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Iran war is not a war, U.S. V.P. Vance says

Washington, United States
U.S. Vice President J.D. Vance said Thursday he would not categorize the Iran war as a war, despite continuing clashes with Tehran six months after the start of the conflict.

Vance's comments came amid growing signs that President Donald Trump is trying to draw a line under the conflict that has bogged down his administration.

"I wouldn't call it a war. Right now, there is no active shooting," Vance told a White House briefing when asked if the war would be over by U.S. midterm elections in November.

Vance added that "I recognize there have been places where this has flared up" but said major combat operations only lasted for six weeks after the U.S.-Israel war started on February 28.

"But when you ask when will this end, you're asking me a question like when will the Iranians stop shooting at ships? I think the reality is I don't know the answer to that question. You would have to ask the Iranians,"



U.S. Vice President J.D. Vance speaks during a press briefing in the James S. Brady Press Briefing Room at the White House in Washington, DC, on September 3, 2026.

he said. After several weeks of calm, fresh clashes began with U.S. raids on Sunday, deepening the impasse in the six-month war, as Iran maintains a stranglehold on the strategic Strait of Hormuz. Vance insisted that the United States would not reopen talks with Iran until it ended attacks on com-

mercial shipping. But with fuel prices threatening to cost Trump's Republicans their control of Congress at the ballot box, his administration has begun pushing the message that oil flows through the waterway are now returning to pre-war levels.

- Wedding strike probe -
"Their control over the Strait

of Hormuz is effectively gone," Vance said of Iran. "If you go back three months ago, how much oil and gas was coming out of the strait under Iranian threats? It was virtually nothing. Now, it's almost back to where it was before the conflict even started," Vance said.

Trump's approval ratings

are near record lows as the president who vowed to keep the United States out of any more foreign wars finds himself in a quagmire with the Islamic republic. Eighteen U.S. troops and thousands of people in Iran and Lebanon have died in the conflict since February. The Wall Street Journal reported that Trump was now discussing with senior aides about whether to declare the Iran war over. He posted a photo of a banner saying "Mission Accomplished" last week.

Iran pressed on with fresh attacks on Thursday, saying it hit U.S. military bases in Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates to avenge a strike on a wedding that it blamed on Washington.

Vance said the United States was probing the wedding strike but cast doubt on Iranian reporting of the incident.

"I know that we're investigating," Vance said. "I will say that the Iranian state media has not been a very good scribe about what's happened in the conflict thus far. So I'm extremely skeptical of this." □

U.S. govt sides with OpenAI in New York Times copyright lawsuit

New York, United States
U.S. President Donald Trump's administration sided with OpenAI in a lawsuit brought by the New York Times, defending training AI models on copyrighted works, according to a court document filed Tuesday.

In late 2023, the New York Times sued ChatGPT-maker OpenAI and Microsoft, its main investor, alleging that the companies' powerful artificial intelligence models used millions of articles for training without permission.

Copyright has been a major battleground for the generative AI sector, with publishers, musicians and artists lawyering up or cutting deals to get paid for technology that is being built with their content. The Justice Department said in a 20-page document that the "creative

possibilities and public benefits that (large language model) training advances far outweigh any competitive harm."

"Constraining LLM development under a misunderstanding of fair use doctrine would thwart such

creative and scientific progress while hindering American prosperity and economic mobility," the document read.

The Justice Department added that the Times' interpretation of the law would

create an anti-competitive entry barrier that "function primarily as large subsidies for old mainstream media companies."

Associate Attorney General Stanley Woodward said on Wednesday that Trump has made clear that "AI dominance is critical" to national security, prosperity and economic mobility. "This Administration will never let our Nation be at a disadvantage relative to our foreign adversaries based on a plainly incorrect understanding of copyright law," Woodward wrote on X.

The Times' lawsuit partly hinges on the limited "fair use" exception, which permits copyrighted work to be used without the rights holders' consent.

The Justice Department argued that the training of AI models on written works is "exceedingly transforma-

tive," allowing it to benefit from the exception.

Graham James, a spokesman for the New York Times, told U.S. media that the Justice Department was siding with "trillion-dollar AI companies" at the expense of American creators.

"The administration's proposal to let companies take that content without permission or compensation would undermine the sustainability of the human-created content that a healthy society depends on, and which AI needs to function," James said in a statement.

In July, a U.S. judge approved a \$1.5 billion settlement between Anthropic and several authors who claimed the San Francisco company illegally copied their work to train its AI model, Claude. □



A copy of The New York Times International Edition, dated Thursday, November 28, 2024, is arranged with a black notebook, a pen, a pad of yellow sticky notes and a white ceramic mug printed with an idea-themed graphic in this still life illustration photo taken on August 31, 2026.



An election worker processes mail-in ballots at the Los Angeles County Ballot Processing Center during California's state primary election in the City of Industry, California, on June 2, 2026.

U.S. postal whistleblower warns ballot system could disrupt midterms

Washington, United States

A U.S. Postal Service whistleblower has warned that millions of Americans could be prevented from receiving mail ballots ahead of November's midterm elections because of a rushed, new system ordered by President Donald Trump and due for launch Tuesday.

The anonymous federal official alleges that the agency has continued developing the system despite court orders blocking key parts of Trump's effort to impose new federal controls on voting by mail.

The disclosure, released Tuesday by Democratic U.S. Senator Richard Blumenthal, describes the project as "secretive, rushed, chaotic, and fundamentally flawed" and warns that insufficient testing could lead to "catastrophic failure."

Under the proposed system, state election authorities would upload lists of mail voters and identifying barcodes to a new federal portal.

Postal workers would then check samples from large batches of outgoing ballots against that information before accepting them for delivery.

USPS has adopted a "zero-percent failure policy" under which an entire batch could be rejected if even one sampled barcode fails to scan or match the federal system.

That could mean that one problematic ballot in a mailing of 10,000 prevents the other 9,999 from being sent until the discrepancy is resolved and the batch rechecked.

"The apparently sloppy and rushed manner in which the federal ballot mail portal and supporting IT systems are being built poses significant risk," said the official, who is represented by the nonprofit Whistleblower Aid.

"Potentially millions of American voters may not receive their mail-in ballot this election cycle in a timely manner, or at all," the person said.

The disclosure said the system was built under constantly changing requirements and received only a fraction of the testing normally required for major information technology projects.

USPS had been working toward a September 1 launch, the whistleblower said.

In a statement to AFP, USPS said it was reviewing the allegations but denied defying court orders.

It said that work on the ballot portal had been lawful, no mandatory verification procedures are currently being used, and the portal will initially be offered only voluntarily to election officials.

"This work has at all times been conducted in a manner consistent with court orders," USPS said.

"Regardless of political party or perspective, we share a common goal: ensuring that Americans can have confidence that their election mail will be handled securely and delivered reliably," it added.

Blumenthal, the senior Democrat on a Senate investigations panel, accused the Postal Service of putting voting rights at risk and urged Postmaster General David Steiner to abandon the plan.

"The whistleblower's allegations make clear that USPS lacks the technical or operational capability needed to effectively implement the (order's) provisions in a way that safeguards every citizen's right to vote in the upcoming midterm elections," Blumenthal said. □

The whistleblower alleges - 'Chaos' -



People chant slogans during a protest against the termination of Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for the Haitian community and to end mass deportations, at Foley Square in New York City on August 28, 2026.

U.S. ICE agent accused of lying about migrant shooting

Washington, United States

A federal immigration agent is facing charges of making false statements about the January shooting of a Venezuelan migrant in Minnesota, U.S. media reported Thursday.

The indictment of the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agent is a rare case of the Trump administration pursuing charges against a law enforcement officer.

Christian Castro, 52, was one of two agents placed on leave earlier this year for allegedly lying about the January 14 shooting in Minneapolis of Julio Cesar Sosa-Celis, who was wounded in the leg.

