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Gas, health care, utilities: high costs squeeze U.S. midterm voters

Warren, United States

Former U.S. steelworker Denise Barber retired three years ago, but steep gasoline prices and family healthcare needs are making the Ohio resident consider returning to part-time work to make ends meet. The 68-year-old is among American voters squeezed by affordability worries ahead of November's midterm elections, an issue that Democrats hope can help them to victory.

"I'm hoping that somebody can undo some of the things that this president has caused, like this Iran war," Barber told AFP.

The Democratic former union worker was among dozens in Mahoning Valley known for its industrial history to show up at a town hall in recent weeks, expressing concern over hospital closures, cuts to health programs and rising cost of living.

Many districts in Ohio are expected to remain Republican. But the Buckeye State, which President Donald Trump won by double digits in 2024, has become a battleground.

Democrats are competitive in some House races and have a chance of seeing former three-term senator Sherrod Brown unseat Republican Jon Husted, who filled a vacancy left by Vice President JD Vance.

The question is whether frus-



Gas prices as of September 26, 2026 in Warren, Ohio.

trations over rising gasoline, grocery and utilities prices, exacerbated by other worries like healthcare issues, will spill into the ballot box.

Barber recalls driving her husband to medical appointments recently after he had a mini stroke, and how costs piled up as they live in a "medical desert."

"The price of gas driving up there is outrageous," said Barber, a steelworker of 22 years who later became an accountant after losing her job. "On a fixed income, it makes it really hard."

She is not alone, with affordability top-of-mind for U.S. voters this year.

Some 29 percent spontaneously named an economic concern when asked what they wanted congressional candidates to discuss, a Pew survey in June found.

War with Iran has intensified stresses, as Tehran retaliated against U.S.-Israel strikes from late February by choking off the Strait of Hormuz, sending energy costs soaring.

The average cost of regular gasoline has jumped over 45 percent since the war started, to \$4.37 per gallon (\$1.15 per liter), AAA motor club data shows.

For Barber, this sometimes meant hundreds of dollars more in weekly expenses.

"I'm going to have to find a job so that I can make up the difference," she said.

- 'Win them over' -

While Mahoning Valley in northeast Ohio has "become very Republican," Hudson Institute nonresident senior fellow Paul Sracic believes the party faces "real danger" in the Senate race.

"The party in power always does poorly in midterm elections," he told AFP. "It was going to be an uphill fight anyway."

But "we have gas prices going up, and gas prices are the best measure of how people feel about the

economy," he said.

Husted has also been a supporter of data center investment, which has attracted backlash, Sracic said.

And U.S. grocery prices stood 2.2 percent higher than a year ago in August, underscoring households' compounding costs.

Democrats are campaigning on these pressures.

"Working-class voters didn't want this war," Brown told reporters on the sidelines of a recent meet-and-greet in Warren, Ohio.

"They didn't want to see explosions in costs of everything," Brown added. "I'm going to win them over."

"Why do you think the data centers are pumping \$30 million against me in this state? Because they know I'll stand up to them."

- 'Getting crunched' -

"Affordability is affecting every worker, not only in this area but really across the entire country," said David Green, a labor leader with the United Auto Workers (UAW) union in Ohio.

"Workers are getting crunched right now," he added. "What's been really scary is over the last six months to a year, a lot of our smaller UAW facilities that are independent part suppliers, mom and pop shops, are having layoffs and some plant closures," Green said. □

Pentagon chief says execution of military base shooter to be 'public'

Washington, United States U.S. Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth said the fir-

ing squad execution of convicted military base shooter Nidal Hasan will be

"public," according to a video shared Thursday by the Pentagon.

"He's going to get a firing squad of soldiers, as it should be, and we'll make sure that people are able to watch it, that it's public," Hegseth told right-wing influencer Jack Posobiec in a clip posted on X by various official Pentagon accounts.

"People need to understand that... there's serious consequence for these types of things," Hegseth said, speaking aboard the USS Abraham Lincoln aircraft carrier.

Asked to clarify what Hegseth meant by the ex-

ecution being "public," a Pentagon spokesperson referred AFP to the U.S. Army, which in turn said to contact the Pentagon.

According to rights group Amnesty International, at least 17 public executions are known to have been carried out last year -- six in Afghanistan and 11 in Iran. The Pentagon announced earlier this week that U.S. President Donald Trump had approved Hasan's execution for the 2009 fatal shooting 13 people at Fort Hood.

Twelve of the dead and 30 of the wounded were soldiers. Hasan was shot and

partially paralyzed by a civilian police officer who responded to the attack.

He was sentenced to death by a military jury in 2013 for carrying out the Al-Qaeda inspired attack. The court that convicted Hasan was told that he was opposed to the U.S. military's occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan, and that he had spoken online with an alleged Al-Qaeda figure, radical cleric Anwar al-Awlaki, an American citizen subsequently killed in a U.S. drone strike in Yemen.

Hasan's execution will be the first carried out by the U.S. military since 1961. □



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.



Political commentator Rogan O'Handley (C), aka DC Draino, US influencer Jessica Reed Kraus (L) and Chaya Raichik (R) carry binders bearing the seal of the US Justice Department reading "The Epstein Files: Phase 1" as they walk out of the West Wing of the White House in Washington, DC, on February 27, 2025.

Unproven 'cures' pushed online amid plague concerns

Washington, United States

Reports that a woman employed at a plague research institute in Russia's Irkutsk region died from the disease has spiked online interest in possible treatments for the illness in North America.

Russia has not confirmed the woman died of plague and the governor of the local region said Thursday no health issues were detected after all her contacts were traced.

But on social media, influencers and doomsday "preppers" are pushing the necessity of purchasing a \$300 kit claimed to help people avoid emergency room visits.

"Don't wait until everybody is scrambling. Prepare before you need it," says the caption of a Facebook video viewed more than 161,000 times under the hashtags #Russia and #plague.

The posts include personalized discount codes, suggesting the creators may receive financial compensation if a purchase is made.

The Wellness Company brand promoted in many of the videos saw a subsequent spike in online searches, according to Google Trends data.

The company is fronted

by Peter McCullough, an American cardiologist who has promoted Covid-19 conspiracies and health misinformation debunked by AFP. It did not immediately respond to questions about the kits.

Rogan O'Handley, known on social media as DC Draino, highlighted the kit's inclusion of the antibiotic doxycycline to his 2.9 million followers.

The antibiotic is among those used to treat plague in countries that see cases each year, helping to contain outbreaks.

"We know how to treat it," said Isaac Bogoch, an infectious disease specialist at Toronto General Hospital. "Obviously it can be a very severe infection," he said, but he warned against taking a course of antibiotics without known exposure.

He said the unconfirmed case in Russia "isn't the type of infection that would cause a pandemic."

Paul Keim, plague researcher and professor at Northern Arizona University, also said there is no reason for people in North America to start taking doxycycline.

"You're altering the microbiome of your gut, and perhaps creating antibiotic resistant bacteria in your

body that will fight off the drug therapy the next time you really need it," he said.

- Ineffective remedies -

The kits are also said to include "hard-to-find" prescription medications such as ivermectin.

But "ivermectin is never really used for a bacterial disease," Keim said.

The anti-parasitic drug is only approved by the US Food and Drug Administration to treat worm diseases. Yet it continues to be the go-to solution touted in health misinformation -- in part because authorities dismissed it as an effective treatment for Covid-19 following unsuccessful clinical trials.

This is not the first public health concern that prompted individuals to offer unproven medical solutions.

When a cruise ship passenger contracted the rare hantavirus in May, accounts also immediately touted ivermectin as a "cure" even while there is no known treatment.

Amid the 2026 Ebola outbreak in the Democratic Republic of Congo, videos of a doctor recommending Vitamin D3 and zinc spread from accounts selling supplements, despite these being unable to treat the disease. □



Lawyer for CNN, MS Now and Politico Ted Boutros leaves the E. Barrett Prettyman United States Court House on October 08, 2026 in Washington, DC.

CNN, MS Now, Politico urge judge to extend White House access

Washington, United States

CNN, MS NOW and Politico urged a federal judge on Thursday to extend White House access to the three media outlets which President Donald Trump is seeking to ban.

District Judge Timothy Kelly prolonged until Tuesday the temporary White House access he granted to the news organizations last month and said he expected to issue a ruling by then.

Trump barred CNN, MS NOW and Politico from the White House on September 18 for distributing what he called "fake news" and "fiction and lies."

