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### LIVE ENTERTAINMENT 7 DAYS A WEEK

PROFESSIONAL COMPLIMENTARY  
PICTURES ON TUESDAY AND FRIDAY

#### SUNDAY:

MARRYBELL MADURO  
SINGER  
6:30 TO 8:30 P.M.

#### MONDAY:

ANDERSON BAHAMON  
SINGER  
6:30 TO 8:30 P.M.

#### TUESDAY:

JEAN PAUL  
SAXOPHONIST  
6:30 TO 8:30 P.M.

#### WEDNESDAY:

MAILLEYN ALVARADO  
VIOLINIST  
6:30 TO 8:30 P.M.

#### THURSDAY:

MARRYBELL MADURO  
SINGER  
6:30 TO 8:30 P.M.

#### FRIDAY:

MAILLEYN ALVARADO  
VIOLINIST  
7:00 TO 9:00 P.M.

#### SATURDAY:

RICKY THOMAS  
GUITAR  
6:30 TO 8:30 P.M.



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# Melania Trump says she brokered truce in war-torn Ukrainian city

Washington, United States

U.S. First Lady Melania Trump said in a surprise announcement Friday she had brokered a localized ceasefire between Russia and Ukraine in the ravaged city of Oleshky, where citizens are trapped and running out of food. Her unusual intervention comes as her husband, President Donald Trump, pursues a full end to Russia's war with a sudden pivot to Moscow that has alarmed Kyiv.

"The situation in Oleshky is dire. Oleshky is a front-line war city on the brink of disaster," the 56-year-old Melania Trump said in a statement released by the White House.

"It was abundantly clear that without my intervention, the possibility to bring humanitarian aid into the city and to evacuate the elderly would be impossible."

Moscow and Kyiv both said they would observe a truce from Tuesday in the city in the southern Kherson region, which has been occupied by Russia since its 2022 invasion.

Melania Trump has been pursuing a parallel diplomatic track on Ukraine since October 2025, when she announced that she established a channel of



U.S. President Donald Trump and First Lady Melania Trump sign an executive order regarding the Women's Health Task Force at the White House in Washington, United States, on October 19, 2026.

communication with Putin. The Slovenian-born former model has since helped reunify more than 30 children separated from their parents by the war, her office says.

## - 'Significant contribution' -

The Kremlin praising Melania Trump's role in arranging the truce.

"We welcome the efforts of the First Lady of the USA, Melania Trump, who has made a significant contribution to the ceasefire," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry

Peskov said. Russian and Ukrainian military top brass both confirmed that they would observe the ceasefire from 0100 GMT on Tuesday two days earlier than Melania Trump's statement had said it would start.

President Trump also hailed his wife, telling reporters that the Oleshky ceasefire was "her initiative" and she wanted to "save children." Asked if Melania could participate in trilateral Ukraine-Russia-US peace talks that the Kremlin says will resume

in Abu Dhabi next month, Trump replied: "No, but it's not the worst idea I've ever heard."

Trump's comments reflected his mercurial approach to the Ukraine war, with the US leader recently feuding once again with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky.

Zelensky complained on Friday that Ukraine was still having problems using the military-grade version of the Starlink communications service, a day after Trump said tech titan Elon

Musk had restored access.

"Unfortunately the speed limits on Starlink and Starshield are still there," Zelensky told the Hudson Institute thinktank. He said Kyiv was also waiting for US interceptor missiles to protect it from Russian strikes. British Prime Minister Andy Burnham separately "underlined the importance for Ukraine to have full access to Starlink" in a call with Trump on Friday, Downing Street said.

But Trump told reporters he would speak to Musk if there was still an issue. "If there is a problem, I will get it straightened out," he said.

## - Food shortages -

The U.S. leader has pivoted back towards Moscow over the past two weeks, announcing a diesel deal that he hopes will bring down oil prices sent soaring by the Iran war and postponing sanctions on Russia. Moscow has in exchange freed a U.S. detainee and now apparently given Trump's wife a gift.

Melania Trump said she had worked with the Russian and Ukrainian leaderships on the Oleshky plan. Civilian leaders from both countries would both visit the devastated city to assess aid needs, she said. □

# U.S. welcomes conclusion of latest Venezuela democratic transition talks

Washington, United States

The United States on Thurs-

day praised the conclusion of the latest round of talks



This handout picture released by the Venezuelan Presidency shows Venezuela's interim President Delcy Rodríguez (L) shaking hands with opposition delegation head Dinorah Figuera after a meeting at the Miraflores Presidential Palace in Caracas on October 22, 2026.

toward a democratic transition between Venezuela's interim government and opposition representatives.

The U.S.-sponsored talks on transitioning from the hard-line socialist rule of ousted ex-president Nicolas Maduro began in August.

Washington is under pressure to organize democratic elections following its January ouster of Maduro. It nudged interim President Delcy Rodríguez, a former Maduro loyalist who was his vice president, to negotiate with an opposition delegation led by Dinorah Figuera.

"I welcome and recog-

nize the efforts of the parties sitting at this dialogue table to move forward in the area of political guarantees for everyone," Rodríguez said at the end of Thursday's meeting with the opposition, held at the presidential palace.

Figuera led a political bloc that won a majority in the 2015 National Assembly, the last legislature elected in a vote widely recognized by the international community.

The third round of talks "delivered tangible results including agreement to work to review and revise several repressive laws to

increase political and social freedom and guarantee the participation of all political actors," the U.S. State Department said in a statement.

It also hailed progress on "rebuilding an independent Supreme Court." Since the talks started, the process has strengthened press freedoms, restored access to more than 70 previously blocked websites, "produced an agreement to recover gold holdings in the Bank of England for earthquake relief, and advanced efforts to reform the repressive Law Against Hatred," it said. □



U.S. Democratic Senate candidate from Michigan, Abdul El-Sayed (C) with Mallory McMorrow (L), Member of the Michigan Senate and, Curtis Hertel Jr. (R), Party chair of the Michigan Democratic Party, arrive during a press conference in Detroit, Michigan on August 5, 2026.

## 'Fake' pollsters hit U.S. midterms

### Washington, United States

A self-described U.S. polling firm whose data was tracked by political campaigns and mainstream media has admitted that its polls were fabricated, in the second such scandal to stir controversy ahead of the midterm elections.

The case involving the firm Wedgewood Polls threatens to erode trust in independent pollsters in an already hyperpolarized political climate, particularly as political pundits voice concern that fast-evolving AI tools are making it easier to fabricate results.

The case came to light earlier this week after polling aggregator FiftyPlusOne contacted Wedgewood as part of an investigation into the firm's surveys.

Wedgewood responded with a statement on X admitting that "most" of its data had been made up. It said the firm had been experimenting on how easy it could be for "an entirely fabricated polling firm to gain traction" and "be taken seriously."

It turns out that Wedgewood, whose X account has since been taken down, was indeed taken seriously.

Michigan Senate candidate Mallory McMorrow

said after the group's "poll" in late June showed her support in the single digits, she said "donations dried up," volunteers were "devastated," and the media "hounded" her "with calls to drop out."

"It killed us," McMorrow wrote on X.

The bogus data, which covered high-profile races across several states, were also highlighted by major polling aggregators and news outlets, including The New York Times.

In an editors' note, The Times said its poll tracker database included 15 surveys released by Wedgewood between June and October, all of which have now been removed.

President Donald Trump responded with a post on Truth Social on Thursday, calling The Times "ARTIFICIAL" for using data from Wedgewood.

"The New York Times got caught! They used a Company, Wedgewood Polls, that ADMITTED that the Poll Numbers they published were made up and FAKE," Trump said.

"This is what I've had to deal with, right from the beginning!" added the president, who has repeatedly accused pollsters of dishonesty.

### - 'Undermines trust' -

Brendan Carr, chairman of the Federal Communications Commission, said there has been "a significant surge in entirely fake polls and suppression polls" designed to interfere with the electoral process.

He urged the media not to amplify such hoaxes and engage in "news distortions."

In August, another phony group called Median Strategies admitted to fabricating poll results, saying it was "created as a short term social experiment," according to the Los Angeles Times.

On Thursday, in a blog titled "more pollster funny business," FiftyPlusOne said it will no longer collect polling data by another firm called SoCal Strategies, after an investigation that cast doubt on its authenticity.

