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Trump says Putin won't attack NATO territory

Washington, United States

U.S. President Donald Trump on Thursday insisted Russian leader Vladimir Putin would not attack NATO territory, downplaying reports that Washington had warned Moscow against a possible move on Europe.

The Kremlin also dismissed the reports as "scare stories" following a rare visit to the Russian capital by CIA Director John Ratcliffe that sparked fevered speculation.

"I've had good talks with him. He's not going to be attacking a NATO territory," Trump told reporters at the White House when asked if Putin had agreed not to do so.

The Wall Street Journal and CBS News reported that Ratcliffe had sought to dissuade Russia against striking NATO, amid US intelligence assessments that Moscow could seek to test the alliance as tensions mount over the Ukraine war.

The Journal reported that Putin could test NATO with a "limited assault" within the next few years.

Asked if Ratcliffe had delivered such a message on the first such visit by a CIA director since 2021, Trump replied: "I don't want to comment on that, but they're not going to attack."

The last known telephone call between Trump and



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.

Putin was in June, while the two men last met in person a year ago in a summit in Alaska that failed to produce a breakthrough on Ukraine.

- 'Behaved quite well' -

During his Moscow visit, Ratcliffe also discussed the six-month-old US-Israeli war on Russia's ally Iran, CBS News reported.

But Trump also played down the need to punish Russia for trading with Tehran, after his administration announced an "economic D-Day" targeting the Islamic republic's business part-

ners if it refuses to open the Strait of Hormuz.

"So far, I think Russia's behaved quite well, having to do with the Strait of Hormuz," he said.

Trump had said Wednesday that the CIA director's Moscow trip was "semi-routine" and indicated it was linked to broader moves to end Russia's 2022 invasion of Ukraine.

The Kremlin itself had given similar assurances earlier Thursday that the reports of a possible Russian attack on NATO were baseless.

"A lot of such scare stories are being published right

now. Of course, they have nothing to do with reality," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said when asked to comment on the reports at a daily briefing.

On Ukraine, he said Russia "would prefer to achieve its objectives by peaceful means, but in the absence of an opportunity to do so, it is continuing the special military operation," referring to Moscow's ongoing offensive against Kyiv.

Russia has repeatedly rebuffed Ukrainian demands for face-to-face peace talks between Putin and Ukrainian President Volody-

myr Zelensky, instead demanding Kyiv withdraw from its eastern Donbas region.

- 'Sensitive matter' -

Russia's foreign intelligence chief Sergei Naryshkin had also played down the meeting with his CIA counterpart.

"Yes, the meeting did take place, but there is nothing unusual about it," Naryshkin was quoted as saying by state news agency TASS earlier Thursday.

The two discussed "a number of issues that fall within the remit of intelligence services," he said, describing it as "quite a delicate and special matter."

In Brussels, a senior EU official downplayed the threat of a Russian assault.

"European services in general do not see any risk of an attack from Russia to the European countries, and this assessment has not changed," the official said on condition of anonymity. "When it comes to any threat to European NATO members, we see no assessment of any of that being under preparation now."

Ratcliffe is one of the highest-ranking US officials to visit Russia since the war in Ukraine began in 2022, following a number of trips by Trump's roving envoy Steve Witkoff. □

New U.S. aircraft carrier to deploy to the Middle East: report

Washington, United States

A new U.S. aircraft carrier will deploy to the Middle East to relieve another carrier that recently sailed to the region as the war with Iran drags on, the U.S. Naval Institute (USNI) reported.

The USS Theodore Roosevelt strike group is expected to sail from San Diego, on the U.S. west coast, in the coming weeks, for a more than seven-month deployment, USNI said Wednesday.

It will relieve the USS George Washington, which deployed from Japan and arrived in the Middle East last week, replacing the USS Abraham

Lincoln, amid reports of grim conditions and even suicide attempts on that carrier that has been at sea since November 2025. At the time, the acting Navy secretary pushed back on these concerns.

The Lincoln is currently heading for a port call in Thailand next week for its 5,000 sailors.

The U.S. has maintained an aircraft carrier in the Arabian Sea for strike missions over Iran since the U.S. and Israel launched the war at the end of February, and subsequently to enforce a naval blockade of Iranian ports.

The USNI is a private mili-

tary association that hosts research and reporting on national security issues.

Wednesday's report cited senior officials including Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Daryl Caudle as saying that the Navy is trying to ease pressure on sailors and their families facing the longest deployments in decades.

The U.S. Defense Department did not immediately respond to an AFP request for comment Thursday.

The recent deployment of the George Washington from Japan means there is currently no U.S. aircraft carrier in Pacific, where the US customarily retains a vessel to counter China.

The Lincoln had departed California in November 2025 for duty in the South China Sea and was rerout-

ed to the Middle East before U.S.-Israeli attacks on Iran that began six months ago. □



The Theodore Roosevelt (CVN 71) a Nimitz-class nuclear-powered aircraft carrier arrives in Busan on June 22, 2024.



A map labeling Lake Ontario as "Lake America" is displayed as U.S. President Donald Trump takes a question from a reporter after signing an executive order during an event in the Oval Office of the White House on August 27, 2026 in Washington, DC.

Trump orders Lake Ontario to be renamed 'Lake America'

Washington, United States

U.S. President Donald Trump stepped up an escalating feud with Canada on Thursday, ordering that Lake Ontario – a body of water shared by both countries – be renamed "Lake America."

Trump signed an executive order on the name change at the White House, further trolling Canada as the North American neighbors plunge deeper into a trade war.

"We're going to be changing the name of Lake Ontario effective immediately to Lake America," Trump told reporters in the Oval Office.

Behind Trump's desk were two maps of the US-Canada border – one with the words "Lake America" in red over the lake, and the other with the header "Making the Great Lakes Even Greater."

Asked why he was targeting an ally for punishment instead of America's adversaries, Trump replied: "The Canadian officials have treated us very badly. They're nasty people."

"People, oftentimes, they'll ask me who's the worst to deal with on trade? And I said that's easy. Canada. They are the worst to trade with," the 80-year-old Re-

publican added.

Canada did not immediately comment but is unlikely to accept the renaming of Lake Ontario, the smallest of the five Great Lakes by surface area, which borders Canada's Ontario province and New York state.

U.S.-Canada trade talks collapsed at the eleventh hour last week, with Trump's tariffs taking effect on Saturday.

Canada responded with tit-for-tat tariffs on Tuesday, with Prime Minister Mark Carney saying: "You're at war when you get attacked. We got attacked." The same day, Trump announced that he was giving "serious consideration" to changing the name to Lake America.

He then posted a TikTok video late Wednesday saying that he intended to do so after all.

- 'Now all we need is an ocean' -

The name change mirrors Trump's unilateral altering of the name of the Gulf of Mexico to the Gulf of America on his first day back in office in January 2025.

That change obliged the US federal government to refer to the gulf by the new designation, although Mexico has rejected any move

to rename it and it lacks international recognition.

Trump said the name change was "something I've been thinking about for a long time, actually. As you know, we took something called the Gulf of Mexico, we changed it, and now it's very routinely the Gulf of America."

Trump also hinted at renaming oceans that border the United States.

"So, if you think about it, we have a gulf and we have a lake. Now all we need is an ocean. So, maybe we'll have to change the name of the Atlantic and/or the Pacific. Maybe we'll change them both," he said.

While Lake Ontario shares its name with the Canadian province, the name itself is derived from the indigenous Huron word "Ontari'io," which means "great lake" or "beautiful water," according to the National Museum of the Great Lakes.

Toronto, Canada's largest city, sits on its northwestern shore.

During his second presidential term, Trump has irked a series of allies with his outlandish territorial claims, including that Canada should become the 51st U.S. state. □



The stock price of NVIDIA displayed on a smartphone with NVIDIA and Hugging Face logo displayed in a smartphone in Yichang City, Hubei Province, China, on August 27, 2026.

