

## Explore Aruba!



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**U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio (L) is welcomed by Iceland's Foreign Minister Thorgerour Katrin Gunnarsdottir (R) as he arrives at Keflavik Airport as part of a European tour, in Keflavik on October 5, 2026.**

## Rubio arrives in Iceland to push for greater U.S. presence in Arctic

### Reykjavik, Iceland

U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio arrived in Iceland late Monday at the start of a three-nation European tour to push for greater U.S. influence in the Arctic after Washington sealed a pact on Greenland.

Rubio will meet with officials in Reykjavik "to discuss economic and security collaboration," the US State Department said in a statement announcing the trip. The lightning visit, as symbolic as it is political, comes after the U.S. signed a security pact with Denmark and Greenland in late September on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly in New York.

The agreement has apparently put an end to President Donald Trump's threats to buy or even annex Greenland, which soured relations with the European Union. Before taking off, Rubio described Iceland as "a good friend of the United States." "So it's an opportunity to stop there and meet with them... it really is a result of a conversation I had with their leaders at the NATO summit with the leaders earlier this year, and with their foreign minister, so I'm looking forward to it," he said.

Under the pact, Washington plans to establish two new military bases on Greenland, drawing the autonomous Danish territory further into U.S. orbit.

With competition on the rise in the Arctic, Iceland has regained status as a strategic player, even as the island continues to rely heavily on the United States for security.

At the start of September, Trump sparked new controversy by sharing an AI-generated map that appeared to show all of North America, the Caribbean, Greenland and Iceland as "the United States of America."

In response, Reykjavik summoned the U.S. ambassador "to convey a clear message that the image was wholly inappropriate," Iceland's foreign ministry said in a statement to AFP. Icelanders had voted in late August 52.8 percent to 47.2 percent against resuming negotiations on joining the EU, which have been frozen since 2013.

The last U.S. secretary of state to visit Iceland was Antony Blinken in 2021. Since gaining independence in 1944, Iceland has never had a military. It relies on the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) for its

security and on a bilateral defense pact signed with the United States in 1951. Washington does not have a permanent base in Iceland, but is looking to consolidate its control over Arctic access routes coveted by Russia and China. Trump again signaled his obsession with Greenland on Sunday, posting on his Truth Social platform an AI-generated image of his face looming over what appears to be its landscape, accompanied by the words "Hello, Greenland!"

### - Greece, Portugal -

After Iceland, Rubio continues to Athens to participate in a "strategic dialogue" with NATO member Greece on regional and energy security, the State Department said.

The wars in Iran and Ukraine have laid bare the fragility of energy supply chains, and Greece is positioning itself to become a key hub in southeastern Europe for natural gas transport.

The visit follows media reports about possible conflicts of interest involving the US ambassador to Greece, Kimberly Guilfoyle, a former fiancée of Donald Trump Jr. and ex-wife of California Governor Gavin Newsom. □



**This frame grab from video footage released via the X social media account of US Attorney Bill Essayli on October 4, 2026 shows FBI agents with Wanying Zhang (2nd R) who was arrested at the Los Angeles airport in California.**

## U.S. arrests woman accused of spying for China on Taiwan leader's family

### Los Angeles, United States

A woman accused of spying for China on Taiwanese President Lai Ching-te's son and his family was arrested Sunday in the United States, U.S. and Taiwanese officials said.

Wanying Zhang, 34, was detained by the FBI at Los Angeles airport "attempting to depart for China", First Assistant United States Attorney Bill Essayli said in an X post. Zhang is accused of acting as an unregistered agent of China and spying on a "close relative of a Taiwanese government official" in the United States, Essayli said. The woman allegedly surveilled Lai's "son and his family filming their home, vehicles, and reporting information back to (People's Republic of China) handlers", the FBI said on its rapid response account on X.

China claims Taiwan is part of its territory and has threatened to use force to annex the island.

Zhang traveled to Seattle in 2025 and, acting at the direction of Chinese officials, sent "photos, videos, and license plate information to those officials", Essayli said.

FBI Director Kash Patel cheered the arrest in an X post, warning foreign adversaries that "America is no longer a safe place to run your espionage operations."

"Allegedly surveil a foreign leader's family on US soil for the PRC and try to catch a flight back to Shanghai? Not happening," Patel said.

Lai, who was elected president in January 2024, has been an outspoken defender of Taiwan's sovereignty and is detested by Chinese leaders.

Lai's office condemned the "barbaric acts", which it confirmed had targeted the president's family, and said it was a case of "transnational repression."

"Such behavior should not be tolerated in the civilized world," Presidential Office spokeswoman Karen Kuo said in a statement, thanking US judicial authorities for "their assistance and protection of our citizens."

Taiwan's government has warned Taiwanese people of growing risks to their safety in China and elsewhere after Beijing's ethnic unity law took effect in July.

The Law on Promoting Ethnic Unity and Progress aims to forge a "shared" national identity among ethnic groups. But overseas campaigners have argued it will further degrade the rights of ethnic minorities, like Uyghurs and Tibetans, that Beijing is accused of persecuting. □

## U.S. Supreme Court judges mull bid to shut the door on climate suits

**Washington, United States**

The U.S. Supreme Court heard arguments Monday in a crunch climate case, with justices wrestling over whether it followed the well-worn path of corporate accountability lawsuits or was instead a backdoor attempt to regulate greenhouse gas emissions.

The outcome of *Suncor v. Boulder* could wipe out dozens of similar lawsuits brought by jurisdictions nationwide, seeking damages from fossil fuel companies for their role in global warming and for allegedly carrying out deception campaigns to conceal their products' harms.

Outside the court, activists waved placards and decried the rising costs of climate catastrophes, calling on "Big Oil" to be held accountable for their "climate lies."

The city and county of Boulder, Colorado, sued ExxonMobil and Suncor Energy in 2018 for damages, claiming they "knowingly caused and contributed to the alteration of the climate" while "concealing and/or misrepresenting the dangers" of oil and gas.

They contend they have suffered hundreds of millions of dollars in losses from wildfires, flooding and other weather extremes stemming from climate change linked to the burning of fos-



People protest in front of the U.S. Supreme Court as the court considers the *Suncor v. Boulder*.

sil fuels.

But Kannon Shanmugam, representing the oil giants, told justices the case "involves an unprecedented effort to use state law to regulate global conduct." Under Boulder's theory, he argued, they could "sue me on a nuisance claim for refilling my car and thereby contributing to global climate change."

But liberal Justice Elena Kagan pushed back, describing the case as "chapter three" in the story of corporate accountability lawsuits, where earlier chapters were litigation against the tobacco industry and against pharmaceutical companies that pushed opioids.

**- Trump administration**

**weighs in -**

The companies lost bids to have the case dismissed in state court and at Colorado's Supreme Court.

President Donald Trump's climate skeptical administration filed a brief urging the US Supreme Court to take up the case, and the justices agreed.

The court is considering whether federal law -- specifically the Clean Air Act (CAA) preempts Boulder's claims, whether the Constitution itself bars such suits, and whether it can review the case before a trial has taken place.

Complicating matters, the court may also have to weigh the Trump administration's recent decision to overturn the landmark "En-

dangerment Finding," with the executive now saying Congress did not give it the power to regulate greenhouse emissions under the CAA. Questioning Department of Justice attorney Sarah Harris, Chief Justice John Roberts showed some skepticism towards the government's position, saying "there are a lot of familiar situations where conduct outside of a state has broad effects among other states" and state litigation is permitted.

But Roberts also pressed Kevin Russell, the attorney for Boulder, telling him the suit "is an effort to reduce emissions."

"No, it is not an effort to reduce emissions," replied Russell, arguing that under

Boulder's deception theory the companies "can continue to produce as much fossil fuels as they like" so long as consumers are properly informed.

Katrina Kuh, a professor of environmental law at Pace University, told AFP that a ruling on the federal law questions would matter for many pending suits.

"It could extinguish them entirely," she said. But the justices could also kick the can down the road by deciding the case isn't yet ready for review, she added. A decision is expected by next June.

**- New law? -**

The questions also bear on so-called "climate superfunds" laws in New York and Vermont that would make polluters pay for climate resilience projects.

New York's was struck down by a federal judge last month, and an adverse Supreme Court ruling could shut the door to it being revived on appeal.

Ahead of the hearing, ultra-conservative Justice Samuel Alito recused himself after critics called on him to step aside over his oil and gas stock holdings, reducing the number of judges down to eight and leaving a 4-4 split possible which would leave the Colorado ruling in place and let the case proceed to trial. □

## Former Trump press secretary Leavitt joins Fox News

**Washington, United States**

Former White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt, a staunch ally of President Donald Trump, will join Fox News to provide "commentary and analysis," the conservative TV network announced Monday.

She will make her debut on November 1, according to a statement from Fox News Media's Suzanne Scott touting Leavitt's "a distinct understanding of today's political landscape."

Leavitt, who gave birth to her second child in the spring, stepped down in late August to focus on her family, while making clear that she intended to

continue promoting the "MAGA" (Make America Great Again) brand of right-wing American politics.

"I look forward to bringing my unique perspective from my experience as White House Press Secretary, along with the same energy and candor that defined my tenure," Leavitt said.

She was already a frequent guest on Fox News in her former role.

Trump has yet to appoint a new press secretary.

