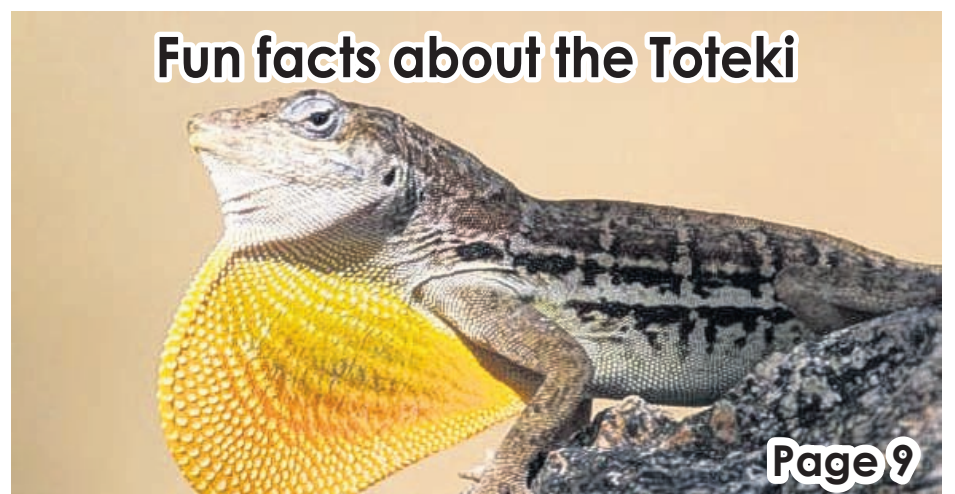
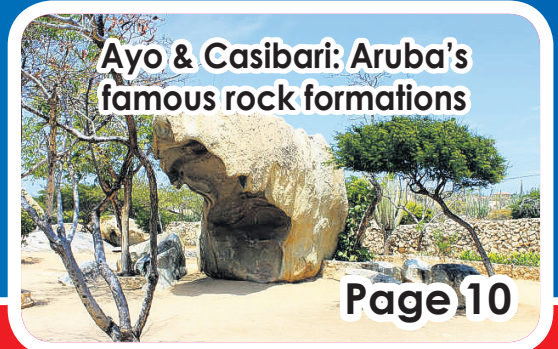




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As Canada takes on U.S. tariffs, what's behind the David and Goliath fight?

Washington, United States

The United States and Canada have plunged into a trade war as Ottawa stands its ground in the face of President Donald Trump's latest tariffs, taking on the world's largest economy. Washington slams its long-time ally as the only trading partner besides China to retaliate against Trump's duties. But Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney said: "You're at war when you get attacked. We got attacked."

As new 50-percent U.S. tariffs took effect on \$20 billion in Canadian goods Saturday, Ottawa set out a "dollar-for-dollar" response Tuesday.

How much pain tolerance does each country have?

- How do the economies compare? -

The United States has a GDP of \$32.5 trillion, in contrast with Canada's \$2.5 trillion.

"This is not an equal fight," Christian Lawrence of Rabobank told AFP. "Exports to the U.S. are 25 percent of Canada's GDP."

The United States is by far Canada's biggest trading partner.

U.S. goods imports from Canada were just 11.5 percent of its total over the first half of 2026, although this outpaced imports from China.



Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney speaks at a press conference in Ottawa, Ontario, on August 22, 2026 after trade talks with the U.S. collapsed.

Canada's imports from the United States, meanwhile, represented 58 percent of its overall figure.

- Who has more to lose? -

Hit by Trump's tariffs, Canada's economy has been recovering after contracting in late 2025.

"Canada cannot decouple from the U.S.," Lawrence added. But it provides important goods to the U.S.

The "stagflationary impulses from weaker foreign demand and higher domestic prices are going to be disproportionately felt

by Canada," warned ING chief international economist James Knightley.

Stagflation refers to a situation of slow economic growth, rising costs and elevated unemployment.

New U.S. tariffs likely have a limited impact on economic growth, but professor Trevor Tombe of the University of Calgary estimates they could put nearly 90,000 Canadian jobs at risk.

Still, Canada's Finance Minister Francois-Philippe Champagne touted his country's strong credit rating and "fiscal discipline,"

saying it can support workers and firms as long as needed.

- What leverage does Canada have? -

Canada is an important supplier of energy and potash to the United States, which has avoided harsh tariffs on both types of products.

The Fertilizer Institute estimated last year that 85 percent of U.S. potash imports, key to American farmers, came from Canada.

Most of U.S.-Canada energy trade value meanwhile

comes from U.S. energy imports from Canada, at \$111 billion in 2025, according to an analysis by the US Energy Information Administration. U.S. energy exports to Canada totaled \$26 billion last year.

And both countries have deeply integrated supply chains.

The Canadian Chamber of Commerce estimated last year that over 60 percent of goods the United States imports from Canada are intermediate goods like lumber, oil and steel which are used to make other products.

- Where will the U.S. feel the pain? -

U.S. importing businesses, particularly those close to the Canadian border, will likely feel the pinch from higher costs, Knightley of ING said.

Canadian provinces' removal of U.S. alcohol from liquor stores also saw exports of U.S. spirits drop by over 70 percent.

Similarly, Canadian visitor numbers to the United States plunged more than 25 percent from 2024 to 2025, Knightley noted.

This has weighed on leisure and hospitality employment in U.S. border communities, found Philip Luck of the Center for Strategic and International Studies. □

CIA director was on 'semi-routine' mission in Moscow: Trump



CIA Director John Ratcliffe exits the West Wing at the conclusion of a Freedom 250 Grand Prix showcase on West Executive Avenue between the West Wing of the White House and the Eisenhower Executive Office Building on July 13, 2026 in Washington, DC.

Washington, United States

U.S. President Donald Trump said Wednesday that CIA Director John Ratcliffe's visit to Moscow was "semi-routine," while implying that the intelligence chief was in the Russian capital to discuss the Ukraine war.

"He's there, very sort of semi-routine. I hate to disappoint people. We would like to see the war with Ukraine end," Trump said in an interview with conservative radio host Glenn Beck.

Ratcliffe is one of the highest-ranking US officials to visit Russia since its war with Ukraine started in 2022.

His Tuesday visit came amid an escalation in Moscow's offensive in Ukraine, with attacks this summer increasing the civilian death toll, while US-brokered peace talks have stalled.

The Kremlin said Wednesday that Ratcliffe had "contacts" with Russia's special services on his visit to Moscow but did not meet President Vladimir Putin.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said Putin was briefed on the talks but refused to say whether the Ukraine war was raised.

"Contacts through the intelligence services are a positive development in and of themselves. It is too early to say how this will affect the process of resolving the crisis in our relations," Peskov said.

The last time a CIA director visited Moscow was in November 2021 when William Burns warned Russia against sending troops into Ukraine. Weeks later, the Kremlin launched its attack that turned into Europe's worst conflict since World War II. □

Meta, U.S. states agree \$16.7B settlement in landmark teen safety case

Oakland, United States

Meta agreed to pay a coalition of U.S. states as much as \$16.7 billion and to impose sweeping new limits on how teenagers use Facebook and Instagram, according to a court filing on Wednesday that ends a landmark trial in California. The proposed settlement, filed in federal court, would resolve claims by 29 states that Meta deliberately engineered its platforms to hook young users, misled the public about the risks and unlawfully collected data from children under 13.

