

Birds of Aruba: Soaring through the blue skies



Credit: Daniel Ruben Gonzalez

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8:30PM
9:30PM

NIGHTLY THEMED WATERSHOW



Mike Accardi, a volunteer with the animal rights group Pro Animal DC, puts up signs in support of a proposed ban on the sale, distribution and importation of foie gras in Washington, DC, on September 4, 2026.

In Washington's political cauldron, a fight over foie gras

Washington, United States

Donald Trump could become a lame duck president after US midterm elections but prospects at the ballot box are looking brighter for ducks of the feathered variety.

When Washington DC residents vote in the November 3 congressional elections, with Trump's Republican Party forecast to fare poorly, there will be an additional measure on the ballot: to ban the sale and distribution in the city of foie gras.

Animal rights activists collected the signatures of five percent of registered voters in the District of Columbia to mandate the referendum on the quintessentially French culinary delicacy that is made from the enlarged duck livers.

"They put a rod in a duck's throat to make its liver get bigger. That's not cool," said campaign volunteer James Nance, referring to force feeding of fowl, as he stapled "Save the ducks" signs on lampposts on a busy uptown street.

Advocates are confident the measure will pass, although, as with a lot of politics in the nation's capital, the debate on "Initiative

86" is rancorous.

The proposal echoing the restaurant shorthand "86" for an item that is off the menu pits zealous reformers against vested interests, with an electorate knowing little about the issue.

The most prominent opponent is Bart Hutchins, chef and owner of Butterworth's, an upscale restaurant near Capitol Hill popular with Trump administration officials and supporters.

Foie gras is his favorite ingredient and a fixture on his menu used in his tartare presentation, to mount sauces, as a pate, and even for ice cream.

Hutchins is pessimistic about staving off the ban and laments what it would mean for the city's famed French restaurants.

"It's this very modern thing where we just kind of keep throwing away the past," Hutchins said.

"Next year it'll be banning something else relatively small...until we're all just eating, you know, chicken nuggets, and we'll have no culinary heritage whatsoever."

For the activists at Pro Animal DC, who are seeking to emulate places like California and Pittsburgh that

have enacted laws against foie gras, it's about fighting animal cruelty.

"DC is actually the third top consumer of foie gras in the entire country. So getting this cruel product out of DC would have a really big impact on the foie gras industry," group spokeswoman Natalie Fulton said.

They gathered nearly 32,000 verified signatures to get "Initiative 86" on the ballot, which is more signatures than for a proposal to legalize cannabis approved in 2014.

They see voter ignorance as the main obstacle.

"A lot of people don't know what it is, and that's I think why it's been allowed for so long, despite how cruel it is," said activist and tech worker Mike Accardi.

- Who decides the menu? -

Jordan Grinor, director at one of only two US commercial foie gras producers, Hudson Valley Farms, strongly disputes the charge of cruelty.

He said that in the wild, ducks gorge before migration and store fat in their livers and argues that "gavage" the process of force-feeding is a traditional means of animal husbandry. □



Senator John Hickenlooper (D-WA) speaks during a Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee confirmation hearing for Keith Sonderling, acting U.S. Secretary of Labor, on Capitol Hill on July 16, 2026 in Washington, DC.

Trump slammed for 'illegal' U.S. TV ads funded by taxpayers

Washington, United States

U.S. President Donald Trump faced bipartisan criticism Monday for taxpayer-funded television advertisements promoting himself just weeks ahead of crucial midterm elections.

One of the ads was screened during an NFL game on Sunday night, featuring Republican Trump warning of a "final battle" over black-and-white footage of him walking down a hallway.

The ads feature an onscreen message saying "Paid for by the U.S. Government."

U.S. media said the ad appeared to be almost identical to a political advertisement for Trump broadcast during his 2024 presidential election campaign.

The White House described the ads as "unapologetically patriotic" public service announcements and compared them to messages from previous presidents during wartime and national crises.

But there has been backlash from both sides of the U.S. political divide.

"You can't spend public money to promote yourself," Republican Senator John Kennedy told CBS "Face The Nation" on Sunday.

Democratic Senator John Hickenlooper described the ads on X on Monday as "propaganda," "illegal" and "un-American."

Mike Levin, a Democratic member of the House of Representatives, said: "It's propaganda, and you're paying the bill."

The first ad was broadcast last week and features a song saying "Love Me" while Trump proclaims "America will never be a communist country."

The second, "final battle" ad broadcast over the weekend, features Trump's voice saying: "We will cast out the communists, Marxists and fascists. We will throw off the sick political class that hates our country. We will rout the fake news media, and we will liberate America from these villains, once and for all."

A White House spokesperson said in a statement to AFP that latest ad was "educational and unapologetically patriotic. We should be proud of our country."

"These public service announcements are about reminding Americans to love their country and understand what makes it worth defending, at home, at our borders, and abroad," the spokesperson added.

Trump administration sources compared the ads to previous public service announcements including Joe Biden's Covid vaccination campaign and Franklin Roosevelt's promotion of the war effort during World War II. □

'Pseudo-journalism': Partisan 'news' sites target U.S. midterms

Washington, United States

It bills itself as an "independent journalism" outfit, but the innocuous-sounding North Carolinian is among hundreds of partisan sites that researchers say masquerade as local news outlets in battleground states ahead of the U.S. midterm elections.

The so-called "pink slime" sites many secretly backed by partisan groups on both sides of the political aisle appear to be fueling an explosion of polarizing or false narratives ahead of the November 3 elections.

Their backers are splurging hundreds of thousands of dollars on advertising their articles on social media, expanding their otherwise limited readership while authentic media outlets grapple with financial woes, layoffs, and record low public trust.

The Senate Leadership Fund (SLF), a political action committee that describes itself as "solely dedicated to protecting and expanding the Republican Senate majority," apparently launched the North Carolinian in July, according to disinformation watchdog NewsGuard.

The North Carolinian said



Republican U.S. Senate candidate Michael Whatley (R) greets attendees ahead of remarks by U.S. Vice President J.D. Vance during a rally at Koury Convention Center on September 21, 2026 in Greensboro, North Carolina.

the site was "paid for by SLF" and was "not authorized by any candidate or candidate's committee." But the site appears focused on opposing Democrat Roy Cooper's campaign for U.S. Senate and boosting his Republican opponent in the southern state, Michael Whatley. It carries headlines with phrases such as, "Roy Cooper's disastrous crime record" and "Whatley highlights Democrat Cooper's

dangerous soft-on-crime record."

SLF spent between \$34,700 and \$46,715 promoting the site's articles on Meta platforms through late August, garnering at least 3.6 million views, according to NewsGuard.

SLF did not respond to AFP's request for comment.

- 'Undermining trust' -

"Pink slime" outlets some suspected of using AI tools

to produce their articles have proliferated in recent years, outnumbering American newspaper sites, in a trend that experts say is eroding trust in traditional media.

NewsGuard has identified 21 pink slime outlets that launched this year, bringing the total number of such sites to 1,179. By comparison, only 937 daily newspapers were operating, according to Northwestern

University's Local News Initiative.

"These pink slime sites can be confounding to news consumers who may not be aware of their agendas and confuse them with authentic independent news websites in their area, thereby undermining trust between journalists and their readers of all political persuasions," said NewsGuard's Sam Howard.

NewsGuard said two pink slime networks One Nation on the right, and the American Independent on the left collectively spent at least \$801,500 on advertising in the first eight months of this year to promote their articles on Facebook and Instagram.

Their growing online reach could potentially affect the responses of AI chatbots, which are now popularly used for online searches, researchers say.

