

Ayo & Casibari: Aruba's famous rock formations



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Blackstone Beach



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of the cah'i
orgel?



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more
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ARUBA
PINK

It's a
reminder
to get
screened.

Aruban legends: Frenchman's Pass



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

After botched execution, U.S. woman was nearly taken off life support before revival

Washington, United States

A convicted U.S. killer who survived a botched execution was almost taken off life support before she regained consciousness, her lawyer said Wednesday, as a court ordered prison authorities to preserve evidence in the case.

Christa Pike, 50, who was sentenced to death for a murder she committed when she was a teenager, received two supposedly lethal doses of the drug pentobarbital at a Tennessee prison last Wednesday. She survived the injections, however, and was rushed to a hospital where she was in critical condition for several days, unconscious and on a ventilator.

"On Monday night, it was our understanding that Christa was brain dead, and that life support would be removed the next day," her lawyer Randy Spivey told reporters.

"But on Tuesday, to the shock of everyone... Christa woke up and began talking."

Pike remains shackled to her hospital bed, awake and able to speak a little but incapable of swallowing or moving her arms, according to her attorneys. "She cannot move either of

her arms, both of her arms and hands are tremendously swollen, and we do not know what, if any, function she will regain in her arms," Spivey said, adding that "there's a long road ahead" for her recovery.

"Medical staff have asked that the shackles be removed and have been denied that request," Pike's lawyer Luke Ihnen said at a court hearing.

An anesthesiologist retained by Pike's lawyers as an expert ahead of her execution told the BBC that she was off the ventilator. She has "no memory, I believe, of the execution attempt," Joel Zivot said, adding that Pike knows her name and thinks it is currently September.

"We have to ask how much suffering is enough? We continue to ask (Tennessee Governor Bill Lee) to commute Christa's death sentence" to life in prison, Spivey said.

The court ordered state corrections officials to preserve all evidence related to the botched execution including medical supplies, waste, and audio and video recordings.

Pike's fate revived debate over capital punishment in the United States.

Lee suspended executions in Tennessee pending an independent investigation and the state's prison chief resigned. Tennessee's correction department has maintained that it followed established protocol.

The state of Texas was scheduled to carry out an execution later Wednesday, the first in the United States since the attempt to put Pike to death.

Jamaal Howard was set to die by lethal injection for killing a store clerk during a 2000 robbery.

His lawyers have sought to have his execution postponed, citing Pike's case.

- First to survive -

The Death Penalty Information Center, which publishes data and analysis on capital punishment in the United States, said Pike was the first inmate to survive after being injected with lethal doses of execution drugs.

Pike was 18 when she and her boyfriend beat and killed 19-year-old Colleen Slemmer at a job training camp.

Pike would have been the first woman put to death by the state of Tennessee in more than 200 years, according to the Death Penalty Information Center. □



The entrance to Trump International Golf Club in Palm Beach County, Florida, on an unspecified date.

Trump plans to turn Florida golf course into presidential retreat

Washington, United States

U.S. President Donald Trump said Wednesday he wants to turn his luxury Florida golf course into a retreat for future presidents modeled on the historic Camp David getaway.

The 80-year-old billionaire said that US security officials had suggested the plan to transform the Trump International Golf Club in West Palm Beach into a sanctuary for his successors.

"Seems that all presidents play golf, and I was asked by Secret Service and the military," Trump who is himself a huge golf fan told reporters in the Oval Office.

"It's only about two minutes away from the airport, so they literally would be at that site, and they could spend a weekend there like a retreat, like sort of a Camp David retreat.

"And they asked if I'd be willing to do it, and I said I would be. This wouldn't be for me, this would be for all future presidents."

Trump said there would be security advantages to the site, where gunman Ryan Routh tried to assassinate the then-presidential candidate in September 2024. Routh was jailed for life earlier this year.

"There are no high buildings looming over it. There are no houses on it," he said.

Trump already spends many winter weekends on the fairways at the club. It is a short drive from his opulent beachfront Mar-a-Lago residence, which he dubbed the "Winter White House" in his first term.

Trump did not address whether U.S. government money would go towards the plan for his club.

- 'Happens to be a highly-rated course' -

But it is the latest in a series of projects in his second term that have seen Trump stamp his physical mark on the U.S. presidency while raising questions about where the funds come from.

Trump is building a \$400-million ballroom at the White House that he says is paid for by himself and private donors though the costs for extra security features are being borne by U.S. taxpayers.

The former property tycoon has also faced ethical questions about his decision to host this December's G20 summit at his Doral golf club near Miami.

He was forced to give up a similar plan in his first term following a major backlash.

A White House official told AFP that the Trump property in West Palm Beach has all the "features that are necessary for any presidential retreat" and "happens to be a highly-rated golf course." □

Pentagon chief visits carrier returning from tough Iran war deployment

Washington, United States

Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth on Wednesday hailed the USS Abraham Lincoln's crew while visiting the ship as it returned from a lengthy, difficult Iran war deployment in which multiple service members in the carrier strike group attempted suicide.

The massive nuclear-powered warship left California in November 2025 for duty in the South China Sea and was rerouted to the Middle East before U.S.-Israeli attacks on Iran that began in late February, staying at sea until a Thailand port call in early September.

"What the USS Abraham Lincoln carrier strike group did, no other carrier strike group has ever done," Hegseth said in remarks to service members on the ship while it was at sea in the Pacific.

"Ten thousand sorties, 23,000 combat flight hours, almost 4,000 combat sorties," he said, later announcing the award of a presidential unit citation to the strike group for "extraordinary heroism against enemy forces."

But the lengthy deployment took a toll on US military personnel on the Lincoln and accompanying



U.S. Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth looks on as U.S. President Donald Trump (out of frame) speaks to the press before walking to board Marine One on the South Lawn of the White House in Washington, DC, on October 6, 2026.

warships. In August, military families and lawmakers sounded the alarm about issues including reported suicide attempts and food shortages aboard the carrier.

Those claims were dismissed by President Donald Trump at the time, while Hegseth insisted the situation had been "misrepresented."

- Hegseth slams media coverage -

On Wednesday, Hegseth took aim at press coverage of the carrier, saying: "There were a few folks in the media who tried to turn the USS Abraham Lincoln into some sort of a symbol a symbol of dysfunction, or a symbol of low morale, or a symbol of a failed mission."

"It's the exact opposite," he said. "The only reaction the American people and the American media should have is pride."

Last month, the Trump administration acknowledged in a letter to a lawmaker that there had been eight suicide attempts by U.S. service members who were part of the Lincoln carrier strike group but said none of those people died.

The letter from Acting Navy Secretary Hung Cao provided details on some of the suicide attempts. It said a sailor assigned to an air wing "went overboard from the ship in early Au-

gust" and was quickly recovered, while another sailor "attempted to go overboard in March and was stopped by his shipmates."

The letter also said that while food supplies on the carrier were "adequate," limited resupply options during combat led the "number of main entree options" to be reduced from "two to one for a short time."

Jonathan Schroden, chief research officer at the Center for Naval Analyses, told AFP that carrier strike groups are generally designed for six-month deployments for reasons including sailor well-being -- a much shorter time than the Lincoln was deployed.

The Lincoln is not the only American carrier to face issues during a lengthy time at sea: the USS Gerald R. Ford also suffered various problems during a recent 326-day deployment.

A fire broke out in a laundry room aboard the Ford in March, injuring two sailors and causing major damage to some 100 beds, according to the U.S. military, while U.S. media reported significant problems with the ship's toilet system. □

Costa Rica's Grynspan tops informal poll for U.N. chief: diplomat

United Nations, United States

Costa Rica's former vice president Rebeca Grynspan appeared Wednesday a frontrunner in the race for U.N. secretary-general as she led informal polling for a fourth time, according to a diplomatic source.

A total of seven candidates four women and three men are vying to succeed U.N. chief Antonio Guterres, of Portugal, who ends his second five-year term on December 31, 2026.