The changes to how young people use its apps go further than anything Meta has accepted before, and follow years of criticism from parents and experts over the effects of the world's biggest social media platforms on children. Anger over the impact of Instagram and Facebook as well as rival apps like Snapchat and TikTok has driven the spread of age limits and school phone bans around the world. Despite the settlement, in the United States, Meta still faces thousands of personal injury claims and litigation from school districts, none of which the agreement covers. The case by the 29 states



Nevada Attorney General Aaron Ford speaks about Nevada's consumer protection settlement with Meta, during a news conference in Las Vegas, Nevada, on August 26, 2026.

was among the most far-reaching, with Meta warning that a courtroom loss could have exposed it to more than \$1 trillion in penalties.

"Meta has agreed to make massive transformations that will reduce the risk of harm from its platforms -- and will do it within months," California Attorney General Rob Bonta said in a statement. He called the outcome "real change, real transparency, and real enforceable protections for chil-

dren."

The agreement, signed by 51 U.S. states and territories, will apply only to teenagers in those signatory states, with no effect internationally.

The filing states that the agreement does not amount to an admission of liability or wrongdoing by Meta, which has consistently denied the allegations. It requires court approval to take effect. Federal Judge Yvonne Gonzalez Rogers said she expected to approve the agreement "pretty shortly."

The most far-reaching provisions are not financial. Meta has agreed to a long list of new safeguards that will substantially change how the apps work for young people. One change is an automatic nighttime block that locks teenagers out of Facebook and Instagram between midnight and 6:00 am local time. Teenage accounts will also be capped by default at two hours of cumulative daily use across Meta's apps, though time spent messaging or watching

long-form video does not count toward the limit.

- 'Right away' -

Meta framed the deal as a template for the rest of the industry and pressed its competitors to match it.

"Because teens move fluidly across dozens of apps, we need an industry-wide solution," said C.J. Mahoney, Meta's chief legal officer.

"We therefore call on our industry peers, TikTok and YouTube, to implement this new framework, right away."

Should competing platforms adopt equivalent commitments, the overnight lockout would widen to 10 pm through 7 am and the daily allowance would fall to 60 minutes per app, capped at two hours in total.

Compliance would be policed for 10 years by an independent auditor chosen jointly by Meta and the states and paid for by the company.

The settlement payment schedule provides for 10 annual installments. California, the largest recipient, is due \$1.5 billion to \$2.1 billion over the decade, followed by New York with up to \$1.13 billion.

The settlement ends the trial in its second week. □

Trump threatens to rename Lake Ontario as 'Lake America'

Washington, United States

U.S. President Donald Trump said Tuesday he was considering renaming Lake Ontario as "Lake America" as his trade war with Canada escalated. The threat -- which Trump backed up with a map featuring the new name -- mirrored his move to rename the Gulf of Mexico as the Gulf of America last year.

Trump stepped up his rhetoric as Canada announced a volley of tit-for-tat tariffs on U.S. goods after trade talks between the historically close allies broke down on Friday. "The United States is giv-

ing serious consideration to changing the name of Lake Ontario to Lake America in that we don't expect to be doing much business with Ontario any longer," Trump said on his Truth Social network.

Lake Ontario is one of the five Great Lakes located on the border between Canada and the United States.

It shares a name with the Canadian province of Ontario, which borders the lake along with the US state of New York. Toronto, Canada's largest city, sits on the northwestern shore of the lake.

Trump later posted a map with the words "Lake Ontario" crossed out and replaced with "Lake America" in large gold font with a U.S. flag, which was boosted by pro-Trump social media accounts.

The lake threat comes as Trump reups his push for Canada to become the 51st U.S. state and the trade war between the two countries escalates. But it also reflects a peculiarly personal spat with Ontario Premier Doug Ford, who said Monday that the U.S. president could "kiss my ass" and threatened a surcharge on exported electricity.

During his second presidency, Trump has irked a series of allies with his outlandish territorial claims. Mexico has refused to ac-

cept his executive order renaming of the Gulf of Mexico as the Gulf of America on his first day back in office on January 20. □



Big Tub Lighthouse in Tobermory, Ontario, Canada, on August 1, 2026. The lighthouse was originally lit in 1885 and remains in operation.

Malian songbird keeps age-old sounds alive at 88

Bamako, Mali

At the age of 88, barefoot and cinched into a belt of cowrie shells, renowned singer Mariam Bagayoko still sweeps across the stage with infectious energy, dazzling wide-eyed fans with the rhythms of a bygone Mali.

Beloved at home and abroad, the "Nightingale of Beledougou" has spent a lifetime carrying the traditional music far beyond her homeland, fighting to keep it alive in the modern world. At Bamako's Palace of Culture, Bagayoko spun like a top, her knees bending and body dipping low before springing back up again as she threw her head back and forth.

In her right hand, she gripped a yabara, a percussion instrument made from a large calabash filled with dried seeds that rattled sharply as it struck her left palm.

The sound blended with the deep notes of the n'goussoumbala, a large xylophone-like balafon unique to the Beledougou



Malian singer, dancer and instrumentalist Mariam Bagayoko sings during a performance at the Palais de la Culture in Bamako on August 14, 2026.

region of central-western Mali, long known for its rural musical traditions.

Moments before, she had clasped her hands behind her back in a show of respect to protective spirits and griots, the guardians of the spoken word, before launching into powerful Bambara songs that evoke

moonlit village gatherings. A towering figure in Mali's music scene, Bagayoko has spent decades bringing little-known local traditions to audiences around the world.

In late 2025, she received a lifetime achievement honour at the Aga Khan Music Awards in London, emerg-

ing as one of 11 final laureates selected from more than 400 candidates across Africa, Asia, the Middle East and Europe.

The jury, which included Malian star Oumou Sangare and renowned Catalan early-music master Jordi Savall, praised her "passionate and unwavering

dedication" to preserving and passing on Mali's musical heritage, especially to women and girls.

- Sang before she spoke -

Born in Kolokani, north of the capital Bamako, in Beledougou, where music and dance follow every stage of life from farm work to ceremonies, Bagayoko said she learned to "sing before I could speak".

As a child, she would trail village women as they pounded shea nuts for butter, labour that was always accompanied by song. "I joined them with my little calabash and sang along," she told AFP.

"At first, nobody paid attention to me. But little by little, my presence became indispensable."

Those simple melodies would eventually make her one of Mali's best-known ambassadors of traditional music.

Yet her father, a musician and performer in traditional local koteba theatre troupes, was against her musical ambitions.

"He was afraid that if I became successful too quickly, I would not live long, that I might be poisoned out of jealousy," she recalled.

- 'Future in good hands' -

Drawing on old songs from her country, Bagayoko's music comments on social issues and offers advice inspired by current events.

"It is the artist's privilege to be able to speak out," she said.

"Through song, we give lessons without hurting people, even when they see themselves in what we're saying."

One of her most famous performances is of the song "Ciwara", a tribute to the courage of farmers and the value of hard work.

She is also known for dancing atop the wooden keys of the n'goussoumbala, turning the instrument into a stage of its own.

Much of her reputation rests on her efforts to keep Bambara music and dances alive. □

Oscar-winner Mirren, women footballers among latest UK honours recipients

London, United Kingdom

Oscar-winning actress Helen Mirren, Black Sabbath guitarist Tony Iommi and six of England's European Championship-winning women footballers were recipients of British honors announced Friday.

Julia Donaldson, author of the best-selling children's book "The Gruffalo", was made a dame for services

to literature alongside Malorie Blackman, who has written more than 70 books for children and young adults.

From the world of sports, rugby league great and research fundraiser Kevin Sinfield was knighted, while former Manchester United footballer Lou Macari landed an honor for his decade-long commitment to

a homeless charity.

The traditional UK honors announced to mark King Charles III's official birthday in June award the famous as well as members of the public for excellence in their fields and charitable endeavors.