The firm could not be reached for comment. SoCal Strategies's website, X account, and Substack page appeared to have been taken offline.

The revelations come amid warnings that AI-powered tools were enabling the fakery.

"It's getting easier to conduct low-quality polls or fake them altogether," FiftyPlusOne said. □



U.S. President Donald Trump shakes hands with US Senator Dan Sullivan (R-AK) during a campaign rally at Curtis D. Menard Memorial Sports Center in Wasilla, Alaska, on October 13, 2026.

## Trump orders lawsuit to block Alaska Senate result if Republicans lose

### Washington, United States

President Donald Trump on Friday said he ordered a Justice Department lawsuit seeking to prevent certification of Alaska's Senate election result if the Republican incumbent loses ramping up questions over whether he will accept midterms defeat.

"I'm the one that said, 'Do it,'" Trump announced during a trip to Florida, where he is due to cast his own early ballot for the November 3 election to decide control of Congress currently in Republican hands.

The extraordinary intervention by a president to launch a preemptive challenge against a possible election result casts a new shadow over the midterms.

Trump who tried to overthrow the 2020 presidential election after he lost to Democrat Joe Biden has repeatedly questioned the validity of the upcoming election in which Democrats are forecasted to make big gains.

If Democrats win the House of Representatives, as widely expected, they would be able to exert the first real brake on Trump's unprecedented exercise of power since he secured his second term two years ago. Democrats also have an outside chance of winning the Senate if they can flip a handful of Republican-held seats, including in Alaska, where incumbent Republican Senator Dan Sullivan faces Democrat Mary Peltola.

### - Sullivan v Sullivan -

In its lawsuit, filed Thursday, the Justice Department alleged that the presence on the Alaska ballot of a minor additional candidate named Dan J. Sullivan Jr. is part of a deliberate ploy to confuse voters and harm the Republican incumbent's chances.

"The sole purpose of his candidacy is to benefit the Peltola campaign by reducing the number of votes for Senator Sullivan," the lawsuit said.

Democrats and Sullivan Jr. himself, a registered Republican, have denied this.

The lawsuit asks for certification of a Democratic win to be held up pending investigation if the Republican incumbent's losing margin is smaller than the votes won by his namesake.

Attorney General Todd Blanche, who has repeatedly broken Washington norms about keeping political distance from the White House, said Thursday that the Justice Department was not preparing to interfere in the midterms.

But he refused to rule out what he called a "doomsday scenario." □

# UK singer-songwriter Raye wins Mercury Prize for second album

**London, United Kingdom**

Raye won the UK's coveted Mercury Prize on Thursday for her album "This Music May Contain Hope", triumphing over fellow singer-songwriter Olivia Dean and 10 other acts including Beatles icon Paul McCartney.

The ceremony was held for the second consecutive year in the northeast English city of Newcastle, and fans inside its Utilita Arena went wild as 28-year-old Raye took to the stage to accept the award.

"I'm just so grateful," the performer, who blends pop, jazz, dance, R&B, and soul, told the cheering crowd, draped in a feather bolero.

"Hope is a very cheesy word especially for us British people," she added. "But hope is just something that we all need, and I think music is that... music is medicine."

Real name Rachel Agatha Keen, the chart-topper from Tooting, south London, has enjoyed soaring suc-



**Raye (Rachel Agatha Keen) wearing Georges Hobeika FW27 Couture and Angara jewelry, styled by Eniola Dare arrives at the 2026 MTV Video Music Awards (VMAs) held at Peacock Theater at L.A. Live on September 27, 2026 in Los Angeles, California, United States.**

cess in recent years, scoring a record six wins at the 2024 Brit Awards and bagging a Grammy in January. The judges said the "scale, structure, ambition, and sheer charm" of her second studio album made it "the right choice".

A dozen acts were nominated for this year's prize, which rewards the best British or Irish album of the past 12 months.

Dean was among the favourites after winning big earlier this year at the Brits, when she claimed four awards including album of

the year for "The Art of Loving".

That came weeks after the 27-year-old also won the best new artist Grammy.

Both Raye and Dean were among the many nominees to perform at Thursday's ceremony, with indie-pop legends Pulp shortlisted last

year also playing on behalf of the nominated "Help(2)" compilation album which they feature on.

## - 'Chuffed' -

McCartney shortlisted for his latest solo studio album "The Boys of Dungeon Lane" and rapper and 2019 winner Dave were the only two not present.

McCartney's inclusion, for his nostalgia-laden record deeply rooted in his post-war childhood in Liverpool, was a first for the 84-year-old.

"I'm sorry I can't be there but just to tell you I'm really chuffed to be included on this list," he said in a video message played. "I was kind of surprised, tell you the truth."

Other nominees included alternative rockers Florence + The Machine, Brit-pop band and 1993 winner Suede and Newcastle jazz fusion collective Knats.

Kojey Radical whose music spans rap, jazz, spoken word and funk and Nia Archives, who fuses jungle, breakbeats and intimate songwriting, were also shortlisted.

The contender list is curated by an independent judging team of music industry professionals and invariably spans various musical genres, with the final decision on the winner made on the night.

Created in 1992 as an alternative to the more mainstream Brits held in March the Mercury Prize is seen as a seal of critical approval and, for lesser known acts, a springboard to wider fame.

The winner also takes home £25,000 (\$33,500).

Past winners include post-punk band English Teacher, jazz fusion act Ezra Collective, as well as the Arctic Monkeys, Franz Ferdinand and Primal Scream.

PJ Harvey is the only performer to have won twice: in 2001 and again a decade later.

Traditionally hosted in London, it switched to Newcastle in 2025 for the first time, when local favourite Sam Fender won.□

# Indian rappers use music to sound climate alarm

**Bengaluru, India**

Indian rapper Kali needed little inspiration to write about dwindling water supplies he drew on childhood memories of hauling plastic pots full of the precious resource.

Kali's "Neer Kodu" "Give Water" in the Kannada language is one of six tracks on the "Climate Emergency Mixtape", billed by its organisers as India's first multilingual rap album about the climate crisis.

The 29-year-old, whose real name is Akshay, grew up in Bengaluru and has been making music for more than a decade, citing Eminem and Akon as influences.

As a child, Kali walked for around 10 minutes to fill pots with water from a public tap.

"We would always think... we should not waste this," he told AFP during the album launch this month.

Water shortages are a

chronic problem in Bengaluru, India's tech hub, where many residents rely on groundwater wells that often run dry in summer. Others depend on expensive water trucked in from elsewhere.

Climate change threatens to worsen water stress as temperatures rise and weather patterns shift.

## - 'Powerful medium' -

India, the world's most populous country and third-largest greenhouse gas emitter, is vulnerable to extreme weather.

While some areas have faced drought, others have suffered deadly floods and landslides triggered by heavy rain.

Brikesh Singh from Asar Social Impact Advisors, which

is one of the collaborators on the album, said music helped express the challenge faced.

"If we want to reach out to people who are experiencing the climate crisis, we need to change how society tells those stories," Singh said.

"Music, we felt, is an extremely powerful medium." Rapper Abisha also drew on experience for "Veppa Marathadiyila" "Under the Neem Tree" in Tamil a song about climate change's impact on marginalised communities.

The 26-year-old, a member of Tamil Nadu's first all-women rap group, Sollisai Sistahs, remembers water "reaching her doorstep" when she was around eight.

Two years later, she said, the area had run dry.

Abisha said climate change was still "not spoken about widely" in her community.□



**This photograph taken on October 1, 2026 shows rapper Kali, aka Akshay performing onstage during the launch of the Indian multi-lingual rap album on climate crisis 'Climate Emergency Mixtape' at The Humming Tree in Bengaluru.**

## Dressed to kill: Haircuts cap menacing look of Japan's yakuza

### Tokyo, Japan

At a barbershop in Tokyo, yakuza gangster Tekisasu glances in the mirror at his meticulous new cut and thanks the hairdresser for the weekly trim crucial to his mobster trade.

Japan's yakuza operate an organised crime empire worth billions of dollars and have long dominated the country's drug rings, gambling dens and sex trade.

From precise haircuts to sharp suits, many mobsters try to project an image of menace and wealth, and barbers play a key role in crafting it.

"The yakuza are all about vanity," said Tekisasu, whose moniker means "Enemy Stabber", in an exclusive interview that took months to set up.