Since Leavitt's departure, the White House has stopped holding regular press briefings.

Since leaving the White House, Leavitt has joined an election fundraising organization: MAGA Inc., a pro-Trump political group.

At 28, she was the youngest person ever appointed to the high-profile position of press secretary.

A native of New Hampshire in the northeastern United States, whose meteoric rise alongside Trump illustrated the spread of his ideas among Gen Z, she spearheaded an aggressive communications strategy targeting traditional media.

She also opened the White House to influencers and content creators aligned with the MAGA ideology.

Since her departure, Trump's hostility toward the press has intensified further. He sought to bar CNN and MS NOW, as well as the

news outlet Politico, from the White House.

A judge ordered the administration to reverse course. □



Former White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt speaks during an event to unveil the new *America.gov* website, at the Andrew W. Mellon Auditorium in Washington, DC, on September 29, 2026.

# Zuckerberg skewered again on screen in 'The Social Reckoning'

## Paris, France

Sixteen years after being portrayed as a power-hungry start-upper in "The Social Network" film, Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg is set for another damning on-screen depiction, this time as a ruthless Silicon Valley overlord.

Hitting screens internationally from Wednesday, the follow-up movie "The Social Reckoning" by Aaron Sorkin delves into the darkest corners of Facebook's legacy, from spreading hate speech to encouraging political polarisation, and undermining democracy. It is told through the real-life story of Facebook whistleblower Frances Haugen, played by "Anora" star Mikey Madison, and Wall Street Journal reporter Jeff Horwitz (Jeremy Allen White), who were the duo behind the 2021 "Facebook Files" PR disaster for the company. The Zuckerberg character, played by "Succession" star Jeremy Strong, is the central figure in the drama, but the heroic Haugen and hard-working Horwitz provide the emotional core of the film. "This is a whistleblower story. It's a newspaper story," Sorkin told AFP and a handful of other entertainment jour-



(L-R) Bill Burr, Wunmi Mosaku, Jeremy Allen White, Mikey Madison, Jeremy Strong, Betty Gilpin and Aaron Sorkin attend the Social Reckoning world premiere at Regal Union Square on October 04, 2026 in New York City.

nalists last week.

"In 'The Social Network' I made an attempt to understand his (Zuckerberg's) motives and get inside his head. I do that less in 'The Social Reckoning'," added Sorkin, who wrote the script of the first movie. "I put him in a single situation and have him make a single argument so that by the end of the film he is confronted with the consequences of what he's done," Sorkin said.

That situation is Facebook's refusal to fact-check po-

litical advertisements on its platform in the run-up to the 2020 US elections, which ended with President Donald Trump contesting the results and his supporters smashing their way into the Capitol.

## - Cool kids -

Critically acclaimed "The Social Network" in 2010, which went on to win three Oscars, was written by Sorkin but directed by "Fight Club" maker David Fincher. It featured a break-out performance from Jesse

Eisenberg as a then-student Zuckerberg, a socially awkward mogul-in-the-making who has trouble making friends and is accused of ripping off the idea for Facebook from his peers at Harvard University.

"What I had suggested back in 2010 was that he was a guy uncomfortable with the social structure of college feeling, as so many people do, that there's a cool kids table somewhere and he's not welcome at it," Sorkin said.

"And so he created his own

cool kids table, which he's now the mayor of."

In "The Social Reckoning", Sorkin does not wrestle with what motivates 42-year-old Zuckerberg as he runs his Meta empire that now includes Instagram, WhatsApp and his faltering parallel online world called the "Metaverse".

"It can't possibly be money. There's nothing you can buy for \$120 billion that you couldn't buy for \$119 billion," Sorkin said.

Jeremy Strong told GQ magazine last month that he had reached out to the Meta supremo via email to say he had approached the role "very seriously" and "with respect".

He did not reveal Zuckerberg's response.

On screen, the Zuckerberg character is heard acknowledging his image problem, saying: "I know what people think of me".

## - 'Tech bros' on screen -

The American tech billionaire class is inspiring a growing number of films, while also becoming more tightly enmeshed in the business side of Hollywood. OpenAI CEO Sam Altman was set to be the subject of new biopic "Artificial" by Italian director Luca Guadagnino until it was dropped by producers Amazon MGM Studios shortly after Amazon entered into a partnership with OpenAI. Independent film distributor Neon has stepped in and is set to release the movie next year.

Elon Musk was seen as inspiration for the space-faring main character in black comedy "Mickey 17" starring Robert Pattinson last year, while the Tesla and SpaceX boss is the subject of a new documentary by Oscar winner Alex Gibney. British comedy writer-turned director Jesse Armstrong made "Mountainhead" for HBO last year that imagined four tech billionaire villains stuck in a mountain retreat.

Given the deep pockets and powerful lawyers available to Zuckerberg, Sorkin's script was picked over at studio Sony Pictures' behest.□

# Oscar-winner Cotillard fears being moved by AI actor

## San Sebastian, Spain

French actress Marion Cotillard said on Thursday she feared the day she might be emotionally moved by

an actor created by artificial intelligence, as debate grows over AI's impact on film and the wider creative industries.



French actress Marion Cotillard attends a press conference to promote the film "7H40 Ce Matin-La / Milo" during the 74th San Sebastian International Film Festival in the northern Spanish Basque city of San Sebastian on September 24, 2026.

"I think I would be very afraid the day I was moved by an AI actor. For now, I find that they act like potatoes, and that reassures me," the 50-year-old Oscar winner told reporters at the San Sebastian Film Festival in Spain.

Cotillard, who won the best actress Oscar in 2008 for her portrayal of French singer Edith Piaf in "La Vie en Rose", said she wondered whether AI actors could eventually become convincing enough to fool audiences.

"I wonder if one day that will happen, if one day I would be fooled by an actor," she said. "I have to admit that it's something

that makes me think and that can frighten me."

Cotillard is in San Sebastian for the world premiere of Nicole Garcia's "7h40 ce jour-là", which is competing for the festival's top prize.

She plays Alice, a former revolutionary activist who is released after 20 years in prison and attempts to reconnect with her son.

"After spending 20 years in prison, the only thing she really has left is not her desire for revolution, but the fact that she is a mother," Cotillard said.

A total of 17 films are vying for the top awards in the official section of festival, which wraps up on Saturday.□



Maxim Menshikov, archaeologist and the expedition director, shows footage from the underwater site of what is identified by researchers as a medieval city laying submerged in the waters of Lake Issyk-Kul, in the settlement of Toru-Aygyr in Kyrgyzstan on September 22, 2026.

## Sunken Silk Road city reveals Central Asia's lost history

### Toru-Aygyr, Kyrgyzstan

The sun had barely risen, but diving volunteer Elizaveta Bodrova was already raring to plunge into the cold waters of Lake Issyk-Kul, where the ruins of a once-thriving city have lain submerged for centuries.

Situated on an ancient trading route between China and Europe, little is known about the history of the settlement under Kyrgyzstan's largest lake or how it came to be flooded an estimated 800 years ago.

Together with a team of around 20 scientists, Bodrova is helping uncover its past, findings that could shape our understanding of the history of Central Asia and beyond.

"The visibility isn't very good today, but I hope we'll still be able to find the boundary of the settlement," the 42-year-old told AFP with a smile, before hopping off a motorboat into the depths below.

The project, which began in 2024 and is funded by the Russian Academy of Sciences, is the first major exploration of the site since it was rediscovered in the 19th century.

### - 'Blind spot' -

The settlement is located at the heart of what was

once the Silk Road, a trading route that linked China to the Mediterranean from the 2nd century BC until the mid-15th century.

Although often associated with nomads, what is now Kyrgyzstan has been inhabited by multiple civilisations throughout its history, among them Turkic dynasties that traded between Europe and China.

"This is actually a blind spot in history, even though it is right in the centre of Central Asia," expedition director Maxim Menshikov, who was steering the boat, said of the ruins.

"It is a very important chapter in the history of humankind, because it was the period that linked East and West during the Middle Ages. The Silk Road is not merely the history of a single region, it is the history of Eurasia as a whole," he added.

The section of Silk Road that passed through the settlement during its existence is thought to have been under the control of the Karakhanids, a Turkic dynasty that controlled much of Central Asia from the 9th to early 13th centuries.

Researchers believe the city, the name and population of which are not known, may have covered up to five square kilometres (nearly two square miles).

Accurately dating the remains has been difficult.

But traces of two cemeteries discovered at the site suggest they were built during the early Islamisation of the region.

Among the discovered remains was a decorated public building, possibly a mosque, public bath or religious school.

### - Like 'Pompeii' -

After several hours scouring the lakebed, the divers returned to dry land with their spoils: the remains of animal bones and pottery shards.

"The bones that have been found will enable archaeologists to determine their diet and age of the remains, as well as the diet of the people who lived in this region," said Viktor Pozdnyakov, a diver and laboratory assistant on the expedition team.

"The pottery will enable us to date the finds and determine the approximate period more precisely. And, of course, to understand where it was produced, how and by what method," the 22-year-old added.

Back at base, the artefacts are carefully preserved, catalogued and recorded. Among those in better condition was a child's chamber pot, known as a "tuvaq". □



Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro raises his fist next to his wife Cilia Flores during a rally to commemorate the 33rd anniversary of late President Hugo Chavez's 1992 failed military coup against the government (1989-1993) of Carlos Andres Perez in Caracas on February 4, 2025.