The three outlets filed a joint lawsuit asking for a temporary restraining order (TRO) against the ban on the grounds that it violates the First Amendment of the US Constitution, which upholds the right to a free press.

CNN, MS NOW and Politico appeared in a downtown Washington court on Thursday to ask that the judge transform his TRO into a preliminary injunction prohibiting Trump from barring them from the White House while the case proceeds.

Theodore Boutros, a lawyer for the media outlets, said Trump issued the ban "because of what he perceives as negative, false, bad, not positive enough reporting." The Republican president, Boutros said, apparently "got up on the wrong side of the bed and declared a ban on these news organizations."

"He doesn't like scrutiny of his policies. He doesn't like the reporting. He wants more good press," he said. "If your press pass is at risk because President Trump decides something you said is false, that's a very, very dangerous, chilling doctrine."

Justice Department attorney Michael Velchik, urging the judge to uphold the ban, accused CNN, MS NOW and Politico of violating "journalistic standards" and endangering national security by revealing classified information.

A skeptical Kelly asked Velchik whether it was a "a violation of minimum journalistic standards to portray the administration in a negative light?"

In his ruling last month temporarily restoring the White House credentials of CNN, MS NOW and Politico, the judge, who was appointed by Trump during his first term, said the ban "likely violated their constitutional due process rights."

Trump has long attacked media that have aired critical coverage of him, repeatedly blasting the press as the "enemy of the people." □

Tenzing Norgay's son says Himalayas sending climate warning

Kathmandu, Nepa

As a new biopic puts the life of mountaineer Tenzing Norgay Sherpa on screen, his son says climate change is transforming the Himalayas and making mountaineering increasingly dangerous.

Released on Friday, "Tenzing", an Apple TV film, recounts the first confirmed ascent to Everest's summit in 1953.

But it focuses on the journey from the perspective of Tenzing Norgay Sherpa who, together with Edmund Hillary, completed the climb that until then was deemed impossible.

More than seven decades after Sherpa stood atop the world's highest peak, Nepal is grappling with the aftermath of catastrophic flood that has put a spotlight on the impact of climate change on mountains.

Jamling Tenzing Norgay Sherpa, 61, said that these disasters are "a warning for us".

"Nepal is very vulnerable to this because half our country is covered with moun-



Dhamey Tenzing Norgay attends Apple Original Films' "Tenzing" New York Premiere at DGA Theater on October 07, 2026 in New York City.

tains," he told AFP.

"That's going to affect the people living lower down below the valley along the river."

Two years ago, Sherpa saw that his father's village Thame, at an altitude of 3,800 metres (12,460 feet), was swept away by a devastating flood caused by a glacial lake outburst.

"It's a big threat. The moment glaciers recede... the lakes are going to rise and then one day, it's going to breach and break. And that's exactly what is happening," he said.

"It happened in Thame, half of the village was wiped off (the map)."

- 'Price to pay' -

The younger Sherpa followed in his father's footsteps to Everest in 1996, a dream he had since he was eight years old.

"I looked up to him as my greatest role model, you know, he was my hero, and I wanted to become just like him," he said.

But the signs of global warming are appearing on

Everest itself.

Sherpa said that guides are now finding water appearing at Camp 2 about 6,400 metres (21,000 feet) high.

"There was never water at all. It's always solid ice up there," he said.

Sherpa said that comparative photographs of the mountain show how much the glaciers have receded since his father's climb.

For climbers and mountaineering Sherpa community, the changes are also making their occupation more dangerous, with unpredictable weather and frequent avalanches.

"I think we have to be very careful now as to how we look at mountains and how we approach climbing mountains nowadays," he said.

Sherpa said that the responsibility of addressing climate change lies largely with the world's biggest emitters.

"It's not only affecting us in the Himalayas, it's affecting European countries, it's affecting places in the US with all these wildfires," he said.

"If we don't start taking care of our planet, there's going to be a price to pay."

- 'Long overdue' -

The climate-induced disasters affecting mountain communities form a striking backdrop as the film premieres -- featuring Genden Phuntsok in the title role, with Tom Hiddleston as Hillary, as well as Willem Dafoe.

Tenzing Norgay Sherpa's story was long overshadowed in previous accounts told from a Western perspective of the historic trip up the mountain, which measures 8,849 meters (29,032 feet).

"I think it was long overdue, a film, a biopic about my father, his life," Sherpa said, adding that the pioneer did not get the recognition he deserved.

"But at the same time, he really didn't care about it. It wasn't the fame he looked for, why he climbed the mountain.□

Searing AIDS drama 'Elsinore' opens London film festival

London, United Kingdom

The searing drama "Elsinore" starring Olivia Colman and Andrew Scott in a true story about an actor dying with AIDS preparing to play Hamlet opened the London Film Festival Wednesday.

Directed by Simon Stone ("The Dig"), it raises the

curtain on the 2026 festival which showcases 251 films from 88 countries until October 18.

Set in the late 1980s as the AIDS epidemic is beginning to ravage London's gay community, Scott plays actor Ian Charleson, who had been acclaimed for his role in the 1981 Oscar-

winning "Chariots of Fire", as he rehearses for "Hamlet" at London's National Theatre.

He confides to the play's director that he has been diagnosed with AIDS and has months to live, as he takes on the role of Shakespeare's character haunted by his own mortality. Despite his impending death, Charleson managed to carry out 24 three-hour performances, before dying seven weeks later in 1990 aged just 40.

"He was a real hero for doing it," Scott told AFP on the red carpet before the screening.

"(It's) a story that I think needs to be told about art and about this extraordinary man who was so courageous and talented and who was taken from us too quickly," he added.

Scott's performance,

which has won him critical acclaim and whispers about a possible Oscar nomination, was hailed by Stone as "incredibly moving". "More than once various crew members had to stifle sobs and tears. It happened to me a couple of times," the director told AFP.

Colman plays pioneering doctor Margaret Johnson, who spearheaded work in treating HIV and AIDS, at a time when many patients, predominantly gay men, found themselves shunned and ostracised.

Other eagerly awaited films at this year's festival include the biographical dark comedy "Artificial" from Luca Guadagnino, starring Andrew Garfield as the founder of OpenAI Sam Altman, chronicling the days when he was ousted from the company only to return later.□



British actor Olivia Colman and Irish actor Andrew Scott pose on the red carpet upon arrival to attend the premiere of the film "Elsinore" at the Royal Festival Hall in London, October 7, 2026, during the BFI London Film Festival.



Russia's liberal Yabloko party leader Nikolay Rybakov fixes the sign reading: "Journalist Anna Politkovskaya lived and worked in this house."

Anna Politkovskaya, the slain reporter who 'predicted' Russia's future

Warsaw, Poland

Assassinated Russian reporter Anna Politkovskaya, shot dead outside her Moscow home in 2006, had "predicted" Russia's trajectory under Vladimir Putin, her editor told AFP as Russians marked the 20th anniversary of her death. Politkovskaya had reported fearlessly on the war in Chechnya and the rise of Putin, warning of his authoritarian tendencies at a time when he was being welcomed and courted in the West. She was gunned down in the lift of her central Moscow apartment block on October 7, 2006 — Putin's 54th birthday. Her killing marked a turning point for Russian journalism. Two decades on, Putin is still in power, Moscow's war against Ukraine which has killed hundreds of thousands is in its fifth year, and domestic repression has reached levels not seen since the Soviet era.

"Everything that is happening with Russia was predicted by Anna Politkovskaya in the books she published before her death," Sergei Sokolov, the legendary reporter's editor at the Novaya Gazeta newspaper where she worked, said. Moscow has labelled her paper, Novaya Gazeta, a

"foreign agent".

"At the time, nobody believed her and they said she was exaggerating the dangers and fears," Sokolov said. As the West embraced Putin in the early 2000s a strongman leader cautiously welcomed after the chaos of the previous decade Politkovskaya warned Russian journalists would have to show "total servility to Putin" or face death or prison. Russia, she said, was "hurling back into a Soviet abyss".

The gunmen behind her murder are in prison but the person, or people, who ordered the killing have never been named. Asked about that in 2021, Putin said his agencies "did everything to uncover these crimes".