The selection process is fraught with uncertainty as a single veto from one of the five permanent members of the 15-member U.N.

Security Council can block a potential nominee.

In Wednesday's poll held behind closed doors, Security Council members anonymously assigned each candidate one of three ratings: "encourage," "discourage," or "no opinion."

According to a diplomatic source, Grynspan came out on top with nine "encourage," six "discourage," and zero "no opinion." This is the fourth time she has led the poll out of five rounds held since July.

The veteran diplomat's performance, however, is weaker than in a previous vote on September 29, after which she had received

only three "discourage," along with 10 "encourage" and two "no opinion."

Argentine Rafael Grossi, the head of the International Atomic Energy Agency, came second with six "encourage," seven "discourage" and two "no opinion."

Carolyn Rodrigues-Birkett, former foreign minister of Guyana, came third.

Even if a candidate earns the required nine votes from the 15 available in the Security Council, they must also avoid a veto by the five major powers, which are deeply divided.

Once a candidate clears those bars, their name will go to the General Assem-



Costa Rican economist and Secretary-General of UNCTAD Rebeca Grynspan, candidate for the United Nations Secretary-General position, speaks during a debate at the U.N. General Assembly Hall in New York, on July 23, 2026.

bly of all U.N. members for confirmation. It is tradition that the U.N.'s top job should rotate between dif-

ferent regions. Under that premise, the role should go to a candidate from Latin America this time. □

In 'The Social Reckoning,' Jeremy Allen White takes on Facebook's 'frightening' ambition

Los Angeles, United States

Jeremy Allen White finds the power of social media frightening an anxiety he's now confronting in his latest film.

The actor is starring alongside the Oscar-winning Mikey Madison in "The Social Reckoning," the drama directed and written by Aaron Sorkin that delves into the inner workings of Facebook.

The film focuses on the investigation that led to "The Facebook Files," a trove of statements and data leaked in 2021.

The preceding probe into the social network's practices was spearheaded by the then-Wall Street Journal reporter Jeff Horwitz (White) with assistance from whistleblower Frances Haugen (Madison).

"I've got a lot of fears about, like, what these companies want ultimately," White said in an interview with AFP.

"They want all of our time. They want all our attention. They want all of our en-



Jeremy Allen White from the cast of "The Social Reckoning" joins host Mike Muse for a SiriusXM Special Event at SiriusXM Studio on October 06, 2026 in New York City.

gagement. They want the way we communicate to be with their tools," he continued.

The American TV and film star said it's "a frightening concept that we don't know where the ceiling is here. You know, they have billions and trillions of dollars. What else?"

"The Social Reckoning" serves as a sequel of sorts to 2010's "The Social Network," Sorkin's acclaimed film that chronicled Facebook's origins.

That movie starring Jesse Eisenberg centered on Mark Zuckerberg, a student

who struggled socially and eventually created his own online ecosystem for making friends what would become Facebook.

For White, who opened an account on the platform during high school, "it seemed innocent enough, I guess, at the time."

But the 35-year-old actor

recalls witnessing the stress and insecurities experienced by friends over who had the most followers, or who followed who on social media.

"Now it's kind of like how we value everything in this world," he said.

Madison, 27, opted out of social media, a stance she still maintains today.

The actor, who scored an Academy Award for her starring role in the hit film "Anora," said she shares "a lot of the same sensibilities" and concerns voiced by White.

- 'Very upsetting' -

"The Social Reckoning" portrays Zuckerberg as an adult, a role played by Jeremy Strong.

Still socially awkward, the rendition of Zuckerberg is now one of a powerful, globally known figure, whose platform generates billions of dollars and is used by millions of people.

The film shows how, according to the investigations, company practices

Andrea Bocelli faces Jordan gig boycott calls over Israel ties

Amman, Jordan

Pro-Palestinian groups called on Wednesday for a boycott of Italian tenor Andrea Bocelli's concert next month in the ancient Jordanian city of Petra over his public support of Israel.

Bocelli, who has been blind since age 12, performed in 2022 at a stadium in Tel Aviv before an audience that included Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, with the tenor ignoring pro-Palestinian activists' longstanding calls for a boycott of Israel.

Bocelli, 68, also sang in Los Angeles at a fundraiser for a group supporting the Israeli military in 2010. In recent years, Bocelli has also been a rare internationally known musician to perform for US President Donald Trump.

"We call on you to boycott Andrea Bocelli's concert because of his longstanding public support for the Israeli enemy... Do not buy tickets! Demand... the cancellation of the concert," said the Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions (BDS)

movement in Jordan, one of the joint signatories.

"It is unacceptable for Petra one of the most iconic sites in Jordan and the Arab world to become a platform for someone who has raised funds for the oc-

cupation army," BDS Jordan added.

The November 27 concert is part of Bocelli's "Romanza" world tour celebrating his 30-year career.

Souha Bawab, the executive director of the association organising the concert, said it was a chance to "showcase Jordan to the world", as quoted by corporate news site Travel News Group.

She added that the concert would help to "reinforce its status as a destination that combines heritage and cultural experiences".

A UNESCO World Heritage site, the ancient city of Petra is a top destination for foreign tourists in Jordan, and is renowned for its monumental temples carved into rose-coloured rock.□



Italian tenor Andrea Bocelli performs in front of Pope Leo XIV during a concert in Borgo Laudato Si, a 55-hectare educational and environmental center, at Castel Gandolfo on July 29, 2026.

contributed to the radicalization of some users.

In the wake of the public revelations, the parent firm rebranded as Meta.

The probe's revelations sparked lawsuits that in some cases sought compensation running into the millions.

But White emphasized that for companies handling billions in revenue, "the sums are kind of irrelevant."

He said he hopes the film will "get people to speak about the damages that can be caused by companies like Facebook."

"I hope people ask their friends, their family members, ask themselves about their own relationship to social media platforms," he said, including in regards to information sources and mental health implications. Wunmi Mosaku who plays a fictionalized Zuckerberg advisor holds similar expectations for the film, which arrives in theaters Friday.□

Ivory Coast clamps down on harmful illegal gold rush

Baziafla, Ivory Coast

A gaping hole in the ground dug by a hundred prospectors is all that is left of an illegal gold mine in Ivory Coast, one of many the state has vowed to eradicate within six months. Near the central village of Baziafla, flanked by tall grass, the pit was excavated over several weeks with spades, pickaxes and crushers, before the miners were driven out of town by the local authorities.

As across much of west Africa, particularly Burkina Faso, Ghana and Mali, Ivory Coast is experiencing a boom in both legal and illegal artisanal gold mining, the latter of which the government has condemned as a "scourge". Besides damaging the environment and the health of locals nearby, the profits from illegal mining help finance the jihadists and armed groups running rampant across the neighboring Sahel region, according to experts. The black market for irregularly mined gold represents millions of dollars that would have otherwise ended up in the Ivorian state's coffers. The government toughened prison sentences this month to up to 20 years,



General view of a abandoned illegal gold mining site in the village of Boore, near Dimbokro central region of Ivory Coast on September 23, 2026.

stepped up surveillance measures and increased the number of brigades deployed in a bid to tackle the issue.

At the same time, the local authorities have intensified their warnings.

"To put an end to illegal gold mining, we have to stamp out all forms of complicity," local official Gueu Georges Gombagui told AFP.

His region of Marahoue is among those most pockmarked by artisanal pits, with around 15 mines iden-

tified, including the one near Baziafla.

- 'Nothing else to do' -

"From today, you will have to watch over your villages," Gombagui told around 100 local officials gathered in the village of Tibeita on a recent morning, urging them to "denounce" the prospectors and their accomplices.

By his side, the regional mining and geology director, Souleymane Sanogo, took aim at a climate of indulgence which allows ir-

regular miners to thrive.

Among the culprits: owners letting their land, the youths delivering the fuel to run the mining machinery, but also "certain officials" in both Ivory Coast and abroad financing illegal mines to reap the profits.

Yet, on the ground, everyone denies having a hand in the trade.

