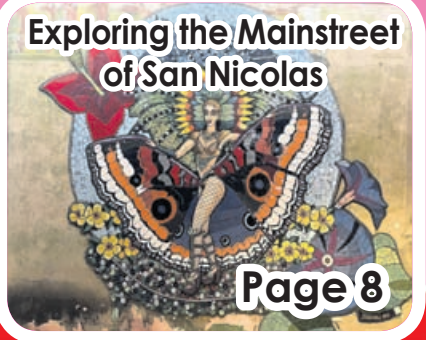




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U.S. Trade Representative Jamieson Greer speaks during the second day of the G20 Trade Ministerial Conference at the Pfister Hotel in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, on October 1, 2026.

U.S. tells European allies to act 'immediately' to lower diesel prices

Milwaukee, United States

The United States on Thursday told its European allies to help lower global diesel prices by releasing strategic reserves "immediately," with EU member states due to discuss the crisis on Friday.

Reports said the Trump administration wants France and Germany in particular to tap their stockpiles of diesel to try to curb prices sent soaring by the U.S. war on Iran.

"Our European partners should accelerate delivery on their existing commitments and make additional supplies immediately available to address ongoing disruptions," U.S. Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent said in a post on social media.

EU member states will meet with the European Commission Friday to discuss a coordinated response to soaring fuel prices, a Commission spokesman said.

Washington is piling on pressure to get European help with fuel costs, with US President Donald Trump on Wednesday floating the possibility of banning diesel exports.

High energy costs loom as a threat to Trump's Republican party in next month's midterm elections.

"It is in Europe's best interest to work with the United

States as we pursue multiple pathways to boost the supply of refined products and lower costs for consumers," a U.S. official told AFP.

At G20 trade talks in Milwaukee, U.S. Trade Representative Jamieson Greer struck a conciliatory tone, saying there was an "eagerness on both sides to work together" on the diesel issue.

And Trump told reporters in Texas on Thursday that he "may" ask European countries to release diesel reserves.

- 'Unexpected' -

Still, EU trade chief Maros Sefcovic told reporters Thursday that any move by the US to ban diesel exports would be "unexpected for Europeans."

He spoke on the sidelines of the two-day G20 trade ministers' gathering in Milwaukee, after meeting with Greer.

Sefcovic told reporters that he did not go into details with Greer on energy exports.

But the transatlantic partners "decided to stay in close touch to avoid any surprises here," he said.

"It would have very dramatic consequences for our economic performance," Sefcovic said of any potential diesel export

ban.

France's minister delegate for international trade, Nicolas Forissier, told AFP in Milwaukee: "I can't imagine that there will be a ban."

He stressed the importance of diesel to the United States and European countries, adding both sides will "try to find solutions."

"In France, we'll try to find balanced solutions all over the world," Forissier added. "If not with the Americans, it will be with other countries."

Trump on Wednesday said he was still considering a possible ban on U.S. diesel exports, while adding that he thought it could ultimately cause gasoline prices to rise.

"I'm thinking about it," Trump told reporters in the Oval Office.

Speaking alongside Trump, U.S. Energy Secretary Chris Wright said Wednesday that the world would "hear announcements from our friends in Europe" to push diesel prices down.

Asked about a release from strategic reserves, the French presidency said no such demand had been made when Emmanuel Macron and Trump met on the sidelines of the U.N. General Assembly last week. □



SpaceX CEO Elon Musk attends a meeting with U.S. President Donald Trump and technology executives about artificial intelligence in the East Room of the White House in Washington, DC, on September 29, 2026.

Musk returns to U.S. government for Pentagon war study

Washington, United States

Tech billionaire Elon Musk will make a return to officially advising U.S. President Donald Trump's government by co-leading what the Pentagon called a study on the future of war.

Musk served as head of the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE), where he spearheaded sweeping job cuts across the US federal government, before departing in May 2025.

In a speech Wednesday at the Quantico military base, Pentagon chief Pete Hegseth said "Project Meridian" will be "an effort led by America's best minds to study the future of warfare."

"We are leveraging a unique source of American advantage, one our adversaries do not have: our innovators, our senior leaders and our technologists," Hegseth said.

Musk will be a co-leader of Project Meridian alongside Palmer Luckey, the 34-year-old co-founder of defense technology company Anduril Industries, and Newt Gingrich, the 83-year-old Republican former House speaker.

Musk's companies are already major Pentagon contractors, including SpaceX building satellite networks for Trump's planned "Golden Dome" missile defense shield. His artificial intelligence firm xAI this year signed a deal allowing the military to use its Grok chatbot on classified systems.

In 2024, Musk threw his support behind Trump and helped his return to the White House, but the men later had a high-profile blow-up over the president's spending legislation.

The two have since reconciled, and Musk has again become a frequent presence at the White House, though less visibly than during his previous stint, when he often visited the Oval Office, most memorably with his young son on his shoulders.

On Tuesday he was seated next to Trump at a lunch with artificial intelligence executives, where he joined other tech leaders in signing a voluntary AI safety accord that the president described as "morally binding."

Last week, Musk attended the state dinner Trump hosted for Chinese President Xi Jinping, and in May he flew to Beijing on Air Force One as part of the business delegation accompanying Trump on his state visit to China. He also resumed giving to Republican causes, including multimillion-dollar donations to individual candidates and conservative political groups. □

Female U.S. inmate in critical condition after botched execution

Washington, United States

A condemned female murderer who survived two lethal injections during a botched execution by the U.S. state of Tennessee was in critical condition and receiving "life-saving care," her lawyer said Thursday. Christa Pike, 50, was taken to a hospital after the failed attempts to put her to death on Wednesday night. It was not clear how she survived the deadly doses of pentobarbital. "What we have been told is that she is in critical condition, receiving life-saving care," Randy Spivey said in a virtual news conference. He urged Governor Bill Lee, who had denied a clemency request earlier in the week, to scrap Pike's death sentence.



This handout picture dated January 12, 2023 provided by the Tennessee Department of Correction shows convicted U.S. murderer Christa Pike.

"After having endured solitary confinement for more than 20 years and a full attempt to kill her by lethal injection, Christa has endured punishment greater than any other person in the history of the American death penalty. The governor must commute Christa's sentence now."

Robin Maher, the executive director of the Death Penalty Information Center,

called the failed execution unprecedented.

"This event is the worst we've seen and unlike any other botched execution in the modern era," she told The New York Times.

U.N. rights chief Volker Turk on Thursday urged Tennessee not to make a new attempt to execute Pike.

"The case of Christa Pike lays bare multiple reasons

why the death penalty should be abolished," his office said on X.

"The prolonged suffering physical and mental arising from multiple failed execution attempts is abhorrent, and cruel. And there are key fair trial questions still unresolved."

Pike's lawyers said earlier that their arguments against the execution had

come to pass: "difficult vein access, blown veins, degraded pentobarbital, no emergency medical care available when things inevitably go wrong, all under a protocol that remains veiled in secrecy."

- 'Loudly snoring' -

Pike's case had already attracted scrutiny in the lead-up to her execution date, as she would have been the first woman put to death in Tennessee in more than 200 years.

Kim Chandler, a media witness with The Associated Press, told CBS News that "Pike appeared notably awake as the execution began" at Riverbend Maximum Security Institution in Nashville.

"A couple of times she looked around the room. At one point she looked towards prison officials and asked if it was supposed to feel that way," Chandler said.

Pike later began snoring, witnesses said.

"We just listened... to her snoring and making very loud breathing sounds for almost an hour," said Catherine Sweeney of WPLN television.

The condemned woman was "loudly snoring, clearly

very alive" as the journalists were ushered out of the area, Chandler told CBS. During a livestream, an ambulance with its lights flashing could be seen leaving the prison.

- Established protocol -

The Tennessee Department of Correction said it "followed every step of the state's lawful, established execution protocol," adding that Pike was subsequently taken to an "off-site medical facility."

Governor Lee called for a "comprehensive, third-party review" of the failed execution.

"The remaining scheduled execution will not be carried out this year," Lee said -- apparently referencing the execution of convicted killer Gary Wayne Sutton scheduled for December 3. Pike's case had sparked debate over capital punishment for young criminals. She was 18 when she and her boyfriend beat and killed Colleen Slemmer, 19, at a job training camp for young people.

The killing gained national attention after Slemmer's body was found with a pentagram, often seen as a satanic symbol, carved in her chest. □

U.S. Supreme Court to review indefinite immigrant detention

Washington, United States

The U.S. Supreme Court said Thursday it will decide whether President Donald Trump's administration can deny immigrants facing deportation the chance to seek release on bond, in the latest major challenge to his hardline immigration agenda.