- 'Nothing could make her stray' -

In death, Politkovskaya has become an even more totemic figure for Russian journalists inspiring a generation of investigative reporters who she never met, and who are now forced to work in exile. With Russia at war in Ukraine, her reporting from both sides of the frontline in the Chechen wars has taken on fresh relevance. She covered war crimes

committed by both the Russian army and Chechen rebels and pushed both to evacuate civilians. In 2002, she walked into a Moscow theatre that had been seized by Chechen rebels to try to secure the release of hostages. "The terrorists had chosen me as a person they wanted to talk to, I couldn't refuse," she later said. More than 130 hostages would be killed when special forces gassed the theatre and stormed the building.

"What stood out in her was her tenacity nothing could make her stray from the topic or idea she had," Sokolov, her editor, recalled. That school of journalism now lies in virtual tatters. Years of pressure from the Kremlin has culminated in censorship levels unseen since the Soviet Union. If Politkovskaya were alive, Sokolov was certain: "she would definitely not be able to stay silent". In her latter years, Politkovskaya had become a fierce critic of Ramzan Kadyrov, then being groomed as the future head of Chechnya. She dubbed him a "little dragon" and accused him of being given a free hand to brutally rule over the war-torn region in exchange for loyalty to the Kremlin. □

Criticism in Syria after women excluded from some university courses



A yellow barrier installed by Israeli forces to obstruct the movement of vehicles is pictured in the village of Jbata al-Khashab in Quneitra in southwestern Syria near the Israeli-annexed Golan Heights on October 7, 2026.

Damascus, Syria

A Syrian government decision to exclude women from certain university courses has sparked backlash, with critics decrying new restrictions on women's rights by the country's Islamist authorities.

Announcing the opening of university enrolments last month, the country's higher education ministry said female students would not be admitted for most disciplines in two institutes created this year by the new authorities.

Teacher Ahlam Othman called the restrictions discriminatory and "an added obstacle for women in Syria". University applicant Israa Salloum said the restrictions were outside her field of study but that "nobody has the right to force me to choose a particular discipline or exclude me from another".

Under the new measures, at Damascus's National University for Defense Sciences subjects reserved for men include economic management and legal and social sciences.

At the Syrian University for Security Sciences, also in the capital, women can only be admitted to the cyber-security department.

All areas of study, however, remain open to women at Damascus University, the country's largest higher education institution.

In northwest Syria's Idlib province, the former bastion of the Islamist-led coalition that took power after ousting longtime ruler Bashar al-Assad, women will not be admitted into a television and radio production course. In Rmeilan in the country's northeast, an area formerly controlled by a semi-autonomous Kurdish administration, women are no longer to be admitted to an oil and gas institute.

The ministry did not respond to an AFP request for comment.

The Islamist authorities headed by President Ahmed al-Sharaa came to power after a 14-year civil war to topple Assad's repressive government, but their rise has sparked concerns about the growing influence of conservative religious movements and an Islamization of society.

New restrictions have included more conservative dress codes for some beaches, and restrictions on alcohol sales.

Last month, a renowned school in Damascus decided to segregate boys and girls, raising concerns over changing social norms. □

Russia glosses over dark Soviet past in reinvented museum

Moscow, Russia

In a Moscow museum that once housed evidence of Stalin-era repression, serene family scenes flickered on a screen as a narrator hailed the tranquility of pre-World War II life in the Soviet Union. The museum set up to commemorate the "genocide of the Soviet people" has elbowed out the award-winning Gulag History Museum, a harrowing collection that had for years cast a light on the killings and imprisonment of millions under Soviet dictator Joseph Stalin.

But since Russia launched its assault on Ukraine in 2022, such criticism of the country's past has been cast as unpatriotic, scrubbed from textbooks and the official narrative.

Instead, the Kremlin has doubled down on glossing over the horrors committed under Stalin, rehabilitating the dictator and erecting statues and busts of his likeness across the country.

The Gulag History Museum was "temporarily" shuttered in 2024 on allegations of fire safety violations. Its exhibits "moved to storage," according to a guide at the new museum.

"From now on, the history of



Visitors attend a guided tour at the Museum of Memory, the recently opened institution which replaced the closed Gulag History Museum and dedicated to the "genocide of the Soviet people" during the Great Patriotic War (World War Two (WWII)), in Moscow on August 12, 2026.

the repressions will remain a murky area, and our shared history will remain distorted," a Russian woman who fights to preserve the Gulag memory told AFP on condition of anonymity.

- Millions killed -

That history is grim from both perspectives.

Up to 18 million people were imprisoned by their government in the Gulag system between the 1930s and early 1950s, accused

of being traitors and enemies of the state.

Historians generally accept that at least 1.5 million of them died, with some suggesting the real figure is higher.

Another 3-5 million died in the man-made Holodomor famine in Ukraine in the 1930s and 1.6 million were either executed or died as a result of forced population transfers, according to Soviet archives declassified decades later.

The Second World War, meanwhile, inflicted its own deadly toll the Soviet Union suffered the highest casualties, with 20-27 million people estimated to have died, both civilians and military. On speakers throughout the new museum, a narrator recounts how during World War II which Russia calls the "Great Patriotic War" and says started with the 1941 Nazi attack on the USSR "our homeland faced violence never seen

before".

There is not a word about those arrested, executed or imprisoned in the gulag, the Soviet Union's vast network of prison labor camps.

- 'Composite image' -

Despite its bombastic display of the official Kremlin narrative, the "Museum of Memory" has kept a low profile so far.

It offers only guided tours to small groups by prior arrangement.

On its website, it says it welcomes "above all" veterans of the Ukraine war and their families, as well as students and schoolchildren.

Inside, the handful of visitors follow an AI-generated story of an imaginary family the Lebedevs recalling horrors endured during the Siege of Leningrad, in concentration camps and villages that were razed to the ground.

"It's a composite image. Each member of this family has several prototypes," the guide explained.

The scenes were, he reassured, "filmed with the participation of real actors".

Giant screens display recreations of bunks in Nazi concentration camps and the entrance to the Auschwitz-Birkenau death camp. □

Nearly 300,000 Nepalis at flood risk: study

New Delhi, India

More than 1,400 people were killed and 5,000 remain missing after catastrophic floods hit Nepal in August -- and a new study Thursday warned nearly 300,000 people face simi-

lar risks.

A tsunami-like wall of water and debris triggered by a glacial and rock collapse on the Nepal-China border on August 26 cut a swath of destruction across the nation.

The disaster raised fears that similar floods could strike elsewhere as glaciers retreat and development expands across fragile mountain terrain.

The study, published in Scientific Reports, examined areas up to 50 kilometers (31 miles) downstream of 1,361 Himalayan lakes in Nepal and neighboring parts of China and India.

"Our results demonstrate rapidly increasing exposure in Himalayan catchments," key study scientist C. Scott Watson, from Britain's University of Leeds, told AFP.

Scientists say climate change played a key role in the August floods.

Nepal, a country of around 30 million people that con-

tributes only a fraction of global greenhouse gas emissions, estimates reconstruction will cost \$4.78 billion.

Prime Minister Balendra Shah told the United Nations last month that the flooding "was a warning to the world" about the rising dangers of climate change.

The study estimated 293,000 people live less than 50 meters (164 feet) above usual water flows, putting them potentially within reach of floodwaters.

And the area covered by buildings in potential flood zones increased by nearly 46 percent between 2016 and 2023, the study found. In the Himalayas, where riv-

ers drop rapidly in height, giving them staggering power, even small changes in temperature or rainfall can have "disproportionate impacts" downstream, it added.

"Hazards are increasing as glaciers retreat, glacial lakes form and mountain permafrost thaws," Watson said.

"It was only last year that a smaller-scale glacial lake outburst flood, with associated fatalities and infrastructure damage, struck the same river channel as the recent August 26 disaster," the scientist added.

"The next step is to develop detailed hazard maps that we hope can inform land-use planning, infrastructure development and early warning systems." □



A general view shows damaged houses in the aftermath of the August 26 flash flood at Betrawati in Nepal's Nuwakot district on October 1, 2026.

How Aruban beaches came to be!

(Oranjestad)—We've talked about the best beaches to visit on the island before, but have you ever wondered how Aruba got its white, sandy beaches, and why there's a clear difference between the northern and southern shores? Here are some fun facts about the development of Aruban beaches. How did Aruba get its white, sandy beaches?

Aruba's beaches have developed over the span of thousands of years. Waves crashing on the rocky formations along our coast line (which consists mainly of coral reefs) have started to wear and tear the reefs over time, resulting in its gradual breakdown. Fish that feed off corals also contribute to this one small bite at a time. Over the course of thousands of years, as waves continue to crash and fish continue to eat off the corals, sand starts to accumulate around the area. However, whether the sand stays there is another question to be answered, and this is where we highlight the biggest difference between the northern and southern coast of the island.