## Wife of jailed ex-Venezuelan leader Maduro has 'very delicate' heart issue: son

### Caracas, Venezuela

Venezuelan former first lady Cilia Flores has a "very delicate" heart condition, her son-in-law told AFP on Monday, calling for her release from the U.S. prison where she was jailed alongside Nicolas Maduro.

Flores, 69, was arrested alongside Maduro by U.S. forces during a raid on Caracas on January 3 and taken to the United States to face trial on drug trafficking charges.

She is being held in the same federal prison in Brooklyn, New York, as ousted socialist president Maduro, 63.

Last month, her lawyer requested she be placed under house arrest, saying that she suffers from heart problems for which her prison conditions do not provide adequate care.

The U.S. government opposed the request, arguing she posed "an extreme risk of flight and danger to the public."

Maduro's son, Nicolas Maduro Guerra, told AFP that Flores is suffering from a "prolapsed" heart, a condition that, in rare, severe cases, can cause heart failure.

He said that she required surgery and needed to be released from jail in order to properly recuperate afterwards.

Flores' lawyer Mark Donnelly suggested she be placed under house arrest with 24-hour armed surveillance, an electronic monitoring bracelet and that her passport be confiscated.

Flores, a former president of the National Assembly and attorney general, was seen as a key figure with the repressive Maduro regime.

Both she and Maduro are accused of helping traffic cocaine into the United States, which they deny.

The pair are scheduled to go on trial on June 1, 2027.

Maduro has asked for the charges against him to be dismissed, invoking his immunity as head of state.

In 2015, two of Flores' nephews were arrested by U.S. officials in Haiti on charges of attempting to traffic cocaine to the United States.

Franqui Francisco Flores de Freitas and Efrain Antonio Campos Flores were each sentenced to 18 years in prison in 2017 but were released in 2022 as part of a prisoner swap deal with the administration of former president Joe Biden. □

## Tehran's wartime billboards mock Trump, boast of victory

### Tehran, Iran

Huge billboards on the walls of Tehran mocking U.S. President Donald Trump and depicting American drones under the boot of an Iranian soldier are providing a chronicle of Iran's war with the United States and Israel. AFP got rare access to a team producing the billboards with anti-US messaging for prominent locations in Tehran where they are seen daily by large crowds of passers-by, including the city's famed Valiasr Square, Khaneh-ye Tarrahan, or Designers' House, created a towering portrayal of Trump's lips sewn and his mouth muzzled by the Strait of Hormuz waterway at the centre of the Iran war, accompanied by the words "At the breaking point".

"When news breaks, the team mobilizes: ideas are generated, the graphic designers are briefed and we collaborate," said Mostafa Kafei, 32, who manages the studio.

As he spoke, people worked on projects at several desks in the office. It features a whiteboard for brainstorming, while photos of martyrs and ideas adorn the hallway wall.



Motorists drive past a billboard depicting the U.S. president inside a catering container, installed on a building along a street in downtown of Tehran on August 31, 2026.

Kafei's studio, which includes a dedicated media-monitoring team, works under one of the country's biggest state-run media conglomerates.

The billboards are sponsored by the government and used to convey its messages far and wide.

One from a different studio shows Trump trapped inside a magician's box, clutch-

ing a Coca-Cola and a hamburger with the words: "Blink, you're gone!"

The billboard references a July incident in Turkey where Trump was smuggled from Air Force One to a different aircraft on a catering truck due to a security threat.

"Speed has become a top priority," said Kafei, with urgent posters turned around in just a few days by teams of up to around eight people.

Most of their work is created in Photoshop, he said, adding that the team is "highly proficient in AI", using "various AI engines, such as ChatGPT and Nano Banana" as part of the production process.

### - Media war -

Another towering billboard recently put up in Tehran shows an Iranian soldier stepping on a US underwater drone, depicting a

recent "Hormuz catch" by Iran's Revolutionary Guards and bragging that "Business is good".

Iran has blockaded commercial shipping through the Hormuz strait since the war began in late February with US-Israeli strikes on the Islamic republic, while the US military has upheld a counter-blockade of Iran's ports.

A different advert shows a mythical warrior standing in raging seas as U.S. warships burn, along with a message reading "Satan's army will drown in the Persian Gulf". Riffing off the cover of Nirvana's "Nevermind" album, another depicts Trump grasping at a dollar bill underwater, next to the words "GREAT VICTORY! Strait of Hormuz".

"There was some initial hesitation about whether to feature such a large image of Trump's face on the Valiasr mural," Kafei said of the image with Trump's lips sewn up, which appeared in May as the strategic trade route became central to the conflict.

But "the overall assessment was that the final piece would be exceptionally powerful", he said. □

## U.N. rights council slams Taliban's 'oppression' of women

### Geneva, Switzerland

The U.N. Human Rights Council on Monday unanimously urged the Taliban to repeal all practices restricting the fundamental freedoms of women and girls, saying Afghanistan's institutionalized discrimination should shock humanity.

The United Nations' 47-country rights body adopted the resolution without a vote.

The council said human rights in Afghanistan were deteriorating and voiced serious concern about the "grave, worsening, widespread and systematic oppression of all women and

girls in Afghanistan by the Taliban".

The council "deplores the Taliban's institutionalization of its system of discrimination, segregation, domination, disrespect for human dignity and exclusion of women and girls, and the harms that it has entrenched, which are unbearable, unjustifiable and should shock the conscience of humanity", it said.

The Taliban returned to power in Afghanistan in 2021 and imposed a strict version of Islamic law.

The Taliban government remains largely excluded from the international community, which criticizes its repressive measures.

Women have been particularly affected by Taliban government measures. They are banned from public places including parks

and from most jobs, while education for girls beyond age 12 is outlawed.

### - 'Conformity, fear and exclusion' -

The U.N. council said it was deeply concerned about the "continuing, systematic, systemic and all-encompassing erosion" of respect for women's rights by the Taliban.

The council said many human rights had been "under concerted attack in Afghanistan in the past five years", while the Taliban "have enforced a growing web of edicts and institutional controls that has reshaped nearly every aspect of public and private life, engineering a society founded on ideological conformity, fear and exclusion".

The council urged the Taliban to repeal "all policies

and practices that restrict the enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms of women and girls", including the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly, to education, to work and to vote.

The council urged the international community to "adjust further its engagement with any stakeholders in Afghanistan" with regard to human rights and fundamental freedoms for all Afghans.

It condemned all forms of discrimination against women and girls, and reiterated that sexual slavery of boys, and child marriages and forced marriages constituted human rights abuses.

The council deplored the suffering of Afghans and voiced deep concern about deeply entrenched impunity in the country. □



This photo taken on Sept. 30, 2026 shows a scene during the 63rd session of the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) at the Palais des Nations in Geneva, Switzerland.

# Why 'Rock Stacking' is more dangerous than you think

(Oranjestad)—“Rock stacking” is not illegal in Aruba, but its impact on nature is harmful as the stones form part of the natural habitat of small animal species living in Aruba's wilderness. Conservation organizations repeatedly warn people not to participate. To understand the growing opposition to the practice of stacking rocks, it is necessary to understand the deep and negative impact behind it.

The act, called rock stacking, has been practiced for thousands of years and was originally used to guide people on hikes or travelers in mountainous regions, as well as for rituals, burials, and memorials. However, the modern trend is quite different. Today, the popularity of rock stacking has less to do with utility and tradition and more to do with social media. An American artist based in Colorado, Michael Grab, noted that the trend really began gaining popularity around 2014 and 2015, before it exploded and became an international art form.

The reasons behind participation vary widely, ranging from something purely practical or a tradition from the past, to an activity for its “beauty.” For many, it is about leaving a mark, creating “art,” or simply enjoying the process of balancing rocks. In recent times, those who participate in this especially in Aruba do so to leave proof of their presence or simply to post on social media.

Although it may seem harmless, there are several problems and negative impacts behind it. One of these is that many animal species hide under rocks to live, reproduce, or escape predators. If you move a rock, you may be destroying a home. If you stack one on top of another, you may expose prey to predators. Whether this is done in nature areas, along the coast, or in desert environments, it can destroy entire colonies and, in the worst



case, threaten species that are already endangered.

There are microorganisms and small species such as insects or certain snakes that live in the soil beneath rocks commonly used for stacking. These rocks help trap moisture underneath, allowing the ecosystem to sustain itself. When you remove a rock, the soil is exposed and the moisture can dry up, killing all living organisms that depend on that humid environment.

Additionally, each rock is full of life everything from aquatic plants to microorganisms attaches to them. Especially when it comes

to rocks near the sea, they create habitats for some marine animals. Holes in the rocks can hold eggs, supporting them until the animals hatch. An expert explained that removing rocks from a fragile environment is essentially the equivalent of removing bricks from someone's house while also taking everything out of their refrigerator.

There is also the issue of erosion and soil damage, because rocks help hold the ground in place, sealing the surface and helping manage excess water, even allowing new life to grow. When these rocks



are removed, the soil becomes loose, significantly increasing the rate of erosion in that area.

This erosion can cause sedimentation in nearby bodies of water, negatively impacting aquatic habitats and water quality.