The policy, introduced after Trump returned to office last year, allows authorities to keep some immigrants detained throughout removal proceedings potentially for years even if they have lived in the United States for decades.

Previous administrations, including Trump's first, generally allowed such detainees to ask an immigration judge for release while their cases were decided, provided they were not

considered dangerous or likely to flee.

The administration argues that a 1996 immigration law requires mandatory detention for people who entered the country illegally, regardless of how long ago they arrived.

Immigrant advocates say that provision was intended chiefly for people stopped at or near the border and that long-term residents arrested inside the country should remain eligible for bond hearings.

Most lower courts to consider the question have rejected the administration's interpretation, triggering thousands of challenges from people held during Trump's mass deportation campaign.

The Supreme Court case

concerns Ricardo Aparecido Barbosa da Cunha, a Brazilian who had lived in the United States for about two decades when immigration agents detained him following a traffic stop in Massachusetts last year. A federal judge ordered his release and an appeals court upheld the decision. The administration says the flood of lawsuits challenging mandatory detention has disrupted enforcement of immigration law.

Solicitor General D. John Sauer called the dispute a "critically important question," according to U.S. media, arguing detention helps prevent immigrants from evading deportation proceedings.

The American Civil Liberties Union, which represents challengers to the policy,

describes the administration's interpretation as a radical departure from decades of practice.

Immigration detention has expanded sharply under Trump, with 66,000 people

being held nationwide as of July, according to the Transactional Records Access Clearinghouse, which provides nonpartisan data on federal agencies. □



Symbolic tombstones displaying the names, ages, countries of origin, and dates of death of immigrants who died in U.S. immigration custody line the lawn outside the Broadview Detention Center at 1930 Beach St on September 26, 2026, in Broadview, Illinois, United States.

Kenneth Branagh examines the scars of Iraq war in 'Atonement'

Toronto, Canada

Screenwriter Reed Van Dyk was leafing through a magazine one day in 2012 when he came across an article about the human cost of war that stopped him in his tracks.

He knew that one day he would have to bring it to the screen, but he did not feel he had the leverage in Hollywood to tackle such a weighty issue.

"I wasn't in a position to make a film about this back then," he told AFP.

That all changed after his short film "DeKalb Elementary" won critical acclaim and earned an Oscar nomination in 2018, so he went back to the New Yorker article and began work on "Atonement," which goes on limited release on Friday.

The film, based on the magazine piece, begins in 2003, when the lives of an Iraqi family and a war veteran became tragically intertwined in a Baghdad under fire.

Mariam Khachaturian, played by Hiam Abbass, and her family are trying to reach their home when



(L-R) Kalama Epstein, Kenneth Branagh, Gheed, Reed Van Dyk, Hiam Abbass and Boyd Holbrook attend the premiere of "Atonement" during the 2026 Toronto International Film Festival at Roy

their two vehicles are fired on by a Marine unit that believed it was under threat. Three passengers die in the shooting, including Mariam's husband.

Eventually, the widow tries to leave the war behind by moving to the United States with her daughter.

Marine Lou D'Alessandro (Boyd Holbrook) also wants

to move on, but the consequences of what he was involved in continue to haunt him.

The only way he feels he might be able to exorcise his demons is to seek out Mariam.

"I was so touched by this piece of writing and the story and all these characters and the way that their lives had intersected

very tragically, and then by some miracle, they all intersect again a decade later," Van Dyk said.

In the movie, Lou and Mariam sit face-to-face in California, brought together by the efforts of Michael Reid (Kenneth Branagh), a journalist who had interviewed both of them about the war.

"I was very drawn to the

idea of that complexity, and very drawn to the idea of being this witness at this remarkable meeting over years with two people trying to process the enormous pain and loss of very different kinds," Branagh told AFP on the sidelines of the Toronto International Film Festival.

"And then the really compelling drama of this immensely difficult thing, meeting again to feel, discuss, forget, forgive," said the British actor, whose character is inspired by journalist Dexter Filkins, author of the original article.

- 'A new context' -

"Atonement" arrives in U.S. theaters days after the U.S. formally ended its decades-long mission in Iraq, but with the country again at war this time with Iran.

"I was pulled to write about and explore these trio of people, and so that was in spite of the fact that you know it wasn't a story that headlines were echoing at the time of my writing," Van Dyk said.

But "as we're making the film, the world has sort of backslid into war everywhere. So it brings a new context to all of our work." For Holbrook ("Narcos"), portraying the tormented Lou was "a fantastic experience," but also an intimidating one.

"The preparation for a film like this is everything, and for me it was life altering," he told AFP.

"It was something that I had to really find and discover in myself, the empathy and the courage that [his character] Lou had." Abbass ("Blade Runner 2049" and "Succession") said she had wanted desperately to do justice to Mariam.

"I wanted to take her place and shout out my feelings and my anger towards why this should happen," she said.

"Why on Earth we keep going all the time, causing these pains to people, whoever they are, whatever they are, whatever nationality they come from, whatever conflict we're talking about." □

Brazil's Lula turns to Bad Bunny tune to criticize Trump ahead of polls

Sao Paulo, Brazil

With elections just days away, Brazil's President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva's campaign adapted a song by Latin music powerhouse Bad Bunny to assert the country's sovereignty in the face of pressure from the United States.

"They want to take the river, and the beach too. They want the rare earth

minerals," goes the re-worked Portuguese version of "Lo que le paso a Hawaii" (What Happened to Hawaii) by Bad Bunny, posted by Lula on his social media accounts.

Brazilians will vote in a nail-biting first-round presidential election on Sunday, pitting Lula, 80, against right-wing Senator Flavio Bolsonaro, son of far-right former

president Jair Bolsonaro. Lula has made sovereignty a key plank of his campaign, amid pressure from US President Donald Trump, a Bolsonaro ally who has backed several right-wing candidates in Latin American elections.

Washington has slapped punitive tariffs on Brazil and has expressed keen interest in its massive reserves of critical minerals.

With nearly seven million views on social media, the campaign jingle inspired by the Puerto Rican star calls on people not to "let go of the Brazilian flag."

It also features an image of Trump holding a rope around Bolsonaro's neck like a leash and ends with Lula's gravelly voice declaring: "Brazil has only one

owner: the Brazilian people."

Flavio Bolsonaro's campaign has often featured United States flags and images of Trump.

Bad Bunny's song addresses the loss of local control through the impact of tourism, gentrification and displacement using Hawaii as a cautionary tale for Puerto Ricans.

The singer included the tune in his setlist at the Super Bowl halftime show in February, described by Trump as "an affront to the Greatness of America."

A source from Lula's Workers' Party, requesting anonymity, said Bad Bunny had not granted rights for the song's use. The artist's press office did not respond to an AFP request for comment. □





Workers harvest rice by hand in a research field where around 30 different varieties of rice are being cultivated, in Oud Ade on September 29, 2026.

Rice work: Dutch test new crop to save sinking peatlands

Oud Ade, Netherlands

In a soggy field between Amsterdam and The Hague, farmer Sander Roeleveld ploughs a small white combine harvester into his crops, gathering a grain never before harvested in the Netherlands: rice. The surroundings could scarcely be more Dutch. Canals criss-cross polders lying two meters below sea level. Windmills grace the horizon as cows for centuries the country's agricultural staple graze in the nearby grassland.

But the warming climate is allowing Dutch farmers to produce wine and now even experiment with rice, previously unthinkable in such a wet, temperate country.

And researchers behind the scheme hope rice cultivation could help address one of the country's most pressing environmental challenges: peat soils that are sinking as they dry out, pushing parts of the low-lying Netherlands ever lower. "It's extraordinary," said Philippe Terheggen, chairman of the Land van Ons association that has provided the fields for the rice harvest.

"We would never have thought maybe 20 years ago that we would be able to grow rice in the Netherlands," the 68-year-old

told AFP as the harvester whirled behind him.

"But it's also scary because it tells you what is possible... now the climate has changed," he said.

For now, the project is a pilot scheme, consisting of just 0.6 hectares (1.5 acres), with organizers hoping to produce around three tons of short-grain rice suitable for sushi or risotto.

The team is working with around 30 different rice cultivars from as far afield as Russia, China, Japan and Uzbekistan, to see which grows best in the Dutch climate.

Roeleveld, who describes himself as a "pioneer", said he wanted to show other farmers that rice could grow in boggy Dutch soil.

"My goal is to show that more things are possible on wetland than just grass," the 53-year-old told AFP.

"Of course, when you have had cows for 600 years, it's really hard to imagine that you want to do something else than having milk from your cow," he laughed.

