ARUBA TODAY®

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The tree that points west: The 'Watapana'



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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Defenders of female sports categories gather in front of the U.S. Supreme Court as they wait for rulings on June 30, 2026 in Washington, DC.

Washington state voters approve transgender athlete ban

Los Angeles, United States
Voters in Washington state approved a measure barring transgender athletes from playing on girls sports teams, a major U.S. midterms loss for LGBTQ advocates in the normally blue state.
With about 80 percent of ballots counted Friday, approximately 57 percent of voters approved the measure while 43 percent opted against it, and opponents conceded defeat.

The initiative will require the prohibition of transgender girls from "competing with and against female students."
Approval of the conservative measure in a state that normally votes Democratic stands in stark contrast to the otherwise disappointing November 3 midterm vote for Republicans.

Opponents of the measure included doctors who said that it is "not backed by clinical guidelines, and would create unwarranted stress and harm for young girls."
Under the initiative girls who want to play sports must undergo a physical reproductive organ exam, or genetic and hormone testing.
More than half of states have enacted laws in recent years restricting the participation of transgender students in sports.
The U.S. Supreme Court upheld state bans in June.
The measure in Washington state was considered among the most extreme of four total similar measures that passed in this week's election.
The others were in Arizona, Nebraska and Colorado.

- 'Fight is not over' -
Trans athletes have been the target of Republican lawmakers and anti-LGBTQ groups who argue that their participation in girls and women's sports is unfair.
The political action committee behind the measure, Let's Go Washington which is bankrolled by conservative hedge fund manager Brian Heywood called its passage "a huge win for girls in Washington state."
"Girls will compete without boys in their sports!" the group said on social media.
Civil rights advocates have countered that such efforts scapegoat a very small group of people, most of them children, who already face discrimination and bullying.
Over half of transgender youth have had suicidal thoughts in their lifetime and 31 percent have made at least one suicide attempt, according to the American Academy of Pediatrics.

The Washington Interscholastic Activities Association, which governs school-linked youth sports in the northwestern state, said earlier this year it is aware of just 10 transgender middle and high schoolers who play sports, out of some 200,000 students competing statewide.

Libby Watson campaign manager of the group No Hate WA State, which advocated against the Washington measure cast the initiative as "deceptive" and a bid "by MAGA forces to target trans kids for their own political gain."
The results are a "disappointment," Watson said in a statement, but "the fight is not over."
"To all trans girls participating in school sports in Washington, we want you to know that you belong: on the field, on the court, on the team," the advocate continued.
"We stand with you and will continue to fight for a day when you can play sports without controversy."❑



White House Chief of Staff Susie Wiles and politcal advisor Stephen Miller attend a bilateral meeting with UK Prime Minister Andy Burnham and US President Donald Trump in conjunction with the 81st session of the United Nations (UN) General Assembly at U.N. Headquarters on September 22, 2026 in New York City.

Trump names hardliner Miller chief of staff after midterms rout

Washington, United State
U.S. President Donald Trump on Friday named Stephen Miller, architect of his hardline immigration policy, as his new chief of staff, signaling a bare-knuckle fightback after the Republicans' midterm hammering.
Ultra-loyalist Miller, 41, will replace Susie Wiles, who becomes the first major White House casualty from the Democratic landslide earlier this week.
Democrats pledged they would fight "every step of the way" against Miller, who became synonymous with scenes of masked immigration agents and violent confrontations in which federal agents shot dead two Americans.
"I wanted to make a change," Trump told reporters at the White House when asked why he had named Miller to replace Wiles.
"Sometimes in life you have to make moves."
Trump's move was particularly startling as he had repeatedly insisted before the midterms that there was "zero chance" of replacing Wiles.
A White House official told AFP that Wiles had resigned on Thursday night.

But naming the combative Miller was the clearest possible signal from Trump that the gloves are now off after his brief conciliatory gestures to Democrats in the wake of the Republican midterms collapse.
Known for his sharp suits and sunglasses, Miller has been one of Trump's closest aides for decades, pushing nativist policies that gelled with Trump's "America First" agenda.
As Trump's deputy chief of staff for policy and homeland security advisor, he was the brains behind the mass deportation program that defined the first year of the president's second term.

But he faced widespread criticism after the deadly shootings of two protesters by immigration agents in Minneapolis in January -- incidents that sparked mass demonstrations.
"Stephen Miller is the architect of the most barbaric, inhumane policies of this administration. Trump couldn't have made a worse choice," Minority Leader Chuck Schumer posted on X.
"Our Democratic majorities will fight him every step of the way,"❑

White House confident Trump arch will overcome legal block

Washington, United States
The White House on Friday dismissed a legal ruling that blocked President Donald Trump's massive triumphal arch project in Washington, criticizing an "activist" judge for temporarily halting construction.
The arch is one of several building projects launched by Trump in a bid to put his personal stamp on the US capital, despite fierce local opposition and multiple legal challenges.
"We are confident we will be fully vindicated as this litigation proceeds and look forward to seeing the completion of this magnificent Arch," the White House said.
District Judge Tanya Chutkan, who is overseeing the case, ruled that the Trump administration cannot start construction for two weeks while the court considers challenges to its legality.
The National Capital Planning Commission (NCPC) which is stacked with Trump supporters on Thursday voted 8-4 to approve the project after hearing hours of testimony from dozens of furious opponents.
Chief among the complaints was the location of the 250-foot (76-meter) tall structure adjacent to the hallowed Arlington National Cemetery, the final resting place for hundreds of thousands of American service members.



Visitors walk near a replica of President Trump's planned 'Triumphal Arch' at the Great American State Fair on the National Mall in Washington, D.C., on July 2, 2026.

The giant arch would be much taller than the Arc de Triomphe in Paris, its inspiration. It would also tower over the Lincoln Memorial, directly across the Potomac River.

- Is it legal? -
Four dissenting commissioners had called for the decision to be delayed, noting there were legal concerns and a lack of congressional appropriation to fund the project. They also questioned the administration's claims that the arch would be needed for military purposes. Trump has referred to plans for snipers and drones being based on the arch, although he has not explained what they'd be used for.
As expected, given the panel's make-up, it voted against a delay and the Trump administration said it aimed to start work right away.
However, Chutkan's ruling sided with military veterans and the attorneys general of Washington and Virginia, who had sued seeking to halt construction.
Trump's other projects in Washington include a White House ballroom, for which he demolished an entire wing of the presidential mansion.
Another is the botched renovation of the Reflecting Pool, a rectangular water basin on the National Mall.
Trump has also pushed to revamp the East Potomac Golf Links, a historic waterfront Washington golf course, cutting down hundreds of trees before a judge halted the project.
Trump wants to place the arch on what is currently a traffic circle covered in grass.
Proponents claim that Congress approved the construction of a monument at the site over a century ago. However, that plan envisioned two large columns, meant to signify the North and the South in the US Civil War, not an arch.
More than 100 people, often speaking as representatives of organizations, on Thursday spoke to the NCPC to express their nearly unanimous opposition.
Kicking off remarks was congressman Jared Huffman, the top Democrat on the House Natural Resources Committee, which oversees public parks.
"This arch would dishonor America, our ideals and our laws," he said
"We'll soon have a new Congress that takes the rule of law very seriously," he added, referring to the Democrats' winning control of Congress in Tuesday's midterm elections.❑

Musk's futuristic Cybertruck rolls toward exit

Washington, United States
Production of Cybertrucks the pickups hailed by enthusiasts as a symbol of Elon Musk's futuristic ambitions and equally hated as ugly reminders of the Donald Trump era -- will wind down, the Tesla CEO said Friday.
Tesla will stop building the truck at its Texas factory around the middle of 2027 to free up space for its Cybercab robotaxi, Musk said.
"Tesla will be winding down production of the Cybertruck at Gigafactory Texas around the middle of next year to make room for increased Cybercab production," Musk wrote on X.
Musk did not say whether the truck would be built elsewhere or discontinued altogether, nor what would happen to outstanding orders.
Wes Morrill, the Cybertruck's lead engineer, wrote in a separate post that the truck "was an incredible technology development platform and lives on through Cybercab."