Nearly 1,200 people earned recognition in the latest list. Last year's saw David Beckham receive his knighthood, becoming Sir David.

Mirren, who won an Oscar for her portrayal of Queen Elizabeth II in the 2006 film "The Queen", had already been recognized by the late monarch for services to the performing arts with a 2003 damehood.

The 80-year-old now joins an elite group of recipients of a Companion of Honor. There are only 65 holders of the title at any one time under Britain's honours system.

Iommi, who co-founded the heavy metal icons Black Sabbath alongside the late Ozzy Osbourne, Geezer Butler and Bill Ward, became a Member of the Order of the British Empire (MBE) for his services to music and charity.

"What an unbelievable honor," he said. "It's been a privilege doing something I love and then to see that music connects with so many over the years."

Chloe Kelly, who scored the winning penalty in England women's 2025 Euros final victory over Spain, was among the six players to be made an MBE.

Goalkeeper Hannah Hampton, defender Jess Carter and forwards Alessia Russo, Lauren James, and Michelle Agyemang were also honored, with Agyemang aged 20 the youngest recipient on the list. □



British actress Helen Mirren looks on as she receives the first major joint UK-Italy award at the birthday celebrations of King Charles III, at Villa Wolkosky, Rome, on June 18, 2026.

Trees 'giving up': climate change hammers historic English gardens



This photo taken on August 18, 2026 shows head of gardens, Rosie Fyles, watering trees next to sun-scorched grass at Chiswick House in west London.

Hirosaki, Japan

Chanting in unison, hundreds of volunteers in northern Japan heaved on ropes on Wednesday to pull a 400-ton castle back towards its original position. The imposing fortified tower of Hirosaki Castle was shifted

ed 80 metres (262 feet) in 2015 to allow for essential repairs to the stone walls that support it. Engineers at the time opted to reposition the three-storey wooden structure without dismantling it, hoisting it in one piece on metal rails

to a temporary platform. Since last Saturday, groups of about 80 people have been taking turns moving the tower a few precious centimeters at a time. Local officials estimate that around 4,000 people in total some from over-

seas have participated, advancing the structure by nearly five meters.

"It's like trying to move a mountain," Takahiro Kogawa, a 56-year-old Hirosaki resident, told AFP, his forehead beaded with sweat after a few minutes of intense effort.

Azusa Nimiya, a 46-year-old history and castle enthusiast, travelled from Shimane, almost on the other side of Japan's main island, to do her bit.

"It's the experience of a lifetime, a precious and unique memory," she said. The municipality will deploy heavy machinery in September to complete the journey, aiming for a permanent installation in November.

Following further restoration work on the copper roof and facades, the full reopening to the public of this masterpiece from the Edo period (1603-1868) is scheduled for 2033.

- Physical history -

By involving the public, "we

wanted everyone to be able to experience history physically," said Kensuke Hayasaka, the head of the restoration project.

"It's extremely significant for passing on the history of Hirosaki to future generations," he told AFP.

Lighting destroyed the tower in the 17th century, and it was rebuilt in the early 19th century.

But a few decades later, the stone foundations threatened to collapse, forcing the tower to be moved for the first time again thanks to muscle power.

It was finally returned to its original position in 1915.

This large-scale, human-powered operation, known as "hikiya", "is a traditional technique for moving structures that has existed in Japan since ancient times," explained Hayasaka.

"Our goal is to preserve this unique heritage, while ensuring that the main tower is securely fixed to its base before the first snowfall," which is abundant in winter in this northern region. □

With ropes and chants, thousands move Japanese castle

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Visitors watch as participants pull Hirosaki Castle using ropes to its original position following repair works in Hirosaki, Aomori Prefecture on August 26, 2026.

suring that the main tower is securely fixed to its base before the first snowfall," which is abundant in winter in this northern region.

"Seeing all these discussions and the methods devised by our predecessors and our teams finally come to fruition this year is extremely moving. We feel a profound sense of accomplishment," he added.

Among the most enthusiastic pullers was Katsumi Terada, 82, who tucked two Japanese flags into his headband.

He recounted having participated 11 years earlier.

"I wondered then, with some anxiety, if I would still be around to see it return to its base. But look, I persevered. I'm alive and well." □



A farmer holds harvested potatoes in a field in the village of Nandrin on August 14, 2026.

Too small for fries: drought shrinks Belgian potatoes

Amay, Belgium

Mathieu Comijn inspected rows of potatoes in a field of cracked earth and browned leaves, pulling from the ground tubers barely the size of ping-pong balls.

"How do you expect to make fries out of these?" asked the Belgian farmer in frustration, as he uprooted another plant and examined it.

"Normally, they should be at least four times this size," he said.

Like many Belgian farmers this summer, Comijn's harvest in Amay, near the eastern city of Liege, has been hit by a devastating combination of weather extremes.

First, a spate of heavy rain and storms at the end of spring weakened the soil. Then, as elsewhere in Europe, exceptionally hot and dry conditions followed blamed by scientists on man-made climate change.

That caused the soil to harden into compact clumps in which potatoes "cannot breathe properly" and struggle to grow, the farmer explained.

"It's a disaster," the 30-year-old told AFP. "I've never seen anything like it."

The problem for Comijn is that all these rows of Bintje

potatoes, a prized variety in Belgium, were destined to become long, golden fries a beloved staple in a country dotted by "friteries" or "frituren", street stalls specialising in the stuff. Yet with just a month to go before the harvest, set for around September 20, none are larger than the palm of his hand. The only silver lining is that their flavor has not been spoiled by their diminished size.

- 'Too painful' -

Comijn's father Stephane has been so distressed by the situation that he refused to visit the field for several days.

"It's too painful," said the septuagenarian, wiping his forehead. The former head of the family farm struggles to remember weather this dry in the region except, perhaps, during a historic heatwave in 1976.

But good harvest or bad, the Comijn family, who grow 500 hectares (1,236 acres) of potatoes, still have supply contracts to meet.

As the world's top exporter of frozen fries, Belgium applies strict rules to its potato trade.

Before the harvest, growers and processors negotiate both delivery volumes and prices.

To help fulfil part of their

commitments, the Comijns will draw on stocks from last year, when the harvest was exceptionally abundant.

"We had started throwing some of them away," Stephane Comijn explained, to make space for this year's crop.

"But now they're worth money," he said, standing in front of a refrigerated warehouse kept at 10C, where mountains of 2025 potatoes remain in storage.

- Supply crunch -

But Stephane Comijn knows using last year's stocks will not be enough.

"We're going to have to use varieties that aren't as good," he lamented. "People at the fry shops complain. You can explain to them that it's because of the drought, but they don't understand."

Bernard Lefevre, the president of the national union of fry vendors, sought to put things into perspective. "There's always a problem," said Lefevre, who has worked in the sector for a quarter-century.

"Either there are too many potatoes, like last year, and prices collapse, so producers say it's a catastrophe, or it's the opposite extreme.

"And yet, year after year, we manage to get through it." □



In this photo taken on August 17, 2026 Indonesian student Rudiansyah dressed in a Superman costume helps to extinguish a forest and land fire at Petuk Katimpun in Palangkaraya, Central Kalimantan.

'Keep up the spirit': Indonesian teenage 'Superman' joins wildfire fight

Palangkaraya, Indonesia

Dressed as his favourite superhero, Indonesian teenager Rudiansyah walks along a charred landscape, helping douse wildfires that have razed large parts of Borneo island.

The Southeast Asian country has been battling infernos that have left a thick, blanketing smog over parts of the island that Indonesia shares with Malaysia and Brunei. Rudiansyah's red and blue Superman costume stood out against the stark, scorched landscape surrounding the town of Palangkaraya, where he has joined a local volunteer firefighting group set up by his father to put out smouldering peatland.