"The neater someone's appearance, the better his reputation becomes," the 44-year-old active gangster allied to a major clan told AFP.

"Say you want to sell someone on a deal... they won't take you seriously if your punch perm is all in shambles," he said, referencing his ultra-short, tightly curled style.

For Tekisasu and his fellow mobsters, barbershops also represent a break from the violent lifestyle they have chosen and an intensifying crackdown by authorities. During his monthly, two-hour perming ritual plus a weekly haircut that keeps



This photo taken on August 27, 2026 shows Tekisasu, an active yakuza gangster allied to a major clan, having his hair permed at a barbershop in Tokyo.

the back and sides of his head shaven in a high "skin fade" the tattooed gangster can stop watching his back.

There are fewer and fewer mobsters like him, with police saying yakuza numbers dipped last year to a record low of 17,600 nationwide.

But even as their forces shrink, the gangsters represent a potent threat, with younger groups of thugs brought in to diversify their business, police warned in a recent report.

Still, Tekisasu's barber who counts around 10 active yakuza among his repeat clientele says he has no qualms about serving them, even though his craftsman-

ship amplifies their "don't-mess-with-me aura".

"All I do is make them look cooler," said the 32-year-old, denying there was anything wrong in making dangerous gangsters appear more aggressive. The barber requested anonymity because any association with the mafia could threaten the reputation of his business.

### - Grinding out a living -

Despite their criminal activities, many people including some of the gangsters themselves hold romantic views of the yakuza's traditions, lifestyles and codes of honour.

The reality is often more mundane, with more and

more rank-and-file mobsters said to grind out a living by targeting vulnerable people through crimes such as organised fraud.

Originally a gangsta rapper, Tekisasu delved into the yakuza world in his mid-20s, but was arrested in 2021, then jailed, before being released last year.

Now, he is at the barbershop for a hot-towel shave and respite from a life where he says, "total darkness can be just an inch ahead".

"When there is fighting among syndicates, we have no choice but to go through it," he said. "It's a matter of pride."

"I wish I could just live smil-

ing, without hurting anyone or getting hurt. But that's not how things work in this world."

Yakuza face pressure to remain in the violent underworld, but they can and do choose to leave. An estimated 320 gangsters quit in 2024 thanks in part to efforts by authorities.

Under Tokyo's anti-yakuza laws, businesses are prohibited from knowingly "providing benefits" to mobsters to aid their activities.

Barbers who intentionally help yakuza clients maintain their looks are unlikely to violate the rules, provided the transactions are fair, according to retired anti-mafia detective Yuichi Sakurai.

But any preferential treatment, like "setting the haircut price excessively low", may constitute an illegal favour, he told AFP.

In his decades-long career, the ex-detective himself noticed many mobsters "value frequent haircuts to retain their intimidating exteriors".

Ideally, the laws should be tightened to bar the yakuza from any place of relaxation including barbershops "if we really want to eradicate them", he said.

Years of strict anti-mafia laws have excluded the yakuza from basic infrastructure in Japan, including opening bank accounts, renting housing and obtaining credit cards. □

## Denmark drops the curtain on mink farming

### Copenhagen, Denmark

Long a world leader in mink farming, Denmark will shut it down for good, the country's agriculture ministry announced Friday.

"Denmark is not applying for a special exemption to allow the Danish mink industry to continue when the EU ban on mink farming takes effect in August next year," the ministry said in a statement.

In November 2020, Denmark's government ordered a cull of the Scandinavian country's some 15 million mink after studies suggested a variant found in some of the animals could jeopardize the effectiveness of future Covid vaccines.

However the cull quickly turned into a political nightmare for the government as it later emerged there was no legal basis to impose the measure on farmers.

All breeding was subsequently banned in 2021 and 2022.

The ban on mink farming was lifted on January 1, 2023, but the industry only saw a modest revival. By August 2026, the country had only seven farms.

"An industry should not continue just because it has existed for a long time. It also has to make sense for society, for the economy, and for the animals," Minister for Nature and Animal Welfare Christian Rabjerg Madsen was quoted saying in the statement.

"The government has chosen to prioritize animal welfare," he added, noting that the EU ban would enter into force on August 7, 2026.

A transitional period to allow farmers to wind down their operations will run until August 2029. □



Thomas Jeppesen (R) and Martin Vestergaard, childhood friends and now business partners for a brewery start up, pose at the site of the former mink farm in Holstebro, Denmark, on November 28, 2022.



This photograph taken on September 22, 2026 shows a culinary chef speaking with students inside a kitchen at the École Ducasse, a French culinary school in Gurugram.

## India stirs up its gastronomy with French cooking schools

### New Delhi, India

Fiercely proud of its culinary traditions, India is increasingly open to foreign influences, with French cooking schools attracting students eager to make their mark on the country's growing fine-dining sector.

"Ten or 15 years ago, there were far fewer young people dreaming of becoming chefs," said Aabhas Jain, director of bakery and pastry training at Ecole Ducasse, a French culinary school also operating in India.

"But with the rise of social media... today's students have greater ambitions in this profession," added Jain, 36, who is also part of the Indian School of Hospitality (ISH) in Gurugram, just outside New Delhi.

In the world's most populous country, the need for high-end hospitality workers is immense, fuelled by economic growth and the rise of a middle class that travels more and increasingly eats at plush establishments.

"There are plenty of job opportunities," said Saurav Chhabra, head of French hotel school Vatel's Indian campus, which has been based in Gurugram since 2015 in partnership with Shant University.

"Employers' expectations are very high, particularly in five-star hotel chains."

### - 'Braising, blanching' -

Culinary and pastry courses, once relatively rare in India, have proliferated over the past decade, with foreign private schools helping drive its high-end hospitality sector.

Such is the enthusiasm that France is considering opening vocational schools, notably in Puducherry, the former French colonial port in India's southeast.

Ecole Ducasse has more than 600 students, most from affluent backgrounds. Indian chefs who have worked at prestigious restaurants, including overseas, teach their respective specialties: Indian, European, Mediterranean and Asian cuisine, as well as bakery and pastry-making. Siddhant Marwah, a final-year student, joined the school to acquire "French techniques that represent the quintessence of culinary expertise."

As he puts the finishing touches to a gratin dauphinois a dish of sliced potatoes baked in cream he explains that French and Indian cuisines share techniques such as "braising, blanching, and slow cooking in stews."

While France boasts its beef bourguignon, India is not to be outdone with goat ni-

hari, a meat dish cooked for hours in a spicy broth.

Drawn by the opportunities for travel and meeting people that a career as a chef offers, Marwah already dreams of opening his own restaurant in India. Nearby, Amitabh Sukhwil has just enrolled at Vatel, whose tuition fees are considerably lower than those at Ecole Ducasse.

The school has around 120 students, many from modest backgrounds.

Sukhwil, 18, who calls himself a "lover of the French language", plans to go to France in four years to pursue a master's degree, gain experience abroad and then draw on it to open his own hotel in India. He learned French through interactions with guests at the small hotel run by his parents in Chittorgarh, Rajasthan and is now honing his skills at his new school, where French-language classes are compulsory.

### - 'In vogue' -

A majority of the students interviewed by AFP at the two schools plan to remain in India.

After working for many years in India's luxury hotels, chef Shikha Gupta, who teaches bakery and pastry-making at Vatel, is pleased to see her classes have "as many men as women." □



Israeli bulldozers demolish a Palestinian building for the lack of construction permits in the so-called Area C designated by the 1995 Oslo Accords -- occupied Palestinian territory which remains under full Israeli control -- in the Israeli-occupied West Bank city of Hebron on October 23, 2026.

## Netanyahu says extensive West Bank military operation 'on the way' after attack

### Hebron, Palestinian Territories

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Friday warned of an imminent large-scale military operation in the West Bank and vowed to displace some residents of Hebron after Palestinian gunmen killed two soldiers in an attack.

The attack, which happened at a checkpoint near the Palestinian city in the southern occupied West Bank, also left three soldiers wounded. It came days before Israeli elections in which Netanyahu is facing a tight race.

The two gunmen who carried out the attack were killed in a shootout with soldiers.

In a visit to Hebron after the attack, Netanyahu said Israeli forces would enter the neighborhood of the attackers and displace its residents.

"We will evacuate the residents, we will go from house to house, we will also seize the weapons there, and all the terrorist infrastructure will be dealt with and destroyed," Netanyahu said, according to his office.