One Nation, an affiliate of SLF, has launched six sites posing as independent news portals in states with key Senate races Georgia, Alaska, Maine, Iowa, Ohio, and New Hampshire according to the independent newsletter Popular Information. □

Justice Alito steps aside from major US climate case

Washington, United States

U.S. Supreme Court Justice Samuel Alito on Monday recused himself from a major climate case after calls from critics for him to step aside because of his oil and gas stock holdings.

The news came in a letter sent by the court's clerk to lawyers involved in the case.

"I am writing to inform the parties that Justice Alito has determined that he will not continue to participate in this case," the clerk said, without stating a reason.

The Supreme Court is set on October 5 to hear arguments from ExxonMobil and Suncor Energy about why they should not stand trial in a growing number of climate litigation cases

brought by states against oil and gas majors.

Conservative Alito had faced calls to step aside as he had previously done in 2023 during the same litigation, when the court declined to move the case from state court to federal court. But in May, he said he would not do so again, telling NBC News through a court spokeswoman that he "does not have a financial interest in any party" and therefore "his recusal is not required."

Although Alito's most recent financial disclosure, released in August, does not list either ExxonMobil or SuncorEnergy as investments, it does mention numerous fossil fuel interests,

including ConocoPhillips and Phillips 66.

Since the case, known as Suncor v Boulder, could have wide-reaching implications for dozens of climate litigation cases, critics said his wider oil and gas holdings were still relevant.

Alexandra Nagy, organizing director of the California-based nonprofit Consumer Watchdog, told AFP that nine city and municipality climate accountability cases from California are stayed pending the outcome of Suncor v Boulder, and all name either or both ConocoPhillips and Phillips 66.

"He did do the right thing. It's something he should have done from the start,



U.S. Associate Supreme Court Justice, Samuel Alito, attends an audience of Pope Leo XIV as part of the Jubilee of Justice at St Peter's square in The Vatican on September 20, 2025.

but you shouldn't be left wondering if the justices in these cases are doing self-dealing or benefiting in any way," said Nagy. "The public needs to be able to trust them to do their job." In a recent analysis, court watchdog Court Accountability said that Alito gained somewhere between \$390,000 and \$2.9

million from his interests in oil and gas extraction between 2005, when he was nominated to the court, and 2024.

The court is split 6-3 along conservative-liberal lines, though with Alito's recusal it leaves open the possibility of a 4-4 split, which could leave underlying legal issues unresolved. □

Documentary turns camera on architect Peter Zumthor

Paris, France

After decades of shunning glittering skyscrapers and corporate office towers in favour of museums and memorials, while his peers conquered the planet, a Swiss architect is finally getting a star turn in the limelight.

Peter Zumthor, 83, is the focus of a new documentary by acclaimed German director Wim Wenders, coming out just after the architect completed the biggest project of his career: the much-delayed LACMA art museum in Los Angeles.

Filmed in 3D, "From Inside Out: The Architecture of Peter Zumthor" takes viewers on an immersive tour through the limited number of buildings built by the artist-architect who is known for his meticulous and minimalist work.

His best-known projects include a thermal bath building in Vals, Switzerland, a monument to women burned as witches in the Norwegian Arctic, as well as the amoeba-shaped LACMA building which finally opened its doors this year after 20 years of reflection and controversy.

"I don't like to be a star ar-



German director Wim Wenders (R) and architect Peter Zumthor attend the photocall of "From inside out - The architecture of Peter Zumthor" presented out of competition at the 83rd International Venice Film Festival, at Venice Lido on September 6, 2026.

chitect, I like to make these artistic buildings," Zumthor said at the Venice Film Festival earlier this month where the film about him premiered. "I'm glad if the client has the patience."

The German-speaking designer is the same generation as Swiss heavyweights Jacques Herzog and Pierre de Meuron, as well as oth-

er European architectural stars from France's Jean Nouvel, Rem Koolhaas from the Netherlands or Norman Foster in Britain.

All now aged over 75, they have built across the world, riding the Asian construction boom this century and opening offices from Hong Kong to New York.

Zumthor, meanwhile, has stayed in his home village

of Haldenstein, gradually renovating buildings there to increase the size of his practice, but avoiding the temptation to expand beyond his mountainous Swiss redoubt.

"I can only do what I can control. I can work with a team of 20, maybe 30 that's the maximum," the 2009 winner of the Pritzker Prize, considered archi-

itecture's highest honour, told AFP in an interview.

"If it would be paintings or sculptures, it would be more easy to understand that I don't want to delegate."

- Landscape -

That means he turns down far more work than he accepts.

"In Korea, for instance, they like my work. There were three or four rich, cultivated Koreans and they wanted to give me a carte blanche to do anything nice, no function. And I said, 'I cannot do it'," Zumthor added to AFP. "I need a purpose. I need a good reason."

The uncompromising author of "Thinking Architecture" only accepts building projects with a clear social function such as museums, chapels or memorials and he has never built a high-rise or commercial office. Each project is unique, including up to 80 percent of custom-made items from furniture to lighting, part of his objective of creating a "feeling" inside a building, rather than an aesthetic.

Zumthor obsesses about context and surroundings, with the aim of producing designs that are minimalist and stark but appear to be "the completion of a landscape that wasn't finished before," he says in the film. The son of a cabinet maker is also uncompromising on details, from ordering dozens of samples of curtains to get the exact finish he wanted for the LACMA windows, to commissioning an artisan to develop pigmented varnishes for the structure's concrete walls. "My work resembles an artistic process. It's almost the same," he told AFP.

That also makes him expensive and a sometimes difficult perfectionist for his clients.

He confesses to having a habit of changing his mind, sometimes after a flash of inspiration in the shower.

"Peter already had a reputation as being the slowest architect one could imagine," LACMA director Michael Govan says in the film about his decision to commission Zumthor. □

Spanish director Almodovar visits Madrid housing protest camp

Madrid, Spain

Oscar-winning Spanish film director Pedro Almodovar visited a protest camp in central Madrid on Sunday, voicing support for protesters demanding urgent ac-

tion on the country's housing crisis and calling the situation "unbearable". Demonstrators set up around 100 tents in the capital's busy Puerta del Sol square after tens of

thousands took to the streets on Saturday to demand action to lower housing costs and protect tenants.

The protest movement was triggered by the police eviction on Wednesday of an 87-year-old woman, Maricarmen Abascal, from the Madrid apartment where she had lived for decades.

"Maricarmen is the last straw," said Almodovar, 76, a prominent figure on Spain's cultural left, during an interview with public broadcaster RTVE at the camp.

"It is absolutely unbearable for Spanish society to have this problem for another day. And politicians have to fix it because they are the ones who govern

us," he added.

Soaring housing costs and a shortage of homes are pricing many Spaniards out of the market. Real-estate website Idealista estimates that rents have nearly doubled over the past decade.

"The housing problem is paralysing Spanish life itself," Almodovar said, adding that the crisis was preventing many young people from starting their own lives.

Socialist Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez vowed on Sunday to take swift government action.

He is expected to table a bill containing measures including the automatic renewal of rental contracts and further restrictions on evictions. □



30 June 2026, Bavaria, Munich: Director Pedro Almodóvar appeared without his glasses on the blue carpet in front of the Deutsches Theater at the German premiere of his film "Bitteres Fest".



The TikTok logo is pictured at the company's booth during the Tokyo Game Show in Chiba prefecture on September 15, 2022.

Japanese anime actor fights TikTok over AI voice cloning

Tokyo, Japan

A high-profile Japanese anime voice actor has taken TikTok to court over videos he says feature an artificial intelligence clone of his "lustrous" baritone, with a verdict due on Wednesday.

AI imitation is a growing concern among performers worldwide, and the threat has roiled Japan's storied animation industry, whose voice actors are sometimes worshipped as much as their characters by fans.