"Thanks to everyone who contributed to making the future (look) like the future," he added.
Tesla fans lamented the departure of the Cybertruck on X, the social media platform Musk owns, but the tycoon reassured them that the Cybertruck fleet "will be around for a long time."
The truck came to be seen as an extension of Musk himself, and its image became entangled with his politics as he took on a high-profile role leading the Trump administration's cost-cutting Department of Government Efficiency. Some owners reported vandalism and harassment.
The angular stainless-steel behemoth was unveiled in November 2019, and Musk said at the time it had drawn 250,000 preorders within days.
Production was originally slated for 2021 but was repeatedly delayed, with customer deliveries starting in late 2023.
Tesla built its Texas lines with planned capacity of 250,000 trucks a year, but sales have come nowhere near that figure.
As U.S. demand slumped, Tesla began selling the truck abroad, starting deliveries in South Korea in November 2025 and in the United Arab Emirates in January.
Tesla does not break out Cybertruck revenue, but its "other models" category, which includes the pickup, accounts for just a small percentage of sales.❑



Tesla co-founder and CEO Elon Musk speaks in front of the newly unveiled all-electric battery-powered Tesla's Cybertruck with shattered windows, after a failed resistance test, at Tesla Design Center in Hawthorne, California on November 21, 2019.

Reading in nightclubs, on tour: how Booker judges pick the winner

London, United Kingdom
British classicist Mary Beard has read and lectured about Homer and Virgil's epics countless times. This year she embarked on an odyssey of her own: reading 163 works of fiction in six months to judge the Booker prize.
"I've never worked as hard in my life. I mean, writing a book is easier than that. It was a revelation and a privilege," Beard, who is chairing the Booker prize judges, told AFP.
For the prize which celebrates the best long-form fiction by writers of any nationality, written in English and published in the last year the panel of five judges whittled down 163 entries to a shortlist of six books.
The winner will be announced in London on Monday, with six authors, including previous winners Douglas Stuart and Marlon James in the running. The person who wins the Booker crown will walk away with £50,000 ($67,400) and see their careers transformed.

The gruelling judging process behind one of the most coveted prizes in the literary calendar has been a source of intrigue and drama since it launched in 1969.
Around December last year, the judges began receiving cartons of some 30 books at a time to digest on a strict schedule, reading one a day or more.
They're not allowed to divulge what books they're reading, working under a shroud of secrecy. "It's proved to be terribly easy to keep mum," said Beard.
When she slipped behind at one point, Beard sequestered herself in a seaside hotel in Greece reading 12 hours a day. But the judging routines, for the most part, were far from glamorous.
"You just end up taking a book with you wherever you go," Rebecca Liu, a writer and critic, told AFP. Once she ended up reading a few pages while waiting in a nightclub line.


The winners of the International Booker Prize 2026 for the book titled "Taiwan Travelogue" author Yang Shuang-zi (C) and translator Lin King (3L) pose with the trophies and judges during the award ceremony at Tate Modern in London, United Kingdom on May 19, 2026.

- 'Tossing books' -
Pulp frontman Jarvis Cocker meanwhile had to squeeze in his reading while on tour with his legendary Britpop band, exchanging boxes of books for digital iPad versions.
"It is quite dull when you're travelling," Cocker told a September press conference. The books "took me somewhere, it was like having somebody".
He recalled one judges' meeting while in Australia on tour, when he joined in the middle of the night in a bathrobe with a glass of wine.
Poet Raymond Antrobus said he would "cry" every night a month into the process, and the books began affecting his dreams.
"You're trying to enter these people's universes that they've created, but also their ambition, that's a very human thing," Antrobus said.
In recent years, the Booker prize has expanded its pool of judges beyond novelists and literary critics to include celebrities such as Cocker and American actor Sarah Jessica Parker.
Over six months, each of the five judges reads every entry, so "every book gets five chances to be noticed", said Beard.
They create a longlist of 13 books, known as the Booker Dozen, then re-read them for the shortlist and repeat the process to pick a winner.
Then, during three-hour closed door meetings -- this year hosted at London's Fortnum & Mason luxury store the judges hash it out.
"I was standing up a lot and tossing books across the room," American poet Patricia Lockwood said.

- 'Celebrating flaws' -
There were disagreements Lockwood said at one point they tussled like "pigs in the mud" but the judges found ways to reach consensus.
One system, the "traffic light" method, involved each judge classing a book as green, amber or red. "The really interesting ones are where you get mixtures of red and green," said Beard.

There is no fixed judging criteria, which has resulted in the prize being criticised as arbitrary in the past. Judges this year settled on two questions: "Would you read it again?" and "would you recommend it?"❑

'Mogging' tops 'firewave' as Collins' word of the year



The English word "binge-watching" spelled out in Scrabble letters in Schwerin, Germany, 5 November 2015.

London, United Kingdom
"Mogging", a word meaning to outshine someone, often in appearance, was crowned word of the year by Collins English Dictionary on Tuesday, beating "firewave" and "ghost jobs".
According to the dictionary, mogging is a compliment meaning "the act of outshining or outperforming someone or something", with the word spreading on social media in the past year.
It is believed to be rooted in the slang acronym AMOG (alpha male of the group), which was associated with bodybuilding culture before being adopted by manosphere and incel spaces that often promote misogynist beliefs.
But mogging has in recent months entered mainstream conversation, used by Gen Alpha and Gen Z to playfully describe someone looking more attractive, fashionable or cooler than another.
The word saw a 210 percent increase in usage this year, the dictionary said in a press release.
"It's a great example of how Gen Z and Gen Alpha have adopted a word and turned it into humorous slang, making the language their own and 'mogging' the rest of us!" managing director Alex Beecroft said in a statement.

Every year, Collins lexicographers create a list of words that "reflect our ever evolving language and the preoccupations of those who use it".
Others in the running were carspreading -- manufacturers making vehicles that are bigger with every new model -- and ghost jobs, postings advertised without any intention to hire someone, driven by frustrations with the job market.
Also in contention was Manchesterism, the political philosophy associated by Andy Burnham, who became the UK's prime minister this summer after a dramatic takeover, and fricy, food that is both fruity and spicy.
There was also firewave, referring to multiple wildfires that spread over a short period of time, and bixie, which is a haircut between a bob and a pixie cut.❑



Resident who live a few meters from the railway track pose for a photograph ahead of the planned relocation once construction work begins on the Lobito Corridor, on September 27, 2026.

DR Congo locals in the dark over massive Lobito mineral railway plan

Kolwezi, DR Congo

A horn blasted and the old rails started to vibrate as a train laden with copper set off from Kolwezi in the Democratic Republic of Congo, bound for the distant port of Lobito in Angola.