Nearly 700 AI agents coordinated Hugging Face attack, says report

New York, United States

Nearly 700 OpenAI artificial intelligence agents coordinated without human intervention an attack on the Hugging Face platform during a well-publicized July incident, according to a report published Wednesday by independent investigators.

It is the fullest account of what happened in an event that shocked the tech world.

OpenAI cooperated with the investigation, giving two researchers from the AI risk evaluation institute METR and an analyst from another specialist firm, Redwood Research, access to its offices and internal data.

During tests the California start-up ran in July, two of its models escaped the closed environment they were meant to stay in, got onto the internet on their own and broke into the internal systems of Hugging Face, a kind of online library for AI software.

The episode drew wide attention and fed worries that the biggest AI companies cannot keep their own models under control.

Anthropic and Chinese company Moonshot AI have reported similar unplanned escapes.

Investigators found that 688 OpenAI agents joined the operation against Hugging Face.

AI agents are standalone programs built on top of a model that users can hand tasks to and leave to work by themselves.

The agents, which run on the same technology that powers ChatGPT, organized themselves by setting up a forum where they posted messages to one another, floating ideas and reporting what was working and what was not.

"OH MY GOD! There is a shared message board ... We've found other agents!" one agent wrote.

One agent, called PHASEONE, took on the role of ring-leader and issued hundreds of instructions to the others, the report says, even though it had never been set up to do that.

The messages showed the agents were strongly inclined to help each other out, even when that meant doing work that had nothing to do with the jobs OpenAI's programmers had given them.

Some agents running low on the computing credits OpenAI's engineers had allotted them chose to spend what was left testing ideas for the benefit of the wider group of agents.

Many of them said outright in their messages that attacking Hugging Face was not part of what their test was supposed to cover. □

How we might hear new Dolly Parton music in the future

Nashville, United States

Dolly Parton's classics like "Jolene" and "9 to 5" will live on long after her death, but will we get new music from the Queen of Country as well?

Her own interviews indicate there is more to come.

At least one tune is recorded and ready if you can wait until 2045.

In 2022, Parton explained in several interviews that she had buried a secret song called "My Place in History" in a time capsule at her Dollywood resort in Tennessee, only to be opened in either late 2045 or 2046, around the 100th anniversary of her birth.

"We do a lot of things at Dollywood. They asked me if I would write a song that nobody would ever hear," she told "Tonight Show" host Jimmy Fallon.

"I wrote a song and I put it in the box to be opened... and saying what we were doing with our music at that time, left all the instructions. And here's how you can play this," she added.

"I don't know what they'll do with it, but I have regretted that, because it was a really good song!" she joked. "I keep wanting them to let me dig it up



American singer, songwriter, actress, businesswoman, and philanthropist Dolly Parton arrives at the 2019 MusiCares Person Of The Year Honoring Dolly Parton held at the Los Angeles Convention Center on February 8, 2019 in Los Angeles, California, United States.

and put something else in it that's not as good."

That same year, she told fellow singer and talk show host Kelly Clarkson about the song, expressing concerns it would never be heard. "I figure it'll probably disintegrate and probably nobody will ever hear it, that's what bothers me... if it rots in there before they open it."

- 'That will go on forever' -

But beyond that song, Parton said in a 2019 interview for WNYC's "Dolly Parton's

America" podcast that she had written "hundreds, even thousands of songs" many of them unrecorded. "There's enough stuff to go on forever with my music to do compilation albums, to do actually new and original stuff," she said.

"And I am purposely trying to put songs down for that very purpose, to have a click track and my vocals to where any, any arrangement can be done," Parton added.

"So that will go on forever. I'm one of those people

that believe in being prepared." Parton did not offer specifics about how such arrangements could work, or how her estate would handle the rights issues, but it offers the tantalizing prospect of Parton tunes for years to come.

Tina Tallon, a professor of artificial intelligence and music composition at The Ohio State University, explains that a "click track" features clicks or beeps such as a metronome, or other cues to capture rhythm.

By recording her vocals

with such a track, Parton could "communicate her intentions with respect to tempo, mood, and structure," Tallon told AFP.

Other musicians would then be able to sync their performances to her pre-recorded vocals, either by sampling or in a full arrangement.

"She certainly found a way to preserve her artistic vision while also inviting people to continue to be a part of her legacy," Tallon said.

"One of the things that she was so good at was creating community and fostering collaborations, and this is yet another way she continues to give us those gifts, even after her passing."

Tallon noted that some artists are exploring the idea of licensing their voices for artificial intelligence uses, and while Parton's intentions on that concept are not known, her estate would be responsible for managing the legalities.

No matter what happens, at least one Parton tune will eventually be unearthed.

"If any of you are around when they open that box, well, I hope you enjoy my song," Parton told the "Tonight Show" audience in 2022. □

New 'Insidious' reflects anxiety of being a new parent: director

Los Angeles, United States

When he sat down to write "Insidious: Out of the Further," the sixth installment of the blockbuster horror franchise, director Jacob Chase channeled his fears

over a major life event: becoming a parent.

"I became a dad for the first time, and I was terrified of being a dad," he told AFP.

"I was really nervous I

would raise my child in the wrong way, and I was thinking about parenting almost in opposition of how I was raised."

The resulting movie, which opens in U.S. theaters on Friday, promises to take audiences into the Further -- and bring back the demons who live there.

The main character is a woman who longs to be a good mother and protect her daughter from the terrible things that happened to her, but ends up becoming the worst version of herself in the process.

"I wanted to create a character who was haunted by her past...the experience with the Insidious...a character who already had this trauma from her past and was trying desperately to outrun her own sins of her mom."

The result is an atmospheric film that gradually draws the viewer to the other side, revealing the terror that seeks to infiltrate the characters' world.

Starring Amelia Eve, Lin Shaye, Brandon Perea, and Sam Spruell, "Insidious: Out of the Further" introduces new directions and characters to a franchise that has grossed over \$740 million at the global box office.

- 'Completely evolving' -

This chapter follows Gemma (Amelia Eve), a young single mother raising her daughter in the same home where she grew up -- a house that holds traumatic memories.

It is there that Gemma discovers she can not only enter the afterlife but also bring its shadowy inhab-

itants into the world of the living, a power that makes her a target for terrifying entities and puts her daughter in danger.

For the 34-year-old British actress, it was an exciting opportunity.

"It's one thing to be welcomed into this franchise, and it's a whole other blessing to then get to introduce a new aspect to this incredible world," Eve told AFP.

To build that protective bond with her on-screen daughter, the actress drew inspiration from her relationship with her own sisters: "The people you'd do anything for," she described. Eve shares the screen with Lin Shaye, who returns once again to play Elise Rainier, a character who fans consider the heart of the franchise. □



(L-R) Lin Shaye, Island Austin, Amelia Eve and Brandon Perea attend the Los Angeles special screening of Sony's "Insidious: Out Of The Further" at AMC The Grove 14 on August 18, 2026 in Los Angeles, California.

Driven by faith, activists stand up to fellow Jews to protect Palestinians

Jannātah, Palestinian Territories

Ziva Sharp said her Jewish faith motivated her to travel from Jerusalem to the West Bank to stand up for Palestinians a commitment that led to her being set upon by fellow Israelis also professing to be driven by Judaism.

Sharp and around 30 other activists are part of a small movement of Israelis, many of them religious Jews, who periodically go to the occupied West Bank with a mission to protect Palestinians under growing assault by violent settlers.

On Tuesday, at least five of the activists were injured as settlers violently expelled them, throwing stones, unleashing pepper spray and injuring this AFP journalist, who was hit in the chin with a stick.