ProPublica, a nonprofit news outlet, said federal prosecutors in Minnesota had sought to file civil rights charges against Castro over the shooting but were thwarted by leaders of the Department of Justice in Washington. Instead, Castro, who has been suspended by ICE, is facing the lesser federal charge of lying to investigators. Castro also faces state charges in Minnesota in connection with the shooting of Sosa-Celis -- felony assault and falsely reporting a crime.

Minnesota has demanded Castro's extradition from Texas to face the state charges but Texas Governor Greg Abbott, a Republican, has refused so far to hand him over.

The shooting of Sosa-Celis came one week after a federal agent in Minneapolis shot and killed Renee Good, a 37-year-old American citizen and mother of three. Good's death inflamed protests against President Donald Trump's immigration raids in the Minnesota city and a second killing there of U.S. citizen Alex Pretti in late January fueled a national backlash against the aggressive immigration crackdown.

According to Minnesota prosecutors, Castro fired a shot through the front door of a residence, striking Sosa-Celis in the leg.

Federal prosecutors initially filed assault charges against Sosa-Celis and another man, Alfredo Alejandro Aljorna, but dropped them after video evidence and witness statements cast doubt on Castro's account of what happened. □

U.S. feminist icon Gloria Steinem dies aged 92

New York, United States

Gloria Steinem, the American journalist, author and activist who was one of the most recognizable and enduring faces of the feminist movement, has died aged 92, her foundation announced Thursday.

"Yesterday, Gloria Steinem passed away peacefully at her home in New York City, surrounded by some of the many who loved her," Gloria's Foundation said in a statement. It did not specify the cause of death.

The announcement sparked an outpouring of tributes to her decades of boundary-pushing activism.

"Gloria Steinem pushed open doors not just for herself, but for literally millions of women behind her," said Hillary Clinton, the first woman to serve as US secretary of state and the first female presidential nominee of a major political party.

Nancy Pelosi, the first woman to be U.S. House speaker, called Steinem "a fearless trailblazer who transformed the fight for equality in America and inspired generations of women to know their power."

"She lit a torch many years ago. It is now our responsibility to keep it lifted into the future," said tennis champion Billie Jean King, winner



U.S. activist Gloria Steinem looks on prior to ringing the closing bell on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange (NYSE) during International Women's Day in New York on March, 9 2026.

of the famed 1973 "Battle of the Sexes" match.

Before becoming a leading figure in the women's rights movement, Steinem cut her teeth in journalism in the 1960s, denouncing the inequalities American women endured at a time when many needed their husband's approval to open a bank account.

She came to prominence in 1963 with an expose of the pervasive sexism faced by cocktail waitresses at New York's Playboy Club.

But she credited her awakening to activism to a 1969 meeting where women described the ordeal of having an abortion.

"It made some sense of my own experience. I had had an abortion and had never told anyone," she later recounted in an article in New York Magazine.

The London doctor who gave her an abortion in 1957, when it was still illegal, made her promise two things: "First, you will not tell anyone my name. Second, you will do

what you want to do with your life."

In the 1970s, she founded Ms Magazine and the National Women's Political Caucus and organized the first National Women's Conference in Houston.

Donning her trademark aviator glasses, Steinem headlined conferences and protests in the United States and around the world for decades. She remained an outspoken defender of women's rights well into her

later years.

When in 2022 the US Supreme Court overturned the Roe v Wade decision of 1973, which had enshrined the right to abortion, she pointed out: "Banning abortions does not stop the need for them. It just bans their safety."

"Don't agonize. Organize," she urged.

After a lifetime battling injustice, she told AFP in 2019: "I think the role of older people like me is to have hope, because we remember when it was worse."

- Public scrutiny -

Born in Ohio on March 25, 1934, Steinem had a nomadic early life with a traveling salesman father.

Her parents divorced when she was 10, forcing her to care for her mother who had mental health issues.

As a frontline feminist, she came under intense scrutiny from both sides of the political spectrum.

Her good looks, miniskirts and brief experience as a Playboy Bunny were used against her in attempts to undermine her credibility.

The fact that she remained single and childless was also weaponized.

At 66, she married businessman David Bale, the father of actor Christian Bale.

Asked by a reporter why she had changed her position on single life, she said: "I didn't change. Marriage changed."

Bale died three years later of brain cancer, aged 62. Steinem herself underwent surgery for breast cancer in the 1980s.

- 'Have hope' -

Some younger activists saw Steinem as representing an outdated type of feminism. She was criticized for defending Bill Clinton in 1989 when the then-governor of Arkansas was accused of sexual harassment.

In 2016, when Clinton's wife Hillary was vying to become the first female president in US history but struggling to garner support among women, Steinem suggested young women preferred her rival Bernie Sanders because young men liked him.□

Venice Film Festival head stresses AI potential

Venice, Italy

The Venice Film Festival's artistic director stressed the creative potential of artificial intelligence on Tuesday ahead of the

premiere of a documentary made entirely with the technology at the Italian event.

In an AFP interview on the eve of the festival, Alberto

Barbera acknowledged the danger but also the capabilities of the emerging technology that has caused panic as well as excitement across a wide swathe of industries.

"There's both danger and advantage. The fact is that up to now we've seen a great many interventions on artificial intelligence driven by fear, by concern over the negative impact AI might have on the whole of humankind, on professional aspects, on copyright, on artists' image and so on and so forth," he said.

Besides understanding how to control the powerful technology, people need to ask how it can "begin to harness the ex-

traordinary potential of this unprecedented technology," he said.

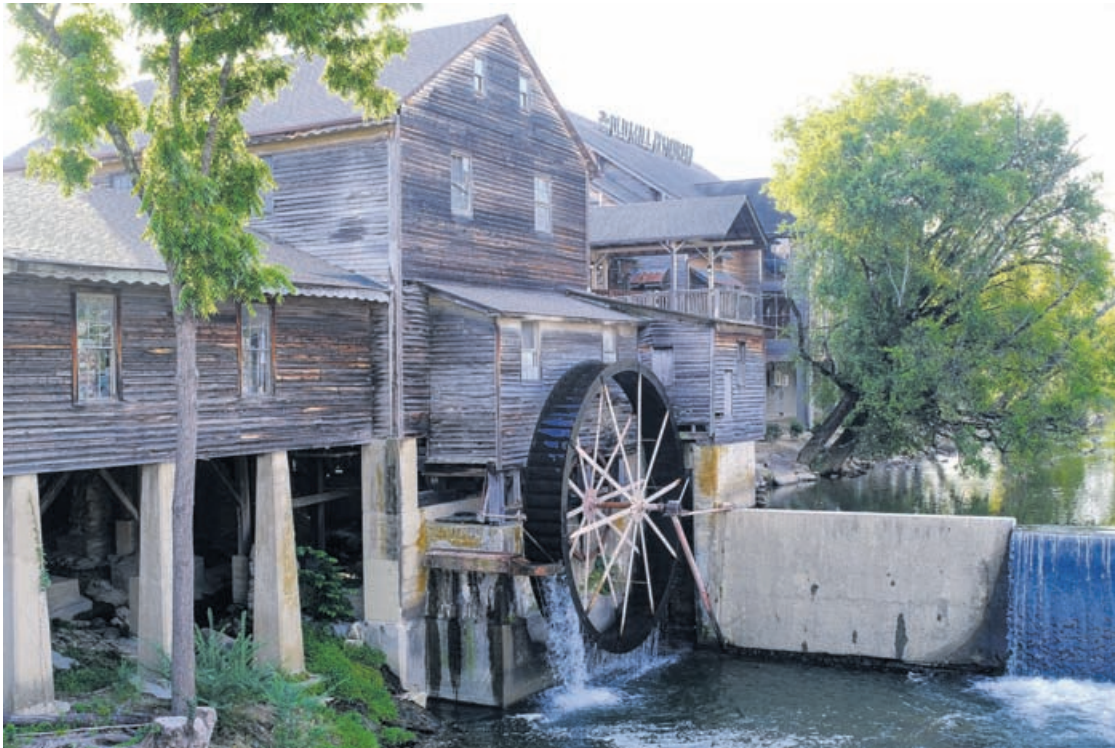
The technology enables artists and directors "to achieve things that until now were not possible," he added. The prestigious festival on the Venice Lido has programmed a documentary made entirely with AI "Be Brave" from Italian director Francesco Carrozzini, which centers on the founder of jeans brand Diesel, Renzo Rosso.

