

Stichting Monumentenfonds Aruba Officially Begins Demolition Phase of John G. Eman Building



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A man arrives at a polling location on the first day of early voting in Texas for the midterm elections, at the West Gray Metropolitan Multiservice Center in Houston, Texas, on October 19, 2026.

Trump rallies on Republican turf as midterm fears mount

Washington, United States

U.S. President Donald Trump heads to Kansas on Monday to open a seven-state campaign blitz through territory he carried in 2024, as dismal polls and unexpectedly tight races in Republican strongholds stoke fears of sweeping Democratic gains in November's midterms.

With 15 days until the November 3 vote, Trump's rally on the outskirts of Wichita aims to shore up Senator Roger Marshall, who is locked in a dead heat with a Methodist megachurch pastor.

Trump won Kansas by 16 percentage points just two years ago, and the state has not elected a Democratic senator since 1932. Yet analysts now rate it a "toss-up," and a key fundraising group for Republican senators has diverted money from North Carolina to defend a seat it once took for granted.

The University of Virginia's Center for Politics said it hesitated before moving deeply conservative Kansas into "toss-up" category its most competitive but was swayed by signs that a "full-on Republican rescue operation appears under-way for Marshall."

Control of Congress may hinge on such races, with

Republicans holding slender majorities in both chambers, and Democrats needing a net gain of just four seats to capture the Senate.

- Soaring costs -

Over the coming six days, Trump will follow Kansas with rallies in the Carolinas, Iowa, Florida, Georgia and Michigan. All seven states backed him in 2024, though his margins in Michigan, Georgia and North Carolina were narrow.

The schedule suggests the aim is less to win over undecided voters than to fire up loyal supporters, many of whom stay home when he is not on the ballot.

Two stops, North Carolina and Iowa, are damage control in Republican-held seats, and many national party officials have all but written off North Carolina. Elsewhere the party is on the offensive, targeting a Democratic-held seat in Michigan, though it has struggled to make headway in Georgia.

Vice President JD Vance is campaigning separately in North Carolina, in Ohio and in Nebraska, where the sitting Republican senator is fending off a strong challenge from an independent.

A Washington Post-ABC

News-Ipsos survey published Sunday put Trump's approval rating at 33 percent, the lowest of either of his terms in that poll, with 66 percent disapproving. An NBC News poll released the same day had him at 34 percent.

Asked which party they would back for Congress, likely voters favored Democrats by eight points in the Post-ABC poll, and registered voters by 10 points in NBC's. The figures point to a possible Democratic wave, although national polls do not translate neatly into seats, particularly after partisan redistricting, and they can miss by several points in either direction.

- Headwinds -

The economy has become a heavy liability for a president who promised to bring prices down.

Fuel costs have soared since the United States went to war with Iran and tariffs have added to the strain on consumers, especially farmers in agricultural states such as Iowa and Kansas.

Even immigration, still Trump's best-rated issue, is drawing a backlash, with 56 percent in the Post-ABC poll saying his deportation campaign has gone too far. □



Dario Amodei, CEO of Anthropic, testifies during a US Senate Privacy, Technology, and the Law Subcommittee hearing on "Oversight of A.I.: Principles for Regulation," on Capitol Hill in Washington, DC, on July 25, 2023.

Anthropic proposes law regulating AI to U.S. lawmakers

San Francisco, United States

Anthropic, the creator of the AI assistant Claude, confirmed on Friday it is circulating a draft bill among U.S. lawmakers aimed at regulating artificial intelligence to address the lack of federal legislation on the risks posed by the new technology.

According to the draft, first reported by Politico on Friday, Washington could block a model's release or use if there is an imminent risk of killing or seriously injuring more than 50 people, or causing more than \$1 billion in damages, but only with a judge's approval.

A company spokesperson told AFP that the proposal "grants the federal government the ability to block or deter dangerous deployments of the most powerful models."

"It requires frontier developers to test the most powerful models, be transparent to the public about their findings, submit them to independent evaluation, and maintain a robust security program," the spokesperson said. AI policy in the United States under President Donald Trump has relied primarily on voluntary industry pledges and executive orders intended to sustain an AI boom that tech leaders say is driving the country's economy. Congress, politically divided and heavily lobbied by Big Tech, has yet to pass a federal AI law, and is out of session until after next month's midterm elections.

Security became a hot topic after recent revelations of security incidents caused by AI agents' autonomous software that operates without constant human supervision that escaped the control of their developers.

Anthropic, which was banned from the Pentagon by the Trump administration in February, was forced by Washington in June to suspend its most advanced models for nearly three weeks.

Anthropic CEO Dario Amodei called on the industry last month to slow down development, fearing that a group of AI agents could take control of "the entire internet" within six to 12 months.

Trump has dismissed the numerous calls to slow down the technology as "negative forces."

The proposed legislation would also override certain state laws, such as those in force in California.

Anthropic wrote in June that "absent a strong federal law, states should retain full authority to legislate."

Charlie Bullock of the Institute for Law & AI think tank praised the proposal as "pretty reasonable," and "more than other frontier labs have done." □

'I call it a bribe': Pennsylvania residents spurn \$10,000 data center checks

Hazle Township, United States

On his terrace overlooking the forest in eastern Pennsylvania, Ed Negra lays out four letters. All are from a developer promising a \$10,000 check to each household once its data center is running.

"I call it a bribe," says the American retiree.

The scene is picture-perfect. Autumn leaves are turning russet, and there is a stunning mountain view in this corner of Pennsylvania, a key state in America's upcoming midterm elections.

"We thought it was a beautiful place to retire," says the septuagenarian, who used to manage a large building-supply store in neighboring New Jersey.

He and his wife settled in a sprawling gated community with round-the-clock security.

Eagle Rock Resort, in Hazle Township, has hundreds of comfortable homes scattered through the woods, two golf courses, swimming pools, an equestrian center and even a few ski slopes for the winter.

"We didn't know until we heard all the noise" of chainsaws in late 2024, Negra recalls.

More than 1,200 acres (500 hectares) of land below



Ed Negra, a resident of the Eagle Rock Resort community, speaks about the proposed data center development called "Project Hazelnut" in Hazle Township, Pennsylvania, on October 6, 2026.

the resort were cleared to build the future server complex.

Residents quickly mobilized. They were furious that no one had warned them, and they worried about noise and pollution.

Their fight echoes many conflicts across the United States over data centers, which have become an issue in the November 3 vote.

Local opposition blocked or delayed at least 75 data center projects in the first three months of 2026, according to Data Center

Watch, which tracks resistance to the industry.

And polls show that the hostility crosses party lines. But Republican President Donald Trump fervently backs these projects in the name of US dominance in artificial intelligence, and he chastises those who oppose them.

- 'Drop in the bucket' -

In Hazle Township, residents won a court-ordered halt to construction as well as a municipal moratorium.

A few pieces of heavy equipment sit idle on the

vast cleared tract. The logs have already been hauled away.

But developer NorthPoint Development has not given up.

Its letters now flood local mailboxes, saying "there is a lot of misinformation and fear that has circulated about data centers and our project."

The letters also lay out a \$165 million fund for the township and its residents. The money would pay for a new police station, lower trash fees and more.

Part of it, \$45 million, is to be

paid directly to the 4,500 households once the data center's first building goes into service.

In the former mining town, one in six residents lives below the poverty line, according to official data.