The sand that accumulates around a torn coral reef is swept away along with the debris by the ocean stream. However, in areas where it's shallow and the stream is weaker, the sand tends to stick to the bottom faster. This is why the beaches in the south the areas with weaker stream and shallower ocean floor has sand that stretches for miles. In contrast, the northern area, where the stream is much stronger and the ocean floor is much deeper, there is no sand present they were swept away with the current!

Why is the north deep, but the south shallow?

Aruba is a continental island. The island actually forms part of South America, and the space between Aruba and the South American continent is simply referred to as land that runs under the ocean. This is why it gets gradually deeper in the south, whereas the ocean floor in the north runs steeply to the bottom. □

Source: archival document provided by the National Archive of Aruba (ANA).

Need a ride down town? Now you can check taxi rates from you phone!

(Oranjestad)—If you were planning on taking a trip downtown but want to

check how much a taxi ride costs, do we have great news for you. Now

you can plan your trip ahead on taxi.aw. With just a few clicks, you'll know

exactly how much it costs to take you to your destination.

to use the same calculation to determine the official fare that the taxi driver must charge during a trip.



Although an official fare list already existed, the previous version was very outdated and created confusion among both drivers and customers. The lack of updates and easy access to the official fares contributed to situations where some taxi drivers charged arbitrary or excessive prices, particularly in tourist areas.

The fare is calculated based on the distance and number of kilometers between different locations on the island. The digital system allows customers

The website also incorporates different surcharges that officially form part of Aruba's taxi system. The system provides a range of different locations and zones to select. Be mindful that there are also conditions that apply to the rate of your trip, all of which are explicitly explained on the website's home page.

With an easy interface that's accessible to everyone, taxi.aw can make planning a trip easier, secure and reliable. □



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Don't forget to visit Aruba's famous Red Anchor

At the south east coast of the island, standing alone on a windswept and barren land stands a popular Aruba landmark – a large anchor. It overlooks the sea just beyond, watching over the shipping lanes. It stands there in memory and in honor of all seamen who have lost their life at sea.

Where to find the anchor?

The anchor is a "must see" landmark when you visit Aruba. It is among the most photographed historical landmarks for the island. You want to make sure you add this stop on your itinerary when you're visiting the south coast of Aruba. The bright red anchor against the backdrop of the deep blue Caribbean Sea and the azure blue skies, make a great backdrop for your vacation pictures.

The anchor is located at the entrance to Gate 6 to the former Lago Colony. It is on the outskirts of Seroe Colorado, on the south east point of the island at the "T" junction to Baby Beach.

Depending on where you are staying on the island, follow the signs that indicate the way to Baby Beach. Once you reach the T-junction, it will be right in front of you.



les (about 90 feet) until the anchor touches the bottom while the chain must rest on the bottom. Subsequently, they will walk out some extra shackles and when the ship starts to swing or lean on one side, the anchor is properly set. Because of the rough weather, unfortunately they did not get the time to walk out the extra tackles and because of the tension exerted on the winch, it broke, and they lost the anchor and its chain."

Story 2:

"Mr. Curiel also said that at one time a small tanker with a Korean crew, while lifting their anchor also lifted another anchor near the inner harbor. When the ship asked for assistance, he went with his tugboat along with a barge, to help. But eventually they had to cut the chain and let the anchor go to the bottom because they could not untangle them."

How did the anchor become a landmark?

Sometime between 1980 and 1985, three gentlemen (Mr. Wim Martinus – the Harbormaster of Aruba; Mr. August Genser – the ex-Division Superintendent of Lago's Laboratory; and Mr. Willie Davis), were having a conversation with Mr. Charlie Brouns Jr., local businessman. Charlie, who was a visionary and had dreams for developing the San Nicolas area, told these gentlemen that he would like to come up with something innovative for the San Nicolas area to draw tourism to the area.

The "anchor", which at that time was being stored at the Oranjestad harbor, was suggested as an option. Charlie liked the idea! He then contacted the President of Lago for permission to acquire the anchor. He was granted permission and the anchor was

then relocated to its present location and dedicated "To All Seamen" on the occasion of the closing of the Lago Oil Refinery on March 31, 1985.

Through the years

Through the years the Anchor was slowly weathering from the wind and salt. As time passed, sadly the origin and purpose of the anchor slowly faded away from people's memories.

After Charles Brouns Jr. died on September 15, 2004, his friend Mr. Sam Speziale, requested assistance from the management of Valero Aruba Refinery to help maintain the monument. The Valero Aruba Refinery graciously sandblasted and painted the anchor and poured a concrete pad around it. On April 17, 2005, the anchor monument was rededicated "To All Seamen" in a formal ceremony in memory of Charles Brouns Jr.

Today, the anchor stands both as memorial to all seaman who have lost their lives at sea, but also as a silent reminder that Seroe Colorado is part of San Nicolas and that San Nicolas is still a vibrant and important part of the island of Aruba.

The best time to visit

When you're planning your visit to the south end of the island, you will want to include in your itinerary the many things to see and do there. The anchor will be just one of these stops, (keep an eye out for our future editions, we publish our recommendations!).

With that being said, I have to say, if you enjoy catching a sunrise, the anchor is one of the best places on the island to catch the sunrise. But in reality, anytime is a good time to visit, depending on your personal schedule. □

About the anchor

Size

It will be hard to miss the anchor, it's huge! The anchor that weighs 21,772 kilos is approximately 10 feet 6 inches wide and 15 feet, 6 inches tall.

Where did the anchor come from?

There are a number of stories as to the origins of the anchor, which one do you think it was? (Unfortunately the mystery has never been solved, so your imagination can pick which one you think it might be!)

Story 1:

"According to Mr. Manuel M. Curiel, an ex-Lago Tug Captain, a fully laden VLCC (Very Large Crude Carrier) was seeking a mooring at the 15-mile anchorage, known as Bara, on the southern part of the island. This is the usual shallow mooring location for ships awaiting orders, etc. The weather was rough with strong current. The normal procedure is that they would walk out three shack-

On the anchor there are some numbers. The 4112 and 4115, which are believed to be the serial numbers that refer to the "fluke" or horizontal and vertical parts of the anchor, respectively. The number 21772K refers to the weight of the anchor in kilos.

This type of anchor was manufactured by Hoesch Dortmund Horde, at a foundry located in Germany.



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Why You Should Not Miss Aruba's Free City Center Street Car Tour

(Oranjestad)—Aruba's City Center Street Car or as we call it in Dutch; "Tram van Oranjestad" is a single track tram line in Oranjestad, the capital city of Aruba. It was inaugurated on 22 December 2012, being the first and so far the only passenger rail service on Aruba and the rest of the Dutch Caribbean. There are two trolleys, a single-deck one with 42 seats and a double-decker with 64 seats. The line was inspired by the popular battery-powered streetcar operation at the Grove in Los Angeles, USA. Aruba's streetcars are powered by hydrogen fuel cells, which are charged by the island's year-round trade winds.



Caya Betico Croes, mostly referred to as our "main street" has been developed into a pollution-free

pedestrian mall. The double-decker offers you a 360 degree view of the downtown area with a picture perfect scenery of the is-

land's clear blue skies. Who would not enjoy a ride on this beautiful and naturally air-conditioned vehicle? The tour consists of a total

of 9 stops approximately 200 meters apart from each other; all stops are clearly marked. The tram will bring you close to different mu-

seums, historical plazas, monuments, the Protestant church, Aruba's high-end mall, retail shops, and a variety of local and international cuisine restaurants. The "I love Aruba" trademark also belongs to that list. The third stop on the route is close to a 5-minute walk to the famous Renaissance Marina showcasing luxurious yachts and Aruba's blue waters.

The "Tram van Oranjestad" starts from a balloon loop near the Port of Call and serves the downtown area and ends at Plaza Nicky. The first ride starts at 10:00 am sharp with intervals of 25 minutes. The last trolley departs from the cruise port at 5:00 pm. Don't miss this tour of the beautiful Aruba's City Center it is free for all! □

Rock stacking and its harmful effects

(Oranjestad)—The organization Aruba Birdlife Conservation has in the past raised concerns about the phenomenon of "rock stacking" in the area of Baby Beach and warned about the dangers it poses, especially for children.