"The defense minister and I are considering a very extensive IDF (army) operation in Judea and Samaria, such as has not been carried out since the Six Day War," Netanyahu added, referring to the 1967 Arab-Israeli war.

"The IDF is ready to execute it and we will set the timing, but it is on the way."

He said the military would apply a model previously used in refugee camps in the northern West Bank. A large-scale military operation dubbed "Iron Wall" launched in January 2025 forcibly displaced tens of thousands of people across several refugee camps, according to the UN rights office.

As of July this year, 33,362 Palestinian refugees displaced from the three camps had not been permitted to return, according to the UN.

Nearly two years on, Israel's military remains present in Jenin refugee camp, which before Iron Wall was a bastion of armed Palestinian militants fighting Israeli occupation.

The army also remains in two refugee camps in the nearby city of Tulkarem.

In all three camps the army demolished dozens of houses in the dense patchwork of alleys in order to ease access for its troops and armored vehicles, the military said, and set up operational centres for troops in the homes of residents. □

## The Bali Restaurant: a touristic hot spot and lost gem on the island

(Oranjestad)—Once located by the yacht dock in front of the Parliament building, the Bali Restaurant was once both a touristic and local hot spot, and nowadays it's considered a forgotten gem on the island.

Known as "the floating restaurant", Bali first opened in 1955 by Willem "Bill" Strijland, who had experience in Javanese cuisine. At the time, the restaurant was pretty exclusive—with space to host only 25 guests. Yet, 4 years later, it was named the best restaurant in the Caribbean by the Caribbean Tourist Association.

The restaurant was probably most iconic for its Javanese-inspired exterior with its pointy, slanted roofs. However, the first version of Bali did not look like that at all but was still considered as one of the most popular restaurants on the island at the time. The restaurant saw



three different owners during its existence, during which it underwent various renovations and rebranding. In 1964, the restaurant was taken over by Karel "Carl" Schmand. Over the years, the restaurant needed constant renovation and repair, mainly due to its vulnerability to leaks and the

unstable pillars underneath the foundation. However, the biggest change made to the restaurant happened in the year 1970—still under the ownership of Schmand, when it got its iconic pointy roofs. The restaurant was also expanded to host a total of 85 guests. This was "The New Bali", who had its official (re)

opening in 1972.

After 1972, when Ronny Schmand took over, the restaurant saw yet another expansion; this time complete with a long bar and dance floor, where guests enjoyed live music from legendary Aruban musician and composer, Toti Arends.

After 1989, the restaurant was again handed over to other owners, and since then suffered from unstable pillars underneath the foundation, resulting in various leaks and overflowing of water into the restaurant. And as most great things come to an end, so did the survival and maintenance of the Bali Restaurant. However, folks today reminisce its legacy, and it's now considered a lost monument.

Be a part of the conversation: if you or any family member of yours have a memory of the Bali restaurant, whether it be a picture or just a story, share it with us! We would love to see this legendary hot spot through the lens of our visitors!

Source and pictures credit to: "De Kolibrie op de Rots (en meer over de geschiedenis van Aruba)" by Evert Bongers. □

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



(Oranjestad)— Standing proudly and always pointing west, the Watapana (also called Divi Divi—though some say erroneously so) played an important role in one of the island's first industries. Since then, it has been recognized as Aruba's national tree. Here are some facts about the sturdy Watapana.

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

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

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

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

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

Source: Chabalito magazine - E Watapana (2010)

## 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 towers are up to 1.7 meters high, which can be very dangerous, especially for children. □

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## Blackstone Beach or "Indjec"

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

if it's opposite day, visit the Blackstone Beach. Blackstone Beach shows the more natural side of Aruba; the stones that cover the beach and the shape of it has been crafted for thousands of years through volcanic eruptions, coral reef movements and wave activity of the rural northern part of the island. Located further east to the Natural Bridge and Andicuri Beach, the Blackstone Beach is relatively easy

to access. Once you get passed the Ayo Rock Formation, take the Andicuri road leading up to Andicuri Beach. There, you can park your car and take a 1km hike towards Blackstone Beach.

Despite being called a beach, do note that it is not advised to swim in the water, as the current is very strong and can easily stray you further in the wild ocean. However, you



can still enjoy a spectacular view of the stones and the northern ocean that

stretches out in front of the beach and take a picture with your friends or family! □

## Papiamento words and phrases you may want to know!

(Oranjestad)—Aruba is a melting pot of different nationalities, cultures and languages. Primarily for this reason, the average Aruban can understand and speak Dutch, English and Spanish relatively well. However, as much as we pride ourselves in being able to communicate with almost everyone, we cherish our native tongue Papiamento above all else. Want to learn some common words in our language? Here are a few basic words and phrases that can get you a hat tip from an Aruban.

When you arrive at the airport in Aruba, one of the first words in Papiamento you may encounter is "Bon bini." Bon bini in Papiamento means welcome, and is probably the most famous Papiamento word for tourists.

### Hi! Bye!

To be fair, there is no unique way to say "hello"



in Papiamento—at least not officially. We often just use the English "hello" or "hey", or Dutch "hallo" to greet someone. We do however, always follow it up with "con bay?" or "con ta?" Con bay is a shortened version of "con ta bay?", which essentially means "how are you?" The word "con" in Papiamento means "how?" and is pronounced with a rounder "o" sounds, like in the English word "cone". "Ta bay" refers to how you are doing.

When we say goodbye, we use the word "ayo" (not like the Ayo Rock Formation, but also...kinda?). We may also use "te oro", which means "see you later".

### Greetings during the day

Most, if not all, languages have different ways to greet according to the time of day, and Papiamento is no different. Since Papiamento is heavily influenced from Portuguese and Spanish, some of these phrases may look very familiar.

**Bon dia** is used in the morning, up to about noon. Bon dia essentially means good morning. The word "bon" means "good", and while "dia" does not directly mean "morning" in English, it is used often to refer to the morning time.

### Bon tardi

In the afternoon to early evening hours, we use "bon tardi" to greet people, which means "good afternoon". "Tardi" actually comes from the word "atardi", which directly translates to "afternoon". However, the shortened "tardi" is used to keep the rhythm on the phrase. And the same could be said for our last greeting of the day.

### Bon nochi.

You guessed it, "bon nochi" means "good night". Just like "tardi", "nochi" is actually the shortened version of the word "anochi".

### Yes...no...maybe?

The affirmative and negative expression is very simple in Papiamento. Just like Spanish, our yeses are "si" and our no's are "no". Pretty easy right? If you want to gain some extra points from younger locals, you can also say "se", which is a more casual affirmative used mostly by the younger generation.

However, do note: some older generations may find this improper and not respectful, so keep that in mind.

### Thanks man...

Lastly, a word that we can also say more often is "danki", which means literally "thank you". "Danki" is derived from the Dutch word "bedankt". Though we don't really have a translation for "I appreciate it" in English, we do use "masha danki" to convey the message. "Masha" means "a lot" or "very", so "masha danki" means "thank you very much". □

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## Today is going to be a good day



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

### Nature Calls

The Arikok National park is worth the ride. We love the hikes that are guided by the park's rangers whose job is to maintain trails and protect

natural resources. The flora and fauna are beautiful and the historical sites tell you about the island's indigenous roots. The guided tours are even free of charge. If you are not up to walking, you can drive through the park, one way or another this park is a great place to spend an entire day. Cruising through the landscape you end up at some of the most stunning beaches like Dos Playa or Daimara Beach. In Total the park consists of 7907 acres protected nature with a richness of animals living in it. The Aruban whiptail lizard (cododo), Aruban cat eye snake (santanero) and endangered rattle snake (cascabel) are just some of them, you can also admire these close in the park's Visitors' Center.

For more information, visit

the website [www.acf.aw](http://www.acf.aw)

### The Lighthouse

No, you would not think of this as a hidden gem. The California Lighthouse is actually one of the most known highlights in Aruba and many repeated guests most probably took the ride uphill already. But, there is a significant change to this tower. Since September 2016 you can climb the top. In 2015 Stichting Monumentenfonds started the restoration of the California Lighthouse. The project finished in September 2016 and the Lighthouse is now open for visitors to enjoy the beautiful view from the top. The construction of the California Lighthouse started in 1915. The name 'California' came from a vessel of the West India Company and Pacific Steamship Co. called 'California' that shipwrecked in the area in 1891. Therefore they came up with the idea of building a lighthouse that could indicate the island's eastern tip to ships with its light.