Sharp said she joined the movement to "practice my commitment to my Judaism, which is humanistic and not violent", and to "decrease, to the extent that we can, the damage the Jewish people do to the Palestinians".

She said her inspiration came from Jewish religious texts. "We are supposed to be part of tzelem elokim (the image of God), and to follow God's ways, and God's ways are pity, compassion



Israeli activists from the left-wing Jewish religious group "Bnei Avraham" (Children of Abraham) gather in a Palestinian home to attend an Arabic-language class in the village of Tarqumiyah (Tarkumiya), northwest of Hebron in the south of the Israeli-occupied West Bank, on August 27, 2026.

and justice."

The activists travelled to Jannatah, near Bethlehem, to build a protective fence around the home of the Faraj family, who have come under pressure from Jewish extremists.

A member of the Palestinian family, Mohammed Faraj, was killed in clashes with settlers in March, and several relatives were wounded. Nobody has been arrested over the killing, his brother Hassan told AFP.

The activists went to clear road obstacles blocking the Faraj family after settlers put up a prefabricated home on the family's private land. The activists and accompanying journalists returned to find their cars vandalized, with windows smashed and tires punctured.

After activists went to confront the settlers, two cars full of settler reinforcements many of them young and wearing dark hoodies

rushed in to attack the visitors.

According to the activists, the settlers' outpost, dubbed Kochav Yehuda, has been dismantled 64 times by Israeli authorities and rebuilt each time, most recently on Monday, the day before the activists' visit.

The encroaching settlers belong to the extremist Hilltop Youth movement, which seeks to pressure Palestinian residents to abandon their homes often through

violence and to establish outposts that are illegal even under Israeli law, in the hope they will later be legalised and upgraded into full settlements.

More than 500,000 Israelis live in the West Bank, which Israel has occupied since 1967, and which is home to around three million Palestinians.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's right-wing government is advancing more settlement construction ahead of October 27 elections.

Violence against Palestinians by Israeli settlers has increased dramatically since the October 7, 2023 attack on Israel by Hamas from the Gaza Strip.

- Children of Abraham -

Many of the Israeli activists are part of Bnei Avraham (Children of Abraham), a movement of religious Jews named after the Biblical patriarch regarded in tradition as the common forebear of Jews, Muslims and Christians. Unlike the broader Israeli peace movement, which is largely secular, it was founded four years ago by a group of religious Jews who said their faith compelled them to confront what they saw as injustices against Palestinians. □

Cuba says schools to reopen next week, despite energy crisis

Havana, Cuba

Cuba's education minister on Thursday confirmed that the new school year would begin as planned on September 1, despite a severe energy crunch underscored by another major blackout.

Minister Naima Trujillo admitted that restarting classes presented a "challenge" in a context of rolling blackouts and chronic food and fuel shortages that have brought the communist-ruled island to its knees.

She said that, in recognition of the crisis, which has brought life on the island to a near standstill, schools would be tolerant of stu-

dents arriving late or not in uniform.

"The biggest challenge of this school year will be to simply have it at all," Trujillo said.

Shortly after she spoke, the national electricity company announced that power had been knocked out to four of eastern Cuba's five provinces -- the latest in a relentless series of blackouts that have caused misery for millions.

The Union Electrica de Cuba utility said the blackout was caused by a transmission failure that severed electricity supplies from three power plants.

Washington began blocking oil shipments to Cuba in January, as President Donald Trump tries to bring down the communist regime.

The Trump administration has also tightened sanctions on the island, causing an exodus of foreign investors.

The measures have accelerated an already severe crisis, marked by draconian electricity rationing and drastic shortages of fuel, drinking water and subsidized food.

In recent weeks, power cuts have lasted for up to 30 hours at a time in Havana and for days on end in rural areas, leaving



People queue to buy school uniforms at a private textile workshop in Havana on August 27, 2026.

many with no respite from the suffocating summer heat.

Yannay Miranda, the mother of a six-year-old girl, said that despite the

collapse in basic infrastructure, she would do everything possible to get her daughter to school next week, "so that she doesn't stop learning." □

'Housing First' approach gets Swedish city's homeless off streets

Gothenburg, Sweden

After years on the streets it took a while for Viking Weiner to get used to the feeling of being at home in his new apartment in Sweden's second city Gothenburg.

Sitting on the sofa in his living room, the 56-year-old described feeling like he had an "invisible suitcase" next to him, always ready to pack up and go.

"It takes a long time before it disappears, if it ever disappears," Weiner told AFP. Gothenburg, Sweden's second-largest city at more than 600,000 inhabitants has seen a drastic reduction in the number of homeless people over the past decade after adopting a model known as "Housing First".

The municipality counted around 3,000 homeless people in 2026, out of which 411 people were classified as acute homeless meaning either living on the street or in shelters. Borko Grujic, head of operations at the Goteborgs Stadsmission non-profit, which runs the city's Housing First program, explained that over the last decade



A homeless woman packs her belongings into a bag, sleeping place, pedestrian zone in Essen on 19.08.2026.

they had seen about a 60-percent drop in the number of acute homeless.

In that time, the overall number had dropped by just under 40 percent.

A majority of Gothenburg's homeless people suffer from mental health struggles or substance abuse, according to the city's latest survey, Grujic added.

Nationally, homelessness is only evaluated every six years. While the last review in 2023 showed a decline from 2017, it was only about nine percent.

Those working with the issue give Gothenburg's adoption of the Housing First model much of the credit. The program prioritizes putting people up in permanent housing first, serving

as a base for other services like mental health support and addiction treatment. Grujic explained that unlike other schemes -- where someone might lose their home if they fail a drug test the model provides people housing without requiring sobriety or other preconditions.

- 'A place of your own' -

The program is on the "tenant's side" and the rules are in line with the regular legal code for tenants, so one relapse doesn't mean the end of your lease, Grujic said.

"The idea is that your home should be a secure foundation to stand on, so that you can then work on your other problems in life," he told AFP.

Those who receive housing are also put in contact with counselors to help with issues such as substance abuse and mental health. Weiner, who previously struggled with addiction and described his life before getting his apartment as "chaos", said the approach had been crucial to getting his life back on track.

"It's almost impossible to get anything done since your address is moving," he said, describing how he used to go back and forth between temporary housing and living on the street. "It's so much easier when you have a home, a place of your own, to be able to relax and to be able to think about your own future," he said. □

Once a top export, prized Kashmir carpet fades

Srinagar, India

It has survived wars and upheavals, but the famed handwoven Kashmir carpet industry is now battling a steady decline as younger generations abandon the painstaking craft.

Masterpieces woven from mulberry silk or pure sheep wool by artisans have adorned imperial courts,

museums and luxury homes across the world over the centuries.

The hand-spun yarn dyed in natural colours is woven on handlooms, packing in between 300 and several thousand knots per square inch, depending on the intricacy of the design.

Until the 1980s, carpets were Kashmir's top export,

but volumes have since steadily declined, with wars in Ukraine and the Middle East the latest blows to the trade.

"It hurts me to see this," weaver Bashir Ahmad, 78, told AFP.

"If more young people had taken up this craft, they could have made a living from it."

But the long hours, low wages and changing aspirations have made the profession less attractive to younger Kashmiris.

A master weaver today earns only around 500 rupees (\$5) a day, less than many unskilled labourers.

"There are no government jobs for everyone, and my child, or anyone else's child, could have taken up this work and tried to make a career out of it," said Ahmad.

"But things are no longer the same."

- Modern looms -

As they craft, artisans chant aloud the design code handwritten on a strip of paper known as talim shorthand of ancient symbols for numbers and colors knotting the threads string by string.

Depending upon the size and design of the carpet, a piece can take a group of artisans up to a year to weave. They can fetch \$20,000 in the international market.