The Lobito Corridor aims to develop the rail infrastructure to transport huge quantities of critical minerals extracted from the southern DRC and northern Zambia to Angola and onward by sea.

The megaproject is often pitched as the United States' and Europe's answer to Chinese dominance in the much coveted African mining sector.

Backed by more than $2.7 billion in pledged investment, the huge rail link however remains a work in progress, particularly on the Congolese side.

In August, the government in Kinshasa signed a concession agreement with Portuguese firm Mota-Engil to modernize the Congolese section of the rail tracks but work has yet to get under way.

In Kolwezi, the vast central African country's mining capital, brick houses and shacks line the narrow rail track, still in its original state and used by locals for lack of a proper path.

No sooner had the train passed by than dozens of young people set off again on foot, while women washed laundry in a puddle and shopkeepers reopened their stalls.

The transit of a cargo of minerals barely drew a second glance.

As for the Lobito Corridor megaproject, "I'm not aware of it," said Nathan Mbuyi, a 24-year-old mechanic, whose home is about 10 meters (30 feet) from the tracks.

"I hope we won't have to move," he added, expressing concern about the risk of the government taking over the house where he has lived for 10 years to radically expand the railway.

- 'Game changer' -

Kolwezi is a global hub for the production of copper and cobalt, vital to the energy transition and highly sought after by major industrial powers.

The mining city is rapidly expanding and lies at the heart of the corridor project.

Mota-Engil Africa plans to rehabilitate, modernize and operate the 1,000-kilometre (620-mile) Dilolo-to-Sakania line, which also passes through the major mining cities of Tenke and Lubumbashi before reaching the Angolan border.

A majority European consortium, Lobito Atlantic Railway (LAR), initially secured funding through a $500-million loan from the US International Development Finance Corporation (DFC).

It won a 30-year concession to operate the railway line, handle the transport of the minerals and manage the new mineral terminal at Lobito.

The aim is to reduce costs, increase volumes and decrease transport time.

Currently, most Congolese minerals are transported by road to ports in southern Africa and the Indian Ocean.

The journey between Kolwezi and Lobito takes seven days by train -- compared to 28 days by road to Dar es Salaam in Tanzania and 31 days to the South African port city of Durban.

"In economic terms, it's a game changer," said one official in the mining sector in Kolwezi, who asked not to be named.

- Local concern -

LAR rejects the idea that the massive project is an instrument serving Western interests.

"We are totally apolitical," its director-general, Frenchman Nicholas Fournier, told AFP in May.

He said that "70 percent of mines in the DRC are Chinese", pointing out that some are already using the corridor to export their copper.❑

'Fighting won't stop': Ethiopia clashes drive thousands into Kenya



Members of communities displaced by conflict in southern Ethiopia queue to receive relief supplies at the OMC Secondary School temporary site in Moyale, on November 4, 2026.

Moyale, Kenya

Deadly clashes between armed forces in southern Ethiopia have driven tens of thousands into neighbouring Kenya with no idea when they can safely return home.

Ethiopia, Africa's second most populous country with around 130 million people, is grappling with multiple armed conflicts, particularly along borders between its states.

Two communities in the south of the country -- the Ethiopian Somalis and the Oromos -- have been fighting over control of the town of Moyale since October 18, driving around 50,000 people across the border into Kenya, according to local authorities.

Conflict monitor ACLED has reported several deaths in the clashes, although the exact toll remains difficult to establish.

"The fighting just won't stop, it's going on daily. Many people are fleeing. People are dying," Beshir Dadie Tufa, 51, a father of three missing children who fled Ethiopia, told AFP.

Moyale straddles the border with Kenya, but the influx is straining resources in the Kenyan county where two-thirds of residents live below the poverty line.

At least 11,000 displaced people, mainly women and children, are sheltering in temporary sites, mostly schools, according to the UN refugee agency (UNHCR).

Others are being hosted by local communities.

"We could see lots of dead bodies along the way," said Halima Hussein, 28, a mother of three who fled Ethiopia and also has family members missing.

"We have suffered; our houses were torched, we have no food," she added.

AFP journalists on the Kenyan side of the border could still hear heavy artillery fire on Monday.

The Kenyan Red Cross said stray bullets had killed three people in Kenya and wounded 20 others.

"There's nobody (left) in that area, only the gunmen... exchanging bullets," said Beshir.

Borders between Ethiopia's regions, established under the 1991 constitution, are frequent flashpoints for violence.

Just weeks ago, fighting erupted in Tigray, hundreds of kilometres to the north, when rebels launched attacks on government forces.

Edward Bach, an Africa analyst at risk consultancy Verisk Maplecroft, warned that Ethiopia's federal government was neglecting the southern conflict as it focused on fighting in Tigray.

"This has exacerbated the clashes and facilitated the steady deterioration," Bach said.❑

‘Cursed’ Peru town hopes Pope Leo brings better luck

Chiclayo, Peru

A luckless Peruvian town that has for centuries been dismissed as cursed is hoping for a new lease on life when Pope Leo visits this month.

Under Spanish colonial rule in the 16th century, Zana home to around 4,000 souls was a wealthy center of commerce dotted with grandiose churches.

But three centuries after it was nearly destroyed by a flood of biblical proportions, vultures now roost in its ruined steeples.

Zana’s identity is strongly associated with Catholicism, thanks to legends of divine punishment before the flood, it was regularly attacked by pirates to the death in the town in 1606 of Toribio de Mogrovejo, a Spanish missionary who converted Indigenous Peruvians to Christianity.

Saint Toribio, who denounced abuses by the Spanish crown, has been feted as a role model by Leo, who will celebrate the 300th anniversary of his canonization in Zana in northern Peru during a three-country tour of South America.



View of the ruins of the Convent of San Agustín de Zana, a historic religious and architectural complex in ruins located in the district of Zana, in the Lambayeque region of northern Peru, on October 14, 2026.

“The curse is over,” said Maria Colchado, a 63-year-old home-maker who is helping prepare the town for the visit on November 14.

The mere fact of the U.S.-born pontiff entering Zana means “we are already more than blessed,” she told AFP.

Colchado is one of the volunteers in charge of maintaining the modest church that will receive Pope Leo, who served as archbishop in this region from 2015 to 2023.

The facade is currently getting a lick of new white and burgundy paint, financed by the sale of raffle tickets.

Pope Leo, who recently underwent surgery for lung cancer, will wrap up his first Latin American tour in Peru, after visiting Uruguay and Argentina.

“The Holy Father holds Zana dear,” Edinson Farfan, the pope’s successor as bishop of the city of Chiclayo near Zana, told AFP during a visit to inspect the town’s preparations.

“Everyone wants to showcase the best” of the ill-starred town, Farfan added.

- ‘Coming home’ -

Born and raised in Chicago, Leo became a Peruvian citizen in 2015 after living in the country for almost two decades.

He left a profound mark on the Andean nation, which adopted him as one of its own.

In Zana, he was a regular visitor for the feast of Saint Toribio on April 27, among other events.

“The Pope is coming home,” Colchado said, echoing sentiments expressed in Chiclayo since Leo was named leader of the world’s 1.4 billion Catholics last year.

Hundreds of Vatican flags have been ordered to festoon homes in Zana for his visit.

Rosario Cossio, head of the town’s Afro-Peruvian Museum, said that Zana’s reputation for being cursed was linked to the murder of a priest during the colonial era.

After the cleric’s death, Zana “was not considered suitable for Catholic sacraments,” she told AFP.

