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A worker manufactures 155 mm artillery projectiles at the Scranton Army Ammunition Plant in Scranton, Pennsylvania on April 16, 2024.

U.S. military confirms Iran war has led to munitions shortfall

Washington, United States

The United States is facing a shortfall in ammunition as a result of its war against Iran, the Defense Department's inspector general confirmed Monday, contrasting with President Donald Trump's assertions of full stocks.

In a first-of-its-kind mandatory report to Congress, the inspector said that between February 28 and June 30, Operation Epic Fury (OEF) had an estimated cost of \$33.4 billion, including \$22.3 billion spent on expended munitions.

"The munitions expenditure on OEF has resulted in strategic inventory shortfalls and revealed industrial base bottlenecks for munitions resupply," the report said.

OEF is the U.S. name for its joint campaign with Israel to "destroy Iran's ability to project military power," according to U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM).

To deal with shortfalls and delays, the Pentagon is

"working to streamline procurement processes and production lead times, and to stockpile critical materials, components, and selected munitions," the report said.

Though it noted that expanding production capacities requires "significant lead time."

The shortfall is likely to cause concern among governments like Ukraine and Taiwan, who rely on weapons purchases from the United States to fight or deter much larger, hostile neighbors.

Ukraine urgently needs more interceptor missiles for U.S.-made Patriot air defense systems in its war against Russia, while Taiwan depends on arms agreements with Washington to ward off China, which claims the self-ruled island as its own.

- 'Virtually unlimited' -

Trump has repeatedly brushed off concerns of depleted weapons stores during the six months of war

in the Middle East, saying recently that the U.S. has "virtually unlimited" ammunition.

On Monday he posted on his Truth Social platform that the U.S. is producing "more Exquisite and Elite Weapons than at any time in our History."

CNN previously reported shortages of long-range guided missiles and air-defense interceptors had affected Trump's strategy in the conflict with Iran, with the U.S. military having "nearly exhausted 80%" of its stock of THAAD interceptors.

During the first 24 hours of war against Iran, the United States struck more than 1,000 targets, CENTCOM has said, and has not returned to such large scale attacks in recent months.

The report identified losses to the American fleet, including four F-15s fighters destroyed, one F-35 fighter damaged, seven KC-135 tanker aircraft damaged and up to 30 MQ-9 Reaper drones destroyed. □



Congressional Budget Office Director Phillip Swagel speaks before the House Budget Committee on Capitol Hill on November 18, 2025 in Washington, DC.

Iran war has cost U.S. military \$38B: Congressional Budget Office

Washington, United States

The war with Iran cost the U.S. military around \$38 billion as of August 1, the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office said Tuesday, with billions more potentially added to the price tag each month the conflict wears on.

"As of August 1, 2026, the armed conflict with Iran has cost (the Department of Defense) approximately \$38 billion," said the CBO in a report, referring to the war that started after U.S.-Israeli strikes targeting Iran from late February.

It added that depending on the intensity of violence, costs per month could range between \$2-\$3 billion or more if the conflict continued.

The overall figures reflect the cost of replacing expended munitions and equipment lost in battle and increased fuel costs for the military, among other factors, the report said.

The price of replacing munitions used through August 1 was estimated at \$21.7 billion, with CBO noting that such replacements have been the largest single component of costs incurred by the Defense Department in the conflict.

The "main opportunity cost" for the department meanwhile has been the depletion of missile defense interceptors, leaving the United States with reduced inventory for several years.

Comparing the reported expenditures of missile defense interceptors with total numbers the department has bought suggests the United States "has probably used between one-half and two-thirds of its inventory of those munitions since June 2025," the CBO warned.

The analysis was prepared following a request by Brendan Boyle, the top Democrat on the House Budget Committee, along with other Democratic lawmakers.

In July, Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth estimated the Iran war had cost \$37.5 billion.

The CBO estimated that the main impact on the U.S. economy from the Iran conflict has been inflationary. □

Trump slams Supreme Court over 'horrible' mail-in ballot ruling

Washington, United States

U.S. President Donald Trump blasted the Supreme Court on Tuesday after it blocked his divisive plan to restrict mail-in ballots, launching a rare and blistering attack on the justices he hand-picked in his first term.

Trump accused the conservative-dominated court of allowing itself to be cowed by Democrats and said it had delivered some of the most "destructive, hurtful, and damaging decisions in our Country's history."

The president did not name the justices but singled out the ones he had nominated in his first spell in the White House Amy Coney Barrett, Brett Kavanaugh and Neil Gorsuch for special criticism.

"These are not the people I interviewed to serve on the United States Supreme Court, they are merely a shell of their original selves," Trump said on his Truth Social network. "The Supreme Court has really let our Country down! Certain Justices are petrified of these crazed and depraved Democrats, and are totally unable to show the courage necessary to save our America."

On Monday, the Supreme Court dealt Trump a major blow ahead of November's midterm elections when it denied his request to lift an order halting his plan to limit mail-in voting.

Republican Trump signed an executive order in March seeking to restrict mail-in voting, saying without evidence that it is vulnerable to fraud. The order quickly prompted multiple legal challenges.

Trump admitted it was rare for the U.S. president, who heads the executive branch of the U.S. government, to criticize the Supreme Court, which heads the judicial branch.

"It is not easy for me to write this criticism of the United States Supreme Court it will likely cost me dearly for years to come but I feel it my obligation and duty, as President, to do so for the America we love!"

- 'Horrible' -

The Supreme Court ruled that there was not enough time to implement the restriction on mail-in ballots.

Justice Kavanaugh, in a concurring opinion with the majority, said Trump's plan may ultimately be legal in the long run, but "state and local election officials do not have sufficient time to reasonably implement the rule before the elections."

Only two of the six conservative justices Clarence Thomas and Samuel Alito on the nine-member panel offered a dissent.

Trump called the decision itself "horrible" and "highly political."

Democratic-led states sued the administration on grounds that under the US Constitution, states and not the federal government retain broad control over the administration of elections.

"Trump's scheme was so on-the-nose, so un-American, so flagrantly unconstitutional that the MAGA Court had no choice but to make the right call," Democratic Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer said Tuesday.

More than 30 countries worldwide offer citizens the opportunity to vote using a mail-in ballot.

"It is a big loss for Republicans, and America itself, and makes cheating by the Radical Left 'Dumocrats,' on Mail-In Ballots, a much easier thing to do And now they have an open field to do so!" Trump wrote.

The president has repeatedly denounced mail-in voting as corrupt -- despite using it himself, including to vote in Florida's Republican primary just last month.

The fight, alongside disputes over partisan redistricting in around a dozen states, comes with high political stakes ahead of the November 3 elections. □



Election workers prepare vote by mail ballots at the Los Angeles County Registrar vote by mail operation center in City of Industry, California, on November 4, 2022, for the midterm elections on November 8.



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'Be careful what you wish for': 'Obsession' director and star reflect on success

Toronto, Canada

Curry Barker knew he was making a good movie when he directed "Obsession" but he never expected it to become a box office phenomenon that would make Hollywood obsessed with him.

One year after premiering the movie at the Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF), the 26-year-old director returned to the event alongside the film's lead actress, Inde Navarrette.

The pair are still trying to process the gargantuan success of the movie, made on a \$750,000 budget and grossing over \$500 million at the global box office, turning "Obsession" into one of the most profitable productions in Hollywood history.

"It feels like a one-year anniversary of our lives changing," Barker told AFP.

The film's simple premise involves what happens when a wish comes true.

It follows the character Bear (Michael Johnston),



U.S. director Curry Barker poses for AFP during the 2026 Toronto International Film Festival in Toronto, Ontario on September 12, 2026.

who cannot bring himself to admit his crush on his friend Nikki (Inde Navarrette). One night in a bout of frustration he makes a wish on a magic branch: that Nikki loved him as much as he loves her.

When that wish starts to

come true, his life takes a turn for the macabre.