### Kayak in the Mangroves

Mangel Halto at Savaneta is definitely a place not to miss out on. The beautiful beach with the natural mangroves is simply a beauty, but if you are into a more active way to enjoy the nature: take a kayak. While you are doing some workout—as it might get a little windy and rough—you will see the island from a different perspective. You can even make a stop to do some snorkeling at the reef. It's fun, it's healthy and for sure something else. □



## Prohibited by law: leaving the island with seashells, white sand or corals



**(Oranjestad)—Often times, the customs department at the airport intercepts many tourists leaving the island with seashells, white sand and/or corals as souvenirs.**

Conforming to the international treaty of CITES and our local law which protects our Flora & Fauna, it is absolutely prohibited to take any seashell, sand and coral outside of Aruba. This is to protect our environment. The high number of seashells, coral and amount of sand confiscated is very strange and it is suspected that our own locals are the ones selling these to the tourists, which is unacceptable.

Upon confiscation at the airport, you can also face a fine that you have to pay before leaving. This would surely not be a pleasant experience. Though we love to accommodate our visitors, let's all give nature the respect it deserves by protecting our environment. Stop collecting seashells, white sand and corals from our shores and stop buying or accepting these from local sellers or companies.

We want our future generations and visitors to enjoy the beauty of our beaches, shells and corals in a sustainable way, without destroying or disrupting the Aruban ecosystem. Help us protect what is ours! □

# The Aruban way of life: Creating community with Cas di Torto

(Oranjestad)—The Aruban people understand that a happy life is spent in great ambience with your loved ones. Passed down from one generation to the other, building community has been a key aspect in forging our traditions and customs. The Cas di Torto (mud house) played a big role in cultivating community, bridging families together and forming close bonds with your neighbors—something we highly value today.

## Cas di Torto: History and construction

The origin of the Cas di Torto is said to date back to the early 19th century in the Paraguaná Peninsula in Venezuela. Refugees who sought sanctuary on Aruba introduced this building method to the island.

The uprights of the walls were made with sturdy and straight wayaca or kwihi wood, or from thin mangrove struts. Then, the wattle walls were weaved in using branches and twigs from the warero and sisal plant,



daubed with a mixture of grass and mud. Finally, the walls got a coat of white plaster to seal everything in.

For roofing, corn stalks, palm fronds and straws were used, allowing air to flow freely through the house. This method of roofing was known throughout the ABC islands (Aruba, Curacao, Bonaire), but the use of cornstalks in Aruba eventually got replaced with use of mud and white plaster for the roofs. The white plaster all around made the houses look like cake, hence the name "Torto" (Spanish for "cake").

## Building community

Building Torto houses was often a community effort. Young couples who were about to get married had to have their house built before they could tie the knot and start their own family. This is where the help of the community comes into play.

Neighbors, extended family and friends would all help in the construction of a Torto House. And everyone had a role: The men oversaw the building of the house, and the women were tasked with collecting wood and straws, cooking and taking care of

the little ones.

The couple's family were primarily responsible for feeding everyone who helped build the house. Before construction, someone usually had the task to prepare the meal; going fishing or slaughter farm animals like goats, chicken or sheep. Even the older kids had their tasks; the older children of the family usually helped with collecting water and mixing the mud.

The average duration of constructing a Cas di Torto was 4 months.

At the end of a long day of work, everyone would gather around and enjoy a feast of hearty food. This type of help from friends and family became a tradition and was called "paga lomba": You help me today; I'll help you tomorrow.

Nowadays, traditional Cas di Torto are rare, especially those that are still inhabited. Houses that do exist probably date back more than a century. □

**Picture credits: Aruba National Library (BNA) and the Monumentbureau archive on Coleccion.aw**



# Planning on snorkeling? Get to know our Candelchi!

ORANJESTAD—If you're ever planning on snorkeling during your vacation on Aruba, you may spot fish that you can't recognize. One of these may be the

**"Candelchi" (Squirrelfish), a common, yet shy fish that swims all year long in the waters of Aruba.**

Let's talk about the names of fish. Do you know your fish? The Department of Agriculture, Livestock, and Fisheries, known as Santa Rosa, offers this informative

article that illustrates some fish and their names in Papiamentu.

## Candelchi, Squirrelfish, Holocentrus adscensionis:

Candelchi actually refers to the entire squirrelfish family or, as some say, when we say candelchi, we mean several different species but without distinguishing them by species. In this picture, we are showing the most common one in our waters, which is called squirrelfish in English or scientifically known as Holocentrus adscensionis.

Under candelchi, we in Aruba generally refer to all the different species of squirrelfish. They all look alike and it's really difficult to distinguish between them.

The squirrelfish family is distinguished by the following characteristics. They are heart-shaped with pink or red hues and often show heart-shaped streaks be-

tween the scales along the body. They have hard fins and are always armed. Over at our sister island Curaçao, they are called "bari di clabo" (nail barrel) for that reason.

In our waters, there are 7 to 8 types or species present and they are sometimes caught and seen occasionally. They can be distinguished by different marks such as color on the dorsal spine or marks on the body.

## In Aruba:

Candelchi are found on reefs or areas with structure in the water where they can hide. Although they prefer to hunt for food at night, they are also active during the day. They are edible and delicious when prepared dry and crispy with lime. It is particularly challenging to scale the fish, which is why it is not one of the favorites among fishermen. They often live in groups. □



## Sun catchers: The different lizards in Aruba

**ORANJESTAD** – Colorful or camouflaged, you're bound to encounter a variety of lizards basking in the sun or scurrying on their way in our island. From the charming, friendly iguanas to the good-luck gecko Pega-Pega, you're bound to meet a few of these special residents during your visit.

Aruba, as a desert island, is home to an incredible variety of unique and colorful species. Among them we can find different lizards, most of which have South American origins. But there are a few exceptions.

### Iguanas

Iguanas are easy to spot, as they are larger than most other lizards and when young, have a bright green color that makes them stand out.

The iguanas usually found in Aruba are the Iguana, known as the green iguana, or locally as Yuwana. The Yuwana are a mostly herbivorous species, and can grow up to 2 meters in size, including the tail, making them one of the largest in the iguana family. As you will see, despite their name, as they reach adulthood, the iguanas can take on a grey or blue tone instead of the bright green displayed by the young ones. In Aruba – as in the rest of the Kingdom of the Netherlands – the most usual color varies from green to lavender, black and sometimes a reddish brown.

Yuwana is a protected species, as it is listed under Appendix II of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES),



meaning that international trade is regulated through the CITES permit system. In the past, Arubans used to eat a popular Yuwana soup, as it was believed to give strength and help restore health – probably due to the protein boost it delivered. However, it is now illegal to catch, kill, buy or sell Yuwanas in Aruba, and this includes eating them!

### Turnip-tailed gecko

The turnip-tailed gecko is known locally as the Pega-Pega, meaning sticky-sticky, due to the way it sticks to walls using the suction in its little fingers. They are found inside houses, and are mostly a nocturnal animal.

According to Etnia Nativa, the local Pega Pega is immediately recognizable by its large size, with a body length of up to 12 cm, and its large, swollen tail, approximately the same length or slightly shorter than its body; females are

larger and more robust than males. It has short, robust legs with flattened toes and extensive basal webbing.

The undersides of its toes are covered in lamellae, which are used as friction pads to cling to smooth vertical surfaces. Some can even walk around completely upside down. Its toes are covered with ridges, which are peppered with millions of microscopic bristle-like structures called setae that attach and detach when the animal wills them to, and they never get gunked up.

They are variable in coloration, from a mottled dark gray to orange-brown, and are capable of changing color depending on their mood and surroundings. Mottled and banded markings aid in camouflage against tree bark. They are harmless and fragile; you can hold one in your hands as long as you are VERY gentle.

Never put pressure on its tail because it will surely drop as a measure to try to distract the predator, and they are different from other lizards because they're long-lived, talkative, lack eyelids, and their small scales are situated next to each other like cobblestones rather than overlapping as is the case in most other lizards.