In spite of, or perhaps because of its history, the town these days is a wellspring of devotion.

Huge posters depicting Saint Toribio and Leo XIV adorn the walls of the town hall and the main church, where a piece of the saint’s tibia is housed as a relic.❑

Paris’s Crazy Horse cabaret comes to Dubai with less nudity

Dubai, United Arab Emirates

On stage at a luxury hotel, dancers from Paris’s iconic Crazy Horse cabaret are rehearsing for their debut performance in Dubai but with less nudity than the original version.

The suggestive choreography and subtle lighting of Crazy Horse, a Paris staple since the 1950s, will be on display in Dubai, a city trying to project normality despite the Middle East war.

The women’s silhouettes are visible in the half-light, with bare shoulders and legs. But, with local sensibilities in mind, the show will not be topless.

“In Paris, they’re not very dressed,” explains Andree Deissenberg, the group’s chief creative and brand officer.

“Here they have more costumes, the same lighting,” she adds.

The oil-rich United Arab Emirates is a Muslim-majority, expat-heavy country of about 10 million people and more than 9,000 mosques.

Crazy Horse’s permanent show on The Palm, the chic, palm tree-shaped development and magnet for the well-heeled, opens on November 12 under the shadow of the Middle East war.



Brio Mindset, dancer and member of the troupe at Crazy Horse Paris, poses ahead of the Dubai edition of the Crazy Horse Paris cabaret show, in Dubai on November 3, 2026.

Dubai, the conservative Gulf’s commercial hub and most progressive city, was frequently targeted in the war’s early months with The Palm struck on day one, February 28.

Crazy Horse’s “Dubai Edition” retains many hallmarks of the show created in Paris in 1951 by Alain Bernardin, which prides itself on an artistic brand of nudity.

There, lighting projections bathe the dancers in patterns such as stripes and polka dots, a departure from the feather-filled cabarets of the Lido or Moulin Rouge.

Dubai will also feature the first Crazy Horse aerial act.

But the atmosphere is more opulent and less intimate than the Parisian basement where the cabaret was born.

At the auditorium inside a plush, shoreline resort, guests will watch from velvet armchairs where they can order dinner and drinks.

– ‘Moment of hesitation’ –

Brio Mindset, one of the troupe’s 18 dancers, praises the work of the teams who created nearly 500 costume items.

“We had to adapt to Dubai’s customs and requirements, which we did with great elegance and chic,” says the 28-year-old, wearing a red robe to match her lips and stiletto heels.❑

Cas di Torto



Cas di torto (also called cas di lodo or cas di bara) is a traditional building technique from Aruba. It refers to a type of houses made of mud with rounded corners. These houses were usually found around the plantations. The few structures that still exist are the oldest structures that are left standing in the country.

The technique probably came over from the Venezuelan Paraguaná Peninsula in the 18th century. Existing houses date back 150 years. Until 1925 many houses on Aruba were built using this technique, afterwards it fell into disuse. In 2005 there were 62 cas di torto houses left, of which only four were in good condition.

The skeleton of the houses is made up of round wooden poles placed with distances of 1.5 feet between them. Branches are interwoven between them, completing the structural support. On this basis, loam is applied, mixed with sand, water and paragrass. This is then coated with aloe vera juice, which gives the white color and helps to protect against the weather.

On top of the poles pieces of wood are fitted that serve as the base for the roof beams. Until 1815 the roofing usually consisted of corn (maize) stems, afterwards the nuclei of columnar cacti were used. The floor is made of loam, mixed with cement or cow dung.

The houses were usually divided into a kitchen, a living room, a porch and a bedroom. In the kitchen would be a wooden or metal barrel for storing water that was collected in small rain ponds. Around this barrel a thick loam wall would be erected. Often large families would live in these houses; people would sleep on mats on the floor.

If you visit the Arikok National Park you will be able to see a very nice cas di torto. ❑

Aruba: The island of Aloes





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

The leaves of Aloe Vera contain a good amount of gel which when used topically, is great for the skin. Traditionally, Arubans use this gel to treat minor burns and other skin ailments, or just to keep skin supple and looking bright and nourished. Aside from the gel, aloe contains a bitter, yellow substance (called aloin) which is a gentle but powerful laxative, and it is also the origin of the industry of aloe in Aruba.

Aloe vera was introduced in Aruba around 1840, when most of the island's inhabitants were farmers of little means. Dutch Governor Van Raders introduced the plant after it had been introduced in other islands of the Caribbean to cultivate and harvest the aloe to produce the laxative.

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

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

However, by the time the oil industry arrived on Aruba, it changed the labor market on Aruba, shifting away from agriculture. It would be after World War II that aloe would make a comeback. And eventually, as science learned about the amazing properties of aloe gel, the industry shifted from producing laxative to producing skin care. An interesting fact is that in 1951, the production of Aruban aloe amounted to around 30 percent of the total global production!

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

Images from the archive of the National Library of Aruba.

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Nanki Beach Aruba: A Unique Coastal Lifestyle -



Discover a different side of Aruba at Nanki Beach Aruba, an exclusive condominium development offering a rare opportunity to own a piece of paradise away from the island's typical tourist corridors.

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Nanki Beach Aruba is more than a place to own property. It is an opportunity to experience Aruba differently. Don't miss out; only 9 units left. ❑







What Aruba means to Dawn

ORANJESTAD — You are back and we would like to give you a shout-out by inviting you to send us your favorite vacation picture while enjoying our Happy Island!

Complete the sentence: Aruba to me is ……. Send your picture with that text (including your name and where you are from) to: news@arubatoday.com and we will publish your vacation memory. Isn't that a special way to keep your best moments alive? Please do note: By submitting photos, text or any other materials, you give permission to The Aruba Today Newspaper, Caribbean Speed Printers and any of its affiliated companies to use said materials, as well as names, likeness, etc. for promotional purposes without compensation.

Last but not least: check out our website, Instagram and Facebook page! Thank you for supporting our free newspaper, we strive to make you a happy reader every day again.

For today we received a lovely message from Dawn Ramasco from Pittsfield, Massachusetts.

She wrote to us saying: Aruba to me is celebrating our friend Chico's 70th Birthday in the most beautiful place on Earth, with a bunch of fun and crazy friends!!
Happy 70th Birthday Chico!!

Thank you for sending us this wonderful message sharing what Aruba means to you with us and our readers!❑

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Juan Valdez Café | Hungry Piranha - Pizza, Wings & More
The Brownstone Ribs and Seafood | The Market
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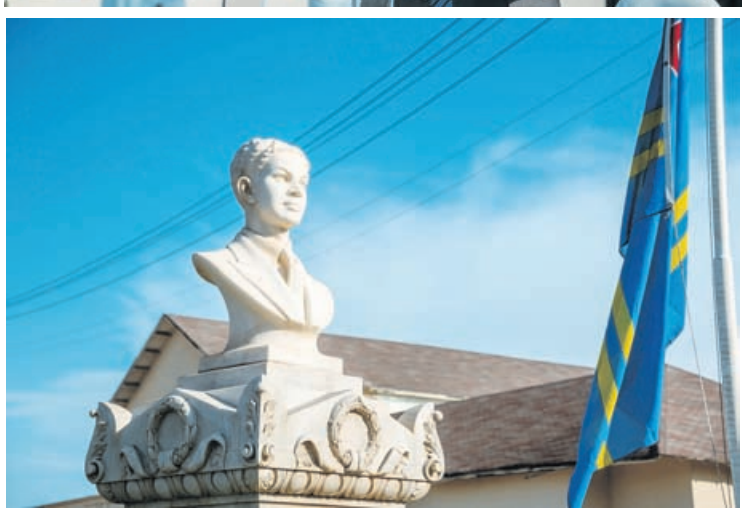
Aruba Honors World War II Hero Boy Ecury on 82nd anniversary of his death



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

The leaves of Aloe Vera contain a good amount of gel which when used topically, is great for the skin. Traditionally, Arubans use this gel to treat minor burns and other skin ailments, or just to keep skin supple and looking bright and nourished. Aside from the gel, aloe contains a bitter, yellow substance (called aloin) which is a gentle but powerful laxative, and it is also the origin of the industry of aloe in Aruba.