As known, "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. Experts warn that "rock stacking" could even lead certain species to extinction.

In Aruba, much of the "rock stacking" also occurs near Arikok National Park. Although this activity is not illegal in Aruba, it may be time for park authorities to impose stricter regulations on this activity.

Tourists often believe that the meaning behind this activity is making a wish, but they do not realize its negative impact.

Aruba Birdlife Conservation's post not only raises alarms about the activity but also now that this phenomenon has reached



Baby Beach, some of the stacked stone tow-

ers are up to 1.7 meters high, which can be very

dangerous, especially for children. □

Unique fauna of Aruba

For a small island, Aruba sure has a lot of unique treasures. Among these, we have some subspecies of animals that are unique to our island. These have evolved to perfectly adapt to our desert climate and make Aruba their home. At the same time, they are part of what makes Aruba truly one of a kind.

Cascabel (rattlesnake, *Crotalus durissus unicolor*)

According to the Arikok National Park, Aruba knows two kinds of snakes, the Santanero and the Cascabel. The cascabel belongs to the rattlesnake family. The cascabel is the only venomous snake from Aruba. It has a length of 65cm to 100cm, and is about 4 to 5cm wide. Its color varies from light brown to grey-brown, and its underbelly is white. On its back there are marks that are a little darker, in the shape of diamonds.

Its reproduction is oviparous, meaning the offspring can hatch from their eggs just before, during or immediately after laying.

The cascabel lives mainly in the Arikok National Park. It likes to live in dark places, and is thus found hidden among the limestone rocks and under stones. As a defense mechanism, the cascabel uses its rattle as a warning, and it is not an aggressive animal.

The cascabel feeds on lizards, small mammals such as rats and mice. It paralyzes or kills its prey with its venom, which is injected through a bite. The enemies of the cascabel are donkeys, goats, humans and cars. Humans are the biggest enemy of the cascabel, as they kill them and destroy their habitat for

urbanization.

Shoco (burrowing owl, *Athene cunicularia arubensis*)

The shoco is a small bird which is seldom seen. They are active during the day but are more active later in the day and at night for hunting. These owls have very good night vision and very good hearing. The shoco is the national symbol of Aruba.

The shoco has about 20cm of length, and the females are slightly heavier than the males. They are light brown in color, with many white spots. The belly of the shoco is either white or light brown, and the shoco has striking yellow eyes. Its beak is yellow/green. Young owls do not have white spots and are lighter in color.

The nest of the shoco is a burrow in the ground. If the shoco cannot find a burrow, it will dig one in soft soil. The shoco lays one or two eggs every other day until all the eggs are laid – a shoco can lay up to four eggs. The first owlets hatch after three to four weeks. The shoco owl takes care of the owlets for three months until they leave the nest. Only a few owlets survive.

The owls dig burrows in the ground with low grass vegetation. An owl can live up to nine years.

Its defense mechanism is simply to fly away or retreat to its burrows. They eat mostly insects, mice and lizards, and the main threats to their survival are boas – an invasive species introduced by humans as pets – and humans through destruction of their habitat.



Prikichi (parakeet, *Aratinga pertinax*)

The Prikichi is the national bird of Aruba. On Aruba, Bonaire, and Curaçao, parakeets can be found, but each of the three islands has a different breed. The Yellow-shouldered Amazon parakeet that we have on Aruba is also found along the coast of Venezuela. Unfortunately, there is interbreeding between the breeds due to cage birds from, for example, Curaçao being released on Aruba. The parakeet population on Aruba is in danger due to extensive deforestation occurring on the island because of the growing population.

The prikichi weighs between 90 to 100 grams. It has a greenish-brown head with some yellow around the eye. The back and wings of the parakeet are dark green, and the underside of the body is a lighter shade of green. There is also a bit of blue in the wings. The parakeet's beak is gray/black.

Parakeets often use termite nests as breeding sites. Parakeets are found in all natural environments (mondi) of the island. It defends itself by

flying away and loud cries. Parakeets eat seeds from the pods of the Kwihi tree, Divi Divi, and columnar cactus. They also consume natural fruits. Its main predators are boa constrictors, humans.

Coneu (cottontail rabbit, *Sylvilagus floridanus nigro-nuchalis*)

The Eastern Cottontail rabbit (*Sylvilagus floridanus*) was probably brought over to the island by Indian settlers thousands of years ago as a source of food. This rabbit, locally known as Coneu, has spread all over the island and has become part of our ecosystem. The very adaptable Coneu can live in a wide variety of habitats, including Aruba's xeric scrublands, where it typically grazes on weeds and grasses.

The Aruban Coneu has a brownish grey color and a distinctive white belly. This white fur extends to the bottom of the tail which becomes visible as the rabbit runs. These rabbits can grow up to approximately 40 centimeters in length over their short lifespan of 3 years. Cottontail rabbits reach reproductive maturity when they

are just 2 to 3 months old. A female rabbit, called a doe, finds a suitable nest spot under a shrub or rocks and lines it with fur. She can have an average of 3 to 4 litters per year averaging 5 young each. The doe only visits her young once or twice a day to nurse her babies for a period of 2 to 3 weeks. The young reach independence at 4 to 5 weeks.

The Aruban Coneu is an endangered species and protected by Aruban law. The Coneu is thought to have drastically declined due to an increase in human activities, habitat fragmentation and predation by the invasive Boa constrictor as well as feral cats and dogs. However, recently there seem to be more rabbit sightings in rural and wilderness areas and also in the National Park. This could be linked to a recent decline of the invasive Boa population after the long period of drought. As the Coneu can reproduce very quickly, a short break in predation pressure can lead to a fast increase of rabbits. These are but a few of Aruba's beautiful inhabitant, which we must all contribute to protect. □



Cas Floria: The Decorated Houses of Aruba

(Oranjestad)—There may be as many as 200 to 300 houses in Aruba that have beautiful decorations, including curtains, stars, flowers, half-moons, etc., placed on the corners or the upper parts of the house.

These houses can be found everywhere, in nearly every district of Aruba. People always thought that these designs came from an Indigenous culture; possibly, the star design resembled the way it was shown, similar to the "God Sun" of the Indigenous people. However, the history of this decorative system does not go very far back in time.

In his book *Millefiori di Aruba*, Father Nooyen declares that the first house to receive this type of decoration was the home of Mr. Bernardo Eman Croes in Pos Chikito. Julien (Janchi) Christiaans and Gregorio (Goy) Semeleer built this house in 1920 and created the decorations on the upper corners of the house. Other people in Pos Chikito, who saw this beautiful work, also wanted their houses decorated in the same way.

Leoncio (Joonchi) Henricus of Pos Chikito learned the work from Janchi Christiaans and, together with his son Bonifacio (Bonny) Henricus, continued decorating houses in Pos Chikito and Sabana Basora.

Janchi Christiaans, Goy Semeleer, and others from Noord, such as Hilario Christiaans, Victor Tromp, Gerardo Jacobs, and Cornelis Rosa, brought the same decoration to houses in Noord and Paradera. In 1927, Janchi Christiaans built a house for Julian Tromp in Bugaruy.

This was the first house in Noord to receive this type of decoration. Later, those in Paradera, Santa Cruz, and Savaneta copied the house decorations. They practiced these systems up until 1944.

Even today, the patterns are well preserved and protected, but they are no longer used.

Janchi Christiaans began cutting the patterns out of zinc plates and cardboard. He also had his own creations and systems, while Leoncio and Bonifacio Henricus produced their own fantasies. This is what made these decorations popular: many people could turn their imagination into expressive art.

However, the decoration of houses



es was not originally Janchi Christiaans's idea. Janchi was a disciple of his father, Hose Christiaans, and of the Donati family, from Italian ancestors. They also made these decorations, though without using any patterns, simply designing and applying them with common plaster as the material.

Using Dr. Johan Hartog's *Aruba, Breve Historia* as reference, I noticed that he also writes that these designs are not indigenous symbols, but only decorative fantasies. One point of disagreement is that he wrote that in 1820 someone from Curaçao began this type of decoration in Aruba.

This means that, according to Father Nooyen, who declared that it began in 1920, it would have actually started 100 years earlier. As part of his research, Ito Tromp also interviewed Mr. Julio Maduro of the Department of Labor at that time, who told him that around 1880 Johannes (Janchi) Wolff began with

house decorations. And as Janchi himself said, he learned this from his grandfather, who in earlier times had built the first lighthouse at California Point.