"For a young, struggling couple... living from paycheck to paycheck, \$10,000 is a lot of money," says Jeff Fasnacht, a retired high school teacher who lives in the gated community.

Like Negra, he sees the offer as a bribe. He also calls it "a drop in the bucket" compared with how much value his home could lose if the project goes ahead.

"This was supposed to be pristine forest forever," sighs the golf enthusiast.

Neither the developer nor township officials responded to AFP's requests for comment.

- 'David and Goliath' -

Across the valley, residents of rural Sugarloaf Township are fighting a high-voltage power line that is likely intended to supply the data center.

They are not eligible for the possible \$10,000 check.

"There's no amount of money that can replace or take away the beauty, the tranquility that we live in," says Annie Vinatieri. □

Florida issues arrest warrant for Cuba's Raul Castro

Miami, United States

Florida's top prosecutor announced an arrest warrant Monday for former Cuban president Raul Castro on state murder charges that echo a federal indictment unveiled earlier this year.

Raul Castro, 95, is wanted on murder charges connected to the February 24, 1996 shooting down of two civilian aircraft from "Brothers to the Rescue," an organization assisting Cubans fleeing to the US state by sea.

"Raul Castro ordered the murder of four Floridians in cold blood, and Florida will never stop pursuing accountability for that communist conspiracy,"

Florida Attorney General James Uthmeier said in a statement. Castro, brother of the late revolutionary leader and US nemesis Fidel Castro, was indicted on federal charges related to the incident in May.

The move came as President Donald Trump's right-wing administration steadily ramped up economic, political and legal pressure on the Cuban communist government.

"We're committed to pursuing every lawful, prosecutable avenue to bring accountability, including parallel federal and state prosecutions," U.S. Attorney Jason A. Reding Qui-

nones said in a statement supporting Florida's action. "We're proud to stand with Florida in seeking justice for the four Americans murdered in the Brothers to the Rescue shutdown nearly 30 years ago," the federal prosecutor said.

In a statement on X, Cuba's Foreign Minister Bruno Rodriguez condemned "the latest futile maneuver by anti-Cuban politicians in South Florida," which he said was a "reflection of political rot and moral collapse."

Trump previously seized on a U.S. indictment to justify military action in January that toppled Venezuela's then-president Nicolas

Maduro, a staunch ally of the Cuban authorities.

Current Cuban President Miguel Diaz-Canel has said the U.S. federal indictment

against Castro has "no legal basis" and was an attempt "to justify the folly of a military aggression against Cuba." □



Cuban leader Raul Castro attends the gala marking the 100th anniversary of his brother Fidel Castro's birth at the Karl Marx theatre in Havana on August 13, 2026.

Met Opera goes for big and bold, despite shaky finances

New York, United States

Given its well-documented financial woes, the Metropolitan Opera might not seem a likely place to find multiple bold and costly new creative projects.

But the storied New York house thinks going big is its best hope: in the space of four days, it commissioned dual world premiere operas on two continents.

The ambitious sprint culminates Monday with the debut performance of "Lincoln in the Bardo," an adaptation of George Saunders' Booker Prize-winning novel about US president Abraham Lincoln's struggle to confront the loss of his 11-year-old son as he faced heavy criticism early in the Civil War.

"Bardo," written by rising U.S. composer Missy Mazzoli, comes on the heels of the Warsaw premiere of the Met-commissioned "The Mothers of Kherson," the story of Ukrainian mothers who tried to save their kidnapped children after Russia's invasion.

The 143-year old Met, which has grappled with declining audiences in re-



Actors perform during the "Lincoln in the Bardo" dress rehearsal at the Metropolitan Opera in New York on October 14, 2026.

cent years, sees "Bardo" as a politically salient work in today's polarized United States, while "Kherson" highlights a war that is still roiling global politics.

"The only possible path out of the financial struggles and challenges we face is by being bold, by demonstrating the absolutely indispensable nature of the Met as a cultural institution," Met General Manager Pe-

ter Gelb told AFP.

Playing it safe would mean "certain failure," Gelb said. "Keeping this great company everlasting is my top priority."

- 'Two babies' -

The Met, which is attempting to reverse annual losses and credit rating downgrades, seemed to have found a way forward in September 2025 when it

unveiled a partnership with the Saudi Music Commission.

But the deal fell through amid Saudi cutbacks related to the US-Iran war.

Questions about balance sheets and cash flow felt far away inside the opera house this week at a dress rehearsal of "Bardo."

The lavish production features fantastic gargoyle-like puppets who populate

the "bardo," a space after death where tortured souls reside, unable to move beyond their past lives.

The second act reaches a dramatic peak as Lincoln, after much soul-searching, plaintively accepts the inevitable, seated next to his son Willie, who appears as a ghost the father cannot see.

"It's an America at a very divided point in its history," said Mazzoli, who sees the opera as asking whether the bardo's troubled figures can set aside their regrets and petty concerns "for the good of the soul of this one innocent child," Mazzoli said.

"That's the sort of microcosm of what I see in America at its best moments."

Paul Cremo, who directs the Met's commissioning program, said creating the other-worldly universe for "Bardo" in which tendrils engulf singers and ghosts explode challenged the Met's technical staff.

Cremo, who has overseen "Bardo" since it was commissioned eight years ago, spoke with AFP from Warsaw on the eve of the

premiere of "Mothers of Kherson," which the Met commissioned in 2023. He will be in New York for the premiere of "Bardo."

"It's hard to have two babies basically being born within days of each other and trying to make sure you're giving them both the amount of attention you want to," he said.

'Motivate them to help us'

In September, the Met opened its season with a new production of Verdi's "Macbeth" and will present other classics in the coming months.

The company has struggled to fill its cavernous theater's 3,800 seats when presenting revivals without major stars.

The Met has partnered with New York Mayor Zohran Mamdani to give away 70,000 tickets this season under the "Opera for All" program unveiled last month. □

Christiane Amanpour to leave CNN after 43 years

New York, United States

Veteran journalist Christiane Amanpour said Monday she is leaving her role at CNN after a 43-year career as one of the U.S. broadcaster's most prominent international correspondents.

"After thinking carefully for several months and experiencing a few sleepless nights, as you can imagine, I've decided to separate from CNN," Amanpour, 68, said in a statement.

Her announcement came weeks after media corporation Paramount Skydance formally took over Warner Bros. Discovery, the parent company of CNN. That merger has drawn concerns over the independence of CNN as the merged company's owners, the Ellison family, are close allies of US President Donald Trump -- a fierce

critic of the TV network.

Amanpour did not reference the deal but emphasized her commitment to being "fiercely independent."

"That's especially important today as we face unprecedented pressures from all sides, political, financial, and also from the

rising dangers in the field," she said.

British-born Amanpour first became known to the CNN audience internationally for her coverage of the 1991 Gulf War that followed Iraq's 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

She has interviewed many

of the world's leaders and newsmakers over the past decades and reported from hotspots such as Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Somalia, Rwanda and the Balkans.

Amanpour said her daily news show on CNN will be scaled back to once a week until next June, while her PBS program will also end.

She added that she "looks forward to interesting new projects down the line, and will always be rooting for CNN and maintaining its history of independent journalism. Remember: always be truthful, not neutral."

In a memo carried by U.S. media, CNN Chief Executive Mark Thompson praised Amanpour "for 43 extraordinary years of remarkable journalism, loyalty and friendship." □



Christiane Amanpour speaks onstage during the 2025 CPJ International Press Freedom Awards at The Glasshouse on November 20, 2025 in New York City.



