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Pioneering U.S. labor leader Dolores Huerta dies at 96

Los Angeles, United States

Dolores Huerta, the U.S. labor leader and civil rights icon whose union work changed the lives of migrant workers, has died, her family said Wednesday. She was 96.

For nearly four decades Huerta was vice president of United Farm Workers, the union she founded with Cesar Chavez, organizing strikes and walkouts that won improvements in working conditions for the millions of men and women who labor in U.S. fields.

"We are deeply saddened to announce that our beloved mother, Dolores Huerta, has passed away today at the age of 96," said a family statement.

"We know that many of you around the world share in our mourning, and we will be following up on plans to recognize and celebrate her incredible life and legacy."

Erik Olvera, a spokesman for her family, told AFP Wednesday that Huerta died of cancer in the morning surrounded by loved ones.

Born in New Mexico and raised in California, Huerta took the reins of the US farmworker movement in the 1960s with Chavez.

At the time, she was rais-



Co-founder of the United Farm Workers of America (UFW) labor union Dolores Huerta, 95, poses in her office in Bakersfield, California, on July 21, 2025.

ing seven children she later had more while going through a divorce.

While Huerta was the organizing force behind the union, Chavez was its charismatic leader and the public face who became an icon to generations on the left, even after his death in 1993.

But that fame and the seemingly tight relationship between him and Huerta hid a dark secret that came to light this year, when Huerta said she was

one of a number of women Chavez had raped.

In her case, the attacks resulted in two pregnancies.

"The first time... I didn't feel I could say no because he was someone that I admired, my boss and the leader of the movement I had already devoted years of my life to," she said in a statement to the New York Times, which broke the story.

"The second time I was forced, against my will, and in an environment where I felt trapped."

Huerta remained a galvanizing figure in left-wing politics well into her 90s, helping to organize a fightback among migrant laborers targeted by President Donald Trump's immigration swoops that saw farmworkers snatched from the fields by masked federal agents. "People are reaching out because they want to do something," she told AFP during a July 2025 interview at the headquarters of her Dolores Huerta Foundation in Bakersfield, an agricultural nexus in California's

Central Valley.

"We've got to be a lot more active, because what's happening right now is so huge. I liken it to what was happening in Germany before Hitler took power," she said.

- 'The best of us' -

Huerta rubbed shoulders with some of America's most influential people over decades in the public eye. In 1968, she stood on a podium alongside Democratic presidential hopeful Robert F. Kennedy, brother of assassinated former president John F. Kennedy, just minutes before he was shot dead.

Barack Obama whose "Yes, we can" slogan he acknowledged he adopted from Dolores' "Si se puede" awarded her the presidential medal of freedom when he was in the White House.

News of Huerta's death prompted an outpouring of tributes from figures across the worlds of activism and politics, especially in her home state of California.

Governor Gavin Newsom ordered flags flown at half-staff in her honor, saying "Dolores represented the best of us" in her work that "changed the course of history against all odds." □

World Bank warns of worsening food insecurity as commodity prices soar

Washington, United States

The World Bank on Wednesday warned that global commodity prices were set to increase by 23 percent by the end of 2026, with energy prices at four-year highs due to the war on Iran and food prices driven up by global conflicts and El Nino.

"Commodity markets are being hit by several major shocks at once," said Ayhan Kose, the World Bank's deputy chief economist, in a statement accompanying the release of the organization's Commodity Markets Outlook report.

"Higher energy costs and trade disruptions are driving up prices across a broad range of commodi-

ties, threatening to worsen inflation, food insecurity, and economic growth."

Food prices were expect-

ed to rise by 10 percent in 2026 and another seven percent next year, due to conflict-affected grain



Ayhan Kose, deputy chief economist at the World Bank Group, gives exclusive interview regarding the World Bank has slashed its global growth forecast, warning that the world economy remains hobbled by deepening fragilities and a steady erosion of investment and productivity in Washington, United States on June 17, 2025.

supply lines, the effects of an extreme El Nino phenomenon and high fuel and fertilizer prices.

El Nino is a naturally occurring weather phenomenon that is set to bring higher temperatures to much of the planet this year, with its impact compounding the effects of man-made climate change.

For food producers, it is expected to lead to more flooding, droughts and heat stress across multiple regions.

- Higher energy prices - Energy prices are projected to see an increase of 32 percent this year before moderating in 2027, the World Bank report said, assuming that conflicts in Iran

and Ukraine do not intensify.

Global energy and fertilizer prices have skyrocketed since the United States and Israel launched a war against Iran in late February, plunging the Middle East into violence.

Iran responded with attacks on US allies in the region and virtually choked the Strait of Hormuz -- a key oil, natural gas and fertilizer supply route.

The World Bank report warned that an especially strong El Nino, intensifying attacks on Black Sea grain shipments during the Russia-Ukraine war or further energy price spikes from the Iran war could lead to a "food crisis." □



Data center next door divides old Massachusetts mill town

Lowell, United States

Retiree Eileen Castle hasn't been able to enjoy her backyard since a data center moved in next door in Lowell, Massachusetts, bringing noise, fumes, dust and water mist.

But a few streets away, contractor Louis Haas is grateful to Markley, the company running the facility, for redeveloping an abandoned site he says was rife with drug use.

Dubbed "the Dungeon" by some locals for the imposing black silhouette it casts over a residential neighborhood of this old milling city, those opposing views encapsulate how data centers are polarizing communities across the United States.

Republican-governed states, with their looser regulations, host most of the country's current AI build-out. But in liberal-leaning New England, some feel betrayed by their elected representatives, while others fear being left behind if the industry is curbed.

- 'Nothing but noise' -

Over the din of construction behind a spiked fence, Castle, 82, told AFP her great-great-grandparents bought the property.

But since the data center moved into a disused pasta factory a decade ago, "We have had nothing but noise. We have dust, dirt. We have all kinds of mist"

from the adjoining cooling towers, which she fears could carry Legionnaires' disease.

Noxious fumes made a long interview outdoors impossible, and she lamented that her grandchildren can no longer swim in her small pool.

"I think every once in a while that maybe I should sell my house," she says, but adds her property value has plummeted.

"The Markley Group serves more than 600 clients in Massachusetts and connects the digital infrastructure that powers our economy, our schools, and the everyday needs of our community," Markley Group CEO Jeff Markley said in a statement to AFP.

The company said its backup diesel generators run only for five minute tests each week and, thanks to abatement efforts, produce "about 44 decibels of sound, quieter than a soft conversation three feet away."

It said it tests its water twice a year for Legionnaires', and has planted 2,000 trees.

In 2015, the city council gave Markley a 20-year property and personal property tax break estimated at \$77 million, the Lowell Sun newspaper reported at the time. Enthusiasm has since cooled. In March, the council unanimously passed a 360-day morato-

rium on construction and expansion of commercial data centers, though Markley's 352,000-square-foot site was grandfathered in.

Residents represented by the Conservation Law Foundation (CLF) and others have sued to challenge its expansion, which included increasing the number of generators to 27, and won a temporary injunction in August.

CLF attorney Adam Reynolds told AFP that it is the "compounding effect of pollution that's really significant" in a historically industrial area.

- Community divisions -

Markley has supporters. Haas, 50, who supplies coffee to a major tech company, said the boom had been good to contractors like him.

"I'm a big liberal, I'm a Democrat. But I'm also pro-jobs and pro-economy," he told AFP.

Markley said it employs more than 100 full-time staff in Lowell, a third of them local. On top of that, over 100 unionized trades workers work on campus.

Another backer, Sarah Bi-beau, a 43-year-old single mother of two who works in the defense sector, told AFP the company had been "kind and considerate," fixing roads and offering favors ranging from yard work to free Red Sox tickets. □



U.S. Secretary of Treasury Scott Bessent (C) and Medicare and Medicaid Administrator Mehmet Oz (R) wait for U.S. President Donald Trump to speak at a campaign rally at the Alico Arena, Florida Gulf Coast University in Fort Myers, Florida on October 23, 2026.

U.S. sanctions Rwandan defense ministry over M23 ties

Washington, United States

The United States on Wednesday imposed sanctions on the Rwandan defense ministry and a financial institution in that country over their alleged ties to the M23 armed group fighting in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

"Today, the United States makes good on President (Donald) Trump's promise to hold Rwanda accountable for its commitments under the Washington Accords for Peace and Prosperity," said Secretary of the Treasury Scott Bessent, referring to an agreement signed in December between Rwandan and DR Congo leaders.

