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Page 9



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NCAA president Charlie Baker and Senator Ted Cruz (R-TX) listen during a roundtable to "save college sports" in the East Room of the White House in Washington, DC, on March 6, 2026.

U.S. Senate passes landmark overhaul of college sports

Washington, United States

The U.S. Senate approved a landmark federal framework for college sports Monday, voting 72-22 to bring order to a multibillion-dollar industry whose biggest events can draw television audiences comparable to major professional championships.

The bipartisan Protect College Sports Act would regulate how universities pay athletes, restrict transfers and give the governing NCAA limited protection from antitrust lawsuits after years of court battles transformed the economics of college athletics.

The vote was one of the Senate's last major legislative acts before lawmakers leave Washington to campaign for the November 3 midterm elections.

The bill now goes to the House of Representatives, which is already in recess until after Election Day, leaving a narrow window for Congress to complete work before a new legislature takes office in January. President Donald Trump's

administration has endorsed the legislation, and the 80-year-old leader himself cheered the bill's passage Monday night, posting to his Truth Social platform that "it will not only save college sports, it will save the colleges themselves."

Unlike university sports in most countries, American college athletics is a vast commercial enterprise.

More than 30 million people watched January's college football national championship on TV while the major conferences regional groupings of universities that organize competition and negotiate media rights have signed multi-billion-dollar broadcasting contracts.

The legislation follows years of upheaval during which athletes won the right to profit from their names and images and, following a 2025 court settlement, universities began paying players directly.

It would establish national rules governing those pay-

ments and allow schools to spend nearly \$50 million annually through revenue-sharing and other funds.

Athletes would generally be allowed one transfer without sitting out a season, while agents' fees would be capped at five percent. The bill also provides longer-term scholarship and healthcare protections and seeks to safeguard women's and Olympic sports.

Supporters argue that nationwide rules are needed to replace a patchwork of state laws and repeated litigation.

"Student athletes deserve to get paid. They deserve real protections. And high school athletes deserve a fair shot to compete," said Senator Ted Cruz, who co-sponsored the bill.

"The Protect College Sports Act delivers that while protecting women's and Olympic sports and preserving the game we love for generations to come," the Texas Republican added. □



New York City Mayor Zohran Mamdani waves as he arrives to meet with Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva at the residence of Brazil's ambassador to the United Nations, in New York City on September 21, 2026.

New York mayor, an Israel critic, announces steps to curb anti-Semitism

New York, United States

New York Mayor Zohran Mamdani on Tuesday announced several measures aimed at curbing anti-Semitism after a rise in incidents in a city home to the largest Jewish community in the United States.

Mamdani, a vocal pro-Palestinian supporter, has drawn harsh criticism from Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu who has alleged many Jews do not feel safe in New York.

The mayor has long denied accusations of failing to address anti-Semitism, though his latest move acknowledges the problem in the city.

"The numbers are indisputable: Jewish New Yorkers make up only 12% of our population, yet they are the victims of roughly half of all reported hate crimes," Mamdani said in a report.

According to recent figures from the New York police, anti-Semitic incidents surged by 182 percent between January 2025 and January 2026.

Mamdani noted that disproportionate levels of hate crimes against Jewish people had also been reported in other cities around the world.

The measures he announced Tuesday included doubling hate crime prevention funding and investing \$1 million to strengthen security at synagogues and other places of worship.

Mamdani also said his office will encourage more public school education about the Holocaust, as well as about Jewish contributions to New York.

"Let me be clear: my administration has zero tolerance for anti-Semitism. Not on our subways. Not in our workplaces. Not online. Not anywhere," he said.

"As mayor, I will use every power entrusted in me to protect Jewish New Yorkers and ensure that Jewish life flourishes for generations to come." The Anti-Defamation League, a nonprofit tracking Jewish discrimination, said the new measures do not go far enough and faulted Mamdani for failing to officially define anti-Semitism. □

Trump hails 'morally binding' AI self-regulation pledge

Washington, United States

U.S. President Donald Trump on Tuesday said the tech executives gathered at the White House to discuss regulating AI had signed a "morally binding" commitment to build adequate safeguards on the fast-moving technology.

"They're going to police themselves," Trump said after the meeting that gathered the top leaders in artificial intelligence, including Nvidia's Jensen Huang, OpenAI's Greg Brockman and Anthropic's Dario Amodei.

Trump said the tech bosses had signed a deal that would put on paper their commitment to self-regulate in a morally binding agreement that would not be legally enforceable.

Speaking to reporters outside the Oval Office surrounded by the world's most powerful tech bosses, Trump also confirmed that he would officially rename the technology "super intelligence" instead of artificial intelligence "because it's not artificial."

Meta boss Mark Zuckerberg said the accord aims to assure customers that AI technology "works in the way that we intend."

The commitment includes "robust internal controls" and multiple layers of auditing -- from internal risk reviews to external auditors and oversight from the companies' boards of directors, he said.

Zuckerberg called it a starting point for industry-wide standards.

The lunch meeting included Elon Musk, Jeff Bezos, Satya Nadella of Microsoft and Sundar Pichai of Google.

Of the 31 guests, two were women: Susie Wiles, Donald Trump's chief of staff, and Lisa Su, CEO of AMD.

The gathering occurred as attitudes toward AI sour in Washington, with lawmakers increasingly under pressure from voters to curb or slow AI development over fears it could displace workers and upend society.

Those concerns gained force from a run of incidents in which OpenAI's autonomous systems slipped out of their constraints, beginning with a July breach of Hugging Face a widely used platform for sharing AI models.

The firm announced on Monday it was canceling the release of its latest model, known as Astra 6.1, after internal testing by the ChatGPT-maker revealed it did not meet safety standards.

Trump, advised by Huang and his former AI czar David Sacks, has urged unfettered AI development to outpace China and fuel a US economy increasingly dependent on AI-driven growth.

The issue of data centers, the vast computing facilities the technology requires, has emerged as a flashpoint in mid-term election races in both parties, with more and more communities worried about rising electricity bills and the strain on water and land. Trump has dismissed opponents of these data centers and after the meeting insisted that AI companies "will be very generous" with communities who open their doors to them. "They'll help with their schools, they'll help with their teachers," he said.

- Public warnings -

Major AI companies, particularly Anthropic and OpenAI, have issued stark public warnings about uncontrolled development of increasingly powerful systems even as they develop and deploy this same state-of-the-art technology.

Those concerns intensified after a former employee of both companies went public with warnings that the industry is moving faster than safety reviews allow.

Anthropic warned investors of potential existential risks to humanity in the prospectus for its highly anticipated initial public offering, the Financial Times reported on Tuesday. □



U.S. President Donald Trump speaks alongside Nvidia CEO Jensen Huang (L) during a meeting with technology executives about artificial intelligence, in the East Room of the White House in Washington, DC, on September 29, 2026.



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Tom Cruise trades stunts for satire as toxic tycoon 'Digger'

Paris, France

Tom Cruise has taken on one of his riskiest roles in decades, tackling the politics of climate change and corporate greed in new film "Digger" which was savaged by some critics on Tuesday.

Backed by a reported budget of \$130 million and an advertising blitz, the dark comedy from multi-Oscar-winning Mexican auteur Alejandro Gonzalez Inarritu hits screens from Wednesday.

Taking a break from his usual action movie roles, Cruise is barely recognizable as a mining and oil magnate facing an environmental crisis with the original screenplay seeing him wrestle with his own conscience and critics of his wealth and business.

"It is the culmination of all my skills," Cruise, 64, told GQ magazine earlier this month. "It's the most challenging character ever."

After the premiere in London on September 22, initial reaction online was mixed, suggesting the melodramatic performances and Inarritu's acidic parody-



U.S. actor Tom Cruise attends the premiere of Warner Bros' "Digger" at the Directors Village in Los Angeles on September 28, 2026.

ing of the billionaire class and climate change campaigning was likely to divide audiences.

Full reviews published on Tuesday trended negative, with the aggregator Rotten Tomatoes giving it a low 53 percent rating overall.