Barbera called it "a very interesting experience."

In the film's line notes, Carrozzini said that the choice to use AI for his documentary about the fashion "provocateur" made sense.□



Italian director of the Venice International Film Festival Alberto Barbera attends the photocall of the jury during the 83rd International Venice Film Festival, at Venice Lido on September 2, 2026.



A view of the water-powered Old Mill in Pigeon Forge, Tennessee, on August 27, 2026.

Grinding away: in remote Appalachia, old mills fuel U.S. clean food dreams

Pigeon Forge, United States

In a country better known for industrial farming, highly processed food and suspiciously long-lasting bread, Chuck Childers rises before dawn and trudges off to operate one of America's oldest functioning gristmills. East Tennessee's water-powered Old Mill first began grinding cornmeal back in 1830 in the deep Appalachian region along the Little Pigeon River. It still does today.

And Childers, 68, isn't just keeping up tradition and showcasing heritage. He and other optimists believe the old ways will fuel a return to healthier, smaller-scale, more sustainable food production across the U.S.

"There's been a resurgence" of interest in "clean food," he told AFP at the mill in Pigeon Forge. In a nation that invented the likes of the frozen TV dinner, Childers is winding back the clock with technology that would be recognizable to farmers two millennia ago.

The corn ground at the Old Mill is Tennessee-grown, never genetically modified, and no harsh chemicals or additives are added to the cornmeal and grits.

The stones doing the grinding at the mill where the father of late country music

legend Dolly Parton once took his corn each weigh 2,000 pounds (907-kg).

"I think people... want foods that are whole foods, the way we used to do them, the foods that their grandmother or great-grandmother made," Childers said.

- Traditional vs industrial -

Traditional millers say stone-ground products are healthier than ones from industrial roller mills.

Heavily processed milling strips away bran, germ and other nutrients, and while federal law requires such flour to be enriched, the end product still lacks key vitamins, minerals and antioxidants.

"A lot of the fiber is taken off" in the industrial process, said Danielle Nierenberg, president of the not-for-profit Food Tank which seeks to build sustainable and equitable food systems.

"Revitalizing" traditional gristmills, thousands of which once operated in Appalachia a swath of mountains and valleys across 13 states, from Alabama, Tennessee and West Virginia up to southern New York is key to America's clean-food puzzle, Nierenberg said.

The economics, however, are going the other direc-

tion, with local mills unable to compete with facilities boasting output hundreds of times greater.

Retired miller John Lovett estimates that fewer than 100 traditional gristmills nationwide still operate at commercial viability.

- Appalachia: poverty, poor health -

Appalachia is known for its struggles with nutrition, health disparities, diminished access to fresh food, and poverty.

Getting locals to eat differently is a challenge.

"It's like pushing a rope," Lovett sighed. A vocal minority is in favor, "but then the mass majority is, I think, not as concerned."

Even if they want to ditch the industrial food products, healthier alternatives cost more and in poverty stricken areas of East Tennessee, that's a non-starter. Clive Valentine, who built a traditional gristmill in Dandridge, in the foothills of the Smoky Mountains, sees hope.

The Covid pandemic "opened people's eyes about what they're putting in their bodies," the 77-year-old told AFP.

A few years ago, 10 couples might stop by the mill and its general store each weekend. Today, that number has soared tenfold. □



Venezuelan opposition leader Maria Corina Machado speaks during 2026 CERWeek by S&P Global energy conference in Houston, Texas on March 24, 2026.

Machado says Venezuela needs 'more than money' after U.S. oil deal

Caracas, Venezuela

Venezuelan opposition figure Maria Corina Machado on Thursday called for a democratic transition in her country after the interim government struck a massive oil deal with the United States.

The agreement grants U.S. access to more than 65 billion barrels almost 20 percent of oil in Venezuela, which holds the largest proven reserves in the world.

Celebrating the "historic" pact on Wednesday, US President Donald Trump and Venezuelan interim leader Delcy Rodriguez both sidelined the notion of elections in the near future.

Machado, a Nobel Peace Prize laureate, said genuine development required a democratic transition.

"The oil sector is only one part of the immense reconstruction we must undertake in Venezuela," she said in a video statement.

The South American country "requires colossal investments," she said, "but it needs much more than money."

"No development is possible without solid institutions and a government elected by popular vote," added Machado.

The deal comes as U.S. Republicans brace for possible losses in November midterm elections over spiraling fuel costs brought on by the U.S.-Israel war on Iran.

Energy Secretary Chris Wright traveled to Venezuela on Wednesday to oversee the signing of deals between Caracas and oil major Chevron, GE Vernova a General Electric offshoot and Italy's ENI.

He insisted that the U.S. was not "stealing Venezuelan oil" in comments to AFP and other media outlets.

"All we're doing is taking an idle, underground asset that isn't doing anything for Venezuelan people and bringing the money, the technology to develop it," Wright said.

- 'I know how you feel' -

Trump meanwhile dismissed the idea of Venezuelan elections taking place in the near future.

"I just don't think they're ready yet," he told reporters. Interim leader Rodriguez, who took the reins after US forces ousted president Nicolas Maduro in January and effectively does Washington's bidding, echoed Trump's comment.

Machado empathized with Venezuelans frustrated by the deal's lack of transparency.

"I know how you feel: sadness, anger, and that all-too-familiar unease in our history, because someone decides what belongs to us, in our name, without taking us into account," she said. □

In Ghana, larger-than-life coffins tell the stories of the dead

Accra, Ghana

Frederick Teiko Ofori spent a large portion of his life with a guitar in his hands, so when the Ghanaian musician died in a road accident, his family decided that the instrument should accompany him on his final journey.

His coffin was built in the shape of an enormous guitar.

The coffin stood out at his funeral on Saturday in Adjen Kotoku Amoama, on the outskirts of Accra, among bright red flowers, a portrait of the 40-year-old and the mourners gathered under canopies to shade themselves from the sun.

Yet it was also par for the course in a country where celebrations of life often include such intricately crafted tributes to the deceased.

In Ghana, particularly among Ga communities around the capital, "figurative" or "fantasy" coffins, as they're known, offer fantastical, yet intimate, send-offs.

Fishermen are buried in massive, human-sized fish or canoes, farmers in cocoa pods, drivers in cars and religious figures in Bibles.

Ofori left behind a wife, a young family including a child born just a week be-



Relatives mourn next to the pen-shaped coffin of the late Ghanaian teacher Samuel Commey Tetteh during his funeral ceremony in Paanor, Ghana, on August 15, 2026.

fore the funeral, and a musical legacy abruptly cut short.

But even in death, the guitar remained part of his identity.

The huge wooden instrument carrying his body was made by Daniel Obli Mensah, known by the cheery nickname "Hello", a veteran coffinmaker who has spent more than three decades turning people's professions, passions and status into their final resting places.

"Anytime someone commissions me to do a cof-

fin in the profession of the deceased, it excites me," Mensah, 54, told AFP.

"It helps me truly honour the deceased and the family." The modern tradition of sculptural coffins emerged among Ga craftsmen around Accra in the middle of the 20th century, partly inspired by the elaborately shaped palanquins used by local chiefs.

Today, the objects occupy an unusual niche of contemporary art, quickly disappearing underground despite painstaking, finely tuned craftsmanship.

Some end up displayed in museums, however, including a guitar-shaped coffin by Ghanaian artist Paa Joe, on loan to New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art.

- A teacher's final pen -

Samuel Commey Tetteh lay dressed in white before his funeral began, visitors greeting elders at the family home before approaching the body of the man known throughout the community as "Teacher". Tetteh, born in 1943, had taught in Paanor, in Ga South, outside the capital,

for more than half a century, his family said.