When the prospectors are at work sometimes for months at a time "we do hear the noises", Baziafla's interim leader David You Bi Bolou said.

But "we don't have the strength necessary to go and interrupt them", he insisted.

Women are recruited to wash away the mud to reveal the nuggets of the precious metal, conceded Jacqueline Djangone, the head of the village women's association.

But she denies ever having done so herself.

Illegal prospecting "is an activity that young people get into because there's nothing else to do", acknowledged Michael Gohore Bi Vro, the deputy leader of Baziafla's youth organization.

He, too, said he abstains from getting involved due to the damage illegal mining does to the land, especially as a result of the chemicals used for extracting gold.

"We can't grow anything anymore," he said.

The damage has even spread to Lake Kossou, Ivory Coast's largest, and an important source of water for the region.

After dredging up Kossou's sediments and using mercury to bind the gold into nuggets, the prospectors dump their toxic waste back in the lake, raged Gombagui, the prefect. □



Bottles of French "Beaujolais Nouveau" new wine arrive in Japan at Kansai International Airport in Osaka, Japan on September 28, 2026.

Paris, France

With its wine industry hit by a swathe of summer heatwaves, France is set to see this year's harvest hit a historic low.

At around 35 million hectolitres the total harvest would be down two percent on a mediocre 2025

yield and 14 percent below the 2021-2025 average, according to estimates published Wednesday by the ministry of agriculture. According to the International Organisation of Vine and Wine (OIV), which tracks global statistics on wine production and con-

French wine harvest set to hit historic low

sumption, France had already recorded last year its lowest production since 1957.

This latest decline is down not just to hot weather, which has been slightly mitigated by recent rainfall, but also a reduction in cultivated areas pared back 1.9 percent in the past year.

Some southern areas, already battered by the heat in 2025, have nonetheless seen production rise this year, notably Bordeaux.

There, despite a five percent decrease in cultivated areas production is set to come in up 10 percent on 2025, albeit still 11 percent below the 2021-2025 average.

For the southwest the rise is

around 12 percent, essentially a return to the previous four-year average.

The Champagne region fared less well as growers had to harvest exceptionally early after the extreme heat sped sugar buildup -- and hence natural alcohol production.

The harvest there wrapped up in September for the first time with production down by half on last year and the five-year average.

In Champagne, producer Claude Mandois reported harvesting three-quarters of an average yield in terms of volume although "in terms of quality visually and in terms of taste we had an exceptional harvest."

In Burgundy and the Beaujolais region, production is projected to be 30 percent lower than the five-year average.

"It's a level of heterogeneity I've never experienced before," said Jerome Despey, chairman of the wine advisory board at the public agency FranceAgriMer and a winegrower in the southern Herault department.

In the south, "we've seen that vines have been more resilient to the climate," he said, with previous intense heat spells causing growers to adapt vineyard management practices such as largely leaving leaves to protect the grapes.

Southern regions also benefited from May rainfall. □



Project manager Cecile Broi looks on during an interview at the site an under construction cable car led by French firm Poma in Ulaanbaatar on August 22, 2026.

Cable car offers small hope for Mongolia's gridlocked capital

Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia

Mongolia's capital Ulaanbaatar has long been plagued by notorious traffic jams and suffocating winter smog the result of breakneck urban growth and infrastructure that has struggled to keep up.

Developers now hope that a 4.2-kilometre (2.6-mile) cross-river cable car might help on the margins, cutting a three-hour journey to just minutes.

Weary residents, however, have long wished for a more ambitious response to the city's heavy traffic and pollution problems.

"I think (the cable car) might improve things a bit," 68-year-old Narantsetseg Aleksandr told AFP in one of Ulaanbaatar's sprawling northern suburbs.

"For families living up on these remote hillside areas, cable cars could be very beneficial since they wouldn't have to rely entirely on buses," he said.

Authorities have long touted various plans to reduce pollution and traffic, which sound "effective on paper" but ended up being "mostly talk", he said.

"There isn't much actual work or real tangible progress being made."

For more than a decade, an underground metro system has been touted for the city to tackle congestion but work has yet to

begin.

For 25-year-old truck driver Enkhbayar Myanganbayar, metro promises always seemed "far beyond realistic expectations" as congestion in the capital has worsened.

"Ever since I was a child, various ministers have promised to build a metro," he told AFP.

"It was obvious from the start that it was untrue."

- 'A lot of sense' -

In contrast, the Tuul River cable car spearheaded by French firm Poma with a concessional loan from the French government is already under development and expected to be completed by the end of the year, potentially followed by more lines.

"The project's cost is low and construction is very fast compared with a metro," project manager Cecile Broi told AFP.

Mongolia's capital has expanded significantly since the end of the Soviet-allied communist era.

In 1990, it was home to around half a million people. Now, Ulaanbaatar's population exceeds 1.5 million.

While the city centre is nestled in the Tuul River valley, its sprawling suburbs stretch into the surrounding mountainous areas.

The project is a "perfect

illustration of a situation where cable transport makes a lot of sense", Broi said.

By car, getting between the line's two stations can take as long as three hours when traffic is at its worst, she said, while a ride on the cable car will take just 12 minutes.

Construction on the electric cable car, which Poma says will be capable of transporting 2,300 passengers per hour, began last March.

The line will soar over a major thoroughfare, as well as the wide Tuul River floodplain and the Trans-Mongolian Railway.

- 'Exhausted' and ill -

During cold winters, Ulaanbaatar is frequently ranked as one of the world's most polluted cities and regularly exceeds World Health Organization recommendations for air quality.

For 42-year-old resident Erdenejargal Khorolsuren, solutions could not come fast enough.

She told AFP that the city's incessant traffic has negatively impacted her son's education.

Five years ago, when he began attending a school across the city, "he was full of energy and enthusiasm, but over time the long commute exhausted him", she said. □



A handout photo released by British adventurer Karl Bushby's team on October 6, 2026, shows the adventurer arriving on a beach near Dover, southern England on October 5, after completing a cross-Channel swim from France.

Brit adventurer back on UK soil after 28-year round-the-world walk

London, United Kingdom

A British adventurer on a 50,000-kilometre, 28-year trek home from South America without using any transport has set foot on UK soil after swimming the Channel, his publicists said Tuesday.

Karl Bushby, a 57-year-old former paratrooper, set off from Punta Arenas, Chile, in November 1998, vowing to reach his mother's home near Hull in northern England without travelling on planes, trains, boats, vehicles or other transport modes.

Nearly three decades and 29 countries later, Bushby stepped ashore in southeast England on Monday afternoon, after securing permission from UK and French authorities to swim across the busy Channel waterway from France.

He and his team said they opted not to publicise the swim for safety and security reasons.

"Feels good to have UK soil under my feet after all these years," the adventurer said in a brief statement released Tuesday.

"It hasn't been easy, and that's part of the point. Proving I'm more capable than I give myself credit for," he added.

"All of us can accomplish more than we will ever imagine."

Bushby has paused his journey several times.

Moscow refused him a visa for a long time, while the 2008 financial crisis and then the Covid-19 pandemic proved to be other hold-ups.

At those times, he stepped away from the journey, living notably in Mexico, then once the situation cleared, he would resume his journey at the exact spot where he had left off.

- Back in 'grown-up world' -

A small gathering of friends and family, including his father and brothers, welcomed Bushby on Shakespeare beach, just south of Dover, as he emerged from the water on Monday.

He was also greeted by legendary filmmaker Werner Herzog and his film crew, who are making a feature-length documentary about the journey entitled "Walk of Life".

The production company behind the film has been supporting Bushby's progress for the past 16 years, providing financial and logistical assistance, as well as equipping Bushby to document his trek and archiving the footage. □

Basic driving rules on Aruba: Roundabouts

(Oranjestad)—Have you ever felt confused when you're driving on the highways or backstreets of Aruba? Then we present a simple guide to some of the basic rules of Aruban traffic, along with some tips for things to look out for.