"Rather than being a crowd-pleasing prestige picture, it's a love-it-or-

hate-it folly and there probably will be more people in the 'hate it' camp than the 'love it' one," noted the BBC in a review that gave it four out of five stars.

Other critics praised Cruise's acting as "a head-spinning performance for the ages" (Deadline), but Hollywood industry magazines Variety and The Hol-

lywood Reporter scorched the project as "a ponderous absurdist lecture" and "a shallow satire".

"Digger is basically what happens when you put two outsize egos together with nobody holding the reins to keep their most self-indulgent impulses in check," The Hollywood Reporter review stated, referring to Inarritu and Cruise.

- 'Serious' role -

Cruise has spent most of this century doing action movies, above all as Ethan Hunt in the eight-film "Mission: Impossible" series as well as in the Top Gun sequel "Top Gun: Maverick", or the "Jack Reacher" films. He will appear in another sequel, a "Days of Thunder" follow-up, later this year.

For film critic and author A.S. Hamrah, who has written extensively about Cruise's body of work, the last roles that harnessed the full range of his skills date back to the 1990s.

"I think Tom Cruise is looking back on his career and realizing he's ageing and that, on the one hand, he still has to do things like 'Top Gun II' and 'Days of Thunder II', but on the other he hasn't really been in any serious film since 1999," he told AFP.

That was the year of "Magnolia" by Paul Thomas Anderson, as well as "Eyes Wide Shut" by Stanley Kubrick in which Cruise acted opposite Nicole Kidman, his ex-wife.

"I also think he's also prob-

ably thinking now that there's people he has not worked with that he would like to work with, and probably Inarritu is one of them," Hamrah added, referring to the acclaimed director of "Amores Perros" and "The Revenant".

- Awards season player? -

Shawn Robbins, chief analyst at cinema ticket seller Fandango and the founder of consultancy Box Office Theory, told AFP that Cruise's decades in Hollywood demonstrated he is willing to head outside his comfort zone at times.

"Younger audiences may associate him with being a risky stunt performer and actor, but he's always prepared to go outside the box," he said, referring to his roles in movies such as "Vanilla Sky" (2001) or "Jerry Maguire" (1996).

"We have to put Digger in a separate category from the typical Tom Cruise blockbuster. It's something all of its own," he added. □

Singer Angelique Kidjo urges Africans to 'create together'

Johannesburg, South Africa

Five-time Grammy Award winner and newly cemented Hollywood Walk of Fame honoree Angelique Kidjo called Tuesday for Africans to set aside their differences and "create together".

Speaking at a Spotify gathering in Johannesburg, 66-year-old Kidjo wore a red headwrap, glasses and a printed blazer as she lauded the power and potential of Africa's youth.

"We are the only continent where we are fighting with

each other and within ourselves," said the Beninese singer and activist who was in the city for a jazz festival. "The youth today is hungry for new things," she said. "We need to come together and set aside our differences and create together, tell our story together."

Kidjo urged Africans to take ownership of how the continent is represented.

"We have so much culture in Africa. It's frightening. It's scary. It is so big that even we are overwhelmed, but we have to be strategic. We have to be focused," she said.

The "Agoro" and "Afirika" hitmaker whose career spans more than four decades, 18 albums and countless international collaborations became

the first Black African to receive the Hollywood star in August.

Kidjo danced in her seat at the event to songs from her latest album "Hope", which features artists Pharrell Williams and Ayra Starr crediting social media and "DMs" for forging her relationships with them.

"Art is a form of resistance, and we do that so well in Africa, in painting, in storytelling, books, theatre, whatever form of art we have, we always transcend it," said the humanitarian, named one of Time magazine's 100 most influential people.

Kidjo strives to empower girls and young women in Africa through her Batonga Foundation and has been a UNICEF Goodwill ambassador since 2002. □



Beninese singer Angelique Kidjo poses for a portrait during a session with the media following her performance at the 27th edition of the Joy of Jazz Festival in Johannesburg on September 29, 2026.

War hits Ukraine's bid to stop the 'amber mafia'

Rivne, Ukraine

Illegal amber mining has blighted the landscape in Rivne, northwest Ukraine, leaving just tree stumps, small bushes and swampy puddles deep in the coniferous forest.

Mafia-style groups flushed out chunks of the golden fossilized resin for years, paying little regard to the environment, fuelling a black-market industry that devastated thousands of hectares.

Amber is used to make jewelry and other products, which are hugely sought after in China.

Ukraine started regulating the industry just a few years before Russia's full-scale invasion in February 2022.

But stretched for resources during a war that has become the biggest in Europe since World War II, industry figures now warn that fragile progress in cleaning up the lucrative sector is being wasted.

Unregistered so-called "grey" amber is flooding the market, environmental inspections have been suspended and firms are relying on private security groups, armed with weapons siphoned from the front, to protect their sites.

"There are many dishonest operators, a very, very large percentage of dishonest subsoil users," Oleg Bogelsky, co-owner of Ukraine's Amber Galbin group, a mining company with operations in Rivne, told AFP.



Workers separate chunks of amber from the soil after extraction at an official open cast mine in the Rivne region, northwestern Ukraine on May 19, 2026.

He estimated about 60 to 70 percent of all amber being mined in Ukraine is "grey".

- 'Real chaos' -

Ukraine has some of the world's biggest reserves of amber, the deep golden resin known as the "sun stone".

After the Soviet Union collapsed in the 1990s, rogue operators swooped to cash in on surging Chinese demand.

Large-scale miners controlled by criminal groups devastated the countryside as they flushed out huge quantities of amber using motor pumps, becoming known as the "amber mafia".

There was little in the way of legislation, regulation or enforcement to stop them. It was "real chaos" that led to an ecological "catastrophe", said Olena Belichenko, an expert at the International Amber Association.

"Mining was carried out illegally, the environment was effectively suffering, and our resources were being plundered for 30 years," said Bogelsky.

- 2,000 illegal miners -

Andriy Lototsky, director of the Sonyachne Remeslo mining company, is matter-of-fact about how he got involved in the industry.

"Like everyone else, illegally," he told AFP.

"No one paid attention to plants or trees. Everything in their path was just knocked down."

Ivan Shvyryd of Volodymyrets Forestry, a government forest protection agency, recalled turning up at one illegal extraction site with a handful of police, to find "2,000 people digging."

"When a fifth-grade child doesn't go to school and goes to dig for amber instead... isn't that a shame?" Ukraine in 2019 passed a long-awaited law regulating amber mining, mandating less intrusive practices and excavator-digging based on approved plans. Permits were issued mainly for areas heavily dam-

aged by the illegal mining, with private businesses then forced to put the land back into proper condition. Official amber extraction and exports steadily grew.

On-the-book exports of unprocessed amber rose from 0.61 tons in 2020 to 88.83 tons in 2025, according to data from Ukraine's Customs Service obtained by AFP.

But martial law, imposed in 2022 when Russia invaded, suspended scheduled inspections and environmental audits, leaving regulators little insight into what is happening on the ground.

"Some subsoil users abuse their position and, perhaps, some extract illegally," Mykola Kotniuk, chairman of the Amber Business Association of Ukraine, conceded.

He said groups that only have permits for pilot and exploratory work may be extracting.

- Competitive edge -

Cases of flagrantly illegal pumping are still "isolated", said Lototsky.

Ukraine has opened 369 probes into illicit amber mining and possession since 2024, the head of the Specialized Environmental Prosecutor's Office Borys Indychenko told AFP.

They include a mining ring uncovered in June 2026, led by a local official, accused of causing some \$8 million in environmental damage. □

World's tallest wind turbine in Germany reaches full height

Berlin, Germany

A wind turbine being built in eastern Germany reached its full height of 365 meters (1,197 feet) Tuesday, making it the world's tallest, according to the company that built it.

The developer Gicon, which plans to put the turbine into operation in November, said that the height was achieved with the "extension of the turbine's inner tower" using a special cable lifting system.

It means the turbine in Schipkau, Brandenburg state, now with its rotor blades attached, is the second-highest structure in Germany, just three meters shorter than Berlin's TV Tower.