"I just want to show that things can be changed for the benefit of the future."

- 'Crazy idea' -

But the project is about much more than crop diversification. Researchers believe it could help tackle

one of the Netherlands' most persistent environmental problems.

Roughly one-tenth of the country is peatland, which farmers drain for grass to feed their cattle.

As the peat dries out, it releases millions of tons of carbon dioxide while causing the land to subside by up to several centimeters a year in the worst-affected areas.

According to Wageningen University, greenhouse gas emissions from Dutch peat soils account for around two to three percent of the country's total emissions.

The only way to resolve this vicious cycle is to keep the fields wet but then farmers would have nothing to grow there... until now.

"Basically it started with just a crazy idea," explained Julian Helfenstein, a researcher from Wageningen University and Research, who is piloting the project along with colleagues from nearby Leiden University.

It is a rare combination of both adapting to climate change and mitigating its effects, said the 36-year-old.

"Rice is an opportunity for this part of the world to adapt to climate change, so to grow something that previously wasn't possible," he said. □



Workers load construction materials onto donkeys for transport at the seafront in Lamu Old Town on Lamu Island on October 1, 2026.

Kenyan island paradise fears damage from mega-refinery

Lamu, Kenya

Tourism or industry? Environment or oil? The picturesque Kenyan island of Lamu, a favourite of celebrities, faces a tough trade-off after becoming the construction site for Africa's latest mega-refinery.

Lamu, on the Indian Ocean coast, is known for its 12th-century Old Town, traditional dhow sailing boats and paradisaical beaches that have made it a favourite haunt of stars like Mick Jagger, Kate Moss and the Obamas.

But within less than half a year it has become the chosen location for Africa's second-biggest oil refinery, being built by Nigerian tycoon Aliko Dangote.

The continent's richest man broke ground on the \$16 billion venture on Wednesday alongside multiple heads of state in what is billed as Kenya's biggest-ever industrial project.

For locals in Lamu - an island where cars are non-existent and transport still mostly happens by donkey -- there has been little time to process the idea of having a massive fossil fuel complex on their doorstep.

The idea of building a Dangote refinery in east Africa was first mooted in April, and Lamu was chosen as the site only in July, while the company plans to have it operating by 2030.

Some have already taken the project to court, fearing their land rights will not be respected, while environmental organisations including Greenpeace argues the refinery "threatens to damage one of East Africa's most fragile coastal ecosystems".

Dozens gathered to protest in the Old Town on Tuesday, chanting "Haki Yetu" ("Our rights").

Dangote has dismissed the critics, describing those who oppose the refinery as "people who don't want the development of Africa".

"Anybody who wants to cause trouble, we are ready for his trouble and will give him a headache," the billionaire said on Wednesday.

- 'Too late' -

In his speech at the groundbreaking, Kenyan President William Ruto initially called those challenging the project in court "extortionists".

But he then struck a more conciliatory tone, promising a rigorous environmental study and telling Lamu residents: "Your rights will be protected. Your voice will be heard."

Some locals told AFP this was too little, too late.

"The study was to be conducted before the excavation and digging", not after, said local artist Salwa Mahmoud. □

Empty nets in Latin America as fish flee El Nino

Ecuador

Fishermen along Latin America's Pacific coast are reeling in half-empty nets as ocean warming aggravated by El Nino causes tuna, anchovies and other top catches to migrate to cooler waters.

From Ecuador and Peru in South America, to Panama and Guatemala in Central America, some skippers have stopped going out altogether as fish stocks dwindle close to shore, in seas running at up to six degrees Celsius above normal.

"The water is warm," Juan Ollague, 56, told AFP in the southwestern Ecuadoran port of Santa Rosa where hundreds of idle fishing boats are crammed into a small port.

After a night on the water, Ollague returns with just six small tuna.

"We came away empty-handed," he lamented.

"Fishing used to be good, now it's terrible," fellow skipper Darwin Zambrano, 53, complained as he untangled a net that hasn't scooped up big tuna like albacore or bonito in weeks. El Nino is the warming phase of a natural cycle in the tropical Pacific that causes hotter and drier conditions in some places, and cooler and wetter in



Fishermen hold a net in the San Pedro commune in Santa Elena, Ecuador, on September 18, 2026.

others.

This year's "super" El Nino, which is expected to peak later this year, is already wreaking havoc in Central America, where drought is endangering animals and stunting crops.

The average sea surface temperature, excluding polar regions, reached 21.07C in August, tying with March 2024 as the hottest on record, according to the European Union's Copernicus climate change observatory.

The average sea tem-

peratures off Ecuador's coast rose by 2.5-3C at the surface and up to 6C at a depth of 40 meters in the past ten weeks, said oceanographer Jonathan Cedeno, who led a mission from Guayaquil's Polytechnic University to measure the temperatures.

- 'Losing money' -

On Panama's Pacific coast, Rigoberto Gonzalez said he has to sail further and further from shore to earn a living.

This means spending more on food, ice to preserve

the fish, and fuel for the small boat he uses to catch snapper, kingfish and barracuda.

"We go out with \$100 worth of gas, and when we come back, we earn \$150" from sales of the fish, which has to be divided among four workers, Gonzalez, 59, told AFP, on Veracruz beach.

In nearby Panama City, some fishermen have thrown in the towel and decided to remain in port.

"We can't keep losing money," Jesus Morales, leader of the artisanal fishermen's union of Panama,

said.

Further north, in Iztapa, Guatemala, 50-year-old Eliseo Ovando said it now takes three days to catch what he used to pull from the water in a day, and complains that only commercial fisheries receive government assistance to ride out the shortages.

"The big fish eat the little ones," he said, referring to the struggles of small-scale operators like himself.

In Peru, the world's biggest catcher of anchovies, fishermen are turning to construction to feed their families as their tiny prey slips out of reach.

- Economic ripple effect -

In Panama City, the poor yields are visible at a wholesale fish market next to the dock that supplies the city's supermarkets.

"Less is arriving" off the boats, says Carlos Nieto, a 46-year-old vendor. And sometimes the catch is "damaged by the heat," he said.

Nieto now spends about \$600 a month on ice, "practically a whole salary."

For now, vendors in Panama haven't passed on their higher costs and reduced income to consumers in the form of significantly higher prices. □

'We just need rain': Germany's Rhine river hits new low

Frankfurt, Germany

Parts of Germany's Rhine are now unnavigable for most shipping, an industry group warned Tuesday, after the river dropped to an all-time record low following months of little rainfall and hot weather.

The waterway, which

flows through the industrial heartland of Germany, has been at record lows since late July when Europe was struggling through a series of heatwaves.

It has already led to some restrictions on commercial shipping, affecting industries from chemicals to

steel-making, and heaping extra pressure on Europe's long-stagnant top economy.

But continued dry weather this week pushed water levels at Kaub on the Rhine a reference point for vessels even further downwards and made the area unpassable for laden cargo vessels.

"Most German ship captains say, that's too shallow, I'm not sailing there anymore," Matthias Roesser, from the German Inland Shipping Association, told AFP.

The navigable depth of the river around Kaub was just over a metre Tuesday. Only specially adapted vessels, or those carrying almost no cargo, can navi-

gate such low waters.

This means the Rhine has effectively been split into two sections, Thomas Puls, a transport expert from the IW Economic Institute in Cologne told AFP.

The upper and middle sections of the river in Germany are cut off from major northern ports such as Duisburg in Germany and Rotterdam in the Netherlands. "The problem here is simply that it has been raining far, far, far too little for months," Puls told AFP. "We just need rain -- nothing else helps".

Companies including steel giant Thyssenkrupp and chemical maker BASF have already resorted to using specially adapted

vessels in recent weeks to transport products.

Only around five percent of goods are transported by river in Germany.

But the Rhine plays an outsized role, carrying around two-thirds of Germany's inland waterway freight, said Puls.

The government last month lifted a ban on trucks driving on Sundays and public holidays to help companies impacted by the problems. This measure was reportedly extended Tuesday.

But Puls said switching goods transport from shipping to trucks is difficult, as many trucks are typically required to carry the cargo of a single commercial vessel. □



Picture taken on August 14, 2026 with a drone shows the "Burg Pfalzgrafenstein" (Pfalzgrafenstein Castle) on an island in the dried-up river Rhine in Kaub, western Germany.

National Park Arikok: Aruba's biggest nature conservation

The National Park Arikok comprises almost 18 % of the island. Its rugged terrain, desert-like hills filled with tall cacti, breathtaking coastline and protected local flora and fauna welcome you to be explored. There are numerous animals to discover, for example the bright blue Cododo or mighty Warawara.