Speed limit

Legally, the speed limit on the four-lane highways is 80 km/h. This speed limit also counts for the main roads that are connected to the highways. The minimum speed is 50 km/h. Most people drive around 60 km/h on the main roads and about 70 km/h on the highways. There are also areas that indicate a speed limit on a sign; these are usually around populated and school areas.

The four-lane highways contain the left-lane, also known as the "fast" lane for each direction. Here is where vehicles can drive up to the maximum speed. However, legally it is not permitted to drive for long periods of time on the left lane. This lane is primarily designed for drivers to switch lanes before a roundabout, for example, if your exit on the roundabout is on your far left. The general lane to drive in both at maximum and minimum speed is on the right lane.

Roundabouts

Speaking of roundabouts, it is important to know where you have to enter and drive on the roundabout to make your exit. A good rule of thumb is to count the exits starting from your right side. So, exit 1 would be on your right; exit 2 would be straight ahead; exit 3 would be on your far left and exit 4 would lead to the road paralleled to the one you're on, heading in the other direction.

Most roundabouts have these 4 exits, so they are relatively simple. When you're driving on the four-lane highway, it is important to know when to switch to the left lane to make your exit: if your exit is on your far



left (exit 3), then you need to switch to the left lane on the high way before nearing the roundabout so you can take the path that leads you directly to your exit. If your exit is on your right or if you're going straight ahead, you can keep driving in the right lane of the highway.

It's also important to know that vehicles about to enter the roundabout must yield to those already on it. A good rule of thumb is to look out if someone is coming from your left side.

However, other roundabouts can be quite tricky to navigate...

Watty Vos Boulevard (the "paperclip" roundabout) Probably the biggest roundabout on the island, the "paperclip" roundabout on the Watty Vos Boulevard is one of the trickier roundabouts that could and has caused confusion among both tourists and locals. However, once you take a good look at it, it's fairly simple. The basis is just the same as a regular roundabout (left exit? left lane! etc.), but instead of having four different exits like on a regular roundabout, now you have two extra; one on the right and the other on the left side of the roundabout. The rules don't change at all, you just have to keep an extra

eye open.

Airport roundabout

Ah, yes. The infamous airport roundabout. The favorite roundabout amongst local, because of its easy (hard) lanes that never (always) cause confusion among drivers. Sarcasm aside, this roundabout can be tricky to enter, especially when you're driving from the direction of the airport heading. When you're driving away from the airport reaching the roundabout, you'll be faced with three lanes. The far right lane is to take the exit 1 out heading east (right lane of highway). The middle exit is used for exit 1 (left lane of highway), 2 and 3. The far

left exit is used to only exit on exit 3 (left lane of highway) and 4.

"Las Americas" roundabout

The Las Americas roundabout is located farther west from the airport roundabout. This roundabout may look like a regular roundabout and for the most part, it is. However, when you are driving from the east going in the direction of town, please take note that there are two exits on your right.

When you're driving towards this roundabout, you'll notice that the road becomes wider, splitting into two lanes. The right lane is used to take the first and second exit on the right. If you want to exit straight ahead, you must drive on the left lane!

It's always scary to drive in new places where the traffic may look and work differently, but once you get it right once, you'll get the hang of it in no time. Additionally, all roundabouts and roads on Aruba have signs and arrows painted on the road to help guide you. So take your time, keep your eyes open and don't forget to wear a seat belt! □





Experience a taste of Belgium in Aruba – Only at L'Avenue, Palm Beach



Nestled in the heart of Palm Beach, Aruba, L'Avenue brings a fresh breeze of Belgian charm to the Caribbean. Just over a year since its grand opening, this intimate bistro has quickly made its mark with its warm hospitality, authentic cuisine, and elegant yet approachable ambiance.

Whether you're strolling through Palm Beach after a morning at the beach or looking for a special dinner spot, L'Avenue welcomes you with an inviting terrace, stylish décor, and the comforting aroma of Belgian classics crafted to perfection. It's a place where locals, travelers, food lovers, and beer connoisseurs come together — united by a love for great food, heartfelt service, and that unmistakable European flair.

At L'Avenue, every dish tells a story — one of tradition, seasonality, and bold yet balanced flavors. From crispy croquettes and perfectly poured Belgian beers to steaming pots of fresh mussels flown in weekly, the menu offers something both comforting and surprising.



Lunch includes a variety of sandwiches—with a healthy selection of bread options—if you're going for a light meal, but just like their dinner selection, also includes steak, chicken, fish, and even rabbit if you're craving a bit more of L'Avenue's exquisite menu. And let's not forget their wide selection of Belgian beer and European wine to complete the tasty experience!

But that's not all! L'Avenue is offering their guests their Early Bird Special, available every day from 4pm to 7pm. Enjoy this affordable and delectable 3-course meal special at a comfortable price of \$29.50 per guest, which includes a selection of their fine in-house wine.

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atmosphere that balances European elegance with island ease make it one of the most talked-about dining spots in Aruba.

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Located in the heart of Palm Beach, Aruba

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Blackstone Beach



(Oranjestad)—Named after its most recognizable feature, the Blackstone Beach almost represents the opposite of the typical Aruban beaches. For one, it has black sand and is covered in black smooth stones. Secondly, it lies on the northern side of the island, away from the white sandy beaches of in the southern region. So, if you feel up for something different—or if it's opposite day, visit the Blackstone Beach.

Blackstone Beach shows the more natural side of Aruba; the stones that cover the beach and the shape of it has been crafted for thousands of years through volcanic eruptions, coral reef movements and wave activity of the ru-

ral northern part of the island.

Located further east to the Natural Bridge and Andicuri Beach, the Blackstone Beach is relatively easy to access. Once you get passed the Ayo Rock Formation, take the Andicuri road leading up to Andicuri Beach. There, you can park your car and take a 1km hike towards Blackstone Beach.

Despite being called a beach, do note that it is not advised to swim in the water, as the current is very strong and can easily stray you further in the wild ocean. However, you can still enjoy a spectacular view of the stones and the northern ocean that stretches out in front of the beach and take a picture with your friends or family! ☐

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Ayo & Casibari: Aruba's famous rock formations

(Oranjestad)—The Ayo and Casibari Rock Formations are known locally as one of the crucial sites to have in your “off-road” trip itinerary. These naturally formed rock formations as just one of the few places on the island that hold a rich history of our culture and of our ancestors.

Ayo

The Ayo Rock Formation is located in the northern part of the island, right on the road that leads you to the Black Stone Beach, and close to the Natural Bridge. The Ayo is a fenced terrain that consists of several giant boulders, resting neatly on top of or side by side each other, adding gorgeous natural architecture to the surrounding “mondi”*. This is also one of the few sites to contain prehistoric mark-



ings of our indigenous ancestors. The Ayo Rock formation contains stairs that lead you to the top of the highest boulder, offering a breath-taking view of the Aruban backyard. The Ayo is usually quiet, as it is situated farther away from the busier parts of the island. However, this is just another charm of the site: the quiet area and the refreshing breeze offer a sense of

comfort and peace.

Casibari

Probably the busier rock formation site, the Casibari is situated more in the center of the island, much closer and more accessible to the general public. Just like Ayo, Casibari is a fenced area containing several boulders that lay on top or lean on each other. The best aspect of the Ca-



sibari Rock Formation is the accompanying view when you climb up the top of the round, flat bolder. For this position, you can see the majority of the island and the ocean in the south.

Both sites are open free to the public, 24 hours a day. However, unless you are taking a trip with a professional tour guide, there are

no guides at the sites to help you climb the rock. So, do be careful when trudging on the boulders, and make sure to befriend any roaming goats you see along the way!

*Mondi: what we call our Aruban wilderness. We don't have forests, or deserts, but we do have mondi! □

Ever heard of the cah'i orgel? A key instrument in Aruban folklore music



(Oranjestad)—The cah'i orgel music box is an important and unique instrument that is used on the ABC islands in the Dutch Caribbean. This instrument

is a staple in our folklore music, and its significance in the traditions of Aruba has and continues to bring together the old and young.

