ARUBA TODAY®

Thursday
November 26, 2026

T: 582-7800
www.arubatoday.com
facebook.com/arubatoday
instagram.com/arubatoday

Aruba's ONLY English Vacation Newspaper



Why 'Rock Stacking' is more dangerous than you think



'Made history': Pakistan cheers as astronaut flies pioneering mission



Spectacular but squawky, starlings get icy welcome in Rome



U.S. Army detonates toxic explosives in Iowa despite contamination fears

Washington, United States

The U.S. Army detonated a massive cache of toxic explosives stored in a tiny Iowa farming town Wednesday, saying the materials were too unstable to move and warning residents to shelter from a potential cloud of lead dust.

Officials said the 68 drums of lead azide -- the entire US stockpile of the degraded material -- were at risk of spontaneous explosion, requiring their destruction at the Iowa Army Ammunition Plant in Middletown, where they had been stored for more than 15 years.

The controlled explosion sent debris flying into the air and a large cloud of smoke over a tree line, while a New York Times reporter said the blast could be heard some 10 miles (15 kilometers) away.

Extensive safety measures were put in place to curb contamination from the destruction of the nearly five tons of explosive material, and officials said the operation went well, with environmental authorities detecting no airborne lead after its conclusion.

"We reduced as close to zero as is absolutely humanly possible the risk to the health and safety of the people of Middletown and (the) extended communities throughout Iowa," U.S. Army Major General Eric Shirley said in a video update after the blast, terming it "tremendously successful."



Debris flies into the air after the Army detonated several tons of highly-volatile, degraded lead azide on the grounds of the Iowa Army Ammunition Plant on November 25, 2026 in Middletown, Iowa.

U.S. President Donald Trump also praised the operation, saying in a post on his Truth Social platform: "Great job by the Army, and others, in Iowa!"

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) said in a statement about an hour after the detonation that all its "real-time air monitors are reporting zero detection of airborne lead throughout the region."

EPA monitoring data from later in the day continued to show no lead detected in the air.

The detonation of the explosives was initially scheduled for November 20 but was postponed for three days, after which Trump paused the operation again before ultimately allowing it to proceed.

Following the explosion, Iowa's incoming Democratic Governor Rob Sand praised "the experts on the ground who did all they could to make this detonation as safe as possible," while saying that the "lead-up to the detonation should never have been so chaotic and unclear."

- 'Extensive protective works' -

Hakeem Jeffries, the speaker-designate of the U.S. House of Representatives, took aim at the Trump administration, saying it "has repeatedly proven that they cannot be trusted to guard the health, safety and well-being of everyday Americans."

"People need transparent information, not vague assurances of safety being made by a Defense Department led by a grossly incompetent secretary," Jeffries added.

Colonel Aaron Teller, who led the explosives experts who carried out the detonation, said the last major disposal of lead azide occurred in 1977, when some 7,000 pounds of the substance were destroyed in an open-air blast in Colorado.

Teller said in that case, 75 percent of the lead particulate remained at the site even with no mitigation measures, and that steps were taken to better contain it in the Iowa detonation.

"There's extensive protective works around those two bunkers, earthen-filled barriers that extend well above the tops of those magazines," Teller told journalists ahead of the explosion.❑



SpaceX's Starship megarocket is seen on a launch tower at Starbase, Port Isabel, Texas, on November 12, 2026.

U.S. clears SpaceX to launch up to one million orbital data center satellites

New York, United States

The U.S. Federal Communications Commission (FCC) on Wednesday authorized SpaceX to launch up to one million satellites as part of its plan to build data centers in space.

Projects for orbiting data centers have multiplied since last year.

Alongside SpaceX and its Starmind constellation, Google is pursuing its own work under the codename Suncatcher, while Blue Origin has submitted an application to the FCC for its "Project Sunrise."

Several startups are also in the race, including Starcloud, which successfully operated an advanced processor known as a GPU aboard a satellite in late 2025. Google also achieved this in October.

SpaceX's authorization runs until 2040, according to a document published Wednesday on the FCC's website.

SpaceX has the advantage of having its own rockets, which have already completed hundreds of missions.

In August, SpaceX boss Elon Musk promised a first launch into orbit in the fourth quarter of 2027 and a ramp-up in 2028.

The company has struck a deal with Nvidia, which will supply its latest-generation Vera Rubin processors, specially designed to operate in space.

Most space-based data center projects have a similar architecture: a constellation of satellites in low Earth orbit (LEO), positioned close together to ensure reliable connections between them.