The quiet of the early morning eventually gave way to pounding music as mourners filed in. Then came Tetteh's coffin a giant pen. Again, it was Mensah's work. It took about two weeks.

A sheep was slaughtered and its blood applied to the coffin, the solemnity of the funeral rites taking precedence over the fun of the coffin.

And then, the pen was buried, Mensah's work disappearing into the ground.

At workshops around Accra, dozens of other lives wait to be translated into wood.

Some customers arrive carrying a photograph of exactly what they want. Others simply describe the life of the deceased.

Then the craftsmen let their imaginations run riot.

One of the most difficult designs that carpenter Lawrence Okoe Anang remembers was a crocodile, commissioned more than a decade ago for a priest in Ghana's Volta Region.

His father made the coffin, while the younger Anang, then still learning the trade he started training for at age 10, helped around the workshop. □

Philippine couple married in hip-deep floodwaters

Manila, Philippines

A Philippine couple tied the knot on Tuesday at a Catholic church swamped in hip-deep waters, as heavy rains have pum-

meled large parts of the country for a month.

Clutching a bouquet of white blooms and clad in an off-shoulder white gown, Leian Lieza Galang

gingerly waded into the murky brown floodwaters inside the Saint John the Baptist church in Hagonoy town, north of Manila, to wed Gilbert Chico.

"We were in complete uniform. We did not mind that our gown and coat got soaked," the groom told AFP.

The parish priest declared the couple, both in their 30s, husband and wife at an abbreviated late-morning ceremony, said wedding photographer Mikko Rey Alfonso.

"The parish had advised them to postpone the wedding due to the rising floodwaters from upstream. It was their decision to proceed," Alfonso told AFP, adding the church

had been partially underwater for nearly a month.

"Since they wanted to see it through, we the servants of the parish did the best we could to make this a special day for them."

Heavier-than-usual seasonal monsoon rains pounded the northern third of the mainly Catholic archipelago in August, with resulting landslides and flash floods killing 34 people, according to the latest official tally.

"They love each other. Nothing could stop their union," Alfonso said.

A video clip of the wedding posted on the parish's Facebook page showed the bride being hugged by her parents in front of

empty pews adorned with plastic flower bouquets.

One photo showed a boy holding the wedding rings walking down the aisle -- with floodwater up to his waist.

The bride and groom arrived together aboard a rickshaw with an elevated chassis, keeping their clothes pristine before they got off at the church courtyard, Chico said.

To allow the bride to safely navigate the floodwaters, she had to "have her wedding gown altered to shorten the train", Alfonso said. Fewer than 15 people were in attendance, he added.

Chico, who works as a rigger in the Middle East, said the wedding was originally planned for December. □



This grab made from a handout video taken and received on September 1, 2026 from Ang Tinig St. John the Baptist Parish Hagonoy, Bulacan shows bride Lhiane Galang (C) walking down the aisle at the St. John the Baptist Parish church during their wedding ceremony in a flooded church in Hagonoy town.

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



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

cial period.

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

fossilized coral reefs at the University of Aruba. Their focus for their research included studying the health and formation patterns of these coral reefs, and to investigate how these reefs have responded and can respond to fluctuating sea levels or extreme weather, like hurricanes and tsunamis.

Through underwater and land surveillance, and 3D models of the reefs, they were able to narrow down when these formations started to take place. They were also able to track the fluctuation of sea levels during the past hundred or even thousands of years, and the effects that this fluctuation has had on the coral reefs of the windward side of Aruba.

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

pointed out, these fossilized reefs on the windward side are truly an incredible and rare remnant of geological history, as they provide a clear view of how these reefs have formed.

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

Exploring the Mainstreet of San Nicolas



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

Over the course of four decades, its demographics had changed immensely

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

Flow of history

If you are looking for history San Nicolas has it.

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

The Community Museum holds a remarkable collection that spans millennia.



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

The new San Nicolas

In the shadow of the refinery, an art capital is quietly

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



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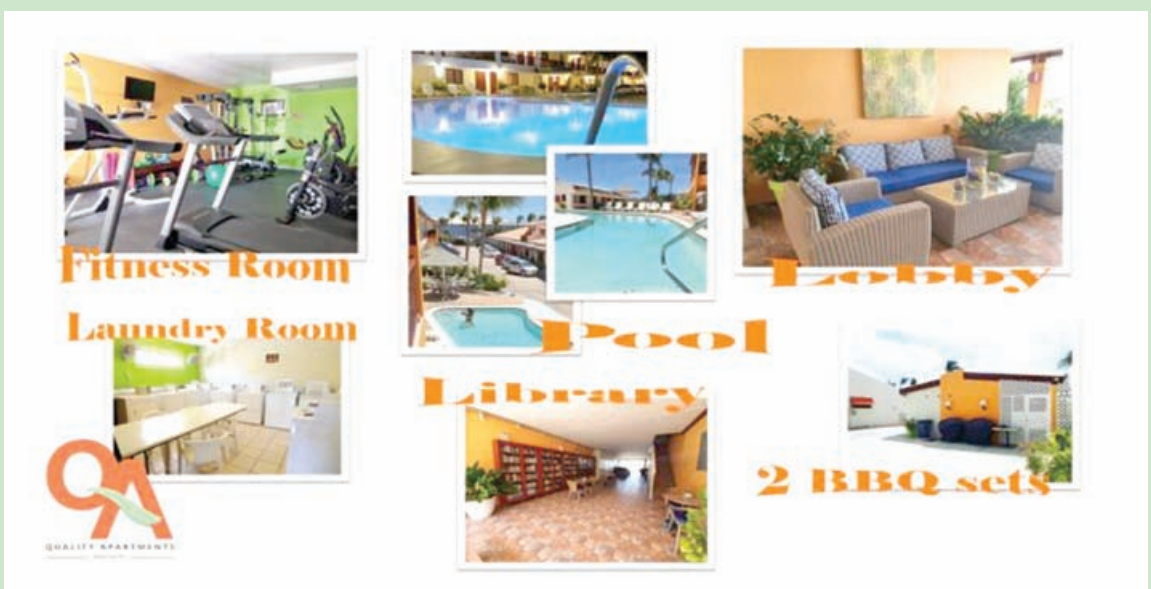
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Aruba to me



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Monumentsfund Aruba announces the restoration of Cas Debrot



**(Oranjestad)—Monu-
mentsfund Aruba (SMFA)
has recently announced
that the restoration of Cas
Debrot has now entered
its second phase. In 2024,
SMFA bought the building
from the Debroth family and
has since designated it as a
protected monument.**

Located at Caya Betico
Croes 98, the history of

Cas Debroth starts with Jose
Maria (Boy) Debroth, a mer-
chant from Bonaire who
moved to Aruba with his
parents after the econom-
ic boom brought on by the
refinery in the late 1920s.
After arriving to Aruba, the
family opened a general
store in Nassaustraat 94,
next to the parcel which
soon after housed Cas De-
broth. The store operated

under the firm E.F. Debroth
Sucs Inc. named after his
father Eduard Ferdinand
Debroth. The firm was an im-
port and export company
and sold alcoholic bever-
ages, jukeboxes and even
office furniture and air con-
ditioners. In 1929, Boy married Elia
Capriles and they had their
honeymoon in Europe. It's
estimated that during their



time abroad the construc-
tion of Cas Debroth com-
menced and was final-
ized soon after their return.
When they moved in, they
decorated the house with
European furniture. The
Debroth family lived in
the house for 10 years after

its construction, and in 1941
during the Second World
War they moved to Vene-
zuela, where Elia is from.

After the Debroth family va-
cated the house, the build-
ing itself saw a myriad of
changes throughout the
20th century and had had
an important role in Oran-
jestad's business life. The
building housed Holland-
sche Bank Unie (Dutch
Bank Union), Debroth Hard-
ware Store, Nassau Shoe
Shop and even housed the
Venezuelan consulate.