The origin of the cah'i orgel is said to have come from Europe around 150 years ago. A cross breed between the barrel piano and the organ, the most popular stories said that the instrument came from either England or Germany, but made its way to Italy down to Venezuela, where in 1881, Mr. Horatio Sprock (1866-1949) from Curacao was first introduced to it. After that, Sprock made his

own cah'i orgel “Josefina”, and successfully debuted it on the streets of Barquisimeto. Back in Curacao, he started his own cah'i orgel business along with his brother Luis. In Aruba, it is said that the cah'i orgel was introduced by Rufo Wever, who later in his career became one of the composers for the Aruban national anthem.

Rufo Wever was a young musician in 1937 when he established his own cah'i orgel business on the island. Before that he experimented with his uncle's cah'i orgel, and he over the years he learned to

build and repair the instrument. In fact, he was incredibly skilled in this, and he was one of the few to have recognized from the start that the cah'i orgel is an instrument that needs preserving.

As mentioned, the cah'i orgel is a music box. Made from mahogany wood, it contains a cylinder with a maximum of eight music pieces. By rotating the lever on the front side of the box, the cah'i orgel produces music similar to that of a piano, and is accompanied often by someone else playing the “wiri”, a percussion instru-

ment made out of steel and reminiscent to the Spanish guiro. Back then, you would often also find someone playing the triangle alongside the cah'i orgel and wiri. In Aruba, the cah'i orgel and wiri is used for traditional music genres, such as the Aruban waltz, tumba, mazurka and more.

Fun fact: another name for the cah'i orgel is the “tinglingi box.” □

Source: “E Cilinder Magico entre Aruba y Curaçao” by Marilyn Alcalá-Wallé, Herta Parabirsing-Balentina and Nidia Rosaria-Wallé.

Aruban legends: Frenchman's Pass

(Oranjestad)—If you ever plan on taking a group tour of the island, you may pass through the Frenchman's Pass in Balashi. The Frenchman's pass (known to locals as "Franse Pas") remains a mysterious—and spooky—road of which its legend is told from generation to generation.

The history of the Frenchman's pass—and how it got its name—dates back to the colonization era, when the French tried to colonize the island, but were met with an angry mob of indigenous settlers, refusing to give up their land. However, as the French were heavily equipped with fire arms, the indigenous settlers began to retreat, and hid away in nearby caves.

The French colonizers tried to smoke them out of the caves, but the indigenous settlers ended up inhaling too much smoke and most died in those caves. From then on, this passage was known as Frenchman's Pass, and there have been many accounts of spirits roaming the area of Spanish Lagoon.

There are many ghost stories surrounding this area, but one of the most famous one involves a lonely hitchhiker, trying to find a ride back home in the dark rainy night.

Sometime after trying to hitch a ride home, the man saw a car approaching, appearing almost ghost-like in the rain. However, since he needed a ride real bad,

he didn't think twice and jumped in. But to his horror, he noticed that there was no driver in the front. Paralyzed with fear, he didn't dare to get out, and the car started to move.

When approaching a sharp turn, the hitch hiker braced for impact, but just when he thought the car might drive straight off the road and crash, he saw a hand appear out the window and turn the wheel. For the next few turns, the hand appeared again. After having had enough, the man decided to jump out and he ran to Santa Cruz.

Arriving at a nearby bar, he ordered a drink and began to tell everyone about his experience. Everyone grew



quiet, because they realized he wasn't some drunk messing around; he was telling the truth.

Sometime later, two men walked into the bar and one of them noticed the hitchhiker. He called out to his buddy and said: "Look, there's the idiot who sat in our car when we were pushing it!"

French man's pass is one of the few sites on the island that keeps the locals on their toes. While most ghost stories may not have real grounds—or some may even be a set up story for a joke, this pass holds a lot of value to our culture of folkloric story-telling. □

Source: visitaruba.com



(Oranjestad) – Like many other cultures, an important aspect of the Aruban cultural identity is our connection to food and food traditions. The local food traditions consist of a melting pot of different cultural and religious eating habits and dishes.

Breakfast, lunch and dinner

The routine of breakfast, lunch and dinner on the island is one that does not completely follow a European or American routine, despite the major influences from these parts of the world on our culture and way of living. When it comes to the three important meals of the day, most of the Aruban population follows a Latin-American influenced routine.

Breakfast

Breakfast in Aruba is quite simple: a cup of coffee or tea, some bread, and sometimes an egg. Sometimes, due to the need of a quick "to-go" breakfast, you may also find many snack trucks and cafes that sell sandwiches, pastechis (meat pie), arepas and empanadas early in the morning.

Main Meal

The main meal is typically eaten in most households around noon or in the afternoon. This can consist of meat, fish, and chicken—stewed or fried—with funchi (polenta) or rice with stewed vegetables. Often, fried or boiled plantain or pan bati (Aruban pancake) is included. Stews are a staple in Aruban cuisine and can be largely influenced by Latin-American and Latin/Afro-Caribbean Stews. Some of the more unique stews

Food culture in Aruba

and soups from the ABC Islands* include sopi bonch'i rabo (red kidney bean soup with pig tail), sopi mondongo (tripe soup), carni stoba (beef stew), comcomber stoba (West Indian gherkin stew) and much more.

Dinner Time

Dinner time can vary significantly from household to household. Unlike the U.S. or in Europe, dinner time typically does not consist of a whole (warm) meal. Instead, the evening "meal" can typically consist of something lighter, like a sandwich, though it is not uncommon to see leftovers from the main meal reheated and eaten again. Tea and coffee are often also served with the evening snack.

(Religious) Holidays

Christmas is probably the biggest global holiday, and every culture has its own spin on what their Christmas cuisine entails. In Aruba, our Christmas cuisine is again largely based on Latin-American influences, most notably from Venezuela. Ayacas and the famous pan di ham* are two crucial holiday dishes, along with stuffed turkey, roasted glazed ham topped with pineapples, arroz con pollo (rice and chicken) and potato salad, among other items. Traditional drinks include ponche crema (Aruban eggnog), chuculati pinda (hot chocolate with peanut butter), and homemade fruit punch. Desserts include bolo di pistachio (pistachio cake), bolo di cashupete (cashew cake), quesillo (flan), bolo preto (fruit cake), drigidek (gingerbread), pan boyo (bread cake) and more.

Snacks and tasty delights

Besides meals and dishes that are eaten on the dinner table, Aruba also has a food tradition that includes snacks and other tasty delights that you may easily find around the island. These include, Saco*, baskets, pastechi, kroket, deditos, Johnny cake and more. These snacks are usually sold at local snack trucks and cafes, often located on the side of the road. In the area of Tanki Leendert and Tanki flip, for example, there are many of these trucks parked on the side of the road and often open until late at night—offering tasty and filling snacks post night-life fun. □

*ABC Islands: Aruba, Bonaire and Curacao

*Pan di ham: Derived from the Venezuelan Pan de Jamon (rolled up bread with ham, raisins and olives)

*Saco: Saco literally means "bag". Saco contains fried potatoes, plantains, chicken (and ribs) and a Johnny cake, served in a paper bag.

Source: Voeding, voedingsgewoonten en gerechten op Aruba (Nutrition, Food Traditions and Dishes on Aruba) by Biblioteca Nacional Aruba

Get to know the history of the gold industry on Aruba



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(Oranjestad)— We have talked about the Bushiribana Gold Mill Ruin before and its brief history during the gold industry on Aruba, but get to know a little more about the history of the “Aruban Gold Rush.”

The first hint of gold on Aruba actually dates back to 1725, when rumors about gold being found in dug up treasure chests of the Spanish colonial era prompted the first official exploration for gold on the island, commissioned by the Dutch West India Company. Under the leadership of Mr. Paulus Printz, a three-year search was conducted on Aruba, to no avail. Though they found some specks of gold, it was not enough to motivate a further search, and the assignment was discontinued by Printz himself.

