confirmed Albert Einstein's theory of relativity.

He achieved this by observing the effect of a light-bending phenomenon called gravitational lensing on the stars that became visible while the Sun's dazzling light was obscured.

More than a century later, scientists will watch a total solar eclipse lasting a minute and 40 seconds appear across a swathe of northern Spain next week.

"Our work aims to understand the physical mechanisms underlying the Sun's activity," Allan Sacha Brun, an astrophysicist at France's Atomic Energy Commission (CEA), told

AFP. Every day, specialists are working on models aiming to explain solar activity, allowing them "to put the Sun back into context within its evolutionary timeline, from its birth to its death," he added.

- 'We're incredibly lucky' -

The Sun is constantly spewing out matter and charged particles, sometimes unleashing full-blown solar storms that shoot out giant explosions of plasma and other matter.

When these materials slam into Earth's magnetic shield, they can knock out satellites, threaten astronauts and create colourful auroras in the skies of north-

ern and southern latitudes. "These phenomena follow a regular cycle, peaking every 11 years," Brun said. "In 2024, the Sun reached the peak of its 25th cycle." Next week, CEA scientists will focus on the Sun's corona, the outermost layer of its atmosphere.

"We're incredibly lucky: the Moon is 400 times smaller than the Sun but it's also 400 times closer to us," Brun said.

This coincidence means the Moon blocks out the Sun's light, but still lets scientists see what is happening in its atmosphere.

The Sun's corona extends out for 10 million kilometres, and is a million times less

intense than its surface, which is called the photosphere. But the corona can still reach up to two million degrees Celsius. During normal times when there is no eclipse, scientists study the Sun's atmosphere with satellites equipped with a coronagraph "a filter that blocks out the photosphere", Brun explained. But total eclipses even allow them a rare glimpse of the chromosphere, the layer of atmosphere between the corona and the surface.

- 'Inspirational' -

Scientists at the European Space Agency (ESA) will be analysing next week's eclipse, hoping to learn more about solar winds.

"Why do solar storms propagate in this way? What are their structures, and can we develop models that allow us to predict them?" asked Carole Mundell, the ESA's director of science. □

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HEALTH



DOCTOR ON DUTY

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

San Nicolas IMSAN
24 HOURS
Tel. 524 8833

PHARMACY ON DUTY

Oranjestad: Eagle
Tel. 587 9011

San Nicolas: Centro Medico
Tel. 584 5794

OTHER

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

EMERGENCY

Police	100
Police Oranjestad	527 3140
Police Noord	527 3200
Police Sta. Cruz	527 2900
Police San Nicolas	584 5000
Police Tipline	11141
Ambulance	911
Fire Dept.	115
Red Cross	582 2219

TAXI SERVICES

Taxi Tas	587 5900
Prof. Taxi	588 0035
Taxi D.T.S.	587 2300
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A1 Taxi Serv.	280 2828

AID FOUNDATIONS

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FAVI- Visually Impaired
Tel. 582 5051

Alcoholics Anonymous
Tel. 736 2952

Narcotics Anonymous
Tel. 583 8989

Against Domestic Violence(FCVR)
Tel. 583 5400

Centre for Diabetes
Tel. 524 8888

Child Abuse Prevention
Tel. 582 4433

Quota Club Tel. 525 2672

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ARUBA TODAY NEWS

Baltics transform from Soviet stagnation to startup hubs

Vilnius, Lithuania

Stepping into the newly renovated Vilnius airport, visitors are greeted with a slew of billboards advertising products "Made in Lithuania", including cybersecurity giant NordVPN.

Rather than focusing on heritage or artisanal craftsmanship promoted in similar campaigns in Italy or France, Lithuania and its Baltic neighbors Estonia and Latvia are highlighting they are home to innovation.

The three countries have a growing number of startups recognized worldwide, such as online reselling platform Vinted, rideshare service Bolt and video-telephony pioneer Skype.

Despite a total population of just over six million people, the Baltic states possessed around 33,000 startups last year, according to data from Lursoft IT, a Latvian company specializing in business and financial databases.

They raised 20 percent more in funding in 2025 at 607 million euros (\$700 million), according to Practica



A laptop keyboard and Skype on App Store displayed on a phone screen are seen in this illustration photo taken in Krakow, Poland on March 17, 2025.

Capital and Firstpick's annual report on the sector. The Baltic states now have 17 "unicorns" startups with a valuation above \$1.0 billion.

- 'Entrepreneurial spirit' -

Fewer than four decades ago Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania regained their independence but inherited

inefficient factories from the Soviet Union's command economy.

"Regaining independence... unlocked the entrepreneurial spirit previously suppressed under Soviet rule," said Latvian-American entrepreneur Girts Graudins, who noted that the region has a history as a science and manufactur-

ing hub going back to the turn of the 20th century.