Turnip-tailed Geckos are insectivorous and feed on cockroaches, grasshoppers, beetles, flies, mosquitoes, and spiders, which makes them the best pest control to have at home! They spend their days concealed in dark tree grooves and cavities, in narrow crevices in the walls, or behind paintings, which provide the perfect shelter for them. Pega pega is a gecko endemic to our island, but in time, some 4–5 intrusive gecko species have been observed, some of which do not cease to amaze us with the racket they make, especially during the hours of the night.

The Pega-pega *Phyllodactylus Julieni* is also a protected species in Aruba, by law. It is illegal to kill them!

### Blue Cododo

These are one of the most striking lizards in Aruba, recognizable by the male's bright blue color. The Aruban whiptail lizard, *Cnemidophorus arubensis*, is a species endemic to Aruba, meaning you can only find it here on our One Happy Island! They are also recognized as the most common and populous lizard on the island. While the male is blue with white dots, the female is brown with blue dots.

These charming lizards eat mostly plants, such as flowers, nectar, leaves and

fruits, and occasionally enjoy some insects. They are selective in which plants they eat, because of the toxins present in many available plants species. The Cododo help take care of Aruba's vegetation by playing a significant role in the dispersal of seeds for certain plants: when they eat fruit, they excrete the seeds in diverse locations, contributing to the reproduction cycle of our local plants.

### Striped anole

The striped anole (*Anolis lineatus*) that lives in Aruba is known locally as Waltaka or Toteki. This is a species of lizard in the family Dactyloidae, and they are native to Aruba and Curaçao. It is usually found in dry areas, commonly where there are not large trees; rather they enjoy rocks, walls or tree trunks, as they prefer to stay close to the ground.

These lizards are about 7cm in length, have a brown color with a stripe on each side and typically, several stripes on the body and tail that are lighter in color. It has a dewlap which is orange-yellow – and what's unique about this species is that it is the only known species of anole where the dewlap is asymmetrically colored, with one side being a deeper orange and the other side a lighter yellow. Mostly this is seen in the males, as it is almost imperceptible in the females. If the Toteki shows you his dewlap, retreat! This is not a friendly greeting!

Lizards are wonderful creatures that are precious to our fragile, local ecosystem. Please be mindful of these residents as you enjoy your stay.

**Images: Some images are from Aruba Birdlife Conservation.**



# CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

## ACROSS

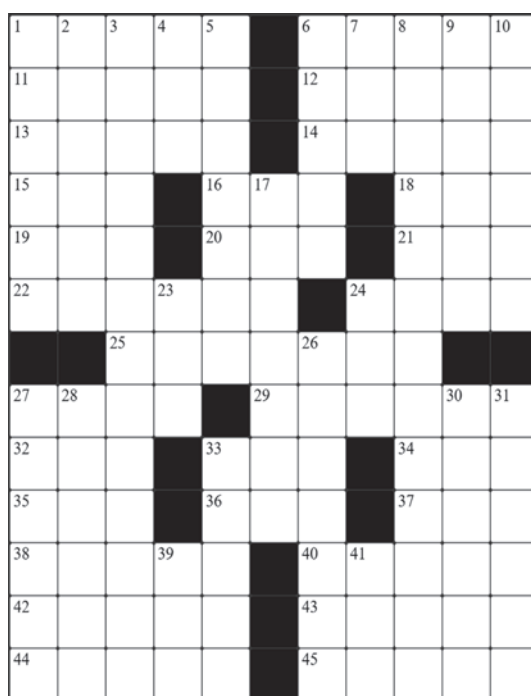
1. Passover bread
6. Aquarium fish
11. Broadway worker
12. Clear sky
13. Woolly ones
14. Note from the boss
15. Cruise in the movies
16. Derby, e.g.
18. Reunion group
19. Stretch of years
20. Writer Tan
21. One-million link
22. Do some city planning
24. Elevator pioneer
25. Trap
27. Whittle down
29. Wreckage
32. Outback bird
33. Apiece
34. Ethan's "Gattaca" co-star
35. Cargo unit
36. Groom's answer
37. Devils' org.
38. Kidney-related

## DOWN

1. Bring together
2. On the beach
3. James Dashner book
4. Last letter
5. "Annie" extras
6. Peevish
7. Seine season
8. Khaled Hosseini book
9. Leah of "The King of Queens"
10. Bowls
17. Added a codicil to
23. Small bill
24. Ball
26. Spray type
27. Fuel for a lorry
28. One-celled creature
30. Arrival announcement
31. Latin dances
33. Heaps
39. Inquire
41. Wall St. debut



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.

## 10-22 CRYPTOQUOTE

Z N I G Y Y B X R T K B X  
Y Q Y J Z L O Y J Y . B O Y Z W R K P Y  
R K Z L O Y J Y . B O Y Z R J Y A Y N A U Y  
P Y O R Q T K F M Y W Y K B U Z T K R K  
T K M Y W Y K B X N W T Y B Z .

---H I J B Q N K K Y F I B

Yesterday's Cryptoquote: WHAT WOULD I DO  
WITHOUT THE ABSURD AND THE EPHEMERAL?  
--- FRIDA KAHLO

# 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               | <b>CARNIVAL MAGIC</b><br>Arrival: 9:00   Departure: 22:00   Berth: C<br><b>GRANDEUR OF THE SEAS</b><br>Arrival: 8:00   Departure: 23:00   Berth: I |
| 21 WED               | <b>EURODAM</b><br>Arrival: 8:00   Departure: 17:00   Berth: C<br><b>ALLURE OF THE SEAS</b><br>Arrival: 8:00   Departure: 23:00   Berth: I          |
| 22 THU               | <b>NIEUW AMSTERDAM</b><br>Arrival: 8:00   Departure: 17:00   Berth: B<br><b>CARIBBEAN PRINCESS</b><br>Arrival: 9:00   Departure: 22:00   Berth: C  |
| 25 SUN               | <b>CORAL PRINCESS</b><br>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

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

Difficulty: ★★★★★

10/24

## Answer to previous puzzle

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

Difficulty: ★★★★★

10/23

# Divers explore oldest medieval warship found off Sweden

## Stockholm, Sweden

Bubbles rise through the murky green water as divers tenderly explore a rare 15th-century shipwreck off Stockholm's coast, believed to be the oldest warship found off Sweden.

"It's a very big ship, it was around 40-45 metres when it sailed probably," project leader and marine archaeologist Hakan Altrock from Sweden's Museum of Wrecks said, overseeing the dives down to the skeletal remains of what is known as Vrak 5, or Shipwreck 5, on a cool October day.

Located off Haringe Castle south of Stockholm, the vessel is thought to be the oldest warship found off Sweden or Denmark, which were joined in a union with Norway in the 15th century.

First discovered in the late 1800s, the shipwreck is one of five lying on the seabed in the Landfjarden sound, most of which have been dated to the 1600s and 1700s.

But in February 2025, researchers were able to date Vrak 5 to the 1480s, or possibly even the 1460s.

"It's not possible to say if it is Swedish, it could also be Danish," Altrock said, noting that the timber used to build it comes from the area that is now southeastern Sweden.

"This is the first example of a ship in the Baltic that has been built with the carvel technique... in Scandinavia that we know of," he said.

He was referring to the boat-building technique where hull planks are laid edge-to-edge rather than overlapping, which made it possible to build bigger and sturdier vessels necessary with the advent of heavy cannons on ships.

## - Sunk in battle? -

Marine archaeologists excavated the wreck this week in order to better document it, find out more about how it was built, and



Swedish Marine archaeologist Jim Hannson presents a new discovery of a shipwreck outside Stockholm archipelago during a press conference arranged by Vrak - Museum of Wrecks on November 8, 2019 in Stockholm.

as part of a special project about food on board. Among other things, they used special pumps to vacuum up sediment and expose parts of the construction.

Divers found bricks that suggested they had found the galley, in addition to parts of the ship's rigging. Matilda Jarl, a Ph.D student in marine archaeology also at the site, said the crew would have eaten fish, meat and porridge on board.