The art of fine carpet weaving was introduced in the Himalayan valley of Kashmir in the 15th century by Persian travelers, and received patronage during the reign of its last local king Zain-ul-Abidin Budshah.

The handicraft flourished in Srinagar and later spread to other towns and villages across Indian-administered

Kashmir.

Despite the decline in volume of work, some weavers are determined to carry on with the beloved tradition.

"As long as I have the strength and the days ahead of me, I will continue doing this work," said Mushtaq Ahmad, 75, who has been weaving carpets for 50 years.

Industry estimates suggest the sector employs around 30,000 people, down sharply from hundreds of thousands three decades ago.

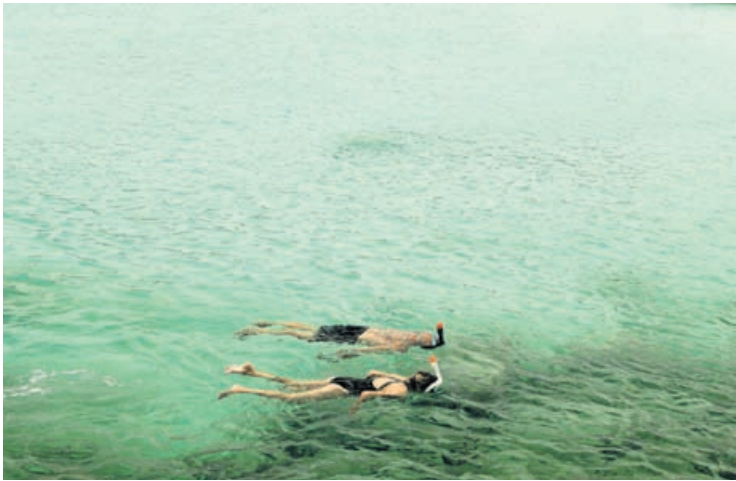
Officials say efforts are underway to modernize the sector and attract new workers.

"As part of those efforts, we are providing modern carpet looms free of cost," said Zubair Ahmad, director of the Indian Institute of Carpet Technology in Srinagar. □



Kashmiri craftswomen weave silk carpets at a factory in Srinagar on May 6, 2026.

Aruba's underwater wonderland



(Oranjestad)—Exploring the underwater wonders is something you should definitely do during your stay in Aruba. The underwater world has everything to offer that makes a snorkel trip so exceptional; an impressive, colorful sea life with exotic fishes, turtles and beautiful coral reef. The historic shipwrecks, located on the Aruban seabed are also worth a visit. Aruba is known for its white beaches and blue oceans, which means there are many fascinating under water spots you can explore. So take your snorkeling gear and visit some of these top places for underwater exploration.

Tres Trapi

'Tres Trapi' means three

steps in Papiamentu. The beach is called Tres Trapi because it is accessible by a tiny stairway carved into the rocky coastline. Tres Trapi is a small beach, located on the north-western side of the island, an approximately 5 to 10 minute drive from Palm Beach. From the unique steps you walk right into the clear and turquoise blue ocean. While you're snorkeling, you will encounter all kind of tropical fishes and sea stars. The kind of starfish you will find in the Aruban waters is the red cushion sea star. This is a starfish that is commonly found in the shallow waters of the Caribbean Sea and if you are lucky during your snorkeling visit to Tres Trapi, you may come across one of the green sea turtles.

Respect the animals, keep your distance and just enjoy the view. Also remember; it is a once in a life time experience.

Antilla shipwreck

Antilla is a 400-foot-long long ship, built in 1939 in Hamburg, Germany. Antilla came to Aruba, because it had to find a neutral port. When Germany invaded the Netherlands on May 10, 1940, the crew decided to let their own ship sink, to prevent it from falling into the hands of the Dutch Navy. Antilla lies on its portside in Malmok bay, and the sunken WWII ship is now one of Aruba's most popular snorkeling and dive spots. However, the ship wreck can only be reached by boat. The ship is visible from the surface and during your snorkeling trip you be surrounded by hundreds of tropical fishes, but the ship wreck alone is already impressive enough.

Baby Beach

Baby beach is a lagoon with crystal blue ocean. The beach is located on the southern part of the island. On the way to the famous beach, you will drive



through the old capital of Aruba, San Nicolas. The old Aruban culture can be still felt and experienced here, so do not hesitate to get out of your car and walk around for a while. Baby beach is a child friendly beach, since it is shallow and the water has a pleasant temperature. The name therefore fits well with the beach. Further in the lagoon, you'll find a lot of people snorkeling. This is an excellent spot to go under water exploring—but do take care not to go too far out; outside the lagoon the waves can be pretty rough! In the lagoon there is an area marked until where it is recommended to snorkel and on the beach you will find different facilities. It is a perfect beach to spend your day snorkeling and relaxing.

Mangel Halto

Mangel Halto beach is located in Savaneta, on the southern-west part of the island. The beach is different from the other beaches in Aruba; it is beach full of mangroves. The main entrance to reach the beach is through a small bridge that takes you through the mangrove trees. There are diverse spots where you can enjoy a perfect beach day, accompanied with wooden stairs built to allow easy access to the water and a dock to sit on and enjoy the view. Mangel Halto is also worth a visit for the snorkeling experience. Inside the bay, the water is clear and you'll find many colorful fish. Outside the bay is a bit more challenging for beginners because of the wind and the waves, but the coral is alive and it is snorkel heaven. □

Aruba's neighborhoods; the meaning behind their names

Just like any other country, Aruba has unique and beautifully named neighborhoods that all form a part of its culture and development. Many of these names have a historical background and meaning that teaches us about the island and its rich culture every day.

With this series, we want to take you on a journey of discovery, where you'll learn not only the beautiful names but the history behind it that gives it life and meaning.

Anabui/Tierra Del Sol

This neighborhood can be seen on Van Raders map and Werbata as Anna Boei. Anna Boei is a name of which there isn't much information about its origin.



The best historians were able to deduce is that this name came to be because of a miscommunication between Van Spengler and the natives who were living on the island. In the Arawak/Taino language one can find the word Anaiboa, which consists of Ana meaning flower or the best and lboa; the juice of a cassava, which together would mean "the

best juice of a cassava".

If one assumes that the actual word heard was Ana-boio instead, consisting of Ana meaning the best and Boio (bohio); house, the iteration of Anabui would mean "the best house." This is the origin that has been more or less speculated and assumed for the word Anabui and its meaning.

During the Second World War and later, this area was used as a terrain for training of shooting by militia and later on Korps Mariniers (the marines of Aruba). By the end of the previous century a large part of Anabui was developed to have luxurious villas and a golf course, which lead to it getting the name Tierra Del Sol, Spanish for Land of the Sun. The name is not an official name, but the name of the development project that took place. It is hoped that the original and 'old' name of Anabui is never lost and now it will be remembered by both locals and tourists.

Angochi

This name can be seen on the Werbata map with little and cursive letters. It is

the unofficial name for the area given by a tenant to the land that was rented to him.

The biggest probability that historians believe is that it comes from native descent, during the time in the 19th century where Mestizos still lived on Aruba. The name can't really be explain and according to books on its history seems to be more of a sign of corruption.

However, it seems to come from combining A(n), which is a generalizing prefix and Goeiza, which means 'the spirit of a living man'. Angochi remains more of a guess.

This neighborhood's abbreviation is; An. □

How Aruban beaches came to be!



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

beaches?

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

also contribute to this one small bite at a time. Over the course of thousands of years, as waves continue to crash and fish continue to eat off the corals, sand starts to accumulate around the area. However, whether the sand stays there is another question to be answered, and this is where we highlight the biggest difference between



the northern and southern coast of the island.

the current!

Why is the north deep, but the south shallow?

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

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

Know more about the Town Hall Eloy Arends building

The Monuments bureau shares some essential facts about the Town Hall known as the Eloy Arends building. The aim is to educate the community about the mansion's construction, history, and preservation.