The lawsuit filed by Kenjiro Tsuda, known for his starring roles in mega-franchises including "Jujutsu Kaisen" and "Yu-Gi-Oh!", is believed to be the country's first seeking to defend an individual's vocal identity against AI-generated copies. Tsuda is demanding TikTok remove a slew of videos narrated by a distinctively "deep" and "lustrous" voice that the 55-year-old says can only be his.

The platform however argues it is a "generic male voice" whose perceived similarity to Tsuda's is subjective at best, according to court records accessed by AFP.

An actor's voice "is the result of years of rigorous training and apprenticeship" to hone talent, Yuko Sasaki, executive director

of the Japan Actors Union, told AFP.

"It's something we spend lots of time and money perfecting," said Sasaki, a fellow voice actor, adding that "we support Tsuda wholeheartedly".

The court should "acknowledge that ownership of a voice is a fundamental right", she said.

An anonymous account, whose picture resembled a "Jujutsu Kaisen" character dubbed by Tsuda, posted the videos in question.

They combined images and seemingly AI-generated speech about urban legends, occult phenomena and conspiracy theories.

The account at one point boasted more than 200,000 subscribers and would have brought in upwards of 500,000 yen (\$3,200) in monthly revenue, the legal complaint argued.

- 'Sordid content' -

The account, whose posts mostly lacked original substance, "only gained popularity because its dubious, sordid content was narrated by the attractive voice of a popular actor," Tsuda's legal team said, according to the court records.

This infringes Tsuda's so-called publicity rights the ability to control and profit from the use of aspects of

one's identity his attorneys said.

Although the account itself is no longer viewable on the platform, the Tokyo District Court will rule on whether TikTok was responsible for deleting the posts. Parallel to the lawsuit, Sasaki and other Japanese voice actors have launched a campaign, called "No More", against using generative AI to mimic performers without permission.

"Our industry can be crushed" if a court win for TikTok triggers "unbridled" AI voice cloning on social media, actor Bin Shimada told AFP.

That could cause younger actors to "lose hope", said Shimada, who is part of the campaign group.

It is also fast becoming a global issue.

"In many countries copyright and data protection laws are not being adequately adapted" to protect performers from AI clones, the International Federation of Actors said last year.

ChatGPT maker OpenAI was forced to apologise in 2024 to star Scarlett Johansson over a synthetic voice that sounded like her, released after she declined to work with OpenAI on the project. □



A prize-winning guinea pig is draped with a winner's ribbon during the New Zealand National Guinea Pig Show in Taupo on September 26, 2026.

Cavy chaos: Hundreds attend New Zealand's biggest guinea pig show

Taupo, New Zealand

Claremont Girl Clash of Hearts took the coveted Best in Show title Saturday at New Zealand's National Guinea Pig Show, which drew hundreds of fans to see the coifed and combed cavies.

Nearly 300 guinea pigs were paraded before crowds at Taupo's Great Lakes Centre, some of which had support guinea pigs in tow as they prepared for the show.

Competitors travelled from throughout New Zealand and the two judges flew in from England and the Czech Republic for the show.

Judges closely examined each pig, looking at the colour and condition of their coat and their general health. Some of the competitors prepared their pigs for months, putting them on special diets and sometimes spending hours a day grooming to have them in the best shape possible.

"Blow drying him to get him ready after a bath would probably take two hours," New Zealand Cavy Council president Andy Lawrie said of his 11-month-old long-haired alpaca, Supreme Grand Champion Romulus Propaganda, which came in second.

"All my long hairs this year have been themed after political type terms," Lawrie said, explaining the lengthy name while combing the rodent's lengthy mane.

The national champion, a black short-haired guinea pig hailing from Timaru on New Zealand's South Island, is owned by teenager Josh Wilson-Jones.

He was meticulous in preparing his pigs for show, going through every individual hair before presenting Claremont Girl Clash of Hearts to the judges.

Tahlia Chapman and her son, Griffin Hopkins, had several pigs competing in multiple classes.

One of Chapman's rough coat Rexes won its category, bringing her to tears.

Earlier in the day she said she didn't have "particularly high hopes".

"But I just love coming in, seeing everybody, and supporting everyone," she said.

Where some exhibitors were bathing their pigs close to the show, Chapman said rough coats needed to be as coarse as possible.

"We try and avoid bathing as much as we can because it will soften them."

Casey Scovell is new to the show scene and brought her pigs on a ferry from the South Island to compete.

She said the key to a good cavy was "their body condition".

"Special grains and lots of fresh vegetables and hay," she said of the diet for her Rex, Barbarian. □

Curtain falls on the romance of India's single-screen cinemas

Bengaluru, India

The demolition has begun at Bengaluru's Urvashi Cinema, once a 1,200-seat movie palace where generations of filmgoers cheered and whistled, another casualty of India's vanishing single-screen era. "The theatre came up in the 1970s... I was so happy when it opened," said Manjunath, watching as seats were ripped out and strewn outside.

Manjunath, who uses one name, recalled its glory days, when the shop he runs opposite was packed with customers buying snacks before and after shows.

"That was the rush... now I have a lot of free time," he said. "But what to do? There is barely any crowd." The peeling facades, faded signs and cavernous auditoriums of such cinemas are remnants of a time when going to the movies was itself the main event.

"It is a completely different experience," said photographer Hemant Chaturvedi, 58, who has documented what remains during a seven-year odyssey, photographing 1,350 single-screen cinemas across



This photograph taken on August 25, 2026 shows the interior view of the iconic single-screen Regal Cinema Hall in Mumbai.

1,000 towns.

His photographs capture not only the movie houses but their ornate facades and decay a record of a cultural landscape disappearing as cinemas are demolished, converted into multiplexes or left to crumble.

- 'Ecosystem is fading' -

"People would be cheering, jumping on the seats, even throwing money at

the screen," Chaturvedi said.

The old halls offered a collective, interactive experience, with fans applauding at the hero's entrance, clapping to romantic songs and shouting at dramatic twists.

"Now that old ecosystem is fading, and the charm is being lost," he said.

India's single-screen cinemas have been steadily squeezed by multiplexes,

streaming, rising property costs and the expense of maintaining ageing buildings and equipment.

Researchers estimate that India had around 14,000 single-screen halls in the 1980s. Only around 2,000 remain today.

Many of the old halls could accommodate around 1,000 people, creating a communal atmosphere rarely found in today's multiplexes.

The decline has also changed the way Indians experience films. New halls offer air conditioning, reclining seats and food delivered to the seat.

"To me, the new cinemas have lost the charm," said Chaturvedi, a former Bollywood cinematographer who worked on hit movies during a three-decade career.

"The multiplexes are a generic, cold experience."

- 'Old times' -

Some of the old cinemas have been restored and renovated, and the single-screen experience still has its devotees.

In Bengaluru, Mukunda Cinemas still draws crowds even for early-morning shows before work.

Hundreds lined up before dawn for a recent 6:00 am screening of the latest release of film star Yash, who is hugely popular in India's Kannada-language cinema.

Santosh, a 47-year-old businessman who uses one name, queued with hundreds of others as crowds set off fireworks outside while waiting for the show. □

Special delivery: India state hands out gold for newborns

Madurai, India

Authorities in India's Tamil Nadu state gave babies born in government-run hospitals a free gold ring on Monday, an initiative aimed at boosting confidence in the public healthcare system.

Under the scheme launched by actor-turned-Chief Minister Vijay, all babies born in public health facilities in the state are eligible for a one-gram gold ring, worth some \$143.

Gold has immense cultural significance in India, featuring prominently in weddings and religious ceremonies, and seen as a safe generational asset.