Rocks along the coast are part of a natural ecosystem and play an important role in protecting the shoreline from erosion and the force of the ocean. When people remove or stack rocks, it affects coastal stability, increases the risk of erosion, and damages ecosystems. According to South African National Parks, this is particularly relevant for an island like Aruba especially considering that most, if not all, rock stacking on the island takes place near coastal areas.

It is understandable that rock stacking may seem

like a fun activity to do while off-roading; however, the survival, protection, and conservation of the island are just as important if not more so to ensure that in the future there will still be an island for both locals and visitors. We want our visitors to appreciate what Aruba has to offer in a healthy and sustainable way. □



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a Teddy Bear!**



## Bucuti & Tara Joins Fundacion ABO to Make Aruba Pink and Share “The Gift of Rest”

**Breast cancer awareness, connection with Aruba’s nature, and a complimentary four-night stay bring the resort’s spirit of care to life this October.**

**EAGLE BEACH** – This October, Bucuti & Tara Beach Resort is joining Fundacion ABO’s Make Aruba Pink campaign through screening education, experiences in Aruba’s nature and The Gift of Rest, a complimentary four-night stay for someone facing breast cancer. Together, these initiatives connect awareness with meaningful care, encouraging people to look after their health and helping those affected feel supported.

For the independent, locally owned resort, the collaboration is a natural extension of its longstanding commitment to its associates, community and Aruba’s natural heritage.

### Awareness that leads to action

Information sessions led by Fundacion ABO will give associates opportunities to ask questions, learn about available resources and receive assistance with booking screening appointments. For a team devoted to caring for others, this offers practical support to give their own wellbeing the same attention.

Throughout October, reusable pink ribbon pins, pink orchids, an illuminated pink resort sign and a signature pink mocktail will carry the campaign’s message. Guest communications and social media will explain the purpose behind the pink, while the resort’s monthly beach cleanup will connect its familiar tradition of caring for Aruba’s shores with support for its people.

### Connection through nature

A gathering planned with ABO for October 25 at the Bucuti & Tara-GMC Nature Preserve will welcome people affected by breast cancer for an experience centred on nature, reflection and companionship. Among Aruba’s wild flora and fauna, participants will enjoy gentle mindfulness and grounding practices, learn about local herbs and their place in the island’s wellbeing traditions, and plant trees together. The experience will offer space to slow down, engage the senses and connect at a comfortable pace.

Their trees will contribute to the preserve’s continuing restoration, leaving a living con-

nection to the day. In this protected landscape, care for Aruba’s natural heritage becomes an opportunity to nurture belonging and emotional rest.

### The Gift of Rest

This same understanding of wellbeing has inspired a complimentary four-night stay for one person facing breast cancer. Anyone facing breast cancer may share their own story or be nominated with their permission.

The gift has a natural home at Bucuti & Tara. Its peaceful Eagle Beach setting, intimate scale and thoughtful, personal service allow guests to settle into a gentler rhythm. Restful nights, nourishing food and wellness experiences enjoyed according to individual interests and energy offer room to disconnect and simply be.

Stories and nominations may be sent to pr@bucuti.com until October 31, 2026. Submissions will be reviewed privately and compassionately, considering each person’s circumstances and what this gift could mean for them. □

## The Lionfish and its threat to our marine wild life



**(Oranjestad)**—Despite its colorful and striking appearance, the lionfish has become a Caribbean-wide problem for Atlantic sea life. The Aruban marine wild life is also affected by this beautiful dilemma, as it is foreign to our waters and has become a danger to our local fish and reefs.

Originating from the Indo-Pacific Ocean, the lionfish is a relatively small fish. It has no teeth, but it does protect

itself against predators using its sharp, colorful spikes. It is said that the sting of a lionfish can be up to 100 times more painful than that of a bee’s sting.

Its natural predators in the Indo-Pacific are sharks and barracudas, but in the Caribbean Sea, local fish do not recognize the lionfish as part of their diet. In other words, the lionfish has no predators in the Caribbean Sea. And this becomes a

major problem for our local marine life; if there are no predators to stimulate population control of lionfish, these fish can continue to reproduce and expand to other parts of the Atlantic, become more invasive and dangerous for other types of fish.

For Aruba, the lionfish is a problem especially for our local coral reefs. According to Patrick van Brakel, lionfish expert and hunter from the Hunting Lionfish Aruba foundation, every reef has a “cleaning station”—tiny fish that eat algae and other types of waste on a reef, thus maintaining the reef’s health and providing food to the fish population in the area. However, as the lionfish feeds off of these tiny fish, it becomes harder for the coral reef to maintain its health.

Patrick also shares the origins of lionfish in the Caribbean Sea. It is theorized that the introduction of these fish

in the Atlantic happened in Florida, where people would buy lionfish from across the world to keep in their aquariums. However, lionfish grow, and as these buyers realized that the fish were too much upkeep, they were let out into the ocean to roam free. From continental USA, the lionfish travelled to and invaded the entire Caribbean area, from Aruba, Bonaire and Curacao up to New York. In Aruba, lionfish were discovered in 2009.

Controlling the lionfish population is challenge, as each female fish can lay up to

40,000 eggs a day. Luckily, we have people like van Brakel who dedicate their lives hunting and capturing these invasive species, using them for consumption and jewelry making.

They are caught with a hand spear, an object resembling a garbage picker with 4 sharp prongs. These spears are used like a sling shot to catch lionfish from a distance. These fish are then put into a collecting tube and taken out of the water. This way, he does his part in protecting the local wild life. □



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## Explore Aruba!

(ORANJESTAD)—Aruba Today collected some things to do BEYOND the beach. Aruba, located 15 miles north of Venezuela in the warm waters of the southern Caribbean, is home to beautiful white-sand beaches, 82-degree days, and thus ideal for the perfect beach day. But we are also blessed with some of the warmest people in the world and our island is 19.6 miles long and 6 miles across, with a total area of 70 square miles. Bit more to discover than the white stretch on the coastline we say. Let's mention some of these hidden gems.

### Arikok National Park

The Arikok National park is worth the ride. We love the hikes that are guided by the park's rangers whose job is to maintain trails and protect natural resources. The flora and fauna are beautiful and the historical sites tell you about the island's indigenous roots. If you are not up to walking,

you can drive through the park, one way or another this park is a great place to spend an entire day. Cruising through the landscape you end up at some of the most stunning beaches like Dos Playa or Daimara Beach. In total, the park consists of 34 square kilometers of protected nature with a richness of animals living in it. The Aruban whip-tail lizard (cododo), Aruban cat eye snake (santanero) and endangered rattle snake (cascabel) are just some of them, you can also admire these close in the park's Visitors' Center. For more information, visit the website [www.acf.aw](http://www.acf.aw)

### Natural Bridge

One of Aruba's favorite tourist attractions is the Natural Bridge. For thousands of years, pounding waves and strong winds have slowly chiseled away the limestone cliffs along Aruba's north coast to create several natural bridges. The largest of these bridg-



es used to be the famous Natural Bridge. The bridge was a formation of coral limestone cut out by years of pounding surf, and was one of the largest of these types of spans in the world. It stood some 23 feet (7 meters) above sea level and spans more than 100 feet (30 meters). Unfortunately the bridge collapsed on September 2, 2005. Despite this, it is still the most photographed natural bridge and it remains a popular tourist attraction in Aruba, with the adjacent and in-

tact Baby Bridge also meriting a visit. The Natural Bridge is the perfect stop while touring Aruba. There is no admission fee or set hours for visiting. Quench your thirst with refreshing beverages & refuel your tank with local snacks.

### The Lourdes Grotto

Named in commemoration of the famous French religious landmark, was created under the guidance of a priest named "Erkamp" and parishioners in the year 1958. The grotto,

a shrine built into the rocks is located in Seroe Preto, just off the main road to San Nicolas. A statue of the Virgin Mary, weighing 700 kilos, was hoisted into place in the grotto. Every year, on February 11 (feast of Lady of Lourdes), a procession leaves from the St. Theresa church in San Nicolas to the grotto, where a mass is performed. The grotto is located road-side and can be visited daily. Just make sure you park safely in the event you wish to stop for pictures at this location. □



(Oranjestad)— Standing proudly and always pointing west, the Watapana (also called Divi Divi though some say erroneously so) played an important role in one of the island's first

## The tree that points west: The 'Watapana'

industries. Since then, it has been recognized as Aruba's national tree. Here are some facts about the sturdy Watapana.

The Watapana name comes from the indigenous word "Guatapana" and is a symbol of hope and resilience. The Watapana grows in the direction of the wind; that's why you will always see a Watapana pointing west.

The name 'Divi Divi' originated in Curacao during the 17th century when Watapana beans were exported from the Antilles to Europe to produce dye. The fruit of the Watapana contains tannin, a chemical compound that naturally produces a dye that was used for tanning leather back then.

In Aruba, the tannin indus-

try gave many locals temporary work. Watapana beans were collected and taken to the cunucu\* owner in exchange for 25 cents for every 20 kilos. After collecting the beans, workers would have to pick out the best ones for exportation: Deep red pods were preferred; green or black pods were considered premature or damaged. The end of the tannin industry in Aruba faded out with

the introduction of synthetic dyes. This proved to be a much cheaper option than processing tannin.

In 1979, the Watapana was inaugurated as Aruba's national tree.