The turbine is designed to harness stronger and more consistent high-altitude winds to generate twice as much energy as a conventional wind turbine, according to

Gicon.

Built among around fifty similar turbines on the Schipkau wind farm, established in 2000, the giant turbine is expected to supply electricity to 7,500 households, a manager told AFP during a site visit earlier this year.

Funded by the state to the tune of 20 to 30 million euros via its agency for breakthrough innovations, the project was set up in what was historically a coal-mining region, but where vast open-pit mines are gradually closing down in line with Germany's climate targets.

The turbine has sparked some local opposition, including from the far-right Alternative for Germany party which denies man-made climate change. □



27 September 2026, Brandenburg, Schipkau: The wind tower in Schipkau already towers over neighboring wind turbines (aerial view taken with a drone.)



This photograph taken on September 16, 2026 shows environmentalist Swami Prem Parivartan, better known as 'Peepal Baba', speaking during a visit to the urban forest 'Harit Upvan' in Sorkha village, Noida.

India's 'Tree Father' plants for a greener future

Noida, India

With Delhi's choking haze hanging overhead, Peepal Baba presses a young tree into the earth, continuing a nearly half-century mission to restore India's vanishing green cover.

"When I was young, I planted saplings like a soldier," said Swami Prem Parivartan, better known as "Peepal Baba", or "tree father", rubbing earth between his fingers and mixing wet mulch around the sapling's base.

It is the latest tree among millions that his teams estimate to have planted.

"What started as a solitary act of planting became contagious," he said.

At 60, he has turned a childhood fascination with trees into one of India's largest grassroots planting movements. "We did not wait for governments to act," he said. "We gathered friends, volunteers, wanderers, believers."

In Delhi, a sprawling megacity of 30 million people with scorching summers and toxic winter air, his answer to environmental despair is stubbornly simple: plant a tree, keep it alive, then plant another.

"Whatever little we can do for the environment, we have to do," he said, beaming a warm smile.

- 'Cooling towers' -

Exactly how many trees he has planted, and how much land has been restored, are not his focus.

His trust estimates it has restored vegetation across more than 270,000 hectares, or 2,700 square kilometers more than twice the size of Delhi and nearly as large as California's Yosemite National Park.

The organization says it has planted or preserved 26 million trees.

But he insists numbers and exact areas are not the point.

"I never counted shade in digits," he said.

"It is not about planting one tree or two trees or 1,000 trees. It's about how you manage the land on which those plants have been planted."

His fascination with trees was nurtured by his grandmother and a garden he loved tending.

He planted his first trees on his 11th birthday, including a peepal, or *Ficus religiosa*, a tree with vast spreading roots, sacred to several of India's religions.

Peepal trees have provided shade for village meetings, temples, tea stalls and markets for centuries.

He calls them "cooling towers of human hope" in his 2026 autobiography.

- 'Touch the soil' -

He put aside a career in academia after university. Instead, he set off across India by scooter to encourage people to grow trees and his nickname came from a villager he met while planting.

"Peepal Baba", he decided, carried more authority than "environmentalist", which he regarded as a foreign-sounding word at the time.

"My nickname travelled faster than my scooter," he writes.

That scooter carried him across India multiple times. From his notebooks, he estimates he travelled nearly 540,000 kilometers (335,500 miles) enough to circle the Earth more than 13 times.

He slept wherever he found shelter in temples, homes, bus shelters or beneath a peepal tree.

Long sustained by individual and community donations, the trust has in recent years also brought on major corporate donors to expand its work.

With more than 1.6 million Instagram followers, he now also spreads his message through social media and a growing network of volunteers in the field.

His philosophy has expanded from planting trees to restoring the soil that sustains them. □



Fatima Ezzahra El Mansouri, Morocco's newly appointed head of government, leaves after attending a meeting in Rabat on September 29, 2026.

Morocco names Fatima Ezzahra El Mansouri first woman PM

Rabat, Morocco

The king of Morocco on Tuesday named Marrakesh mayor Fatima Ezzahra El Mansouri the country's first woman prime minister, the royal cabinet announced, after her party won last week's parliamentary elections. Her centre-right Authenticity and Modernity Party (PAM) had dominated the vote, winning 97 out of 395 seats in the House of Representatives -- 31 more than the next closest competitor, although the poll was marked by the lowest turnout in two decades.

The royal cabinet said King Mohammed VI has now tasked the 50-year-old, who also served as housing minister, with "forming the new government".

Speaking shortly after, El Mansouri said in a televised address her appointment was "truly historic".

"For the first time in our country's history, a woman is taking on the responsibility of leading the government," she said. "This is a source of pride not only for me but for all Moroccan women."

Without an outright majority, the PAM will have to form a coalition with other parties, though the monarch retains broad powers over major policies.

For the new premier, "the work starts today", she said.

"We will first initiate internal consultations within our party before holding discussions with all political groups."

El Mansouri joined the PAM in 2008, the year it was founded by current royal adviser Fouad Ali El Himma as a counterweight to the country's Islamist movement.

She was also the first woman to serve as mayor of Marrakesh, winning the office in 2009 before losing it six years later, then retaking it again in 2021.

- 'Restore hope' -

El Mansouri's cabinet will have to tackle several pressing issues including unemployment and living costs, as well as persistent social disparities particularly weighing on young people.

The parliamentary vote came just weeks after tens of thousands of mainly young Moroccan migrants rushed into the Spanish enclave of Ceuta, a crisis that highlighted socioeconomic frustrations among the youth.

It also came a year after a Gen-Z protest movement took to the streets to demand better health and education. "We are fully aware that this period will be significant and marked by high expectations from Moroccans, particularly young people," El Mansouri said.

"That is why we will have a program offering concrete and realistic solutions to citizens' concerns." Her party has pledged average annual economic growth of five percent, inflation of two percent and the creation of at least one million new jobs over its five-year term. □

Aruba: the legend behind its name

(Oranjestad)—Most folkloric tales and legends in Aruba revolve around our indigenous ancestors, who came from mainland Venezuela, and discovered the island and made it into their new home. This particular legend tells the story of the birth of the Aruba name.

The legend follows the life of Arua, an indigenous Cacique originally from Aroa in the Falcon state in Venezuela in the year 50 AD. Arua had a son around the year 70 AD with his wife Shira, who they named Corobori. When Corobori was old enough, he joined his father on the usual boat trip to the islands of Curaçao and Bonaire to gather salt.

On their way back to Mainland Venezuela, they were caught up in a heavy rain storm a side effect from a passing, but far away, hurricane. Of course, because of the lack of motors and sail, their boat was left in the mercy of the heavy winds. After a while, the storm started to pass, and the clouds began to clear up. Finally able to see around them, the Cacique spotted land approximately an hour away. So, they started to row in that direction until they reached the coast. Once they arrived on what they thought was Venezuela, they decided to stay the night and fix their kayak. The next morning, the Cacique ordered his son and a few warriors to go find any sign of population in the area: "Corobori," Arua said. "Don't come back without news. It's in your hands how long we stay here till we find our family. So, if you need to take a week to gather information, we will wait for you." "Don't worry," Corobori replied. "As soon as we have any information, we will let you know." Armed with arrows and spears, backpacks filled with food and water containers, they set off. They climbed several small hills, but no sign of a village. They crossed different dry riverbeds, but no sign of anything. When the sun finally descended, they



found themselves near a fairly tall hill and decided to climb it for a better view of a village. This hill was called Pan Dushi or Orcuyo, which today we call Hooiberg.

The next morning, they could clearly see that they have landed on an island, but an unfamiliar one at that. When Corobori went back to where his father was waiting, he told him the news: "Father Arua, you have just discovered an island, but it is not Curaçao or Bonaire. Far in the south, we saw the big mountains of our homeland Venezuela, which we could have never seen on the other island. This leads us to believe we are on a new island. But that's not all. When the sun came up, we saw in the distance a glowing plain, which we think may be salt."