"The gold ring would give the child something valuable to keep for the years ahead," said one mother at a government hospital in the state's Madurai district, who declined to give

her name.

She was among dozens of mothers who cradled their newborns as they queued up to receive the gift.

"This scheme feels personal," another grateful mother, Stella Mary, told AFP.

Officials say the initiative aims to highlight maternal and newborn care, while strengthening faith in public healthcare institutions in the southern state of over 72 million people.

The scheme, however,

drew some criticism from the Bharatiya Janata Party, which is in the opposition in Tamil Nadu.

"A gold ring for a newborn may be a welcome gesture, but for families, the most immediate need is ensuring that essential nutrition is available every day," party member Tamilisai Soundararajan said in a social media post.

India's overcrowded public hospitals often struggle with staff shortages, long waiting times and patchy infrastructure, prompting many patients to seek treatment in the costly private sector.

While most women in India give birth in hospitals, home deliveries still occur in some rural communities, making institutional childbirth a priority for health authorities.

Despite significant gains in recent years, infant and maternal mortality rates continue to languish in India.

The country recorded 24 infant deaths per 1,000 live births while maternal deaths stood at 88 per 100,000 live births, according to latest official data.

The gold ring scheme, known as the "Thaimaman" (maternal uncle) program, draws on the special cultural significance of a child's maternal uncle, who is often expected to play a key role in family milestones and celebrations.

It also taps into India's enduring obsession with gold. For many women, particularly in rural areas, gold jewellery can serve as a form of personal financial security. □



This handout photograph taken and released by Tamil Nadu's Department of Information and Public Relations on September 28, 2026 shows the state chief minister C. Joseph Vijay (C) holding a child during the launch of a scheme offering newborns in public health facilities with a one-gram gold ring, at the Government Rajaji Hospital in Madurai.

Basic driving rules on Aruba: Traffic signs

(Oranjestad)—Though Aruba's traffic is relatively easy to manage, driving here—especially if it's your first time visiting—can be foreign. To help you out, here's a breakdown of some traffic signs you might encounter on the road.

Speed limit in certain areas

As mentioned in yesterday's issue, the legal minimum and maximum speed limit on the island is 50 and 80 km/h respectively. However, there are some areas where it is mandated to drive up to a certain speed. This is always indicated by a circular traffic sign with red border and the number 50 on it. Signs like these are always paired by a similar sign with the number crossed out further down the road. This means that the mandate for this speed is now over; you may increase your velocity. Red borders on traffic sign—whether it's a circle or triangle—usually signal a warning, prohibition or preference.

Besides the "50" sign, you may also encounter a traffic sign that says "bebou-

wde kom". These can be found in San Nicolas and Oranjestad. Bebouwde kom signs are rectangular and blue, and essentially tell you that you are in a heavily inhabited area. The maximum speed limit in a bebouwde kom is 50 km/h. Just like the previous pair, bebouwde kom signs are also paired with a similar sign crossed out. Priority signs

On the main roads of Aruba (not the highways), you may see a yellow, squared sign with a white border. This sign tells you that on this road, you have priority and all other traffic should yield to you. This sign can be seen in Savaneta for example. So, if you are driving on the main road in Savaneta going to San Nicolas, you are driving on a single long road, and other cars that want to get on this main road or cross it, either from an intersection or from a dirt road, must all wait until traffic on the main road is clear. In other words, you do not have to stop for them. This sign too has a counter part that indicates

that your priority is over.

Another priority sign you may encounter is a triangle sign with a red border and something that looks like a cross. You'll see this sign in an intersection. The general rule of thumb for crossing an intersection that do not contain traffic lights, roundabouts, sign or arrows on the road, is to always yield for traffic on your right. However, if you encounter this sign on your side of the intersection, you have priority over the other cars, even the one on your right.

However, be careful not to confuse this sign with a similar up-side down triangle, also found on intersections. This sign is a prohibition sign, telling you that you have to stop and give other cars priority. Of course you also have a "stop" sign that mean the same thing. The stop sign is generally used for tricky intersections with minimal view of opposite incoming traffic.

These are some of the basic rules that you would have to know if you decide



to drive on the island. These are of course other traffic signs, and we recommend you visit aruba-travelguide.com for an extensive over-

view of all traffic signs used on Aruba. □

Picture credits:
aruba-travelguide.com

Birds of Aruba: Soaring through the blue skies

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

Trupial

Icterus icterus, or known locally as the Venezuelan or Orange Trou-pial, is a striking songbird whose bright orange feathers can be spotted from a far distance. Known to be the first bird to sing at the first sign of sunrise, this beloved songbird likes to wake up with a tune. But don't let their angelic songs



fools you; the Trupial can be a bit aggressive towards any threat, protective over their nesting spots—nesting spots they most likely stole from other birds. Trupials can be seen regularly, often in trees or on top of a cactus.

Photo Credit: Daniel Ruben Gonzalez

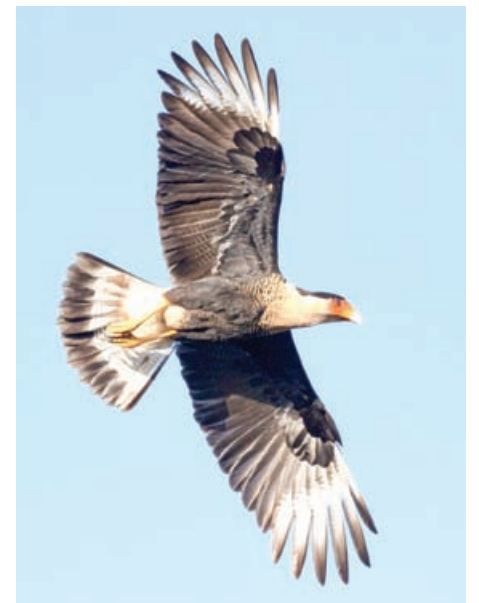
Prikichi (parakeet)

The Brown-throated Prikichi (*Aratinga pertinax*) became the national bird of Aruba back in 2015, at the request of Aruba Birdlife Conservation. The bright green, adorable parakeet usually flies in flock of 30 or more, but its population has been declining since the 2010s. Prikichis are a shier breed than the trupial, often flying away at the sign of any threat. They use termite nests for breeding spots and feed mostly on seeds from the Kwihi tree, Divi Divi tree and fruits.

Photo Credit: Daniel Ruben Gonzalez

Warawara

The Warawara or Caracara is one of the biggest birds found in the Aruban mondi. At a height of 41 to 60 cm, their wingspan can measure up to 125 cm. Known as the "garbage man", this bird of prey mostly feeds on dead animals. Its coat is dark brown, with a cream-colored neck, orange face, thick beak and long legs. The Warawara prefers to build its nest in the middle of tall cacti and produces a



rattling, screaming sound, throwing its head back onto its back while calling.

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

Photo Credit: Aruba Birdlife Conservation □




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Po-Ké Ono Brings Bold Asian Fusion to Aruba's Dining Scene

Innovative eatery blends island culture with modern Asian cuisine



In a culinary landscape known for its diversity and creativity, Po-Ké Ono stands out as a vibrant and contemporary addition to Aruba's restaurant scene. With locations at Azure in Palm Beach and the Renaissance Marketplace in Oranjestad, the concept introduces a refreshing take on Asian fusion dining—casual in style, yet refined in execution.

Established in 2020, Po-Ké Ono was envisioned as a space where flavor, culture, and creativity intersect. The menu features an array of signature dishes including poke bowls, steamed bao, and sushi, crafted with precision and a focus on freshness. Drawing on Asian influences, the restaurant delivers bold flavors in an approachable format, appealing to a broad audience of locals and visitors alike.