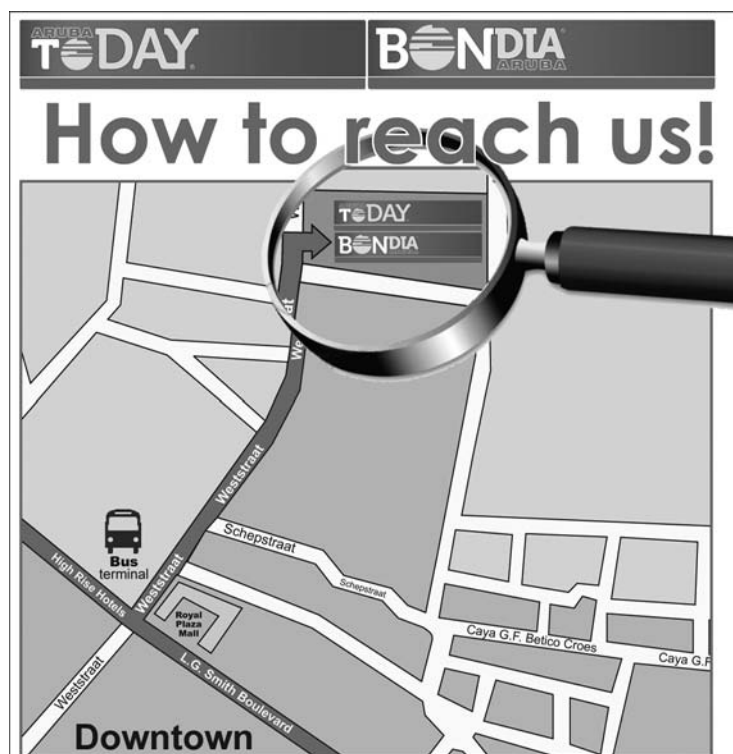
"A lot of the food would be boiled. So there would

be a lot of pottage, which is basically anything that is cooked in a pot," she said. "With the food they would also drink beer. The people with a higher status on board would be drinking wine also, but the general crew would be drinking beer instead of water as it kept better," she added. It is not yet known why the ship sank where it did. Altrock said rumours from when the wreck was found in the 19th century referred to a fire on board.

"Perhaps it was sunk when they (the Danes) attacked the Haringe Castle behind

us in 1501," he said. "That's one theory."

"Maybe we'll find traces of where it burned. We'll see." □



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ARUBA TODAY NEWS

# Musk wants to merge SpaceX and Tesla: Here's what to know

## Washington, United States

Elon Musk said this week that SpaceX and Tesla have formed special committees to study a merger of his two biggest companies.

The combination would be worth about \$3.5 trillion and would be the largest corporate deal in history.

### - What is SpaceX? -

Musk founded SpaceX in 2002 to cut the cost of reaching space and one day bring humans to Mars. Its reusable Falcon 9 rockets dominate the global launch market, its Dragon capsule carries NASA astronauts to the International Space Station, and its Starlink satellite network provides internet service worldwide.

The company is no longer just a rocket maker. In February it absorbed xAI, Musk's artificial intelligence startup known for its Grok chatbot which had taken over the social network X in 2025.

SpaceX went public this year in a record listing and is now valued at about \$2



A grab taken on October 16, 2026 from a live feed released by Tesla shows Tech billionaire Elon Musk unveiling on October 15 the next-generation Roadster electric car in McGregor, Texas, United States.

trillion.

Much of its recent growth comes from renting data center computing power to other AI companies.

### - What is Tesla? -

Tesla was founded in 2003 and became the world's best-known electric car-maker after Musk became chief executive in 2008. It is

valued at about \$1.5 trillion. Its core car business has come under pressure and Musk increasingly presents Tesla as a company built around self-driving robotaxis and its Optimus humanoid robot.

### - Why merge? -

Musk told analysts Tuesday that a merger would be "a

good idea."

Florian Frischmuth of engineering consultancy Enviroso said a combined group could centrally control the key ingredients of AI chips, energy and connectivity. Garrett Nelson of CFRA Research wrote in a note that synergies would likely be small relative to the size of the deal, which in his view

would mostly be about control.

Musk holds about 82 percent of SpaceX's voting power but only about 20 percent at Tesla, where his moves have drawn scrutiny and lawsuits from investors.

### - How easy will it be? -

Most analysts expect a deal.

"In our view once Musk discussed the deal it's a matter of when and not if this happens," Dan Ives of Yorville Ives told AFP.

He put the odds at 90 percent by early 2027 and said Tesla would likely need to be valued at more than \$500 per share to win approval.

Musk cautioned that a merger is not certain. It needs the support of a majority of all Tesla shares, which he called "quite a high hurdle."

But Nelson noted that loyal retail investors hold an estimated 25 to 27 percent of Tesla shares. With Musk's stake added, only a small portion of institutional investors would need to back the deal.

The legal obstacles appear slight because both companies moved their incorporation from Delaware to Texas, according to Ann Lipton, a law professor at the University of Colorado.

In Texas, shareholders challenging a deal must first show fraud or intentional misconduct, and companies can require that certain suits be brought only by holders of 3 percent of the stock.

At SpaceX, that means about \$60 billion of stock. "I think Musk will have no trouble getting a deal through from a corporate perspective," Lipton said. "He should be able to muscle something through."

### - What are the obstacles? -

Lipton said the bigger risks lie in SpaceX's importance to the US government and Tesla's operations in China. SpaceX depends heavily on contracts with NASA and the Pentagon, and Musk has poured hundreds of millions of dollars into Republican campaigns.

## Spotify adds 11M active users in 3rd quarter to reach 788M

### Stockholm, Sweden

Music streaming giant Spotify on Thursday said it had added 11 million monthly active users in the third quarter and had reached 788 million active users by the end of September, in line with the company's forecast.

The uptick represented an

11-percent growth in users compared to a year earlier, Spotify said in a statement, adding that paying subscribers had grown by nine percent compared to a year earlier, reaching 306 million, just above the company's forecasted 305 million.

"This was a quarter where

we did what we said. We've built a strong business that keeps compounding," co-chief executive Alex Norstrom said in a statement.

Revenue for the third quarter came in at 4.97 billion euros (\$5.6 billion), up 16 percent from a year earlier.

Operating income meanwhile rose 15 percent to 672 million euros. Looking forward, the company said it expected to add 30 million additional active users to the platform by the end of the year to reach 818 million.

Spotify also said it expects to reach 316 paying subscribers.

In recent years, the company has started expanding from music, first investing heavily into podcasts and now offering audio-books.

In early October, the streaming giant announced that it was expanding access to its audiobook service to more than 180 markets, up from the previous 22.

Amid growing concern across the music industry over AI-generated content overwhelming streaming catalogues, the company has recently taken steps to identify and label AI content.

Earlier this week it reported that it had taken "more than 50 million slop and spam tracks" out of recommendations meaning the songs would not be suggested to listeners this year.

In August it announced that it was launching a new "AI Persona" badge to identify content producers that are AI-generated and not real people.



The Spotify logo is displayed on a smartphone screen with the company logo in the background, in Creteil, France, on May 22, 2026.



Jaylen Brown #7 of the Philadelphia 76ers dunks during the fourth quarter against the Cleveland Cavaliers at Xfinity Mobile Arena on October 22, 2026 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

## 76ers rally to stun Cavs in James's first home game for Philadelphia

### Los Angeles, United States

The Philadelphia 76ers erased a 29-point deficit to stun the Cleveland Cavaliers 114-106 on Thursday in NBA superstar LeBron James's first home game since landing in Philly as a free agent.

Tyrese Maxey scored 32 points and Joel Embiid added 24 including a jump shot with 6:54 left to play that gave the Sixers their first lead of the night one they wouldn't relinquish on the way to an epic comeback.

Former Celtics star Jaylen Brown, the Sixers' other big off-season acquisition, scored 21 points and pulled down eight rebounds and four-time NBA champion James added 17 points, 10 rebounds and five assists to help the 76ers author their biggest comeback of the play-by-play era that started in 1996. It was also the biggest comeback of James's storied career. The league's all-time leading scorer called it a good win but not a position he wants to be in often.

"You don't want to rely on that," he said. "I think it's great to know (that) deep down we're not going to have that quit mentality. You never want to look around and say guys gave

up.

"But you don't want to put yourself in too many of those situations."

Cleveland, disappointed not to land hometown hero James after he announced he was leaving the Los Angeles Lakers after eight seasons, appeared to be on a mission to show him what he missed.

Donovan Mitchell scored 22 of his 32 points in the first half as the Cavs seized control against a 76ers team struggling to find a rhythm and protect the ball.