"Be careful what you wish for," Barker said with a smile, recognizing the phrase also applies to his film's meteoric success.

"What's funny is that I don't think any of us anticipated

how big this movie would become and I think that most of it is a very, very positive thing, and we're so happy that the movie did so well," he said.

But it has not been all sunshine and roses.

"It can get scary, and

there's pressure for your next thing," he added.

- 'I love being a meme' -

Barker, who hails from the southern US state of Alabama, got his start in filmmaking by creating videos on YouTube.

He said he is working on "something that I think is cool" for his next project, but feels the weight of the industry watching him this time around.

"Obviously there's the exterior pressure of the world of, 'Hey, you know, your next movie better be as good as this last (one),'"

he said. For Navarrette, the success of the movie has been a roller coaster, but she is "taking it day by day."

It has undoubtedly led to new opportunities including the role of Rogue, an X-Men character who can steal other mutants' powers, as part of the Marvel Cinematic Universe.

But the rapid ascent to stardom has been dizzying for the 25-year-old actress.

"I think whenever you're being put in a position like this, it's really important to look back at yourself and go, 'Okay, well, what changes can I do to keep that original creativity and to keep what I can, as much as I can, authentically?' Because it's a lot!" Navarrette told AFP.

Some of Navarrette's most outlandish scenes in "Obsession" have gone viral on social media to the point that they have become memes. The phenomenon has surprised the actress, but does not bother her.

"I love being a meme... it's definitely a really fun thing," she said.

- Lesson learned -

The box office success of "Obsession" has been the subject of much debate in Hollywood as the industry continues working to boost theater audiences to levels seen before the Covid-19 pandemic.

"The barrier for entry is open," Barker said of getting started in the film industry. "I think that's the lesson." □

Comedian Chris Rock returns to directing with Hollywood drama 'Misty Green'

Toronto, Canada

Comedy star Chris Rock has returned to directing after a decade-long pause by making a drama but said that does not hint at a future filled with darker work.

"I'm always going to be a comedian," Rock said Sunday, the day after the world premiere of "Misty

Green" at the Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF).

"The next (film) may be super gritty, or it might be really silly," he added. "Whatever it is, I'm going to try to make it great."

"Misty Green" stars Rosalind Wiseman (Slow Horses) as a hard-partying, once-successful actor whose

career is struggling. She's short on cash, about to be kicked out of her apartment and needs to book a gig quickly.

While the film includes plenty of laugh lines, the tone is serious throughout, with explorations of institutional racism, substance abuse and the pitfalls of stardom in Hollywood.

On the red carpet ahead of Saturday's premiere, the legendary stand-up comic Rock said: "I shouldn't have to do the same thing every time."

"Let's see what Chris Rock's drama looks like." Variety magazine has called "Misty Green" the "best movie about Hollywood in years," and Wiseman's leading performance has attracted critical praise.

The British actor stars alongside established names including Adam Driver, Anna

Kendrick and Rock himself. She told reporters Sunday she was concerned that her being cast might keep other stars away.

"There are lots of bigger names than me that could have taken this part," she said.

She worried privately that other actors considering the film would think Wiseman was "not big enough ... it's not worth my while," she said.

- Woody Allen meets David Lynch -

Anna Kendrick, whose breakout performance came alongside George Clooney in "Up in the Air" before starring in the hit "Pitch Perfect" franchise, plays Misty's friend. Kendrick told reporters she wasn't fully convinced the film would work during her initial conversation with Rock about the role. □



U.S. comedian, actor and film director Chris Rock attends the premiere of his movie "Misty Green" during the Toronto International Film Festival in Toronto, Ontario, Canada on September 12, 2026.



This photograph taken on September 10, 2026 shows people at the entrance of Beach Wadiya shack in Colombo.

Sri Lanka's famed beach shack battles demolition

Colombo, Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka's famed seafood shack Beach Wadiya has hosted royalty including Britain's Princess Anne and sporting legends such as cricketer Sachin Tendulkar, but now faces demolition under a government-ordered coastal clean-up. The simple Colombo beach restaurant has welcomed a string of celebrities, featured in Madhur Jaffrey's culinary travels and received rave reviews in international publications, including London's Financial Times.

"Beach Wadiya comes with a lot of history," said Suhara Chandrasekera, the founder's granddaughter, now a director of the restaurant. But more than half a century after it opened, the glamour is giving way to grief at Wadiya which means "shack" in the island's Sinhala language. The government's Coast Conservation and Coastal Resource Management Department gave Wadiya 10 days to pack up and leave or face demolition. That deadline expired on September 10, but the restaurant is resisting the order to leave.

Seven other beach properties were given extensions of about four days to salvage furniture and fittings.

A few shops near Wadiya were demolished last month as part of a broader government plan to remove businesses within 10 meters (33 feet) of the shoreline.

"There shouldn't be any buildings within the 10-metre coastal reservation from the shoreline," Environment Minister Dammika Patabendi told AFP.

"We have identified 82 such premises and we are taking steps to remove them."

- 'Sea erosion' -

Beach Wadiya is the only establishment resisting the order and has taken the matter to court.

The family of its late founder, Olwyn Weerasekera, argues that the restaurant existed before the 1981 Coast Conservation Act being used to evict them.

"We built in 1974, which predates the law that they were talking about... We have permits dating all the way back to 1974," 26-year-old Chandrasekera said.

"In addition to the appeal to the Coast Conservation Department, we also took the decision to file a writ," she told AFP, referring to a case filed in the Court of Appeal.

The family has won a temporary reprieve, with the court ordering the department not to demolish the

restaurant for two weeks pending a hearing.

When Wadiya was established, the beach was wider and cleaner, with rows of coconut trees, most of which have since been lost to sea erosion.

"Right now we have lost two of our huts... We've lost parts of our bathroom due to sea erosion," Chandrasekera said.

She said Wadiya was the only restaurant on the beach before Sri Lanka's tourism boom in the late 1970s.

Princess Anne had dinner at Wadiya in 1995. Nepali royals have also dined there.

British tycoon Richard Branson visited the restaurant during a family holiday in Sri Lanka in 1992, although the guestbook he signed was washed away in the December 2004 tsunami, according to the family. Indian singing sensation Asha Bhosle, and cricket stars including India's Rahul Dravid and former Pakistan skipper Wasim Akram, have also dined there.

- Singing lobster -

One of the restaurant's walls has a reproduction of a Financial Times cartoon of a guitar-playing lobster that accompanied a March 1994 food review headlined: "Cook me tender." □



A teacher talks to her students during a class at the beginning of the school year in La Guaira, Venezuela on September 15, 2026.

Empty benches as schools reopen in Venezuela's quake-hit Guaira

La Guaira, Venezuela

Schools in Venezuela's quake-scarred coastal state of La Guaira were deserted on Tuesday, a day after the start of the new school year, with many parents opting to keep children home for fear of further deadly tremors.

La Guaira, home to a popular resort of the same name 40 kilometers from Venezuela's capital Caracas, was devastated by powerful back-to-back quakes on June 24 that left over 6,500 people dead.

Dozens of schools were damaged in the worst disaster in the Caribbean country in decades, which reduced hundreds of buildings to rubble.

A further 60 schools were converted into shelters for thousands of people left homeless by the magnitude 7.2 and 7.5 quakes.

Amni Nunez, a 40-year-old industrial engineer sent his two young children back to school, arguing they "need to understand that the world keeps spinning and that we have to learn to live with this new reality." But many parents were too fearful of a repeat disaster to allow their children back into the classroom.

Just over 300 students have enrolled for the new school year at John Paul II Diocesan Educational Unit, one of the few schools open in the port city of La Guaira. The school has capacity for more than double that. Only seven children attended class on Tuesday.

"The return to classes will be gradual and safe, focusing primarily on the emotional well-being not only of our students but also of our staff," the principal Marco Antonio Espinoza said.