"Rwanda must halt its support for M23 and withdraw its troops from eastern DRC."

With Rwandan help, the M23 movement has seized swathes of the eastern DRC home to valuable minerals coveted by world powers since it took up arms again in 2021.

Despite the U.S.-brokered truce in December, fighting has continued to rage in a region that has been torn apart by conflict for three decades and faces an Ebola epidemic.

An offensive by the M23 and the Rwandan army in eastern DRC in early 2025 resulted in the capture of Goma and Bukavu, capitals of North and South Kivu provinces.

Since then, the front line has stabilized, though South Kivu in particular has seen fierce clashes.

While United Nations experts have reported that Rwanda still has thousands of troops helping the M23 and exerts de facto control over the group, the DRC's neighbor has long denied offering the M23 military support. Rwanda insists that it faces an existential threat from a Congolese militia founded by ethnic Hutus involved in the 1994 genocide of Tutsis in Rwanda.

U.S. State Department spokesperson Tommy Pigott, however, said that "thousands" of Rwanda Defense Force troops continued to fight alongside M23 in North and South Kivu provinces.

Wednesday's U.S. action included blocking financial transactions with Zigama Credit and Savings Society, the Treasury Department said, calling it a financial institution that serves Rwanda's security services.

The United States sanctioned the Rwanda Defence Force, which falls under the defense ministry, in March. □

A throne on wheels, popemobiles star in new Vatican show

Vatican City, Holy See

Popemobiles past and present from German automaker Mercedes-Benz are the stars of a new show at the Vatican Museums, emblematic vehicles that serve to bring the pope closer to his flock.

"A Century of the Pope-mobile" tracks the long relationship between the Stuttgart-based automaker and the Holy See, where the head of the Catholic Church has used increasingly sophisticated vehicles to meet the faithful, whether in St Peter's Square, or during papal voyages around the world.

Opening to the public Thursday, the exhibit in a temporary pavilion within the Vatican's Square Garden features eight models borrowed from the automaker's collection and that of the Vatican.

First on display and poles apart from the white popemobiles of present-day is the Nurburg 460, a shiny black Pullman limo delivered to Pope Pius XI in 1930, whose luxurious exterior re-



A photograph taken on October 28, 2026 shows a historic papal vehicle, the Mercedes-Benz 230 G, on display at the Square Garden (Giardino Quadrato) during the press preview of the "A Century of Papamobile" exhibition, in the Vatican Museums, at the Vatican.

veals a plush papal seat inside, covered in raspberry silk brocade.

Last is the hulking ML 500 made for Pope Benedict XVI in 2012, with its enlarged enclosed back section allowing for optimal viewing of, and by, the pope.

Sandro Barbagallo, head of the museum's department of historical collec-

tions, told journalists during a preview Wednesday that the popemobile should not be viewed as "just a simple means of transport".

"The so-called popemobile serves to allow people to see the pope, but also to allow him to see. It serves so that people can greet the pope, but also and above all so that the pope can, along the roads, greet and

at the same time bless," he said.

"It is a modern technology placed at the service of the pontiff, at the service of his ministry," said Barbagallo.

The first so-called modern popemobile appeared in 1980, with the Mercedes-Benz 230G for Pope John Paul II.

Its rear resembled an elevated throne covered

by a transparent dome, adorned with mother of pearl paintwork and gold trim.

Other cars on display include the 1960 300D Landaulet with its plush beige mohair seat and removable side windows for Pope John XXIII and the 1997 lungo Landaulet with its electrohydraulic soft top for Pope John Paul II.

Although the show recounts 100 years of papal mobility, it leaves out the various vehicles produced by Mercedes-Benz's competitors and gifted to the pope, including from Fiat, Renault, Volkswagen and even Ferrari.

- 'Sardine can' -

Popemobiles have included bulletproof glass since the assassination attempt on John Paul II in 1981 in Rome.

But for all their benefits, the popemobiles sometimes meet resistance from those they were designed to transport.

Pope Francis famously told a Spanish newspaper in 2014 that he couldn't get

close to the people from within his "sardine can" popemobile encased in bulletproof glass, saying he preferred to be more out in the open, despite the safety risks.

For short trips to cross Rome, Francis often opted for a simple white Fiat.

Accessing the show, visitors enter through the museum's Carriage Pavilion with the ornate horse-drawn coaches of popes and cardinals of years past, before global automakers began wooing the pope with their vehicles.

Speaking to journalists, the chief executive of Mercedes-Benz Heritage, Marcus Breitschwendt, said the automaker's historic cars, including popemobiles, are exhibited in a closely protected museum in Stuttgart.

"A clear rule to everybody" prevails there, Breitschwendt said.

"It's strictly forbidden to everybody, even to our CEO, to all of us, to sit on the pope's seat."

'Faerie' nights: 'ACOTAR' fans finally get their book

Los Angeles, United States

Thousands of costumed fans lined up for Tuesday's release of the sixth novel in Sarah J. Maas's hit "A Court of Thorns and Roses" series, a leading force in the booming romantasy genre that is bolstering publishers' bottom lines.

Waiting to get their hands on "A Court of Splintered Harmony," readers thronged midnight parties at bookshops across the nation, including The Ripped Bodice in Los Angeles, where fans sporting "faerie" ears and wings took in performances by fire breathers and acrobats.

"To see the new one come out and have everyone around, this is really what we've been waiting for," Taylor Capizola, the bookstore's general manager, told AFP.

The series known to fans by its acronym "ACOTAR" is one of the most success-

ful in the romantasy genre a heady combination of the swords-and-sorcery of "Game of Thrones" and the breathless passions of Danielle Steel.

Maas, who has sold 75 million books in 40 languages, was the best-selling author in the United States in 2024.

"A Court of Thorns and Roses" really is the backbone, is the foundation of this genre," said Capizola.

Romantasy a genre that

also includes "The Fourth Wing" series by Rebecca Yarros and "Quicksilver" by Callie Hart has been propelled by BookTok, the corner of TikTok where readers review and recommend titles in short videos.

But reviews are no longer enough for some fans.

With no film or series in sight since Hulu dropped its adaptation in 2025, some are now using AI to make their own trailers and short

episodes of ACOTAR, propelling the series' heroine Feyre to an even bigger audience.

- The Maas Effect -

Tuesday's release of "A Court of Splintered Harmony" is expected to be good news for Bloomsbury home also to the "Harry Potter" series.

The publishing house will be looking for a bump to turn around a year that saw first half revenue slip five percent and adjusted pre-tax profit down 30 percent.

"Sarah J. Maas is a publishing phenomenon," Bloomsbury founder and Executive Chairman Nigel Newton said in 2024, when her novels carried the company to record profits.

She's also a durable one: the original ACOTAR which first came out in 2015 has now spent 92 consecutive weeks on the New York Times paperback bestsellers list.



A girl reads a Sarah J. Maas's book next to a large promotional display of the book "A Court of Thorns and Roses" at a bookstore in Los Angeles, California, on October 23, 2026.

Mona Lisa scrubbed from Syrian textbooks as critics slam conservative drift

Damascus, Syria

In one book, an illustration was redrawn to show the girls gathered around a computer wearing hijabs. In another, an image of the Mona Lisa was taken out entirely.

Changes to Syria's official school books are sparking criticism of the country's new Islamist authorities as the nation tries to move on after 13 years of civil war and decades of authoritarian rule.

After ousting longtime ruler Bashar al-Assad in December 2024, Syria's new authorities, led by former jihadist Ahmed al-Sharaa, have taken several conservative steps including imposing stricter dress codes for beaches and restricting alcohol sales, while some universities have limited certain courses to men only.

Now the textbook changes are drawing outcry, after they were pointed out last week by Syrian journalist Mohammad Salloum, drawing on a report by the Institute for Monitoring Peace and Cultural Tolerance in School Education (IMPACT-se).



People walk past the Ministry of Education building in Damascus on October 26, 2026.

AFP confirmed several changes by consulting electronic versions of textbooks on official websites. Among them was the removal of an image of the Mona Lisa from a seventh-grade history textbook, and the removal of images of statues emblematic of ancient Syrian civilizations in a third-grade social studies text.

In a fourth-grade Islamic education textbook, illustrations of several people wearing Western clothing were replaced with two separate drawings one of two men in traditional robes, and another showing two women wearing the niqab.

On social media and some local media platforms, Syrians shared images of a Pharaonic bust that had

been clothed with a modern shirt, and an illustration of girls at a computer that now shows them wearing the hijab.