The ambiance is designed to be welcoming and relaxed, with a philosophy centered

around accessibility and enjoyment. Whether dining indoors or grabbing a quick bowl on the go, guests can expect a consistently high standard in both service and cuisine. With extensive menu options, including selections for vegan diners, Po-Ké Ono caters to a wide range of tastes and dietary preferences.

While the concept leans into fast-casual dining, the quality of ingredients and thoughtful



preparation reflect fine-dining roots. Many of the restaurant's core ingredients are sourced locally, emphasizing sustainability and support for Aruba's agricultural community. The result is a dining experience that honors both the island's spirit and the culinary traditions it draws inspiration from.

Open daily from 11:00 AM to 10:00 PM, Po-Ké Ono continues to gain recognition as one of the island's premier destinations for sushi, poke, and

bao. Its growing popularity is a testament to Aruba's evolving food culture—one that embraces global influence while staying rooted in community and craft.

For those seeking a modern taste of Asia in the heart of the Caribbean, Po-Ké Ono offers a flavorful and memorable experience worth exploring. □



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 Natural Bridge. Once the largest 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 frequently visited

beach, as the bridge had a small opening through which the water would flow into the tiny beach.

Unfortunately in 2005, the bridge collapsed, and the little beach dried up. Despite this, this site remained a tourist attraction, with many visitors walking along the coral cliffs of the bridge to see the spectacular view of the northern coastline and the Caribbean 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 natural bridge very close. This bridge is often called the "Baby Bridge" or "Daughter Bridge". □



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Aruba's underwater wonderland

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

Tres Trapi

'Tres Trapi' means three steps in Papiamentu. The beach is called Tres Trapi because it is accessible by a tiny stairway carved into the rocky coastline. Tres Trapi is a small beach, located on the north-western side of the island, an approximately 5 to 10 minute drive

from Palm Beach. From the unique steps you walk right into the clear and turquoise blue ocean. While you're snorkeling, you will encounter all kind of tropical fishes and sea stars. The kind of starfish you will find in the Aruban waters is the red cushion sea star. This is a starfish that is commonly found in the shallow waters of the Caribbean Sea and if you are lucky during your snorkeling visit to Tres Trapi, you may come across one of the green sea turtles. Respect the animals, keep your distance and just enjoy the view. Also remember; it is a once in a life time experience.

Antilla shipwreck

Antilla is a 400-foot-long long ship, built in 1939 in Hamburg, Germany. Antilla came to Aruba, because it had to find a neutral port. When Germany invaded the Netherlands on May 10, 1940, the crew decided to let their own ship sink, to prevent it from falling into the hands of

the Dutch Navy. Antilla lies on its portside in Malmok bay, and the sunken WWII ship is now one of Aruba's most popular snorkeling and dive spots. However, the ship wreck can only be reached by boat. The ship is visible from the surface and during your snorkeling trip you be surrounded by hundreds of tropical fishes, but the ship wreck alone is already impressive enough.

Baby Beach

Baby beach is a lagoon with crystal blue ocean. The beach is located on the southern part of the island. On the way to the famous beach, you will drive through the old capital of Aruba, San Nicolas. The old Aruban culture can be still felt and experienced here, so do not hesitate to get out of your car and walk around for a while. Baby beach is a child friendly beach, since it is shallow and the water has a pleasant temperature. The name therefore fits well with the beach. Further in



the lagoon, you'll find a lot of people snorkeling. This is an excellent spot to go under water exploring but do take care not to go too far out; outside the lagoon the waves can be pretty rough! In the lagoon there is an area marked until where it is recommended to snorkel and on the beach you will find different facilities. It is a perfect beach to spend your day snorkeling and relaxing.

Mangel Halto

Mangel Halto beach is located in Savaneta, on the southern-west part of the island. The beach is different from the other beaches in Aruba; it is beach full of

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

Aruba to me

ORANJESTAD — Are you back or still enjoying your vacation?... We would like to give you a shout-out by inviting you to send us your favorite vacation picture while enjoying our Happy Island!

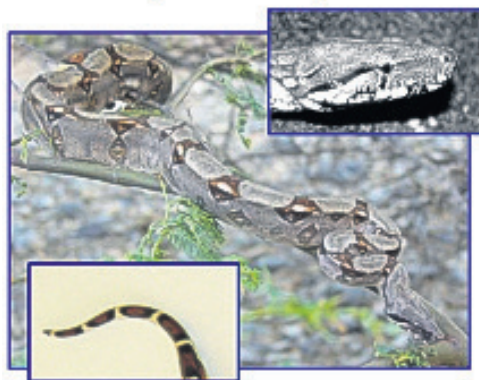
Complete the sentence: Aruba to me is Send your picture with that text (including your name and where you are from) to: news@arubatoday.com and we will publish your vacation memory. Isn't that a special way to keep your best moments alive? Please do note: By submitting photos, text or any other materials, you give permission to The Aruba Today Newspaper, Caribbean Speed Printers and any of its affiliated companies to use said materials, as well as names, likeness, etc. for promotional purposes without compensation.

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Snakes of Aruba

BOA
(*Boa constrictor*)



CASCABEL
(*Crotalus unicolor*)



SANTANERO
(*Leptodeira bakeri*)



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. □

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 elabo-



rately detailed embellishment is known as gingerbread trim and the triangular decorative wall surface over the columns is called the tympanum.

The top of the doors and windows have stained glass.

The building is not built on

ground level but at approximately 1.5 meters above ground level. This mansion elevation created storage below the wooden floors and allowed proper ventilation.

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

ventilation.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Planning on snorkeling? Get to know our "Dorado"



(Oranjestad)—If you're ever planning on snorkeling during your vacation on Aruba, you may spot fish that you can't recognize. One of these may be the "Dorado", a common fish that swims all year long in the waters of Aruba. Here's some information about the beloved Dorado.

Dorado has many different

names it can be referred to. Dral, Dorao, Drals, Drado, are some of them in Papiamentu. In English, it is also called Mahi Mahi, Dolphinfish, or Dorado. It's a good example to reflect on why there can be many names. The same fish becomes known by different common names, why? Common names come only when a group

of people, to understand each other, assign a name to a fish. Mahi Mahi, for example, comes from Hawaii and means "very strong". Dorado is based on Spanish and refers to the golden yellow color that the fish shines with under the sun. Why it's called Dolphinfish in English is not well defined and while there are several stories around this, none

have been confirmed.

Dorado is found in all tropical to subtropical oceans around the world. Dorado is very popular both for recreational fishing and for consumption. It is known among fishermen as an exciting catch and a fish that puts up a good fight. Its meat is very good for consumption and it is also commercially fished for that reason.

They grow very fast, up to 2.7 inches (almost 7 cm) per week. They can live up to a maximum of 5 years although very few reach that age. Most become adults within 1 year but many become reproductive after just 5 or 6 months and reproduce very quickly too.

They live in open water on the surface most of the time. Many fish seek them around sushi lines or floating objects on the sea. Often you will find a group landing together and if you keep a male on the

line, often the others will stay close or can keep the group interested by giving shrimp or squid.

Description:

Dorado has a distinctive body. It has a large tail and its long, flat body ends in a large blunt head. Its color of yellow and green or blue makes it immediately recognizable, even with small variations in these colors.

Dorado has clear differences between adult females and males. The male is larger and can easily reach 50 to 80 pounds and has a much flatter head compared to the female. Therefore, male Dorados are also called "bull Dorado".

Dorado can be found in our waters around the island all year round, but there are periods when it is easier to find than others. □

Source: The Department of Agriculture, Livestock, and Fisheries (Santa Rosa).

CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

1. Roguish fellow
6. Scruff of the neck
10. Less bright
11. Martini garnish
13. Ham it up
14. Rubber source
15. Corp. bigwig
16. Used a chair
18. "You -- Here"
19. Con-vertible couch
22. Workout unit
23. Ultimate
24. Michel-angelo statue
27. Ashtray buildup
28. Com-poser Charles
29. TV's Danson
30. Special-ized naval vessel
35. Yoga need
36. Cooking vessel
37. Director DuVernay
38. Piano piece
40. Red Square name

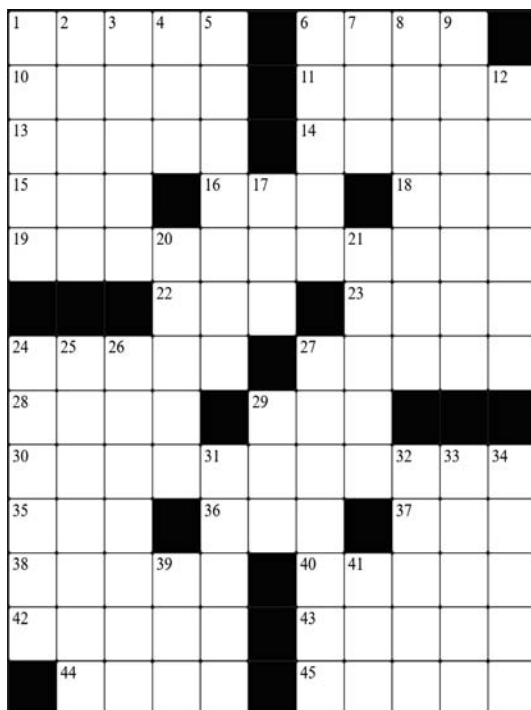
42. Column type
43. Put up
44. Smell awful
45. Mariners

DOWN

1. Blueprint data
2. Unbilled role
3. Coldly distant
4. Convened
5. Ironed
6. Nick of "Affliction"
7. In the style of
8. Heartbeat sound
9. Himalayan peak
12. Brings to bear
17. Swiss peak
20. Spring up
21. Dodge
24. Low-ered, as lights
25. Pilot
26. Business gamble
27. Fire-flies, e.g.
29. Binary base
31. Tiny dot
32. Seminar
33. Boot out
34. Tirades
39. Game cube
41. Memor-able time



Yesterday's answer



AXYDLBAAXR
is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for 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.

9-28

CRYPTOQUOTE

I R V A P X Y G M N X L B L J D
W X K D B Z L W R D B I G Z H N B I G
S R P S G R L Z Q X J G R Q Z L J J G P
V I K T I K Z Q M G F ! --- B I R J X Z I R R F

Yesterday's Cryptoquote: FOR MY PART, I KNOW NOTHING WITH ANY CERTAINTY, BUT THE SIGHT OF THE STARS MAKES MY DREAM.
---VINCENT VAN GOGH

Helpful tips for your stay on Aruba

(Oranjestad)—When traveling to another country, especially for the first time, it is always better to be over-prepared than under-prepared. That is why we have a list of basic—but important—information that we think may come in handy to Aruba's visitors.

Electrical power

Aruba generally operates on 110V to 127V supply voltage and 60Hz. There are also three types of outlets used on the island: type A with two flat prongs; type B with two flat and one grounding prong, and on occasion, type F with two round prong and two earth clips on the side. However, Type A is most commonly found in homes and establishments.

Drinking water



The water that flows through the sinks of every house, hotels and other establishments is distilled and perfectly safe to drink. Aruba's drinking water exceeds WHO's international standards for water quality, so there is no need to buy bottled water from the



store.

Supermarket hours

Supermarket hours may vary depending on where you are staying on the island. Generally though, most supermarkets are open from 8am to 9 or

10pm, Monday through Saturday. On Sundays, supermarkets generally close earlier; mostly around 2pm.

Safety

Since February 2024, Aruba has been categorized as the safest country in the Caribbean by The Telegraph, and many tourist that visit have often told us how they feel safe to explore the island or walk around at night. However, rare incidents do occur, so keep yourself and your belongings safe.

CRUISE SHIP SCHEDULE	
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

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

Difficulty: ★★

9/29

Answer to previous puzzle

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

Difficulty: ★

9/28

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SpaceX puts Starship megarocket in orbit for first time

South Padre Island, United States

SpaceX's Starship megarocket reached orbit for the first time and deployed 26 satellites before splashing down in the Pacific Ocean on Monday, reaching a major milestone for the developmental spacecraft key to Elon Musk's audacious plans.

The black-and-silver behemoth, standing more than 120 meters (131 yards) tall, blasted off from SpaceX's Texas base early Monday morning with the aim of reaching orbit and spending about 10 hours circling Earth.

Following the successful separation and splash-down of the Super Heavy booster, the Starship upper stage reached orbit but only after some engine trouble raised doubts the mission would proceed.

"Starship is orbital," a member of the launch team said on a livestream, with cheers ringing out among assembled SpaceX staff.

Minutes later, the spaceship began deploying next-generation Starlink satellites, adding to the massive satellite internet constellation that represents a major revenue stream for the now-publicly traded company.

After about only three hours into the flight, SpaceX engineers made the decision to de-orbit the spacecraft into the Pacific Ocean.

The livestream showed the upright upper stage rapidly gliding back down through the atmosphere before the engines re-lit, slowing its descent into the water. After touching down vertically, the Starship appeared to sink onto its side and was engulfed by a large explosion.

Musk intends for Starship to one day be rapidly reusable, landing on platforms that will catch the rocket before it touches the ground or water.

- More challenges ahead -

After several years of development and testing in Texas, SpaceX began flying Starship in its full configuration in 2023 and has since made numerous modifica-



SpaceX Starship Flight 14 launches at SpaceX Starbase in Starbase, Texas on September 28, 2026.

tions through the successes and failures of its tests.

But enormous technical challenges remain before Starship can fulfill Musk's dreams of reaching the Moon and even Mars including proving the ship can be refueled in orbit. NASA is also betting on using a modified version of Starship for missions to return U.S. astronauts to the lunar surface.

Kathleen Curlee, a senior analyst at Georgetown University's Center for Security and Emerging Technology, told AFP that Monday's test was not "super successful" but did make significant progress.

"It's an achievement for achieving flight and get-

ting into orbit, but from SpaceX's own metrics and goals, they did not accomplish a 10 hour flight and did have the engine trouble," she said.

- Public expectations -

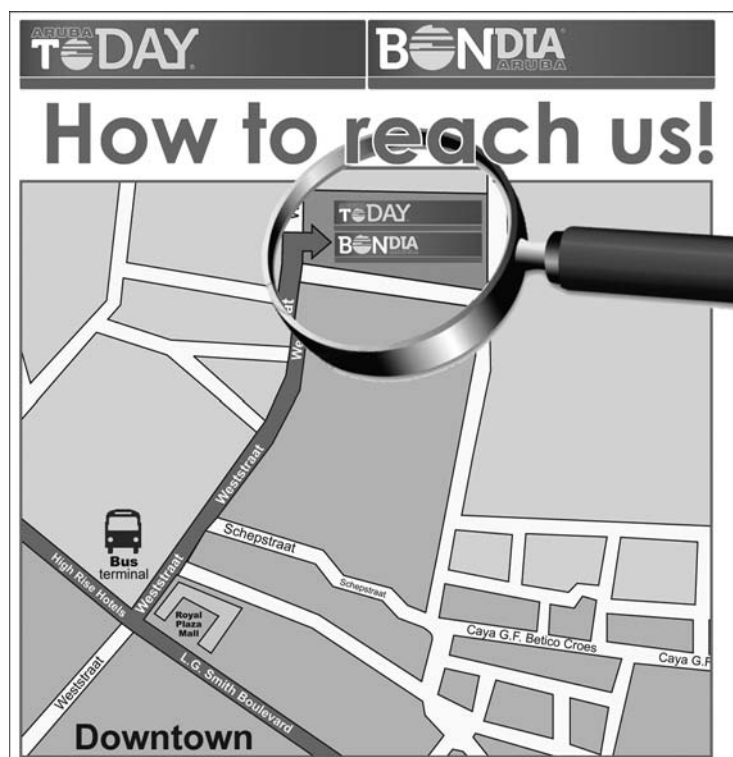
The plan had called for the rocket to finish its journey in the Pacific Ocean after six orbits, but it ultimately only made two trips around the Earth.