After comparing his information, Ito Tromp wrote that Hartog was right concerning the period when decorated houses began in Aruba in 1820. However, it was not people from Curaçao who started it. Victor Tromp, who was 87 years old at the time of writing, was a member of Janchi Wolff's family.

Julio Maduro said that in 1920 they began again with this type of decoration. In general, there is no specific year (up to now) when Arubans first began with this decorative artistic expression. It is interesting to know that these decorations are a kind of symbol for several generations.

For example: Decorations that appear on the house of the Arends family could also be seen on the

houses of the Bermudez or Croes families. This was because parents always gave a specific sign to their sons or daughters when they were getting married.

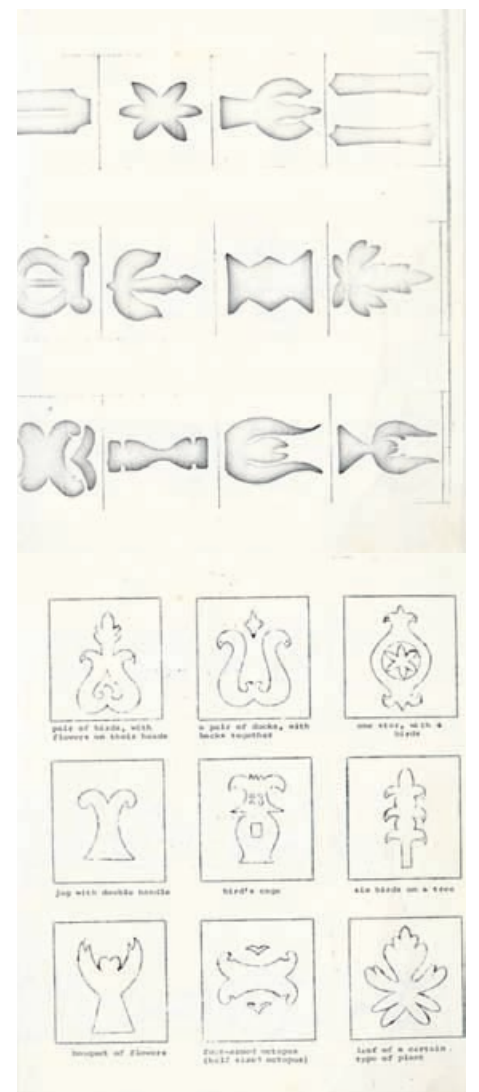
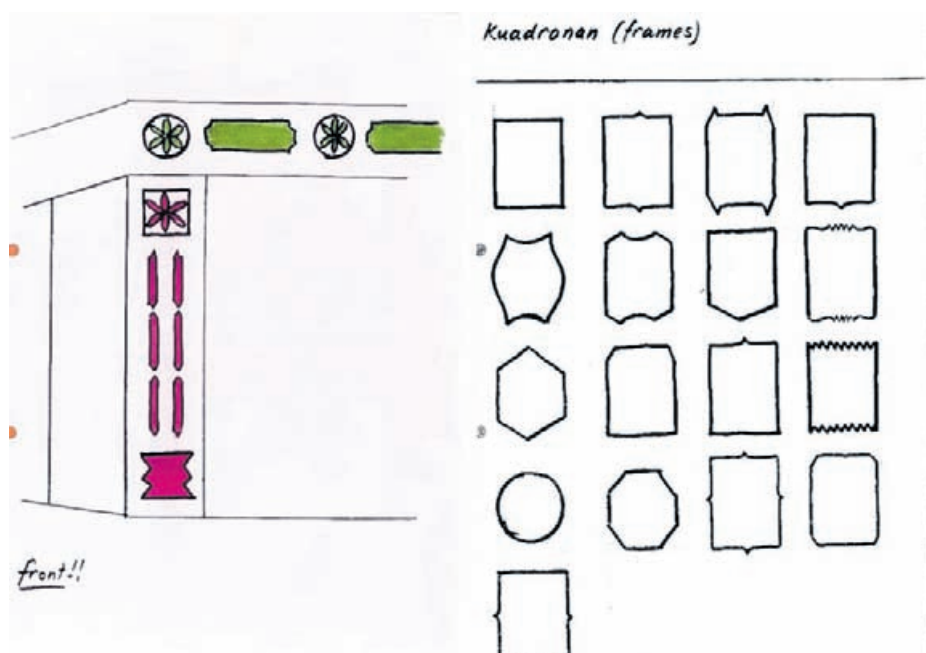
It was also said that these designs had a certain kind of voodoo purpose, to keep away the spirits of the Indigenous people who were buried in the neighborhoods where the houses now stand. However, this has almost completely disappeared.

As for the continuation of these designs from family to family, this is a cultural heritage that is no longer established. For this reason, in earlier times, every young man who married had to have his own house; otherwise, there would be no marriage.

The designs were created according to the individual's imagination. If he saw, for example, six pairs of birds on a tree, he would then paint six pairs of birds on a tree. If he wanted to express his love for his twin children, then he designed a twin.

Nowadays, if you want to use these designs for your house, don't worry—you can simply copy them and paint them. □

Source: *E casnan Decora na Aruba (1976)* by Ito Tromp.



CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

1. Stand-ins
5. Costello's chum
11. Capital on a fjord
12. Brown and simmer
13. Spring
14. Charged
15. Apple sources
17. Make fun of
18. Argon and xenon
22. Goya subjects
24. Ham it up
25. Alias letters
26. Smoked salmon
27. Book after Jonah
30. Wet, in a way
32. Tibia's end
33. Gallery fill
34. Subcontinent, e.g.
38. Coy
41. Falafel holder
42. Tips off
43. Persia, today
44. Compiled book

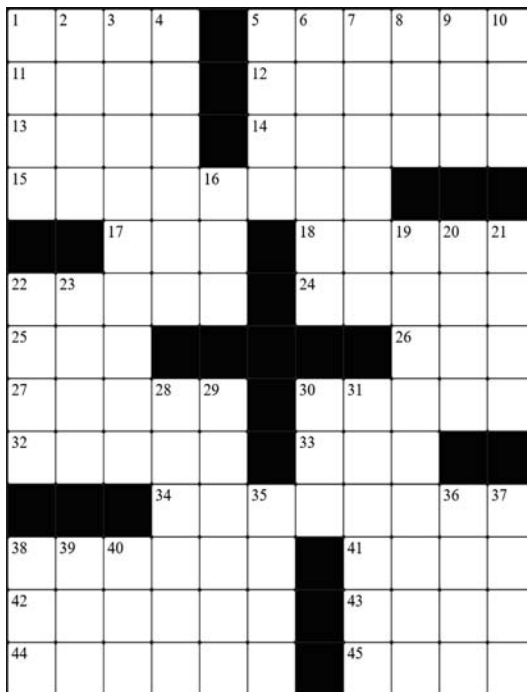
DOWN

1. Go it alone
2. Manual reader
3. Card game in casinos
4. Oscar winner Loren
5. This answer, e.g.
6. Card game with bids
7. Fragrant wood
8. Well output
9. Part of Mao's name
10. Media mogul Turner
16. Spots



Yesterday's answer

19. Card game for one
20. School near Windsor
21. Hot, in a way
22. Baby's call
23. Related
28. Attraction
29. Card game with tricks
30. "Gnarly!"
31. Deodorant target
35. Eggholder
36. Sax great Getz
37. Beach cover
38. Pop
39. Bulldog backer
40. Ryan of movies



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

W V Z E F R F J D F W X I P J J F
T P Q X V R ' X Q P F J E U F Q F E I P Q
F R S T P Q X V R U V V S L W I U V X P
D U V E J V X P J W X Z Q Q V Z R S U G Y.
P X T P E G F J J W G H I U P W ' Q P

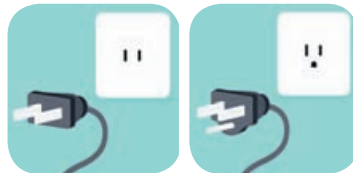
H F Y G J W. —E U Z E N R V Q Q G X

Yesterday's Cryptoquote: IF YOU THINK ABOUT IT. EVERYTHING WE DO IN LIFE IS SET TO SOME KIND OF MUSIC.—PEABO BRYSON

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 Tele-



graph, and many tourist that visit have often told us how they feel safe to explore the island or walk around at night. However, rare incidents do occurs, so keep yourself and your belongings safe.