Images of people dancing were also removed from sixth-grade social affairs textbooks.

- 'Ideological narrative' -

While nominally secular, Assad's clan committed horrific abuses over the

course of several decades against people who dared to speak out against their rule, including anyone perceived to be Islamist.

Sharaa meanwhile once headed the country's chapter of Al-Qaeda, and his Islamist group led the alliance that toppled Assad. But he has undergone a major transformation and adopted a more moderate image as Syria's head of state.

The curriculum controversy comes as supporters and critics tussle over the religiously conservative country's direction in the post-Assad era.

On Monday, the education ministry said changes to the curriculum included "removing symbols of the defunct regime and its ideological content, and correcting images and content connected to it".

The ministry last year had made changes to the curriculum, mainly in primary school subjects of social studies, Islamic education, history and geography, removing symbols linked to the Baath party which ruled the country for decades. □

Cuba wins U.N. vote against U.S. embargo with weakest backing in 30 years

United Nations, United States

The U.N. General Assembly on Wednesday adopted a new resolution calling for an end to the U.S. embargo against Cuba, although support for the communist-ruled island fell to its lowest level in three decades. Nearly every year since 1992 similar resolutions have been put to a vote and passed, but support for the measure this year was markedly lower.

The resolution, which has called for lifting the economic, trade and financial embargo against the island, received 130 votes in favor, with 17 against and 25 abstentions. It was the lowest level of support since 1995.

This year's Cuban resolu-

tion included a reference to the impact of restrictions on fuel supplies to the island imposed by the United States since January.

- 'Gangster coercion' -

In recent weeks, Havana accused Washington of mounting a diplomatic offensive to pressure countries into withdrawing their support for the Cuban resolution.

"The world has once again spoken out overwhelmingly against the blockade, even despite the most blatant pressure and blackmail from the U.S. to change the course of this vote," Cuban President Miguel Diaz-Canel said in a celebratory post on X Wednesday, later adding that the US engages in

"gangster-like coercion." Speaking in New York, Cuban Foreign Minister Bruno Rodriguez accused Washington of seeking to "determine the nation's destiny" and "seize" its wealth. In the minutes before the vote, U.S. ambassador to the United Nations Mike Waltz denied that Cuba was under a blockade and said "the plight of the Cuban people is exclusively the fault of this corrupt communist regime."

"The reality is, today as we speak, there is no ring of U.S. Navy warships around Cuba. Their ports are open. In recent months, data shows that shipments have arrived," from around the world, he added.

- Shouting match -

The vote came a day after a dramatic shouting match on the floor of the U.N. General Assembly that at one point saw Rodriguez approach Waltz and shout, "You are a liar!"

as Waltz shouted for him to back away.

Amid the interruptions, the chair briefly suspended the session and instructed both countries' representatives to return to their places. □



Cuba's Minister for Foreign Affairs Bruno Eduardo Rodríguez Parrilla speaks during the 81st United Nations General Assembly at UN headquarters in New York on September 26, 2026.



Villa Vie Residences' 'Odyssey' cruise ship, docked at the Harland & Wolff ship repair dock in Belfast on September 26, 2024.

'Cruise for life' strands passengers in Cambodia as operator goes bust

Sihanoukville, Cambodia

Around 200 passengers who paid to live on a cruise ship while travelling the world were abruptly left in Cambodia after the company ran out of money but passengers told AFP on Wednesday they had no regrets.

U.S.-based operator Villa Vie Residences announced on Tuesday it was suspending operations of the Odyssey, two years after the ship set off, citing "extraordinary increases" in fuel costs following the US-Israel war with Iran.

It had been billed as an affordable, continuous voyage around the world, in which residents could buy or rent rooms for a holiday or for life, some passengers selling everything they had to pay for it.

However, residents were given just seven hours to pack their bags and leave during a scheduled stop in the Cambodian port of Sihanoukville on Tuesday, according to local authorities. American Randy Cassingham and his wife Kit had been on the ship since it left Belfast in October 2024, spending around \$1 million on the all-inclusive trip they hoped would last at least 15 years.

"It was great, for a while," he told AFP by phone from his Sihanoukville hotel.

"My wife and I really enjoy travelling. But we really hate airports and airlines.

This was a way that you could unpack once; you can sleep in your own bed every night and wake up in a new place every few days."

Despite being left in Cambodia, Cassingham said he had no regrets and would get back onboard if the cruise restarted, telling AFP that "money aside, it was a fantastic adventure".

Operator Villa Vie said in a statement the per-cabin monthly fuel expenses had gone from an average of \$1,800 to an estimated \$6,000 to \$8,000 in parts of Asia.

"The company cannot simply pass increases of that scale on to residents, and the resulting shortfall has placed its current operating model under unsustainable financial pressure," it said.

Carol Larson, a 69-year-old from California, told AFP that she initially paid \$120,000 for her cabin not including monthly maintenance fees and a voyage that was meant to last 15 years or the life of the ship. But after just a year and a half, she and a friend were now "stranded" in Sihanoukville.

She faulted the U.S. president and his war in the Middle East, as well as cruise management.

"I put most of the blame on Trump, but there was some probably not financially

good bookkeeping," Larson said.

Still, she said, the journey was "well worth it".

"I am so blessed to have been part of the experiment of residential cruising."

'Something going wrong'

The 200-metre (656-foot) ship arrived from Thailand on Friday carrying 203 guests and 156 crew, according to Long Dimanche, deputy governor of Preah Sihanouk province.

He said in a statement some passengers took flights out while others remained in Sihanoukville, adding that the ship was due to refuel and leave on Saturday.

Barbara Figiel, 62, who says she has been on around 70 cruises and her husband, went aboard the Odyssey in December 2024.

"I've always said, 'Oh, when I retire, I want to live on a cruise ship,'" Figiel told AFP.

The former U.N. employee said she jumped at the chance to travel at a slow pace and be part of a community at sea.

But in the last four months, she said "we knew something was going wrong because they kept on asking us for more and more and more money".

"But it came to a point that how much money can you give to save a sinking ship?"

"I don't think we've been scammed," she added. □



A Belgrade resident paints over politically charged graffiti during a clean-up campaign in the Serbian capital on October 28, 2026, days after a student-backed list won the country's snap parliamentary elections.

Clean-up starts as Serbian students movement prepares to govern

Belgrade, Serbia

Belgrade residents on Wednesday washed away politically charged graffiti that had stained city walls over months of protests, as Serbia's student-led movement prepared to govern after its seismic election victory.

A student-backed list defeated the right-wing SNS nationalist party of Aleksandar Vucic in a national election Sunday, ending its 14-year rule in the Balkan nation.

The historic victory came after two years of protests sparked by the 2024 collapse of a railway station canopy in Novi Sad that claimed 16 lives.

As celebrations faded, citizens focused on cleaning up the remnants of a divisive political period.

Directly after the vote on Monday morning, students were joined by other citizens in cleaning a park that a pro-government encampment had illegally occupied for over a year outside the presidency building.

By the afternoon, children were enjoying a freshly scrubbed playground, and all signs of the camp were gone.

On Wednesday, the student-led movement called on Belgrade residents to help restore buildings, streets, and parks after two years of "unappealing" changes. Its social media post said this should include "offensive graffiti ... that have marred building facades for some time".

Dozens of people whitewashed a tunnel in central Belgrade whose walls had become pockmarked with competing graffiti from opposing political sides.

In recent months, the ubiquitous abbreviations, 'FCK BLK' or 'FCK SNS' were tagged across buildings around the city, along with offensive slurs particularly against the student movement.

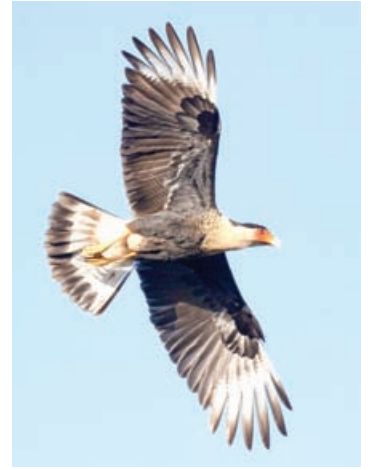
'BLK' targets the protesters who were labelled blockers by the government, while the latter was used to target Vucic's Serbian Progressive Party (SNS).

The clean-up came as the student-backed list cemented its position in a nearly complete vote tally.