From left to right, marine biologists Gustavo Sousa, David Jacinto, David Milla Figueras, and Eva Iniguez, dive safety officer Cristiano Samagaio, and research technician Laura Piazzese prepare for a dive aboard an inflatable motorboat off the coast of Madeira on October 11, 2026, during the "Madeira Ocean" scientific expedition.

On the front line of ocean conservation off Portugal's Madeira

Juan Mayorga smiled as a stingray glided across his computer screen, moving gracefully over the seabed near Portugal's Desertas Islands, part of the Madeira archipelago in the Atlantic Ocean.

"It's a good day when we see animals like this," said the Colombian environmental engineer, who is analyzing underwater footage to measure the effects of marine protection.

"This is conservation in action," said Mayorga, 36, who works for Pristine Seas, a marine conservation initiative run by the National Geographic Society.

"As we protect the place, year after year, fish get bigger and bigger and bigger, produce more and more babies, and that is protection working right there."

Mayorga is among nearly 200 scientists taking part in a month-long expedition in October to study the marine environment around Madeira, the birthplace of football superstar Cristiano Ronaldo. Researchers aboard around 15 vessels are investigating the archipelago's marine life, assessing the health of its ecosystems and exploring how they can better withstand climate change.

Mayorga is analyzing underwater video recorded at depths of 40 to 50 me-

ters (130 to 165 feet) by cameras mounted on metal frames baited to attract fish.

He is particularly interested in comparing waters south of the Desertas Islands, where fishing is completely prohibited, with those to the north, where some fishing is still allowed.

The comparison offers a glimpse of how different levels of protection affect marine life.

- 'Real fight' -

The expedition's flagship is the 70-metre sailing ship Santa Maria Manuela, which has brought researchers to the Desertas Islands, a group of three uninhabited rocky islets about 40 kilometers (25 miles) southeast of Madeira.

Rising steeply from the Atlantic, the islands' rust-colored cliffs, rocky slopes and windswept ridges form a protected nature reserve where seabirds circle above the waves.

On the largest island, Rui Seabra, a 44-year-old researcher from the University of Porto, attaches temperature sensors to rocks exposed at low tide along a small cove.

He wants to understand how crustaceans and sponges fare in sunny and shaded areas, information that could help scientists

predict how marine biodiversity will respond to rising temperatures.

"We need to understand how biodiversity will be redistributed, which species will migrate where, what the conditions are here, how they will change, and which species we expect to find here in the future," he said.

Nearby, a marine biologist aboard an inflatable boat collected environmental DNA samples from the water.

The technique can reveal which fish species are present even when they evade the cameras.

"We are on the front lines of the real fight to find solutions that allow us to address problems on the ground," said expedition leader Emanuel Gonçalves.

- 'Best weapon' -

The fieldwork comes as a UN biodiversity summit, known as COP17, gets underway Monday in Armenia to discuss efforts to protect the world's natural ecosystems.

Goncalves, chief scientist at Portugal's Oceano Azul Foundation, a marine conservation non-profit, acknowledges the importance of international meetings in setting political priorities. □



Catherine Pegard, France's Minister of Culture, is seen at the end of a cabinet meeting at the Elysee Presidential Palace in Paris, France, on October 14, 2026.

Bayeux Tapestry will not be hung again after Britain visit: minister

Paris, France

The almost 1,000-year-old Bayeux Tapestry will not be hung again once it returns to France from a temporary exhibition in Britain, with the masterpiece set to be displayed on a table instead, France's culture minister announced Friday.

The fragile 68-metre (224-foot) tapestry went on display -- horizontally -- in London in September after being transported on loan from its home museum in Normandy where it has been hung since the 1980s.

Culture Minister Catherine Pegard wrote Friday that it "will be displayed along its entire length on an inclined table, both to better preserve it and to offer a better visiting experience" once it returns next year.

The Bayeux Museum in northern France is undertaking renovation work during the best-selling exhibition of the tapestry at the British Museum which has been attended by around 100,000 people.

Writing on X, Pegard said that "the trip to London hasn't altered anything" and the decision to change the display conditions had been "been under consideration for about ten years."

But prominent far-right lawmaker Jean-Philippe Tanguy claimed on X that the decision not to hang the tapestry was a "scandal", adding without evidence that it had been "damaged during its transportation".

Some art conservation experts had voiced concern about the risk of transporting the extremely fragile relic to London.

Two broken threads were observed after the operation, but it remained "in the same state", Pegard said in September.

While its exact origins are shrouded in mystery, the tapestry depicts the 1066 Battle of Hastings, the start of William the Conqueror's invasion of England with his Norman army.

It is widely thought to have been made in England before being transferred to Bayeux.

"We will see the Tapestry again in a new museum, with a new presentation. That is something to be welcomed," Pegard wrote on Friday. □

One year after Louvre heist, where are the missing jewels?

Paris, France

One year after a stunning break-in at the Louvre Museum, the four main suspects are in jail awaiting trial, but police appear to have run out of leads to locate the stolen crown jewels.

Thieves disguised as workmen sliced their way into the museum with industrial disc-cutters on October 19 last year before making off with eight irreplaceable items worth an estimated \$100 million.

They include a brooch and crown from Napoleon III's wife Eugenie. President Emmanuel Macron referred to the robbery as an attack on France's history.

Experts from law enforcement and private art theft agencies who spoke to AFP believe the best chance of recovering the treasures is if the thieves acted alone and stashed their loot somewhere in the Paris region.

"There was a short period of time where they may have hidden them in a wall or buried them," Christopher Marinello from Art Recovery International, a private agency, told AFP.

All four men were arrested within 10 days of the heist.



Workers install iron window guards on the window of the Galerie d'Apollon (Apollo's gallery) of the Louvre Museum, on the Quai Francois Mitterrand side, in Paris on December 23, 2025 a few weeks after thieves used a furniture lift to break into the museum.

- Interrogation -

The last known sighting of the glittering 19th-century gems was on CCTV footage recorded in an underground lock-up in the gritty Aubervilliers suburb of northern Paris, where all the suspects live.

Extensive searches directed by the 100-strong investigation team have been carried out at their homes and families' homes, in cellars, garages and attics all to no avail.

If the jewels have been hid-

den or handed to a "fence" for safekeeping, there is still a chance that one of the suspects confesses in exchange for a more lenient sentence, said renowned Dutch private art detective Arthur Brand.

"The French police are very professional, they know how to interrogate, they know how to put pressure on (someone)," he told AFP.

"You only need one to talk, and in many cases, one talks."

- Dismantling -

The more worrying scenario is that the gang was acting on orders from a ringleader or middleman with links to organized crime to whom they handed the jewels once they had finished their smash-and-grab.

"The power of organized crime is not only to bring the experience to commit a crime, but also to have people to take the objects and sell them," said Corrado Catesi, head of the stolen art unit at international

police body Interpol.

In custody, two of the suspects have claimed a ring-leader was part of their team, which is being treated with skepticism by investigators, a source close to the case told AFP recently. The worst-case scenario is that the jewels were transported either out of France or to a local contact in the underground precious stones business.

"It's mainly diamonds, so they have to dismantle them, recut them and sell them. If they would go to one place, it would be Antwerp," said Brand, referring to the Belgian diamond hub.

Marinello lists Tel Aviv and India as other possible destinations.