The ruins of the Soviet command economy were also a crucible for innovation, said Kadri Ukkari, who lectures on the subject at Estonia's Tartu University.

"Coming from (the) Soviet times, we didn't have very good telephone systems," she said, leading to the cre-

ation of Skype -- Estonia's first, and arguably its most famous, unicorn.

The app helped the once-behind country leap forward, she argued, "helping us to solve this very backward communication system".

Founded in 2003 by a couple of Scandinavian entrepreneurs along with four Estonian developers, Skype had 50 million registered users worldwide by 2005, when it was sold to online auction site eBay for approximately \$2.6 billion.

European Union accession in 2004 also brought the Baltic states access to European markets.

Estonia, with a population of 1.3 million, now has 10 active unicorns -- the most per capita in Europe.

- Startup 'multiplier effect' -

Although Skype is now defunct -- retired last year by Microsoft which bought the app in 2011, its legacy as the first Baltic unicorn can still be felt across the region. Known as the "Skype mafia" effect, founders and early employees took the

experience they gained from the company and went on to start their own companies, inspiring others to do the same.

Lithuania's first unicorn, second-hand clothing platform Vinted, has had a similar impact.

"Vinted's journey has certainly been intertwined with the broader development of Lithuania's startup ecosystem," said the company's vice president for corporate affairs, Jessie de la Merced, arguing that its presence has had a "multiplier effect".

Vinted, which became a unicorn in 2019, reached \$8 billion in market valuation in April, and Lithuania now boasts a total of six unicorns.

Unicorns' effects can also be felt across the local economy, said Karolina Urbonaite, the head of Start-up Lithuania, a government institution which supports the country's startup ecosystem. □

Most UK teens to opt out of planned social media curfew: poll

London, United Kingdom

Most teenagers would opt out of a U.K. government plan to impose social media curfews on older teenagers, according to a poll published Friday.

Plans to introduce an overnight social media curfew for children aged 16 and 17 were unveiled by the UK government in mid-

July under Prime Minister Andy Burnham's predecessor, Keir Starmer.

The curfew would supplement a social media ban on under-16s announced by Starmer in June, covering sites including Snapchat, TikTok, YouTube, Instagram and Facebook.

The time restriction would be enabled by default set-

tings on social media accounts for children aged 16 and 17, preventing them from accessing social media sites between midnight and 6:00 am.

But the feature could be turned off, and a survey by consultants Censuswide found 85 percent of 16 to 18-year-olds said they would disable it.

Just under half of the teenagers polled said they would turn the feature off to allow them to speak to friends and family, while 37 percent said they would opt out of the curfew to watch online content.

The research suggests a curfew is "unlikely to be enough on its own to prevent online harms," said Leanne Proctor, regulatory lead at the Online Responsibility Network, the organization the survey was con-

ducted for.

Just two percent of the 1,000 teenagers polled said they did not currently scroll on social media or watch short-form videos on school nights.

Over 18 percent of them said they consumed social media content until 1:00 am or later.

Education minister Bridget Phillipson told broadcasters after the plan was unveiled that the voluntary element of the curfews could be changed if it was found too many teenagers were switching off the default settings.

The U.K. government has said its plan is inspired by Australia's under-16 social media ban, which was introduced in December and does not include a curfew for 16- and 17-year-olds. □



The TikTok logo is displayed on a smartphone screen in this photo illustration in Brussels, Belgium, on March 30, 2026.



FIFA's president Gianni Infantino sits next to the governor of Valle del Cauca Dilian Francisca Toro (L) and the president of Colombia's Football Federation (FCF) Ramon Jesurun, during a visit to a sports complex in Cali, Colombia, on August 7, 2026.

FIFA chief Infantino gets backing of South American football

Cali, Colombia

FIFA president Gianni Infantino on Friday received support from several leading South American football figures as he visited Colombia amidst the crisis engulfing world football's governing body.

Infantino arrived early on Friday in the Colombian city of Cali to attend hard-right president Abelardo de la Espriella's inauguration.

Photos released by the Colombian Football Federation show a smiling Infantino standing alongside South American Football Confederation (CONMEBOL) president Alejandro Dominguez and the president of the Colombian federation, Ramon Jesurun.

The visit to Colombia comes as the head of world football has been embroiled in a storm following a much-criticised and ultimately abandoned plan to open the World Cup to private investment.

The 56-year-old Italian-Swiss lawyer, who has been in office since 2016, declined to answer a question from an AFP journalist about whether he considered FIFA's woes to be over.

Later, while attending a children's soccer festival at a sports complex in Cali, he spoke of his "happiness" at

being at the event.