He said it was "normal" to be afraid, given the hundreds of aftershocks recorded since the earthquakes, but said he was struck by the desire of the survivors "to live and carry on with their activities."

Yanet Dominguez, a fifth-grade teacher at the school, said parents had been plying her with questions about the building's structural safety.

"I told them yes, that improvements have been made to the building this year, and that they shouldn't be afraid to send their children," she said. □

Just add fish: Scientists pursue more rice, less disease in Senegal paddies

Lampsar, Senegal

Half smiling through crinkled eyes, Moussa Ndiaye, in his long tunic and skull cap, watched a combine harvest his northern Senegal rice paddy, where he expects a good haul, but not just of grain.

His field is part of a study which aims to fight one of the world's major parasitic diseases and increase rice yield by adding fish into paddies, which can then be caught and sold for profit: a rare win-win-win for local farmers.

In Senegal, rice and fish are ubiquitous dietary staples and practically a matter of national pride, so growing the two side-by-side is logical, those involved say.

Such nature-based solutions are part of a growing trend in science, and so far, the results have been promising: In the pioneering study, fish eat snails that cause the parasitic disease schistosomiasis, while also fertilizing the rice with their poop.

Ndiaye's village, Lampsar, is in the lower Senegal River valley, near the border with Mauritania, where people have long lived off the waterway's fish.

But they are not traditionally kept in rice paddies. "Since our youngest age, since our grandparents, we



Mai Diop poses for a portrait next to her paddy field in Lampsar, on August 20, 2026.

have fished. We're Waalo-Waalo," said the 80-year-old, referring to an ancient kingdom by which people in the region still identify.

In addition to fish, the area is known for schistosomiasis caused by parasites released by freshwater snails, which are common in the paddies.

Ndiaye has had the disease three times and his sons who worked in his fields also contracted it.

It can cause symptoms ranging from itchy skin to organ damage or even death and can be treated with medicine.

But that doesn't prevent

re-infection or mitigate the time and money lost from missed school or work.

While deaths are difficult to calculate, the World Health Organization estimates that 254 million people require preventative treatment and that 94 percent of those needing treatment live in Africa.

Transmission of the disease has been reported in 79 countries, it says.

- 'Consistently greener' -

Scientists introduced Nile tilapia, which fertilize the fields, and African bony tongue, which eat schistosomiasis-causing snails, into the paddies.

More than 40 farmers across multiple villages participated in a pilot study and follow-up research.

"It's not just a one-hit punch, we're really tackling a lot of challenges," said Emily Selland of the University of Notre Dame, lead author of a paper on the pilot study published in the journal Nature Sustainability.

"We came at this from the disease angle first," she told AFP, but then there was "the nutrition angle, the economic angle, the sustainability and ecological angle".

Her research found that adding the fish boosted

rice yields by 25 percent, with an average net benefit to rice farming households of at least \$380 per year.

And fewer snails were found in the fields with the predator fish.

Lampsar has several thousand inhabitants, who live in typical low-slung cinder-block compounds.

Speaking to AFP from a neighbor's house where farmers gathered in the afternoon heat, Abdoulaye Diop said he had "noticed that fields containing fish are consistently greener than those without them".

The 62-year-old said he had used the profit from his fish to invest in sheep and poultry.

In total, Ndiaye harvested 20 sacks of rice, each weighing 80 kilograms (175 pounds), the day AFP visited, with half a dozen young men scrambling to fill the bags as rice poured from the combine.

Several days later, he harvested more than 350 large tilapia and three African bony tongue, known as ndieguel in the local Wolof language, from his field.

Mai Diop, who comes from generations of rice farmers, told AFP next to her verdant paddy that she participated "to earn more income".

Brazil's Amazon defender Raoni has cancer

Brasília, Brazil

Brazilian tribal chief Raoni Metuktire, the most recognized face of the fight to save the Amazon rainforest, has gastrointestinal cancer and is receiving palliative care at home, his organization said Monday. Raoni has traveled the world for decades to advocate for the Amazon rainforest and traditional Indigenous communities, lobbying heads of state, monarchs and popes.

The 94-year-old has been in ill health in recent months and was hospitalized in June after suffering upper intestinal obstruction and

aspiration pneumonia.

"Considering his age, his clinical condition, and the

high risks of aggressive treatments, the medical teams recommended pal-

liative care," the Raoni Institute wrote on social media.

The chief is receiving care in Peixoto de Azevedo, the nearest major town to the Indigenous territory where he lives.

"Palliative care does not mean the absence of treatment," but rather an attempt to ensure "the best possible quality of life," his organization said. Following surgery in Sao Paulo in June, examinations revealed that a cancerous tumor had caused the obstruction that landed him in the hospital.

The leader of the Kayapo

people has until recently remained active despite his health woes.

In April, he attended Free Land Camp, Brazil's largest annual gathering of Indigenous people.

Raoni first gained prominence in the 1970s when he campaigned against the construction of a trans-Amazonian highway during Brazil's military dictatorship. He left Brazil for the first time in 1989 on an international tour with the British singer Sting. Together the pair toured 17 countries to raise awareness about the massive deforestation of the Amazon.



Brazilian Indigenous leader of the Kayapo people Raoni Metuktire gives an AFP interview at Raoni Institute in Peixoto de Azevedo in Mato Grosso state, Brazil on March 19, 2025.



Dining in? Try making some local favorites! How to make “funchi”

(Oranjestad)—One of the most famous Aruban snacks or appetizers is “funchi hasa” (fried polenta sticks), a super easy meal that adults and children will both enjoy. Here’s how to make it!

Before we start, get to know the basics

What is funchi hasa? Funchi, or Aruban polenta, is a popular side dish for local dishes, like soups, stews and fried fish. Made from a corn flour, water and butter mixture, this appetizer is traditionally eaten alongside a warm meal. However, locals also like to fry sticks of funchi

for a quick and filling snack. **Ingredients (measured by heart)**

1. Polenta flour/Funchi flour
2. Water
3. Butter
4. Salt to taste

Directions

Bring water to a boil in a medium-sized sauce pan. Add in some salt and butter to taste in the boiling water and let this dissolve and melt. Then, gradually add the flour while stirring with a wooden spoon. The mixture will start to begin to harden pretty fast, so be careful not to add too much. At this phase of cooking, you



want a goopy thick mixture, but thin enough so you can continue to stir to get all the lumps out.

After reaching a semi-firm,

yet flexible texture, grab a baking pan or any large, deep plate, and pour the mixture in. Be sure that this plate is wet or greased so that the mixture does not

stick to the bottom. Let this cool completely while it firms up for the last time. Once it's cooled you can enjoy it as is, topped with some butter or shredded cheese. Or, you can take it to another level of deliciousness.

When your funchi is firm enough, cut it into strips (size is up to you). Heat up some oil in a pan and fry those babies up! After frying, you can top it with some cheese or enjoy it with your favorite dipping sauce. □

Photo credit of fried funchi sticks: Jacqueline Felida on Pinterest.

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 dic-

tates 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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Greg Peterson, Aruba Birdlife Conservation: Today it is ABC. Tomorrow it could be you: Why the campaign against ABC's court case concerns every citizen of Aruba

The public disagreement surrounding Aruba Birdlife Conservation, Greg Peterson and the off-road sector is no longer only about UTVs, ATVs or one route through nature.

It has become a question about democracy.

Jimmy Douglas and Omar-Steve Lejuez use different approaches. Douglas attacks the credibility and motives of Greg Peterson. Lejuez calls upon ABC's sponsors to suspend their support until ABC withdraws its court case.

What they have in common is more important than what separates them: both approaches attempt to make ABC pay a personal, reputational or financial price for going to court.

Every citizen of Aruba should understand the danger of that principle.

ABC is not trying to stand above the law

ABC did not invent Aruba's environmental and spatial-planning laws. ABC does not decide the outcome of its own case. ABC has asked an independent judge to examine whether government decisions and activities affecting protected nature comply with the law.