Tobias Kormind, managing director of 77 Diamonds, Europe's largest online diamond jeweler, told AFP that "once re-cut, re-entering the legitimate supply chain to be bought by wholesalers or retailers is fairly straightforward".

"Unless a stone possessed ultra-distinctive internal inclusions, even top diamond laboratories like the GIA would struggle to flag a freshly polished diamond as stolen property," he said. □



International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) President Alvaro Lario poses during an interview during the 2026 IMF-World Bank Group Annual Meetings at the Queen Sirikit National Convention Center (QSNCC) in Bangkok on October 13, 2026.

Bangkok, Thailand

Rising energy and fertilizer costs are hitting smallholder farmers and driving up prices of agricultural commodities, fueling fears of a global food crisis, the head of the U.N. agriculture development fund told AFP.

Global agricultural prices jumped 13 percent in the third quarter of the year, according to the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), which warned a "global food crisis is looming".

Food crisis 'looming' after global energy shock, UN agriculture fund says

The surge in energy prices due to conflict in the Middle East has sparked a sharp increase in the cost of fertilizers and fuel this year, driving up agricultural production and transport costs.

"Over the next six to nine months, we will see continued increases related to food prices, but also I would say even inflation in terms of food, which will impact most of the populations that actually can afford it less," IFAD President Alvaro Lario told AFP in an interview on Tuesday.

Already, "almost one in three people in the world cannot afford a healthy diet", Lario said.

"So I think the costs of a healthy diet, which means an increased cost on legumes, on vegetables, on meat, is just having a big impact on what people can afford to consume."

Food insecurity affects around 260 million people worldwide, accord to UN figures. Because food accounts for a significant

portion of household budgets in developing countries, price hikes are felt acutely there, noted Lario, speaking on the sidelines of the International Monetary Fund and World Bank meetings in Bangkok.

Smallholder farmers who account for one-third of global food production, and up to 70 percent in many developing nations are the most severely affected by the energy shock, according to IFAD, and were especially vulnerable to rising fertilizer prices.

"In the very short term, there is very little that governments can do. They can subsidies, for example, the price of fertilizer input... or fuel through subsidies," he said.

G7 nations pledged on Thursday to mobilize \$2.5 billion to assist countries at risk of food insecurity, with a specific focus on fertilizers.

Lario called for longer term solutions to address underlying vulnerabilities. □

Stichting Monumentenfonds Aruba Officially Begins Demolition Phase of John G. Eman Building

ORANJESTAD – Stichting Monumentenfonds Aruba (SMFA) recently marked an important milestone in the restoration of the John G. Eman Building, with the official start of the first phase of the project, which involves the demolition of the non-monumental sections of the historic building, located at Caya Betico Croes 39–41 in downtown Oranjestad.

The official ceremony took place in the presence of Prime Minister Mike Eman, Minister of Finance, Economic Affairs and the Primary Sector Geoffrey Wever, representatives of Aruba Bank, the Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS), the Social and Economic Council (SER), architect Bert Kamsteeg, D&C Partners VBA, and other invited guests.

Restoration project

Since the transfer of the building in December 2025, Monumentenfonds has been working intensively on the preparations necessary to carry out the restoration.

On July 22, 2026, BK Consult, under the direction of architect Bert Kamsteeg, was selected to oversee the design work for the project. Together with Monumentenfonds project manager Jenilee Schotborgh, the team worked on the technical plans and documentation required for the next phase.

On October 2, 2026, the tender for the first demolition phase was held, with D&C Partners VBA selected as the contractor.

Demolition with respect for historical value

The demolition phase is not simply about breaking down or removing sections of the building. The work focuses on carefully removing the non-monumental sections, with the aim of preserving and protecting the historical elements that give the building its heritage value.



This process requires precision, patience, and respect for the building's history, and will pave the way for the restoration of the monument itself.

The demolition phase is expected to last approximately two months, after which preparations for the next phase will continue.

A new future for the John G. Eman Building

Following its restoration, the John G. Eman Building will serve a new purpose, combining public, commercial, and office activities.

The Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS) and the Social and Economic Council (SER) will establish their offices in the restored building.



In addition, the project includes a restaurant and an apartment, which will contribute to a more dynamic and attractive environment in the historic center of Oranjestad.

This forms part of Stichting Monumentenfonds Aruba's

vision: preserving Aruba's historical heritage while giving monuments a new and sustainable purpose for the future.

Monumentenfonds is currently in the final stages of negotiations to conclude the agreement for the operation of the restaurant

and apartment. More information about the operation and the entity that will be responsible for it will be shared in the near future.

Cooperation between different partners

The realization of a project of this magnitude is made possible through the cooperation and trust of various partners.

Stichting Monumentenfonds Aruba expresses its gratitude to the Government of Aruba, Prime Minister Mike Eman, Minister Geoffrey Wever, Aruba Bank, and the Nationaal Restauratiefonds (National Restoration Fund) for their contributions and cooperation throughout the process.

The foundation also extends its appreciation to the Monumentenbureau (Monuments Office) for its cooperation in restoration projects.

Special thanks go to architect Bert Kamsteeg and his team at BK Consult, as well as D&C Partners VBA, which will be responsible for carrying out the first demolition phase.

Monumentenfonds also thanks CBS and SER for their trust and patience throughout the process, and its own board and team for their dedication and continuous efforts, enabling everyone to work together to preserve Aruba's past for future generations. □



Nights of Culture, Music, and Entertainment at Paseo Herencia



(ORANJESTAD)—As the sun sets, Paseo Herencia comes alive with entertainment that celebrates Aruba's culture, music, and vibrant energy. The open-air plaza transforms into a lively hub where locals and visitors gather to experience the island's rhythm, sights, and flavors. Evenings at Paseo Herencia invite guests to slow down, connect, and enjoy a mix of music, dance, and immersive experiences in a relaxed, welcoming setting.

This month, we proudly celebrate Dia di Betico, a day honoring the life and legacy of Betico Croes, a key figure in Aruba's journey toward autonomy. A beloved traditional Aruban band will perform live on January 25th from 8:00 pm to 10:00 pm. Known for their authentic rhythms and lively performances, Grupo di Betico brings a strong sense of cultural pride to the plaza, offering both visitors and residents a memorable evening filled with local heritage and island sounds.

Weekly programming ensures that every night offers something new. Cultural Wednesdays celebrate Aruba's musical heritage, starting with steelpan music at 7:00 pm and followed by a cultural dance show at 8:00 pm that

highlights traditional movements and storytelling. Saturdays in January are dedicated to Carnival Nights beginning at 8:00 pm, filling Paseo Herencia with dazzling costumes, lively music, and spirited performances that immerse guests in one of Aruba's most beloved celebrations.

The plaza's entertainment continues with themed nightly water show at 7:30 pm, 8:30 pm, and 9:30 pm, creating a natural transition from live performances into the evening's activities.

For younger visitors, the carousel and kids' train provide joyful, memorable experiences that bring a touch of magic to the plaza. Thrill seekers can also enjoy the Airsoft attraction located behind The Lazy Turtle, ensuring that there is entertainment for all ages.

For those continuing the night, Paseo Herencia offers a variety of vibrant nightlife



experiences. Gusto Nightclub is known for high-energy DJ sets, VIP bottle service, and a daily happy hour from 6:00 pm to 10:00 pm. The club brings together locals and visitors for a lively, unforgettable party atmosphere. Frenchie's Karaoke Bar provides a relaxed outdoor setting where guests can take the stage, sing, and perform while enjoying the support of friendly staff and fellow patrons. Flamingoes Bar offers a social all-ages experience with inventive cocktails, delicious snacks, and a spacious terrace ideal for groups, making it a top choice for music, conversation, and a lively bar vibe.