The 17-year-old told AFP he has been using his free time after school to help his father douse fires since 2023.

But this year, he decided to don the brightly coloured tights when fighting fires, creating a striking image that has drawn attention to the struggle to contain the blazes.

While Rudiansyah said dressing as the Man of Steel was "just for fun", video of him using a hose to wet foliage has gone viral, garnering millions of views and earning him the title of "forest hero" from the country's forestry minister.

"Honestly, I'm really happy because I can help locals, even though it feels really tiring," Rudiansyah, who like many Indonesians only uses one name, told AFP on Sunday while still wearing his cape.

He said that he wet his costume slightly before heading into the fields to prevent it from burning, and washed it every night to keep it clean.

- 'Normal kid' -

His father, Mulyadi, told AFP the haze from this year's fire season was the worst his volunteer firefighter group had seen since it was established in 2020.

"In the house, he's like a normal kid," he said when asked about his cape-clad son.

"But when he saw me going out, he asked, 'Are you going to put out fires? I'll go with you,'" he said.

The lack of water was the main challenge for firefighters, Mulyadi said, with wells and other water sources drying up during drought.

Fires between January and July burned more than 200,000 hectares of land an area three times the size of the capital Jakarta, the government said this week. □

Create museum memories with the entire family!

Museums are an integral part of conserving and honoring cultures, and Aruba is no exception. Our Island has a wide selection of various museums for our locals and visitors to see. Take this opportunity to learn about our island and experience a different day beyond the beach. Let us introduce to you to these locations.

Museum of Industry Aruba

The Museum of Industry is located in San Nicolas. This museum presents the history of gold, aloe, phosphate, oil and tourism through elaborated displays and multimedia installations.

The Museum of Industry is situated in the Water Tower and narrates Aruba's industrial history which began in the 19th century. The Water Tower was built in 1939 and consists of three sections: the substructure, the high-rising vertical shaft, and the tank at the top. The Water Tower was purchased by the Monuments fund in 2003 so it could be restored and preserved as one of Aruba's

monuments. The Museum of Industry is part of Aruban Museum Foundation (FMA), which is a foundation that maintains, preserves, and protects the Aruban cultural sector, history, and nature. The museum of Industry is open daily from 9 am till 6 pm.

For more information check out their Facebook page: Museum of Industry Aruba.

Archaeological Museum of Aruba

The Archaeological Museum of Aruba is located at Schelpstraat 42 in downtown Oranjestad. The renovated historic Ecury complex in downtown Oranjestad has been transformed from a family home to a modern museum that preserves Aruba's Amerindian cultural heritage. This 21st century museum is especially designed to preserve valuable artifacts dating back to the Pre-Ceramic period of 2500 BC.

In the late 1980's AMA identified its need for an ad-

equate housing for its collection and activities. After studying various options, a project proposal was drawn up, including the acquisition and restoration of historical buildings in downtown Oranjestad.

These historical buildings were formerly the property of the Ecury family. The "Ecury Complex", is a cluster of single and two-story historic buildings, mainly Dutch colonial architecture from the late 19th and 20th century on a plot of approximately 1,700 m2.

In 1997 the Aruban Government bought the complex for the National Archaeological Museum project. In 2004 a financial agreement was signed with the European Development Fund and in 2006 restoration and construction work began on the monumental buildings and the new to build exhibition space. In December 2007 the key to the complex was delivered and the museum's employees moved to the new location. The final



design for the exhibit was completed in November 2007 and the permanent exhibit, financed by the Aruban Government and the Union of Cultural Organizations (UNOCA), opened in July 2009.

At the new location the National Archaeological Museum Aruba uses approximately 500 m2 for its permanent exhibit. This exhibit showcases archaeological objects and conveys modern exhibition techniques information on the origin and culture of the first inhabitants of the island. The new permanent exhibit gives

the visitor an insight into the cultures that inhabited the island in Pre-Historical and Early Historical times. The museum regularly hosts public seminars, special exhibitions and workshop for visitors to enjoy.

The museum is open daily from 9 am till 5 pm.

For more information check out the Facebook page National Archaeological Museum Aruba or website: www.manaruba.org

Editor's note: Pictures are property of the respective museums. □

Place names in San Nicolas and their origins

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

Sero Colorado

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



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

Vader Piet

Another well visited area, Vader Piet is located in the

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

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

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

San Nicolas

Of course we can't forget

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

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

Source: "Aruba: Short History" by Dr. J. Hartog.

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Don't miss out on L'Avenue's Early Bird Special!



(Oranjestad)—Up to grab an early dinner after a day of shopping or cruising? Take advantage of L'Avenue's Early Bird Special, and experience their innovative twist of traditional Belgian cuisine!

Located in a cozy nook at The Cove Mall—a short walking distance from the Holiday Inn and Paseo Herencia, this Belgian and French bistro offers a delicious and rich menu available through lunch and dinner from 11am to 10pm. Enjoy your lunch and/or dinner in a cool, air-conditioned interior area of the restaurant, accompanied by the warm lights and chic design that emphasizes the restaurant's laid-back, yet sophisticated ambience.

Lunch includes a variety of sandwiches—with a healthy selection of bread options—if you're going for a light meal, but just like their dinner selection, also includes



steak, chicken, fish, and even mussels and rabbit if you're craving a bit more of L'Avenue's exquisite menu. And let's not forget their wide selection of Belgian beer and European wine to complete the tasty experience!

But that's not all! L'Avenue is offering their guests their Early Bird Special, available every day from 4pm to 7pm. Enjoy this affordable and delectable 3-course meal

special at a comfortable price of \$32 per guest, including a glass of house wine.

L'Avenue honors and takes pride in serving the traditional Belgian and French flavors, but does not shy away from offering a flexible menu for their guests' needs. That's right, L'Avenue also offers to cater for their guests' dietary restrictions, making sure that each guest gets well taken care of!



More information

L'Avenue is situated at The Cove Mall in Palm Beach and is open every day from 11am to 10pm for lunch and dinner. To book a reservation or ask for more information, please contact their phone line at +297 6996400, send an e-mail info@lavenuearuba.com, or visit their website at lavenuearuba.com □

Dining in? Try making some local favorites!

How to make "pan bati"



(Oranjestad)—If you're ever up for an Aruban snack, try making another Aruban classic appetizer called Pan Bati. Similar to a pancake both in appearance and cooking, this is a super easy meal that adults and children will both enjoy. Here's how to make it!

Ingredients:

2 cups of all purpose flour
1 cup grams of fine cornmeal
2 tbsp baking powder
1 1/3 cup of milk
1 pinch of salt
2 tbsp of granulated sugar
Oil for cooking

Instructions:

Add all the dry ingredients in a bowl first, and stir until well mixed. Then add the milk and beat until reached a pancake-like consistency. If more moisture is needed, add some water until reached desired consistency.

In a hot pan with oil, pour in enough batter to cover the bottom of the pan. Just like pancakes, flip the pan bati when one side turns golden brown. When your pan bati is ready, place on a plate and cover with a clean kitchen towel.

Traditionally, pan bati is cut in triangle pieces, and is often eaten as a side dish with soup, fried fish or stews. However, it is also casually enjoyed with some butter and cheese on top! □

Sun catchers: The different lizards in Aruba

ORANJESTAD – Colorful or camouflaged, you're bound to encounter a variety of lizards basking in the sun or scurrying on their way in our island. From the charming, friendly iguanas to the good-luck gecko Pega-Pega, you're bound to meet a few of these special residents during your visit.