So far it has won over 52 percent of the vote giving it around 140 of the 250 seats in parliament, enough to comfortably govern alone, according to the central election authority.

Students will have to wait until the final vote count is certified before parliament can be constituted, allowing the leaderless movement to form a government and name a prime minister. □

Birds of Aruba: Soaring through the blue skies



(Oranjestad)—Aruba's nature is very diverse and is home to several beautiful and majestic wildlife. Among these is the bright Trupial, whose angelic voice is always heard with the rising sun; the cuddly parakeet, always in company of another, and the majestic Warawara, a mighty bird that can be seen soaring in the clear blue skies.

Trupial

Icterus icterus, or known locally as the Venezuelan or Orange Trou-pial, is a striking songbird whose bright orange feathers can be spotted from a far distance. Known to be the first bird to sing at the first sign of sunrise, this beloved songbird likes to wake up with a tune.

But don't let their angelic songs fool you; the Trupial can be a bit aggressive towards any threat, protective over their nesting spots—nesting spots they most likely stole from other birds. Trupials can be seen regularly, often in trees or on top of a cactus.

Photo Credit: Daniel Ruben Gonzalez

Prikichi (parakeet)

The Brown-throated Prikichi (*Aratinga pertinax*) became the national bird of Aruba back in 2015, at the request of Aruba Birdlife Conservation. The bright green, adorable parakeet usually flies in flock of 30 or more, but its population has

been declining since the 2010s. Prikichis are a shier breed than the trupial, often flying away at the sign of any threat. They use termite nests for breeding spots and feed mostly on seeds from the Kwihi tree, Divi Divi tree and fruits.

Photo Credit: Daniel Ruben Gonzalez

Warawara

The Warawara or Caracara is one of the biggest birds found in the Aruban mondi. At a height of 41 to 60 cm, their wingspan can measure up to 125 cm. Known as the "garbage man", this bird of prey mostly feeds on dead animals. Its coat is dark brown, with a cream-

colored neck, orange face, thick beak and long legs. The Warawara prefers to build its nest in the middle of tall cacti and produces a rattling, screaming sound, throwing its head back onto its back while calling.

While these birds are a beautiful sight to behold, it is very important to keep your distance and respect their habitats. This is how we protect our wildlife. By admiring the beauty of Aruba in a safe and respectful manner, we can do our part in protecting our sacred nature.

Photo Credit: Aruba Birdlife Conservation



Aruba's Bocas: home to the rarest fossil reefs on the planet!

(Oranjestad)—If you've been to the northern coast of Aruba already, you've probably noticed how the ground differs entirely from the sandy beaches on the southern part of the island. These hard surfaces, with sharp bumps and holes are actually fossilized coral reefs, of which its growth and changes can be traced back to the last glacial period.

On May 30 2023, geoscientists, Dr. Patrick Boyden from the Marum research faculty at the University of Bremen, Prof. dr. Alessio Rovere from the Ca' Foscari University of Venice and Prof. dr. Gianfranco

Scicchitano, from the University of Bari Aldo Moro, presented their research on these fossilized coral reefs at the University of Aruba. Their focus for their research included studying the health and formation patterns of these coral reefs, and to investigate how these reefs have responded and can respond to fluctuating sea levels or extreme weather, like hurricanes and tsunamis.

Through underwater and land surveillance, and 3D models of the reefs, they were able to narrow down when these formations started to take place. They were



also able to track the fluctuation of sea levels during the past hundred or even thousands of years, and the effects that this fluctuation has had on the coral reefs of the windward side of Aruba.

These findings can certainly put things into perspective. The ground on which we have walked many times on the northern part of the island hold such rich history, history that dates back to a time that most of us cannot even imagine. As the scientists themselves have pointed out, these fossilized reefs on the windward side are truly an incredible and rare rem-

nant of geological history, as they provide a clear view of how these reefs have formed.

This research is also important for the future of coral reefs on the island. By studying rising sea levels and climate impact on these coral reefs, we are able to take concrete action in protecting and preserve our coral reefs. So, if you are ever visiting one of the bocas or driving along the northern part of the island, please be conscious to help protect our natural historical remnant. Oh, and wear (coral-friendly) sunscreen! ☐



National Park Arikok: Aruba's biggest nature conservation

The National Park Arikok comprises almost 18 % of the island. Its rugged terrain, desert-like hills filled with tall cacti, breathtaking coastline and protected local flora and fauna welcome you to be explored. There are numerous animals to discover, for example the bright blue Cododo or mighty Warawara.

The national park Arikok takes you on a memorable journey of the islands past offering unique geological, cultural and historical sites. These can all be enjoyed and explored either on your own or during guided tours. A wide variety of educational and informative programs and fun activities is available.

Did you know that four of the seven species of sea turtle lay their eggs on Aruba's beaches? In the national park, a Least Tern (*Sterna antillarum*) keeps a strict eye on a very special event taking place below on the beach: A majestic Leatherback (*Dermochelys coriacea*) heading back to the ocean after laying her eggs



during breeding season. Sea turtles prefer nesting in the cool and dark hours of the night. And hatchlings usually wait for the cue of cooling surface sand before emerging.

Nature Conservation

The protected area of National Park Arikok was officially established in 2000. Arikok National Park is a 34 square kilometers (7907 acres) of natural area, located at the north-eastern part of Aruba which contains examples of most of the island's flora and fauna against a backdrop of great geological complexity. We are proud to state that approximately 18% of the to-

tal land area of Aruba is assigned as a National Park, to protect and preserve the flora, fauna, geology and historical remains present within Arikok National Park.

The Landscape

There is a great geological variety within the park. The main aspects are the rough hills of the volcanic Aruba lava formation, the mysterious rocks of the batholithic quartz-diorite/tonalite, and the limestone rocks from fossilized coral. The two tallest hills on the island are situated within the park. Jamoeta hill 188 meters (617 ft) and Arikok hill 176 meters (577 ft), from which the name of the park is derived.



The line of the permanently wind-and-wave beaten North Coast is broken by several bays (boca's). Most of them are small yet impressive inlets at the mouth of dry riverbeds. Some of these bays (boca's) are spectacular sights, adorned with white, sandy beaches and sand dunes, as is the case at Boca Prins and Dos Playa.

Arikok is also home to Conchi, Aruba's most important natural attraction; also known as The Natural Pool. The journey to the Pool is and adventure by itself and only possible by foot, horse, or 4x4 vehicle. As of 2020, ATV's and UTVs are not allowed in the park due to its significant impact on nature.

Cultural and Historical components

There are a number of sites within the park that attest to the history of Aruba. The Caquetío Indians left rock paintings in Cunucu Arikok and Fontein Cave.

Old plantation (Cunucus) sites tell the story of an active yet challenging agricultural past.

These Cunucus were also residential areas for the few families that worked the land. These families found ways to survive in the difficult conditions, and were able to erect their homes with materials found in the area. Two of these adobe houses have been restored. Park rangers are learning many of the old building techniques in order to preserve this unique Aruban mud-house. At Cunucu Arikok and near Plantation Prins you can find these adobe houses.

Park Management

The Aruba Conservation Foundation (ACF), formerly known as Aruba National Park Foundation, manages the national park. This foundation was established in July 2003. In February 2017, mangrove and wetland RAMSAR site #198 Spanish Lagoon was annexed to Arikok National Park due to its importance as a feeding and breeding area for water birds and as a nursery area for a variety of marine organisms. With this addition, the areas under management increased by 70 hectares while the amount of species of flora and fauna to be conserved to over 250. On December 21st, 2018 (AB 2018 no. 77) Parke Marino Aruba – currently consisting of four marine protected areas (MPAs) – was officially established and subsequently brought under management of ACF. In 2019, preliminary management plan for marine were introduced for Parke Marino to conserve reefs, seagrass beds, and mangrove forests and in 2020 ACF was given additional management areas such as the Saliñas (Druif, Malmok, Cerca, Palm Beach, Bubali etc.) and also additional areas such as Rooi Manonchi, Ser'I Teishi etc. Managed areas can be seen here: <https://acf.aw/>.