In 1950, the building was
split between Nederlandsche
Bank Unie N.V. and the
Venezuelan consulate until
the 1970s. Its current archi-
tectural design reflects the
Neo-Barok Latin American
artistic movement that
dominated the 60s and
70s. □

**Pictures courtesy of Monu-
mentsfund Aruba (SMFA).**

Visit the natural bridges of Aruba!

**(Oranjestad)—After you've
visited the Alto Vista
Church, the Bushiribana
Gold Mill Ruins and the mini
natural pool that is located
right next to it, you're next**

**up around the northern
coast line must be the Nat-
ural Bridge. Once the larg-
est natural bridge in the
Caribbean, this bridge has
been a tourist attraction for**

many years.

The bridge was formed
during thousands of years,
cut and crafted by the
wild waves that crash into
the coral stone walls of the
coast. Before its collapse,
this bridge measured 30
meters in length and 7
meters in height, making it
the biggest natural bridge
in the Caribbean at the
time. For many years, this
site was also a frequen-
tly visited beach, as the
bridge had a small open-
ing through which the wa-
ter would flow into the tiny
beach. Unfortunately in 2005, the

bridge collapsed, and the
little beach dried up. De-
spite this, this site remained
a tourist attraction, with
many visitors walking
along the coral cliffs of the
bridge to see the spectac-
ular view of the northern
coastline and the Carib-
bean Sea. Visitors can also
still visit the souvenir shop
on the left of the bridge
entrance.

While the natural bridge
no longer is functional,
there is now a smaller nat-
ural bridge very close. This
bridge is often called the
"Baby Bridge" or "Daugh-
ter Bridge". □



Snakes of Aruba

Arikok National Park is home to various unique plant and animal species such as Aruba's rare endemic rattlesnake *Crotalus unicolor*). This rattlesnake is locally known as the 'Cascabel'. But Aruba has two more snake species living on the island: the Santanero and the Boa.

Cascabel (*Crotalus unicolor*)

The small Cascabel or Aruba Island Rattlesnake averages 70 cm in length. The body color is often uniform gray or light brown. There may be a faint pattern of diamond shaped markings on the back. This pattern is most noticeable on younger snakes. The most distinctive feature of this snake is the rattle at the end of its tail which makes a buzzing sound when the snake is alarmed. Cascabels are shy and not aggressive, but their venom can be dangerous to humans. It is best to leave this snake alone. Do not attempt to catch or kill it.

Cascabels hunt by waiting under bushes and fruiting trees to catch passing lizards, mice, rats, small rabbits, and an occasional bird. This is often considered to be one of the rarest rattlesnakes in the world. The range of the Cascabel is restricted to the rugged and mountainous areas of the island mostly within Arikok National Park. The Arikok National Park was designated in the early 1980s to include most of the rattlesnake's population, providing a safe refuge in which the snake can be protected and monitored. The government has also implemented outreach and education initiatives to change local perception of the snake and highlight its ecological and economic importance – it is now being promoted as a national symbol.

Arikok's partnership with the Toledo zoo has safeguarded the rattlesnake ex-situ and led to a number of research projects collecting critical data on the Cascabel's abundance, life history and habitat requirement to help guide future conservation efforts.



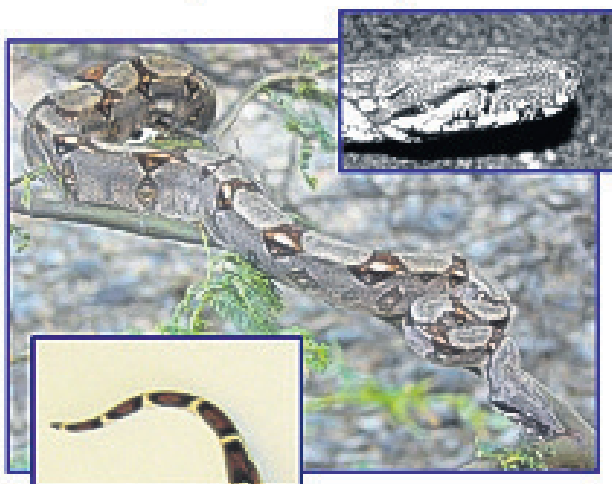
Santanero

The slender Santanero or Aruban Cat-eyed Snake is typically less than 50 cm long. This snake is recognizable by the large scales on the top of its head and by its pattern of dark brown bands alternating with light brown bands. The belly is plain white or cream colored without any markings. This snake is shy and not aggressive. However, it has enlarged teeth at the back of its mouth and mild venom which is not dangerous to humans. However, the venom can paralyze small lizards and frogs. Santaneros are most active at night when they search for food. During the day, they hide under rocks or leaves. They frequently climb trees and cactus. Santaneros eat toads, frogs, insects, and lizards. You may find Santaneros near dams during periods of rainy weather or crossing roads at night. This snake is found island wide. A Santanero in your garden will keep away the unwanted insects. If you encounter a Santanero around your garden, please do not harm this species.

Boa (*Boa constrictor*)

Boas are Aruba's largest snakes. The longest Boa found on the island was slightly less than 3 m. Newborn Boas average 35 cm. Boas are not venomous. The most distinctive feature of a Boa is its pattern of dark brown and tan blotches which become red toward the tail. The belly is white or cream colored with numerous black spots. Boas are excellent climbers and may be found in trees and cactus. Boas also hide in the leaves under bushes waiting to catch prey that pass. Boas catch their prey with their teeth and then constrict it in their coils. The Boa's diet consists of birds, lizards, rats, mice, and rabbits. Large Boas have been known to eat small goats and chickens. When threatened, Boas will hiss loudly. Boas are a non-native species. The first Boas were reported on the island in 1999. Since that time they have been found across the entire island in all types of habitats. □

BOA
(*Boa constrictor*)



CASCABEL
(*Crotalus unicolor*)



SANTANERO
(*Leptodeira bakeri*)



Lessons from our elders: Plants and fruits for medicinal use



(Oranjestad)— Though western medicine is now widely used for common illnesses and to keep our bodies healthy and happy, it is still very common in every household in Aruba (and around the world) to have staple home remedies that is passed on through generations. Here are some tips that our elders have passed on to us over the years.

Sweet potato

According to our elders, sweet potato is mostly useful for low blood pressure.

People who suffer from low blood pressure were advised to eat sweet potato 2 to 3 times a week. However, if you have high blood pressure, it is best not to eat too much sweet potato, as this raises blood pressure. Sweet potatoes are also great for people who work hard labor jobs, and it's been said to be aid blood circulation in the body, as well as help those with hemorrhoids or diarrhea.

Many of our elders opted to plant sweet potatoes themselves, mostly because of

how easy it was to do so. Cut the end of a sweet potato let it sit in shallow water until it starts to sprout. Then you may plant it in the ground. Sweet potatoes need plenty of water to grow, especially in the first week in the ground. It was said that once you start to notice the ground crack underneath the flowers, it is time to harvest. This should happen around month 3.

Pomegranate

Pomegranates are also one of the easier fruits to plant and harvest. Originated from Persia, this plant can grow almost everywhere. In Aruba, there are many homes that have a tiny or big pomegranate tree. You may be wondering what the difference is between a small and big pomegranate tree, for which the answer is based on harvest time. Tiny trees produce tinier pomegranates that can be harvested early on. Contrarily, big trees produce bigger pomegranates, but they



need enough time to fully ripen before harvesting, otherwise you might end up with bitter seeds. Pomegranate trees are also very easy to plant. In essence, if you just throw the seeds on the ground, they could grow into a tree.

In terms of medicinal use, pomegranate skins are said to have a few benefits for our health. According to customs, pomegranate skin tea can help those that

suffer from diarrhea. Dried pomegranate skin tea is also good for people who have worms. Pomegranate flowers can be boiled to make a drink and this can be used for irritated gums; just take a swig and let the tea sit in your mouth for a couple minutes. □

Source: Remedi i Kustumber di nos Bieunan (Medicine and Customs of our Elderly) by Dinah Veeris

The Bushiribana Gold Mill Ruins and its history

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

Built in 1872 by English com-

pany Aruba Island Gold Mining Company Ltd, the gold mill at Bushiribana was constructed in the area where most gold was found by locals. The story of gold on Aruba actually dates back to 1725, when a first exploration for gold on the island was commissioned by the Dutch West India Company. Under the leadership of Mr. Paulus Printz, a three-year search was conducted on Aruba,

to no avail. Though they found some gold, it was enough to motivate a further search, and the assignment was discontinued by Printz himself.