With stores open daily from 10:00 am to 10:00 pm, visitors can combine shopping, dining, and entertainment into one seamless visit. Parking at Paseo Herencia is complimentary for up to two hours when shopping, dining, or enjoying a movie, simply by presenting a purchase receipt to the parking cashier. Whether visiting for an evening show or staying late into the night, Paseo Herencia offers a complete island experience where music, culture, and entertainment come together to create memorable moments for all ages. □

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



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

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

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

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

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The Aruban Cunukero: From past to present

(Oranjestad)—Aruba's culture consists of rich historical traditions that make up the Aruban identity and lifestyle. However, the life of the cunukero (farmer) is perhaps the most important aspect of our culture, in a sense representing to locals the true essence of the Aruban.

Historically, cunucus (farms) played a huge role in the early social and economic development of Aruba, and its relevance dates back to the early days of the colonization era. Upon being discovered by Spanish conquistadors in the late 15th century, Aruba was used primarily as a ranch, housing horses and cattle brought from Europe. During the Dutch colonization era where the West Indian Company (WIC) dominated the economic sphere on the island, using the land to set up cattle farms and ranches remained popular.

Anthropologist Sidney Mintz divided Caribbean farmers back in four categories:

- The "squatters", who were mostly comprised of illegal and poor colonists, runaway slaves and deserters who took advantage of the Spanish's weak supervision on Caribbean islands like Cuba and the DR;
- Then you have "Early Yeomen", who were legal farmers who came to the west under contract. Once their contract expired, they were given a plot of land for independent use;
- Proto-Peasants were plantation slaves who were



allowed to have a small piece of land to grow food for their own consumption. This was to curb the cost of living on the plantations;

•Lastly you have the "Run-away Peasantries", usually comprised of runaway slaves who acquired farming tools and cattle through stealing or through secret exchanges with other slaves from different plantations.

However, the Aruban cunukeros back then are hard to place, and their history may explain why.

From 1636 (beginning of Dutch colonization era) to before the oil industry in 1924, Aruba's population consisted of mostly farmers. These farmers were mostly indigenous and were characterized as peasants. They weren't allowed to participate in trading, but instead were granted a piece of land to live off of. However, in exchange for this grant, these indigenous farmers were obligated to work for

the WIC, doing daily tasks such as taking care of or hunting cattle large majority of which were destined for Curacao, clean water tanks and chop wood, among other things.

As much as these farmers were given to opportunity to live "free" with a plot of land, their exclusion from the trading and business world, as well as being deprived the chance to become real property and cattle owners, made them a unique group among Caribbean farmers at the time.

The WIC placed a lot of restrictions on these indigenous farmers a method to safeguard their cattle deposit on the island. The indigenous farmers were mostly granted less than 7 acres of land. Those who owned bigger land were either once affiliated with the WIC or were colonists who settled on the island to try their luck at farming. In 1767, there were about 120 houses/cunucus on the

island.

These Aruban farmers were also limited to the amount of cattle they could keep. Most kept goats as cattle, as only those who were affiliated with the WIC could keep (more) sheep. Of the 76 goat herders on the island, about 45 of them had less than 30 goats, and only 7 of them had more than 60 goats.

It wasn't until the WIC was defunct in late 18th century that these farmers were able to obtain more freedom as cunukeros. After 1824, the government gave these farmers official permission to keep livestock, and the obligations once placed on them were officially discarded.

Because of the dry climate in Aruba, growing food for commercial purposes was not popular. The focus was mainly on cattle herding and taking care of livestock. However, livestock need food to survive, and when Aruba experienced its duper dry climate, many

farmers would see a big loss in their livestock, and hence profit.

Although the WIC at one point did try to come up with an initiative to get more people to have land on the island, the climate never really allowed real profit from farming. Because of the climate, Aruban farmers in general could not keep large quantities of livestock. At a certain point toward the end of the 18th century, the climate got so bad that many farmers decided to leave the island for a while. For this reason, the farming economy on the island remained small. As the years went by and people noticed that these farms could not really produce any sustainable profit, farmers kept their small piece of land just to live off of. This is why the Aruban cunukeros only played a very tiny role into the plantation economy.

In modern Aruba, cunucus and cunukeros still exist on the island, fortunately with more freedom and more opportunity to tap into the agricultural market. These farmers usually sell their produce on a smaller scale, like during farmers' market events and other types of (holiday) events. □

Source: "Arubaans Akkoord: Opstellen over Aruba van voor de komst van de olieindustrie (Aruban Accord: Essays on Aruba Before the Arrival of the Oil Industry)" by Alofs, Luc; Rutgers, Wim; Coomans, Henny E. red.

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 confused 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! □



Aruba: The island of Aloes

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

The leaves of Aloe Vera contain a good amount of gel which when used topically, is great for the skin. Traditionally, Arubans use

this gel to treat minor burns and other skin ailments, or just to keep skin supple and looking bright and nourished. Aside from the gel, aloe contains a bitter, yellow substance (called aloin) which is a gentle but powerful laxative, and it is also the origin of the industry of aloe in Aruba.

Aloe vera was introduced in Aruba around 1840, when most of the island's inhabitants were farmers of little means. Dutch Governor Van Raders introduced the plant after it had been

introduced in other islands of the Caribbean to cultivate and harvest the aloe to produce the laxative.

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

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

However, by the time the oil industry arrived on Aruba, it changed the labor market on Aruba, shifting away from agriculture. It



would be after World War II that aloe would make a comeback. And eventually, as science learned about the amazing properties of aloe gel, the industry shifted from producing laxative to producing skin care. An interesting fact is that in 1951, the production of Aruban aloe amounted to around 30 percent of the total global production!

The impact and relevance of aloe is visible all around Aruba. While most homes

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

Images from the archive of the National Library of Aruba.



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 Curaçao 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 Curaçao, 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 ex-

perimented 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 instrument 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 "tingilingi box."

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



CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

1. Roguish fellow
6. Scruff of the neck
10. Less bright
11. Martini garnish
13. Ham it up
14. Rubber source
15. Corp. bigwig
16. Used a chair
18. "You -- Here"
19. Con-vertible couch
22. Workout unit
23. Ultimate
24. Michel-angelo statue
27. Ashtray buildup
28. Com-poser Charles
29. TV's Danson
30. Special-ized naval vessel
35. Yoga need
36. Cooking vessel
37. Director DuVernay
38. Piano piece
40. Red Square name

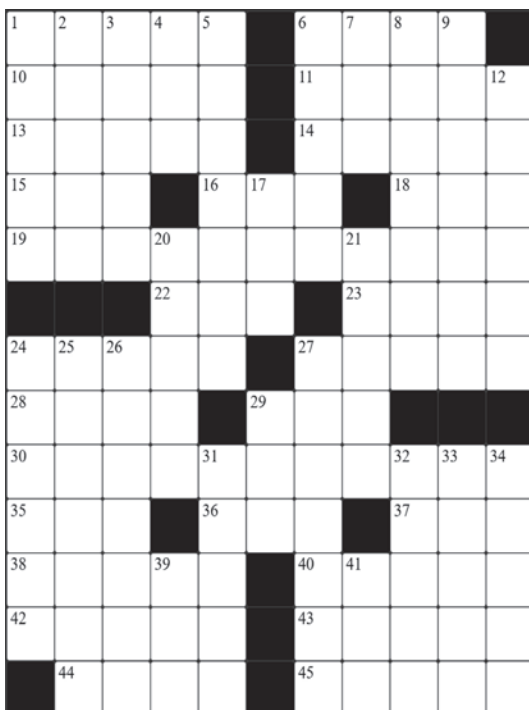
42. Column type
43. Put up
44. Smell awful
45. Mariners