Aruba, as a desert island, is home to an incredible variety of unique and colorful species. Among them we can find different lizards, most of which have South American origins. But there are a few exceptions.

Iguanas

Iguanas are easy to spot, as they are larger than most other lizards and when young, have a bright green color that makes them stand out.

The iguanas usually found in Aruba are the Iguana, known as the green iguana, or locally as Yuwana. The Yuwana are a mostly herbivorous species, and can grow up to 2 meters in size, including the tail, making them one of the largest in the iguana family. As you will see, despite their name, as they reach adulthood, the iguanas can take on a grey or blue tone instead of the bright green displayed by the young ones. In Aruba – as in the rest of the Kingdom of the Netherlands – the most usual color varies from green to lavender, black and sometimes a reddish brown.

Yuwana is a protected species, as it is listed under Appendix II of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES), meaning that international trade is regulated through the CITES permit system. In the past, Arubans used to eat a popular Yuwana soup, as it was believed to give strength and help restore health – probably due to the protein boost it delivered. However, it is now illegal to catch, kill, buy or sell Yuwanas in Aruba, and this includes eating them!

Turnip-tailed gecko
The turnip-tailed gecko is

known locally as the Pega-Pega, meaning sticky-sticky, due to the way it sticks to walls using the suction in its little fingers. They are found inside houses, and are mostly a nocturnal animal.

According to Ethia Nativa, the local Pega Pega is immediately recognizable by its large size, with a body length of up to 12 cm, and its large, swollen tail, approximately the same length or slightly shorter than its body; females are larger and more robust than males. It has short, robust legs with flattened toes and extensive basal webbing.

The undersides of its toes are covered in lamellae, which are used as friction pads to cling to smooth vertical surfaces. Some can even walk around completely upside down. Its toes are covered with ridges, which are peppered with millions of microscopic bristle-like structures called setae that attach and detach when the animal wills them to, and they never get gunked up.

They are variable in coloration, from a mottled dark gray to orange-brown, and are capable of changing color depending on their mood and surroundings. Mottled and banded markings aid in camouflage against tree bark. They are harmless and fragile; you can hold one in your hands as long as you are VERY gentle.

Never put pressure on its tail because it will surely drop as a measure to try to distract the predator, and they are different from other lizards because they're long-lived, talkative, lack eyelids, and their small scales are situated next to each other like cobblestones rather than overlapping as is the case in most other lizards.

Turnip-tailed Geckos are insectivorous and feed on cockroaches, grasshoppers, beetles, flies, mosquitoes, and spiders, which makes them the best pest control to have at home! They spend their days concealed in dark tree grooves and cavities, in narrow crevices in the walls, or behind paintings, which

provide the perfect shelter for them. Pega pega is a gecko endemic to our island, but in time, some 4–5 intrusive gecko species have been observed, some of which do not cease to amaze us with the racket they make, especially during the hours of the night.

The Pega-pega Phyllodactylus Julieni is also a protected species in Aruba, by law. It is illegal to kill them!

Blue Cododo

These are one of the most striking lizards in Aruba, recognizable by the male's bright blue color. The Aruban whiptail lizard, *Cnemidophorus arubensis*, is a species endemic to Aruba, meaning you can only find it here on our One Happy Island! They are also recognized as the most common and populous lizard on the island. While the male is blue with white dots, the female is brown with blue dots.

These charming lizards eat mostly plants, such as flowers, nectar, leaves and fruits, and occasionally enjoy some insects. They are se-



lective in which plants they eat, because of the toxins present in many available plants species. The Cododo help take care of Aruba's vegetation by playing a significant role in the dispersal of seeds for certain plants: when they eat fruit, they excrete the seeds in diverse locations, contributing to the reproduction cycle of our local plants.

Striped anole

The striped anole (*Anolis lineatus*) that lives in Aruba is known locally as Waltaka or Toteki. This is a species of lizard in the family Dactyloidae, and they are native to Aruba and Curaçao. It is usually found in dry areas, commonly where there are not large trees; rather they enjoy rocks, walls or tree trunks, as they prefer to stay close to the ground.

These lizards are about 7cm

in length, have a brown color with a stripe on each side and typically, several stripes on the body and tail that are lighter in color. It has a dewlap which is orange-yellow – and what's unique about this species is that it is the only known species of anole where the dewlap is asymmetrically colored, with one side being a deeper orange and the other side a lighter yellow. Mostly this is seen in the males, as it is almost imperceptible in the females. If the Toteki shows you his dewlap, retreat! This is not a friendly greeting!

Lizards are wonderful creatures that are precious to our fragile, local ecosystem. Please be mindful of these residents as you enjoy your stay. □

Images: Some images are from Aruba Birdlife Conservation.



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Explore Aruba!

(ORANJESTAD)—Aruba Today collected some things to do BEYOND the beach. Aruba, located 15 miles north of Venezuela in the warm waters of the southern Caribbean, is home to beautiful white-sand beaches, 82-degree days, and thus ideal for the perfect beach day. But we are also blessed with some of the warmest people in the world and our island is 19.6 miles long and 6 miles across, with a total area of 70 square miles. Bit more to discover than the white stretch on the coastline we say. Let's mention some of these hidden gems.



Arikok National Park

The Arikok National park is worth the ride. We love the hikes that are guided by the park's rangers whose job is to maintain trails and protect natural resources. The flora and fauna are beautiful and the historical sites tell you about the island's indigenous roots. If you are not up to walking, you can drive through the park, one way or another this park is a great place to spend an entire day. Cruising through the landscape you end up at some of the most stunning beaches like Dos Playa or Daimara Beach. In total, the park consists of 34 square kilometers of protected nature with a richness of animals living in it. The Aruban whip-tail lizard (cododo), Aruban cat eye snake (santanero) and endangered rattle snake (cascabel) are just some of them, you can also

admire these close in the park's Visitors' Center. For more information, visit the website www.acf.aw

Natural Bridge

One of Aruba's favorite tourist attractions is the Natural Bridge. For thousands of years, pounding waves and strong winds have slowly chiseled away the limestone cliffs along Aruba's north coast to create several natural bridges. The largest of these bridges used to be the famous Natural Bridge. The bridge was a formation of coral limestone cut out by years of pounding surf, and was one of the largest of these types of spans in the world. It stood some 23 feet (7 meters) above sea level and spans more than 100 feet (30 meters). Unfortunately the bridge collapsed on September 2, 2005. Despite this, it is still the most photographed natural bridge



and it remains a popular tourist attraction in Aruba, with the adjacent and intact Baby Bridge also meriting a visit. The Natural Bridge is the perfect stop while touring Aruba. There is no admission fee or set hours for visiting. Quench your thirst with refreshing beverages & refuel your tank with local snacks.

The Lourdes Grotto

Named in commemoration of the famous French religious landmark, was created under the guidance of a priest named "Erkamp" and parishioners in the year

1958.

The grotto, a shrine built into the rocks is located in Seroe Preto, just off the main road to San Nicolas. A statue of the Virgin Mary, weighing 700 kilos, was hoisted into place in the grotto. Every year, on February 11 (feast of Lady of Lourdes), a procession leaves from the St. Theresita church in San Nicolas to the grotto, where a mass is performed. The grotto is located roadside and can be visited daily. Just make sure you park safely in the event you wish to stop for pictures at this location. □

Ayo & Casibari: Aruba's famous rock formations

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

Ayo

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



itecture to the surrounding "mondi"*. This is also one of the few sites to contain

prehistoric markings of our indigenous ancestors. The Ayo Rock formation contains stairs that lead you to the top of the highest boulder, offering a breathtaking view of the Aruban backyard.