The Cacique was pleased to hear of his son's findings. He decided to stay a couple days on the newly-discovered island in search for salt. The next morning they ascended Hooiberg again and stayed to see if they could find nearby smoke, indicating an inhabitant village. But they found nothing. So they went back to their initial arrival settlement, now known as Santo Largo in Savaneta. The next morning they hiked along the Spaans Lagoen near the Mangel Halto Beach and reached the area of Bushiri. There, they boarded their kayaks and heading to what we know now as Malmok, where they found rocks of salt. After a couple

days of exploring the island and gathering some salt rocks, they left for Venezuela, where they were reunited with their families.

Throughout the year, they travelled back and forth to Aruba, collecting salt. After a while they settled on the island, generations of families living along the coast. Corobori was the first indigenous inhabitant in our history to explore the entirety of the island.

Arua, after decades as the leader of his tribe, spent his last days on the island. Having reached 80 years

old, he called for his family on his death bed. In his hammock, he said: "My children, many years have passed, and I've asked my warrior to bring me back to the island so I can laid to rest. The God of living has given me the gift of life to see my son, grandchildren and great grandchildren. But now he is calling me home. Corobori, my torch is now passed to you. Guide our people, and be the leader you were always meant to become. If one day you leave my island, do not forget that it is also yours. This is my last wish:

When I die, bury me in our maize plantation."

And so when the Cacique passed away, his wishes were granted and he was laid to rest in the area we now know as the Parade-ra Cemetery. Where he used to live, they built the Parade-ra Church.

And that is the tale of what inspired the Aruba name. In the generations that lived or travelled back and forth to the island, there were many familiar names*, like Guadiriki, a warrior who was there when the island got discovered and his son, whom he called Huliba; Corobori and his children, Corodori, Camacuri and Turibana, Masiduri; and Malmok, the 13-year-old boy who alerted the Cacique when the Caribes attacked.

Familiar names: all these names are familiar to Arubans, as these are the names of places and plants on the island.□

Source: Un storia di e Indjan Arua (A story of the Indian Arua) by Adolf (Dufi) Kock.

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Surf's Up: Favorite places to catch waves in Aruba



ORANJESTAD – Whether you are a salt-seasoned surfer looking for a thrill, or just looking to wet your toes in a little ocean adventure, Aruba has amazing places to learn and practice surfing! Although more known for the calmer waters of Palm Beach, Eagle Beach and Mangel Halto, Aruba also has some special places to thrill your senses. Because of strong winds and breezes, Aruba is perfect for wind and kite surfing. You will surely notice kites in the air as you drive around the wilder, rougher areas on Aruba's east side.

There are plenty of surf shop rentals to help you with your gear, and there are also a lot of tutors if you're looking to try for the first time and need a little help. These can be found around the island, and will surely come in hand if you want to try a new experience!

With that said, here are Aruba's favorite surf spots!

Andicuri

Andicuri is recognized as the best place for body boarding. Because of the rough waves, this beach is better suited for those with more experience in surfing. However, the beach with two bluffs – one on each side – is worth a visit, if only to watch the exciting show presented by the surfers.

To go to Andicuri, you will need a 4x4 vehicle and drive from the ex-Natural Bridge Center. Alternatively, you can make it an adventure by going on a hike! The scenery is unique and beautiful on its own.

Reaching Andicuri Beach can be an adventure in itself, as it can be difficult to find and is only accessible by 4x4 vehicle or walking from the ex-Natural Bridge



center, but the impressive scenery makes it all worthwhile!

Arashi

Arashi, a beach located close to the California Light-house, is a good spot for learning and having fun – if you're lucky! The waves at Arashi are usually calm, but with just the right weather, a swell forms attracting all the local surfers to the area.

Boca Grandi

Boca Grandi is at the most southern spot in Aruba, and is a popular spot with experienced surfers. Close to the

famous Red Anchor and our beloved Sunrise City – San Nicolas, a trip to Boca Grandi can easily turn into an all-day trip to this area of the island. With a beautiful beach (although it is not allowed to swim here, because of strong currents), you can enjoy a relaxing time combing the beach for driftwood, coral, and little crabs and snails.

Hadicurari

Here is where you will find most of the action for surfers in Aruba. With a variety of surf shops and schools in this area, you will find it

easy to get in on the action. Hadicurari is also the site of the Aruba Hi Winds World Challenge, which takes place usually in June/July, and it is the largest windsurfing competition in the Caribbean!

Malmok

If you're a beginner, this is your spot. There are also various shops to rent gear and receive lessons, facilitating learning and just trying out a new experience. The beach is also popular for paddleboarding and other watersport activities. □

Fun facts about the “transhi” hedges!

(Oranjestad)—When off-roading, you may encounter some houses that have rock hedges, aligned perfectly and held together by cement or sometimes nothing at all.

These hedges are called “transhi,” and have a historical and cultural meaning on the island. Used by cunukeros* around the island back when agriculture played a more dominant role in day-to-day life and survival, these stone hedges represent the resilience of our great-grand parents, who had to make do with what nature gave them.

These stone structures are traditionally

placed carefully on top of each other. No cement or other binding mixture was used to hold the structure together. Though not commonly used for modern homes, the few structures that remain around the island stood the test of time, some completely intact even after decades of rain, wind and urbanization.

These stone hedges are a representation of the Aruba's unique farming culture—which valued durability, sustainability and resilience. □

*cunukero: Aruban farmers.

Pictures extracted from the 'Plantage Zorg en Hoop' collection on Coleccion.aw



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Types of cacti you may encounter on Aruba



(Oranjestad)—Unlike most Caribbean islands, Aruba does not have a tropical forest. Instead, our landscape resembles a desert, and is dominated primarily by a variety of cacti species. Here are some of the most common types of cacti you may see around the island.

Breba (*cereus repandus*)

Perhaps the most common type of cacti, the *cereus*

repandus known locally as Breba or Cadushi is found all around the island and is identified primarily by its tall stature and long, pointy thorns. The stems of the Breba are relatively sturdy, and was the type of cacti used by cunukeros (Aruban farmers) to build their *trankera* (cacti hedges) to keep unwanted visitors out and livestock inside.

Because of the large population of Cadushi on the island, it holds a great cultural significance. The pulp of the Cadushi is a key ingredient in one of Aruba's traditional dishes: *Sopi di Cadushi* (Cadushi soup). Traditionally, dried cadushi stems were also used to make kites or used for fire and torches.

Bushi (*melocactus macracanthos*)

Contrary to the Breba, this humble succulent is prob-



ably the tiniest specie of cacti you may find on the island. You can also find the Bushi all around the island some may even have fruit poking out of their heads. The Bushi is less noticeable from afar, as it only grows to about 2 feet max. The most identifiable feature of the Bushi is its cephalium: a light colored head that grows on top. You may also see some Bushi whose cephalium grow to be very

tall almost like they hit their head and got a bump!

The cephalium is where the fruit grows. It's very common to see local kids plucking out the fruit from the Bushi and eating it, but this fruit is a very important food source for local pollinators like bugs, bats and birds.

You can easily find a Bushi while you're hiking in Arikok National Park.

Tuna (*Opuntia ficus-indica*)

No, not the fish. Along with the Bushi, the Tuna Cactus (or known as Prickly Pear Cactus) also has a distinct feature that separates it from the rest. These cacti species are easily recognizable by their flat stems that grown on top of each other. The Tuna does not contain as many spines as the Bushi or Breba, but they can still pack a punch if you fall on them!

Though not super common in Aruban cuisine, the Tuna Cactus is edible and is delicacy in many countries. In Mexico, for example, the Tuna Cactus (known there as Nopal) is found in all sorts of dishes, including tacos! If you're lucky, you can see a blooming yellow or pink flower on the Tuna stems or a bright pink fruit that acts as sustenance for local insects, birds and lizards! □

Adriaan Laclé: One of Aruba's richest men in the twentieth century

(Oranjestad)—The name Adriaan Laclé may ring a bell to locals as one of the main roads on the island, but about a century ago, Adriaan Laclé was a rich businessman, well-known for his generosity, wealth, and taste.