Aloe vera was introduced in Aruba around 1840, when most of the island's inhabitants were farmers of little means. Dutch Governor Van Raders introduced the plant after it had been introduced in other islands of the Caribbean to cultivate and harvest the aloe to produce the laxative.

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

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

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Images from the archive of the National Library of Aruba.



Ayo & Casibari: Aruba's famous rock formations

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



Ayo

The Ayo Rock Formation is located in the northern part of the island, right on the road that leads you to the Black Stone Beach, and close to the Natural Bridge. The Ayo is a fenced terrain that consists of several giant boulders, resting neatly on top of or side by side each other, adding gorgeous natural architecture to the surrounding "mondi"*. This is also one of the few sites to contain prehistoric markings of our indigenous ancestors. The Ayo Rock formation contains stairs that lead you to the top of the highest boulder, offering a breath-taking view of the Aruban backyard. The Ayo is usually quiet, as it is situated farther away from the busier parts of the island. However, this is just another charm of the site: the quiet area and the refreshing breeze offer a sense of comfort and peace.

Casibari

Probably the busier rock formation site, the Casibari is situated more in the center of the island, much closerand more accessible to the general public. Just like Ayo, Casibari is a fenced area containing several boulders that lay on top or lean on each other. The best aspect of the Casibari Rock Formation is the accompanying view when you climb up the top of the round, flat bolder. For this position, you can see the majority of the island and the ocean in the south.

Both sites are open free to the public, 24 hours a day. However, unless you are taking a trip with a professional tour guide, there are no guides at the sites to help you climb the rock. So, do be careful when trudging on the boulders, and make sure to befriend any roaming goats you see along the way!

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

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

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.❑

The tree that points west: The 'Watapana'

(Oranjestad)— Standing proudly and always pointing west, the Watapana (also called Divi Divithough 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 manylocals 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)

Fun facts about the Terns



(Oranjestad)—Throughout the months of January to September, big groups of terns migrate to the island for breeding season. These terns are important seabirds, and their presence on Aruba is a unique phenomenon. Here are some fun facts about terns.

Why terns matter

Terns (Sternchi in Papiamento) migrate annually to Aruba for breeding season. Our island, hosts 10 different species of terns which is crucial for global seabird conservation. 90% of Caribbean population of Common Tern nest on Aruba, 25% of Global population of Cayenne Tern nest on Aruba and 25% of Caribbean population of Black Noddy nest on Aruba, making their conservation especially important.

Breeding season

The terns breed mainly along the north coast of Aruba as well as the San Nicolas Reef Islands (No-Go conservation zones). Baby Beach is a particularly special site for terns, since this is where they carry out their reproduction rituals. Referred to as a "discotheque" by Natasha Silva, the point of Baby Beach near the open water is where a large group of terns spends the season searching for their partner for life to reproduce.

In Aruba, there are ten different species of terns, all of which breed at different times. The ten species of terns that migrate to the island include the Cayenne Tern; Cabot's Tern; Common Tern; Roseate Tern; Least Tern; Brown Noddy; Black Noddy; Sooty Tern; Bridled Tern and the Royal Tern

Main threats to these seabirds are human proximity, kite-surfing, unleashed dogs, ATVs/UTVs, Jet Ski's and pollution.

How to protect them

Aruba Conservation Foundation advises everyone to keep their distance from these seabirds, do not visit the reefs, do not fly drones around nesting areas, keep your dogs on leashes, do not drive on the coastline and do not leave trash thrown about. "Nature has no boundaries and its protection is a shared responsibility."❑



Aruban snacks and where to find them

ORANJESTAD — Want to taste something different for a change? How about some Aruban snacks that you can find all around the island? Hop in your car, and go to these locations to find some of the most popular and tasty snacks that are beloved by our locals.

One of the staples of Aruban cuisine and snacks is the Pastechi. Pastechi is a Caribbean fried pastry that is filled with cheese, meat, chicken, veggies and sometimes even fish! Or perhaps you might want to try a croquette, locally called a "kroket," which is a crusty fried snack with typically a meat and dough mix filling. The Aruban kroket is based on its Dutch counterpart, the "bitterbal".

These two snacks are typically found in all local snack trucks, which can be found all over the island, including on the side of the main road that stretches from San Nicolas to the Hotel Area. You can also find them at local bakeries all over the island. These places may also sell other snacks and sandwiches too, perfect for on-the-road lunch break.

While you're at it, why not accompany your snack with a refreshing "batido"? Batidos are fruit shakes, typically made with added milk for some creaminess. However, you can also ask to hold the milk. Batidos are commonly found in snack shops too. You may find some batidos along the flea market downtown. If you are looking for something a bit more fresh and healthy, why not try some coconuts, or shaved ice from local vendors? These vendors carry their little shop at the back of their truck, so they are ever-moving around the island. However, there are a few spots where you can almost always find a coconut/shaved ice vendor:

- Right next to the Red Anchor in San Nicolas, on the way to Baby Beach.
- Along the main road next to the airport field.
- At the California Light House.
- At the Alto Vista Chapel.

These vendors may also sell other delights, like the beloved coconut-based dessert "cocada" or peanuts. All in all, in Aruba, you can always find some place to take a break and have a bite of something local, you maybe just might have to look for them!

Photo credit: wheninaruba.com

CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

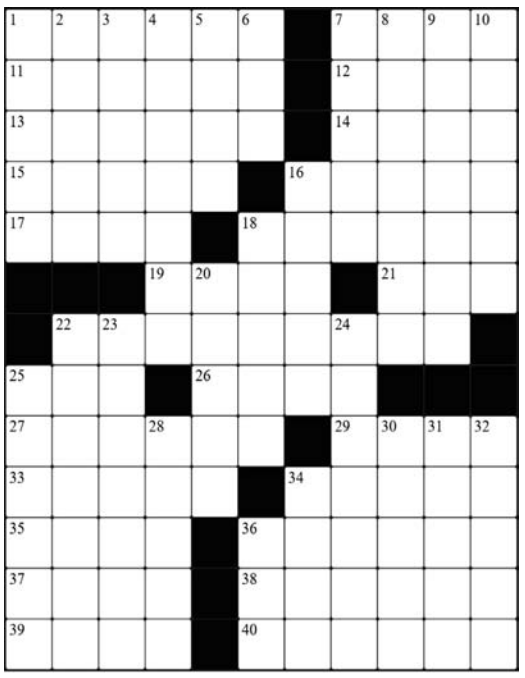
1. In excess
7. Rogues
11. Turkish peak
12. Heaps
13. Costume choice
14. Hand, to José
15. Some messages
16. Costume choice
17. Move quickly
18. Furrow
19. Dull pain
21. June honoree
22. Day for wearing costumes
25. Stimpy's pal
26. Org.'s kin
27. Senior
29. Captivated
33. Costume choice
34. -- Dame
35. Cave sound
36. Costume choice
37. Coward of comedy
38. Relaxed
39. Poet Sexton
40. Jacqueline of films
43. Indian, e.g.
44. School paper
45. Egg settings