DOWN

1. Blueprint data
2. Unbilled role
3. Coldly distant
4. Convened
5. Ironed
6. Nick of "Affliction"
7. In the style of
8. Heartbeat sound
9. Himalayan peak
12. Brings to bear
17. Swiss peak
20. Spring up
21. Dodge
24. Low-ered, as lights
25. Pilot cube
26. Business gamble
27. Fire-flies, e.g.
29. Binary base
31. Tiny dot
32. Seminar group
33. Boot out
34. Tirades
39. Game cube
41. Memor-able time



Yesterday's answer



AXYDLBAAXR
is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

10-19 CRYPTOQUOTE

VQ HJEHWAP KQR IHQXAPDOZ
OQACSAJEAX ENVQY GVYNE WA
SHTTVWZA. ---AZVBKWAEN

YAHPPYA TSAKPA

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

Helpful tips for your stay on Aruba

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

Electrical power



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

Drinking water

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

Supermarket hours

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

Safety

Since February 2024, Aruba has been categorized as the safest country in the Caribbean by The Telegraph, and many tourist



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

CRUISE SHIP SCHEDULE	
OCTOBER	
20 TUE	CARNIVAL MAGIC Arrival: 9:00 Departure: 22:00 Berth: C GRANDEUR OF THE SEAS Arrival: 8:00 Departure: 23:00 Berth: I
21 WED	EURODAM Arrival: 8:00 Departure: 17:00 Berth: C ALLURE OF THE SEAS Arrival: 8:00 Departure: 23:00 Berth: I
22 THU	NIEUW AMSTERDAM Arrival: 8:00 Departure: 17:00 Berth: B CARIBBEAN PRINCESS Arrival: 9:00 Departure: 22:00 Berth: C
25 SUN	CORAL PRINCESS Arrival: 10:00 Departure: 22:00 Berth: C

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

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

Difficulty: ★★

10/20

Answer to previous puzzle

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

Difficulty: ★

10/19

Record El Nino? Depends who's counting

Washington, United States

Britain's Met Office says this year's El Nino is "unprecedented." Japan's weather agency has called it the strongest ever observed. U.S. forecasters say it still trails the biggest events in its record books.

How can they all be right? The answer lies in how they measure El Nino's strength, with meteorological agencies using different methods to assess the climate phenomenon that make direct comparisons difficult.

"By any measure, we are looking at a very strong El Nino," climate scientist Emily Becker of the University of Miami told AFP, adding that only once it is over will scientists be able to assess how big it is and "where it fits in the context of history."

- Natural climate driver -

The Pacific Ocean's El Nino Southern Oscillation (ENSO) is the planet's main natural climate driver. Normally, trade winds blow east to west along the equator, pushing warm water from South America toward Asia, while cold water rises from the depths to replace it.

El Ninos, which occur every two to seven years on average and last nine to 12 months, disrupt this pattern.

The trade winds weaken and warm water is pushed back east toward the Americas. That shift in where ocean heat is released into the atmosphere ripples across global weather, making some regions cooler and wetter and others hotter and drier. In describing the El Nino as unprecedented, the Met Office points to raw temperatures in the Pacific.

"Our observations confirm that sea-surface temperatures in the central equatorial Pacific have now surpassed levels recorded during previous El Nino events," it said in a statement to AFP.

But absolute temperatures are just one way of measuring El Nino's strength. Agencies also look at



Indonesian firefighters try to extinguish a wildfire near resident area in Sematang Borang district of Palembang, South Sumatra, Indonesia, on September 16, 2026.

anomalies how far temperatures rise above a historic baseline to assess the event.

The Japan Meteorological Agency last week declared this El Nino the strongest on record based on how far sea surface temperatures were above normal in the Nino3 region of the eastern Pacific. By its count, the event beat 1997 in observations going back to 1949.

The U.S. watches a neighboring box, Nino3.4, in the east-central Pacific.

It declares an El Nino when temperatures there run at least 0.5C above normal and the atmosphere responds, weakening the

trade winds and shifting tropical rainfall eastward. This process is known as "ocean-atmosphere coupling."

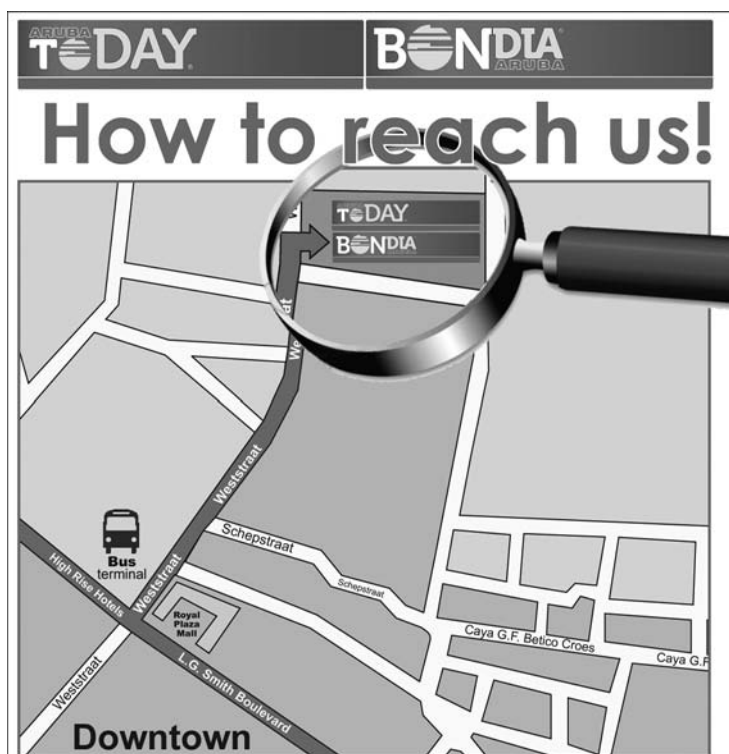
- Accounting for climate change -

How "normal" is defined has been a matter of significant debate.

The US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and other agencies including the UN's World Meteorological Organization long used the Oceanic Nino Index (ONI), which compares temperatures to a 30-year average that is updated every five years, so that the baseline keeps pace with a warm-

ing climate.