It wasn't until 100 years later, in 1824, when a young boy found a lump of gold while out herding his father's sheep. His father took it to a local merchant who then sold the lump for \$70. Unbeknownst to the boy

and his father, they quite literally struck gold, and as word got out, a gold fever spread among the locals who started searching for more gold. About 25 pounds worth was found.

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

Over the years, concession-holding had seen different companies from around the world, all of which used primitive methods to dig and carve out gold from the rocks. Aruba Island Gold Mining Company Ltd. was no different, but used a unique method that involved grinding the rocks and letting the dust be blown away by the strong

northeast wind, leaving clumps of gold behind. The next step was melting the gold and letting it attach to quicksilver in order to obtain pure gold. All these processes were done at the Bushiribana Gold Mill.

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

Sources: Etnia Nativa



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CROSSWORD

By **THOMAS JOSEPH**

ACROSS 40 Totaled

1 Lab 41 Fly high
liquids 42 Churlish

6 Ernst's art fellows

10 Twangy

11 Wise ones **DOWN**

12 Creamy 1 Zoo
color resident

13 Russian 2 Yielded
range

14 Parcel 3 Uranium-
(out) 235, need

15 Petite 4 Be bold 11 Travel 28 Messages

16 Commo- 5 Cunning 17 Vociferous 29 Places

tion 6 Move 20 Blue 31 Hall of

17 Match part 21 Model buy Fame

18 Put away 7 Banded 24 Last name catcher

19 Cosmetics 8 Perry's 25 Fraud per- look

counter 9 Useful 27 Poker bird

buy skill prize 38 Collar

22 At hand

23 Melodies

26 Oil-

checking

item

29 Chemist's

place

32 Buck's

mate

33 Paint buy

34 Egggy dish

36 Titled

woman

37 Alarm

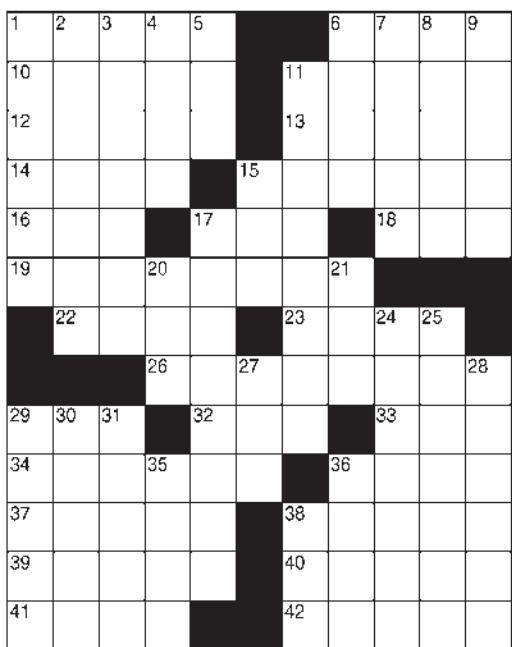
sound

38 "— Rae"

39 Snowy

wader

CATER ADDER
HEAVE PEEVE
ARMED FORCES
PIE EAR ORE
SERVANT DEN
ELS JEST
COSTS BUSTS
ONTO HEN
ALA CALORIE
REN ALL ANA
SALES FORCES
EVENT WHERE
REEDS SORTS



5-17

A XYDLBAAXR
is LONGFELLOW

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

5-17 **CRYPTOQUOTE**

X LRIRO EYGR G XKZF YM FZR

MDHF FZDF AVGF JRXLK XG

MVL. — CDFZDOXLR ZRSJVOL
Cryptoquote: WHAT A STRANGE
THING! TO BE ALIVE BENEATH CHERRY
BLOSSOMS. — KOBAYASHI ISSA

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 SCHEDULE	
SEPTEMBER	
01 TUE	CARNIVAL HORIZON Arrival: 8:00 Departure: 22:00 Berth: B GRANDEUR OF THE SEAS Arrival: 8:00 Departure: 23:00 Berth: C
08 TUE	CELEBRITY REFLECTION Arrival: 8:00 Departure: 23:00 Berth: B ADVENTURE OF THE SEAS Arrival: 11:30 Departure: 23:00 Berth: C CARNIVAL VISTA Arrival: 13:00 Departure: 23:00 Berth: I
09 WED	GRANDEUR OF THE SEAS Arrival: 8:00 Departure: 23:00 Berth: B MARGARITAVILLE ISLANDER Arrival: 7:00 Departure: 17:00 Berth: C ALLURE OF THE SEAS Arrival: 7:00 Departure: 14:00 Berth: I
15 TUE	CARNIVAL HORIZON Arrival: 8:00 Departure: 22:00 Berth: B GRANDEUR OF THE SEAS Arrival: 8:00 Departure: 23:00 Berth: C CELEBRITY REFLECTION Arrival: 8:00 Departure: 23:00 Berth: I

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

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

Difficulty: ★★★★★

9/4

Answer to previous puzzle

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

Difficulty: ★★★

9/3

Spacecraft bound for Mercury begins 'tricky' arrival

Paris, France

After an eight-year journey, a spacecraft carrying European and Japanese probes began the months-long, high-risk approach to Mercury on Thursday to study the Sun-scorched planet.

The BepiColombo mission set off from Earth in 2018 on a winding path to study the smallest and least understood planet in our Solar System with the aim of releasing the two probes into its orbit.

On Thursday it began its arrival phase, described by the European Space Agency (ESA) as its "most operationally challenging planetary arrival sequences ever attempted".

Mercury's relatively tiny mass it is only slightly bigger than the Moon means its gravitational pull is extremely weak compared to the Sun, making it complex for spacecraft to approach the planet without ending up incinerated or lost in space.

"It's a very ambitious mission," Santa Martinez, the mission manager at ESA, told a press conference ahead of its arrival.

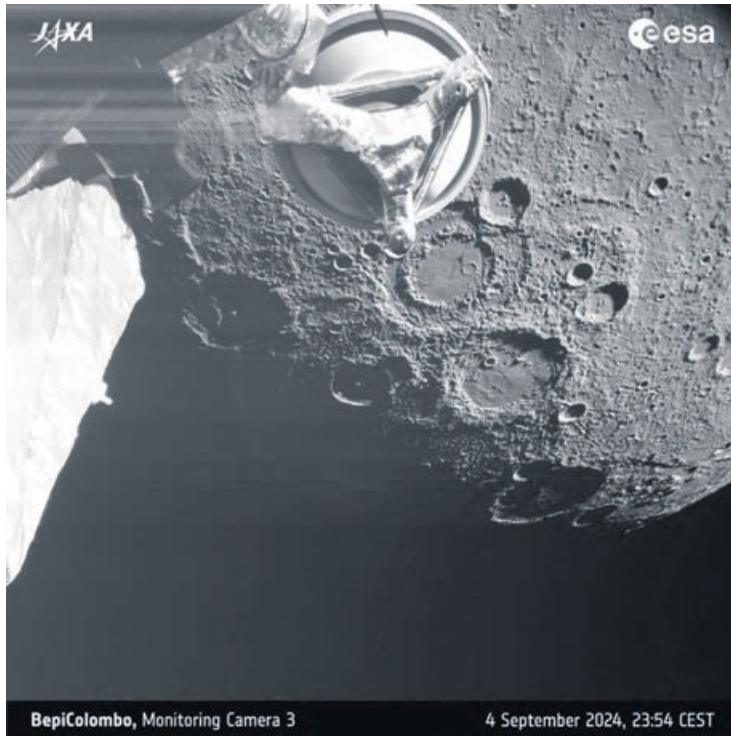
The spacecraft had to travel more than 10 billion kilometres (miles), executing a series of nine flybys, to speed up, slow down and perfect its trajectory.