It wasn't until 100 years later, in 1824, when a young farmer boy named Willem Rasmijn found a lump of gold while out herding his father's sheep in the area of Rooi Fluit on the north coast. His father took it to a local merchant who then sold the lump for \$70. Unbeknownst to the boy and his father, they quite literally struck gold, and as word got out, a gold fever spread among the locals who started searching for more gold.

When the colonial governor in Curacao, Governor Cantz'laar, heard about the news, he sent his adjutant, Capitan van Raders, to start harvesting gold. This was in July 1824. In August of that same year, the governor followed suit to the island, accompanied by high-ranking military officials. When citizens started swarming the area in search for gold, The Netherlands sent more troops to safe guard the gold.

Prominent places where gold was found was in Daimari, Wacobana, Arikok, Rooi Fluit, Hadicouradi and later West punt, where gold ore was found. Because of a lack in advanced technology and materials to harvest the gold, the process took a more primitive approach: Clay rocks containing trac-

es of gold were left to dry in the sun. Then, workers would start chipping the clay away on a large canvas to catch the gold particles that were left behind after the wind blew away the dust from the clay.

In the harvest period of 1824-1825, there was a total of 71,000 kilos collected through commissioned harvesting. Locals themselves reportedly found about 25 pounds worth of gold in the nearby rivers. The following years after that first big harvest, commission work fell off, and in 1828, the director of the goldmines, Johan Gravenhorst, decided to halt harvesting.

Almost 40 years later, the London-based Aruba Island Gold Mining Company Ltd. was granted concession. The firm built their gold mines on Bushiribana, and in the port of Oranjestad a long road that connected the gold mill to the port. The ores themselves came from Sero Plat en Sero Cristal.

By this point, workers were still using primitive methods to harvest the ores. For example, when someone had to go into the mines, there were no stairs or lifts; the person had to be brought down in a big bucket, with two or more workers holding the bucket by a thick rope above ground.

Aruba Island Gold Mining Company Ltd. reportedly operated until 1899, and right after the Aruba Gold Concession Ltd. was established, coincidentally also based in London. This time, the gold mill in Balashi was built, and more mines were dug up all around the island. The gold ores that were found were transported via track engine, locally called the “trekinchi”. Despite being more equipped for the job, the Aruba Gold Concession Ltd. could not produce any real profit, and so the concession was terminated just eight years later, in 1908.

A local firm, the “Aruba Goud Maatschappij” (Aruba Gold Company) took over the concession, along with all the materials and equipment. In the beginning, the company saw good profit, and for a while, the island's economy depended primarily on the mining and harvesting of gold. But just like its predecessors, the streak of luck for the Aruba Gold Company came to an end when WWI broke out.

The main reason why production stopped this time was reportedly because of a lack in dynamite for extracting the ores from the mines, as well as a lack in raw materials like German cyanide for the refining process. By the time the war ended, the equipment

that was left at Balashi were too old to use again. After the war, gold production on the Aruba was left to a standstill.

According to an issue in Aruba Esso News paper in 1953, Henny Eman wanted to start up digging again, this time using independent miners. He argued that there was proof of more gold to be discovered. Plus, hiring independent miners would boost the island's employment rate.

When it was proven that gold was in fact still present, the executive board on the island promised to fund the project only if the gold dug up proved to be valuable. However, nothing else was reported after this, so it could be concluded that there was no real profitable market on the island anymore.

The ruins of the Bushiribana and Balashi Gold Mills are still standing, and open for the public to visit. These structures offer a glance into the past, to a time where Aruba experienced one of its first wave of industrialization. Today, these structures are persevered as historical monuments. □

Source:

1. “De Kolibrie op de Rots (en meer over the geschiedenis van Aruba)” by Evert Bongers.
2. Aruba Esso News, 1953 issue.



CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

1. Carry
5. Irritated
11. Sailor's call
12. Nabokov novel
13. Script unit
14. Bureau
15. Machinery part
16. Drill parts
17. Savory taste
19. Tree flow
22. In the future
24. Spare
26. Goes bad
27. Rocker Clapton
28. Extravagant showiness
30. Slyly disparaging
31. Lyric poem
32. Clarifying words
34. High point
35. Bit of humor
38. Sizzling strip
41. Recipe direction
42. Stuck at a port, perhaps
43. Opera set in Egypt
44. Past and present

45. Be rife

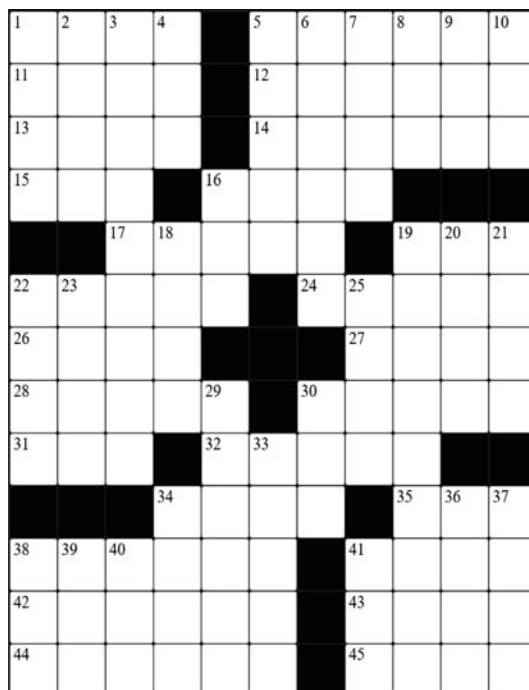
DOWN

1. Soft mineral
2. River to the Mississippi
3. Leave speechless
4. Needle feature
5. Assert
6. Hamper
7. Brighton brews
8. Shark feature
9. Series-ending abbr.
10. Calendar box
16. Naughty
18. Schooner pole
19. Narrow neckwear



Yesterday's answer

20. Parched
21. Tempo
22. Jason's ship
23. Ship storage
25. TV's warrior princess
29. Cuffs alternative
30. Kinsey topic
33. Where-withal
34. "Angels in America" topic
36. Staff member
37. Mass unit
38. In shape
39. Superb serve
40. Psaki of MS NOW
41. Plopped down



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.

10-7 CRYPTOQUOTE

X A M S D K Q X E P Z V S D K X K,
I O I W M K Q X E B J I R S X E T X A I
X N N I K K S N S U I P X E R S A

U D N X H . - Y I Z V S V W M N S E

Yesterday's Cryptoquote: DON'T GET SO BUSY MAKING A LIVING THAT YOU FORGET TO MAKE A LIFE.— DOLLY PARTON

Helpful tips for your stay on Aruba

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

Electrical power

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

Drinking water



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



buy bottled water from the store.

Supermarket hours

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

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

Safety

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

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

SUDOKU

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

King Classic Sudoku

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

Difficulty: ★★★

10/8

Answer to previous puzzle

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

Difficulty: ★★★

10/7

Climate change strips island's title of largest penguin colony: study

Paris, France

A remote island near Antarctica is no longer home to the world's largest penguin colony as climate-driven changes to ocean food chains likely devastated its once-thriving inhabitants, a new study said Wednesday.

Drone and satellite images showed that the volcanic island of Zavodovski lost more than 680,000 -- or two-thirds -- of its chinstrap penguins between 2011 and 2025, according to the British Antarctic Survey (BAS).

"That's a very rapid loss," Norman Ratcliffe, the lead author of the BAS study published in the journal Current Biology, told AFP.

The study's findings raise concerns that chinstrap populations across the South Sandwich Islands, which include Zavodovski and are home to 38 percent of the species, have fallen.

The researchers suggest that the "alarming declines" should lead to chinstrap penguins being redesignated as "endangered" by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN).

This would be a sharp downgrade from their "least concern" classification, which means they are not currently threatened with extinction.

Surveys in 2011 had concluded that chinstrap populations across the South Sandwich Islands were stable.