The national park Arikok takes you on a memorable journey of the islands past offering unique geological, cultural and historical sites. These can all be enjoyed and explored either on your own or during guided tours. A wide variety of educational and informative programs and fun activities is available.

Did you know that four of the seven species of sea turtle lay their eggs on Aruba's beaches? In the national park, a Least Tern (*Sternula antillarum*) keeps a strict eye on a very special event taking place below on the beach: A majestic Leatherback (*Dermochelys coriacea*) heading back to the ocean after laying her eggs during breeding season. Sea turtles prefer nesting in the cool and dark hours of the night. And hatchlings usually wait for the cue of cooling surface sand before emerging.

Nature Conservation

The protected area of National Park Arikok was officially established in 2000. Arikok National Park is a 34 square kilometers (7907 acres) of natural area, located at the north-eastern part of Aruba which contains examples of most of the island's flora and fauna against a backdrop of great geological complexity. We are proud to state that approximately 18% of the total land area of Aruba is assigned as a National Park, to protect and preserve the flora, fauna, geology and historical remains present within Arikok National Park.

The Landscape

There is a great geological variety within the park. The



main aspects are the rough hills of the volcanic Aruba lava formation, the mysterious rocks of the batholithic quartz-diorite/tonalite, and the limestone rocks from fossilized coral. The two tallest hills on the island are situated within the park. Jamanota hill 188 meters (617 ft) and Arikok hill 176 meters (577 ft), from which the name of the park is derived.

The line of the permanently wind-and-wave beaten North Coast is broken by several bays (boca's). Most of them are small yet impressive inlets at the mouth of dry riverbeds. Some of these bays (boca's) are spectacular sights, adorned with white, sandy beaches and sand dunes, as is the case at Boca Prins and Dos Playa.

Arikok is also home to Conchi, Aruba's most important natural attraction; also known as The Natural Pool. The journey to the Pool is and adventure by itself and only possible by foot, horse, or 4x4 vehicle. As of 2020, ATV's and UTVs are not allowed in the park due to its significant impact on nature.

Cultural and Historical components

There are a number of sites within the park that attest



to the history of Aruba. The Caquetío Indians left rock paintings in Cunucu Arikok and Fontein Cave.

Old plantation (Cunucus) sites tell the story of an active yet challenging agri-

cultural past.

These Cunucus were also residential areas for the few families that worked the land. These families found ways to survive in the difficult conditions, and

were able to erect their homes with materials found in the area. Two of these adobe houses have been restored. Park rangers are learning many of the old building techniques in order to preserve this unique Aruban mud-house. At Cunucu Arikok and near Plantation Prins you can find these adobe houses.

Park Management

The Aruba Conservation Foundation (ACF), formerly known as Aruba National Park Foundation, manages the national park. This foundation was established in July 2003. In February 2017, mangrove and wetland RAMSAR site #198 Spanish Lagoon was annexed to Arikok National Park due to its importance as a feeding and breeding area for water birds and as a nursery area for a variety of marine organisms. With this addition, the areas under management increased by 70 hectares while the amount of species of flora and fauna to be conserved to over 250. On December 21st, 2018 (AB 2018 no. 77) Parke Marino Aruba – currently consisting of four marine protected areas (MPAs) – was officially established and subsequently brought under management of ACF. In 2019, preliminary management plan for marine were introduced for Parke Marino to conserve reefs, seagrass beds, and mangrove forests and in 2020 ACF was given additional management areas such as the Saliñas (Druif, Malmok, Cerca, Palm Beach, Bubali etc.) and also additional areas such as Rooi Manonchi, Ser'I Teishi etc. Managed areas can be seen here: <https://acf.aw/>.

Visit the National Park Arikok to see the wonder of Aruba's nature. The visitor center in San Fuego and entrance in Vader Piet (San Nicolas) is open daily from 8:00 AM to 16:00 PM. Contact the ACF via e-mail, info@acf.aw or call +297 585 1234 for more information. □

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Exploring the Mainstreet of San Nicolas

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

Over the course of four decades, its demographics

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

Flow of history

If you are looking for history San Nicolas has it.

The Museum of Industry is situated in the Water Tower in San Nicolas and narrates Aruba's industrial history which began in the 19th century. Here you will learn



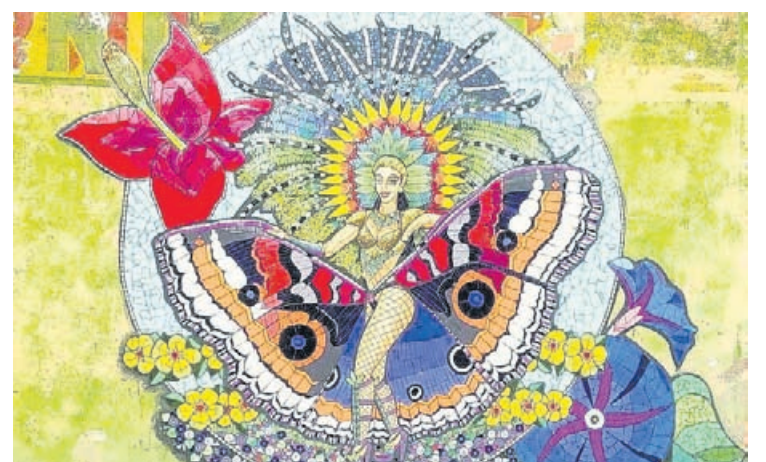
about gold, aloe, phosphate, oil and the tourism industries which made San Nicolas once a bustling business center. Experience the touching stories of those who were part of this history.

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

The new San Nicolas

In the shadow of the refin-

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



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ABC reacts to new Aruba Strategic Tourism Master Plan 2026-2031: Sustainable policies demand proper representation from the beginning

Aruba Birdlife Conservation (ABC) congratulates the Government of Aruba and Minister Wendrick Cicilia on the initiative to develop the Aruba Strategic Tourism Master Plan 2026-2031. A renewed tourism policy is of great importance to Aruba's economic future, quality of life and, equally important, the protection and recovery of our nature.

At the same time, ABC considers it necessary to inform the Aruban community

that our organization was not invited to participate in any of these strategic dialogue sessions. Nor was ABC consulted or asked to provide input, despite its many years of experience in nature conservation, habitat protection, environmental education and the relationship between tourism and Aruba's natural environment.

This is particularly regrettable because the announcement refers to the

participation of environmental leaders. ABC is one of Aruba's most active nature-conservation organizations and has repeatedly demonstrated that tourism policy and nature policy cannot be developed separately.

We sincerely hope that meaningful consultation with ABC and other independent nature organizations will still take place before the Tourism Master Plan is finalized. Genuine consultation must happen

while plans can still be influenced, not only after the principal decisions have already been made.

We therefore respectfully ask for the public's understanding in advance. If ABC determines that proposed policies, projects or decisions are not in the best interests of Aruba's nature, protected species or vulnerable habitats, ABC may once again consider it necessary to take appropriate action to have such

matters corrected.

This should not be interpreted as opposition to progress. On the contrary, ABC supports progress, but progress that respects Aruba's laws, protects our natural heritage and secures a healthy island for future generations.

Aruba's new tourism policy can only be truly sustainable and regenerative when nature is represented at the table from the very beginning. □