The two probes, which are attached to each other, finally separated on Thursday from the transfer module that has propelled them a crucial first step in the final approach. It was the equivalent of "launching a new spacecraft. Only this spacecraft happens to be around a different planet," explained Ignacio Tanco, ESA's head of inner solar system mission operations, before the separation began.

- All went to plan -

On Thursday, Mercury was some 63 million km from the Sun and 200 million km from Earth.

"At these distances... any real-time operation becomes impossible," Tanco



This handout photograph taken on September 4, 2024 and released on September 5, 2024 by European Space Agency (ESA) shows BepiColombo captures newly named Stoddart crater.

said, explaining there was about a 30-minute delay between checks being performed and commands being executed from the ground to the craft. It means the spacecraft had to check and execute the separation autonomously a "tricky business," Tanco said.

But all went to plan. The space craft autonomously cut the four mechanical struts connecting the orbiters to the module. Spring mechanisms then gently pushed them away. The separation took place at a speed of 40 centimetres (16 inches) per second, leaving the two enti-

ties relatively close given the vastness of space. Due to the distance between the probes and Earth, the signal confirming the operation's success reached the control centre in Darmstadt, Germany, nearly two hours later at 1353 GMT sparking rounds of applause and cheers.

"This is the best case scenario, that the telemetry comes exactly at the moment we expect it," said Elsa Montagnon, in charge of module operations at ESA.

"The spacecraft has completed its reconfiguration as expected," she said

happily.

The probes are due to come into Mercury's orbit on November 21.

The next tricky phase will come on December 9 and 10, when the two probes separate into their respective orbits.

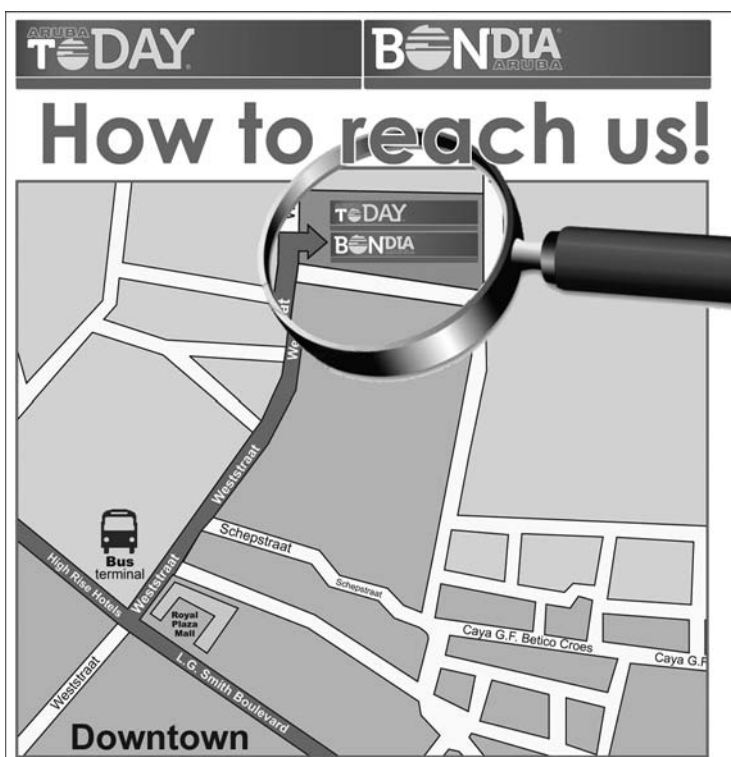
From April, the ESA's Mercury Planetary Orbiter (MPO) will begin studying the planet closest to the Sun with unprecedented precision, passing just 480 km from its surface.

The Japanese Mercury Magnetospheric Orbiter (Mio) will focus on its space environment and magnetic field, following an elliptical orbit that will carry it as far as 11,000 km away.

- New chapter -

Mercury is the least studied of the four rocky, innermost planets in our solar system, which include Venus, Earth and Mars.

NASA's Mariner 10 was the first probe to capture a close picture of its lunar-looking surface in 1974. □



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ARUBA TODAY NEWS

AI boom is testing tech firms' climate pledges

Geneva, Switzerland

Technology companies are stepping up their climate commitments but not fast enough to counter rapidly inflating energy needs linked to the artificial intelligence boom, a report said Wednesday.

Despite progress in climate reporting and renewable electricity use, tech firms are falling short in cutting emissions at the pace required to achieve global climate targets, the Greening Digital Companies 2026 report found.

Published by the UN's International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and the World Benchmarking Alliance (WBA), sustainable development NGO, the report monitors the emissions and climate commitments of 200 major tech companies worldwide.

It tracks greenhouse gas emissions, energy consumption, climate targets, renewable energy use and climate transition planning. This year's edition, based on 2024 data, found that artificial intelligence "is both a driver of efficiency



Elon Musk is seen on a screen as he virtually attends the G20 Innovation Ministerial summit next to the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy Director Michael Kratsios in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, on September 1, 2026.

and a growing challenge", the ITU said in a statement. Leading AI and cloud providers saw their individual emissions rise from 2020 to 2024, driven by surging energy needs and infrastructure expansion, it said. "While digital technologies offer immense potential for climate action, their ris-

ing energy demands and emissions cannot be overlooked," said ITU chief Do-reen Bogdan-Martin. "Environmental sustainability must be built into how we design, power and scale the technologies shaping our shared digital future," she said.

- 'Clean' AI? -

Emissions from four major AI and cloud computing providers had skyrocketed by up to 239 percent between 2020 and 2024, the report found. Over the same period, 14 major telecoms firms reduced their emissions by 11 percent.

"While AI supports climate action through energy optimisation, renewable forecasting and efficiency gains, it comes with its own environmental costs," the ITU said.

In 2024, the 200 companies assessed for the study reported 301 million tonnes of operational emissions in carbon dioxide equivalent, equal to 0.8 percent of global energy-related emissions.

But the companies consumed close to 500 Terawatt-hours (TWh), or around 1.7 percent of global electricity consumption, the report said, adding that power demand was only expected to grow "as AI, cloud computing and digital infrastructure continue to expand".

With Amazon not reporting electricity data for 2024, China Mobile reported the biggest electricity consumption at 63 TWh, nearly double that of second-placed Alphabet and Samsung, which each consumed 32 TWh, followed by Microsoft at 30 TWh.

The 10 biggest consumers combined used 269 TWh of electricity more than Australia, the report found.

- Climate targets -

Although tech firms figure among the world's biggest purchasers of renewable electricity, only 25 of the 200 companies in the report said they sourced 100 percent renewable electricity.

It found that 151 of them had near-term emission reduction targets, "reflecting both voluntary leadership and the influence of investor expectations", as well as emerging regulations. But only 85 companies were "assessed as on-track based on progress to date", while just 81 had comprehensive plans to meet climate goals, the report found.

"Digital companies need to engage suppliers and address emissions across the products and services they rely on," said WBA executive director Gerbrand Haverkamp.

The report gave each

Study shows plug-in hybrids polluting far more than expected

Paris, France

Plug-in hybrids have enjoyed a surge in popularity but a study published Thursday showed they are polluting far more than most buyers think, as they run on batteries less than regulators expected.

The study by the International Council on Clean

Transportation (ICCT), a lobbying group, looked at data from the onboard monitors of roughly 920,000 plug-in hybrids registered between 2021 and 2023. It found a "substantial and fast-growing gap between real-world and type-approval CO2 emissions for PHEVs registered

in 2021-2023".

The type-approval norms include an assumption by regulators about the pollution the vehicles would emit based on the distances they would be driving using the battery and the distances using internal combustion engines. But the study found that average CO2 emissions in real-world driving were 3.5 times higher than the 2021 type-approval values, and 4.6 times higher than the 2023 type-approval values.