The Ayo is usually quiet, as it is situated farther away from the busier parts of the island. However, this is just another charm of the site: the quiet area and the refreshing breeze offer a sense of comfort and peace.

Casibari

Probably the busier rock formation site, the Casibari is situated more in the center of the island, much closer—and more accessible—to the general public. Just like Ayo, Casibari is a fenced area containing several boulders that lay on top or lean on each other. The best aspect of the Casibari Rock Formation is the accompanying view when you climb up the top of the round, flat bolder. For this position, you can see the

majority of the island and the ocean in the south.

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

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



Aruba's cultural and literary development: Then and now



(Oranjestad)—The Aruban culture has seen many substantial developments over the course of a century. With the introduction of the Lago Refinery at the turn of the 20th century, followed by the breakout of the Second World War and the general incentive for political independence during the mid-century, a cultural identity on the island began to take form and have since developed through international and local influences.

In the pre-industrial era of the 19th century, much could not be said about a cultural identity on the island. Still being a part of a Dutch colonial territory at the same, as well as not having political or economic autonomy (Curacao was the center of commerce, cultural life, and political management of the Netherlands Antilles at the time), the small population of Aruba consisted mostly of farmers and fishermen, tending to their crops and their cattle, or going out to fish to provide for their family. As Quito Nicolaas states in his article *Historia di Literatura Arubiano: E Bida Cultural* (Literary History of Aruba: Cultural Life), "during the pre-industrial period, there were no significant economic activity that could have created a cultural ambience, with only one way to generate profit at the time for the sub existence of Aruban families."

It wasn't until the introduction of the Lago Refinery in San Nicolas in 1928, that the island saw a small boom in cultural manifestations and entertainment, as farmers left the 'cunucu' (country) life to work in the refinery, which resulted in Aruba acquiring a different economic pillar. Before this, entertainment and cultural manifestations were mostly experiences by local parishes and the island's elite, who often partook in cultural and entertaining activities around the island, like going to the movie theater or coming together to share poetry on Sundays after church.

Literary life

Throughout the 19th century and up until the 1940s, there were also not much trace of a cultural climate for the cultural-literary sector on the island. Primary education was introduced

on the island mid-19th century, followed by secondary and higher education around the late 30's and 40's. It wasn't until the 1950s, with the introduction of the E.R.N.A agreement in 1951 and the signing of the Statute in 1954, which allowed more space for and control over the economic and cultural development of Aruba, that the literary life on the island began to grow substantially compared to decades before. This was in response to local institutions established in the 1940s for cultural and literary growth on the island, but that did not yet capture the attention of the general public. The 1950 brought with it a boom of literary production on the island, like those of V.S. Piternella, as well as migrant authors José Ramón Vicioso y Rings William Rufus, who have also contributed to the literary development on the island. The literary movement was further promoted by local broadcasters Voz di Aruba and Radio Kelboom, with their regular broadcast of literary works.

The 50s and 60s also saw the influence of international cultures, especially that of the United States. During this time, because of international influences as well as the continued prosperity of the oil refinery, cultural traditions in Aruba began to really take form and become widespread, as different worldly and local concepts were introduced in the Aruban society. With the establishment of local television broadcast station Tele-Aruba in 1963, and with time and possibilities, local programs such as "Nos Tera" ("Our Land") started to pay more attention to the Aruban culture and worked to form a cultural consciousness in the community. The 1960s also saw the rise of local authors and artists, who were more comfortable in producing works in our native tongue, Papiamentu, but who also produced works in Spanish, English and Dutch. This new phenomenon was in response to the interaction between economic growth, individual prosperity, cultural life and literary expression.

The 21st century

Nowadays, international influence on our culture is still prevalent, especially those from Latin America, the United States and The Netherlands. Nevertheless, there also exists a strong cultural identity and traditions that are exclusive to the Aruban culture, often manifesting during traditional celebrations, like Dia di San Juan/ Dera Gay (St. John's Day), Dia di Himno y Bandera (National Hymn and Flag Day), Camping during Easter and much more. With the surge of social media in the last decade, artistic voices, especially those of the younger generation, has become even more prevalent and easily accessible to the community of Aruba through online platforms such as Facebook, Instagram and TikTok. □

Source: Historia di Literatura Arubiano: E Bida Cultural by J.R. "Quito" Nicolaas



CROSSWORD

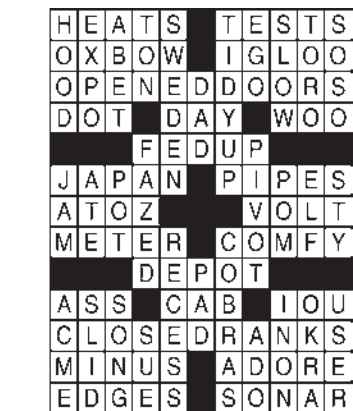
By **THOMAS JOSEPH**

ACROSS

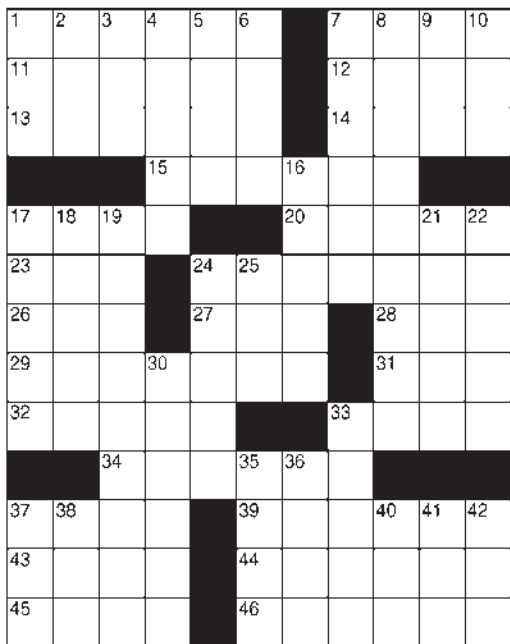
- 1 Predica-
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- 7 Pindar
poems
- 11 Piled up
- 12 Latvia's
capital
- 13 Pooh's
pal
- 14 Pop of
music
- 15 Seek,
as office
- 17 Power
unit
- 20 Vigilant
- 23 2001
Will Smith
film
- 24 Predict
- 26 Beagle or
boxer
- 27 Objective
- 28 Kinsey
topic
- 29 Spreads,
as a
sleeping
bag
- 31 Green of
"Casino
Royale"
- 32 Small
sounds
- 33 Calls on
- 34 Ignores
the limit
- 37 Too
- 39 Big-billed
bird
- 43 Foot
features
- 44 Painter
Monet
- 45 Artist's
inspiration

DOWN

- 1 That ship
- 2 Semi-
circular
shape
- 3 Beam of
light
- 4 Left on
a liner
- 5 Llama's
land
- 6 Adam's
home
- 7 Baltimore
player
- 8 Goes off
on a
tangent
- 9 Easter
quest
- 10 Put into
words
- 16 Rural busi-
nesses



- 17 Crumple
- 18 Detached
- 19 Fierce
females
- 21 "Super-
man"
star
- 22 Michener
book
- 24 Un-
faithful
- 25 Pipeline
flow
- 30 Go
against
- 33 Routine
- 35 Engrave
- 36 Portion
(out)
- 37 Money
machine
- 38 Singer
Reed
- 40 Trophy
- 41 Sports
drink
suffix
- 42 Homer's
neighbor



5-10

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.