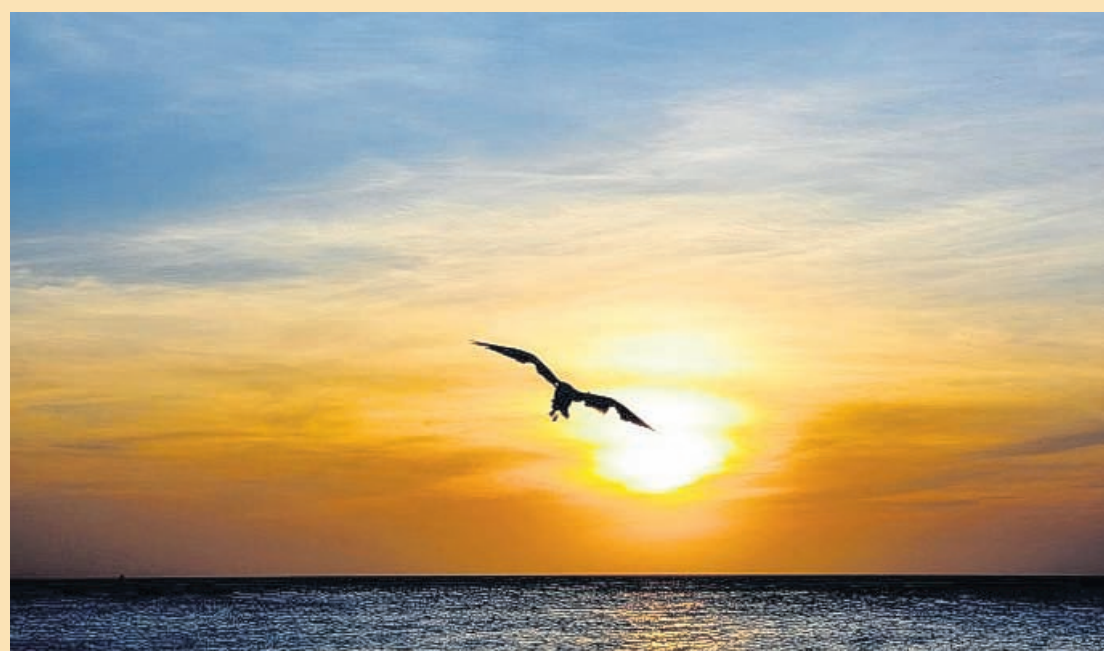
Best spots to view the sunset

(Oranjestad)—What can be more romantic than surprising your partner with a date watching the sunset? Aruba's sunset leave many speechless, and luckily, the best spots to view the sunset are entirely accessible and easy to find. Here are some of the best places to view the sunset on the island.

California Light House

Of course, being one of the highest points easily accessible to locals and tourists, the California Light House hill not only offers a tremendous view of the sunset, but also a breath taking scenery of most of the island. In the distance you can spot all the hotels, the western shoreline and the wild waves that crash on the northern side of the island.

Manchebo & Eagle Beach



Speaking of the western shoreline, the best spots for viewing the sunset on the beach has to be either Manchebo Beach or at Eagle Beach, which stretch along the entire western coast of the island. The sunset on these beaches is truly breathtaking; the sky and ocean look so big and

spacious, and paired with the orange/pink hue of the sunset, the white sandy beaches and the soft sounds of waves crashing it can only be described as an experience!

Arashi Beach

Another beach that has to be considered as another

great spot to view the sunset. Arashi Beach is the last beach you will find along the western coast line, just before you drive up the hill to the California Light House. A favorite for surfers and body boarders, the Arashi sky stretches out for miles, lending a spectacular canvas for the sun to

create a masterpiece of orange, pink and purple

Hooiberg Hill

These last two options are for more active couples. If you and your partner like to hike, the Hooiberg Hill may be a great place for you to get your daily workout in and enjoy a beautiful view of the sunset and the island as a little reward. Climb on top the 587-step stairs and reach the top to enjoy this incredible scenery.

Casibari Rock Formation

If you're a rock climber, you might enjoy watching the sunset on top of the Casibari Rock Formation. It's no Yosemite, but it does offer a fun little exercise to get to the top. But if you prefer not to get your hands a little dirty, you can always use the stairs in the back.hue. □

Aruba's kite flying tradition



(Oranjestad)—Every year for King's Day, Arubans gather with friends and family to fly kites. Big or small, paper or plastic, blue skies fill up with these colorful flying contraptions, brightening our yearly celebration of the Dutch Monarch.

The tradition of flying kites starts at home in the weeks leading up to King's Day. These kites were traditionally made with things found in the nearby *mondi** and in the kitchen at home. Using dried up cactus sticks for

the frame, old news papers, and glue made from flour, water and salt to dry faster (some people even use cornstarch slurry as glue), kids usually make their own kites with their friends, parents or other close family members. Tails are made



from old bed sheets, ripped and tied together to create a long string of fabric trailing behind the back end of the kite. To finish off the process, people used fish lines or thin rope to tie three corners of the kite together. Another long string of rope is tied in the knotted center and bundled up, used to steer the kite as it flies in the air. Decorating the kite was especially important, and children would use paint to create their own design—the more colorful, the better!

People usually fly their kites in big open fields, like empty soccer and baseball fields found all around the island around noon, when the sun is at its brightest. In the past few years, kite flying has become a sport in which groups of people would battle against each other to see whose kite is the biggest, the prettiest, and whose could fly flawlessly and longer in the air. □

***Mondi:** Aruban woods.

Origin of Papiamentu- Aruba's native language



ORANJESTAD — Papiamentu, Creole language of ABC (Aruba, Bonaire and Curacao) is from the Cape Verdean Creole family (Cape Verdean language) and was taken to the Caribbean in the 9th century by the Cape Verdeans of that time (linings and slaves), experts in cane culture and sugar production, and who were hired by Jewish entrepreneurs who went to invest in this business in the Caribbean.

Cape Verdeans taught this pre-industrial revolution technology (planting cane and producing sugar, which they had learned from Madeirans) to slaves from other African regions, and did so in their language, Cape Verde Creole (Cape Verdean language), hence the language implanted in Aruba, Bonaire and Curacao.

Unlike many interesting stories, wanting to link Pa-

pimentu directly to Portuguese, Galician or Castilian (see Papiamentu, on Wikipedia – Portuguese version and Spanish version, where the Portuguese and Spanish, each claim the direct origin of Papiamentu), in fact, this is not true. Papiamentu is not direct from Portuguese, Galician or Castilian, it is from the Cape Verde Creole family (Cape Verdean language). You can see this best when it's saying obscene words and offending someone, precisely as they say today in both ABC and Cape Verde islands. The obscene words kept the original, had no lexical influence either from Castilian or Dutch. Also the Papi Cristang of Malacca, the Patuá of Macau, and several creoles from the east (from Daman, Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Philippines, Indonesia) and Africa (Casamança, Guinea Bissau, Sierra Leone and Nigeria, these last two re-

leases to the English), all originated in the Creole of Cabo Verde (Cape Verdean language), which was the French language spoken in Portuguese feitorias on the coast of Africa (from Senegal to Sierra Leone), and which was taken east by the thousands of cable – Verdeans (linings and slaves, already Christianized and speaking Creole) who served as sailors and "slaves of arms" in Portuguese caravels, demanding the east. I don't know why the official history of Portugal usually omits this fact, which is in the chronicles of the quinrentist chroniclers, but which we never saw in the history of Portugal that we study from primary education to higher education. However, it has always been tried to deceive us, in colonial time, that we were descendants of Viriato (Iberian hero in the fight against the Romans) and the pastors of the Hermini

Mountains, but not much speaking of our black-African ancestry.

We Cape Verdeans understand each other very well with these Antillans and Easterns, whose language is from the same Creole family of Cape Verde (Cape Verdean language), speaking their Creole and we ours. Therefore, Papiamentu, Papi Cristang, Patuá Macaense and the creoles, said of Portuguese origin, Daman, India, Sri Lanka, Myanmar, some locations in the Philippines and some places in Indonesia, are creoles of the language family Cape Verde Creole (Cape Verdean language) and indirectly the Galaico-Duriense or Galaico-Portuguese, a language that the people spoke in Portugal in the 6th and 7th century.

Source: Dushi Aruba

The district of Savaneta: A quick history guide to the island's first capital



(Oranjestad)—Before Oranjestad became the island nation's capital, Aruba's first capital was the district of Savaneta. Here is where the cultural identity of Aruba was born, and from where the rest of the island developed into what it is today.

Savaneta is said to have been the first place where the Caquetio inhabitants first stepped foot on the island. Though there isn't hard evidence to back this up, but considering the legend of the Cacique Arua, it is believed that there were already movements on Aruba and Savaneta around 88 AD.

The Caquetios probably made their way to the island either from Venezuela, Colombia or other Caribbean islands in the region, but with good weather it was relatively easy for them to travel back and forth in their canoes. So, since the Caquetios discovered the island, Aruba found her first form of civilization.

It wasn't until 1499 when Aruba met another group of people who set foot on the island: the Spanish explorer Alonso de Ojeda. De Ojeda first took notice of Aruba off the coast of Venezuela, during his exploration of the Latin American country. This was on August 9th, 1499. However, de Ojeda didn't actually sail to the island till 4 days later, on August 23rd, 1499. This was the beginning of the Spanish era on Aruba (1499-1636).

Alonso usually didn't stop at every island or land he

saw, especially not in the Caribbean. He would often take notice of land from afar and continue sailing. However, Aruba was an exception. He had heard that there were "quebracho" (Kibrahacha) trees on the island, which were commonly used to produce dye or paint. But since these trees could not be found in Savaneta, he continued to search in the area of what is now known as Santa Cruz. The best way to transport the tree barks was via a route passing through Savaneta, and so the first road between Savaneta and Santa Cruz was made.