DOWN

1. Peered
2. Fragrance
3. Truman's hometown
4. Like planetary paths
5. Track part
6. Summer in Lyons
7. Unbilled role
8. Apple pie order
9. "Mellow Yellow" singer
10. High
16. Barrymore and Carey
18. Costume choice
20. Conflict
22. Site of the Muses' temple
23. "What happened next?"
24. Covers up
25. Ivanhoe's love
28. French academy
30. One of the Titans
31. Use a crowbar
32. Principle
34. Words of denial
36. Yak it up

A	S	T	O	R	■	T	U	B	A	S
T	O	R	R	E	■	A	T	O	L	L
O	R	I	O	N	■	P	A	B	L	O
N	B	C	■	E	W	E	■	S	I	P
E	E	K	■	G	A	D	■	F	E	E
S	T	O	R	E	S	■	B	O	S	S
■	■	R	U	S	T	L	E	R	■	■
D	A	T	E	■	R	A	D	A	R	S
E	R	R	■	G	E	M	■	P	E	C
F	O	E	■	A	L	P	■	P	H	O
A	M	A	S	S	■	O	I	L	E	R
M	A	T	E	S	■	O	C	E	A	N
E	S	S	A	Y	■	N	E	S	T	S

Yesterday's answer



AXYDLBAAXR
is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the 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.

11-5 CRYPTOQUOTE

IEL JQUMW PA VKMM QV OBNPG IEPTNA, HBIPLTIMX JBPIPTN VQU QKU ALTALA IQ NUQJ AEBUHLU. — J.F. XLBIA

Yesterday's Cryptoquote: WALLS TURNED SIDEWAYS ARE BRIDGES. — ANGELA DAVIS

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 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

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

Difficulty: ★★★★ 11/7

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Answer to previous puzzle

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

Difficulty: ★★★★ 11/6

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An AI reckoning? Investors brace for potential fallout

Paris, France

"Correction" is not the word investors want to hear, but the stampede out of AI and technology stocks this week has heightened doubts about the sustainability of the four-year bull run for markets.

Further declines would have wide-ranging financial and economic consequences amid the massive AI spending, much of it fuelled by companies taking on huge amounts of debt.

AFP takes a look at how tech sector weakness could impact governments and households.

- The AI motor -

Outlays on data centres to train and power artificial intelligence models have become one of the main growth engines for the U.S. economy, the world's largest.

"That contributed to 30 percent of growth in the United States in 2025 and 2026," said Bruno Cavalier, economist at the bank Oddo BHF, with spending on data centers surging by 150 percent.

The resulting demand for cutting-edge chips and other high-tech equipment has boosted share price gains across the technology sector.

But the centers also need power sources, intensive cooling systems, and old-fashioned construction, plumbing and electrical work, all providing money and jobs for local communities and beyond.

Opposition has been building over worries about the environmental and human costs of the huge server farms, including air pollution, higher energy costs, water use and noise.

The Democratic wave in this week's midterm elections in the United States raised investor fears of a regulatory crackdown -- prompting the heavy selling on Wall Street on Thursday.

Markets are pricing in the risk that "Democratic victories in the states with the most projects will make construction more expensive and longer to complete", said Kevin Thozet at the asset management firm Carmignac in Paris.



Traders work on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange (NYSE) on November 06, 2026 in New York City.

- American households -

Share ownership is widespread in the United States, where individual retirement funds invested in stocks and bonds are much more prevalent than government-funded pensions.

"Forty-three percent of household wealth is now exposed to the stock market, an increase of 10 percentage points from 2000," said Cavalier.

A sustained market downturn would directly impact their spending power, especially for retirees, creating a wider economic risk.

And "the richest 10 percent of Americans now account for half of consumer spending", said Alexandre Baradez, an analyst at the brokerage IG France.

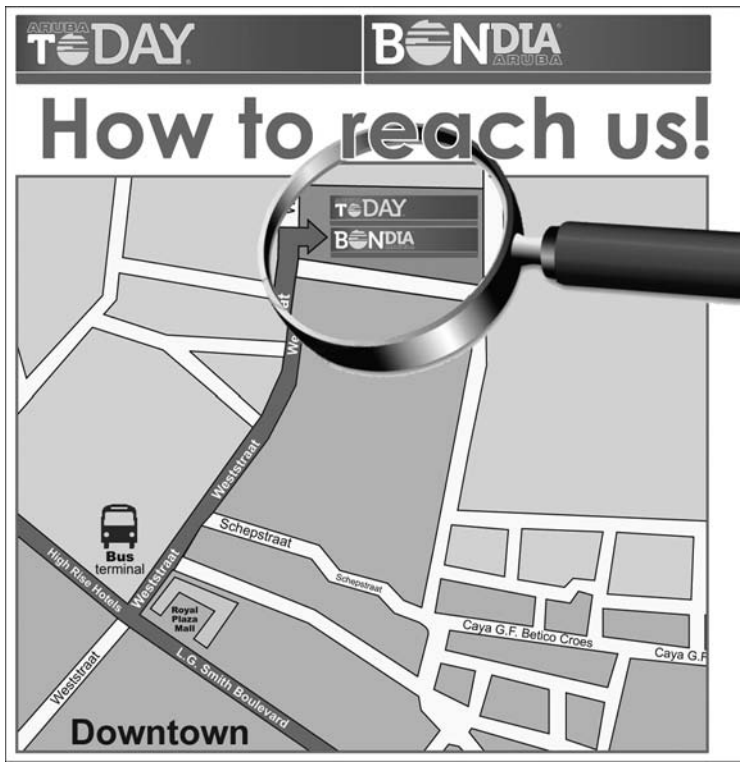
"They're the ones who own the most stocks and have benefited the most from the tech stock gains," he said.

A market crisis could crimp their spending as well, meaning it would no longer compensate for the spending pullback among average Americans since the inflation spike provoked by the US war against Iran.

- Capital access? -

Rising interest rates complicate the picture, since they lift borrowing costs for the billions of dollars in debt AI firms have taken on to finance the data centre rollout.

"This is not an easy time, with shares falling and high rates on debt markets and little chance of any easing moves soon by central banks," Baradez said.❑



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HEALTH

DOCTOR ON DUTY

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

PHARMACY ON DUTY

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

OTHER

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

EMERGENCY

Police	100
Police Oranjestad	527 3140
Police Noord	527 3200
Police Sta. Cruz	527 2900
Police San Nicolas	584 5000
Police Tipline	11141
Ambulance	911
Fire Dept.	115
Red Cross	582 2219

TAXI SERVICES

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Prof. Taxi	588 0035
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Taxi Serv. Aruba	583 3232
A1 Taxi Serv.	280 2828

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Narcotics Anonymous
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Child Abuse Prevention
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Quota Club Tel. 525 2672

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ARUBA TODAY NEWS

EU tells TikTok to change 'harmful' For You feed

Brussels, Belgium

The EU told TikTok on Friday to change the "harmful" design of its personalized For You feed or risk large fines under the bloc's digital content rules.