5-10 CRYPTOQUOTE

IQ WQQN JQLEZ EP GQQ DQIW

FIN IQ CFN JQLEZ EP PVQTG

ZIQRWV. — TQWZT ZCZTG

Cryptoquote: LOOKING BACK, MY
LIFE SEEMS LIKE ONE LONG OBSTACLE RACE,
WITH ME AS THE CHIEF OBSTACLE. — JACK
PAAR

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	
16 SUN	FREEWINDS DEPT. Arrival: Departure: 24:00 Berth: E
18 TUE	CARNIVAL HORIZON Arrival: 8:00 Departure: 22:00 Berth: B GRANDEUR OF THE SEAS Arrival: 8:00 Departure: 23:00 Berth: C
19 WED	FREEWINDS Arrival: 6:00 Departure: Berth: E
23 SUN	FREEWINDS DEPT. Arrival: Departure: 24:00 Berth: E
25 TUE	CARNIVAL MAGIC Arrival: 9:00 Departure: 22:00 Berth: B GRANDEUR OF THE SEAS Arrival: 6:00 Departure: 23:00 Berth: C
26 WED	FREEWINDS Arrival: 6:00 Departure: Berth: E
30 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

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

Difficulty: ★★★

8/27

Answer to previous puzzle

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

Difficulty: ★★★

8/26

Butterflies seek new habitats as climate changes: study

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.



A common yellow swallowtail butterfly (*Papilio machaon*) is feeding on a flower in Chisseaux, central France, on June 27, 2026.

- '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.

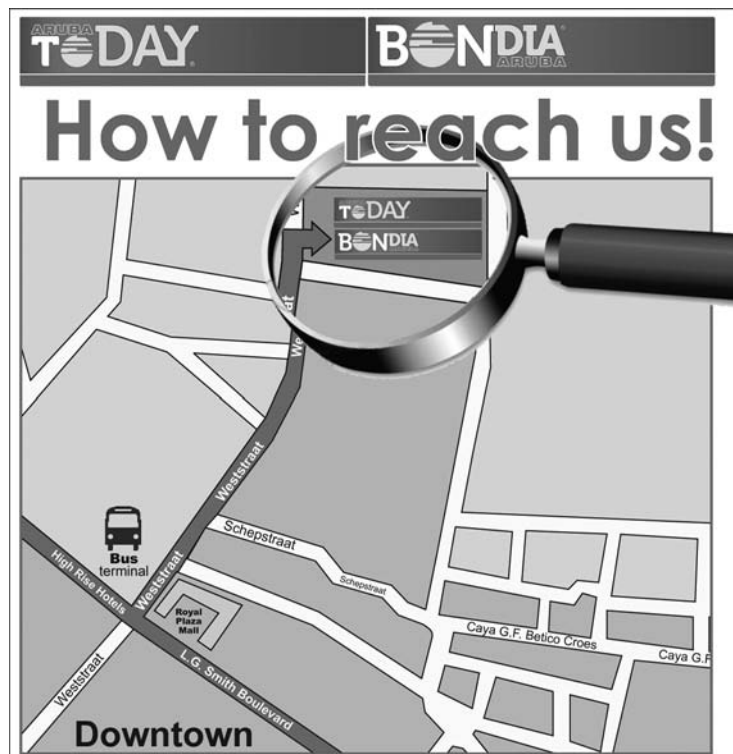
But butterflies could only adapt so far, Lenoir said. It was possible that beyond a certain warming threshold more butterflies would

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.



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: Sta. Cruz
Tel. 585 8028

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
Taxi Serv. Aruba 583 3232
A1 Taxi Serv. 280 2828

AID FOUNDATIONS

Aruba Food Bank
Tel. 588 0002
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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Fave or flop? A guide to gauging video game success

Cologne, Germany

The video game industry is notoriously tight-lipped about its numbers, filled with members-only metrics like wishlists, pre-orders and player numbers, so it can be hard to know which games have actually proven popular and turned a profit.

Industry associations such as France's SELL periodically release sales figures based on data taken from game publishers.

Private research firms also make their own estimates, based for example on publisher or public data as well as their own user panels and rankings.

But publishers and studios often highlight indicators that are most favourable to their messaging, which vary depending on the type of game, experts told AFP ahead of the Gamescom trade show now underway in Cologne, Germany.

Here is a look at some of the proffered gauges, and how to read them.

- Wishlists -

Online stores operated



Gamers play Zeta video games at the Gamescom video games trade fair on the fair grounds in Cologne, western Germany, on August 26, 2026.

by console makers as well as gaming platforms like Steam or Epic open "wishlists" for players to register their interest before a game is available to play.

Some publishers tout wishlist numbers when they pass an impressive threshold, usually at least a million.

But Rhys Elliott of Alinea Analytics, a consulting firm, told AFP the indicator usu-

ally had remarkably little to do with actual sales, particularly for big-budget releases known as AAA in industry parlance.

"Never, ever, ever kind of look at wishlists as a reflection of the sales," Elliott said. "For some very lucky indie games or something like that with lower price points, maybe they can convert

40 percent of their wishlist at launch," he said.

"But for an AAA game, usually it's under 10 percent or even under five percent."

- Pre-orders -

Pre-orders are a more reliable indicator, Elliott said, but he warned against simply converting sales volume into a definitive amount of revenue.

"Regional pricing and discounts mean that huge unit count can actually be a small amount of revenue or the other way around," he said. "A game might cost \$70 in the US and then cost the equivalent of \$30 in China."

And a million copies sold for \$10 each will of course not generate the same revenue as a game sold for \$70.

"Drilling down a bit deeper into, like, where the units, the players, the copies sold come from is super important," Elliott said.

- Number of players -

A publisher reporting a game's number of players rather than its sales is often seeking to disguise a game's true performance, Elliott said, particularly if it comes bundled with a subscription service -- increasing the number of players without any necessary effect on sales.

"I'm not going to say 'sneaky', but you're obfuscating how well your game is doing when you do that," Elliott said.

Many users on social media also track the "concurrent users" figure provided by Steam, one of the few statistics available online.

"Concurrent is very helpful," said Joost van Dreunen, a professor at New York University's Stern School of Business and a specialist in video game economics.

"That's where the audience attention is right now. But it doesn't say anything directionally about where they came from or where they're going next," van Dreunen said.

Also, Steam's figures cover only users on its own platform, not those on other providers or consoles.

- Playing time -

Playing time is the key metric to watch for free-to-play titles such as "Fortnite" and "Roblox", games that make add-ons available for purchase, von Dreunen said, with developers battling for players' attention. "If it's free-to-play, you look for retention," he said. □

Bill Gates warns world unprepared for AI upheaval

Washington, United States

Bill Gates warned Wednesday that the world is dangerously unprepared for the upheaval brought by artificial intelligence, with the technology destroying jobs and threatening human connection, especially for young people.

In a nearly 6,000-word es-

say published on his blog, the Microsoft co-founder said the shift into the AI era will rank among the most turbulent periods in human history and that no one has produced a credible plan for managing it.

His stance will draw significant pushback from many

in Silicon Valley and the Trump administration who blame "doomer" attitudes among some tech leaders for giving the AI revolution a bad reputation.

"AI will either be the greatest equalizer ever invented, or the worst source of injustice," wrote Gates, 70, who now chairs the philanthropic foundation that bears his name.

"There is no plan to ease the entry into the AI era," Gates said, adding that he would likely support one if it existed.

"However, I don't think that's going to happen. The geopolitical and economic incentives are pushing too hard to go full speed ahead," he warned. Gates said he saw three main risks arising from the fast deployment of AI.

The first is permanent job destruction. Gates insisted

comparisons to the shift from farm work to office work were misleading, as that transition unfolded over generations and created roles that still required human thinking.