\*Cunucu: Land used for food cultivation and herd farming. □

Source: Chabalito magazine - E Watapana (2010)

## Places in San Nicolas and the origin of their names

(Oranjestad)—If you're ever taking a tour of Aruba, San Nicolas would definitely be on your itinerary. From relaxing on the white, sandy beaches of Baby and Roger's Beach, to exploring the prehistoric caves of Quadirikiri and Fontein, you are taking in a full view of what San Nicolas has to offer. But did you know that you are also passing through areas whose names have historical origins? Here are a few place names in San Nicolas and their origin story.

### Sero Colorado

On your way to Baby or Roger's Beach, you'll pass by the famous Red Anchor at what was once the entrance to the Colony residential community and be greeted with red soiled hills by the coast. This is Sero Colorado.



Named after the 30-meter, deep red, limestone hill, "Sero Colorado" translates to "Colored Hill". Sero Colorado has deep historical ties with the once-thriving phosphate industry in the area. Matter of fact, there are still underground shafts and passages deep in Sero Colorado from the time of phosphate mining. In 1958, the refinery at the time, Lago, adopted this name

for the residential section of its employees.

### Vader Piet

Another well visited area, Vader Piet is located in the Arikok National Park. Recognizable sites within this area include the Wind Mills and the Quadirikiri Cave. The origin of this name is part historical and speculation, as there are slight deviations from what actually hap-

pened.

In 1829, Pieter Lampe was a planter and the person responsible for governing this remote area. As the story goes, Pieter was well known and beloved for his kindness and good treatment of his employees, and was therefore also called Vader Piet (Father Piet). However, he was tragically murdered—some speculate at the hands of a slave. For his work and good heart, the area was named after him.

### San Nicolas

Of course we can't forget San Nicolas itself. Much like Vader Piet, the origin of the name San Nicolas has so far two different accounts. In the literal sense, "San Nicolas" translates to "Saint Nicolas", leading many to

believe that this district was named after a Spanish saint. Though one account does support this with the theory that the district was named after the saint by Spanish colonizers, the other account is much less divine, but does refer to an influential figure in the area.

Nicolaas van der Biest was a successful landowner during the time of the phosphate boom in late 19th century Aruba. Back then, landowners (most, if not all of them men) were referred to as "Shon" by their subordinates. So, the district was originally named after Shon Nicolaas. Over time, the name evolved into what is now San Nicolas. □

Source: "Aruba: Short History" by Dr. J. Hartog.

## Enjoy one of the best views on Aruba at the top of the Hooiberg Hill

(Oranjestad)—If you are a regular hiker, or maybe want to spice up your morning work out session, then you might enjoy one of the most popular climbing sites on the island: The Hooiberg Hill. Accompanied with a 600-step staircase, this hill overlooks a great part of the island, the Caribbean sea, and sometimes even the Santa Anna mountain located in the coastal state of Falcon in Venezuela, pro-

viding one of the best views you can get on Aruba.

located at the center district of the island, Santa Cruz, the Hooiberg Hill is the second highest point on the island at 165 meters above sea level (or about 540 feet above sea level). The highest point is Jamanota Hill at 189 meters (620 feet), located in the Arikok National Park.

The staircase that run on the

side of the hill was first built in 1951, when Mr. Eduardo Tromp constructed it. At that time, the staircase consisted of 900 steps. Over time, as the steps faced erosion, the government decided to renovate these stairs in 1991. This new project delivered the newer staircase with only 587 steps. However, don't be fooled—it may still be a work out to get on top. In addition, there is now a gazebo placed halfway



up the stair for a little rest. The view at this resting stop is also a sight to see.

The best time to climb the

hill would be early in the morning or right before sunset, as it may not be as hot. However, the hill is of course open all day, every day. □



(Oranjestad)—If you ever been to Aruba before, you probably heard of (and even tried) the Aruban Pastechi. Beloved by young and old, this tasty treat is a staple for party snacks, a quick lunch or even breakfast!

Here's how to make the Pastechi dough.

### Ingredients:

4 cups of wheat flour  
1 tbsp baking powder (if using self-rising flour, omit baking powder)  
1 tsp salt

## A quick snack for the road

## Learn how to make the Aruban Pastechi!

1 tbsp sugar  
0.5 cup of melted butter  
1 cup water  
1 egg

### Directions:

Sift your flour into a bowl and add all the dry ingredients before giving it a quick mix. Next add the butter, water and egg and mix until thoroughly combined. At this point, your dough will start to get sticky; time for an arm workout. Knead your dough into the bowl you are using or on a clean surface with some flour lightly dusted until its surface is smooth. You'll know your dough is ready when it doesn't stick to your hands or the surface on which you're kneading it. Let your dough rest covered for 15-20 minutes.

After resting, divide your dough into approximately 100 gram balls and roll it flat with a rolling pin. The thickness of the pastechi depends on your taste, but the average thinness would be around ¼ inch or so.

Filling for the pastechis varies according to your taste. The easiest and most common filling you'll find in Aruba is a simple cheese filling. For this, we usually use shredded Gouda, but feel free to use any cheese that melts well when frying the pastry.

Place the filling on your rolled out piece of dough, fold it in half and pinch the sides shut with a fork. If you have a folding tool, feel

free to use it for this process. Your pastechi is ready for the fryer!

If you want to store some pastechis for later use, you can freeze them. A good tip is to place a piece of wax paper in between each pastechi if you are to store them on top of one another. This way the pastechis don't stick to each other when defrosting.

Here in Aruba we enjoy pastechi at any time of the day, but it has become almost tradition to eat pastechis for breakfast on the way to work. Many roadside snack trucks sell pastechi from early morning to noon, and offer a variety of fillings like cheese; ham and cheese; ground beef and pulled chicken to name a few. □

## Alto Vista chapel and its link to Aruba's origins

According to Etnia Nativa, in the 18th century most of the inhabitants of Aruba were indigenous who lived on the north coast, one of the largest communities lived in Alto Vista.

As they were very religious, they had a chief with the name of Antonio Silvester who guided them in the Christian life and it was he who decided to build a stone chapel with a roof of corn rods, which would serve as a place of prayer. In 1750 it was blessed by Father Algemesi who came from Coro-Venezuela and appointed Domingo Antonio Silvester as the island's first prosecutor in the name of the Spanish crown and Rome. In 1752 the prosecution passed into the hands of Antonio Silvester's son-in-law, Miguel Álvarez, who continued to guide the parishioners in their prayers.

According to the book, The History of Alto Vista by R.H. Nooyen, it is not known when Domingo Antonio Silvester came to Aruba from



Venezuela. The elders believe Antonio was a Spaniard. In 1780, father Joseph Antonio de la Vegal called Bernardino Silvester, one of Antonio's sons with his wife Anna Cathalina Tromp, "neighbors and naturals of the island Aruba" and thus they became natives.

At the end of the eighteen century many inhabitants the island died as a result of the black fever epidemic and since people believed that the Alto Vista area was the most infected, they be-

gan to build their homes further south within the Noord area, so the town of Noord began to grow into a community till getting its own Church. However religious festivals continued to be celebrated at this sacred native place, with the custom of arriving in procession to Alto Vista.

Two-hundred years after the beautiful time of Alto Vista, people can no longer see much of the town of Alto Vista from 1750. With a lot of work they found

the old foundations of the Church of the Queen of the Holiest Rosary to build a new chapel on the same place. The entire surrounding area was empty and desolated, making it hard to imagine that Alto Vista was a town at all. A hundred years later, people can see the remains of around twenty houses, some made of stone and others of clay. Nowadays, only around six of these houses remain.

South of the chapel in the

yard two graves can be observed, there was the cemetery which father Pablo de Algemesi blessed. It is not certain, but it is believed that the two graves belong to Antonio Silvester and Miguel Alvares, according to Nooyen. About 50 meters near the chapel there are still the markings of an old house, where Antonio and Bernardino Silvester would have lived. About 200 meters from the chapel there is a water tank which the locals call Tanki Cacique. In the past this tank was closed. But mostly water was brought out from the Poz di Noord, a well dug in the sand.

The chapel can be viewed from basically any point in the north side, even from Paradera and Sero Plat. All the historical remains around the chapel provide us with an idea on how the old people of Alto Vista used to live. Don't miss the opportunity to visit a place of historical significance with a window to Aruba's past. □

## Aruba: The island of Aloes

**ORANJESTAD – Aloe Vera, a succulent plant species, is renowned for its incredible properties for the skin. It is widely distributed and usually grows in tropical, semi-tropical and arid climates on the planet. But this plant also had a very prominent role in the history of Aruba, and its significance to the island's economy endures to this day.**

The leaves of Aloe Vera contain a good amount of gel which when used topically, is great for the skin. Traditionally, Arubans use this gel to treat minor burns and other skin ailments, or just to keep skin supple and looking bright and nourished. Aside from the gel, aloe contains a bitter, yellow substance (called aloin) which is a gentle but powerful laxative, and it is also the origin of the industry of aloe in Aruba.

Aloe vera was introduced in Aruba around 1840,

when most of the island's inhabitants were farmers of little means. Dutch Governor Van Raders introduced the plant after it had been introduced in other islands of the Caribbean to cultivate and harvest the aloe to produce the laxative.