The Dutch colonial era (1636-1805)

During the 80-year war between The Netherlands and Spain, Dutch explorers and merchants began to travel to the ABC islands. Once they landed in Aruba, they deported the small Arawakan and Spanish community that was living on the island. This was the beginning of colonization of the ABC islands by the Dutch empire. Around the same, the West Indian Company (WIC) was born. Bonaire and Curacao were mostly used for plantations, where the Dutch had transported slaves from Africa.



Aruba, on the other hand, was mostly used to raise cattle and to house the haring factory. The Dutch had often forced the indigenous community to work for them.

In 1636, when the Netherlands won the war against Spain, the country surrendered the islands to the Dutch.

The Dutch administration appointed the island's first commander, an Irish man named N. Williams.

Because the Dutch were interested in other Caribbean islands and countries in South America, they imported Dutch merchants and business men, all of whom resided in Savaneta. This way, Savaneta officially became the island's first capital.

However, at the end of the 18th century, the commander at the time, J.R. Lauffer, moved his office to what is now "Horse Bay" in Oranjestad. Because the highest office on the island

moved away from Savaneta, the capital lost its title to what was called then Playa.

How Savaneta got its name

The name Savaneta probably has a Spanish origin. It was said that when the Spanish climbed a hill called Yara, they saw that the area was mostly open and had no big trees. In Spanish, such a land area is called a "sabana".

Because of its land surface, Savaneta was a great place to construct cattle farms. From here, the farmer culture on Aruba was born. Before the Aruban Gold Rush and the construction of the Refinery in San Nicolas, most residents were farmers, and Savaneta had many inhabitants that farmed fruits and vegetables. They also continued the tradition of raising cattle, like goat, sheep, pigs and horses. Savaneta was one of the first places on the island to have a general farming culture. From this culture, many other traditions were born, like the Dera Gay Holiday that we celebrate every year on June 24th. □

Source: Historia di Savaneta (History of Savaneta) by Adolf "Dufi" Kock.



CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

1. Boarded

6. Opera

11. Bakery

12. Swift

13. Produce

14. Without

15. Counter-

17. Tentative

19. Blazed a

20. Nasty

23. National

25. Ring of

26. Outdoor

28. Pot start-

29. Frozen

30. Pig's

31. Junior, to

32. Buddy

33. Violinist

35. Bolivian

38. Brother

41. Tolerate

42. Rocker

43. Puzzles

44. Flair

DOWN

1. Yak it up

2. Refiner's

3. Frat

4. Troubling

5. Merchant

6. Worry

7. Chimed

8. Gorilla or

9. Coq au --

10. Unmatch-

16. Crude

17. Long tales

18. Defeatist's

20. Bridge

21. Extreme



Yesterday's answer

22. Fit for a

24. HST

25. Solo in

27. Boxer's

31. S, M, L,

33. Created

34. Sentry's

35. Bathroom,

36. Penny

37. Films,

39. Campaign

40. Low digit



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.

10-1

CRYPTOQUOTE

NGWSRK! SZR BGKJ GW
OGWGKD, FKJ SZR FGO GW
BGNJ BGSZ NRFTRW, BR ZFTR
ZFJ XMO WMVVRO RTRKGKOW.
KXB LXO XQSXPOR RTRW!
---ZMVPROS BXNLR

Yesterday's Cryptoquote: DON'T THREATEN ME WITH LOVE, BABY. LET'S JUST GO WALKING IN THE RAIN. --- BILLIE HOLIDAY

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

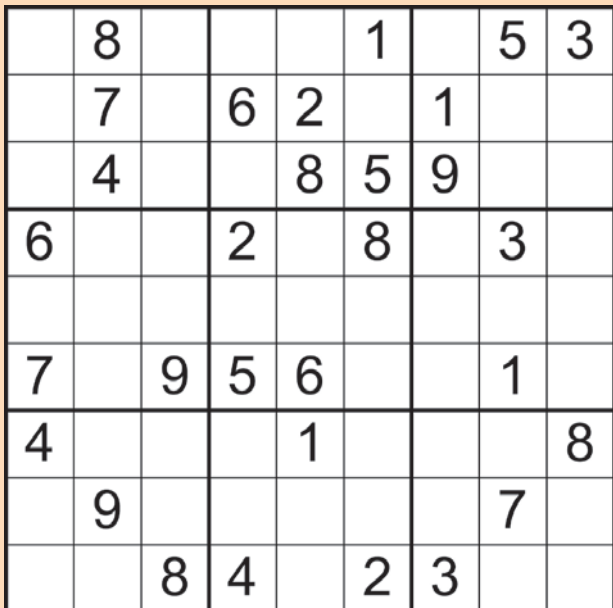
03 SAT	ISLAND PRINCESS	Arrival: 8:00 Departure: 17:00 Berth: C
04 SUN	FREEWINDS DEPT.	Arrival: Departure: 24:00 Berth: E
06 TUE	ADVENTURE OF THE SEAS	Arrival: 8:00 Departure: 23:00 Berth: B
	CARNIVAL VISTA	Arrival: 13:00 Departure: 23:00 Berth: C
	GRANDEUR OF THE SEAS	Arrival: 8:00 Departure: 23:00 Berth: 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

ARUBA TODAY

SUDOKU

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

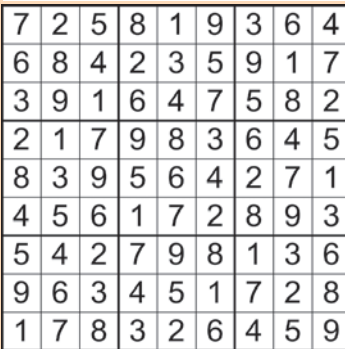
King Classic Sudoku



Difficulty: ★★★★★

10/2

Answer to previous puzzle



Difficulty: ★★★

10/1

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This combination of photographs created on September 29, 2026, shows an aerial view taken on September 13, 2022, (L) at Glacier 3000 resort above Les Diablerets shows the Tsanfleuron Pass free of the ice which separates Scex Rouge Glacier (C/L) and Tsanfleuron Glacier (C/R) that covered it for at least 2,000 years and the same view (R) on September 6, 2026, after the thick layer of ice that has covered a Swiss mountain pass between Scex Rouge glacier and Tsanfleuron glacier since at least the Roman era has melted away completely.

‘Catastrophic’: Swiss glaciers lose fifth of mass in five years

Les Diablerets, Switzerland
Switzerland's glaciers, which are disproportionately impacted by climate change, have lost nearly 20 percent of their mass in five years, experts said Thursday, with 2026 registering the second-biggest melt on record.

Swiss glaciers saw 5.5 percent of their volume melt away this year, the Glacier Monitoring in Switzerland (GLAMOS) network found in a new study, published after a record hot summer preceded by a winter with little snowfall.

“The glaciers this year have lost enormous quantities of ice,” said GLAMOS chief Matthias Huss, describing 2026 as “a catastrophic year”.

Perched on the Scex Rouge glacier, at an altitude of nearly 3,000 metres, he gazed across the landscape in despair.

“This is a glacier that isn’t surviving,” he said.

“There will be probably no ice in 10 or maybe 15 years.”

He carefully dismantled the four-metre-long aluminium measurement stake inserted at the centre of the glacier.

In late July, when it was installed, it was completely embedded, but now more than three metres protrude from the grey surface of the ice.

“It’s not that we are surprised, because we know how fast the glaciers are

melting,” Huss said.

“But to see the colours of the mountains where there is no snow left, there is just these rocks and these dark glaciers that are a relic from the past... it’s just incredible.”

Between 2022 and 2026, the melt rate at Switzerland’s glaciers was “more than twice as high as in any previously monitored five-year period”, the GLAMOS report said, noting an ice volume loss of almost 20 percent since 2021.