Visit the National Park Arikok to see the wonder of Aruba's nature. The visitor center in San Fuego and entrance in Vader Piet (San Nicolas) is open daily from 8:00 AM to 16:00 PM. Contact the ACF via e-mail, info@acf.aw or call +297 585 1234 for more information. □



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Surf's Up: Favorite places to catch waves in Aruba



ORANJESTAD – Whether you are a salt-seasoned surfer looking for a thrill, or just looking to wet your toes in a little ocean adventure, Aruba has amazing places to learn and practice surfing! Although more known for the calmer waters of Palm Beach, Eagle Beach and Mangel Halto, Aruba also has some special places to thrill your senses. Because of strong winds and breezes, Aruba is perfect for wind and kite surfing. You will surely notice kites in the air as you drive around the wilder, rougher areas on Aruba's east side.

There are plenty of surf shop rentals to help you with your gear, and there are also a lot of tutors if you're looking to try for the first time and need a little help. These can be found around the island,

and will surely come in hand if you want to try a new experience!

With that said, here are Aruba's favorite surf spots!

Andicuri

Andicuri is recognized as the best place for body boarding. Because of the rough waves, this beach is better suited for those with more experience in surfing. However, the beach with two bluffs – one on each side – is worth a visit, if only to watch the exciting show presented by the surfers.

To go to Andicuri, you will need a 4x4 vehicle and drive from the ex-Natural Bridge Center. Alternatively, you can make it an adventure by going on a hike! The scenery is unique and beautiful on its own.

Reaching Andicuri Beach can be an adventure in itself, as it can be difficult to find and is only accessible by 4x4 vehicle or walking from the ex-Natural Bridge center, but the impressive scenery makes it all worthwhile!

Arashi

Arashi, a beach located close to the California Lighthouse, is a good spot for learning and having fun – if you're lucky! The waves at Arashi are usually calm, but with just the right weather, a swell forms attracting all the local surfers to the area.

Boca Grandi

Boca Grandi is at the most southern spot in Aruba, and is a popular spot with experienced surfers. Close to the famous Red Anchor and our beloved Sunrise City – San Nicolas, a trip to Boca Grandi can easily turn into an all-day trip to this area of the island. With a beautiful beach (although it is not allowed to swim here, because of strong currents), you can enjoy a relaxing time combing the beach for driftwood, coral, and little crabs and snails.

Hadicurari



Here is where you will find most of the action for surfers in Aruba. With a variety of surf shops and schools in this area, you will find it easy to get in on the action. Hadicurari is also the site of the Aruba Hi Winds World Challenge, which takes place usually in June/July, and it is the largest windsurfing competition in the Caribbean!

Malmok

If you're a beginner, this is your spot. There are also various shops to rent gear and receive lessons, facilitating learning and just trying out a new experience. The beach is also popular for paddleboarding and other watersport activities. □

Feeling parched? Grab refreshment by the side of the road



(Oranjestad)—Touring the island in the blistering heat can leave one feeling rather thirsty and looking to cool off. Luckily there are a few stands along the roads of Aruba that can offer you just what you need: a nice, refreshing beverage!

These “coconut stands” can be found at several locations on the island, where you can cool off with delicious smoothies, drinks, snacks, and of course, fresh coconuts!

Packed with natural electrolytes, coconuts are a fantastic choice for hydrating yourself under the blazing Aruban sun. Coconuts also contain antioxidants that can help reduce stress and protect your cells. So while you're having fun exploring the island, know you are well-protected with a fresh-cut coconut in your hand. □

The Bushiribana Gold Mill Ruins and its history

(Oranjestad)—The Bushiribana Gold Mill Ruins is one of the most visited places by tourists on the island, as it lies along the northern coast line near the mini pool and on the way to the Natural Bridge. Despite its seemingly plain appearance, this ruin represents one of the most important histories of the island: The Aruban Gold Rush.

Built in 1872 by English company Aruba Island Gold Mining Company Ltd, the gold mill at Bushiribana was constructed in the area where most gold was found by locals. The story of gold on Aruba actually dates back to 1725, when a first exploration for gold



on the island was commissioned by the Dutch West India Company. Under the leadership of Mr. Paulus Printz, a three-year search was conducted on Aruba, to no avail. Though they found some gold, it was enough to motivate a further search, and the assignment was discontinued by Printz himself.

It wasn't until 100 years later, in 1824, when a young boy found a lump of gold while out herding his father's sheep. His father took it to a local merchant who then sold the lump for \$70. Unbeknownst to the boy and his father, they quite literally struck gold, and as word got out, a gold fever spread among the locals who started search-

ing for more gold. About 25 pounds worth was found.

At the same time, the Aruban government took immediate actions, and informed Curacao that gold was found. At first, everyone could look for gold, as long as they sold it to the government. However, after some time, the government decided to implement stricter rules and banned local search parties.

Over the years, concession-holding had seen different companies from around the world, all of which used primitive methods to dig and carve out gold from the rocks. Aruba

Island Gold Mining Company Ltd. was no different, but used a unique method that involved grinding the rocks and letting the dust be blown away by the strong northeast wind, leaving clumps of gold behind. The next step was melting the gold and letting it attach to quicksilver in order to obtain pure gold. All these processes were done at the Bushiribana Gold Mill.

The gold mill itself had a short life-span: only 10 years in service, but its structure remained relatively solid till this day, and is now a historical remnant. □

Sources: Etnia Nativa

Aruba's neighborhoods; the meaning behind their names

Just like any other country, Aruba has unique and beautifully named neighborhoods that all form a part of its culture and development. Many of these names have a historical background and meaning that teaches us about the island and its rich culture every day.

With this series, we want to take you on a journey of discovery, where you'll learn not only the beautiful names but the history behind it that gives it life and meaning.

Anabui/Tierra Del Sol

This neighborhood can be seen on Van Raders map and Werbata as Anna Boei. Anna Boei is a name of which there isn't much information about its origin.



The best historians were able to deduce is that this name came to be because of a miscommunication between Van Spengler and the natives who were living on the island. In the Arawak/Taino language one can find the word Anaiboa, which consists of Ana meaning flower or the best and Iboa; the juice of a cassava, which together

would mean "the best juice of a cassava".

If one assumes that the actual word heard was Ana-boio instead, consisting of Ana meaning the best and Boio (bohio); house, the iteration of Anabui would mean "the best house." This is the origin that has been more or less speculated and assumed for the word

Anabui and its meaning.

During the Second World War and later, this area was used as a terrain for training of shooting by militia and later on Korps Mariniers (the marines of Aruba). By the end of the previous century a large part of Anabui was developed to have luxurious villas and a golf course, which lead to it getting the name Tierra Del Sol, Spanish for Land of the Sun. The name is not an official name, but the name of the development project that took place. It is hoped that the original and 'old' name of Anabui is never lost and now it will be remembered by both locals and tourists.

Angochi

This name can be seen on the Werbata map with little and cursive letters. It is

the unofficial name for the area given by a tenant to the land that was rented to him.

The biggest probability that historians believe is that it comes from native descent, during the time in the 19th century where Mestizos still lived on Aruba. The name can't really be explain and according to books on its history seems to be more of a sign of corruption.

However, it seems to come from combining A(n), which is a generalizing prefix and Goeiza, which means 'the spirit of a living man'. Angochi remains more of a guess.

This neighborhood's abbreviation is; An. □



Keeping up with the conniving spider... Nanzi fools Cha Tiger

Many years ago, Cha* Tiger did not live in the mondi*, but among civil society. Back then, he was feared by everyone. When he walked past in a halfway, everyone around would make room immediately, that's how ferocious he was.

One night a group of friends was hanging out and they were talking about Cha Tiger. "You know, that tiger sure is incredibly strong and I don't trust him one bit. He probably eats a lot too. Oh, I'm so scared of him!" one person said.

"Oh, don't be stupid! What can Cha Tiger do? He's all bark and no bite, that's it. I certainly am not afraid of him. I bet you guys that I could even sit on his back like I would any donkey." It was Nanzi who said this. The people around him laughed at his remarks, thinking how silly it was for him to say such things.

"You, Nanzi? You are such a liar! He'll stomp you into next Tuesday, stop saying such nonsense."

"I'm not lying!" Nanzi defended himself. "He'll take me all the way to Shon

Arei*."

The next morning, Shon Arei already knew of what Nanzi had been saying about Cha Tiger. He was really curious to see if Nanzi was brave enough to put his money where his mouth is. Cha Tiger walked past.

"Hey, Cha Tiger!" someone called to him. He growled at the person. "Hey, Cha Tiger! Listen!"

"Nanzi made fun of you, said he wasn't afraid of you at all! Said he could sit on your back and that you weren't as strong as we think you are."