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

SUDOKU

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

King Classic Sudoku

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

Difficulty: ★★★★★

10/9

Answer to previous puzzle

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

Difficulty: ★★★

10/8

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As species decline, green turtles offer glimmer of hope

Mataking, Malaysia

The palm-sized green turtle hatchling flailing through the sand on a Malaysian island may seem vulnerable, but its species has emerged as a symbol of hope for wildlife conservation.

Green turtles have made the rare jump from endangered to "least concern" in global conservation rankings, a remarkable success when many species are declining.

Conservation NGO World Wildlife Fund (WWF), in its biannual Living Planet Report released Thursday, found a 73-percent decline in the average size of monitored wildlife populations over 53 years.

But around 50 percent of the thousands of vertebrates monitored for the report are stable or increasing.

That includes green turtles, thanks to decades of efforts including egg relocation, marine protection and trade bans.

Malaysian turtle expert Juanita Joseph has spent years on the frontlines, carrying out cutting-edge genetic research and even convincing her own father to stop eating turtle eggs.

Still, when the International Union for the Conservation of Nature last year announced green turtles were no longer endangered, she could hardly believe it.

"Never in my mind (did I think) that one day turtles can be 'least concern'. I cried... I said I've done my part," she told AFP at Universiti Malaysia Sabah, where she is a professor.

All six other sea turtle species are still vulnerable or critically endangered, apart from the flatback turtle, whose status is unclear because of data shortages.

Turtles are targeted for food and their shells, killed in fishing nets, and constrained by development and pollution at nesting beaches and feeding grounds.

Climate change also skews populations more female because heat determines



This photo taken on September 25, 2026 shows newborn green turtles crawling across a sandy beach towards the sea after being released from a wildlife protected area on Mataking Island, Semporna, in Malaysia's Sabah region.

sex development in eggs. Even now, recovery is uneven. While green turtles globally are "least concern", some regional populations are still endangered and declining.

- 'Our heritage' -

Malaysia is something of a regional exception. Green turtle nesting at Sabah state's Turtle Islands has tripled since the 1970s to over 20,000 nests annually. That reflects "over five decades" of work, said Sabah Parks director Maklarin Lakim.

The Turtle Islands have been protected since 1977, and Sabah banned turtle meat and egg consumption in 1997.

"This is our heritage, this is our biodiversity," Maklarin said.

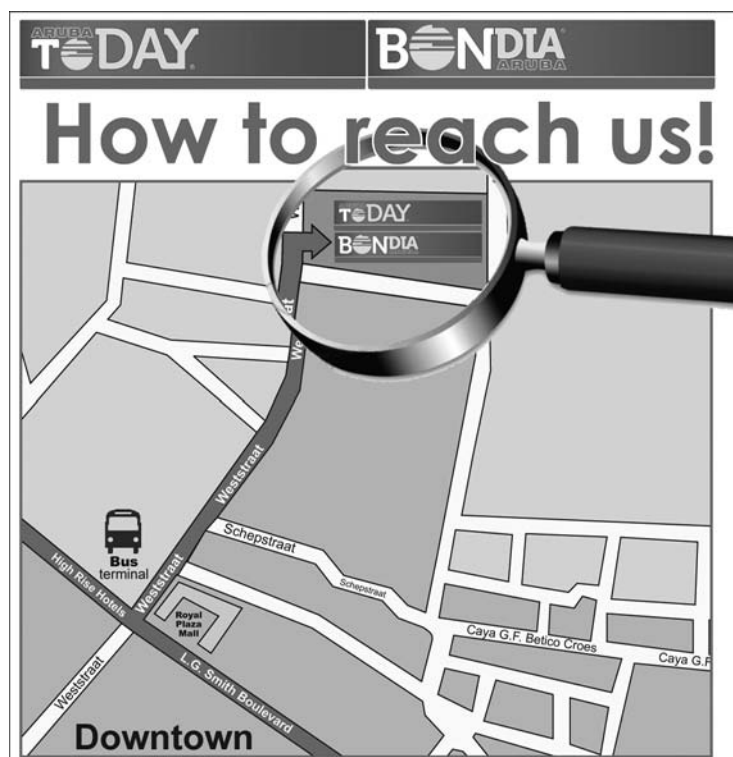
"We would like to protect that as long as possible." Much of the conservation success has relied on people like Sitti Rasah Abdul, 50, from a fishing community on Malaysia's Omdal island.

Since 2012, she and other members of a women's cooperative have relocated turtle eggs from beaches to a hatchery to protect them from predators and poachers.

The 20-strong team started conservation work with WWF, but now self-funds, ploughing 10 percent of

revenue from their handicraft and catering business into turtle protection.

"I'm already old," said Rasah, on the wooden jetty that extends from her home into aquamarine seawater. □



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

PHARMACY ON DUTY	
Oranjestad: Oduber Tel. 582 1780	
San Nicolas: Aloe Tel. 584 4606	

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

EMERGENCY	
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Police Oranjestad	527 3140
Police Noord	527 3200
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Police San Nicolas	584 5000
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FAVI- Visually Impaired Tel. 582 5051	
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Narcotics Anonymous Tel. 583 8989	
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Child Abuse Prevention Tel. 582 4433	
Quota Club Tel. 525 2672	

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Microsoft pushes AI vision with new, expensive Surface laptop

San Francisco, United States

Microsoft is pushing a “hybrid intelligence” future with a new Surface Ultra laptop that runs on Nvidia artificial intelligence (AI) chips and will cost more than \$2,500, the company announced Wednesday.

The launch is part of a broader push by tech companies to release hardware that can handle more AI computing on-device and offline, so users don’t have to rely solely on remote cloud data centers, where running AI is slower and more expensive.

It also sees Nvidia, whose data center processors power the AI revolution, make a move into personal computing, a sector dominated for decades by chips from Intel and Qualcomm.

“The trajectory for me is so clear. There will never be a moment where we will go and look and say: ‘Oh, this runs locally, this runs in the cloud.’ You will expect this hybrid intelligence to be everywhere and pervasive,” CEO Satya Nadella said during an event in San



Microsoft's Windows and Surface chief Pavan Davuluri announces the Surface Laptop Ultra powered by Nvidia RTX Spark at a Windows event on October 07, 2026 at Dogpatch studios in San Francisco, California.

Francisco.

He was joined onstage by Nvidia CEO Jensen Huang, who echoed the idea that AI will be integrated into all computing going forward and on all devices.

Agentic AI, in particular, will be central to software

development, Huang said, referring to systems programmed to be autonomous and perform tasks without supervision.

With all the changes from AI, “the computer has to be revolutionized,” Huang said. The partnership between the two US-based tech ti-

tans helps them compete with Apple, Intel and AMD in the personal computing market.

Apple unveiled two desktop computers in September, the Mac mini and Mac Studio, which it touted as powerful new options capable of processing AI software

locally.

Microsoft has been working on building “AI PCs” since at least 2024, when its laptops were powered by Qualcomm chips.

The new Surface Ultra will use Nvidia’s state-of-the-art AI chip, RTX Spark, which the semiconductor giant announced earlier this year. It will cost \$2,599 and begins shipping on October 16.

Some AI computing power and data will be processed locally, or on the device, while other applications are still handled remotely via Microsoft’s cloud computing services.

“We built it for developers and creators pushing the limits of performance,” Microsoft Executive Vice President of Windows and Device Pavan Davuluri said on Wednesday.

The news comes just a couple of weeks after Microsoft announced it would integrate Word, Excel and Powerpoint into its AI-powered assistant Copilot, in an effort to make AI the entry point for its famous suite of productivity software.

OpenAI, the company behind ChatGPT, and Claude-maker Anthropic each launched their own document creation tools in recent months.

The two San Francisco-based AI labs are also key suppliers for Microsoft, since Copilot runs primarily on their models.

Microsoft’s in-house models currently only power a few products, such as GitHub’s Copilot coding tool.

In June, Microsoft also unveiled its own cutting-edge artificial intelligence models a crucial step toward reducing its dependence on OpenAI, the creator of ChatGPT.

Microsoft, the first company to have invested massively in OpenAI, has for several years been seeking to reduce its reliance on its Sam Altman-led partner.

It renegotiated their alliance last year and retains only a non-exclusive license on its technology until 2032 though is OpenAI’s biggest shareholder. □

Trump gives ‘national treasure’ Musk top U.S. medal after rift

Washington, United States

Donald Trump presented Elon Musk with the top U.S. science medal on Thursday, as the rocket tycoon fully returned to the president’s orbit after an explosive bust-up.