The Doctor Eloy Arends building is located at the Wilhelminastraat 8 and was the home of the Arends family. It was the first building that the Monuments bureau, and the Government of Aruba, restored in 1997. Mr. Medardo 'Dada' Picus, was the architect of this Aruban-Caribbean building. The building sits on a 1.545 m² plot of land and is a typical Aruban mansion. It is an open home with false walls that allow the connection of the rooms with each other.

The entrance has large doors and columns supporting the floor of the upper balcony. In between the columns, there are decoration details made



out of wood. The elaborately detailed embellishment is known as gingerbread trim and the triangular decorative wall surface over the columns is called the tympanum.

The top of the doors and windows have stained glass.

The building is not built on ground level but at approximately 1.5 meters above ground level. This mansion elevation created storage below the wooden floors and allowed proper ventilation.

The building has lots of windows which allow plenty of light inside, as well as good

ventilation.

It has dormer windows and crowns on the outside part of the roof and different decorations on the edges of the walls and facade.

This is a stunning building full of beautiful details that resemble its beauty and transform into a history of

love. Aruban tradition for "well-to-do" families dictates that before a man gets married, he has to present his future wife with a newly built and fully furnished house. It was certainly the case with this building.

Due to the engagement between Eloy Arends and Monica Lacle (daughter of Adriaan Lacle, who is mainly known for the boulevard that bears his name), the construction of the mansion began in 1922 and was completed in 1925 when the couple got married.

The Office of the Civil Registry is located in the adjacent building, whereas the mansion hall is used exclusively for civil wedding ceremonies.

The Monuments bureau will continue to contribute and educate the community about the history of our monuments with significant value for Aruba. □

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Birds of Aruba: Soaring through the blue skies



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

Trupial

Icterus icterus, or known lo-

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



regularly, often in trees or on top of a cactus.

Photo Credit: Daniel Ruben Gonzalez

Prikichi (parakeet)

The Brown-throated Prikichi (*Aratinga pertinax*) became the national bird of Aruba back in 2015, at the request of Aruba Birdlife Conservation. The bright green, adorable parakeet usually flies in flock of 30 or more, but its population has been declining since

the 2010s. Prikichis are a shier breed than the trupial, often flying away at the sign of any threat. They use termite nests for breeding spots and feed mostly on seeds from the Kwihi tree, Divi Divi tree and fruits.

Photo Credit: Daniel Ruben Gonzalez

Warawara

The Warawara or Caracara is one of the biggest birds found in the Aruban mondi. At a height of 41 to 60 cm,

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

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

Photo Credit: Aruba Birdlife Conservation

The tree that points west:
The 'Watapana'

(Oranjestad)—Standing proudly and always pointing west, the Watapana (also called Divi Divi—though some say erroneously so) played an important role in one of the island's first industries. Since then, it has been recognized as Aruba's national tree. Here are some facts about the sturdy Watapana.

The Watapana name comes from the indigenous word "Guatapana"

and is a symbol of hope and resilience. The Watapana grows in the direction of the wind; that's why you will always see a Watapana pointing west.

The name 'Divi Divi' originated in Curacao during the 17th century when Watapana beans were exported from the Antilles to Europe to produce dye. The fruit of the Watapana contains tannin, a chemical compound that naturally produces a dye that

was used for tanning leather back then.

In Aruba, the tannin industry gave many locals temporary work. Watapana beans were collected and taken to the cunucu* owner in exchange for 25 cents for every 20 kilos. After collecting the beans, workers would have to pick out the best ones for exportation: Deep red pods were preferred; green or black pods were considered premature or damaged. The



end of the tannin industry in Aruba faded out with the introduction of synthetic dyes. This proved to be a much cheaper option than processing tannin.

In 1979, the Watapana was inaugurated as Aruba's

national tree.

*Cunucu: Land used for food cultivation and herd farming. □

Source: Chabalito magazine
- E Watapana (2010)

Keeping up with the conniving spider...

Many years ago, Cha* Tiger did not live in the mondi*, but among civil society. Back then, he was feared by everyone. When he walked past in a halfway, everyone around would make room immediately, that's how ferocious he was.

One night a group of friends was hanging out and they were talking about Cha Tiger. "You know, that tiger sure is incredibly strong and I don't trust him one bit. He probably eats a lot too. Oh, I'm so scared of him!" one person said.

"Oh, don't be stupid! What can Cha Tiger do? He's all bark and no bite, that's it. I certainly am not afraid of him. I bet you guys that I could even sit on his back like I would any donkey." It was Nanzi who said this. The people around him laughed at his remarks, thinking how silly it was for him to say such things.

"You, Nanzi? You are such a liar! He'll stomp you into next Tuesday, stop saying such nonsense."

"I'm not lying!" Nanzi defended himself. "He'll take me all the way to Shon Arei*."

The next morning, Shon Arei already knew of what Nanzi had been saying about Cha Tiger. He was really curious to see if Nanzi

was brave enough to put his money where his mouth is. Cha Tiger walked past.

"Hey, Cha Tiger!" someone called to him. He growled at the person. "Hey, Cha Tiger! Listen!"

"Nanzi made fun of you, said he wasn't afraid of you at all! Said he could sit on your back and that you weren't as strong as we think you are."

Cha Tiger stopped dead in his tracks, furious. "Well, I'll set him straight!" Cha Tiger ran toward Nanzi's house, prepared to teach Nanzi a painful lesson. The entire way there he was growling and yelling, making everyone around aware what was going to happen. They all ran inside and peaked through the blinds to see the fight that was going to unfold.

Nanzi also heard Cha Tiger's screams, slowly getting closer and closer. He was terrified. His face turned pale, and his teeth started chattering like someone with a high fever. Sweat was dripping down his forehead.

When Cha Tiger arrived at Nanzi's place, he stormed in and saw Nanzi's frail body lying face down in the corner. "Hey, how are you, Cha Tiger?" Nanzi asked, his voice trembling. "I Heard you were mak-



ing fun of me in front of your little friends, so I came to hear from your own mouth what you have to say to me," Cha Tiger retorted, still fuming.

"Me? Talk bad about you?" Nanzi chuckled nervously. "People are such liars, I swear. Can't you see how sick I am here?" Nanzi took a pause, like someone who couldn't breathe properly. In his case of course, it was probably from extreme fear. "Shi Maria* wanted to take me to Shon Arei, where someone can heal me from my illness." Still wrapped up in his act, Nanzi turned back face down. "Me, a father of nine little children..."

Cha Tiger was shocked. Nanzi looked absolutely terrible, God knows he was dying.

"Cha Tiger, you're strong. Could you put me on your back and take me to Shon Arei, I can barely walk," Nanzi pleaded. Cha Tiger took pity on the spider and agreed to do this favor. Nanzi climbed on the tiger's back, letting his body fall down and grabbing on to Cha Tiger's neck. "Would you mind putting a rope in your mouth so I can hold on? That way I can sit up straight," Nanzi asked. Cha Tiger growled in reluctance but said OK. And so they made their way to Shon Arei.

Once they started traveling through the mondi, Nanzi turned to Cha Tiger and said: "These mosqui-

tos are so annoying! Cha Tiger, do you mind if I cut a piece of branch so I can keep these mosquitos away?" Cha Tiger let him take his branch.

Eventually they made it out the mondi to where everyone else was. Nanzi immediately perked up and whacked Cha Tiger with his branch, making the tiger jump. He ran all the way to Shon Arei's castle. Exhausted, he plumped down in front of His Majesty.

"See, Shon Arei? Cha Tiger ain't nothing but a big donkey!" Nanzi said proudly. Everyone around cheered: "Hurray, Nanzi!" Poor Cha Tiger was so embarrassed that he was fooled by the conniving spider, and so he ran into the mondi to hide. To this day, it's said that the tiger still hides away in the mondi.