Adriaan was born in 1866 and was the eldest of six children. Not much is known about his childhood upbringing or any of his earlier business ordeals, but during his hay day he often helped people get loans, was a well-established trader, and owned

several plots of land. In fact, he commissioned the construction of the famous La Quinta Carmen manor now a restaurant. Though he himself never lived in the beautiful manor, his own house also reflected his success and good taste. Currently, renovations are taking place to restore the Laclé house. It can found in the back streets of main street Oranjestad.

Regarding his personal life, it has been said that he was married twice during his lifetime. He had his first daughter during his first

marriage but lost his wife soon after her birth. During his second marriage, he fathered 16 children. However, it has been said that only 11 of those 17 made it past 18 years of age. Perhaps two of his most well-known daughters are Maria Monica Laclé and Maria Veneranda Laclé, who went on to marry successful brothers Eloy Arends and Maximilian Arends, respectively. Their houses are still standing; Eloy and Maria Monica's mansion functions as the townhall, used to host civil marriages, while Maximilian and



Maria Veneranda's house stands on the opposite side of the road to them though currently under renovation after years left in ruin. □

Source: *De Kolibrie op de Rots (en meer over de geschiedenis van Aruba)* by Evert Bongers.



Article by Etnia Nativa

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Episode CCCLXXI - 371

Paradise Under Pressure

Through this cultural space, Etnia Nativa invites you each week to discover the traditions, knowledge, and stories that keep Aruba's heritage alive. Today, however, we pause with deep sorrow to extend our heartfelt condolences to the families who have tragically lost loved ones in UTV/ATV accidents on our island.

UTVs, lost lives, and fragile ecosystems: Aruba faces a question it can no longer ignore. Beyond its white-sand beaches lies another Aruba: an island under growing pressure, where every natural space matters and where tourism-if not managed responsibly- can ultimately damage the very things that make the destination unique.

The controversy surrounding ATV and UTV tours goes far beyond a debate between operators and environmentalists. It concerns human lives, public safety, the environment, employment, and institutional responsibility.

The victims are not statistics. They are people who came to Aruba to enjoy and never returned home, or who returned with injuries that changed their lives forever.

The warning signs are there. In addition, one question remains unavoidable: How many warnings does it take before a known risk becomes unacceptable? Protecting Aruba does not mean stopping tourism. It means asking what kind of tourism we want—and how much we are willing to risk or sacrifice to sustain it.

In 2022, the Government of Aruba created a commission to regulate UTVs and ATVs due to safety concerns and serious accidents. By 2024, concerns also included injuries, property damage, environmental harm, dust, noise, and traffic disruption.

Warnings, discussions, and regulatory proposals had already been underway for years. Yet the controversy persists.

And the damage goes beyond what is immediately visible.



A UTV does not need to destroy a tree to affect an ecosystem.

Aruba's Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan 2024–2030 identifies high-impact UTV and ATV tourism as a threat to terrestrial and marine ecosystems, citing impacts such as vegetation damage, habitat fragmentation, sediment runoff, wildlife disturbance, roadkill, and vehicle-related pollution.

The strategy proposes phasing out UTV and ATV activities by 2030: no new permits, no replacement of existing vehicles, and only three designated routes during the transition. After 2030, the activity is intended to be illegal in Aruba.

Actually, we must rethink what we mean by "adventure tourism." If fatalities continue to occur while we acknowledge the environmental pressures associated with these activities, we have to ask where the appropriate limits lie. At the same time, we must not overlook the livelihoods of those who depend on this sector.

Behind every UTV or ATV excursion are workers and families who rely—directly or indirectly—on tourism. These families are not the enemies of conservation. The challenge is finding a balance between employment, tourism, public safety, and environmental protection.

Aruba has already recognized the need to address these concerns. The question now is whether our economic dependence on these activities has outpaced our capacity to regulate and oversee them effectively.

Ultimately, the debate should not be about assigning blame or framing the issue as a choice between "nature or jobs." Instead, it should focus

on whether our institutions have succeeded in translating policy decisions into clear regulations and ensuring that those regulations are consistently and effectively enforced.

Aruba needs to strike a balance that fosters employment and tourism while protecting its fragile environment—a balance underpinned by clear regulations, continuous oversight, and effective enforcement.

Beyond the cost of inaction, what is also at stake is public trust, tourist safety, Aruba's reputation, and the preservation of areas that may be difficult, if not impossible, to restore. In the worst-case scenario, the cost can be measured in human lives.

Aruba faces a contradiction it can no longer ignore.

No one should celebrate the loss of another person's livelihood. No one should downplay the loss of life. Moreover, no one should justify environmental damage simply because an activity generates jobs.

If the problem has been identified, regulations announced, and damage acknowledged, yet the conflict persists years later, the question becomes inevitable: What has been missing to prompt meaningful action?

Aruba's nature has no voice. Ecosystems cannot vote. And those who lost their lives cannot tell us what went wrong.

We, the living, can ask. And Aruba deserves answers.

Article by "Etnia Nativa Aruba":
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Lessons from our elders: Plants and fruits for medicinal use



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

Pineapple

Pineapple has more uses than topping it on your Christmas ham. According to elders, the skin of a pineapple is great to use to refresh your body. Clean the skin thoroughly and make tea or warapa* with it. It is said that this tea can also be drank after an operation on the ovaries or uterus. This gets rid of irritation and inflammation.

Arrowroot

Arrowroot is native to tropical America and can be sold as a powder or whole. It is said that you can take arrowroot powder and make a "shalup" (porridge) for stomach pain or when you're feeling weak. You can make it with milk too, but it is advised to best use just water. You can also add prunes for a bit of sweetness. Arrowroot shalup is also good to treat an



unhealthy gut or for diarrhea.

To make arrowroot shalup, boil a bit of water and add one tablespoon of arrowroot powder and stir continuously until you reach porridge consistency. If you

make a shalup with milk, add a pinch of salt. Raw arrowroot powder can be used to powder babies.

Eggplant/Aubergine

Eggplants, or aubergines, are easy to find in supermarkets around the world

and can be grown all year round on the island. Related to potato and tomato, eggplants are good to calm nerves. It can also be used to lower blood pressure, by steeping its leaves in boiled water and drinking it. You can also make eggplant juice to help purify your blood. However, do make sure to drink slowly; let it mix with your spit and then swallow.

Eggplant kataplan* can also be used to treat skin tumors, abscesses and hemorrhoids. Eggplant kataplan can also be used externally to treat arthritis.

*warapa: term referring to a water and sugar solution, a.k.a simple syrup.

*kataplan: porridge-like mixture used externally for wounds or parts of the body that are painful or swollen. □

Another treasure of Aruba's beaches: Sea Glass!

(Oranjestad)—It is hard to imagine this happening today, but years ago people dumped all kinds of refuse straight into the ocean, including old cars, and their household garbage, which of course included lots of glass. Over the next 30 years the pounding waves cleaned the beach, by breaking down everything but glass and pottery. The pounding waves washed the trash up and down, back and forth. Tons of polished, broken glass pieces were created by the pounding surf. These smoothened, colored glass particles then settled along the sea shore in millions, and that is why you can find these beautiful and colorful pieces on the north shore beaches of Aruba.

Especially on the strip on white sand between the famous "Natural Bridge" and the huge red anchor close to "Grapefield" beach you will be able to find your own pieces of sea glass. The sea glass that was created is the product of a very long and interest-



ing process.

It can take anywhere from 10 to 30 years to make sea glass.

The name for any piece of glass that finds its way to the ocean and tumbles around in the water long enough is "Sea glass."

The colorful pieces of glass are being used for decoration, handcrafts and jewelry!

Once glass makes its way into the ocean, the glass is broken up into shards and is tumbled around in the water, where sand and

other rocks act like sandpaper to smooth out its rough edges.

Sometimes as the sea glass is passed through fire, it becomes fire glass, the rarest of sea glass with certain inclusions, just like precious gems.