Philadelphia center Joel Embiid looked creaky, and James had five of the Sixers' 15 first-half turnovers which led to 22 Cavs points and provoked boos from Philly fans whose hopes of a title run have been raised by the arrivals of James and Brown.

The boos turned to raucous cheers as the re-energized 76ers opened the third quarter on an 11-0 run.

They cut the lead to single digits on back-to-back baskets from Maxey that pulled them within 80-73.

The Cavs were struggling to regroup. Maxey reduced the deficit to two points with a running finger roll layup with 2:33 left in the third before Cleveland reeled off six straight points to take

a 90-82 lead into the fourth quarter.

But the 76ers, who beat the reigning champion New York Knicks at Madison Square Garden on Tuesday, kept coming. They outscored the Cavaliers 60-37 in the second half, clamping down defensively and giving up just two turnovers.

Evan Mobley scored 18 points for Cleveland but had just three in the second half. Jarrett Allen scored 14 but was held scoreless after the break.

"We stayed together, that's the main thing," Sixers guard VJ Edgecombe said. "When it got worse we could have given up, we didn't. It's an early season test, early season adversity, and we overcame it."

### - Thunder win as SGA streak ends -

In Oklahoma City, the Thunder pulled away late for a 96-84 victory over the Denver Nuggets, despite a rough shooting night for two-time reigning Most Valuable Player Shai Gilgeous-Alexander, who saw his streak of games with at least 20 points end at 141. Gilgeous-Alexander missed all seven of his first-half shots and was just two-of-13 from the floor through three quarters. □



Ian Poulter of Majesticks GC lines up a putt on the seventh green during day three of LIV Golf Indianapolis at The Club at Chatham Hills on August 22, 2026 in Westfield, Indiana.

## Ian Poulter and Tyrrell Hatton leave LIV Golf

### London, United Kingdom

England's Ian Poulter and Tyrrell Hatton both announced Friday they had become the latest players to leave LIV Golf as the struggling breakaway league attempts a relaunch after filing for bankruptcy protection.

The 50-year-old Poulter, in a lengthy social media post, said it had been a "tough decision" to call time on his LIV career but that he would relish "the opportunity to spend more time at home with my family, reduce international travel, focus on senior golf and have the opportunity to pursue other interests".

Poulter's announcement that he is leaving the troubled LIV circuit came in the same week South Africa's Louis Oosthuizen announced his intention to return to the European tour next year.

LIV's future is uncertain after it filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection in the United States following the withdrawal of financial support from Saudi Arabia's Public Investment Fund, their longtime backers.

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

But the DP World (European) Tour had confirmed any player signing with the new-look LIV will be ineligible for membership and therefore ruled out of the Ryder Cup the team event against the United States which has witnessed many of Poulter's best days as a professional golfer.

Poulter acknowledged the split between established tours such as the US PGA and LIV has been a source of huge tension within golf but insisted he had no regrets about his role in the 'rebel' enterprise.

"Clearly LIV Golf has divided opinion, but to be part of the founding group who took world class golf around the globe...is something I will be forever proud of," he said.

"Change is never easy and it's fair to say professional golf has experienced plenty of it over the last few years. But I've always believed that change can create opportunities and ultimately lead to positive outcomes." Hatton, in a brief Instagram post later Friday, said: "Wanted to confirm that I will not be a part of LIV 2.0. A big thank you to everyone for their continued support. I am excited for what the next chapter of my career holds."

Earlier this month, two-time major champion Jon Rahm reached a separation agreement with LIV Golf. The deal, still to be approved by a judge in New Jersey, came after Rahm's lawyer confirmed the Spaniard would not return to LIV under proposed new financial plans. □

# Shiffrin sidesteps slalom in 'exploration' season

Paris, France

Mikaela Shiffrin headlines the line-up that kicks off the alpine skiing World Cup season in the Austrian resort of Soelden this weekend, the US star explaining she was ready to explore her strengths beyond slalom. "I am really excited at the opportunity to have space to focus a bit more with giant slalom and super-G," Shiffrin said Friday.

"I'm looking forward to the chance to have this space to kind of play with how I'm training, when I'm training, how I'm having recovery days as well. So this is kind of the thinking behind this. But I don't have much of a plan beyond, like I want to see how it feels."

Shiffrin, 31, won nine of the 10 World Cup slaloms races last season and also picked up an Olympic gold medal in the discipline.

"Since the beginning of my career, I felt like at some point there might be a little bit of a shift in my schedule," the American insisted. "But for so long, I was doing the same thing, and I always felt motivated to do the same thing. So, this last year or after the last season, my motivation maybe



USA's Mikaela Shiffrin takes part in the Atomic Media Day in Altenmarkt, Austria on October 8, 2026, ahead of the start of the Alpine ski season.

shifted a little bit.

"I think it's just my job to listen to that and to hear what my body is saying, hear what my mind is saying, and then maybe that provides a bit more longevity in the sport."

Turning to Saturday's giant slalom opener, Shiffrin was cautious, saying she was treating it more like a high-intensity training run.

"I don't think you should put me on your bingo card to win this race!" she said. "But I think my skiing's been pretty strong, and I would hope to be competitive."

## - No saving energy -

Switzerland's Marco Odermatt wrapped up the men's overall title last season for a fifth successive year and will be a firm

favourite to continue his dominant showing, form and injury notwithstanding. But the 29-year-old, searching a fourth Soelden victory to equal the record of his childhood hero, American skier Ted Ligety, is expecting stiff competition from his younger rivals, not least Brazil's Lucas Pinheiro Braathen.

"I guess I'm still hungry, for

sure," he said. "Hopefully I can still stay a little bit."

Odermatt also played down backing off the gas until the Crans Montana world championships in February.

"I have to hope that the body continues there," he said, insisting that the at-times brutal race schedule meant there was "no place to save some energy".

One major absentee this season will be Shiffrin's partner Aleksander Aamodt Kilde, who ruptured an achilles tendon in training in Chile in the latest blow to his career.

"He's heartbroken," Shiffrin said. "But he finds a way to somehow be grateful for things anyway."

The season will also kick off without Italian stars Federica Brignone and Sofia Goggia, and also American veteran Lindsey Vonn, who suffered a terrible leg injury in a fall at the Cortina Olympics. One person anxiously awaiting the start of the season will be Alexander Ospelt, the newly-elected president of the International Ski Federation (FIS), plunged into a period of austerity as part of cost-cutting measures. □

# Hammer blow for Kenya as world marathon champ Jepchirchir suspended for doping

Paris, France

In a fresh hammer blow for Kenyan athletics, world marathon champion Peres Jepchirchir has been provisionally suspended for doping, the Athletics Integ-

rity Unit (AIU) announced Friday. The highly decorated 33-year-old Kenyan, who won Olympic gold in the Covid-delayed Tokyo Games in 2021, was suspended after an out-of-

competition sample tested positive for banned blood booster EPO.

An athlete is provisionally suspended while their case is investigated.

Jepchirchir joins more than 140 Kenyan athletes, including current women's marathon world record-holder Ruth Chepngetich, who have been suspended or banned by the AIU since 2017.

The AIU said Jepchirchir's out-of-competition sample had been collected in Kenya prior to her recent Sydney Marathon victory.

Jepchirchir's lauded career has also seen her as a former world record-holder in the half-marathon while she is a four-time World

Marathon Major winner having captured the Sydney Marathon (2026), the London Marathon (2024), the Boston Marathon (2022) and the New York Marathon (2021).

The decision of World Athletics to award Nairobi the 2029 world championships is likely to increase the scrutiny of the east African nation's anti-doping policies. Barnabas Korir, Athletics Kenya Youth Development Director and National Olympic Committee of Kenya vice president, said he was left feeling shocked by the news of the suspension. "It's a big disappointment coming soon after we were awarded the World Athletics Championship in 2029," Korir told AFP.

"We are in shock, especially in the calibre of Peres Jepchirchir after a stellar career.

"We don't know what is happening with our athletes."

## - 'Spoiled her career' -

Jepchirchir's manager Gianni Demadona said she had tarnished her reputation.

"When I learned from AIU 3 days ago that she had been tested positive for EPO, I was confused and shocked," Demadona said.

"I can't say anything because I was trusting her after 13 years working together that she was one of the most trustable athletes around. □



Kenya's Peres Jepchirchir celebrates as she crosses the finish line to win the Women's section of the 2026 Sydney Marathon in Sydney on August 30, 2026.