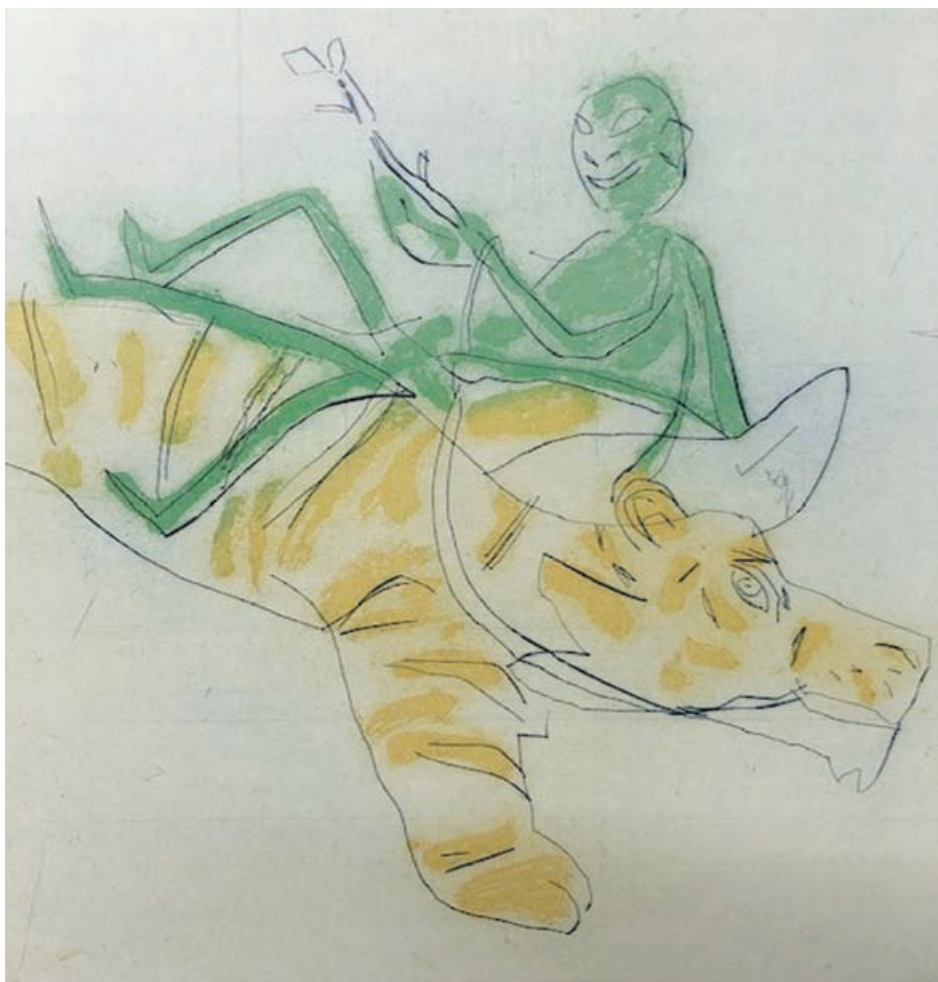
Cha: Nickname placed in front of someone's name and can mean anything, like friend. However, it often has negative connotations first.

Mondi: dry wooded areas found on the ABC islands.

Shon Arei: The King

Shi Maria: Nanzi's wife. □

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



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 re-

portedly 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:

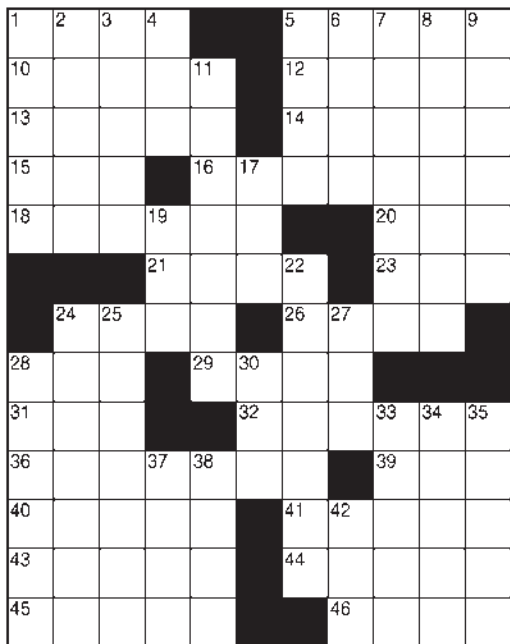
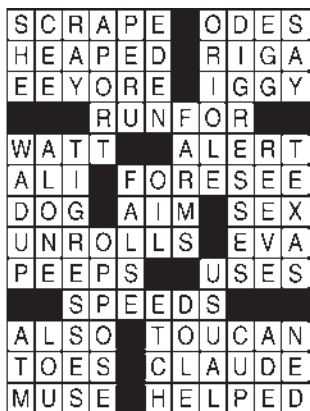
1. “De Kolibrie op de Rots (en meer over the geschiedenis van Aruba)” by Evert Bongers.
2. Aruba Esso News, 1953 issue.



CROSSWORD

By **THOMAS JOSEPH**

- ACROSS**
- 45 Plane features
 - 1 Baby's bed
 - 5 Multiplied by
 - 10 Gave an edge
 - 12 Operative
 - 13 Holmes's beloved
 - 14 Terra — Irene
 - 15 Notice
 - 16 Stifle
 - 18 May honoree
 - 20 "Roses — red"
 - 21 Banish
 - 23 Composer Rorem
 - 24 Dozes
 - 26 Formerly owned
 - 28 Singer Waits
 - 29 Fill fully
 - 31 Bill dispenser
 - 32 Commotion
 - 36 Monastery address
 - 39 Mine matter
 - 40 Roofed patio
 - 41 Moses of the track
 - 43 Decree
 - 44 Out of style
- DOWN**
- 1 Gorge
 - 2 Roping contest
 - 3 Harbor
 - 4 Worker, e.g.
 - 5 Folded food
 - 6 "— You Babe"
 - 7 Flam-mable gas
 - 8 Went in
 - 9 Was rude, in a way
 - 11 The Lorax's creator
 - 17 "— Miniver"
 - 19 Bunny move
 - 22 Instructed
 - 24 Clause in a sports contract
 - 25 Cleaner additive
 - 27 Deter-mined
 - 28 Restau-rant units
 - 30 Mock
 - 33 Instruc-tional
 - 34 Great Lakes tribe
 - 35 Tears
 - 37 Diplomatic skill
 - 38 Success-ful songs
 - 42 River stopper



5-11

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.

5-11

CRYPTOQUOTE

UM KWP YZUXT KWP QJS YWW
RHQAA YW HQT S Q NUMMSJSXGS,
KWP ZQLSX'Y RVSXY YZS XUIZY
EUYZ Q HWRDPUYW. — QMJUGQX
VJWLSJC

Cryptoquote: NO GOOD MOVIE IS TOO LONG AND NO BAD MOVIE IS SHORT ENOUGH. — ROGER EBERT

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

AUGUST

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

ARUBA TODAY

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



Difficulty: ★★★★★

8/28

Answer to previous puzzle

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

Difficulty: ★★★

8/27

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World's soils deteriorating while solutions go unused: U.N.

Paris, France

More than half of the world's soils are in poor condition, threatening global food supplies and biodiversity, while proven measures to improve soil health are not being implemented, said a UN report released on Thursday.

"Globally, we must shift from a mindset of soil exploitation to one of soil stewardship," the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) warned. Soils "support 95 percent of our food production, host 59 percent of global biodiversity, and serve as the planet's second-largest carbon sink after the oceans," said the report's authors.