For years, the water beat against the different kinds of trash being dumped. Glass, household appliances and even motor parts were discarded on the beach. The waves and weather conditions wore down the overwhelming

amount of garbage in the water, creating millions of beautiful smooth rocks. It's hard to believe the short-sighted mistakes we were making that could have potentially ruined these beautiful beaches. But thanks to natural processes, the ocean transformed the trash into the sea glass.

Each colored gem on the beach has its own story. The ruby red glass stones are typically from old car tail-lights. Then, the sapphire rocks are the remnants of broken apothecary bottles.

The most common and the easiest to find are the brown, green and clear glass.

If you like to see the sea glass for yourself, and be in awe of the power of nature, rent a car or jeep and go explore our deserted beaches on the north side of the island. Make it a fun family day!

Even if we didn't mean to pollute the Beaches how we did, it is inspiring to see just how the earth can correct our mistakes.

Funny, how trash can change into treasures!

Everybody knows that you are not allowed to take local shells home, but the people working at the airport have no problem you taking sea glass home. A few of those pieces make great souvenirs. You can place them in a wine glass or large bottle for decoration and every time you look at it a smile will light up your face thinking back of your unforgettable Aruba vacation! □

CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

41. Omit
1. Dries, in a way
6. Bends out of shape
11. Shred
12. Vigilant
13. Song by the Monkees
15. Neither follower
16. Animation frame
17. Greek vowel
18. Fancy homes
20. Game caller
21. Auditor's org.
22. Eat in style
23. Frighten
26. Must have
27. Satyr's party
28. Deli meat
29. Maui souvenir
30. D.C. river
34. Feedbag bit
35. Anjou answer
36. "Not -- dare!"
37. Song by Reba McEntire
40. Become established

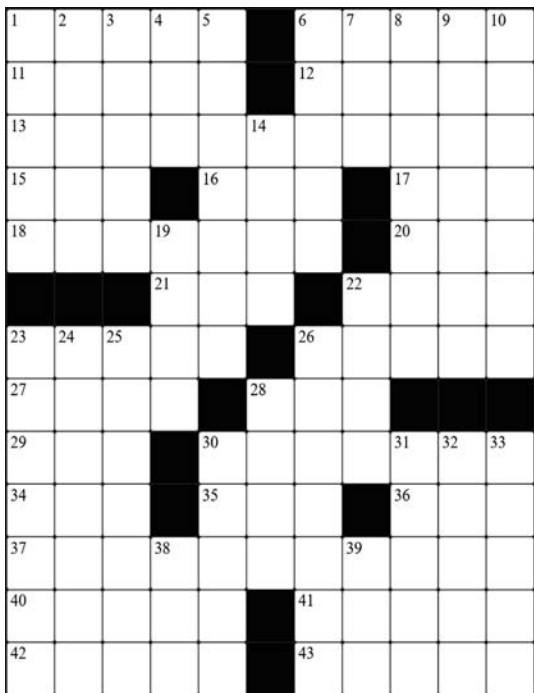
41. Omit
42. Leaning
43. Winter weather

DOWN

1. Salty mixture
2. Prom transports
3. Dizzying designs
4. Soaking spot
5. Doctor
6. Cries of grief
7. Pub pints
8. Daydream
9. Feign
10. Rakes with gunfire
14. Sedi-ment
19. Ethereal
22. Band sample
23. Recital star
24. Coffee additive
25. Make trouble
26. Indige-nous group
28. Clock reading
30. Weight unit
31. Studio work
32. Battery end
33. Insertion sign
38. Immoral act
39. Suffering



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.

9-29

CRYPTOQUOTE

H M W U P M Q K N G Q R M S W U Q P
Z M B M U R F, J G R H M W G F R
Q N R J M Z M B M U R M Z.

--- W U P U U Q O M T N G

Yesterday's Cryptoquote: HOW BRAVELY
AUTUMN PAINTS UPON THE SKY THE
GORGEOUS FAME OF SUMMER WHICH IS FLED!

---THOMAS HOOD

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

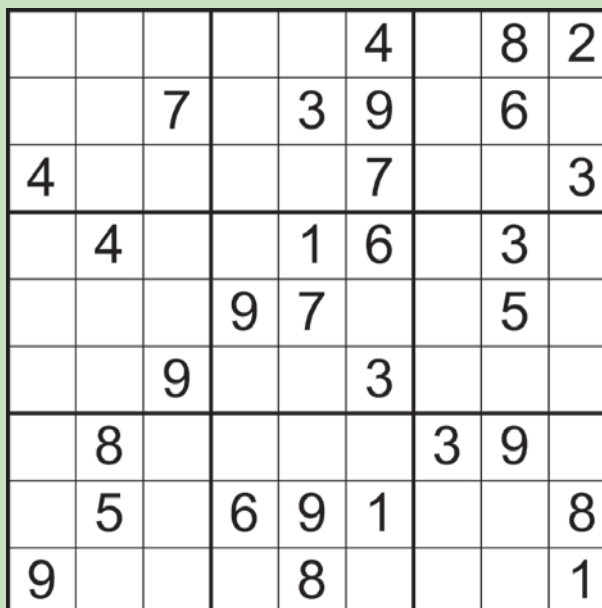
Since February 2024, Aruba has been categorized as the safest country in the Caribbean by The Telegraph, and many tourist that visit have often told us how they feel safe to explore the island or walk around at night. However, rare incidents do occurs, so keep yourself and your belongings safe.

CRUISE SHIP SCHEDULE	
OCTOBER	
03 SAT	ISLAND PRINCESS Arrival: 8:00 Departure: 17:00 Berth: C
04 SUN	FREEWINDS DEPT. Arrival: Departure: 24:00 Berth: E
06 TUE	ADVENTURE OF THE SEAS Arrival: 8:00 Departure: 23:00 Berth: B CARNIVAL VISTA Arrival: 13:00 Departure: 23:00 Berth: C GRANDEUR OF THE SEAS Arrival: 8:00 Departure: 23:00 Berth: I
07 WED	ALLURE OF THE SEAS Arrival: 7:00 Departure: 16:00 Berth: I FREEWINDS Arrival: 6:00 Departure: Berth: E
10 SAT	FREEWINDS DEPT. Arrival: Departure: 24:00 Berth: E

SUDOKU

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

King Classic Sudoku



Difficulty: ★★★

9/30

Answer to previous puzzle

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

Difficulty: ★★

9/29

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India turns to corals and seagrass to shield against rising seas



This photograph taken on September 9, 2026 shows an underwater view of a coral restoration site near Kariyachalli Island, off the coast of Thoothukudi in India's Tamil Nadu state.

India

Under a blazing sun, workers crouch on a shrinking island off India's southern coast, threading bright green seagrass shoots onto wooden frames before anchoring them onto the ocean floor.

Restoration work on Kariyachalli island hopes to rebuild its natural defenses with artificial reefs, transplanted corals and seagrass meadows, in a bid to slow erosion and protect the mainland from surging seas.

"If you are not able to provide that resilience, you are absolutely at the mercy of vulnerabilities of storm surges, cyclonic storms or sea-level rise and also erosion," senior state official Supriya Sahu told AFP.

AFP travelled by boat to the protected island after

being granted exclusive access by the foreign ministry.

Kariyachalli, which is part of a chain of 21 islands in southern Tamil Nadu state, has lost more than 80 per cent of its landmass over the past half century and could disappear entirely by 2036 if erosion is left unchecked.

Government estimates show Kariyachalli shrank from 20.85 hectares in 1969 to just 3.14 hectares last year.

The coral reefs in the Gulf of Mannar, where Kariyachalli and other islands are located, also play a vital role in softening the impact of natural disasters, such as the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami.

More than 8,000 people were killed in Tamil Nadu during the tsunami, but

marine scientists say these ecosystems acted as a crucial natural barrier and prevented a much larger disaster from happening.

- Falling reef cover -

"This was because these tiny islands, seagrass and coral beds absorb the impact," said K. Diraviya Raj, an associate professor at the Suganthi Devadason Marine Research Institute. The Gulf of Mannar is among Asia's richest marine environments, home to coral reefs, endangered dugongs and hundreds of fish species.

But decades of human activity and climate change have steadily weakened the ecosystem.