Cha Tiger stopped dead in his tracks, furious. "Well, I'll set him straight!" Cha Tiger ran toward Nanzi's house, prepared to teach Nanzi a painful lesson. The entire way there he was growling and yelling, making everyone around aware what was going to happen. They all ran inside and peaked through the blinds to see the fight that was going to unfold.

Nanzi also heard Cha Tiger's screams, slowly getting closer and closer. He was terrified. His face

turned pale, and his teeth started chattering like someone with a high fever. Sweat was dripping down his forehead.

When Cha Tiger arrived at Nanzi's place, he stormed in and saw Nanzi's frail body lying face down in the corner. "Hey, how are you, Cha Tiger?" Nanzi asked, his voice trembling. "I Heard you were making fun of me in front of your little friends, so I came to hear from your own mouth what you have to say to me," Cha Tiger retorted, still fuming.

"Me? Talk bad about you?" Nanzi chuckled nervously. "People are such liars, I swear. Can't you see how sick I am here?" Nanzi took a pause, like someone who couldn't breathe properly. In his case of course, it was probably from extreme fear. "Shi Maria* wanted to take me to Shon Arei, where someone can heal me from my illness." Still wrapped up in his act, Nanzi turned back face down. "Me, a father of nine little children..."

Cha Tiger was shocked. Nanzi looked absolutely terrible, God knows he was



dying.

"Cha Tiger, you're strong. Could you put me on your back and take me to Shon Arei, I can barely walk," Nanzi pleaded. Cha Tiger took pity on the spider and agreed to do this favor. Nanzi climbed on the tiger's back, letting his body fall down and grabbing on to Cha Tiger's neck. "Would you mind putting a rope in your mouth so I can hold on? That way I can sit up straight," Nanzi asked. Cha Tiger growled in reluctance but said OK. And so they made their way to Shon Arei.

Once they started traveling through the mondi, Nanzi turned to Cha Tiger and said: "These mosquitos are so annoying! Cha Tiger, do you mind if I cut a piece of branch so I can keep these mosquitos away?" Cha Tiger let him take his branch.

Eventually they made it out the mondi to where everyone else was. Nanzi immediately perked up and whacked Cha Tiger with his branch, making the tiger jump. He ran all the way to Shon Arei's castle. Exhausted, he plumped down in front of His Majesty.

"See, Shon Arei? Cha Tiger ain't nothing but a big donkey!" Nanzi said proudly.

Everyone around cheered: "Hurray, Nanzi!" Poor Cha Tiger was so embarrassed that he was fooled by the conniving spider, and so he ran into the mondi to hide. To this day, it's said that the tiger still hides away in the mondi.

Cha: Nickname placed in front of someone's name and can mean anything, like friend. However, it often has negative connotations first.

Mondi: dry wooded areas found on the ABC islands.

Shon Arei: The King

Shi Maria: Nanzi's wife. □

Story and pictures are from "Kon Nanzi a Nek Shon Arei (i otro kuentanan antiano di e araña sabi)" by Nilda Pinto.



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CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

1. Soon, in e.g.
memos
5. Crime packed
outing
10. Disconcerts
12. Like lambs
13. Bizarre
14. Splinter groups
15. Keats work
16. Small chirper
18. Box office buy
20. "Roses -- red"
21. Inkling
23. Marked a ballot
24. Lion's pride
26. Monopoly card
28. Sedan or SUV
29. Blocks up
31. Little laborer
32. Strike participant
36. Growth of trees
39. New Haven student
40. Subatomic particle
41. Seething
43. Gladden

44. Caruso,
e.g.
45. Tightly packed
46. Groan inducers

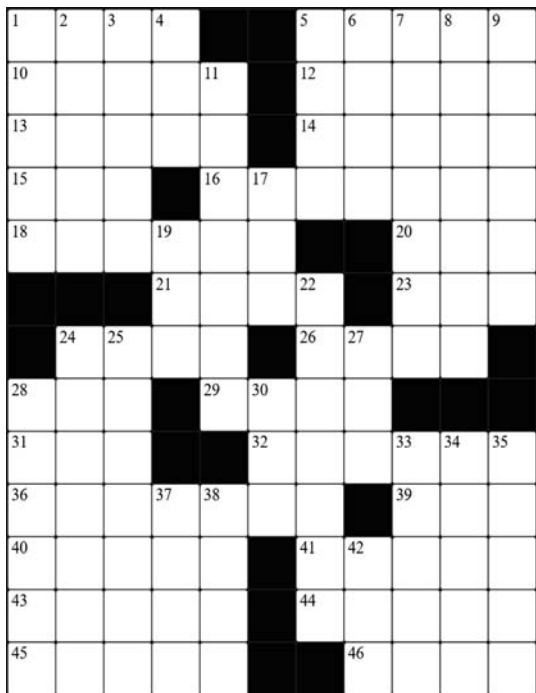
DOWN

1. Underway
2. -- Arabia
3. Early Mexican
4. For each
5. "-- fan tutte"
6. Opposite of "sans"
7. Prospector's tool
8. Went in
9. Took a breather
11. Left the



Yesterday's answer

- group
17. Numbered one
19. Family of "Speed"
22. "Be honest!"
24. Street opening
25. Craftsman sights
27. PC key
28. Place for a part
30. Clumsy
33. Reeves of "Speed"
34. Rocker John
35. Strata
37. Barracks
38. Pants
42. Gym unit



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.

10-28

CRYPTOQUOTE

QI CIOFRCA OHK ROPI UOVI ZJ
AZYVDIFJ, QYR QI COBBA
XMRC RCI QIOYRMJYF
RCMHTD RCOR LOPI AZY AZY.

--QIAZHUI

Yesterday's Cryptoquote: LIFE IS SHORT, AND
IT'S UP TO YOU TO MAKE IT SWEET. --- SADIE
DELANEY

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.

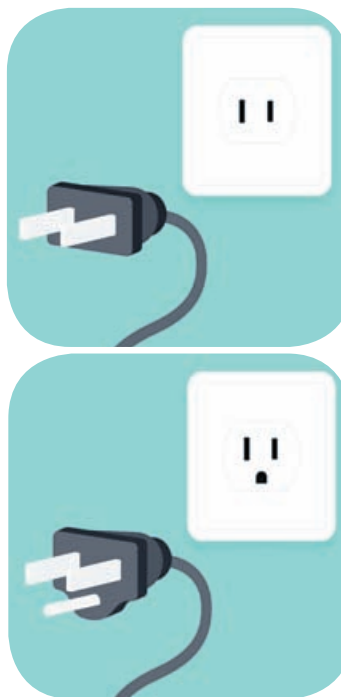
found in homes and establishments.

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

Drinking water



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

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

Safety



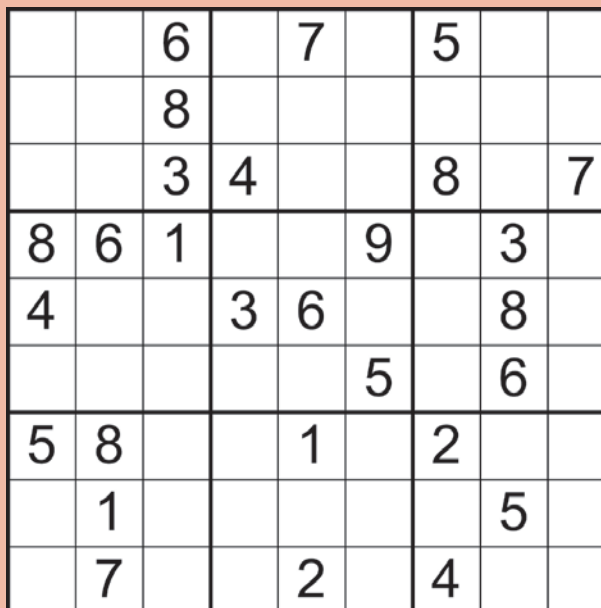
Since February 2024, Aruba has been categorized as the safest country in the Caribbean by The Telegraph, and many tourist that visit have often told us how they feel safe to explore the island or walk around at night. However, rare incidents do occurs, so keep yourself and your belongings safe.



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



Difficulty: ★★★

10/29

Answer to previous puzzle



Difficulty: ★★★

10/28

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Climate change must be declared 'global health emergency': Lancet study

Paris, France

Climate change must be declared a "global health emergency" to shape governments' policies after heat caused three million deaths between 2016 and 2023, a report in The Lancet said Wednesday.

Published by the British medical journal ahead of the COP 31 climate summit in November, the 10th edition of the report brought together 146 researchers from 30 countries to assess the impact of climate change on the health of the world's population.