The growing difference was due to an assumption that bigger batteries would lead to increased driving on battery power, but the real-world use data did not bear this out.

The divergence "misleads consumers about expected energy costs" with

plug-in hybrids, the ICCT said, as well as unduly opening them up to incentive schemes and skewing the determination whether automakers are complying with emissions rules.

The ICCT, which was behind the 2015 revelations about diesel emissions that became known as the "Dieselgate" scandal, urged the EU to not delay a planned 2027 update to the calculations that would reduce the discrepancy with real-world emissions.

It also called on the EU to use real-world data to guide further updates. The publication of the study comes as certain automakers, particularly German carmakers, want to see plug-in hybrids continue to be included in the EU's strategy to decarbonise the auto sector.



A Tesla Supercharger electric vehicle charging station is seen in Ohio, United States, on August 4, 2026.



Just the beginning of the journey, Broeders-Bol says of 800m adventure

Brussels, Belgium

Femke Broeders-Bol has achieved what many athletes can but dream: swapping with success from a discipline in which she was a two-time world champion to the 800m, one of the most ruthless running distances.

The 26-year-old won 400m hurdles golds at last year's Tokyo world champs and the 2023 edition in Budapest.

She is a two-time Olympic bronze medalist in the hurdles and left the 2024 Paris Games with an additional gold and silver in the 4x400m relays.

U.S. rival Sydney McLaughlin-Levrone came away with back-to-back Olympic hurdles golds and also the world record to overshadow the Dutchwoman on the ultimate stage.

While the American has clocked the three fastest times ever in the 400m hurdles, Broeders-Bol has four in the top nine.

The Dutch athlete opted to compete in the 800m just as a pregnant McLaughlin-Levrone stepped away from the sport -- her daughter Savannah was born in July.

But it is not something that Broeders-Bol has regretted for one minute.

- Werro in form -

The women's 800m has been one of the stand-out

events of the season, Switzerland's Audrey Werro inching ever closer to the oldest world record in track and field: the 1 min 53.28sec over two laps set by Jarmila Kratochvilova of the then-Czechoslovakia in Munich back in 1983.

Werro has gone third fastest in the all-time list with a winning 1:53.70 at last week's Zurich Diamond League. Broeders-Bol, second, improved the Dutch national record to 1:54.71 -- the 15th fastest time ever run over the distance and an astonishing achievement for someone new to the event. "I never expected to go this fast in the first season," she said ahead of the Diamond League finals in Brussels.

"It's a couple of years' plan and I was hoping to get to that level eventually, but to be there already this quickly is a very nice surprise."

The transition from hurdles to the "very unpredictable" 800m had been a "very big experience", she added.

"In the hurdles you also race others but you always have your own hurdles. Here you're together in a lane after 100 meters."

Asked where she could progress, the ever-humble Broeders-Bol replied: "I think pretty much in everything except speed!"

"My speed is very good for an 800m runner. My endurance is very bad and I think the tactical part is still

something I need to learn.

"For me it really feels like I'm still at the beginning of this journey and there's so much to learn."

- Overcoming fear -

Broeders-Bol added that she had learned not to underestimate herself.

"I was quite scared of the 800. At one point my coach told me I had too much respect for the 800 and also in a way for my competitors, putting everyone and everything on a pedestal, because I didn't know where I was at."

"There's a lot of more things out of your control and it's really a race against each other until the line and I think it's a lot of fun."

With the 800m in a golden age of runners also including Britain's Olympic champion Keely Hodgkinson, Broeders-Bol expressed hope that she and her rivals "can push the event further together".

"We are in an era where there are so many amazing girls to run against," with Werro, Hodgkinson and the Dutch runner completing the European podium in Birmingham last month.

Sweden's world and Olympic pole vault champion Armand 'Mondo' Duplantis, who registered 7.15m in the long jump as a 17-year-old and 10.37sec in a one-off 100m race in 2024, dubbed Broeders-Bol "amazing". □



Paris Saint-Germain's French forward #29 Bradley Barcola controls the ball to score Paris Saint-Germain's third goal during the French L1 football match between Paris Saint-Germain (PSG) and Lille LOSC at the Parc des Princes stadium in Paris on January 16, 2026.

Clubs spend \$9.89B in record-breaking transfer window

Paris, France

FIFA said on Thursday that clubs spent more than \$9.89 billion (8.51 billion euros) on international transfer fees in men's football this summer, the highest figure ever recorded for a mid-year window.

According to FIFA's latest International Transfer Snapshot, more than 12,500 transfers were completed worldwide, also a record. It is up from 11,863 a year ago.

English clubs once again dominated spending, investing more than \$3.02 billion in transfer fees to sign players from clubs abroad.

The amount is considerably less than the record Premier League outlay of £3.49 billion (\$4.7 billion) reported by British media, which also includes deals for players moving between English sides.

Italian clubs ranked second with \$1.1 billion, followed by Spain (\$940 million), Germany (\$904 million) and France (\$641 million).

French clubs generated the highest transfer income, receiving \$1.7 billion in fees. Clubs in England collected \$1.43 billion, ahead of Germany (\$1.02 billion), Spain (\$773 million) and Portugal (\$642 million).

FIFA said the 2026 World Cup had a significant impact on the transfer window, with players who featured at the tournament accounting for more than \$3.3 billion in transfer fees.

A total of 267 World Cup players from 47 nationalities changed clubs between June and September.

Women's football also established new records for both transfer spending and activity.

FIFA reported 1,406 international transfers in the women's professional game, a rise of 19.2% from the previous record. Spending on international transfer fees more than doubled from the corresponding 2025 window to reach an all-time high of \$28.6 million.

English clubs led women's spending with \$8 million, ahead of Spain (\$6.6 million), Germany (\$4.9 million), the United States (\$2.9 million) and Italy (\$2.1 million). Swedish clubs received the highest value of transfer fees at \$4.2 million, marginally ahead of England (\$4 million), while clubs in France and Germany each collected \$3.6 million. □



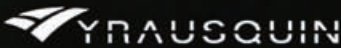
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Khachanov stuns third-seeded Auger-Aliassime in U.S. Open second round

New York, United States
Karen Khachanov knocked third-seeded Felix Auger-Aliassime out of the second round of the US Open on Thursday, pulling away relentlessly for a 6-7 (5/7), 6-3, 6-2, 6-2 victory. The 50th-ranked Russian took full advantage of 47 unforced errors, with eight double faults, from an out-of-sorts Auger-Aliassime, a two-time semi-finalist at Flushing Meadows.

"I thought maybe he had some physical issues, it's part of our sport," Khachanov said. "I tried to give my best performance, fighting, fighting."
"I'm super happy to get this win."
It was another 2026 Grand Slam disappointment for Auger-Aliassime, who retired in the first round of the Australian Open and lost in the quarter-finals at Roland



Russia's Karen Khachanov celebrates after defeating Canada's Felix Auger-Aliassime during their men's singles second round tennis match on day five of the US Open tennis tournament at the USTA Billie Jean King National Tennis Center in New York City on September 3, 2026.

Garros and Wimbledon. It was the second big upset on the men's side, after an ailing Novak Djokovic was

ousted in the first round by Mariano Navone and further opened up a men's field headed by world

number two Alexander Zverev. The top-seeded German anchors the night session

on Arthur Ashe Stadium, taking on 52nd-ranked Frenchman Quentin Halys for a place in the third round.
Zverev won his long-awaited maiden major at Roland Garros in May and was runner-up to Jannik Sinner at Wimbledon.
With Sinner sidelined by a knee injury, Zverev appears to have a strong shot at doubling his Grand Slam trophy collection, but he'll be looking for a smoother ride against Halys than the wild five sets he needed to subdue Lorenzo Sonego in the first round.
Two former champions booked their third-round berths, Iga Swiatek marching through with a 6-3, 6-2 victory over Nadia Podroska while Naomi Osaka survived a second-set swoon to beat Katerina Siniakova 6-2, 5-7, 6-1.□