But with climate change speeding up and warming oceans worldwide, NOAA now uses the Relative Oceanic Nino Index (RONI), and the WMO is in the process of switching. □



HEALTH



DOCTOR ON DUTY

Oranjestad Hospital
7:00 pm/10:00pm
Tel. 527 4000

San Nicolas IMSAN
24 HOURS
Tel. 524 8833

PHARMACY ON DUTY

Oranjestad: Dakota
Tel. 588 7364

San Nicolas: Centro Medico
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

Taxi Tas 587 5900
Prof. Taxi 588 0035
Taxi D.T.S. 587 2300
Taxi Serv. Aruba 583 3232
A1 Taxi Serv. 280 2828

AID FOUNDATIONS

Aruba Food Bank
Tel. 588 0002
FAVI- Visually Impaired
Tel. 582 5051
Alcoholics Anonymous
Tel. 736 2952
Narcotics Anonymous
Tel. 583 8989
Against Domestic Violence(FCVR)
Tel. 583 5400
Centre for Diabetes
Tel. 524 8888
Child Abuse Prevention
Tel. 582 4433
Quota Club Tel. 525 2672

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Japan to launch historic round-trip mission to Mars moon

Tokyo, Japan

Japanese scientists are readying a mission to Mars's moons to retrieve samples that could help unlock the origins of the Solar System and life on Earth, in what aims to be the first round trip to the Martian region. The unmanned Martian Moons eXploration (MMX) probe, a collaboration with U.S. and European space agencies as well as numerous universities and tech companies, could also help lay the groundwork for eventual human exploration.

The flagship H3 rocket carrying the MMX is set to blast off from the Tanegashima Space Center Tuesday at 4:41 am (1941 GMT Monday), according to the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA).

"Being able to be involved in such a grand mission is incredibly exciting," Mako-to Arita, project manager of JAXA's H3 rocket team, told reporters two days before the launch.

The spacecraft will arrive near Mars around August next year, where it will orbit one of its moons, Phobos, before landing and collecting at least 10 grams (0.35



The H3 Launch Vehicle Flight No. 10 (H3 F10) was transported from the assembly building to the launch site at the Tanegashima Space Center in Minamitan Town, Kagoshima Prefecture, Japan, on October 19, 2026.

ounces) of material from the surface during three years of operating within the Martian sphere. A rover dubbed IDEFIX the French name for the comic hero Asterix's dog will first conduct surface observations aimed at ensuring a safe landing.

"The sampling (from) Phobos is of course the world's first, but it means... this is the first round trip to the Martian system," MMX's project manager Yasuhiro Kawakatsu told AFP. JAXA said the mission will also explore the possibility of using Phobos as a "natu-

ral space station" by establishing the requirements for a round trip to Mars something "essential for crewed Mars exploration". It will also observe the Red Planet's moon Deimos, although it will not land on it, before returning to Earth.

- Impact or capture -

JAXA hopes the mission will reveal how Mars and its two moons formed, a key piece of knowledge in working out how the Solar System was born.

One theory for the origin of the Martian moons the "giant impact" hypothesis is that they formed after a celestial body collided with Mars.

The "capture" hypothesis, meanwhile, postulates that the moons are asteroids captured by Mars's gravity.

Determining which theory is correct will help reveal "how a habitable environment for life might have arisen on the terrestrial planets", JAXA said, referring to the four rocky worlds closest to the Sun Mercury, Venus, Earth and Mars.

"MMX will shed light on the transport mechanisms that delivered water, volatiles, and organic compounds from the outer Solar System to the inner rocky planet region processes that may have played a key role in making these worlds habitable," said Patrick Michel, a French astrophysicist working on IDEFIX.

"If Phobos and Deimos are indeed remnants of these early delivery systems, they may hold clues to the origins of life itself, or, to be more correct, to the transport of the materials that were key to the emergence of life on rocky planets," he told AFP.

- Deep in the 'gravity well' -

MMX is a collaboration with France's National Centre for Space Studies (CNES), the German Aerospace Center (DLR), NASA, the European Space Agency (ESA), and about 20 universities and tech companies. The development of the spacecraft's landing legs was particularly difficult, as gravity on Phobos is extremely weak, JAXA scientists say. Japan's unmanned Smart Lander for Investigating Moon (SLIM) the "Moon Sniper" tipped over after touching down on Earth's Moon in 2024, but still transmitted data and survived several two-week lunar nights. □

Swiss solar-powered plane altitude record confirmed

Geneva, Switzerland

Swiss pilot Raphael Domjan beat the altitude record for a solar-powered electric plane in a 2025 flight that took him soaring to 9,640 meters, the World Air Sports Federation (FAI) confirmed.

The FAI governing body, holding its 120th general conference in Lausanne from Wednesday to Friday,

validated the record attempt after verifying the flight data.

The SolarStratos plane made the landmark flight from Sion airport in southwest Switzerland on August 12 last year, taking advantage of warm air thermals to beat a 15-year-old record.

The previous certified altitude record for a solar

plane was 9,235 meters (30,298 feet).

Domjan's flight lasted five hours and nine minutes.

"After several months of verification and certification, FAI ratification now gives this achievement full international recognition," the SolarStratos team said a statement.

"SolarStratos officially becomes the highest-flying crewed electric and solar-powered aircraft in history."

On Wednesday, Domjan was given the FAI's Louis Bleriot Medal established in 1936 and named after the French aviation pioneer in recognition of his world record flight.

"This distinction crowns more than 10 years of research, testing and commitment to pushing the boundaries of electric and

solar-powered flight," SolarStratos said.

"SolarStratos takes another step towards its ultimate goal: reaching the stratosphere aboard a crewed electric and solar-powered aircraft, without using a single drop of fossil fuel." Domjan is aiming to make the first manned solar-powered flight into the stratosphere, which at Switzerland's latitude begins at around 10,000 to 12,000 meters, depending on climatic conditions.

The single propeller plane, registration HB-SXA, is made of carbon fiber to ensure lightness and strength.

SolarStratos is 9.6 meters long. Its 24.8 meter wingspan accommodates 22 square meters (237 square feet) of high-spec solar panels and allows for flying at low speeds. □



This handout picture taken and released by Swiss pilot Raphael Domjan on August 8, 2025 shows him during his first attempt of the season at setting a new aviation record by reaching an altitude of 10,000 meters onboard the solar-powered plane SolarStratos above Sion, southwestern Switzerland.



Nassr's Portuguese forward #07 Cristiano Ronaldo and Neftchi Fergana's defender Koffi Kouao react during the AFC Champions League group B football match between Al-Nassr and Neftchi Fergana at the Alawwal Park stadium in Riyadh on October 12, 2026.

Ronaldo handed 30-day suspension after walking out on Portugal

Lisbon, Portugal

Cristiano Ronaldo has been handed a 30-day suspension for leaving the Portuguese national team camp, the country's football federation (FPF) announced on Monday.

The 41-year-old abruptly left the Portugal camp on September 30 during the UEFA Nations League, before accusing coach Jorge Jesus of breaking his word about giving him game time.

Ronaldo apologised to supporters earlier in October, adding he would accept any punishment that was imposed.

The former Manchester United and Real Madrid star, who will also have to pay a fine of 255 euros (\$286), has received the minimum penalty provided for in the federation's regulations, which stipulate suspensions of between one and six months for leaving the national team.

Ronaldo left Portugal's squad after first being made to warm up as a substitute against Norway on September 27 and not being brought on, and then finding out he would not start against Denmark in the match on October 1.

Ronaldo's suspension takes effect from the day of the Denmark match, meaning he has already served 19 days of his ban and will complete it by the end of October.

The FPF disciplinary committee said it took into account "the remorse shown in the statement" issued by Ronaldo on October 6, in which he admitted his mistake and expressed his willingness to accept a punishment.

The five-time Ballon d'Or winner is Portugal's all-time top goalscorer and record appearance-maker in men's international football.

But in his absence, Portugal won all four of their Nations League matches and qualified for the quarter-finals with two games to spare. Portugal host Denmark on November 14 and then travel to face Wales on November 17 in their final two Nations League Group A4 matches -- by which time Ronaldo will have served his suspension.