It said there were a record 710,000 heat-related deaths in 2023 with more than 70 percent of that toll linked to human-caused climate change.

Marina Romanello, the executive director of the health and climate research project Lancet Countdown, said there were "three million heat-related deaths globally in an eight-year span since the Paris Agreement" of 2015.

"That's roughly equivalent to the entire population of Wales being wiped out in the space of eight years due to heat," she told a news conference.

And "68 percent of those deaths are directly attributable to climate change." The legally binding international climate treaty adopted in the French capital aimed to limit global warming to well below 2C and pursue efforts to keep it to 1.5C compared to pre-industrial levels.

- Climate change impact -

Romanello said the global health emergency due to climate change should have "an integrated approach so that we're not responding to emergency after emergency".

Instead she called for "a cohesive long-term response that builds resilience, builds capacities, and builds the possibilities of countries to avoid further emergencies moving forward".

To determine the share of deaths attributable to



Turkish Communications Director Burhanettin Duran gives a speech during the 'From Zero Waste to COP31: Türkiye's Climate Diplomacy' panel hosted by the Presidency of Communication in Ankara, Türkiye on October 27, 2026.

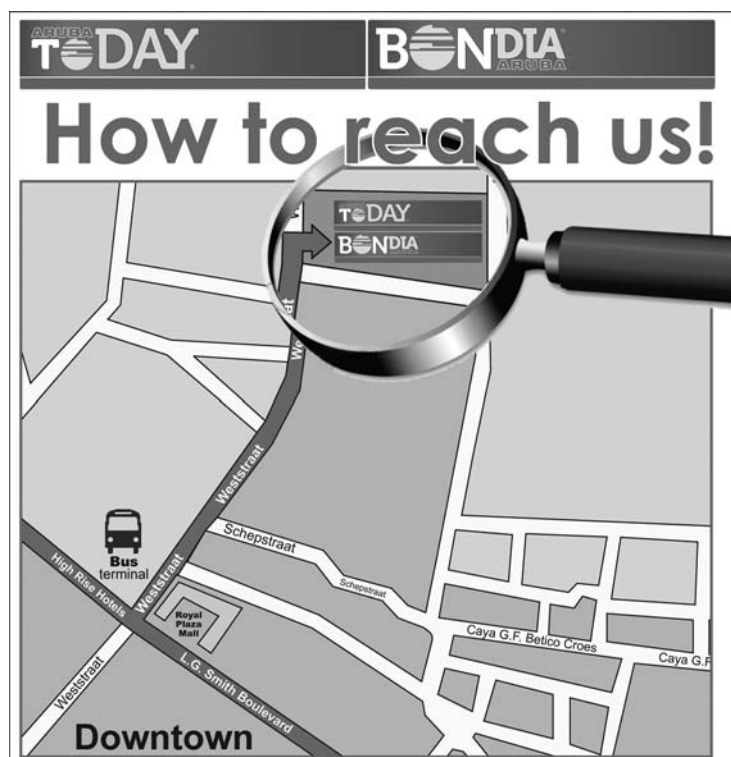
warming caused by human activity, the researchers compiled the number of heat-related deaths recorded by states, then subtracted those that would have occurred in the absence of climate change, said Professor Ollie Jay of the University of Sydney. Jay said the intensity and frequency of periods of intense heat were amplified by climate change, pointing out that last year an extreme drought affected more than half of the world's land surface for at least one month.

- Economic cost -

By reducing worker productivity, warming has cost the global economy more than one trillion dollars per year over the past three years, the researchers said. Southeast Asia and Africa, the hardest-hit regions, are estimated to have lost the equivalent of 3.9 percent and 3.2 percent of their GDP, compared with 0.2 percent for Europe and 1.5 percent for the Americas. However there has been concrete progress in some areas.

Since 2016, 56 of the WHO's 194 member states have adapted their health and early-warning systems to

anticipate extreme events. Investment in clean energy reached \$2.1 trillion in 2025 double that of the amount invested in fossil fuels, which cause climate change. □



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ARUBA TODAY NEWS

Nintendo producer 'all nervous' as Zelda classic remake hits shelves

Paris, France

He has been behind some of Nintendo's biggest hits, but producer Eiji Aonuma still feels "nervous" as he awaits players' reactions to the new Zelda video game, "Ocarina of Time" out November 5.

"I'm all nervous about releasing the remake of 'Ocarina' because I don't know how it's going to turn out, I can't stop thinking about it," the 63-year-old Japanese creator, one of the most respected figures in video games, told AFP during a visit to Paris.

For over 25 years Aonuma has steered the series, which many people consider one of the best video games ever made.

Created in 1986 by Nintendo legend and Mario inventor Shigeru Miyamoto, who was Aonuma's mentor, the series has enjoyed growing success.

Its last two main installments, "Breath of the Wild" (2017) and "Tears of the Kingdom" (2023), sold more



Japanese video game designer, director, and producer at Nintendo, best known as the longtime series producer of The Legend of Zelda, Eiji Aonuma, poses at the Ministry of Culture after being awarded the insignia of Knight of the Order of Arts and Letters in Paris on October 23, 2026.

than 55 million copies between them.

- Islands in the sky -

Poetic, melancholy and ground-breaking for its era, what set the original "Oca-

rina" apart was its sweeping story, shifting between the childhood and adulthood of its hero, Link.

Floating islands in the sky, a wind-swept ocean "The Legend of Zelda" under

Aonuma's direction has evolved to offer ever vaster and more open worlds.

The series centres on the adventures of the green-clad warrior Link, who battles the evil demon Ganon-

dorf across the ages trying to save Princess Zelda.

"I've worked a lot on using space to surprise players and spark their imagination," said the designer, in order to "create games that instill in them the joy of exploration".

Infusing the saga with this intrepid spirit is where the Japanese creator says he feels he has made his mark on the series.

It is "the very essence of Zelda today."

- Karakuri dolls and 3D -

To keep players engaged, the Zelda saga alternates between major releases, smaller titles, side adventures and remakes of older titles.

"Ocarina of Time" is by far the most ambitious of its remakes, and its release is part of the 40th anniversary of the saga.

The new installment has a special meaning for Aonuma, the son of a telecommunications engineer and second of three children.

The original "Ocarina of Time", released in 1998, was the first project he worked on with Miyamoto.

At university Aonuma studied design and in particular 3D composition through Karakuri dolls -- traditional Japanese automatons.

A keen drawer, he joined Nintendo somewhat by chance in the late 1980s and worked as a graphic artist before being spotted by the Mario creator, who brought him onto the team working on the fifth Zelda game.

"It was the first time Nintendo was creating games in 3D," he recalls.

He went on to take the helm of its sequel, "Majora's Mask" (2000), and directed several installments before moving into a producer role to oversee the development of the saga.

- Young blood -

Some of the younger members of his team have never played the original "Ocarina", bringing a freshness to the creative mix for the remake. □

Tech, AI leaders expand China's 2026 rich list

Beijing, China

The number of mega-wealthy people in China reached an all-time high this year, with tech tycoons including the founder of DeepSeek joining a closely watched rich list as the country expands its AI reach.

The number of people worth more than 5 billion yuan (\$750 million) rose to a record 1,529, according to the annual Hurun China Rich List released Tuesday, dwarfing the previous high of 1,460 in 2021.

Liang Wenfeng, the founder of AI startup DeepSeek, made his debut at number seven with an estimated fortune of \$41.7 billion one of 263 newcomers largely from sectors including semiconductors, AI and robotics.

His wealth was pumped up by DeepSeek's industry-shaking R1 reasoning model released last year, triggering a sell-off in U.S. tech stocks.

This year's roster reflected China's "two-speed economy", which has seen tech fortunes surge as traditional wealth declines, said Rupert Hoogewerf, chief researcher at the Hurun Research Institute, which publishes the list.

Of the top 100, 60 percent made their fortunes in sectors targeted by China as part of a plan launched in

2015 to develop technological leadership within 10 years.

"This was the year 'Made in China 2025' came home," Hoogewerf said in a news release.

ByteDance founder Zhang Yiming, China's richest man in 2024, reclaimed the top spot with an estimated fortune of \$99.7 billion -- a

record for the list.

He overtook Nongfu Spring founder Zhong Shanshan, known as the "Bottled Water King".

ByteDance, which includes TikTok and Douyin, has faced growing regulatory pressure worldwide but its AI chatbot Doubao had nearly 420 million monthly active users far ahead of domestic rivals.