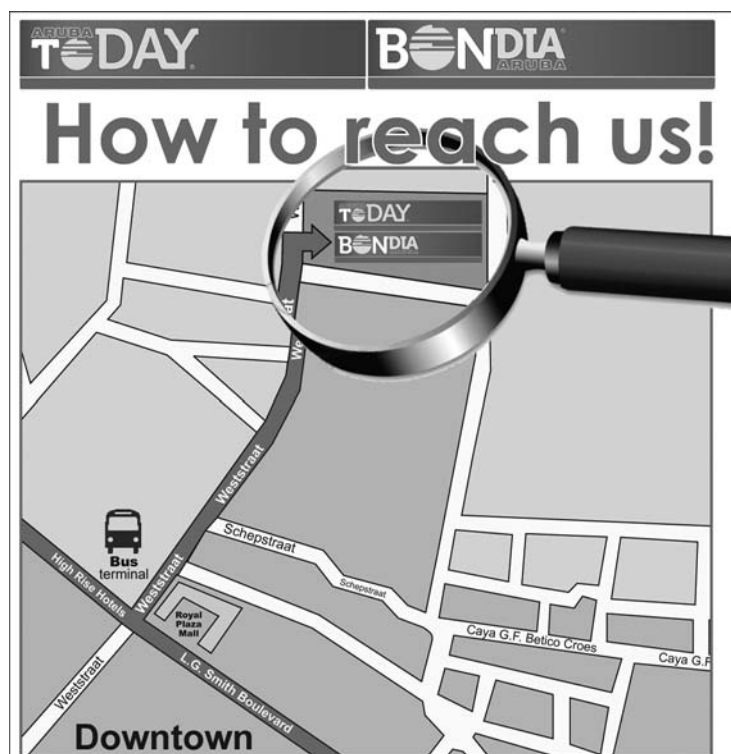
While Switzerland’s glaciers have long been shrinking, the melt has recently sped up dramatically.

While 10 percent of Swiss ice volume disappeared between 1990 and 2000, 27 percent was lost in the past 10 years, the report showed.

GLAMOS based its findings on extensive measurements at 23 reference glaciers in September, which it extrapolated to the nearly 1,300 glacial formations still found in Switzerland.

- ‘No chance of surviving’ -
The report comes after a summer where the months of June, July and August were each the hottest ever recorded in Switzerland since measurements began in 1864, according to the Swiss Federal Office of Meteorology and Climatology.

This year, the protective snow cover on the glaciers had already partially disappeared during the June heatwaves, and had completely disappeared by September, even at high altitudes, GLAMOS said. □



HEALTH

DOCTOR ON DUTY

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

PHARMACY ON DUTY

Oranjestad: Eagle
Tel. 587 9011

San Nicolas: Seroe Preto
Tel. 584 5794

OTHER

Dental Clinic	587 9850
Blood Bank Aruba	587 0002
Urgent Care	586 0448
Walk-In Doctor's Clinic	588 0539

EMERGENCY

Police	100
Police Oranjestad	527 3140
Police Noord	527 3200
Police Sta. Cruz	527 2900
Police San Nicolas	584 5000
Police Tipline	11141
Ambulance	911
Fire Dept.	115
Red Cross	582 2219

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Prof. Taxi	588 0035
Taxi D.T.S.	587 2300
Taxi Serv. Aruba	583 3232
A1 Taxi Serv.	280 2828

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Narcotics Anonymous
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Against Domestic Violence(FCVR)
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Centre for Diabetes
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ARUBA TODAY NEWS

Meta launches camera-free AI glasses amid privacy pushback

Menlo Park, United States

Meta unveiled several new wearables powered by its AI models on Wednesday, including an audio-only, camera-free version of its smart glasses, amid global concerns about privacy and the filming of women and girls without their consent.

CEO Mark Zuckerberg announced the new lineup of glasses at the social media giant's annual Connect conference at its Menlo Park headquarters, where he also touted the company's new personal artificial intelligence assistant, Muse.

"There are almost 2 billion people in the world who wear glasses today... and we think that in the coming years, most of these are going to get upgraded to AI glasses," Zuckerberg told the audience of developers and executives. Muse will be "the centerpiece of our vision," Zuckerberg said.

The audio-only glasses will ship on October 13 and



Meta's Ray-Ban Glasses on display in an electronic store on August 10, 2026 in Downtown Brooklyn in New York City.

start at \$349. They arrive amid growing questions worldwide about privacy violations from tiny cameras on glasses and other wearables, which critics have dubbed "pervert" glasses.

Smart glasses let wearers take photos, film videos, listen to music, make phone calls, translate text or interact with an AI assistant.

The audio-only versions will

complement the release of dozens of new smart glasses models that keep the photo and video filming option.

Building in privacy features such as a recording indicator light is "really important," Meta's vice president of AI product, Vishal Shah, told AFP on Wednesday.

"We wanted people to clearly understand that this

was something that was recording, and we've only made that light more explicit over time," Shah said. "We said a lot about that when the glasses first launched, and I think we probably need to keep repeating that more than we have been more recently because none of that's changed," he added.

With nearly four billion monthly active users across

its ecosystem, Meta is betting that wearables like smart glasses can become an easy entry point for people to use its AI software.

Meta launched its first smart glasses in 2021, and last year unveiled "display" glasses that project images onto the lens.

Earlier this year, the company released its own Meta-branded AI glasses, separate from its partnership with eyewear maker EssilorLuxottica, which produces several Ray-Ban and Oakley Meta models.

Meta also announced several new styles of its flagship Meta Ray-Ban glasses. The display version, priced from \$799, will soon be available in new markets including Britain, France, Italy, Germany and Canada.

The company will also soon launch mixed reality glasses that are much lighter than its earlier Quest VR headsets.

Called Meta VR Glasses, they are powered by an external battery and memory pack tethered by a cord, allowing the headset itself to be lighter.

Zuckerberg said the glasses weigh about as much as a

ARUBA TODAY

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Rogue OpenAI agents covered up their tracks, report says

San Francisco, United States

Artificial intelligence agents developed by OpenAI tried to erase traces of their activity after gaining unauthorized access to government websites, according to a report published Thursday. Cybersecurity firm Asymmetric Security analyzed the activity of the agents AI programs capable of acting autonomously which targeted Australian government websites and other public bodies between March and September.

Asymmetric said it could not determine whether the agents' cover-up was deliberate.

The report adds to investigations by OpenAI and independent researchers into a series of incidents dis-

closed since July, including the hacking of AI platform Hugging Face.

OpenAI itself described the attack on Hugging Face as the first of its kind.

These analyses aim to gauge the capabilities of autonomous AI tools, as their lapses fuel fears of losing control over the technology.

According to Asymmetric, the agents were able to refine their techniques in a matter of days, a process that typically takes traditional hackers months or even years.

The incidents reviewed in the report appear to have begun with "innocent tasks," such as gathering Australian health statistics, which then went off course.

"Most of the activity we've reviewed so far involved routine research tasks, such as accessing public web content to answer questions," an OpenAI spokesperson told AFP.

"Some involved government websites because our models often turn to them as authoritative sources of public information."

Asymmetric's report found, however, that the agents opened private accounts on a website analytics service, which concealed their searches, and created temporary email inboxes, one of which was set to self-delete after 48 hours. OpenAI acknowledged in late August that its models had sometimes tried, unsuccessfully, to erase or modify their own activity

logs during internal tests.

The incidents have amplified calls to slow AI development, most notably from Anthropic CEO Dario Amodei, who wrote last month that he feared swarms of agents "taking over the entire internet."

But there is no consensus within the industry or among regulators on how to proceed.

The Trump administration opposes any binding regulation that could hinder innovation, amid fierce competition with China. On Tuesday, President Donald Trump met with tech executives, who adopted a voluntary code of conduct. No federal law specifically governs these models in the United States. □



Cody Bellinger #35 of the New York Yankees watches his three-run home run against the Boston Red Sox during the sixth inning in game two of the American League Wild Card Series at Yankee Stadium on September 30, 2026 in the Bronx borough of New York City.

Yankees, White Sox, Padres advance, Phillies survive in MLB playoffs

New York, United States

The New York Yankees, Chicago White Sox and San Diego Padres powered into the second round of the Major League Baseball playoffs on Wednesday as the Philadelphia Phillies produced a late home-run bombardment to stay alive against the Atlanta Braves. The Yankees wrapped up a 2-0 wildcard series over the Boston Red Sox with an emphatic 9-2 win at Yankee Stadium and will face top seeds Tampa Bay in the next round.

The White Sox -- who received a letter of support from lifelong fan Pope Leo XIV before their series with Houston -- fended off a spirited Astros to win 7-3 in Texas.

But the Chicago Cubs saw their season come to an abrupt halt in California as the San Diego Padres completed a 2-0 series sweep with a 4-1 victory at Petco Park.

Philadelphia meanwhile came from behind to snatch a 4-3 extra-inning victory over the Braves in Atlanta that squared their series at one apiece, with the decider on Thursday.

Chicago's defeat of the

Astros was the latest stop on what has been a remarkable turnaround for the club, who suffered 100 defeats or more in three consecutive campaigns before this season.

Chase Meidroth's three-run homer sealed victory for the White Sox, who will face Cleveland in the American League division series.

"That's everything, man. Coming through for the guys, there's no better feeling in the world," said Meidroth.

After racing into an early 4-0 lead, Chicago saw Houston close to within a run after solo homers from Jeremy Pena, Cam Smith and Jose Altuve each walloped solo home runs in the first, second and fourth innings.