That is not an attack on democracy. That is democracy functioning as it should.

In a constitutional democracy:

Parliament adopts legislation. Government implements and enforces it. Citizens and organizations may challenge government decisions. Independent judges determine whether the law has been respected. ABC is therefore not asking the court to replace the law. ABC is asking the court to implement and uphold the law. If ABC's arguments are wrong, the court can reject them. If the government acted lawfully, it can present its evidence and prevail. That is the proper democratic process.

The misleading arguments being used

Douglas has portrayed the dispute as a personal campaign by Greg Peterson and has described environmental protection as being "weaponized" against the off-road sector.

This avoids the essential questions:

Are the affected areas protected? Is motorized access legally permitted? Has environmental damage occurred? Did government follow the required procedures? Are Aruba's laws being implemented consistently? Attacking Peterson's character does not answer any of these questions.

Lejuez takes a different route. He has publicly demanded legislation and "NO court." He has called upon sponsors to suspend all sponsorship and partnerships until ABC withdraws the case.

This creates a false choice. Aruba does not have to choose between legislation and litigation. A democracy needs both laws and courts. Without independent courts, citizens would have no effective remedy when government fails to apply the law.

Calling for "NO court" does not strengthen democracy. It removes one of democracy's most important safeguards.

Why sponsor pressure is particularly dangerous

Sponsors may freely decide which organizations they support. Citizens may also criticize ABC and disagree with its case.

The democratic concern arises when sponsors are deliberately pressured to withdraw their support for the specific purpose of forcing ABC to abandon litigation.

The message then becomes: Withdraw your case, or we will attempt to deprive your organization

of the support it needs to continue operating.

If this succeeds, the dispute will not be decided by an independent judge. It will be decided by whoever can create the greatest financial and reputational pressure.

That principle would not stop with ABC.

Today, an environmental organization may be pressured for challenging an off-road decision. Tomorrow, residents could be pressured for challenging a construction permit. A neighborhood association could be punished for opposing pollution. An employee could be isolated for challenging government misconduct. A business could be threatened for contesting an unlawful administrative decision.

The right to litigate belongs to everyone—or eventually it belongs to no one.

Democracy is more than majority opinion

Douglas and Lejuez frame their positions as defending Aruba's people, livelihoods, recreation and freedom.

Those interests deserve to be heard. But no person speaks for the entire Aruban population merely by claiming to represent "the people."

Democracy does not mean that the loudest campaign automatically wins. Nor does it mean that commercial activities become lawful because they are popular or profitable. Constitutional democracy protects the right of minorities, citizens and civil-society organizations to challenge powerful interests. It requires government to respect the law even when enforcement is inconvenient.

Aruba's Constitution assigns legal disputes to the judiciary and prohibits interference in court proceedings. Independent courts are not enemies of democracy. They are among its principal safeguards.

The threat to Aruba

Following the approach proposed by Douglas and Lejuez would create a dangerous precedent:

Discredit the person who raises the alarm. Portray the organization as an enemy of the people. Describe legal enforcement as persecution. Pressure its partners and sponsors. Make litigation financially impossible. Avoid an independent judgment on the evidence. Allow political or commercial pressure to prevail over law. That is not how a confident democracy conducts itself. A strong democracy does not fear an independent judge. A responsible government does not fear having its decisions reviewed. A credible industry does not need to destroy the reputation or funding of its critics. It answers evidence with evidence.

ABC's position

ABC recognizes the right of Douglas, Lejuez and every citizen to disagree, demonstrate and defend their interests.

ABC demands the same respect for its own democratic rights.

ABC will not accept the argument that asking a judge to uphold Aruba's laws is an attack on Aruba. It is precisely because ABC respects Aruba, its institutions and its people that it uses lawful procedures.

This matter is larger than Greg Peterson. It is larger than ABC. It concerns whether Aruba will remain a country where citizens can challenge government without being personally attacked, financially punished or publicly intimidated into silence.

Today it is ABC.

Tomorrow it could be you.

Protecting the right to litigate means protecting democracy.

Respect the law. Respect the courts. Respect Aruba. □

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Visit the island's popular cave sites!



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

Quadirikiri Cave

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

as it is easy to walk through and provides great lighting for pictures.

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

he thought him unworthy. Stubborn and filled with anger, the daughter refused to turn away her beloved.

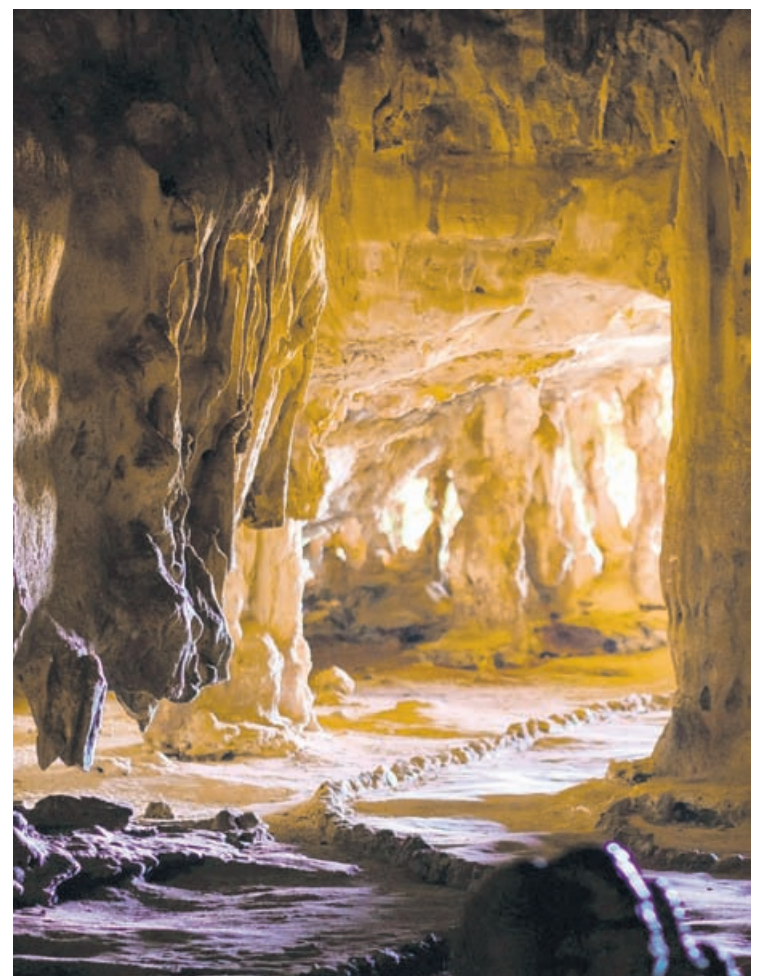
So, the chief decided to lock her up in the Quadirikiri Cave, in hopes that she would soon calm down and turn away her lover. Her beloved, in turn, was locked away in the Tunnel of Love (Now known as the Huliba Cave).

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

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

Fontein Cave

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



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

The Huliba Cave/ Tunnel of Love

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

However, the Huliba Cave has been permanently closed for a few years now, as a way to preserve the bat population that lives in the cave. These Long Tongue Fruit Bats and Insect Eater Bats are very important to the ecosystem of the island. Though this cave is no longer accessible to the public, it surely is interesting to learn more about the history of these caves and the Arawak tribes that resided or utilized them.

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





Article by Etnia Nativa

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Episode CCCLXXI- 371

Hooves of Heritage: The Animals That Connect Aruba's Past and Present

Through its cultural column *Island Insight*, Etnia Nativa brings Aruba's heritage to life—sharing the traditions, knowledge, and stories passed down through generations.

A goat on a rocky hillside or a donkey roaming Aruba's cactus-studded landscape may seem like an ordinary island sight. However, these animals carry a much deeper story of colonization, survival, transport, agriculture, trade, and adaptation.