CATL founder Robin Zeng, Tencent's Pony Ma, NetEase's William Ding and Cambricon's Chen Tianshi also made the top 10.

DeepSeek is reportedly close to completing a new funding round worth 100 billion yuan a record for China's AI industry which would value the company at around 500 billion yuan.

Hurun's list of China's richest women, which was released on Wednesday, saw Zhou Qunfang, founder of touchscreen maker Lens Technology, retain her top position, with a \$18.9 billion fortune. □



Zhang Yiming, founder of ByteDance displayed on the smartphone in Yichang City, Hubei Province, China on September 17, 2026.

Reigning champ Knicks earn first win against Pistons

New York, United States

The NBA reigning champion New York Knicks finally got their first win of the season, beating the Detroit Pistons 111-97 Tuesday with 27 points from Karl-Anthony Towns and 23 from Jalen Brunson.

The Knicks, who broke a five-decade title drought in June but had lost their three opening games this season, overcame another slow start at Madison Square Garden to pull clear in the second half.

They avoided the ignominy of being the first reigning champions since 1969 to start the following season 0-4.

"We got to remember that Rome wasn't built in a day. This is a new year, new team," said last season's NBA Finals MVP Brunson, who added seven assists.

"Adversity started early, so we just got to fight back."

The Pistons -- who had won their first three games of the season -- started fast, going 13 points clear at the beginning of the second quarter thanks to free-scoring Paul Reed and Cade Cunningham.

Brunson struggled early,



Karl-Anthony Towns #32 and s #11 of the New York Knicks compete for the ball during the third quarter against the Detroit Pistons at Madison Square Garden on October 27, 2026 in New York City.

shooting just 1-for 9 in the first half.

But the Knicks pulled together for a remarkable rally, edging a single-point lead at halftime and roaring 25 points clear by the end of the third quarter.

They restricted the Pistons to a combined 25 points across the entire second and third quarters.

"I think we were just able to get stops, run a little bit, create a good enough lead, knowing that they were going to have a run in them to fight back," said Brunson.

With a home game against Charlotte looming Wednesday, and his team 21 points down, Detroit coach J.B. Bickerstaff emptied the bench with seven-and-a-

half minutes remaining.

The Knicks' starters remained on court, and top-scorer Towns finished the night with 20 rebounds.

The Pistons, who finished with the best regular-season record in the NBA Eastern Conference last year, are now 3-1. Reed top-scored with 22, while Cunningham had 19 points, eight assists

and nine rebounds.

Elsewhere, Victor Wembanyama helped the San Antonio Spurs to a 130-103 win over the Sacramento Kings with 29 points, 10 rebounds, five blocks and two steals.

The Spurs, who lost to the Knicks in last season's finals, had endured their own slow start to this campaign with two opening losses, but moved to 2-2.

San Antonio were rampant in a first half they led 80-54, with Wembanyama pouring in 23 points before the interval, and their lead barely dipped in a comfortable second half.

Julian Champagnie scored 26 points. The Kings sank to 0-4.

With Boston trailing by a single point at the very end of overtime, Jayson Tatum sank a game-winning buzzer-beater to ensure the Celtics won a thriller 125-124 against the winless Brooklyn Nets.

A tense game in which neither team ever opened a double-digit lead had ended 117-117 after regular time.

Tatum scored 40 points plus eight assists. □

Former Grand Slam winner Wawrinka ends tennis career

Paris, France

Stan Wawrinka bid farewell to tennis as he brought the curtain down on a decorated 24-year career following a first-round exit at the Basel Open on Tuesday.

The 41-year-old Swiss announced earlier in the season that his last tournament as a professional would be the ATP 500-level event in his home country and a 7-5, 7-6 (7/2) defeat by Czech Jiri Lehecka brought an end to the career of the three-time major champion. Former world number three Wawrinka, along with Andy Murray, was the only player to win multiple Grand Slams in a period dominated by Roger Federer, Rafael Nadal and Novak Djokovic.

"I was lucky enough to be able to play alongside them and sometimes beat them," Wawrinka told AFP

in 2024.

He bested Nadal to win his first Grand Slam at the Australian Open in 2014, before beating Djokovic in the French Open final the following season and then again in the U.S. Open title-match in 2016.

Alongside his compatriot Federer, the Lausanne native won the Davis Cup for Switzerland and claimed gold in the doubles at the 2008 Beijing Olympics.

On court in Basel, Wawrinka's every point won, as well as several trademark booming one-handed backhands, was greeted by wild cheers from the partisan home crowd.

But Lehecka got his nose in front with a break of serve in the 11th game and sealed the opening set with an ace.

A tight second set went to a tie-break, but it was just

a step too far for Wawrinka as his 21st-ranked opponent took firm control to seal the breaker and the match.

Wawrinka, who enjoyed a farewell ceremony in Basel on Monday, did a lap of the court to thank the crowd, before disappearing down the tunnel for the last time.

"He won the biggest tournaments, so for me to be here in his moment is a little bit weird," Lehecka told Sky Sports.

"But at the same time, it's a pleasure and I will never forget this match."

However, fans will have one more chance to see the Swiss in action this year. Wawrinka announced in June that he will throw a farewell party on December 19 in Geneva with Federer and Murray also on the card of the "One last

backhand" event.

Elsewhere, second seed Arthur Fils beat his fellow Frenchman Giovanni Mpetshi Perricard 7-6 (7/5), 7-5 to reach the round of 16.

Spanish third seed Rafael Jodar cruised past Chilean Alejandro Tabilo in straight sets, while top seed

Ben Shelton battled past his American compatriot Aleksandar Kovacevic 6-7 (4/7), 7-6 (7/3), 7-6 (7/4).

Djokovic, who trained with his old friend and foe Wawrinka ahead of the tournament on Sunday, will open his campaign on Wednesday against Ugo Humbert of France. □



Switzerland's Stan Wawrinka hits a return to Italy's Matteo Berrettini in their men's singles first round tennis match on day two of the US Open tennis tournament at the USTA Billie Jean King National Tennis Center in New York City on August 31, 2026.

Rays win thriller to thwart Brewers in World Series

Miami, United States

The Tampa Bay Rays staged a dramatic extra-innings rally to keep their World Series dream alive on Tuesday, walking off a 4-3 victory against the Milwaukee Brewers to avoid a clean sweep.

Tampa Bay's Ben Williamson singled a ground ball to right field in the bottom of the 12th inning to complete a thrilling comeback at Tropicana Field that ensures a game five on Wednesday.

"Just shows the resiliency of this group," Williamson said afterwards.

"We continue to fight and that's been the motto this series and this whole season."

Milwaukee had looked to be heading for a



Ben Williamson #15 of the Tampa Bay Rays celebrates after hitting an RBI Single during the twelfth inning to defeat the Milwaukee Brewers in game four of the 2026 World Series at Tropicana Field on October 27, 2026 in St Petersburg, Florida.

4-0 series triumph after rookie shortstop Cooper Pratt launched a solo home run in the 12th inning to give the Brewers a 3-2 lead on the night.

But with their season on the line, the Rays flipped the script, igniting a fightback when a throwing error by Brewers' third baseman Joey Ortiz allowed Junior Caminero to reach first base.

The Brewers brought in reliever Shane Drohan to replace Antonio Senzatela but the Rays continued to prosper with catcher Liam Hicks singling to send Caminero to third base with no outs.

Jonny DeLuca then singled to drive in a run to make it 3-3, and shortly after that leveler Chandler Simpson singled to load the bases with no outs.

Pinch hitter Williamson then came in and steered a ground ball to right field to score the winning run.

The Rays aiming to become the first team in World Series history to overturn a 3-0 series deficit after losing the opening three games had edged into an early lead in the second inning.

Simpson's line drive off Brewers starter Dustin May allowed DeLuca to sprint from first base to home to put the home side 1-0 up.

Milwaukee got back on level terms in the top of the fourth inning though with Pratt's double off Tampa Bay starter Griffin Jax allowing Sal Frelick to score and make it 1-1.

Tampa Bay regained the lead in the fourth inning though after an error by Brewers third baseman David Hamilton.

Hamilton just failed to tag Caminero and after an errant throw to first base, the Dominican slugger scrambled home to give Tampa Bay a 2-1 lead.

Hamilton however was quick to make amends. In the top of the fifth inning, the 29-year-old smashed a 93mph fastball from Jax into right center field for a solo run. □



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