The European Union warned that TikTok's recommendation system exposes children and vulnerable individuals to potentially damaging content by pushing a stream of videos similar to those the user has previously engaged with. TikTok rejected the accusations.

Brussels accused TikTok of violating the EU's Digital Services Act (DSA) over the "harmful 'rabbit holes' effect", which happens when users are fed related videos based on an algorithm, in some cases leading to more dangerous content.

"The more a user interacts with a certain type of content, the more TikTok's 'For You' feed algorithm recommends similar content.



The TikTok logo is displayed on a smartphone screen in this photo illustration in Brussels, Belgium, on March 30, 2026.

This design can be harmful when such endless and repeated exposure involves, for example, content about sadness, isolation or body image," the European Commission said.

Even when users tell TikTok they don't like certain content, the platform's algorithm continues to suggest similar videos.

TikTok has made some tweaks to mitigate the risks but they were not effective, the EU said, demanding more radical design changes.

The commission gave examples of changes the platform could make, such as:

rely more on users' explicit preferences, because the EU found that the app's "not interested" button "may not be enough to change the content feed"

disable viewing time as an indicator to recommend content

increase the accessibility and ease of use of user controls, and regularly test its algorithm.

A TikTok spokesperson hit out at the EU's "series of statements that are fundamentally inaccurate and distort our platform's architecture and our commitment to user safety".

The spokesperson insisted TikTok has "a strong record of protecting our community while giving users direct and intuitive control over their content experience".

Friday's demand comes after the EU in February told TikTok to change "addictive design" features, and after it accused the company in July of exposing children to risks like cyberbullying and predatory behavior.

The EU has ramped up its efforts to protect children, launching investigations into the world's most popular platforms under the DSA law part of the bloc's legal armory targeting digital giants.

Brussels plans to add to this by forcing social media companies to make platforms safe before children use them, as part of plans to ban children under 13 from social media, and permit only limited, supervised access until the age of 15.

'Repeated exposure risks'

A senior EU official said the February findings on TikTok focused on features like notifications, whereas Friday's view was about the algorithm itself.

TikTok is popular because of that algorithm, say observers, and the official admitted the EU was targeting its engagement-based business model.

TikTok can now access the EU's files and defend itself against the accusations.❑

'Grand Theft Auto' set for blockbuster return after 13 years

Paris, France

Fans of the violent "Grand Theft Auto" video game franchise are just two weeks away from getting their hands on the latest edition, which has taken almost a decade to make and has become the most expensive title in history.

The franchise allows players to act out gangster fantasies shooting up bars, crashing cars in fictional renderings of U.S. cities where the soundtrack piped through in-game radio is almost as important as the cutting-edge visuals.

GTA VI, which comes 13 years after its predecessor, is expected to break sales records when it lands on November 19 thanks in part to a monumental marketing campaign that kicked off in late 2023 with the first official trailer.

"It is going to be the biggest entertainment launch of all time," Chris Dring of The Game Business outlet told AFP.

The previous edition, GTA V, is still the second-biggest selling game ever it took just three days to rack up $1 billion in sales, two days less than the movie "Avengers: Endgame".

The budget of GTA VI has reportedly ballooned to over $1 billion - far higher than any other game or film and projections have it on track to make several billion in its first week, which would smash all records for any cultural product.

- 'Top creators' -

'GTA VI' has two main protagonists, former drug-runner Jason and newly released ex-con Lucia, who try to survive in Vice City, a reimagining of Miami.

Lucia is the first playable woman character in a main edition of the almost 30-year history of a franchise.

During the 1990s and 2000s the game's graphic depictions of sex, violence and misogyny became notorious tabloid media outrage boosting the title's notoriety and helping sales to skyrocket.



A mural painted by Colossal Media for Rockstar Games' Grand Theft Auto VI (GTA) is seen in Williamsburg in New York on November 5, 2026.

Rockstar Games has spent eight years developing the sixth edition, a process beset by difficulties including the leak of development footage and code for the game online in 2022.

But expectations are sky-high.

"They've spent a long time on this game, but they are probably the top game entertainment creators in the world," said Dring.

Analysts expect the game to have an impact on the entire video game sector, including on console sales and accessories.

Several other studios delayed the release of new games to avoid being caught in the hype cycle around GTA VI.

Analysis firm Sensor Tower said the game had already generated around $750 million from pre-sales.

Surveys suggested almost one-third of the 49 million people who use PS5 and Xbox Series consoles in the United States intended to buy the game.❑

Olympic refugee athletes target glory and a better life for families

Diamniadio, Senega

Lourence Numukiza, a 16-year-old athlete from DR Congo, has gone from being a war refugee to earning a prized berth at the Youth Olympic Games in Senegal.

After a tough childhood spent in the Kakuma refugee camp in Kenya, the teenager said her path to Dakar was simple: "I trained hard, I competed hard and I was able to win."

She has set herself two goals. Firstly, "I want to get a medal," she said. But also she wants to offer her family a better life as she limbers up to join a team comprising fellow young refugees for the first time at a Youth Games.



Head of mission of the young refugee team and goodwill ambassador for the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Yiech Pur Biel, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) coach Arnold Yafunga, DRC's sprinter Rashid Rochene, Kenyan head coach Eliakim Otieno, DRC's judoka Arno Yafunga and South Sudanese mid distance runner Nyataba Gatloth. (front L-R) DRC's sprinter Florence Masumbe, Burundian mid distance runner Clement Niyomuhoza, a Congolese refugee in Kenya competing in Taekwondo -49 kg women Lourence Numukiza pose for a photograph at the Olympic Village in Diamniadio on November 5, 2026.

Lourence and her teammates, originally from South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Burundi, will briefly put aside their lives as refugees in Kenya and Uganda to show their mettle in judo, athletics and taekwondo.

In her yellow tracksuit, Lourence, with cropped hair and a mischievous smile, mingles with competitors in the Olympic Village at Diamniadio outside Dakar.

She tells AFP of a gruelling road to reach where she is today. Her parents, from eastern DRC, fled conflict in Kivu. Lourence was born in a refugee camp in Tanzania, then grew up in Kakuma.

"What made me become a refugee, first is the war. From where we came from, there's a lot of war going on," she said.

Lourence was just four years old when she lost her father, leaving her mother to raise nine children alone.

Competing at the Youth Games, she says, is like a dream.

"I'm proud and happy because the Olympics is a big stage in sports," she said.

"I'm happy to be here because this sport has really, really changed my life," says the teenager, who only took up taekwondo in 2024.

She admits that "some people used to discourage me, saying that you cannot do this sport" as a girl.

"But I am grateful for the challenges. Because they are making me to learn new things in life. And they are also making me to become a strong girl who can overcome anything in life."

In the refugee camp, home to an estimated 300,000 displaced persons, "we have a lot of challenges we can stay for five good weeks or three weeks without water. Sometimes no food. You have to just take one meal per day, or just eat once, and you wait for the following day."

'Sports can change lives'

In the meantime, her mother struggles to earn enough "to make sure that you go to school, to make sure that you eat, to make sure that you've got some clothes to put on."

On top of all that, "girls are getting married at a young age, at 12 years old. You find that a girl is pregnant... and she will not be able to pursue her dreams.

"So now this is my time to give back to my mother what she has been doing all of this time since our father died. So that's why I'm working hard and trying my best.