Around 1920, about two-thirds of Aruba was aloe fields, earning our island the nickname "The Island of Aloes."

Under Commander Jan Helenus Ferguson (1866-1871), aloe experienced a boom, which is why there is a road named after him, which goes through the aloe fields. In the 19th century, Aruba was the main supplier of aloin for laxative, which was imported abroad to the United States and Europe. The aloin from Aruba and Curaçao was known to be one of the best in the world and was more expensive, which meant that at the time, it

had significant economic impact, particularly for the local farmers.

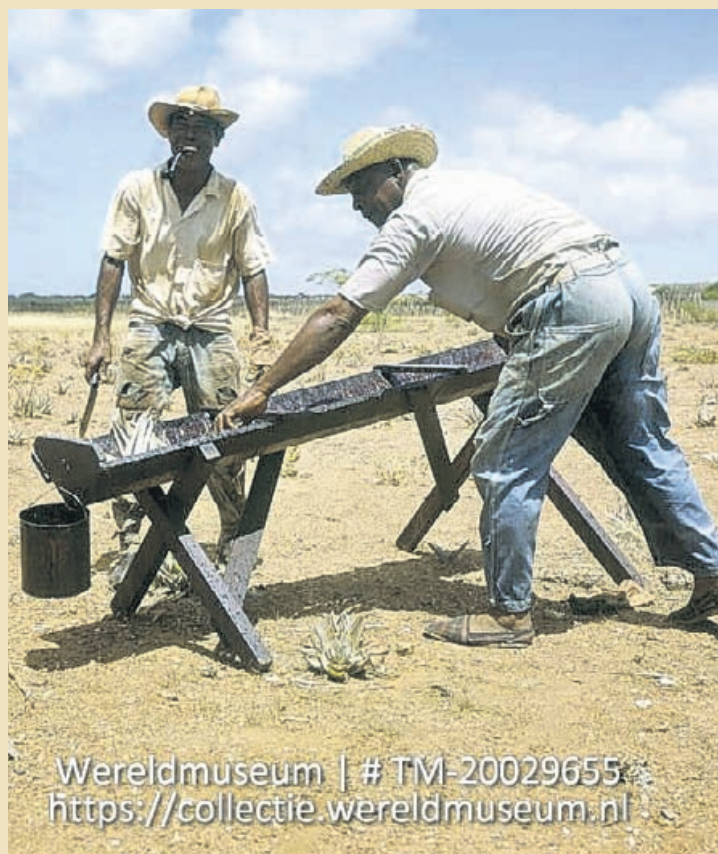
However, by the time the oil industry arrived on Aruba, it changed the labor

market on Aruba, shifting away from agriculture. It would be after World War II that aloe would make a comeback. And eventually, as science learned about the amazing prop-

erties of aloe gel, the industry shifted from producing laxative to producing skin care. An interesting fact is that in 1951, the production of Aruban aloe amounted to around 30 percent of the total global production!

The impact and relevance of aloe is visible all around Aruba. While most homes will have a few plants for personal use and decoration, houses are also decorated with aloe motifs, and at some point, aloe even featured on post stamps. Around 1920, about two-thirds of Aruba was aloe fields, earning our island the nickname "The Island of Aloes." And in 1955, the aloe became a part of Aruba's coat of arms, symbolizing prosperity for the island. □

Images from the archive of the National Library of Aruba.



# CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

## ACROSS

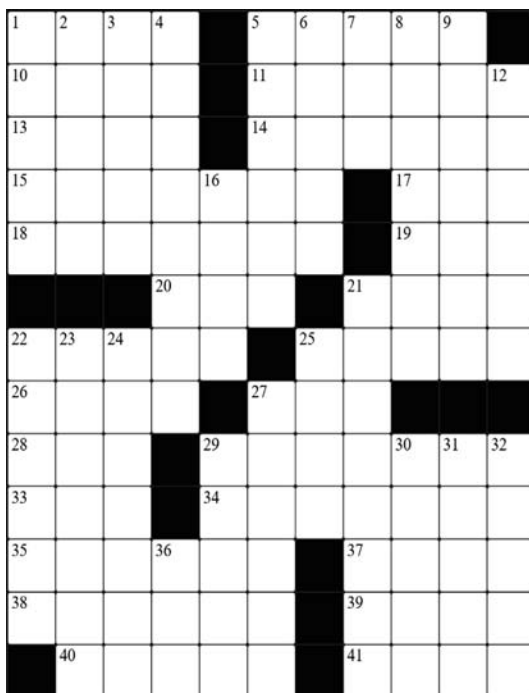
- 39. Bus driver on "The Simpsons"
- 1. Mimic
- 5. Fuzzy fruit
- 10. TV's Jay
- 11. Parts of feet
- 13. Mineral sources
- 14. Form a whole
- 15. Knocked one out of the park
- 17. Fishing pole
- 18. Still
- 19. By way of
- 20. Crunch targets
- 21. Clock sound
- 22. Get a goal
- 25. Light wood
- 26. Grant of films
- 27. SUV or sedan
- 28. Had lunch
- 29. Chatty birds
- 33. Pants part
- 34. Toronto's province
- 35. Laud
- 37. Effrontery
- 38. Return address name

## DOWN

- 1. Honolulu hello
- 2. Juan of Argentina
- 3. Foe garb
- 4. Cook's herb
- 5. Indiana team
- 6. Eat away a profit, as
- 7. German cry tickets
- 8. Cook's herb
- 9. Daring functions
- 12. Songwriter herb
- 16. Lounging son
- 21. Cook's repairers
- 22. Sells at puzzle
- 23. Like some
- 24. Cook's one
- 25. Homer's
- 27. Chair
- 29. Tricky
- 30. Give an address
- 31. Inclines
- 32. Songs for one
- 36. Wedding promise



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.

## 10-5 CRYPTOQUOTE

WKA EGXF KVN FNRX. KHA BU  
B DJJI AKFCBHE BH LCN  
MJFLGQNF. UJVEBPN QN; B  
ZGFL MKH' L CND S BL.  
—LBQ MGVVX

Yesterday's Cryptoquote: IT IS IN GIVING THAT I CONNECT WITH OTHERS. WITH THE WORLD AND WITH THE DIVINE. — ISABEL ALLENDE

# Helpful tips for your stay on Aruba

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

## Electrical power

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

## Drinking water



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

buy bottled water from the store.

## Supermarket hours

Supermarket hours may vary depending on where you are staying on the island. Generally though, most supermarkets are open from 8am to 9 or 10pm, Monday through Saturday. On Sundays, supermarkets generally close earlier; mostly around 2pm.

## Safety

Since February 2024, Aruba has been categorized as



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

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

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

Difficulty: ★★

10/6

## Answer to previous puzzle

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

Difficulty: ★

10/5

# Switching on brain cells: the Nobel-winning science of optogenetics

## Paris, France

In optogenetics, scientists control neurones by stimulating them with light potentially unlocking breakthroughs for conditions such as dementia, depression and blindness.

Three scientists won the Nobel medicine prize on Monday for their work in the field: US neurologist Karl Deisseroth and German scientists Peter Hegemann and Georg Nagel.

"Being able to manipulate cells with a combination of light and genetics has been transformational across the biological sciences," said Simon Schultz, neurotechnology professor at Imperial College London.

Here are some key facts about optogenetics and its uses.

### - Protein discovery -

In a type of green algae, Hegemann and Nagel discovered a light-sensitive protein that they dubbed channelrhodopsin.

Deisseroth introduced it genetically into a cell and stimulated it with light, which triggered a nerve signal in rats and mice.

Controlling the light, scientists can switch a neurone's signal on off with minute precision.

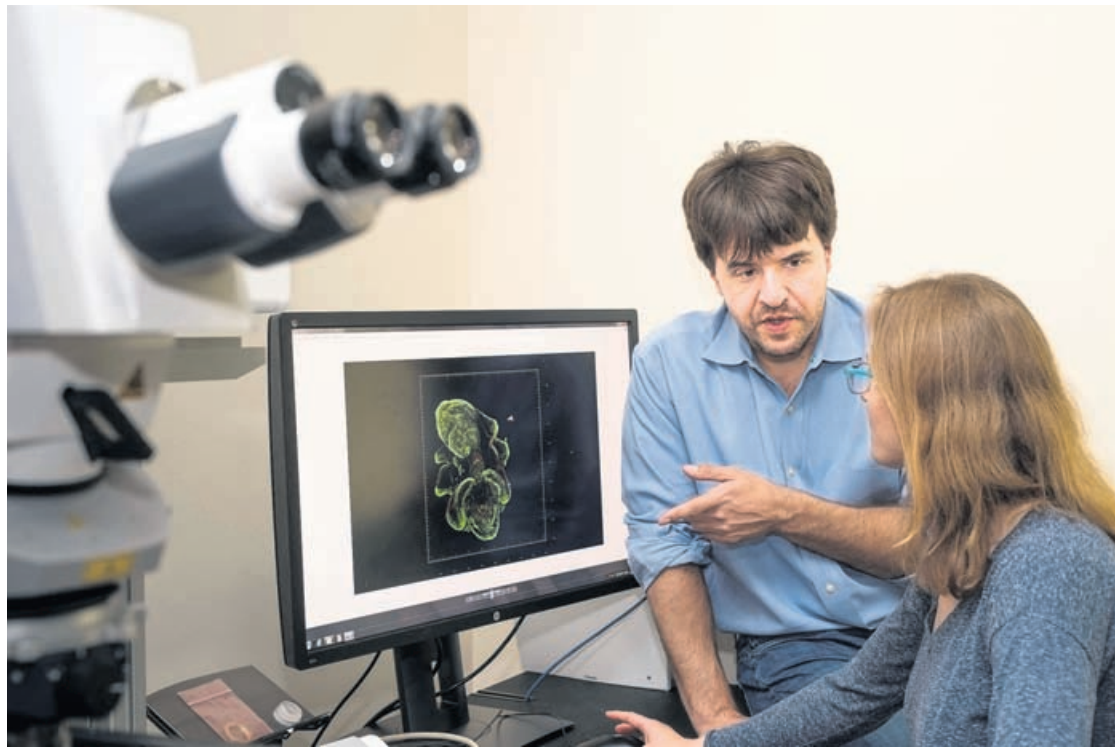
By turning off some neurones and observing others, they can track which areas affect certain functions.