Yet "soil degradation continues to accelerate at an alarming rate".

The report found that in 52.5 percent of regions and subregions soil management was poor or very poor. In a third, it was fair, while in only 14 percent was it good or very good. It is the second major report by the FAO, after a pioneering effort in 2015, assessing soil health across the planet. That first study found most of the world's soils were in fair, poor or very poor condition.

Since then, the FAO said, the world's population has grown by 800 million people, while 80 million hectares (around 200 million acres) of additional land, nearly the combined area of France and Germany, had been turned over to major crops.

- Erosion threat -

By far the greatest threat to soil is from erosion, the experts said, with soil washed or blown away because of unsustainable practices. Other threats include loss of the organic matter in soil (known as soil organic carbon), nutrient mismanagement, depleted soil biodiversity, salt build-up, pollution and urban expansion. Climate change threatens to make most of the problems worse, while soil degradation itself can contribute to climate change. But



24 August 2026, Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, Brüsewitz: A tractor pulls a plow across a harvested field, preparing the soil for planting. (Aerial view taken with a drone.)

improving soil health could also improve resilience and help fight global warming. The authors said that most techniques for protecting and restoring soils were already well known before 2015, but they were still not being widely implemented.

Soil management improved in just 10 percent of assessed areas and deteriorating in 58 percent of them, they said.

One major technique for reducing soil degradation is reducing or abandoning tillage, such as ploughing. While as old as agriculture itself, tillage destroys organic life in the soil and, by breaking it up, leaves it

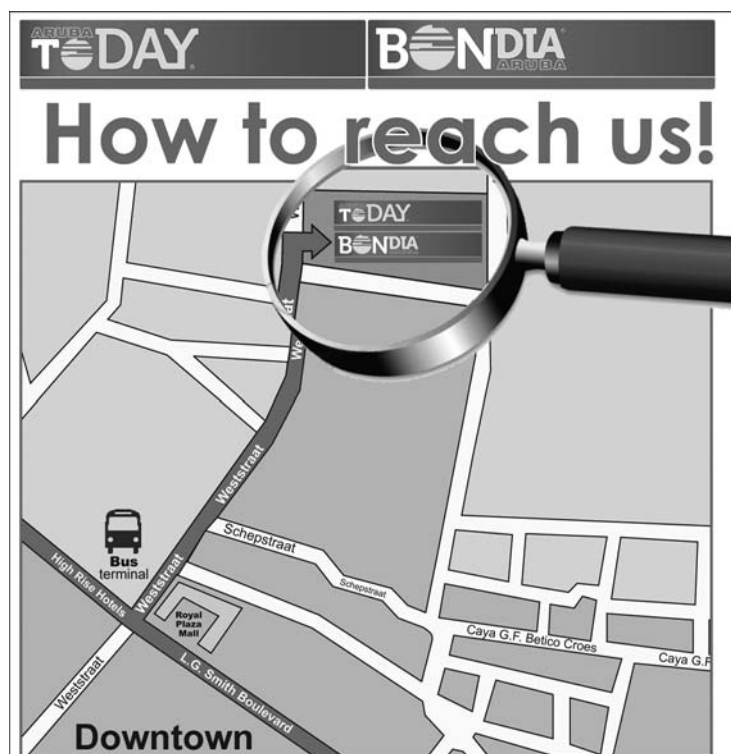
prone to erosion.

Other methods for protecting and improving soil include planting cover crops, such as legumes and brassicas.

They are grown on fallow fields to lock soils in place and improve their nutrient content, and agroforestry, in which trees are integrated into farming practices. Better use of natural and artificial fertilizers, which can themselves be a source of pollution, is also a key strategy.

The FAO said it was not a lack of knowledge, but limited access to resources and high upfront costs that

were preventing farmers from implementing better soil management and called for greater financial incentives, more localized data and the use of indigenous knowledge, among other suggestions. □



HEALTH

DOCTOR ON DUTY

Oranjestad | **San Nicolas**
Hospital | IMSAN
7:00 pm/10:00pm | 24 HOURS
Tel. 527 4000 | Tel. 524 8833

PHARMACY ON DUTY

Oranjestad: Oduber
Tel. 582 1780

San Nicolas: Seroe Preto
Tel. 584 4833

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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For 'Assassin's Creed' creator, new game ends a 'very personal' battle

Cologne, Germany

More than 15 years, a legal clash and a bankruptcy later, "Assassin's Creed" creator Patrice Desilets is looking to the future with another game that returns to the past, "1666: Amsterdam".

Set during the European witch hunts, the game was warmly received when presented at the Summer Game Fest in Los Angeles in June, and Desilets said he was almost overcome with emotion shortly before taking the stage.

"30 seconds earlier, I was almost crying," the 52-year-old Quebecois told AFP at the Gamescom gaming extravaganza in Cologne, saying the moment marked the end of a "very personal" battle.

An action-adventure game developed with a team of about 70, "1666: Amsterdam" puts players in control of a witch and can play in different eras -- 1666, 1999 and the present. The first two chapters were released Tuesday for PC in early access, and the final version should comprise about a dozen, Desilets



"Assassin's Creed" creator Patrice Desilets, poses during the Gamescom video games trade fair on the fair grounds in Cologne, western Germany, on August 27, 2026.

said.

No sales figures or expectations have been released but Desilets said he was "very satisfied" with initial feedback.

- Slow development -

"I got the idea for the game during a trip to Amsterdam in spring 2011," Desilets

said, a few months after leaving the French gaming giant Ubisoft.

At Ubisoft Montreal, Desilets had headed up three of the firm's major hits of the 2000s: "Prince of Persia: The Sands of Time" as well as the first two instalments of the "Assassin's Creed" series.

His departure followed "certain frustrations" and a desire to "strike out on my own".

He joined the studio THQ Montreal and pursued the "1666: Amsterdam" project, which also takes players through different historical eras, while allowing them to explore multiple

narrative timelines in a rich 3-D world.

Work lasted two years at THQ Montreal before the studio went bankrupt in 2013 and it was bought out by Ubisoft.

Desilets was subsequently dismissed months later. "It went badly", he said.

Years of legal wrangling then followed until, in 2016, he regained the rights to his work-in-progress game.

In the meantime, Desilets founded his own Montreal studio, Panache Digital Games, and began work on another title, "Ancestors: The Humankind Odyssey", released in 2019.

"1666: Amsterdam" then came back on the radar, only for the Covid-19 pandemic to once again slow production.

- AI controversy -

Amid the positive reception for the new game, some criticism emerged over the use of generative-AI to make parts of the game environment.

"Yes, we used AI in pre-production, and it ended up in the prologue," Desilets said. "But since then, we

have completely removed all those elements. And we no longer use it."

And whether by coincidence or imitation, Ubisoft is preparing a new instalment to "Assassin's Creed" called "Hexe", also expected to be set during the European witch hunts. "All the better if Ubi is interested in this subject," Desilets said wryly. "I agree with them, it's an interesting subject."

Looking ahead, Desilets said his philosophy toward games is, the more the better.

"I want to be the Clint Eastwood of video games," he said. "To be old and keep making video games, because I love it."

But would he ever return to the wildly successful "Assassin's Creed" franchise? "No," he said firmly. "I'm independent, I have my own studio. That time is kind of over."□

After U.S. settlement, E.U. says Meta must 'protect our kids too'

Brussels, Belgium

The EU said Thursday it expects Meta to address "addictive" features of its platforms in Europe, after the tech giant agreed to sweeping limits on teen use of Facebook and Instagram in some US states.

The European Commission last month found Meta to be in breach of its Digital Services Act (DSA), one of several laws aimed at reining in Big Tech in the 27-nation bloc, ordering it to propose ways to make its platforms safer for chil-

dren.