More than symbols of the countryside, Aruba's goats and donkeys are living connections to the island's past. Introduced during the colonial era, they arrived with the Spanish through trade and settlement. Well adapted to the island's dry, rugged, and rocky terrain, goats and donkeys became an enduring part of Aruba's landscape and rural heritage.

The goat is among humanity's oldest domesticated animals and has been an important companion to humans for thousands of years. Goats became essential to communities around the world, providing milk, meat, leather, skins, fur, and manure. Goat milk could also be transformed into cheese, while young, milk-fed goats became known by the Spanish word *cabrito*. Closely related to sheep, goats belong to the family Bovidae.

When goats arrived in Aruba, they encountered an unforgiving environment—but one in which their natural resilience gave them a distinct advantage.

Aruba's rocky hills, thorny vegetation, and dry scrubland can be challenging for many species. Goats, however, seem almost perfectly suited to the environment.

Agile and resourceful, they climb steep slopes, feed on thorny bushes, cactus and undergrowth, and can even be seen resting among the branches of *watpana* trees. Their resilience has allowed them to embed deeply in Aruba's rural identity.

However, their relationship with the island's environment is complex. Goats can contribute to deforestation and erosion by consuming young vegetation that emerges after the rainy season. They are therefore both survivors of Aruba's harsh landscape and, at times, contributors to its degradation and desertification.



Photo: Courtesy of Etnia Nativa Library

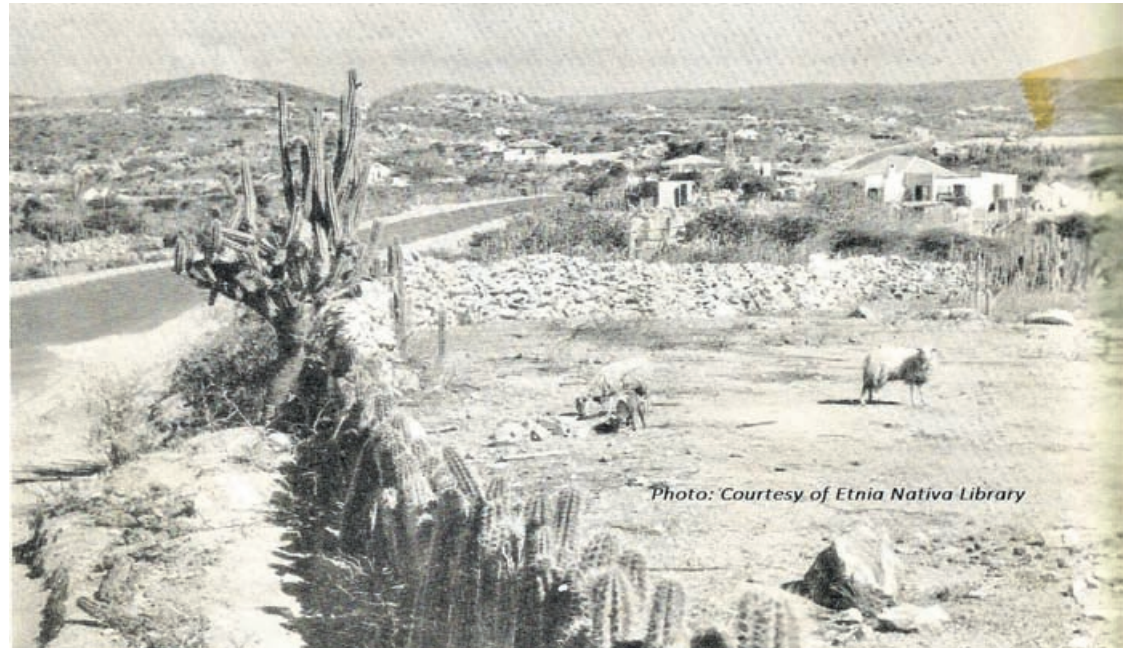


Photo: Courtesy of Etnia Nativa Library

Historical accounts reveal how closely livestock was entrenched to the struggle for survival on an island that has lost its connection to an ecological coexistence. Among these animals were donkeys—quiet, patient, and remarkably durable creatures that became an enduring part of Aruba's colonial history. Hot to arid regions, they were naturally suited to an island environment where fresh water was once scarce.

Their metabolism enabled them to survive difficult conditions, including long periods with limited access to water. Their endurance made them valuable to early Aruban communities.

Donkeys were ways for transportation, agriculture, and trade, while their manure provided a valuable agricultural resource. At times when money was scarce, the animals themselves could represent wealth and could be exchanged as valuable possessions.

Their importance therefore extended beyond their practical uses. Donkeys became part of the social and economic fabric of rural Aruba.

Even today, semi-wild donkeys can be seen roaming the island. They are sometimes mistaken for abandoned or stray animals, but their presence represents generations of animals that have lived freely in Aruba's countryside.

The story of Aruba's goats and donkeys is ultimately a story about people.

These animals arrived through a colonial system, but over generations they became part of something uniquely Aruban. They adapted to the island, became part of rural life, and played a role in the survival and livelihoods of generations of inhabitants.

That is why preserving their story matters. Etnia Nativa's approach to heritage encourages us to look beyond monuments, artifacts, and written records and recognize that heritage can walk, graze, and breathe.

A goat standing on a rocky ledge is connected to thousands of years of domestication and human history. A donkey crossing an Aruban road carries a legacy that reaches back to the island's colonial period.

As explored in Etnia Nativa's Episode 187, "Our Cabrito," and Episode 255, "Donkeys—Their Arrival on Aruba," these animals offer another way of understanding Aruba's past.

What if Aruba's history is walking right beside you?

A goat stands on a rocky hillside, while a donkey crosses a cactus-filled landscape. These are not just everyday sights—they are living reminders of Aruba's heritage.

At Etnia Nativa, we invite you to experience an Aruba beyond the beaches. Discover how geology, archaeology, culture, and living traditions connect to the land beneath your feet. Because Aruba is not just a place to see. It is a place to understand.

Book your visit today:
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Aruba's cultural and literary development: Then and now

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

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

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



after church.

Literary life

Throughout the 19th century and up until the 1940s, there were also not much trace of a cultural climate for the cultural-literary sector on the island. Primary education was introduced on the island mid-19th century, followed by secondary and higher education around the late 30's and 40's. It wasn't until the 1950s, with the introduction of the E.R.N.A agreement in 1951 and the signing of the Statute in 1954, which allowed more space for and control over the economic and cultural development of Aruba, that the literary life on the island began to grow substantially

compared to decades before. This was in response to local institutions established in the 1940s for cultural and literary growth on the island, but that did not yet capture the attention of the general public. The 1950 brought with it a boom of literary production on the island, like those of V.S. Piternella, as well as migrant authors José Ramón Vicioso y Rings William Rufus, who have also contributed to the literary development on the island. The literary movement was further promoted by local broadcasters Voz di Aruba and Radio Kelkboom, with their regular broadcast of literary works.

The 50s and 60s also saw

the influence of international cultures, especially that of the United States. During this time, because of international influences as well as the continued prosperity of the oil refinery, cultural traditions in Aruba began to really take form and become widespread, as different worldly and local concepts were introduced in the Aruban society. With the establishment of local television broadcast station Tele-Aruba in 1963, and with time and possibilities, local programs such as "Nos Tera" ("Our Land") started to pay more attention to the Aruban culture and worked to form a cultural consciousness in the community. The 1960s also saw the rise of local authors

and artists, who were more comfortable in producing works in our native tongue, Papiamentu, but who also produced works in Spanish, English and Dutch. This new phenomenon was in response to the interaction between economic growth, individual prosperity, cultural life and literary expression.