- 'Putting in the work' -

In a social media post shortly after his walk-out, Ronaldo accused Portugal boss Jesus of breaking his word about giving him game time in Nations League

matches but insisted he was not retiring from international duty.

"I will be available, as I have always been until today, to compete and win for our national team," Ronaldo posted.

He said Jesus had gone back on his word about bringing him on against Norway, and then in a press conference before the Denmark match had not said a series of points they had agreed upon during a conversation beforehand.

One of Ronaldo's pre-approved talking points was that Jesus had "made a mistake in asking someone of the stature of Pele or Maradona to warm up and then not sending him on in the match".

Jesus, speaking several days later, said he would select Ronaldo for international duty if the forward was playing for his club Al Nassr, and was interested in being called up.

Following the FPF's announcement, Ronaldo did not directly react to the news on Instagram but did post a picture of himself preparing to train with his Saudi club, accompanied with the caption, "Putting in the work".



The home plate umpire gives the ball to Pitcher Drew Rasmussen #57 of the Tampa Bay Rays in the first inning against the Cleveland Guardians in game five of the American League Championship Series at Progressive Field on October 18, 2026 in Cleveland, Ohio.

Rays one win from World Series return after downing Guardians

Los Angeles, United States

The Tampa Bay Rays moved to within one win of a return to the World Series on Sunday after defeating the Cleveland Guardians 3-1 to edge into a crucial 3-2 lead in their MLB playoff series.

A dazzling pitching performance from starter Drew Rasmussen laid the foundation for another deserved victory for the Rays, who had leveled the best-of-seven American League Championship Series on Saturday. Rasmussen restricted the Guardians to one run and four hits through seven innings with six strikeouts.

Rays catcher Liam Hicks paid tribute to Rasmussen's gem after the win.

"He's an ace, it's as simple as that," Hicks said.

"He rises to the occasion and no moment is ever too big for him. I don't think there's anyone we'd rather have on the mound.

"He's such a hard worker. He has a plan and then he just executes."

The Rays meanwhile pounced on a string of early opportunities to edge into a lead that proved decisive.

Tampa Bay's bats caused problems for Guardians starter Parker Messick in the first inning, with Yandy Diaz getting the ball rolling with a leadoff double.

Messick soon found himself in a bases loaded jam and walked Jonny DeLuca to surrender a run that gave Tampa Bay an early 1-0 lead.

The Rays doubled their advantage in the second inning when Jonathan Aranda drove in a run for Ben Williamson.

Messick was promptly pulled from the mound after 57 pitches to leave Cleveland improvising a bullpen game. Tampa Bay continued to make the most of the scoring chances that came their way, with Hicks singling off Guardians reliever Tim Herrin in the top of the third to make it 3-0. With Rasmussen in complete control, the Guardians had to wait until the sixth inning to get on the board, outfielder Steven Kwan coming home on Chase DeLauter's ground out to first base.

The Guardians raised hopes of a rally in the ninth, when Rays closer Bryan Baker gave up a leadoff walk to start the inning.

But Baker coolly held firm to claim his 35th consecutive save and a Rays win.

Tampa Bay one of only five Major League Baseball teams never to win a World Series title now need only one more win to book their third appearance at the Fall Classic after losing in 2008 and 2020.

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Knicks face tall task in NBA championship repeat bid

Los Angeles, United States

Jalen Brunson and the New York Knicks say they're starting from scratch as they aim for an elusive NBA championship repeat with the San Antonio Spurs spearheading a host of rivals as the 2026 season tips off on Tuesday. "We just have to find a way to turn the page and move on," NBA Finals Most Valuable Player Brunson said as the Knicks began their preparations in September three months after ending the storied franchise's 53-year title drought with an epic defeat of San Antonio.

The Knicks return their starting five, but a sour note has already been sounded in the pre-season as star center Karl-Anthony Towns said he was "extremely disappointed" by the Knicks' public announcement that they were pausing contract extension talks with him and Josh Hart. Additionally, no team has won back-to-back titles since the Golden State Warriors in 2018, and Victor Wembanyama's Spurs are just one of the clubs tipped to keep it that way.



Jalen Brunson #11 of the New York Knicks reacts during the first quarter against the Toronto Raptors in a preseason game at Madison Square Garden on October 15, 2026 in New York City.

The Oklahoma City Thunder, led by two-time reigning MVP Shai Gilgeous-Alexander, are eager to reassert themselves after the Spurs ended their title repeat bid in the Western Conference finals.

Closer to home in the Eastern Conference the Knicks will contend with a retooled Philadelphia 76ers squad

now featuring all-time leading scorer LeBron James and Jaylen Brown, who earned Finals MVP honors with the Boston Celtics in 2024.

Four-time champion James, still a force at 41, agreed to slash his salary in his quest for a fifth ring.

Along with Brown he'll team with former MVP big man Joel Embiid, All-NBA point

guard Tyrese Maxey and 21-year-old phenom VJ Edgecombe.

The 76ers will be out to make an early statement when they take on the Knicks at Madison Square Garden on Tuesday, part of a three-game opening day slate.

The Miami Heat have also added star power in the

shape of two-time MVP Giannis Antetokounmpo. Antetokounmpo, who led Milwaukee to the crown in 2021, arrived from the Bucks in a blockbuster trade and could form a lethal partnership with Bam Adebayo who poured in 83 points in one game last season.

But nowhere are the expectations higher than in San Antonio. The Knicks were still celebrating their Finals victory when Wembanyama started counting the days to the 2027 championship series.

San Antonio used the disappointment of their 2013 Finals loss to Miami to fuel their run to the 2014 title, and Wembanyama says the current Spurs squad is determined to bounce back in the same way.

- Spurs eye summit -

"We're fighting for the top spot of the mountain," says the towering French center, who reached his first NBA Finals in only his third season. At just 22 Wembanyama is a bona fide star. He was the 2026 Defensive Player of the Year and finished third in MVP voting. □

Eagles star Hurts to miss rest of NFL season: reports

Los Angeles, United States

Philadelphia Eagles star Jalen Hurts will miss the remainder of the NFL season after multiple blood clots were found in the quarterback's lungs, U.S. media reported Monday.

NFL Network and ESPN said the discovery of several clots meant Hurts would undergo treatment for at least three months, ending his season with the Eagles. The Eagles had already announced that Hurts, who led Philadelphia to a Super Bowl victory over the Kansas City Chiefs last year, would miss at least

a month after being diagnosed with a blood clot in

his calf.

The clot was discovered



Jalen Hurts #1 of the Philadelphia Eagles yells before a game against the Los Angeles Rams at Lincoln Financial Field on October 04, 2026 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

after the Eagles recently traveled to London for a game against Jacksonville as part of the NFL's international series.

A statement issued by the Eagles and Hurts' agent Nicole Lynn on Monday made no mention of the player's absence, but confirmed he had been diagnosed with "a deep vein thrombosis as well as bilateral pulmonary emboli." The statement said Hurts was "clinically stable and has no significant functional limitations."

It said during a period of treatment with blood thin-

ners, Hurts would not "be allowed to participate in any contact activities, including football."

"Jalen's prognosis is very good, and we expect a full recovery," the statement added. "We anticipate that he will have the opportunity to resume contact football activities when off the blood thinners."

"In the meantime, he will remain active around the team and continue to condition. More importantly, we anticipate that he will have no long-term effects." □