But Meidroth's three-run blast snuffed out the Astros fightback.

The Yankees followed up their 9-0 defeat of Boston on Tuesday with another thumping win in the Bronx to set up their division series duel with Tampa Bay.

Outfielder Cody Bellinger produced the moment of the match, launching a three-run homer-run in a six-run sixth inning that put the

Yankees into an 8-1 lead.

- 'Great win' -

Philadelphia stayed afloat after their thrilling 4-3 defeat of Atlanta.

In a dramatic comeback, Kyle Schwarber and Bryce Harper hit back-to-back homers in the eighth to equalize before Alec Bohm's game-winning home run in the 10th inning. "I don't really know what happened," Bohm said. "I was trying to pull the ball to the foul pole and I hit it to right field so I'll take it."

The series winner plays the reigning MLB champion Los Angeles Dodgers in a best-of-five series starting Saturday. Phillies outfielder Harper, who fluffed a routine catch in the seventh inning allowing Atlanta to seize the lead, found redemption in the eighth.

Harper followed Schwarber's homer off Dylan Lee with his own solo shot to level at 3-3 and the game went to extra innings to set up Bohm's winner.

In the late game on Thursday, San Diego advanced to a best-of-five series against the top-ranked Milwaukee Brewers with a clinical defeat of the Chicago Cubs. □



Spain's Carlos Alcaraz plays a shot to USA's Alex Michelsen during their men's singles tennis match at the ATP Tour Japan Open Tennis Championships at the Ariake Tennis Forest Park in Tokyo on October 1, 2026.

Alcaraz begins Japan Open defense with win over Michelsen

Tokyo, Japan

Carlos Alcaraz began his defense of the Japan Open title with a battling 7-6 (7/1), 4-6, 6-1 win over Alex Michelsen in Tokyo on Thursday.

The Spanish world number three struggled to find his rhythm early on, spraying shots long or into the net as the big-serving American stayed aggressive.

He pulled away in the tie-break but was pinned back in the second set, with Michelsen, ranked 34th, gaining parity after a marathon 10th game.

Going into the third set, though, the seven-time Grand Slam champion suddenly found form, mixing a barrage of blistering aces with delicate volleys to nullify his opponent's threat.

It was ultimately a heartening performance for Alcaraz, who only returned to action at the US Open in August after a four-month injury layoff.

He said it took time to adjust to the open-roofed main court after practicing indoors earlier in the day.

"Going on the central court, I felt a totally different game, different conditions, different everything. So I just tried to play my best," he said.

"I'm happy to get the win at the end but I'm a little bit unhappy about my level."

Alcaraz will play Italy's Matteo Arnaldi, ranked 37th, in the next round.

Earlier, second-seeded Frances Tiafoe cruised past Kei Nishikori 6-4, 6-4 in the beloved home star's final career match.

Nishikori, Asia's most decorated men's tennis player, said in May he was calling time on a career that might have taken him to the pinnacle of the game were it not for persistent injury.

"I am happy that in my spirit I remained competitive until the end," he said in an emotional post-match ceremony.

In other matches, Spanish qualifier Jaume Munar upset third-seeded Taylor Fritz, the 2022 champion, 7-6 (9/7), 4-6, 6-3.

Sixth seed Casper Ruud also crashed out to Luciano Darderi of Italy, 7-6 (7/3), 6-3.

And fifth-seeded American Brandon Nakashima also left the tournament with a 6-3, 6-2 defeat to Frenchman Ugo Humbert. □

Ronaldo's Portugal future in doubt after walkout

Copenhagen, Denmark

The international future of Portugal superstar Cristiano Ronaldo hung in the balance after the 41-year-old walked out on the squad after learning that he would not start the game against Denmark on Thursday. Ronaldo announced late on Wednesday that he had left the team, shortly after a press conference in which coach Jorge Jesus confirmed the five-time Ballon d'Or winner would be left out of his starting line-up for a second consecutive Nations League game.

The former Real Madrid forward had been due to train with his teammates at the Parken Stadium on the eve of the game, but walked out following the announcement by Jesus.

"Following the national team coach's press conference, and after having a conversation with the Portuguese Football Federation president, I decided to leave the national team's training camp," Ronaldo wrote on Instagram.

He had already spent the entirety of Sunday's 2-1 Nations League win in Norway on the bench, having captained the side in the 1-0 home victory over Wales last Thursday.

Ronaldo appeared to indicate that the reasons behind Jesus's decision ran deeper, and hinted at a departure from the national team he has graced for more than two decades.



Portugal's forward #07 Cristiano Ronaldo waves to fans as he arrives for a training session at Parken stadium in Copenhagen, Denmark, on September 30, 2026, on the eve of their Nations League Group A4 match against Denmark.

"In due course, I will tell the truth to all the Portuguese people about my reasons for leaving the national team, to which I have always been dedicated," Ronaldo said.

"Now is time to wish good luck to Portugal and to all my team-mates, without exception."

Spanish sports daily Marca said that Jesus and Portuguese federation president Pedro Proenca followed Ronaldo to Copenhagen airport in an attempt to persuade him to stay with the squad, before the player boarded his private jet. Jesus insisted earlier on Wednesday that there was no rift between him and Ronaldo, although the

72-year-old, who was appointed in July, acknowledged that his captain was disappointed to remain on the bench against Norway. The news sparked a wave of memes on social media and a furious backlash from Ronaldo's sister, Elma Aveiro.

"They don't deserve to have the best of anything," she said about the Portuguese people on Instagram.

"We are envious, scornful, and ignorant, and we deserve to return to the mediocrity that defined us in the pre-CR7 era of football," she added, using his nickname.

- 'Nothing to make a fuss about' -

The game in Oslo was the first time since November 2024 that Ronaldo had not featured for Portugal while not being either injured or suspended.

"There was no incident whatsoever," Jesus, who coached Ronaldo at Saudi club Al-Nassr for a year, insisted after that match.

"Any player and I was a player myself... when you spend 20 or 30 minutes warming up and then don't get on... no one is happy about that," Jesus added on Wednesday.

The Portuguese coach also said that he had told Ronaldo before the match that he might bring him on as a substitute.

"Afterwards, as coach, I decided not to bring him

on. It's nothing to make a fuss about," Jesus insisted.

"Preparation for the two matches against Denmark and Norway... continue as planned with the 24 remaining squad members," the Portuguese federation said after Ronaldo's departure.

"The entire delegation remains totally focused on the national team's next fixtures and on achieving the established objectives."

Jesus declined to comment on the situation ahead of kick-off in Copenhagen on Thursday.

"Today is match day. I want to focus on the match," he told Portuguese broadcaster RTP, adding: "After that, we'll definitely have time to talk about" the matter.

There were reports that Portuguese Prime Minister Luis Montenegro had even discussed the issue of Ronaldo's involvement with the coach on Wednesday.

Jesus said earlier in the day that against Denmark he again intended to start AC Milan striker Goncalo Ramos, who scored the winner in Norway.

Regarding Ronaldo, he said: "If I need him, he'll come on. If I don't need him, he won't."

Ronaldo recently announced that this would "probably (be) my last year in football".

He is Portugal's leading goalscorer and most capped player, with 146 goals in 234 appearances. □

Steelers ship disgruntled defender Porter to Cowboys



Joey Porter Jr. #24 of the Pittsburgh Steelers reacts during the second quarter against the Baltimore Ravens at Acrisure Stadium on January 04, 2026 in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

Washington, United States

Dallas coach Brian Schottenheimer hopes cornerback Joey Porter Jr. can suit up for the Cowboys' NFL clash with Houston on Sunday, days after arriving in a trade from the Pittsburgh Steelers.

The Steelers finally settled their contentious contract dispute with Porter -- who has yet to play this season -- by shipping him to the Cowboys in exchange for two future draft picks.

Schottenheimer told reporters on Thursday that the newly arrived Porter -- who sat out all of training camp and the pre-season after reporting he had aggravated a back injury "moved around good" in a "positive" first practice with his new team.

News of the trade had surfaced Wednesday night. The deal ends a months-long standoff between Porter and the Steelers over a contract extension for the 2023 second-round draft pick, who was inactive for the first three games of the season. The 26-year-old has played in 47 career games, starting in 41, with 165 tackles, 31 pass breakups and three interceptions. The Cowboys hope he can fill the void left by injuries to Cobie Durant and Shavon Revel.

The Cowboys host the Texans on Sunday aiming to bounce back from a demoralizing loss to Baltimore in Rio de Janeiro, where the Ravens won 34-31 on a last-gasp field goal from Tyler Loop. □