But their number on Zavodovski fell from around 1.09 million breeding individuals in January 2011 to 402,000 in 2025, or a 63 percent decline, according to the study.

The island is also home to a different species, macaroni penguins, whose population rose from around 338,000 in 2011 to 433,000 in 2025 -- and now outnumber chinstraps.

Together, chinstraps and macaronis now total more than 835,000 on Zavodovski.



Chinstrap (*Pygoscelis antarcticus*) penguins are pictured at Deception Island, in the western Antarctic Peninsula, on January 24, 2024.

The researchers said the Adelie penguins of Cape Adare, on the other side of Antarctica, are now the world's largest penguin colony, numbering more than one million as of 2018.

- Krill decline -

Zavodovski island's Mount Curry volcano erupted in 2016, sparking fears that it could wipe out its penguin population.

But the researchers found that the ash cloud was blown northeast over an area not inhabited by the flightless birds.

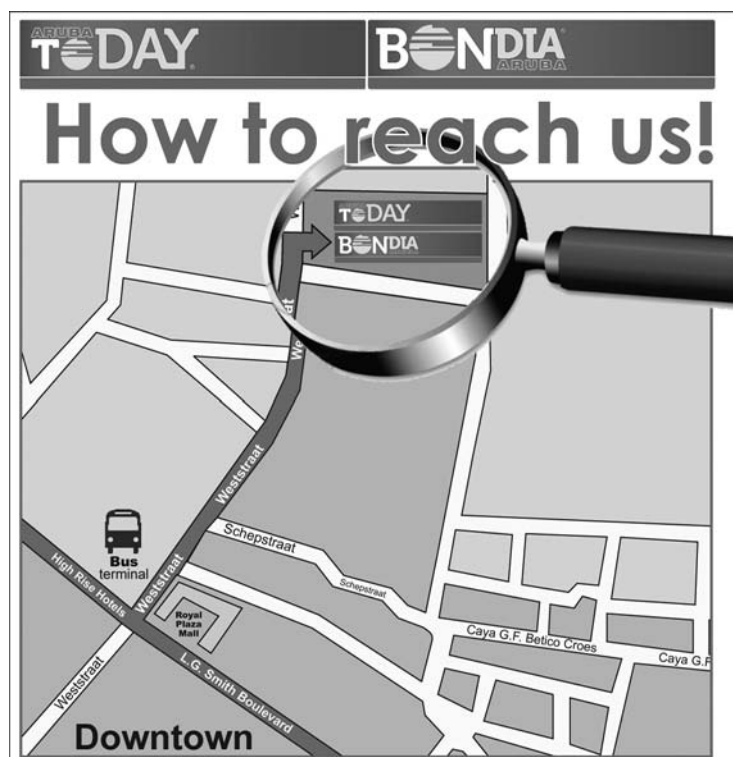
"The decline in chinstrap colony area was in progress prior to the eruption and continued at a con-

stant rate thereafter," the study said.

"We don't think the volcano is implicated or it's not the main driver (of the population decline) because what we see is a linear decline in the chinstrap penguins," Ratcliffe told AFP.

Instead, the scientists linked the drop in chinstrap numbers to a reduction in the availability of krill -- the tiny shrimp-like creatures that are their main food source. Warming ocean temperatures have pushed the crustaceans south toward colder waters, which chinstraps do not tolerate.

"We think that climate change operating through food webs is probably the main driver," Ratcliffe said. The island's chinstrap population has been falling at a rate of seven percent per year. □



Editor
Caribbean Speed Printers N.V.
Aruba Bank N.V. Acc. #332668
Caribbean Mercantile Bank N.V.
Acc. #23951903
RBC Royal Bank Acc. #1330772

Editors

Pilar Flores
Richard Brooks
Angenette Figueroa
Oriana Geerman

Sales

Mark Gomes
Sulaika Croes

Classifieds

classified@cspnv.com

Distribution and Collection

accounting@bondia.com

Social / Website

Juan Luis Pinto

Weststraat 22
T: 582-7800
E: news@arubatoday.com
W: www.arubatoday.com
f @ArubaTodayNews

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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

TAXI SERVICES

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Taxi Serv. Aruba 583 3232
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Child Abuse Prevention
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Quota Club Tel. 525 2672

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ARUBA TODAY NEWS

U.S., China, EU: three paths to regulating AI

Washington, United States

The United States, China and the European Union are taking different paths to govern artificial intelligence, as calls grow worldwide to rein in its most powerful systems.

Here is how they are going about it:

- United States -

Nearly two years into his second term, President Donald Trump has built his AI policy almost entirely from voluntary industry pledges and executive orders intended to sustain an AI boom that is powering the U.S. economy.

On his first day back in office, Trump scrapped his predecessor Joe Biden's 2023 order requiring developers of the most powerful AI systems to share safety test results with the government.

In July 2025, the White House unveiled an "AI Action Plan" listing more than 90 measures to speed up development.

An accompanying order titled "Preventing Woke AI in the Federal Government" requires federal agencies to buy only models deemed ideologically neutral.



SpaceX CEO Elon Musk (top R) looks on as U.S. President Donald Trump speaks to the press after a meeting with technology executives about artificial intelligence at the White House in Washington, DC, on September 29, 2026.

Congress, politically divided and heavily lobbied by Big Tech, has yet to pass a federal AI law, and is out of session until after the mid-term elections.

Trump has pushed to block state AI laws, but Congress has repeatedly refused to override them, and state laws are taking effect nationwide.

This year, the release of AI

models capable of powerful cyberattacks shifted the focus to security. A June order set up a voluntary system for developers to give the government up to 30 days of early access to their most powerful models. With voter anxiety growing, the heads of major AI companies signed a White House accord on September 29 pledging independent audits and board-

level oversight of cutting-edge models.

The pact carries no penalties for companies that fall short, though Trump called it "morally binding."

The same day, Trump ordered federal agencies to replace the term "artificial intelligence" with "super intelligence" in official communications.

- China -

China already has a complex, evolving set of rules on how AI is used, including by children.

Regulations on AI companion bots took effect in July, aiming to curb emotional dependency and banning the creation of digital clones of real people without their consent.

President Xi Jinping said this summer that AI should be "always under human control," calling for more "laws and regulations, technological monitoring, early warning, and emergency response systems."

Premier Li Qiang has also warned that the world risks "losing control" of frontier technologies such as AI if governments are too slow to regulate them.

However, "a general pause or deliberate slowdown in AI development remains outside the mainstream Chinese policy posture," Oxford China Policy Lab analysts wrote in September.

Some in China see calls to slow progress as hard to justify, "particularly given their perception that US measures such as export controls have already constrained China's AI development for years," they said.

China censors and controls AI-generated content much as it does other online information and last month, its spy chief warned that AI could endanger national security.

"Hostile forces" are abusing generative AI to "fabricate political rumors and spread harmful information," Minister of State Security Chen Yixin said.

- Europe -

The European Union rushed to adopt its AI Act in 2024, which Brussels touts as the world's most comprehensive rules on the technology.

But European companies, fearing the rules would stifle innovation as they race to catch up with US and Chinese rivals, later won a delay on rules covering high-risk systems.□

Australia probes app used in cheap smart glasses over privacy fears

Sydney, Australia

Australia is investigating how and where the firm behind an app used in popular low-cost smart glasses collects and stores personal data, the country's data protection watchdog said

Wednesday.

China-based Shenzhen Qingcheng is the maker of the HeyCyan smart glasses application, used in the Anko smart glasses sold for as little as AU\$89 (US\$62) at shops like K-mart across

Australia.

Australia's Information Commissioner (OAIC) said it had sent preliminary inquiries to several companies involved in making the glasses last month including Meta, Kmart, Google and Shenzhen Qingcheng about how they recorded data and where it was stored.

"In the absence of any response from Shenzhen Qingcheng to the OAIC's preliminary inquiries, I have no assurance that it is protecting personal data of Australians as required by the Privacy Act," Privacy Commissioner Carly Kind said.