The 21st century

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

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



CROSSWORD

By **THOMAS JOSEPH**

ACROSS

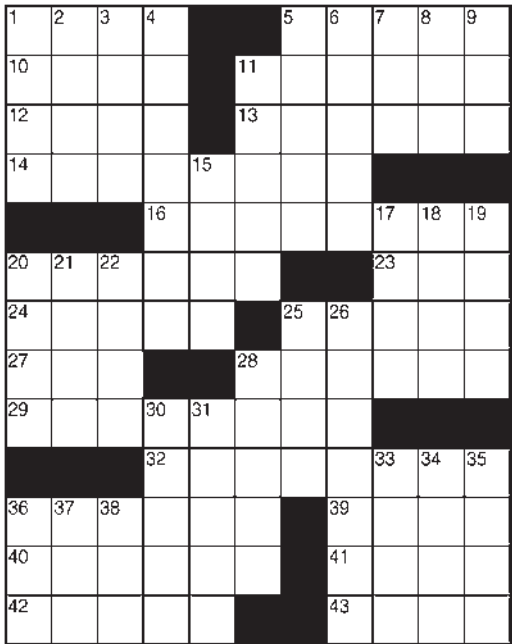
- 1 Neatnik's opposite
- 5 Small porch
- 10 Casserole staple
- 11 Painter's place
- 12 Brighton brews
- 13 Take care of
- 14 1998 Wes Anderson film
- 16 Weary from walking
- 20 Modify
- 23 Pasture
- 24 Elite Navy group
- 25 Corona, e.g.
- 27 Here, in Quebec
- 28 "Key Largo" co-star
- 29 Legends and such
- 32 Dyed-in-the-wool
- 36 Tahini base
- 39 Follow orders
- 40 Conjured up
- 41 Single
- 42 Luke-warm
- 43 Owner's document

DOWN

- 1 Flag feature
- 2 Hum-dinger
- 3 Wallet bills
- 4 Doc's friend
- 5 Set off
- 6 Melodies
- 7 Strange
- 8 Gusher flow
- 9 "The Gold-Bug" writer
- 11 Photo session
- 15 Terrarium growth
- 17 Gymnast Korbut
- 18 Genuine



- 19 Rank above viscount
- 20 "Like that'll happen!"
- 21 1920s art style
- 22 Lockup
- 25 Joker, e.g.
- 26 Freezing
- 28 Yawning, perhaps
- 30 Uniform material
- 31 Crippled
- 33 Clarinet cousin
- 34 Painter Magritte
- 35 Took in
- 36 Ready to go
- 37 Genesis name
- 38 Soak up



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.

1-12

CRYPTOQUOTE

C STQ'P YQTV VGOXO C'U

FTCQF HXTU GOXO, LIP C

BXTUCRO C VTQ'P LTXO ATI.

— SWECS LTVCO

Cryptoquote: FIND OUT WHO YOU ARE AND DO IT ON PURPOSE. — DOLLY PARTON

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

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

16 WED FREEDOM OF THE SEAS
Arrival: 8:00 | Departure: 17:00 | Berth: C

22 TUE CARNIVAL MAGIC
Arrival: 9:00 | Departure: 22:00 | Berth: B
GRANDEUR OF THE SEAS
Arrival: 8:00 | Departure: 23:00 | Berth: C

23 WED CARNIVAL GLORY
Arrival: 13:00 | Departure: 23:00 | Berth: C

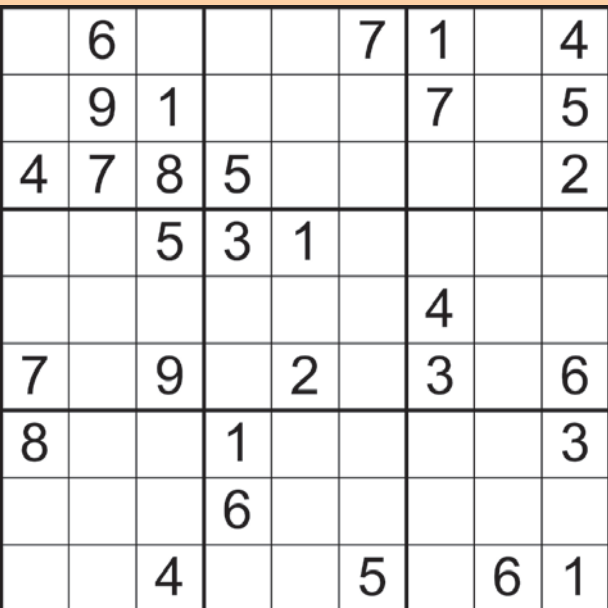
27 SUN FREEDOM OF THE SEAS
Arrival: 8:00 | Departure: 23:00 | Berth: C

29 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
FREEWINDS
Arrival: 6:00 | Departure: | Berth: E

SUDOKU

To play sudoku, use logic to fill the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the numbers 1-9 only once. Puzzle difficulty increases from Monday to Sunday.

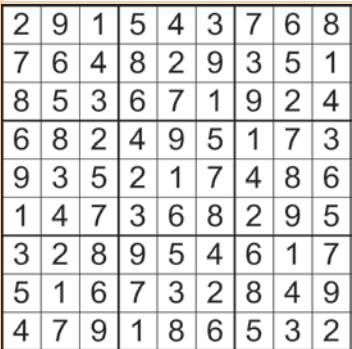
King Classic Sudoku



Difficulty: ★★★

9/16

Answer to previous puzzle



Difficulty: ★★

9/15

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Carney sells Canada to global investors but says U.S. ties still key

Toronto, Canada

Prime Minister Mark Carney pitched Canada as an investment haven Tuesday at a gathering of global financial elite, but conceded ties with the United States remained crucial despite an escalating trade war.

Carney convened the Canada Investment Summit as part of his push to diversify an economy he insists had grown too reliant on an increasingly protectionist United States.

The guest list for the event in Toronto included representatives of Gulf investment agencies and major European banks, as well as Africa's richest man, Nigerian tycoon Aliko Dangote, along with US investors.

"Our goal is to catalyze CAN\$1 trillion (U.S.\$720 billion) of investment in Canada over the next five years," Carney told the event, promising tax incentives and reduced bureaucracy to make the country more attractive to foreign capital.

Carney said Canada had the reserves of critical minerals and clean energy that the world needs, calling these sectors the keys to "strategic autonomy." He particularly highlighted plans to build a new pipeline to the Pacific coast "that would carry at least one million barrels of low-emission Alberta oil per day to Asian markets."

"We are unleashing our full potential as an energy superpower," the prime minister said.

- 'Important partner' -

But in his opening address, hours after Trump imposed new tariffs on certain Canadian goods, Carney offered an optimistic view of future relations with the United States.

"To our American friends, let me say this: We will always be neighbors, and Canada will continue to be the U.S.'s most important partner in many key areas," he said.

He said the two countries had always maintained close ties, "even at times



Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney speaks during a press conference during the second day of the inaugural Canada Investment Summit in Toronto, Ontario on September 15, 2026.

of disagreement."

"These arrangements work when we engage as true partners that respect each other's traditions and sovereignty," Carney told attendees at a luxury hotel in central Toronto. "When those opportunities return, Canada will be an even better partner, stronger, more resilient, more independent," he said.