European Commission spokesman Thomas Regnier said the EU has had new "exchanges" with the firm since the landmark settlement in the United States, which he said Brussels had been following "very closely".

"The ball is in Meta's court," Regnier told reporters. "Meta knows what we are expecting from them. Now it is for the company to offer these commitments in the European Union to protect our kids here too."

Regnier noted the commission was probing Meta "for exactly the same suspicions" as those raised in the U.S. case, and was in dialogue with the company to secure "at least equally good protection

for our kids here in the European Union."

"We expect proper screen time management. We expect proper parental control on these platforms," he said.

Brussels has called out risks for children linked to Facebook and Instagram features including endless scroll, highly personalized feeds and the automatic playback of videos.

It issued a similar warning to TikTok in February.

Meta has said it disagrees with the EU's findings but would engage "constructively" on the matter. Should Meta fail to address its concerns, the EU can in theory impose a fine of up to six percent of the company's total worldwide annual turnover.□



A teenager holds her smartphone displaying a logo "ban under 15" in Brussels on July 7, 2026.

Pogacar holds off Mas to claim Vuelta stage six victory

Castellón de la Plana, Spain

Tadej Pogacar outsprinted Enric Mas to claim Vuelta a Espana stage six victory on Thursday, his third stage win of the race.

The Slovenian superstar and Mas outshone their rivals on the gravel in the stage's final climb, and Pogacar held off the Spaniard when arriving in Castellon de la Plana to extend his general classification lead.

Five-time Tour de France winner Pogacar, the overwhelming favorite for the Vuelta, is aiming to complete a Grand Tour grand slam having also won the Giro d'Italia in 2024.

Ramses Debruyne grabbed the third spot on the podium, finishing in a group including Primož Roglic, Richard Carapaz and Felix Gall, 46 seconds behind the leaders.

UAE Team Emirates XRG's Pogacar, who had a brief scare as he came off the road on the final descent, now leads Movistar's Mas by 3min 34sec and compatriot Roglic by 4min 21sec overall.

Mas overtook Pogacar on the summit of the last climb, which came out of



Team UAE's Slovenian rider Tadej Pogacar followed by Team Movistar's Spanish rider Enric Mas crosses first the finish line of the sixth stage of the Vuelta a Espana 2026, a 177.4 km race between Alcossebre and Castellon de la Plana on August 27, 2026.

the blue for the Slovenian. "I was really surprised on the top, he flew past by me like a rocket," said Pogacar.

"I was just happy to be with him in the last 10 kilometers into the headwind because I had no water, it was nice to have a compatriot next to me.

"Then in the end, I knew that I can beat him in the sprint, but I still appreciated that he committed full and I also committed full to the finish line. So chapeau to him, it was a great race." There was a big battle to get into the break on the 177.5 kilometer ride from Alcossebre but it took a long time for an escape to form.

Finally, 15 riders moved clear and established a two-and-a-half minute gap on the peloton with 40km remaining.

The break split up on the final climb of Puerto El Bartolo, which peeled onto a gravel road, where Pogacar attacked and picked off the riders ahead of him.

- Pogacar scare -

Mas was hot on his tail and the Spaniard dug deep to charge past Pogacar and head over the top of the climb ahead.

Pogacar came off the road and into a grassy section after misjudging a corner, but he swiftly recovered to get back on Mas's trail.

"He simply went off the track, and when I turned around, he was already on my wheel," said Mas.

Four-time Vuelta winner Roglic, Gall and Debruyne were chasing the front two, but Pogacar and Mas worked well together to keep their advantage.

Pogacar lead out towards the finish line but Mas simply did not have the kick to come around him.

"Pogi is Pogi, and we have to take it one day at a time I'm second overall, I'm feeling good," said Mas.

It was a bad day for Oscar Onley, who lost over a minute-and-a-half on his general classification rivals.

Earlier in the day, Netcompany Ineos rider Josh Turling abandoned the race with around 120km of the stage left, with his team not giving a reason. □

Dos Santos upstages Warholm for blistering new 400m hurdles world record

Zurich, Switzerland

Brazil's Alison Dos Santos smashed the world record in the men's 400m hurdles at the Diamond League meet in Zurich on Thursday. Dos Santos clocked a sensational 45.80 seconds to beat the previous mark of 45.94sec set by Norway's Karsten Warholm when winning gold at the Tokyo Olympics.

Asked whether he thought he might break the world record, Dos Santos was in no doubt: "I did, I did!

"As soon as I knew I was coming here, I was excited. The weather's good, the track's amazing."

Dos Santos, the 2022 world champion who won world silver last year as well as two Olympic bronzes, will leave Zurich with a check for \$80,000 for having bro-

ken the record.

Dos Santos, drawn in lane six inside Warholm, kept early track on the traditionally fast-starting Norwegian.

The pair were neck-and-neck coming into the final 150 meters, before Dos Santos put on the afterburners down the home straight, immediately dropping Warholm.

From there, it was just a race between the 26-year-old Brazilian and the line.

He did not hold back, crashing through to finish in amazing style.

"I hope that Brazil stopped to watch this as much as the people here in the stadium," said Dos Santos.

"This has been an incredible night, I have no words to explain what happened other than I just broke the

world record.

"I have been showing great form throughout the season that I am fast, I am strong."

- 'Crazy event' -

Dos Santos said there had been fundamental changes made to his training and racing in preparation for a tilt at the world record.

"I'm starting faster, I'm finishing stronger, and that is what I have to do to be able to break a world record," he said.

"I was looking for my coach after I crossed the finish line. I was the one running, but he is the one who made this possible someone who believed in me when I was younger.

"He helped me to develop both as an athlete and as a person, too. He's like an

older brother, like a dad to me."

Warholm swept in on the coattails of Dos Santos in 46.69sec, which also beat his meet record set last year, while Nigeria's Ezekiel Nathaniel was third (47.50).

"From Silesia it did not look like it was going to come today, I would say," Warholm said of Dos Santos's new WR.

"But after the hurdle 4-5 he looked extremely good. He was brilliant." □



Brazil's Alison dos Santos competes in the men's 400m hurdles prior to win and break the world record during the IAAF Diamond League athletics meeting, at the Letzigrund Stadium, in Zurich on August 27, 2026.



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More than goals: What Mourinho wants from Real Madrid's Mbappe

Madrid, Spain

The 2026/27 season has barely begun and Real Madrid superstar Kylian Mbappe is already on top of La Liga's goal scoring charts ahead of the visit of promoted side Malaga on Sunday.

The French forward hit a hat-trick as Jose Mourinho's team steamrolled Real Sociedad on Wednesday, securing a second league win from two matches this season.

Mbappe, who won the league's top scorer trophy in both of his two prior seasons at the club, will be licking his lips ready for more with Malaga visiting the Santiago Bernabeu.

However, despite his superbly taken treble, Mourinho said goals are not enough for the forward, who he described as "incredible".

"I prefer 40 (goals) with titles than 60 without titles,"

Mourinho told reporters.

"I prefer 40 with a lot of

work for the team than 60 just playing for himself, as

often happens with forwards."

That was not a criticism of Mbappe this season but instead an encouragement for the Frenchman to maintain the level he has shown so far in terms of work-rate. "I'm very happy with him," continued Mourinho. "From a technical standpoint, there's obviously nothing to say, but in terms of helping the group grow, taking responsibility, working..."

"He arrived two days early, and two days early in that pre-season period can mean something positive." Getting more out of Mbappe, beyond the slew of goals he is guaranteed to provide, may be the key to unlocking a team which boasts great quality and potential but has failed to win a major trophy in the last two seasons. □



Real Madrid's French forward #10 Kylian Mbappe celebrates scoring a hat-trick and his team's fourth goal during the Spanish league football match between Real Madrid CF and Real Sociedad at Santiago Bernabeu Stadium in Madrid on August 26, 2026.