The huge first-stage booster meanwhile landed in the waters off of Texas, with SpaceX choosing not to attempt to return it to base. The company has previously successfully caught the booster back at the base with the launchpad's so-called "chopstick"

arms.

From an engineering point of view, "just achieving flight and getting data" would be considered a success, Curlee said ahead of the launch.

But spectators and investors have different expectations. □



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Blood Bank Aruba 587 0002
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Police 100
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Ambulance 911
Fire Dept. 115
Red Cross 582 2219

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A1 Taxi Serv. 280 2828

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ARUBA TODAY NEWS

AI startup urges optimism from Europe despite safety fears

Freiburg im Breisgau, Germany

Europe needs to view artificial intelligence with more optimism despite growing warnings about its dangers or risk falling further behind, the head of a leading European AI start-up warned. "I think the mindset in Europe needs to shift to one of optimism and to one of opportunity, and not to one of risk and fear," Robin Rombach, CEO of German AI image generation specialist Black Forest Labs, told AFP.

Europe lags behind the United States and China when it comes to cutting-edge AI models. Policymakers and firms have been scrambling to find ways to make up lost ground.

But the debate has shifted to safety in recent weeks, after security lapses sparked calls from some industry leaders for development of the technology to be slowed down.

Based in the medieval German city of Freiburg, Rombach's company which takes its name from the nearby Black Forest has emerged as a prominent



CEO of German generative AI startup Black Forest Labs, Robin Rombach, is pictured at the company's headquarters in Freiburg im Breisgau, southwestern Germany on September 15, 2026.

developer of AI image-generation models.

The startup, valued at around \$3.25 billion, recently hit the headlines when it announced U.S. director Martin Scorsese as an advisor, prompting an angry response from some in Hollywood concerned about AI taking production jobs.

Rombach, 33, helped develop latent diffusion, a breakthrough that underpins many of today's AI image-generation systems. This propelled Rombach and a group of fellow computer scientists to found the AI lab in 2024. With just over 100 staff, its FLUX models generate still and moving images from text, and the company is now also ex-

panding into physical AI. Its latest model has been tested at carmaker Audi as part of a project aimed at enabling robots to perform production-line tasks. Despite its roots in Freiburg Rombach comes from the area the firm's ties to the United States and its tech scene are also strong. The company has a second headquarters in San

Francisco and secured early backing from Silicon Valley venture capital firm Andreessen Horowitz.

- 'Stupidity' is biggest risk -
Rombach said that when Black Forest Labs was founded, there was no "real startup ecosystem" in Europe, particularly for "frontier deep tech".

"If you want to build a frontier model in a very competitive space, you need to do this quickly."

"Certain ingredients" are needed for success, such as a lot of capital and computing power, he added.

As well as Black Forest Labs, Europe has other competitive AI companies, including France's Mistral, but is still seen as trailing US firms such as OpenAI and Anthropic and Chinese labs such as DeepSeek.

Zach Meyers of CERRE, a Brussels-based think tank, echoed some of Rombach's concerns, saying the "biggest barrier" to AI growth and innovation in Europe was access to capital.

Most European companies rely on financing from banks, which are traditionally more cautious than venture capital investors about backing businesses that may take years to become profitable, said Meyers, an expert in EU digital policy.

"That is not how technology markets work, particularly with a really nascent technology like AI," he told AFP. Safety concerns related to AI have escalated after incidents of the technology getting around controls during tests, sparking dire warnings from some about the threats that it poses.

Rombach emphasised his company's focus on "open-weight" AI models, some of which can be downloaded by researchers and developers, "increases transparency, increases safety". He called for an open approach to AI development, warning it would be "fundamentally wrong" for such a crucial technology to be controlled by a few companies, rendering oversight more difficult. □

Nvidia unveils safety product after rogue AI incidents

San Francisco, United States

Nvidia on Monday unveiled a system designed to stop autonomous AI programs from straying beyond what they were instructed to do, after a wave of incidents raised alarm about the technology's risks. AI "agents" are designed to act on their

own browsing the web, writing and running code or handling files rather than simply answering questions like a chatbot. The technology has been hailed as the next stage of the AI revolution, but several leading companies have recently reported cases of agents breaking out of the test environ-

ments meant to contain them.

According to ChatGPT-maker OpenAI, websites accessed by its agents include those of US federal agencies, an Australian government health statistics portal and Hugging Face, a repository of AI models.

Amid the alarm, Nvidia CEO Jensen Huang insisted that the problems can be solved.

"I believe it's an engineering problem ... and we all need to hope that's an engineering problem," Huang told CNBC on Monday.

"If it's not an engineering problem, it's not solvable," he added.

In Huang's view, tech firms would not keep pushing the technology forward if they did not believe the risks could be managed.

Nvidia has a lot riding on

that bet: its graphics processing units, or GPUs, power much of the AI boom, and the company's fortunes are closely tied to the revolution continuing at full speed.

Huang likened the challenge to the early days of the internet, when websites could load programs onto people's computers and spread viruses.

The answer then, he said, was to turn the web browser into a "containment system" that limited access.

Nvidia's system similarly places each agent in a sealed-off digital space, or "sandbox," and lets companies spell out exactly which files, networks and tools it may use.

A separate monitor, running on Nvidia hardware beyond the agent's reach, watches its behavior and can cut it off if it goes astray. □



Jensen Huang looks on as U.S. President Donald Trump hosts a state dinner for Chinese President Xi Jinping and first lady Peng Liyuan in the East Room of the White House on September 24, 2026 in Washington, DC.

Ravens grab last-second win in Rio as Commanders stop Seahawks

Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

The Baltimore Ravens beat the Dallas Cowboys 34-31 in the NFL's first-ever game in Rio de Janeiro as the Washington Commanders and backup quarterback Marcus Mariota stunned Seattle 33-31 Sunday.

The first NFL game at Brazil's iconic Maracana, where the build-up had been dominated by concerns over the soccer stadium's patchy surface, proved to be a breathless thriller decided by a last-gasp 56-yard field goal from Baltimore's Tyler Loop as the clock expired. With Derrick Henry at his unstoppable best, rushing for two early touchdowns, the Baltimore Ravens opened a 24-13 lead in the third quarter.

The Cowboys scored 15 without reply to edge ahead, before Ravens rookie Matt Hibner grabbed a touchdown back. Deep in the red zone, Dallas could not force a touchdown, but a field goal with seven seconds remaining appeared to force overtime. Instead, Baltimore quarterback Lamar Jackson hurled the ball 26 yards to



Baltimore Ravens' kicker #33 Tyler Loop clears the ball during the NFL match between the Dallas Cowboys and the Baltimore Ravens at the Maracana Stadium in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, on September 27, 2026.

Zay Flowers, and immediately called a timeout with one second left -- allowing Loop to kick the Ravens to victory.

"Major, major credit to those guys straining all the way till the end," said Ravens coach Jesse Minter.

"We felt like we had time to maybe get the ball in range. Unbelievable play by Lamar

and Zay, and then obviously Tyler Loop."