"It is a joy to be here today," the FIFA boss told dozens of children kitted out in football gear at an event in the southwestern city.

"Football is joy, football is happiness, football is unity," he said, adding that "so many champions" were born "in this part of the world, in this part of Colombia."

- 'Not necessary to always agree' -

Infantino, who will seek a fourth and final term in the presidential election in Rabat next March, is facing criticism, notably from European body UEFA, which on Thursday maintained its threat to boycott the World Cup despite FIFA's withdrawal of the private investment proposal.

CONMEBOL, which has only 10 FIFA-affiliated members but includes iconic federations such as Argentina and Brazil, had on Thursday expressed its "concern regarding the repeated unilateral actions taken" by FIFA.

However, when asked by a Colombian media outlet on Friday, the CONMEBOL president stated that "one cannot ignore the great work" done by Infantino.

"We must continue working for football through dia-

logue; it is not necessary to always agree," Dominguez added.

Following the powerful Argentine Football Association (AFA) and the Paraguayan federation on Thursday, Infantino also received support on Friday from two other South American federations -- Venezuela and Ecuador.

In line with their confederation's statement, they welcomed the withdrawal of the controversial plan to create a commercial entity open to private investors known as the FIFA Forward Enterprise.

In a letter to the FIFA chief, Ecuadorian federation president Francisco Egas Larreategui added that he had confidence in Infantino "as well as in those currently leading football to continue working for the good of our sport".

Close to figures on the right of politics, such as US President Donald Trump, Infantino attended De la Espriella's presidential inauguration ceremony later on Friday.

Colombia's incoming leader has broken with tradition by choosing to hold the ceremony in Cali, considered the capital of salsa, rather than before Congress in Bogota. □



Cameron Norrie of Great Britain plays a backhand against Alex de Minaur of Australia during their singles third round match on day five of the ATP 1000 National Bank Open presented by Rogers at Stade IGA on August 6, 2026 in Montreal, Quebec, Canada.

Shelton storms to Montreal win as title defence solidifies

Montreal, Canada

Ben Shelton threw down eight aces and produced three love games in the second set in dominating Zizou Bergs 6-3, 6-2 on Friday in reaching the fourth round of the ATP Montreal Masters.

Fifth seed Shelton, highest-ranked man remaining in a severely depleted field, improved his chance for a second straight title in Canada with the rout in 65 minutes. The American profited from foot faults and double-faults from his Belgian opponent in advancing to a round of 16 for the first time this season.

"It was a good day for me, I managed the match well," said 23-year-old Shelton. "He came out serving extremely well. I had to make some adjustments.

"I found a way to break his serve and kept the foot on the gas when I got the lead."

Shelton will wait for an opponent as number nine Casper Ruud, the only other top-10 seed remaining in his half of the draw, plays his fourth-round match against Brazilian teenager Joao Fonseca.

Tallon Griekspoor followed up his defeat of top-seeded Roland Garros champion Alexander Zverev, with the Dutchman gaining late momentum and getting through a rough patch for a 3-6, 6-4, 6-3 defeat of Matteo Arnaldi.

The Italian French Open semi-finalist took early command before Griekspoor took motivation through player box instructions from Swedish coach Thomas Hogstedt and turned the match on its head.

World number 66 Griekspoor went up two breaks in the deciding set against the 2024 Canadian semi-finalist, lost one of them but broke back for victory in his third match point after more than two hours.

"Tennis is such a tricky sport. It's never over until the last ball is hit," Griekspoor said. "I tried to stay focused, I'm happy with how I managed.

"I've had a good level in practice but was not able to convert it to the match court. Today was not easy but I'm pleased after a win like this.

"I was far from my best but I'm happy I played myself into the match to win it."

Griekspoor will bid for a quarter-final place when he takes on Spaniard Daniel Merida, who put out Alex Michelsen 6-4, 6-7 (4/7), 6-1, saving two match points in the second set for the American. □

Niewiadoma seizes Tour de France Femmes lead on Mont Ventoux

Mont Ventoux, France

Kasia Niewiadoma sprung a surprise on her two rivals Marlen Reusser and Demi Vollering with a long-range solo win on the Tour de France Femmes Queen stage on Friday which edged her into a narrow overall lead.

Starting the day third 1min 17sec down, the Polish rider attacked a massive 9km from the summit of Mont Ventoux in the Provence region of southern France as the top two let her go and instead kept tabs on each other.

By the time all three main contenders had crossed the line Niewiadoma's tactic had edged her to a 15sec lead overall on Vollering, while overnight leader Reusser had folded to third overall at 39sec.

"I'm just so tired and so blown away with what just happened," said Niewiadoma after an agonizing final kilometer on stage seven.