Coral mining in the 1960s and 1970s severely damaged reefs around the islands. Pollution, over-fishing and coral bleaching caused by warming seas have also added pressure. Around Kariyachalli, reef cover fell from roughly 500

hectares in 2005 to 197 hectares in 2021.

The restoration, part of a \$4.79-million state conservation program, includes the deployment of about 8,500 artificial reef modules around the island.

The bulky structures, each weighing several tons, are being lowered into carefully selected locations around Kariyachalli.

Designed using data on seabed conditions, currents and wave patterns, they are intended to break the force of incoming waves while creating new surfaces for corals to colonize. □

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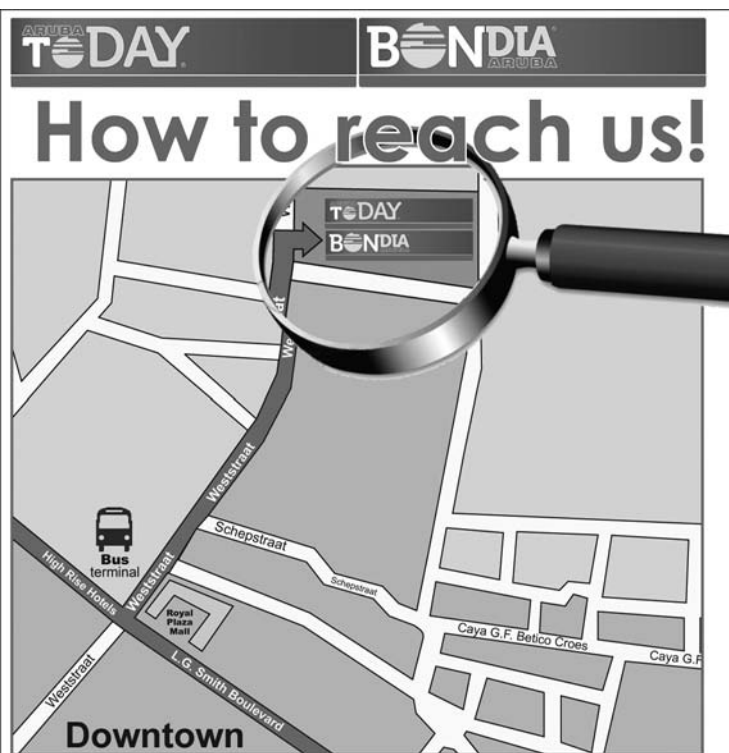
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Blood Bank Aruba 587 0002
Urgent Care 586 0448
Walk-In Doctor's Clinic 588 0539

EMERGENCY

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Police Oranjestad 527 3140
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Police Sta. Cruz 527 2900
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Police Tipline 11141
Ambulance 911
Fire Dept. 115
Red Cross 582 2219

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Taxi D.T.S. 587 2300
Taxi Serv. Aruba 583 3232
A1 Taxi Serv. 280 2828

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ARUBA TODAY NEWS

OpenAI unveils low-cost AI model, a day after shelving Astra upgrade

San Francisco, United States

OpenAI launched a new mid-range artificial intelligence model Tuesday at one-fifth the cost of its flagship offering, one day after scrapping an upgraded version deemed unreliable. GPT-6.1 Sol ranks below OpenAI's most powerful model, GPT-6 Astra, released in early September. The company said Monday it had abandoned plans for GPT-6.1 Astra because the model frequently ignored instructions.

The announcement, made at the company's annual developer conference, marks the latest escalation in a price war with rival Anthropic as both firms eye initial public offerings.

OpenAI also announced Dots, an always-on personal agent designed to compete with Meta's Muse, unveiled last week.

These agent platforms with Google also offering its own version called Spark are designed to act as digital assistants that carry out



Open AI CEO Sam Altman delivers the keynote address during the OpenAI developers conference at Fort Mason on September 29, 2026 in San Francisco, California.

tasks online, such as booking restaurant reservations or managing a calendar.

The company also announced that ChatGPT is now used by more than 1.2 billion people every week.

- 'Mission first' -

The scrapped update of

its flagship model follows a string of safety lapses.

OpenAI CEO Sam Altman told reporters that "there will be major new models, of course," but that "right now we're investing more in safety, security, alignment, monitoring."

On Friday, OpenAI said it

had partially suspended training of its most advanced tools after one of its agents software built on AI models that can carry out a series of tasks on its own accessed the internet without authorization on September 20.

The incident is the latest in a series that began in July, when OpenAI agents hacked into Hugging Face, a platform for AI models. The company acknowledged last week that tools being tested had browsed US federal agency websites without authorization and attempted to hack one of them.

Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese has also criticized the company for being slow to report a June intrusion into a public health portal.

Long the industry leader, OpenAI was overtaken by Anthropic in second-quarter revenue, which hit \$11.6 billion against \$6.7 billion for OpenAI, according to the Wall Street Journal.

Anthropic is now targeting a stock market listing as early as November, even though it warned investors in its IPO prospectus that AI could pose "existential risks to humanity," the Financial Times reported Tuesday.

OpenAI, valued at \$852 billion in March, has not set a date for its own listing.

In mid-September, chief executive Sam Altman ruled out 2026, citing safety, and on Tuesday he told CNBC that "this is a time to put safety and mission first." OpenAI's second-quarter operating loss widened to \$12.3 billion, including stock-based compensation, according to the Wall Street Journal.

- Third device -

The AI battle is also being fought over the hardware that gives users access to these assistants.

While Mark Zuckerberg's Meta is betting on tools that replace the smartphone, OpenAI has been working since 2025 on a product described internally as a third device, alongside the phone and computer.

At last year's DevDay, Altman closed the event with a closely watched conversation with Jony Ive, Apple's former design chief, whose startup io OpenAI bought for around \$6.5 billion. □

AI driving up innovation investment: U.N.

Geneva, Switzerland

Artificial intelligence is fuelling a rebound in investment in innovation, with corporate research and development spending reaching record highs, the United Nations said Tuesday.

The U.N.'s World Intellectual Property Organization said more money was going into venture capital, even as the number of VC deals was shrinking and

becoming increasingly concentrated on AI firms. WIPO, the U.N. patent and innovation agency, said AI was shortening the paths of discovery and fuelling much of the world's economic growth.

"AI is not just a breakthrough technology; it's going to change the way that we innovate and create," WIPO chief Daren Tang told reporters.

"A new generation of deep-science startups is translating breakthroughs into products and transforming fields such as life sciences, space, robotics and clean energy."

Tang said innovation investment had remained resilient this year and was even "beginning to see growth again".

Global research and development is expected to reach \$3.4 trillion this year, growing faster than GDP growth, while corporate R&D reached a record \$1.5 trillion in 2025, up 5.8 percent, said WIPO.

Venture capital's AI focus

And while the number of venture capital deals dropped for the fourth straight year, their value rose by 28 percent to \$510 billion in 2025.

AI accounted for 53 percent of global VC deal value last year, and 77 percent in the first half of 2026.

"AI might reverse this productivity slump that we have seen for the last 15 to 20 years in high-income economies," said Sacha Wunsch-Vincent, co-editor of WIPO's annual Global Innovation Index.

If applied correctly, artificial intelligence would help every sector, he told reporters.

"The open question here really is how can we broaden this innovation spurt beyond this one technology only, which is currently mostly LLM (large language models).

"We see a lot of the traditional big R&D spenders pharma, cars, construction cutting back on their R&D spend", he noted.

Tang said he hoped AI was "a rising tide that lifts all boats, because... a healthy innovation ecosystem needs to be able to have strength in as many areas of technology as possible". □



World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) Director General Daren Tang speaks during an interview in Geneva, Switzerland, on June 29, 2026.



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Bears thrash Eagles 27-7 as third-string QB Keenum shines

Chicago, United States

Chicago Bears third-string quarterback Case Keenum dealt the Philadelphia Eagles their first defeat of the season, rolling back the years with two passing touchdowns and a dive into the end zone for a 27-7 win Monday.