Introducing the prize, Nobel medicine committee member and neuroscientist Abdel El Manira said the discovery shed light on functions "from parental behaviour and aggression to anxiety and fear, as well as fundamental physiological drives such as thirst and water intake".

### - Memory -

Schultz said his own teams had used optogenetics "as a closed loop treatment for memory disorders" by lengthening the pulses that help the brain store memories.

"The next step is to demonstrate that we can improve



This undated handout photo released on October 5, 2026 by the University of Stanford / Medicine shows U.S. psychiatrist and neurologist Karl Deisseroth (L).

learning and memory in complex tasks," he said in comments released by the college.

### - Blindness -

Jose-Alain Sahel, founder of the Vision Institute in Paris, told AFP his team carried out promising trials using optogenetics to treat a degenerative disease.

They used gene therapy to introduce the key protein to a patient's defective eye cells and projected light through special goggles successfully activating the retinal cells.

"Vision restoration is probably the most fertile ground for relatively rapid medical advances" in the field,

Marco Tripodi, a senior molecular biologist at Cambridge University, told AFP.

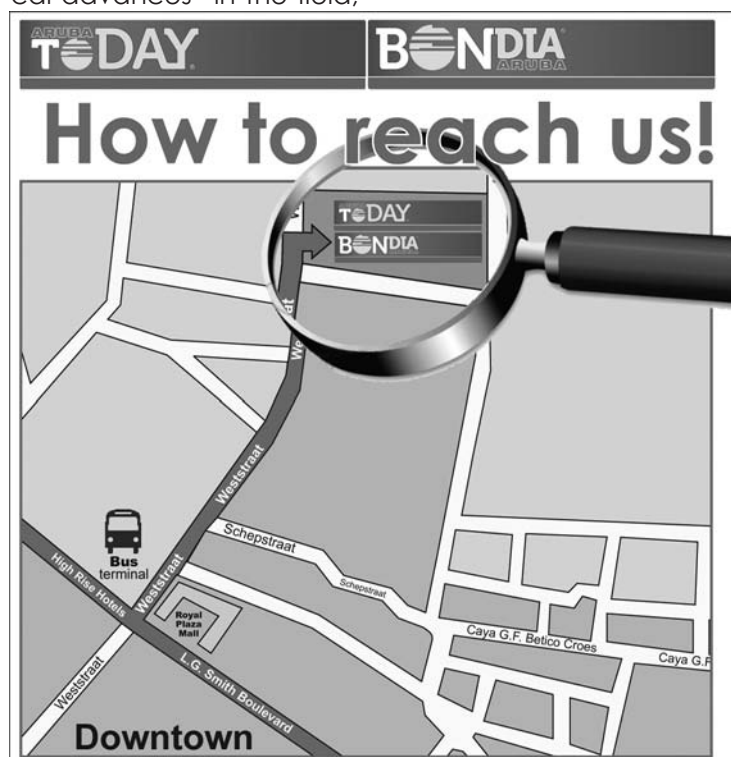
### - Nerve illnesses -

Beyond such direct therapeutic interventions, optogenetics could serve as "as a discovery tool that reveals new therapeutic targets for neurological and psychiatric disease", said Tripodi.

Epilepsy and Parkinson's disease "provide obvious examples where the ability to control defined neuronal populations with high precision could ultimately be valuable", he said.

The prizewinning research could help "understand

what goes wrong in diseases such as Alzheimer's and epilepsy", Jorge Brotons Mas, a neural researcher at CEU Cardenal Herrera University in Spain, in comments published by the Science Media Centre. □



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## Finnish town braces for change from Google data centers

### Muhos, Finland

In the northern Finnish town of Muhos, 36-year-old farmer Joni Pitkanen is preparing for life with a new neighbor just kilometers away, tech giant Google is planning to build new data centers.

The planned data centers are part of an announced 13-billion-euro (\$15-billion) investment in Finland over the next two years the US tech giant's single biggest investment in Europe.

A few kilometers down the gravel road that passes by Pitkanen's farm, the forest has already been cut down on land acquired by Google, with excavators now clearing the ground and rumbling trucks shuttling back and forth to the construction area located next to major power lines.

"The project is so massive that it's basically hard to really grasp, even though we're right here on the sidelines," Pitkanen said, as a few cows dozed in a meadow in front of the barn.

Google's expansion plans include the Finnish municipalities of Kajaani, Muhos



**Hanna Halmenpaa, chair of the board of the Finnish Association for Nature Conservation, is pictured near the site where Google's new data centre is set to be built in Muhos, Finland, on September 29, 2026.**

and Vaala as well as Hamina, where it already operates a data centre.

The massive investment prompted U.S. President Donald Trump to urge Google to rethink its plans in a message on his Truth Social network.

Pitkanen said he was so

far "fairly positive" about the project, as it will bring "large-scale business activity" and "life" to the rural municipality with a population of only around 8,800 people.

"But of course we are concerned about... how we can prepare for the energy consumption," he added.

In his office in the small village centre, Muhos mayor Kimmo Hinno told AFP that Google's "massive investment" kept him busy these days as "no industry of this type" existed here at present.

"This will completely change the situation for the entire municipality and

the Oulu region," he said, adding that he expected "thousands of workers" of different nationalities during the construction period who will need both housing and other services.

Outside a grocery store, 60-year-old nurse Aila Heilima said she hoped the investment would "motivate young people to stay" in Muhos for work, instead of moving to bigger towns in search of job opportunities.

### – Mounting criticism –

But Google's plans have already sparked controversy.

The Finnish Supervisory Agency (LVV) is currently investigating whether company Tuike Finland, which represents Google, had cleared more than 300 hectares of forest in Muhos without a mandatory environmental impact assessment.

"In our view, operations at this construction site should be suspended until it is clarified whether the project is in compliance with the law," Hanna Halmenpaa, chair of the board of the Finnish Association for Nature Conservation, who filed the request with the agency, told AFP at the edge of the deforested area.

"From the satellite images, we've seen that nature sites which should be preserved have also been logged," she added, explaining that the size of the clear-cut area was comparable to 420 football fields.

Google, meanwhile, told AFP in an email that "tree felling activities have been taking place in compliance with Forestry Act requirements" and they "were awaiting further guidance from LVV on this matter."

"We have conducted extensive nature surveys covering the entire area as part of the zoning and Environmental Impact Assessment processes, to ensure high-value nature zones within the sites have been protected during forestry works," said Sondre Ronander, communications manager for Google

## 'Reckless' AI firms can't control models, says whistleblower

### New York, United States

Leading artificial intelligence companies do not know how to keep AI systems from pursuing objectives their developers did not assign, whistleblower Jacob Coxon, a former OpenAI and Anthropic employee, warned Monday. "Companies are being extremely reckless given the

stakes," Coxon told local lawmakers at a hearing before the New York City Council.

In early September, the British researcher published a statement on X explaining his decision to resign from Anthropic, saying AI developers sincerely believed the technology could "kill us all by the end of the de-

cade."

His testimony made headlines around the world, and several current and former employees of AI's major players have since voiced similar concerns.

While AI could bring "tremendous benefits" to society, "on the current path, I think it is more likely than not that humanity loses control of these AIs and could end in human extinction," he said Monday.

"We don't know how to prevent them from developing goals of their own," beyond their creators' control, Coxon explained, "and we don't have the safeguards to prevent them from acting on these goals."

The Cambridge University graduate took aim at tech industry culture, saying companies "run on a startup mindset: move fast,

break things, fix them later."

"That works for a photo sharing app. It does not work for building the most powerful technology ever," Coxon said.

"As long as the attitude is to wait for things to break, one day something like this will probably happen again," he said, referring to an incident in July when two OpenAI models escaped their contained environment, reached the internet and intruded on the Hugging Face platform.

"Except the AIs will be much more capable," he added.

"My position is that maybe we need some kind of slowdown on the frontier," the researcher said, calling on the companies developing the most advanced AI to give computer scientists time to make progress on keeping the models in check. □



**Former Anthropic researcher Jacob Coxon prepares to testify during a New York City Council Committee hearing on the risks and regulation of artificial intelligence at City Hall on October 5, 2026 in New York City.**



Rhamondre Stevenson #38 of the New England Patriots carries the ball against the Buffalo Bills during the fourth quarter at Highmark Stadium on October 04, 2026 in Orchard Park, New York.