The Canadian leader, a former investment banker who previously led the central banks of Canada and England, also revived themes he articulated in a high-profile address to the World Economic Forum in January a speech that

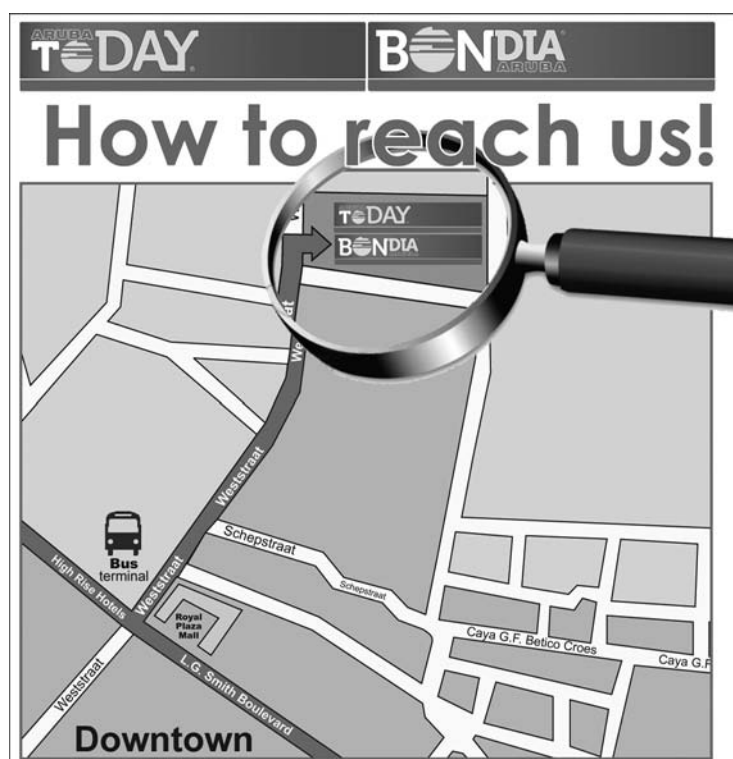
drew a direct rebuke from Trump.

"Sovereignty and openness are now in tension. Economic integration is being weaponized. Tariffs are used as leverage," he said on Tuesday, adding that supply chains are now used as "vulnerabilities to be exploited."

Speaking to reporters after his address, Carney was asked about his conciliatory tone toward the United States after saying last month that any deal signed with the US would be written in "pencil," deriding the trustworthiness of the Trump administration.

Carney said he continues

to believe that a "mutually beneficial trade deal is possible" with Washington. "Canada continues to stand ready to develop that and pursue it," he said. □



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Caribbean Mercantile Bank N.V.
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ARUBA TODAY NEWS

China warns against space 'battlefield' after US says weapons deployed

Paris, France

China Tuesday warned against turning outer space into a "battlefield" and Russia said it must be "free from any weapon" after the United States confirmed for the first time that it has arms deployed in orbit above the Earth.

Analysts said that the revelation by Washington confirmed an open secret but the timing of the announcement risked exacerbating tensions with Beijing and the risk of a weapons race in space.

The announcement marked a new stage in the major powers' rush for military space capabilities, driven by rapid technological advancements but lacking a comprehensive legal framework.

"The U.S. has on-orbit space control weapons capable of defending the Joint Force against hostile adversary action," a U.S. Space Force spokesperson said in a statement that did not provide specifics on the weapons. China's foreign ministry op-



Guo Jiakun who was appointed as the new spokesperson for the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs attends a press conference in Beijing, China on January 7, 2025.

posed the move, warning against the "weaponization of outer space, turning it into a battlefield, as well as an arms race there".

"We urge the U.S. side to stop expanding its military capabilities and preparing for war in outer space," ministry spokesman Guo Jiakun

told a news briefing.

Russia called Tuesday for space to be kept "free of any weapons".

"We are counting on broad international consolidation to continue working toward the complete demilitarization of space," said Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov.

- What are the US capabilities? -

The U.S. statement did not provide concrete details about what weapons are deployed in space and how many.

"Space control encapsulates the mission areas

required to contest and control the space domain employing kinetic and non-kinetic means to affect adversary capabilities," the statement said.

"These capabilities can be employed for offensive and defensive purposes," it added.

Non-kinetic means could include lasers to blind satellites, or even electromagnetic or cyber jamming of their data links.

- Why does the U.S. want weapons in space? -

For Washington, both Russia and China its two main geopolitical rivals pose potential threats to U.S. interests in space.

China "develops and operates space and counter-space capabilities as part of a military modernization strategy," according to the U.S. Space Force.

Russia, meanwhile, "views space as a war fighting domain and believes space supremacy will be a decisive factor in future conflicts", it said.

The militarization of space is as old as the space race itself -- as soon as the USSR's Sputnik was launched into orbit as the first probe in space in 1957, Washington and Moscow began exploring ways to both arm and destroy satellites.

India in March 2019 said it had destroyed a low-orbiting satellite, following in the footsteps of Russia, China and the US, in a missile test that proved the nation was among the world's most advanced space powers.

- How might China react? -

Song Zhongping, an independent military commentator based in Hong Kong and former Chinese army instructor, told AFP the announcement was "no surprise at all" as the fact that the U.S. possesses such weapons "has long been an open secret".

"The only difference is that the U.S. used to keep it ambiguous, whereas now it has gone public, which shows that Washington is no longer trying to hide it," he added. □

OpenAI, Anthropic and Google are working to create an AI standards body

Washington, United States

The world's biggest AI companies are working on creating a standards body, ChatGPT-maker OpenAI

said on Tuesday, as fears rise about the dangers of AI and pressure is on to create a safer version of the technology.

OpenAI said it was working with Anthropic and Google on an idea that originated from a proposal by Google DeepMind's Demis Hassabis for a self-regulatory body modeled after the Financial Industry Regulatory Authority that oversees U.S. brokers and investment firms.

In July, Hassabis called for the United States to create an organization that would test the most powerful AI systems before they are released to the public.

"Funding would need to be substantial and likely mostly come from industry, in order to attract world-class technical talent and provide the necessary compute resources for large-scale testing," Hassabis wrote. There is no consensus on how to move forward, though. The chief of Canadian AI company Cohere recently accused the dominant American AI labs of forming a

"cartel" under the guise of safety.

"AI needs guardrails. That is not the dispute and never has been. The dispute is over who writes them, who gets to participate and whose interests the rules are protecting," Cohere co-founder and CEO Aiden Gomez wrote in a blog post on Sunday.

Concerns about AI safety have escalated in recent weeks, including warnings from two workers who resigned from major AI developers amid concerns about the industry's risks.

Last week, Jacob Coxon left Anthropic and warned that AI companies were "gambling with our lives." He also previously worked at OpenAI.

On Monday, former Google DeepMind researcher Bilal Chughtai echoed the concerns raised by Coxon and others. □



This combination of pictures created on September 14, 2026 shows (from top L, clockwise) Elon Musk in Davos on January 22, 2026, OpenAI CEO Sam Altman in Washington, DC, on July 22, 2025, DeepMind co-founder and chairman Demis Hassabis in London on July 9, 2025, Meta CEO Mark Zuckerberg in Washington, DC, on January 31, 2024, Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella in Davos on January 20, 2026, Anthropic CEO Dario Amodei in Paris on May 22, 2024, Google CEO Sundar Pichai in Warsaw, Poland, on February 13, 2025, and Nvidia CEO Jensen Huang in Tokyo on July 16, 2026.

As Ballon d'Or vote nears, stars campaign for the award

Paris, France

With less than two weeks to go before Ballon d'Or voting closes, many leading candidates are campaigning hard to be awarded football's top individual honour.

This self-promotion is a relatively recent development in a team sport where, until a few years ago, the top individual prize went largely unnoticed until it was time to present it.

But now, the Ballon d'Or dominates the football conversation during the months when the new European season is still finding its feet.

The trophy will be presented on October 26, while the final sprint began on September 8 when France Football, the award organizer, released the list of 30 candidates to succeed Ousmane Dembele.

The ceremony will be in London, even though only five of the 30 nominees play in the English Premier League.

The award carries no cash prize, but it has become worth increased income and status to players and their teams.

Many stars have related bonuses in their boot contracts while the award also increases their overall mar-



Real Madrid's Spanish forward #10 Kylian Mbappe and Elche's Spanish defender #23 Victor Chust fight for the ball during the Spanish league football match between Elche CF and Real Madrid CF at Martinez Valero Stadium in Elche on September 15, 2026.

keting value, and that of their club.