"As we started to climb Mont Ventoux, I looked right and I saw my parents. They made a surprise visit, I could see my dad crying,



Canyon//SRAM zondacrypto's Polish rider Katarzyna Niewiadoma celebrates as she crosses the finish line to win the 7th (out of 9) stage of the fifth edition of the Women's Tour de France cycling race, 146.8 km from Voulte-sur-Rhone to The Mont Ventoux, at The Mont Ventoux, southeastern France on August 7, 2026.

and I was like, 'I just need to make them proud.'"

Niewiadoma won the title in 2024 and took a risky early attack with a track record as the better climber of the three.

The 31-year-old explained her early charge was due to the wind and how it

would be harder on the upper lunar landscapes of the mountain to drop the other two.

"She was incredible today, really, well done for her," said Reusser of the winner.

- 'Played to her advantage' -

The 34-year-old Swiss said however that she and Vollering had only themselves to blame for the turn around.

"It was stupid of us, Demi kept attacking and I told her we should work together, we had her in our sights but we played to her ad-

vantage," said Reusser.

The Canyon-SRAM rider eventually crested the 1910m altitude finish line 1min 16sec ahead of Dutch rider Vollering, who unlike Niewiadoma flew up the final section to claw back around 30 seconds that could eventually prove crucial.

Niewiadoma beat Vollering to the title in 2024 by just four seconds.

Italian Elisa Longo Borghini also finished strong on the day in third another 26 sec off the pace overhauling Reusser near the line.

Defending champion Pauline Ferrand-Prevot of France ended 10 minutes down on the day.

Saturday's penultimate run to Nice would appear set for a mass sprint finish but Niewiadoma said she would be wary.

"There's a hill near the end and I know it won't be easy," she said.

The race also ends in Nice on Sunday with a title struggle in the hills outside the Riviera city ripe for a tense finale with a series of four climbs of the same steep 7km slope. □



Haynes King #16 of the Carolina Panthers scores a five-yard touchdown to defeat the Arizona Cardinals 33-30 in the 2026 Pro Football Hall of Fame Game at Tom Benson Hall Of Fame Stadium on August 06, 2026 in Canton, Ohio.

Washington, United States

Haynes King's five-yard touchdown run on the final play gave the Carolina Panthers a 33-30 victory over Arizona on Thursday in the first NFL pre-season game of the 2026 season. King, a 25-year-old undrafted rookie quarterback completed 21-of-34 passes for 180 yards and two touchdowns and ran three times for 39 yards

and the winning touchdown in the Hall of Fame Game at Canton, Ohio.

Trailing 27-23 late in the fourth quarter, the Cardinals drove 62 yards in 10 plays with backup quarterback Kedon Slovis flipping a one-yard touchdown pass to Bryson Green to give Arizona a 30-27 lead. Carolina answered on a 13-play, 65-yard march in

Panthers edge Cardinals in NFL pre-season opener

1:55 with King scrambling over the goal line at the finish to decide matters.

With no overtime in pre-season games, the Panthers elected to go for the victory on the final play rather than kick a tying field goal.

Two days before former Carolina linebacker Luke Kuechly and retired Arizona receiver Larry Fitzgerald will be inducted into the Pro Football Hall of Fame, their past clubs met in the annual classic to signal the start of training contests ahead of next month's launch of the NFL campaign.

The game mainly focuses on players like King, trying to earn starting jobs and roster spots for the regular season.

After a scoreless first quarter, Arizona took a 7-0 lead

with Corey Kiner's one-yard touchdown run. It capped a 13-play, 96-yard drive with Carson Beck completing all six of his passes for 72 yards in the march.

Carolina equalized on AJ Dillon's one-yard touchdown run but Arizona regained the lead on Beck's five-yard touchdown pass to Simi Fehoko. King's 15-yard touchdown pass to Ja'seem Reed lifted Carolina level again.

Chad Ryland's 35-yard field goal gave the Cardinals a 17-14 lead but Ryan Fitzgerald answered for Carolina from 33 yards to level the half-time score at 17-17. Ryland's 43-yard field goal in the third quarter lifted Arizona back on top but King flipped a four-yard touchdown pass to Anthony Tyus that got the

Panthers ahead 24-20.

The Cardinals answered on a 35-yard Ryland field goal but Fitzgerald responded from 37 yards to restore Carolina's four-point edge, setting up the closing drama.

The game marked the debut of Arizona head coach Mike LaFleur, hired in February to replace Jonathan Gannon.

Together with his brother Matt, in his eighth season as Green Bay head coach, they are the second set of siblings to be NFL coaches after John Harbaugh of the New York Giants and Jim Harbaugh of the Los Angeles Chargers.

Panthers coach Dave Canales guided Carolina to an 8-9 record and NFC South division title last year. □