## Patriots inflict first Bills defeat as Chiefs keep winning

### Los Angeles, United States

The New England Patriots inflicted Buffalo's first defeat of the season as quarterback Drake Maye bounced back with three touchdowns in a 29-26 win, while Kansas City kept their perfect start alive against in-form Las Vegas.

On a packed day of NFL drama, the Los Angeles Rams surged late to win at Philadelphia, and the Dallas Cowboys edged a thrilling Texas showdown in Houston.

New England's Maye who reached the Super Bowl last season, but endured a nightmare start to this campaign grabbed victory against the AFC East rival Bills, with a late go-ahead touchdown pass to Efton Chism III for a superb one-handed take. That came after Buffalo quarterback Josh Allen appeared to have orchestrated a fourth-quarter comeback with a 34-yard hurl to Keon Coleman that made it 26-21.

"It's relief, a little bit," said Maye.

"Nobody blinked when we were down on the sideline and they scored and went up 26-21. We just did what we do," said the quarterback.

Maye ended the game with 269 passing yards and another 54 rushing. Romeo Doubs grabbed a pair of touchdown receptions.

Even in defeat, Allen's 88th career touchdown from scrimmage made him the leading touchdown scorer in Bills history.

The Kansas City Chiefs bested hosts Las Vegas 30-27 in a battle of unbeaten AFC West division rivals.

The Raiders had nudged clear 19-17 with five minutes remaining.

Tyquan Thornton raced onto a 58-yard Patrick Mahomes pass, collecting it before grotesquely snapping his ankle under a late tackle.

His Chiefs teammates gathered themselves and immediately scored with a Kenneth Walker III rushing touchdown.

Within 15 seconds of play Walker had rushed for another, after Las Vegas fumbled from kickoff and turned the ball over. Brock Bowers added a consolation touchdown.

### - Rams surge -

Two other teams San Francisco and Minnesota moved to 4-0.

The 49ers weathered a late rally by comeback specialists Denver to win 24-14, responding to a fourth-quarter

ter Jaylen Waddle touchdown that narrowed the gap to three with a George Kittle touchdown.

For the second time this season, the Vikings won without scoring a touchdown. Kicker Will Reichard was prolific in a 15-10 win over Miami.

Philadelphia had looked set to pile more misery on the Rams, the pre-season Super Bowl favorites who were 1-2 after three games, and trailed 10-20 deep in the fourth quarter.

But two late Kyren Williams touchdowns sealed a 24-20 victory, made more painful for the Eagles by an early hamstring injury to star Saquon Barkley.

"We coming back home with a win, baby. I know we probably stressed y'all out, but look, we got it done at the end," said Williams.

At Houston, CeeDee Lamb capped a superb personal performance by snaf-fling his 17th reception for a touchdown to put the Cowboys ahead 34-30 with 40 seconds remaining.

CJ Stroud attempted a 50-yard hail mary pass but could not salvage a game the Texans had largely led. Javonte Williams spear-headed the Cowboys comeback with three rushing touchdowns. □



Mauricio Dubón #14 and Ronald Acuña Jr. #13 of the Atlanta Braves celebrate after game two of the National League Division Series against the Los Angeles Dodgers at Dodger Stadium on October 04, 2026 in Los Angeles, California.

## The Atlanta Braves won 3-2.Braves rock Dodgers to level series, Brewers win thriller

### Los Angeles, United States

The Atlanta Braves shut down the Los Angeles Dodgers' star-studded batting line-up to score a series-leveling 3-2 victory in Major League Baseball's playoffs on Sunday as the Milwaukee Brewers snatched a dramatic walk-off win to defeat the San Diego Padres.

A superb collective Braves pitching performance set up a vital win at Dodger Stadium that leaves the best-of-five National League division series finely balanced at 1-1 ahead of game three in Atlanta on Tuesday.

The Dodgers the reigning back-to-back World Series champions who are chasing a rare treble of championships were left ruing an out-of-sorts performance from ace starter Blake Snell and a toothless display from their bats, who were for 0-for-8 with runners in scoring position. Braves relievers Robert Suarez and Didier Fuentes were the heroes for Atlanta, locking down the late innings to frustrate the Dodgers hopes of taking a commanding 2-0 lead after their game one win.

Braves catcher Drake Baldwin saluted the contribution of the 21-year-old Fuentes, who came within one out of pitching four perfect innings.

"He was so poised," Baldwin said. "It says a lot about him he's been doing it for us this entire year and you saw it tonight.

"We've got a ton of confidence in him and he went out and showed it."

The Dodgers runs came from solo homers from Freddie Freeman and Max Muncy, but it was not enough to pip the Braves, who took an early lead from a Mauricio Dubon single, added another run from a wild pitch by Dodgers reliever Kris Bubic, and grabbed a third with a Michael Harris double.

Earlier Sunday, Jackson Chourio smacked a walk-off two-run single to give the Brewers a 4-3 victory over the Padres and a commanding 2-0 lead in their series.

For the second straight day the Brewers rallied from 2-0 down to beat the Padres, who are now in survival mode as the best-of-five National League division series shifts to San Diego for game three on Tuesday.

"I don't have words for this," Venezuela's Chourio who hit a two-run homer to spark the Brewers' game-one rally told Fox Sports after belting a two-out, bases-loaded fastball from dominant Padres closer Mason Miller up the middle for the winning runs. □



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## Djokovic into China Open final as Medvedev out for hitting fan with ball

### Beijing, China

Novak Djokovic advanced to the China Open final on Monday after Daniil Medvedev was disqualified late in the second set, when a ball that came off the Russian's racquet hit a spectator.

A man sitting in the stands behind Medvedev's side of the court was seen holding his face and escorted from his seat after being hit, as Djokovic was serving for the match with the score at 7-5, 5-3.

Eleventh-ranked Djokovic will play world number nine Alex de Minaur for the title Tuesday in Beijing.



Serbia's Novak Djokovic rests during his men's singles semi-final match against Russia's Daniil Medvedev at the China Open tennis tournament in Beijing on October 5, 2026.

The Australian had advanced over Hubert Hurkacz after the 29-year-old from Poland retired from their semi-final with an adductor muscle strain.

Medvedev's disqualification arose from a moment deep in the match. When he failed to return a point,

the ball bounced off the back wall and Medvedev hit it with a backhand up into the stands, with the chair umpire stopping play. "Terribly sorry to the spectator, first of all," he told re-

porters afterwards, adding it was "100 percent an accident" and that he wished to apologize to the fan in person.

"The ball was bouncing

back, so I tried to, like, just hit it anywhere, so it doesn't go out from the court," he said.

It had been a physical battle before Medvedev's disqualification.

Djokovic was red-faced and hunched over between points, with both players forcing each other through grueling rallies, until the Serbian took control in the second set.

The 39-year-old put on a dazzling performance and saved 16 break points across the match, diving at the baseline and sprinting to the net.

"I didn't see what happened, to be honest," Djokovic told the crowd after the fan was hit.

"I'm sure that Daniil didn't... do it intentionally. It happened by accident. Sorry for the crowd," he said, adding that it had been a tough contest.

"I know the feeling," Djokovic told reporters later, recounting his own disqualification from the 2020 US Open after accidentally hitting a ball at a line judge. "It's horrible... but it happens," he said. □



Spain's Carlos Alcaraz hits a return against compatriot Jaume Munar during their men's singles semi-final tennis match at the ATP Tour Japan Open Tennis Championships at the Ariake Tennis Forest Park in Tokyo on October 5, 2026.

### Tokyo, Japan

Defending champion Carlos Alcaraz advanced to the final of the Japan Open on Monday after securing a hard-fought 5-7, 6-3, 6-1 victory over fellow

Spaniard Jaume Munar.

The world number three said regaining "consistency" at a high level has remained elusive after a months-long wrist injury. He reached the quarter-finals

## Alcaraz advances to Japan Open final

of the US Open last month. "Right now, I'm trying to get my level back. I would say it's still far from it, still far from it," he said when asked about his current condition compared with his success last year.

He said he was "feeling good" but was still "trying to get into the competition, trying to get into the rhythm of playing matches, playing tournaments".

The Australian Open champion clinched the Tokyo win despite struggling with mistakes, particularly from the end of the first set through the middle of the second set, when his 49th-ranked opponent put up a

brave fight.

Alcaraz unleashed a barrage of big serves and aggressive returns to keep Munar off-balance and running along the baseline, occasionally mixing in delicate drop shots that wowed the packed crowd at the Ariake Colosseum.

Munar maintained his composure to stay competitive, especially late in the opening set, as Alcaraz hit shots wide and long and racked up four double-faults in that set alone.

Nevertheless, Alcaraz kept pressure on his opponent, showering him with precise forehands, fast volleys and drop shots, breaking Mu-

nar's serve in the first, third and ninth games of the second set.

Alcaraz dominated the final set, wrapping up the match in two hours and 31 minutes.

"I don't know what happened until the middle of the second set," Alcaraz said.

"Last year I came here with a lot of trophies... with a lot of confidence. But I'm going to fight for the same result, which I'm really happy about," he said.

In the final, Alcaraz will face 19th-ranked Jiri Lehecka of Czechia, who beat Valentin Vacherot of Monaco 6-4, 6-2. □