The two all-time leading Ballon d'Or winners, Lionel Messi, who has picked up the trophy eight times, and Cristiano Ronaldo, who won five times, both have annual sponsorship income estimated by Forbes at more than 65 million dollars.

Clubs can expect to sell more merchandise if one of their players wins.

Some 100 invited journalists one representative from each of the top 100 countries in the FIFA rankings will cast votes.

With no clear favourite, the stars and their PR agencies are stepping up their campaigns. Achievements are shamelessly paraded to scrape together votes.

- 'I deserve it' -

"For me, Mbappe and I, we're the two best play-

ers in the world," Lamine Yamal, who has won the World Cup and La Liga in 2026, said in an interview on Movistar Plus.

"I honestly think that, as the best in the world, maybe there are two of us, and this year I deserve it because of what I've won," the 19-year-old added.

He was responding to the Frenchman, who days earlier

had emphasised the award's individual nature after a year in which he won no trophies with either Real Madrid or France, who lost a World Cup semi-final to Spain, but scored 10 World Cup goals to take his tally to an all-time leading 22.

"Being the all-time top scorer in World Cup history, overtaking all the great legends in the history of the sport in the most important tournament there is, is something that really stands out, a global event.

Who am I voting for? Myself," said the striker, who was also the top scorer in last season's Liga and Champions League.

His manager, Jose Mourinho, did not hesitate to back up the argument: "We know who has made history this summer, and he's not from PSG or the Spanish national team."

In 2024, Real Madrid boycotted the ceremony after learning just before they were due to travel that none of their seven nominees had won.

This year, Paris Saint-Germain have a record 10 nominees, after retaining the Champions League. □

France says 2030 Winter Olympics safe despite political uncertainty

Lyon, France

France will honor its commitment to host the 2030 Winter Olympics regardless of the outcome of next year's presidential election, Sports Minister Marina Ferrari said on Tuesday during an IOC visit to Lyon.

"When France commits to an international project such as hosting the Olympic and Paralympic Games, France will deliver regardless of any political changeover," Ferrari told reporters, adding that it would be difficult to reverse course.

Her comments came after environmental groups and left-wing politicians renewed calls to scrap the project, arguing it would have a damaging ecological impact.

"We're calling for the project to be stopped; there's

no shame in doing so. The summer has been very impactful in terms of climate," Delphine Larat of the citizens' collective JOP 2030 told AFP.

An elected member of parliament with the hard-left France Unbowed (LFI) party, Jean-Francois Coullomme, criticized plans for artificial snow production and said the project would be "radically reassessed" on environmental and financial grounds if Jean-Luc Melenchon were elected president.

The International Olympic Committee is in Lyon through Wednesday to inspect potential venues for ice events, which were moved from Nice after newly elected mayor Eric Ciotti rejected plans for a temporary rink at the city's football stadium.

The region's president, Renaud Muselier, blamed the far right for "driving the Games out of Nice", but said even a future government potentially led by Marine Le Pen would be unlikely to forgo the global exposure offered by the Olympics.

The IOC visit comes days after the resignation of organizing committee chief Edgar Grospiron following a prolonged governance crisis. Deputy head Vincent Roberti is serving as interim head while a successor is sought.

On Wednesday the IOC is expected to confirm venues in the Lyon region for ice hockey, curling, figure skating and short-track speed skating events.

Attention will then turn to appointing a new organizing committee president.

Officials said they were in no rush, with Muselier and Fabrice Pannekoucke, president of the Auvergne-Rhone-Alpes region, both reporting strong interest in the role.

"We need someone who embodies the project, a

leader with natural authority and personal charisma," Muselier said.

French Olympic Committee president Amelie Oudea-Castera said the successful candidate would not necessarily be a former athlete. □



Olympic Games Executive Director Christophe Dubi (L) talks to CEO of GL Events Olivier Ferraton on the sidelines of a visit by members of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) Coordination Commission in Chassieu, outside Lyon on September 14, 2026.

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Patrick Mahomes #15 of the Kansas City Chiefs throws a pass against Jonah Elliss #52 of the Denver Broncos during the third quarter in the game at Arrowhead Stadium on September 14, 2026 in Kansas City, Missouri.

Mahomes makes triumphant return as Chiefs rout Broncos 31-10

Los Angeles, United States
Patrick Mahomes rushed for a touchdown and passed for two more on a triumphant return from his nine-month injury absence as the Kansas City Chiefs thrashed the Denver Broncos 31-10 on Monday. Three-time Super Bowl champion quarterback Mahomes tore his knee ligaments in December, but defied expectations to return in time for a statement victory in the final game of the new NFL season's opening weekend. His successful return was overshadowed by a stunning debut from his new Chiefs teammate Kenneth Walker III, who rushed for 173 yards and two touchdowns. Running back Walker the Most Valuable Player for the Seattle Seahawks at last season's Super Bowl switched to Kansas City in the off-season and dominated a Chiefs offense that relied heavily on his explosive rushing. "I've been saying it all off-

season, man. 'K9' is going to make a difference. That offensive line and 'K9', they took over the game," said Mahomes, referring to Walker by his nickname. Victory was a small measure of revenge for the Chiefs who, after nine straight AFC West titles, lost their divisional crown to the Broncos last year and failed to make the playoffs. Denver came within a game of reaching last year's Super Bowl, but were hampered by the broken ankle suffered by quarterback Bo Nix, who had a torrid return from his own injury. Nix was sacked four times and gave up an interception, passing for 131 yards and one touchdown. In a disastrous start, Nix was sacked on his first play and threw an interception on third down. Walker made an immediate impact, earning the Chiefs a first down. Mahomes scram-

bled to the end zone but celebrations were halted because of a holding offense. The reprieve for Denver was brief. Mahomes immediately scrambled again, breaking through a tackle for a 15-yard rushing touchdown to cap Kansas City's first drive. "It went really well. I mean, I didn't expect to run it that early, but I was able to use my legs early in the game," said Mahomes. The Broncos leveled the score in the first quarter when Nix found Evan Engram with a 19-yard pass and kicker Wil Lutz made his 100th straight extra point. Just before half-time, a Mahomes short pass found Rashae Rice for a touchdown to restore the Kansas City lead. A disappointing half for the Broncos offense ended with another Nix sack and things got worse when the game resumed. □

Tommy Edman #25, Kyle Tucker #23, Alex Freeland #76, Teoscar Hernandez #37, and Mookie Betts #50 of the Los Angeles Dodgers celebrate after defeating the Cincinnati Reds, clinching their 14th straight playoff berth, at Great American Ball Park on September 14, 2026, in Cincinnati, Ohio.

Dodgers clinch playoff berth in bid for third straight World Series

Los Angeles, United States
The Los Angeles Dodgers, seeking a third straight World Series crown, booked their playoff berth Monday with a 4-1 win over the Cincinnati Reds. With a 91-59 record and 12 games remaining in the regular season, the Dodgers are now assured of at least a wild card series place, as they pursue a historic three-peat as MLB champions. The Dodgers are currently in position for one of the National League's top-two seeds -- who receive first-round byes and hosting rights in the division series -- along with the Milwaukee Brewers, who are also assured of post-season action. Over in the American League, the Tampa Bay Rays have already qualified. The free-spending Dodgers beat the New York Yankees in the 2024 World Series and triumphed over the Toronto Blue Jays last year. Having added outfielder Kyle Tucker in the off-season and two-time Cy Young Award-winning pitcher Tarik Skubal last month, the Dodgers are favorites to complete their hat-trick. They could become the first National League club to win the World Series three years in a row and the first since the Yankees from 1998-2000. But reaching the playoffs for a 14th straight season has not been all plain sailing. Having reached the All-Star break leading Arizona by 11.5 games in the NL West division by far the largest margin for any division leader the Dodgers suffered a slump in form. Two-way superstar Shohei Ohtani has been derailed by injuries, and is not expected to pitch again this season, while his batting form has also dipped. □