AI can substitute for thinking itself, he warned, hitting law, medicine, customer service, software and manufacturing within roughly a decade.

Entry- and mid-level positions are the most exposed, Gates said, leaving young people entering a labor market with far fewer openings.

Blue-collar work will follow as robots become cheaper, with the construction and hospitality sectors feeling pressure by the end of the decade.

Gates suggested that some jobs should be set aside for humans, even if AI can do them better and more cheaply. □



Bill Gates, co-founder of Microsoft and co-chair of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, attends the Allen & Company Sun Valley Conference at the Sun Valley Lodge on July 9, 2026 in Sun Valley, Idaho.



Tutor's curling Serena Rota shows how to throw the stone as people try the winter sport of curling on ice-free synthetic curling rinks set up in Colle Oppio Park overlooking the Colosseum during a hot summer day in Rome on August 24, 2026.

Curling attracts curious Romans under Colosseum's shadow

Rome, Italy

Winter Olympic sport curling has found itself an unusual setting, under the hot sun in front of the Colosseum in Rome.

New aficionados have been converted to the ice sport in the incongruous southern setting of Rome. A temporary rink in the shadow of the Colosseum has won over new fans of curling, with locals and tourists alike taking part in the sport that gained traction during the 2026 Winter Olympics held in Italy's north.

"They're curious as soon as they see the rink, they're immediately fascinated," said Serena Rota, 24, a curling tutor hired to introduce new players to the sport.

Rome installed the temporary rink made of high-density plastic, not ice in June, bringing a sport more commonly associated with frozen lakes and icy northern landscapes to the Italian capital.

The initiative was spearheaded by Sport e Salute, a public entity that develops and promotes sports projects across the country. On a recent afternoon at the Colle Oppio Park, which covers the ancient ruins of Roman emperor

Nero's sprawling palace, players in trainers and shorts launched curling stones to slide across the bright white rink.

Each throw began with a soft thud as the stone hits the rink, followed by the low scrape as it glided across the surface.

Pietro Valli, 21, said he had been visiting friends in Rome when he headed to the park to play basketball. He came across the curling rink and decided to give it a try.

- 'Not that simple' -

Valli admitted having been sceptical of the sport that seemed to be on everyone's lips during the recent Olympics.

"It seemed so static," he said.

But after trying it for the first time in Rome, he realised "there's a lot of strategy involved and it's not that simple".

With its origins in 16th century Scotland, curling is a team sport played on ice. Players slide polished stones toward a target with teammates sweeping the surface ahead of them with brooms to control the stones' speed and direction.

With the lack of ice in Rome's rink, the focus is

more on the throwing of the stones than controlling their trajectory.

Tutor Rota said it had been fun to introduce people to the sport "which is mainly played in northern Italy and isn't very well known here". Valli looked over his shoulder at the impressive Colosseum as the light began to fade.

"What's nice about playing here in Rome in the summer is that you can enjoy all of this," he said, something "you definitely don't get in an indoor rink in the cold." Tutors take players through the basics step by step, from how to hold the stone to how to glide it across the 40-foot-long white rink.

Another tutor, Federico Sanna, 24, said about 50 to 100 people have been playing each day this summer.

"During the hottest hours, it's difficult to last more than one game."

The heat radiating from the white surface of the rink added a distinctly summer twist to the sport, as players took frequent breaks from the sun under the shadow of trees.

Francesco Mariani, also 24, took part in a friendly competition with his friends, all of them first-time players. □



Team Visma-Lease a bike's British rider Matthew Brennan celebrates as he crosses the finish line to win the fifth stage of the Vuelta a Espana 2026, a 173.4 km race between Falset and Roquetes on August 26, 2026.

Brennan blasts to Vuelta stage five victory, Pogacar holds lead

Roquetes, Spain

Matthew Brennan powered to victory in stage five of the Vuelta a Espana on Wednesday, comfortably holding off Jordi Meeus in a bunch sprint finish to claim his second stage win of the race.

General classification leader Tadej Pogacar, the overwhelming favourite to win the race, stayed in the red jersey and maintained his solid overall lead.

On Tuesday, Slovenian UAE Team Emirates rider Pogacar produced a sensational 50-kilometre solo effort to stun his rivals and take control of La Vuelta.

Pogacar, aiming for a Grand Tour grand slam, holds a 3min 21sec lead on compatriot and four-time Vuelta winner Primož Roglič, in second place.

"You can see throughout the day everyone just went full, I'm very thankful to finish it off again," said Visma-Lease a bike's Brennan, who also won stage two.

"Last corner I lost my wheel a bit but glad I could stay safe," added the 21-year-old. "Glad we could finish with our arms in the air."

After starting in Monaco and heading to France and Andorra, the race finally entered Spain with a 173.3km run from Falset south west of Barcelona to Roquetes, with a profile inviting the sprint finish.

A small group got up the road near the start of the stage and established a gap of more than two minutes.

However, on a windy day the pace was high and the peloton caught the breakaway with nearly 100km remaining.

Brennan was given a perfect lead-out from his high-calibre Visma team-mates Wout van Aert and Christophe Laporte.

Belgian cyclist Meeus was on Brennan's wheel but did not come close to threatening the Briton.

"When you have Matthew Brennan there in a group like that, it's the best card to play," said Van Aert.

"It comes close," he added with a grin, when asked if helping guide Brennan to victory was as good as winning a stage himself.

Italian rider Vincenzo Albanese completed the stage five podium ahead of compatriot Alessandro Romele. Thursday's stage six runs 177.5km from Alcossebre to Castello with four categorised climbs, including a dirt road in the final ascent. □

Improving standards transform pole vault as spectacle, says Duplantis

Zurich, Switzerland

Armand 'Mondo' Duplantis said Wednesday that improving standards in pole vaulting had transformed the event from a demonstration to a proper competition that fans crave.

Duplantis has truly dominated the pole vault since 2019, winning two Olympic golds and three world titles. Also a four-time world indoor champion, he recently picked up a fourth European crown. Beside the burgeoning medal cabinet, the 26-year-old has also set the world record 15 times.

It currently stands at a towering 6.31 metres and Duplantis has regular at-



Armand Duplantis during Wanda Diamond League - Silesia Kamila Skolimowska Memorial 2026 in Chorzow, Poland, on August 23, 2026

tempts at bettering that mark, normally after he has wrapped up another victory on the circuit.

But in recent competition, Greece's Emmanouil Karalis has proved his worth as a rival to the US-born Swede. Asked whether he was happy that his rivals were now regularly hitting the 6m mark, Duplantis joked: "No! I just want to chill!

"I just want to win, go home and take it easy."

Speaking on the eve of the Diamond League meeting in Zurich, Duplantis then doffed his other cap, calling the competition "really fun".

"I think everybody really likes it. What's been really amazing to see is just how much the fans are getting behind it," he said.

"Everybody's really enjoying not only just seeing me get pushed really hard, but also everybody just jump really high and jump really well."

Recent competition has seen Duplantis and Karalis captivate public interest, notably at the European championships in Birmingham and in the Diamond League.

"We had a great competition with Manolo (Karalis) and I in Birmingham, but then in Lausanne, I feel like it just kind of set a new precedent for our sport and our event," Duplantis said of the Diamond League meet last week.

- Unprecedented -

Duplantis won the event in the Swiss city with a best of 6.21m, while Karalis cleared 6.16m.

Never before had a second-place finisher jumped so high as both men broke the previous meet record of 6.15m.

"It's really unheard of and unprecedented for our kind of event. It's been really fun," Duplantis said.

With barely time to pack the poles and have a breather, the vaulters were back in action in Silesia on Sunday. □



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