Six U.S. tech titans received prestigious awards from

the president at a Washington peace institute that was itself recently renamed after Trump.

But all eyes were on trillionaire SpaceX and Tesla boss Musk following his acrimonious departure from Trump’s cost-cutting Department of Government

Efficiency (DOGE) last year. Trump called Musk a “national treasure” and said that “Elon is our modern-day Thomas Edison,” referring to the American inventor of the lightbulb.

“Elon, I want to congratulate you. You’re my friend, and all of that, but you are a very, very special guy,” Trump added at the summit, dubbed “Science: A New Golden Age.

Along with Musk, Google co-founder Sergei Brin, Nvidia CEO Jensen Huang and AMD chief Lisa Su all received the National Medal of Science from Trump during the ceremony.

Computer mogul Michael Dell and Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella got the National Medal of Technology and Innovation, also the top U.S. award in its field.

Trump and Musk gave an amiable if awkward performance on Thursday, with president patting the tycoon on the back and giving him a wooden case containing his medal. The pair largely avoided eye contact.

It was a far cry from May 2025 when Musk’s brief and tempestuous time at DOGE flamed out over his opposition to the White House’s “utterly insane” tax and spending bill.

Musk -- the biggest donor to Trump’s 2024 presidential campaign -- had spent months working out of a small office in the White House complex as DOGE took a hatchet to the federal workforce and agencies.

He appeared at Trump’s side in cabinet meetings and brought his young son X into the Oval Office alongside the president. □



(From L) SpaceX CEO Elon Musk, Dell Technologies CEO Michael Dell, Nvidia CEO Jensen Huang and US tech entrepreneur Sergey Brin greet each other at the “Golden Age of American Innovation Summit” at the Institute of Peace in Washington, DC, on October 8, 2026.



Collin Morikawa of the U.S. Team and Jackson Koivun of the U.S. Team celebrate on the 18th green during Sunday's Singles on day four of the Presidents Cup 2026 at Medinah Country Club on September 27, 2026 in Medinah, Illinois.

Morikawa says LIV players face 'business decision' after Rahm exit

Yokohama, Japan

Double major winner Collin Morikawa said Thursday that LIV Golf players have to make "a business decision" about their futures, after Jon Rahm's lawyer said the Spanish star was quitting the breakaway tour.

Rahm's decision to leave LIV due to "unacceptable" terms deals a significant blow to the divisive 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 popular stars like Rahm has been widely seen as critical to its prospects.

Morikawa, in Japan to play the PGA Tour's Baycurrent Classic, told AFP that "everyone has their own choice to make".

"It's a business decision, it's

a decision that a lot of guys aren't going to take lightly," said Morikawa.

"Are you able to go to sleep at night, keep waking up motivated, doing what you love, going out and achieving your goals and whatever those goals might be?"

"It's whatever platform that's going to be best set at," he added.

Rahm's lawyer John Beck told a US Bankruptcy Court of New Jersey hearing on Wednesday that the player would "not be participating going forward in LIV 2.0".

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.

- No way back -

Morikawa said he did not know where Rahm would play in the future and added that "you don't get many second chances in life".

"I don't know if this is a second chance, I don't know what opportunities they're going to have but at the same time I think you're going to see a lot of them play on the DP World," he said.

"I don't know about the

top guys but you're going to see a lot of them potentially go over there.

"It's going to strengthen world golf."

The PGA has no plans to offer LIV players a pathway back, chief executive officer Brian Rolapp said in August.

While the PGA Tour offered a temporary path back for some LIV players five-time major winner Brooks Koepka in January took advantage, paying financial penalties no repeats are planned, said Rolapp.

Morikawa said that "a lot of the LIV guys are trying to figure out what's next".

"Hopefully we can all step forward and forget about what has happened and go out and enjoy golf for what it is again," he said.

Morikawa, who won the 2023 Baycurrent Classic under its former name, was four shots off the lead after carding a 4-under-par 67 on the opening day at Yokohama Country Club.

American Jacob Bridgeman was out in front on 8-under, one shot ahead of England's Jordan Smith.

Defending champion Xander Schauffele was at 1-under after going round in 70. Japan's Hideki Matsuyama was on 4-under. □



Carlos Alcaraz of Spain poses for a photo with a trophy after winning the Kinoshita Group Japan Open Tennis Championships 2026 against Jiri Lehecka of Czechia at Ariake Colosseum in Tokyo, Japan on October 6, 2026.

Alcaraz feeling 'mentally fresh' ahead of Shanghai return

Shanghai, China

Carlos Alcaraz said he was feeling "mentally fresh" on Thursday ahead of the Shanghai Masters, after the Spanish star won his first title since returning from a months-long injury.

The world number three said his body was still adjusting to playing demanding matches after coming back from a wrist injury that sidelined him from April until the US Open in August.

But he comes into Shanghai having won the Japan Open on Tuesday, beating Jiri Lehecka 7-6 (7/4), 6-4 in the final.

"I'm feeling very good. Physically I'm well, I'm feeling mentally fresh," the 23-year-old told reporters in the Chinese city.

"I'm training very well, so we'll see."

Alcaraz has never gone beyond the quarter-finals in Shanghai, and missed last year's tournament due to fitness issues.

The former world number one has previously criticized the packed tennis schedule, particularly the autumn "Asian swing" that follows the US Open.

"If we see a couple years back, you know, probably this swing or this part of the season, it's never been my best one," Alcaraz said.

But he added that he was "ready to take on the challenge" in Shanghai, where he will kick off his campaign against either Argentina's Juan Manuel Cerundolo or qualifier Nicolas Mejia of Colombia in the second round.

Alcaraz's path to victory has opened up after current world number one Jannik Sinner announced on Tuesday he was ending his 2026 season with a knee injury. His main rivals in the draw are Germany's Alexander Zverev, the current world number two, and Serbian veteran Novak Djokovic, who claimed his 102nd career title in Beijing on Tuesday.

- Djokovic hails Sinner's 'big-picture' thinking -

Djokovic, 39, told reporters in Shanghai that Sinner was "smart" to call time on his season to heal.

"He has to think long-term," Djokovic said. "That's smart because, you know, as someone that... always tried to have the big picture in my mind, I really support that."

"It's important that you give yourself more years to your career, so you have more chances to accomplish all of your objectives," added the 24-time Grand Slam champion. □



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Dodgers beat Braves to advance in MLB playoffs, Rays oust Yankees

Los Angeles, United States

The World Series champion Los Angeles Dodgers beat the Atlanta Braves to advance in the Major League Baseball Playoffs on Wednesday as the Tampa Bay Rays ousted the New York Yankees.

Andy Pages put prior post-season disappointments behind him to deliver a go-ahead two-run single in the seventh inning for the Dodgers, who beat the Braves 4-1 to complete a 3-1 victory over the Braves in their best-of-five National League division series.

The Rays edged the Yankees 4-3 in New York to complete a 3-0 sweep in their American League division series, fueled by a two-run home run from Victor Mesa Jr. and aided by a spectator interference call that denied the Yankees a two-run homer.

A tight game in Atlanta had been knotted at 1-1 since



Victor Mesa Jr. #25 of the Tampa Bay Rays is unable to make a catch as fans interfere on a ball hit by Anthony Volpe #11 of the New York Yankees during the sixth inning in game three of the American League Division Series at Yankee Stadium on October 07, 2026 in the Bronx borough of New York City.

the second inning when Pages came through in the seventh, stroking a fastball from Braves relief pitcher

Robert Suarez up the middle for a bases-loaded single that scored two to put Los Angeles up 3-1.

"It's important," Dodgers manager Dave Roberts said. "Once you get to an

elimination game... anything can happen. And to be able to win today, get back, reset, have a day off tomorrow, set the rotation, it's huge."

The Dodgers will face the Milwaukee Brewers in the National League championship series for the second straight year.

The Brewers beat the Padres 3-1 in San Diego to complete a 3-1 win in their division series and book a rematch with the Dodgers who swept them in four games in the NLCS last year on the way to a second straight World Series title.

"We know that we're a force to be reckoned with," said Milwaukee's Garrett Mitchell, who delivered a triple and a run-scoring single before robbing San Diego slugger Manny Machado of a potential game-tying homer in the eighth inning with a spectacular catch at the wall. □