"Sports can change someone's life because I've been seeing a lot of people moving from a refugee camp to a citizen in a particular country."

Lourence cites as inspiration Yiech Pur Biel, the team's chef de mission who competed for the first ever Olympic refugee team at the 2016 Rio Olympics and is also a UNHCR goodwill ambassador.

Having fled war in South Sudan in 2005, he arrived alone at Kakuma aged 10 but earned his Rio berth and then got an opportunity to study in the United States.❑

McIlroy sinks 11 birdies in Abu Dhabi surge as Rahm shares lead

Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates

Rory McIlroy charged into contention at the Abu Dhabi Championship with a second round featuring 11 birdies as Jon Rahm moved into a three-way share of the lead Friday.

McIlroy shot the round of the day to haul himself back into the mix after receiving a two-shot penalty Thursday for improving his lie on a hole where he made a double-bogey.

"I'd much rather be two shots worse off than be called a cheat," said McIlroy, reflecting on the incident at the 12th hole during his opening round at Yas Links.

"I made peace with it and at least I went out today and it wasn't playing on my mind. I had a clear conscience and I could just go and play."

The six-time major champion carded a nine-under 63 in round two, picking up seven birdies on the back nine to bolster his chances of winning a record-equaling eighth Race to Dubai title.

"It wasn't like I got off to the greatest of starts today, but then obviously I got it going," said McIlroy, who overcame a bogey on the first hole before finding his groove.

"I went out today and played a good round of golf and did get myself back into the tournament," he added. "I've given myself a great chance."

Rahm is level at the top on 12-under with Tyrrell Hatton and overnight leader Francesco Laporta in his first event since leaving the rebel LIV Golf tour, which has announced it will shut down after five contentious years.

The Spaniard began the day three shots off the pace but climbed into a tie for the lead with a five-under 67.

Laporta left the door ajar with an inconsistent two-under 70 in his second round, as Hatton shot a seven-under 65 to reel in the Italian alongside close friend Rahm.❑



Northern Ireland's Rory McIlroy plays a shot on the 16th hole during the DP World Tour's Abu Dhabi Aldar Championship golf tournament at the Yas Links Golf Course in Abu Dhabi on November 5, 2026.

Vikings without Murray for battle with Allen's Bills

Los Angeles, United States
The Minnesota Vikings, without top quarterback Kyler Murray, will rely on their elite defense to slow Josh Allen's Buffalo when they host the Bills in a battle of NFL division leaders on Monday.
The clash of 6-1 teams took on a slightly new complexion on Thursday when the Vikings announced that Carson Wentz would start at quarterback in place of Murray, who is week-to-week with a hamstring strain.
"For (Murray), his movement skills, and the way he plays the game, we do feel like we'd be putting him at risk of possibly turning this into a more significant injury than it is by trying to have him work through it here early on," Vikings coach Kevin O'Connell told reporters.
"So, Carson will start the football game and Max (Brosmer) will back him up."
It will be the second start of the season for Wentz, who stepped in after Murray suffered a concussion in week one and led the Vikings to wins over Green Bay and Chicago.
To be sure the Vikings' 6-1 record owes little to effective offense. The club ranks 27th in scoring and 29th in total yards.
They'll be counting on their defense, which is allowing a league-low 13 points per game, to shut down Allen and the Bills offense who are averaging a league-best 33 points per game.
The Blitz-heavy Vikings defense has produced a league-leading 25 quarterback sacks, including at least four sacks in five of their seven games played.
Minnesota will be aiming to bounce back from their first defeat of the season, against the Detroit Lions, while Buffalo unbeaten on the road chase a fourth straight victory.



Kyler Murray #1 of the Minnesota Vikings plays against the Detroit Lions at Ford Field on

The marquee Monday night game will conclude the action in week nine, which will see red-hot Cincinnati quarterback Joe Burrow lead the Bengals against the Atlanta Falcons in Madrid.
Burrow has thrown 13 touchdown passes during a three-game Bengals winning streak.
The Kansas City Chiefs will be aiming to right the ship when they host the New York Jets.
Since starting the season 5-0 Patrick Mahomes and the Chiefs have dropped two straight, including a 28-24 setback in Denver on Sunday in which the Chiefs led by 11 in the fourth quarter.
"We just have to be better than we were last week and try to win a game," Mahomes said.

- 49ers back in action -

The 6-1 San Francisco 49ers have had a bye week to regroup after their lone defeat of the season, but will still be without some key contributors when they take on the Las Vegas Raiders.
Wide receivers Mike Evans and Deebo Samuel are likely to remain sidelined by injuries, although quarterback Brock Purdy could have a pair of returning targets in Demarcus Robinson and KhaDarel Hodge.
The Niners are also expected to welcome back a major defensive reinforcement in Nick Bosa, the imposing pass rusher who has been out since week three.
Among other games, the Dallas Cowboys coming off a bruising overtime loss to Arizona in which they twice squandered a 14-point lead visit the Indianapolis Colts.
The Philadelphia Eagles host the New York Giants in an NFC East division clash, and the New England Patriots host the Green Bay Packers in a battle of winning teams.
The Chicago Bears, coming off an impressive victory over the Super Bowl champion Seattle Seahawks on Monday, will try to push their winning streak to four games when they host the Tampa Bay Buccaneers.
The Seahawks, meanwhile, will try to bounce back against the Arizona Cardinals without the help of quarterback Sam Darnold, who suffered a cracked rib and a quadriceps injury against Chicago.❑

Shelton fights past Paul to reach Paris Masters semis

Paris, France
World number four Ben Shelton edged out Tommy Paul in an attritional three-set tussle on Friday to book his spot in the semi-finals of the Paris Masters.
A single break of serve in each set was enough to separate the two compatriots as Shelton emerged from the quarter-final battle a 6-4, 4-6, 6-3 winner.

The 24-year-old becomes the first American to reach the last four of the 1000-level event in the French capital since John Isner and eventual champion Jack Sock in 2017.
For world number 14 Paul, the defeat brought not only an end to his hunt for a first Masters title of his career, but also to his hopes of reaching this season's ATP Finals.
American
Frances Tiafoe, who lost in the second round on Wednesday, is now assured of playing in the season finale, which will run from November 15-22 in Turin.
"Frances has had an outstanding year. One of my best friends, and to see him make Turin for the first time is amazing," Shelton said of the 28-year-old Finals debutant.

On court, Paul was the first to crack when serving at 4-5 as two double faults presented Shelton with set points, the second of which the Atlanta native converted with a forehand winner.
But Paul hit back instantly, breaking Shelton to 15 in the very first game of the second frame.
With his nose ahead, the 29-year-old held firm to serve the match out to a decider.
The momentum swung back in Shelton's favour in the fourth game as the third seed converted a break point with an inside-out forehand that just nicked the outside of the line.
Shelton then kept Paul at arm's length to move into the next round, where he will meet Luca Van Assche after the Frenchman ended Australian Rinky Hijikata's fairytale run from qualifying to the last eight.
On the other side of the draw, seven-time Grand Slam champion Carlos Alcaraz will later take on Taylor Fritz for a spot in the semi-finals.
Former world number two Casper Ruud will close out the day's play against Portuguese lucky loser Nuno Borges.❑



U.S.' Ben Shelton plays a backhand return to US' Tommy Paul during their men's singles quarter-final match on day five of the Paris ATP Masters 1000 tennis tournament at the Plenitude Arena in Nanterre, on the outskirts of Paris, on November 6, 2026.