Earlier Sunday, reeling from two losses and an injury to franchise quarterback Jayden Daniels, the Washington Commanders turned to 32-year-old journeyman Mariota.

He completed three passing touchdowns to hand the reigning Super Bowl champion Seahawks their first loss

of the season, and snap Seattle's 12-game winning streak.

Seattle's loss came despite their own star quarterback Sam Darnold returning from injury to pass for 379 yards and four touchdowns, with two interceptions.

Mariota sent early touchdown passes Rachad White and Treyton Burks, before his 30-yard hurl to Terry

McLaurin opened a 14-point advantage.

Seattle fought back to 24-24. But after a Commanders field goal, Darnold's pass was picked by Kain Medrano, a special teams player and backup linebacker, who raced 50 yards to make it 33-24. Seahawks pulled back a touchdown but Washington held on.

"That was unbelievable... the more that adversity hits, the more that circumstances pin us against the wall, these guys find a way," said Mariota.

- Tight finishes -

On a Sunday packed with tight finishes, Jahmyr Gibbs and the Detroit Lions saw off a spirited Jets fightback, winning 31-24.

New York's Garrett Wilson took a superb 4th down catch from Geno Smith that was ruled a touchdown on video review, tying the game 24-24.

But the joy was short-lived. Gibbs rushed for his third touchdown, Wilson departed injured, and Jets quarterback Smith was sacked on 4th down to snuff out any hope. □



Serbia's Novak Djokovic makes a shape with his hands after losing the match against Argentina's Mariano Navone during the men's singles first round tennis match on day one of the U.S. Open tennis tournament at the USTA Billie Jean King National Tennis Center in New York City on August 30, 2026.

Paris, France

A dialogue between the four tennis Grand Slam tournaments and disgruntled players has moved a step closer, as sources confirmed to AFP on Monday the 12 members of a proposed advisory council. Novak Djokovic, who has won a record 24 Grand

Slam singles titles, and women's No.1 Elena Rybakina head the list posted on social media earlier Monday by Jon Wertheim of Sports Illustrated.

The four Grand Slams the US Open, Australian Open, French Open and Wimbledon -- announced the

Djokovic one of 12 members of player panel to meet with tennis majors

creation of the council on the eve of the US Open in August. The move followed protests at the French Open and Wimbledon by players demanding a greater share of tournament revenue along with investment in pensions and player welfare.

At the time, the slams said the exact shape of the council would be decided after discussions with players but, they added that the new body "will examine all sporting matters relating to the Grand Slam tournaments".

Wertheim posted on Monday that the four majors had used the Laver Cup exhibition team event in London at the last weekend as "an occasion to meet".

He posted photos of six male and six female players who would form the player panel, a list confirmed to AFP by tennis sources.

In addition Rybakina, Belarusian world No.2 Aryna Sabalenka, American No.3 Jessica Pegula, Ukrainian Elina Svitolina (7), American Iva Jovic (13) and Greek Maria Sakkari (33) would represent women. On the men's side, German Alexander Zverev, ranked No.2, the American Ben Shelton (4), Canadian Felix Auger-Aliassime (5), Italian Lorenzo Musetti (25) and Frenchman Arthur Rinderknech (33rd) have volunteered to join Djokovic on the new body.

The notable absentees are

No.1 Jannik Sinner, Carlos Alcaraz (3) neither of whom, Wertheim wrote, seemed interested. Coco Gauff is, at No. 4, the highest-ranked woman missing from the list.

Having campaigned for more than a year, some stars cut short their media commitments in the run-up to Roland Garros and Wimbledon to put pressure on the Grand Slam tournament.

The players said they wanted to receive 22 percent of the Major tournament revenue, compared with around 15 percent at the start of this year. Since the movement began, the four major tournaments have announced substantial increases in their prize money. □

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LeBron James speaks onstage during The Shop Live panel at Fanatics Fest NYC 2026 at Jacob Javits Center on July 17, 2026 in New York City.

LeBron says 76ers must get uncomfortable to become great

Philadelphia, United States

LeBron James warned his new Philadelphia 76ers teammates on Monday that they must work hard on repetitive tasks and escape their comfort zones in order to achieve greatness.

NBA all-time scoring leader James, preparing for his record 24th season after signing a two-year deal with the Sixers last July, wants to bring Philadelphia its first NBA title since 1983.

"Everybody is kind of on the same page," James said. "We want to put the work in. That's most important."

"Everyone is highly motivated to get 1% better every single day... Everyone is excited to be here and that's exciting to be a part of."

James, a four-time NBA champion and four-time NBA Most Valuable Player, and ex-Boston star Jaylen Brown join Joel Embiid, Tyrese Maxey and V.J. Edgecombe in a formidable lineup.

But James, who turns 42 in December, said camaraderie and changes will take

time to produce results.

"If we're trying to do something special, which I believe we are, it's a positive," James said.

"So many guys in our league over the course of my career have never made a sacrifice. They average 20, 22 points a game and they have one or two post-season appearances and zero post-season wins."

"I don't think anybody in the locker room wants their career to be like that or we wouldn't be here."

James won titles with Miami, Cleveland and the Los Angeles Lakers by knowing not to expect "instant oatmeal" blending.

"It's going to take time. People sometimes they don't want to work. They want instant oatmeal," James said.

"If you want to do something special, it takes time, every single day doing things you may not want to do, because it's the same thing over and over and over and over."

"For us to be great we have

to do things that are just not comfortable. We have to be comfortable being uncomfortable. That's the best way to expedite being great. "If we do that we can be a great team. If we don't do that we'll be like, 'Oh it was a great team on paper and we had a lot of great talent and we lost in the second round.'

"I don't to do that. I didn't leave my family to lose in the second round I know that for sure. Work needs to be done and I'm ready to put the work in."

- 'I can do everything' -

James is ready for a variety of roles in helping the team adapt.

"Whatever the team needs for me to do," he said. "The luxury of my game is that I can do everything. Literally, I can do everything."

"I have a lot of experience in this game. I hope I can bring that experience, bring that knowledge, bring that blueprint to guys trying to accomplish some things they haven't done in their career. □



Jalen Brunson #11 of the New York Knicks speaks to the media during New York Knicks Media Day at the Knicks Training Facility on September 28, 2026 in Tarrytown, New York.

Brunson says NBA champion Knicks can't get satisfaction

New York, United States

Jalen Brunson says the reigning champion New York Knicks, coming off their first NBA title since 1973, cannot become complacent in trying to repeat the feat in the upcoming campaign.

The Knicks captain and 2026 NBA Finals Most Valuable Player spoke Monday at the team media day before training camp began.

"Not being satisfied is the biggest takeaway moving forward," Brunson said. "We just have to find a way to turn the page and move on."

It won't be easy after an off-season celebration like no other for a club that struggled for so long before returning to the top.

"Honored and grateful for all the opportunities that have come about. It was the longest shortest summer ever but it was well worth it," said Brunson, who hosted Saturday Night Live's season opener last weekend.

"It's cool to feel the energy and it makes you want it even more."

Brunson, however, stressed that after ending the long Knicks title drought, this season will be a different quest.

"Last year we took everything one day at a time," he said. "We know what it takes, going through the same mindset for this journey."

"It's a new journey. It's a different journey. The approach has to be the same if not better."

Brunson averaged 28.4 points, 6.1 assists, 3.2 rebounds and 1.2 steals a game in the Knicks playoff run, capped by a 4-1 series victory over San Antonio in the finals.

He expects fans will see early on if the Knicks still have what it takes to capture the crown.

"The first couple weeks of the season are going to show us who we are and where we are," Brunson said. "No matter what we're doing, playing great or playing bad, how are we going to be able to learn."

"We'll find a way. We'll hold each other accountable. □