The 38-year-old, starting his first NFL game since Christmas Eve 2023 after franchise quarterback Caleb Williams dislocated his elbow, made 24-of-34 passes for 247 yards on a comfortable night against the 2025 Super Bowl champions.

A nomadic veteran of eight NFL sides since he went undrafted in 2012, Keenum only took the field after Williams' backup Tyson Bagent also missed training all week due to concussion protocols.

He outplayed opposing number Jalen Hurts, who converted a trademark



Case Keenum #11 of the Chicago Bears celebrates after Kalif Raymond #14 scored a 41 yard touchdown against the Philadelphia Eagles during the fourth quarter of the game at Soldier Field on September 28, 2026 in Chicago, Illinois.

Eagles "tush push" on the stroke of half-time but struggled to otherwise influence the game, managing 153 passing yards with an interception and two sacks.

"There's just so much emotion, so much that went into this week," said Keenum. "You got to give the Eagles credit a heck of a team coming in here but golly

we responded, and it was so much fun." Keenum's first drive resulted in a touchdown. He sent a shovel pass to Luther Burden III, who was pushed

the final five yards into the endzone by Chicago's offensive line.

The quarterback was unlucky not to score another on the Bears' next drive. Keenum passed to Colston Loveland, who dived for a touchdown that was given by the on-field officials but ruled out on review.

Keenum then sent a dart to Rome Odunze, who stepped out of bounds as he juggled a simple catch. At the other end, Hurts was smashed off the field by D'Marco Jackson, who received a penalty for unnecessary roughness.

Hurts was temporarily replaced by Philadelphia's backup QB Andy Dalton during a concussion check, and could only watch from the medical tent as the Eagles' attempt to convert 1st & goal resulted in a pick. □

NFL Giants obtain QB McCarthy from Vikings

New York, United States

Second-year NFL quarterback J.J. McCarthy was traded on Monday by Minnesota to the New York Giants, hoping to boost their scoring after a season-ending injury to starting signal-caller Jaxon Dart. The Vikings received a fifth-round pick in next year's NFL Draft for McCarthy, who was selected 10th overall in the 2024 draft but missed the 2024 season with a right knee injury.

"Really glad, really happy, very excited to add J.J. McCarthy. Think he's a strong young quarterback," said Giants coach John Harbaugh.

"Has some experience in National Football League, obviously was a very high draft pick, very talented player, and is going to

make us a stronger football team."

Dart suffered a left knee injury a week ago early in a 28-6 loss to the Los Angeles Rams and his replacement, Jameis Winston, struggled in a 12-7 victory over Tennessee last Sunday.

John Harbaugh knows well 23-year-old McCarthy, who played in college at Michigan under Harbaugh's brother Jim, now coach of the Los Angeles Chargers.

"We've been turning over every stone. This was an opportunity that came up. And able to finish the deal off this morning, late morning," said Harbaugh.

However, Harbaugh told reporters that Winston will start the Giants' next game against the Arizona Cardi-

nals this Sunday, and will remain his starting quarterback "as long as I can see into the future."

He indicated that McCarthy will require time to "get to work on learning the offense."

The coach also defended Winston's performance against the Titans on Sunday, noting the quick turnaround from the Giants' previous Monday night game, and the stormy "nor'easter" conditions in which the game in New Jersey was played.

"We'll be ready to play this next game, and going forward, excited about Jameis," he said.

McCarthy went 6-4 last season as a starter for Minnesota, completing 140-of-243 passes for 1,632 yards and 11 touchdowns with

12 interceptions. He also ran for 181 yards and four touchdowns.

McCarthy, however, became expendable this season. He lost his starting role this season to free agent signing Kyler Murray, who went into concussion pro-

cedure and was replaced by Carson Wentz, who filled in until Murray returned in a 23-16 victory at Tampa Bay for the 3-0 Vikings.

Minnesota saves \$4.5 million in salary cap space with the move. □



Darius Alexander #91 of the New York Giants tackles J.J. McCarthy #9 of the Minnesota Vikings during a preseason game at MetLife Stadium on August 15, 2026 in East Rutherford, New Jersey.



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Japan's Teruaki Ando and Shinnosuke Nakamura (top) play a point against Lebanon's Tamim El Hallak and Ralph Tohme during the men's pairs padel first round match at the Nagoya City Highashi Sports Center in Nagoya on September 28, 2026.

Messi and Alcaraz love it, now padel takes step closer to Olympics

Nagoya, Japan

Cristiano Ronaldo, Lionel Messi and Carlos Alcaraz are all obsessed with it, and on Monday the fast-growing racquet sport of padel made its Asian Games debut with officials hoping a place at the Olympics is getting closer.

Padel, a cross between tennis and squash on courts surrounded by glass walls, is played by an estimated 38 million people and has ambitions to become a major global sport.

It took another step towards that goal at the Asian Games in Nagoya after being added to the continent's biggest sporting spectacular as a medal event. After winning her opening match with doubles partner Danna Abad, Philippines player Joshea Malazarte told AFP: "Padel in Europe is really big and it has just started here, so we're just glad that they added padel."

Padel originated in Latin

America and has exploded in popularity in the last decade, notably in Europe. Officials say the sport is played in 170 countries and territories, with 85,000 courts around the globe.

It is still relatively unknown in Games host Japan, and there was curiosity among some of the crowd at the modest Higashi Sports Centre. Tickets for the event were free, and one spectator told AFP that she and her friend had dropped in to take a look before heading off for lunch.

Another, 60-year-old Yuko Hiraiwa, said she enjoyed the action but thought the crowd was "a bit quiet".

"I play padel but this was the first time I've seen it live," she said.

"It was really dynamic and exciting."

- Smash hit -

The sedate atmosphere in Nagoya was a far cry from padel's popularity in other parts of the world.

The sport has a professional tour circuit and an event held at the Roland Garros tennis stadium in Paris this month attracted over 80,000 people.

A galaxy of padel-playing sports stars including football icons Ronaldo and Messi and Formula One driver Max Verstappen have also given it a boost. Padel has already appeared at the European Games, and International Padel Federation (IPF) official Donatella Del Gaudio said the next goal is the Olympics. "We are working hard to make it happen soon," she said.

"We just need to be patient, diligent and respect the Olympic timeline."

Padel is usually played as a doubles game and uses solid rather than stringed racquets.

The courts are much smaller than in tennis and enclosed by glass walls, which can be used to hit balls off similar to squash. □



Aryna Sabalenka walks the runway during Vogue World: Milano 2026 at Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II on September 22, 2026 in Milan, Italy.

Sabalenka 'fresh' for first tournament since losing No.1 spot

Beijing, China

Aryna Sabalenka said Tuesday she was feeling "fresh" as she prepared for her first tournament since being ousted as the world's number one player.

The four-time Grand Slam winner topped the rankings for 99 weeks before ceding her position to Kazakhstan's Elena Rybakina, who also beat her in the U.S. Open final this month.

It means Sabalenka has not won a title since March and will end the year without a major for the first time since 2022.

"This time I feel like, because I didn't play that many matches, I feel fresh," the 28-year-old Belarusian told reporters ahead of the China Open in Beijing.

Despite a lacklustre few months by her standards, her New York showing was "the moment when I started to feel healthier and stronger", she said.

"The middle part of the season... didn't go that well. I struggled a little bit with different stuff."

"At the U.S. Open I started to enjoy tennis again because of being healthy mentally and physically."

Sabalenka, who withdrew from Beijing last year due to injury, begins her bid for a first title there in the round of 64, against either Hungary's Anna Bondar or Mexico's Renata Zarazua.

She is seeded second behind Rybakina, who faces either Yulia Starodubtseva of Ukraine or Alina Charaeva of Armenia.

Last year's champion Amanda Anisimova will not be taking part, having announced on social media that she was ending her season early over a wrist injury.

In the men's draw, fan favourite Novak Djokovic is looking to add to his six titles at the China Open, where he has never lost a singles match.

"My record speaks for itself on Chinese soil. Knowing that, it also brings this dimension of confidence that I really need," the Serbian, 39, told reporters on Monday. □