"The failure of Shenzhen Qingcheng to respond to the OAIC's inquiries raises concerns about the entity's practices, procedures

and systems to protect the personal information it holds," she added.

She also urged retailers to reconsider stocking the glasses given the investigation.

"Given the particular risks the OAIC has identified with the HeyCyan app, I would urge responsible retailers to consider whether it is appropriate to continue making these devices available," Kind said.

Smart glasses let wearers take photos, film videos, listen to music, make phone calls, translate text or interact with an AI assistant. Calls have grown for action against what campaigners call "pervert" smart glasses after secretly filmed footage of girls and women has appeared online.□



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



USA's Coco Gauff reacts after a point against Belgium's Elise Mertens during their women's singles match at the China Open tennis tournament in Beijing on October 7, 2026.

Gauff says online abuse was 'draining' after China Open exit

Beijing, China

Coco Gauff said online racist abuse had left her feeling exhausted after she went out of the China Open with her loss to Elise Mertens on Wednesday, later announcing she would skip next week's tournament in Wuhan.

The American world number four, who is Black, turned in an uncharacteristically listless performance in Beijing, double-faulting eight times as she went down 6-3, 6-3 to her Belgian opponent.

Gauff, 22, was playing a day after she called out the "insane" amount of abuse she had received on the internet following her win over Chinese teenager Sun Xinran in the previous round.

"It has been kind of draining. I'm not going to lie," Gauff said of the impact of the online comments.

"But I just turn off my phone and move on. There's nothing you can do."

Asked about the match, she said: "I think I just didn't play well. I think I wasn't moving well."

"There were a lot of things I didn't do well. I thought Elise played well on the bigger points."

During her previous match in Beijing, against Sun, Gauff requested a video review over flickering LED

lights on the stadium's advertising hoardings.

The move prompted some boos from the crowd. The umpire agreed to have the point replayed, and Gauff went on to win 7-5, 6-1.

Early on Tuesday, Gauff wrote on X: "Hey everyone, you can dislike me or disagree about what happened without being racist."

She was responding to a post that contained a racial slur.

"The amount of racist comments and messages I've received in the last few hours is insane," she wrote. Gauff also clarified that she challenged the point before Sun had returned the ball, when she noticed the lights flicker for a second time.

Asked about the incident, a spokesperson for the Women's Tennis Association, the global governing body, said they were "appalled by the racial abuse directed at Coco Gauff and are in contact with her to offer our full support".

It added in a statement to AFP that there was "no place for racism, discrimination, or abuse in tennis", and that it was "seeking action" against the abusive content.

Gauff, who won the Beijing title in 2024 and made the semi-finals last year, is a

popular player among fans at the tournament itself.

A group of supporters in the largely empty stadium tried to encourage her into a comeback on Wednesday.

Hours later, the Wuhan Open said Gauff had withdrawn from the prestigious 1000-level tournament "citing fatigue".

"I'm disappointed to withdraw from Wuhan, especially as the defending champion. I always love playing there," Gauff said in a statement shared by the tournament on Instagram.

"After a long year, my body needs some time to rest and recover. I look forward to returning next year," Gauff said.

The Wuhan Open runs from October 12 to 18 in China's central Hubei province.

- 'All too fast' -

Mertens was undeterred as she punched her ticket for a quarter-final clash against Iga Swiatek.

The world number 19 called Gauff an "incredible player", adding: "I knew it was going to be a very tough match".

She dedicated her win to her coach, who is also her boyfriend.

Earlier, Swiatek swept aside American teenager Iva Jovic 6-1, 6-3 in one hour and 35 minutes. □



Giant Slalom event at the FIS Alpine Ski World Cup in Jasna, Slovakia on March 7, 2021.

'Itching' for change: Shiffrin cuts back slaloms this season

Washington, United States

Alpine skiing icon Mikaela Shiffrin announced on Tuesday she will be competing in fewer slalom events this coming campaign, focusing instead on the giant slalom and super-G.

"I'm planning to race less slalom this season," Shiffrin said on Instagram.

"Not necessarily no slalom! Right now, the plan is Killington (end November) as my first slalom and a few others throughout the season."

At 31, the Milan-Cortina Olympic slalom champion and 2026 overall World Cup winner aims to give her career fresh momentum.

"I love the process of getting better," said the US ski great who holds the record for World Cup victories with 110, of which 73 are in slalom.

"I enjoy training more than racing. I like trying to figure out how to handle a turn. I love it when something isn't working and, little by little, you finally understand it."

"That curiosity has been the driving force behind my motivation all these years."

"And right now, I feel that curiosity in giant slalom and super-G. I'm looking to give myself the space to explore that."

Shiffrin is an eight-time world champion and a six-time overall World Cup winner.

In February, she also claimed a third Olympic gold medal, dominating the field in the slalom at the Milan-Cortina Games.

But after a serious abdominal injury during a giant slalom in Killington, Vermont in late 2024, she has struggled to overcome her apprehension regarding speed events.

At the 2026 Olympics, she finished only 11th in the giant slalom.

She has also competed in just three Super-G races since her injury, with a best finish of 22nd in Lillehammer, Norway, in March 2026.

"For the past 16 years, my goal has been the same to push my limits and become a better, faster ski racer. That part hasn't changed," Shiffrin said.

"What is changing is that I'm giving myself a bit more freedom to ask: What am I curious about now? What still makes me want to lock in? And what might happen if I create some space to follow that 'itch'? This season is an exploration."

The 2026/2027 alpine skiing season gets underway in late October in Soelden, Austria, with a giant slalom race.

In her message, Shiffrin did not specify whether she intends to participate. □

Golf star Rahm quitting LIV tour over 'unacceptable' terms

New York, United States

Jon Rahm is quitting LIV Golf due to "unacceptable" terms, the star's lawyer said on Wednesday, dealing a significant blow to the divisive breakaway tour as it attempts to relaunch itself after declaring bankruptcy.

Along with Bryson DeChambeau, double major winner and former world number one Rahm was arguably the most prominent golfer to defect from the PGA Tour and join the free-spending Saudi-backed league.

But LIV filed for bankruptcy protection last month after its deep-pocketed Middle Eastern backers pulled the plug.

The tour is trying to relaunch next year with new investors as "LIV 2.0". Retaining



Spain's Jon Rahm watches his iron shot on the 11th tee during practice for the 154th Open Golf championship at Royal Birkdale Golf Club near Southport in north-west England on July 15, 2026.

popular stars like Rahm was widely seen as critical to its prospects.

"Mr. Rahm has independently reviewed the proposed terms of LIV 2.0 as the parties have been referring to it, and has determined that those terms are unacceptable as to him, and he will not be participating going forward in LIV 2.0," his lawyer John Beck told a U.S. Bankruptcy Court of New Jersey hearing on Wednesday.

Beck said that "advanced discussions for a consensual separation agreement of Mr. Rahm and LIV" are ongoing, according to a courtroom audio recording verified by AFP.

That agreement is expected to be presented before the court next month, he added.

"If the parties, for whatever reason, are unable to reach a consensual separation agreement, Mr. Rahm intends to press his objection" through legal channels, said Beck.

LIV Golf did not respond to an AFP request for a comment.

Launched in 2022, LIV Golf's emergence led to bitter divisions throughout the sport as several of golf's top names left the PGA Tour after signing big-money deals.

Saudi Arabia's Public Investment Fund (PIF) poured an estimated \$5 billion into the tour, before abruptly pulling the plug earlier this year. Documents from bankruptcy filings show that LIV owes between \$500 million and \$1 billion in estimated liabilities to at least 1,000 creditors, including star players.

Rahm, DeChambeau and fellow golfer Dustin Johnson hold the largest unsecured claims against the tour, totaling more than \$5 million each in immediate past-due payments, per the bankruptcy filing.

Still, new lead investor BC Partners Credit has pledged an initial funding commitment of a potential \$300 million to help LIV relaunch in 2027. □



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