Starmind's satellites will communicate with those already in orbit as part of SpaceX's Starlink satellite internet network, which will then relay the data to Earth.

Other competing networks plan to receive data directly from Earth and send it back using lasers.

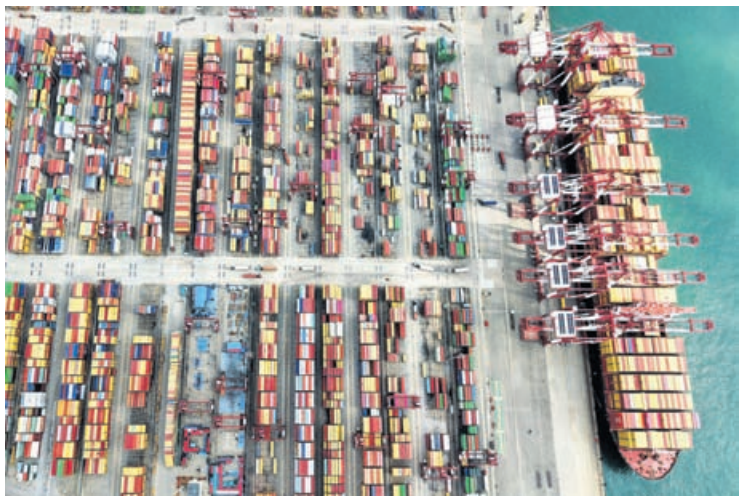
Not all the technical challenges have been resolved, including processors' ability to withstand the high levels of radiation in space.

Observers also point to the difficulty of withstanding extreme temperatures or avoiding damage from space debris and micrometeorites.

Locating a data center in space offers numerous advantages over building one on Earth.

Among those, a satellite in what is known as a sun-synchronous orbit can capture solar energy continuously and with eight times the efficiency of its ground-based equivalent.❑

U.S. unveils proposed tariffs on major partners, including EU and China



A ship is seen at the container terminal of the port in Qingdao, in China's eastern Shandong province on October 9, 2025.

Washington, United States

The United States on Wednesday unveiled proposed tariffs on 14 economies including the European Union and China, after a months-long probe into alleged excess production -- the latest move by U.S. President Donald Trump to remake Washington's trade relationships.

The duties, proposed at up to 20 percent, come over allegations the economies "are promoting production and capacity divorced from the realities of demand and market principles," a senior U.S. official said on condition of anonymity.

The new tariffs face a period of public comment before taking effect, with the official adding that the proposals take existing trade deals into account.

The new levies target some of the largest U.S. trading partners, including China, the European Union, India, Bangladesh, Cambodia, Indonesia, Japan, South Korea, Malaysia, Singapore, Switzerland, Taiwan, Thailand and Vietnam.

A 20-percent tariff is being proposed for China, the joint-highest for any economy, but US Trade Representative Jamieson Greer said the new levies were within the bounds of existing trade negotiations with Beijing.

"China understands that we're going to have some level of tariffs. This falls within that understanding," he told U.S. broadcaster CNBC on Wednesday, adding that the United States was also offering China exemptions on around $30 billion of goods.

Earlier, however, China's foreign ministry warned Washington not to engage in "tariff wars and trade wars," responding to a question about the new levies, which had not yet been announced at the time.

- Not stacked on deals -

Vietnam also faces a proposed 20-percent tariff; Cambodia and Indonesia 18 percent; and India 17 percent, according to the USTR's office.

Partners like the EU, Korea and Taiwan, which have signed earlier trade deals, will see tariffs broadly capped at 15 percent.

In a separate announcement, USTR also proposed additional tariffs on goods from Brazil, including aircraft, over alleged inaction on addressing US trade concerns.

Trump's tariffs have targeted Washington's friends and foes alike, and are part of a push in his second term to remake global trade by forcing countries to buy U.S. products or produce their goods in his country.

The new tariffs could raise temperatures as the U.S. president prepares to host G20 leaders in Miami in December.

"We don't expect this to create tension or rancor" at the G20 summit, the senior US official said. "We actually expect that we may be signing more agreements at the G20 in the wake of these announcements."

- Inflation pressures -

Over-capacity concerns affect a range of sectors, from batteries to cement, chemicals to processed food, the senior U.S. official said. The duties could add further pressure on U.S. businesses already squeezed by earlier tariffs, with firms now likelier to pass on costs to consumers already frustrated with the high cost of living.

Affordability was a key issue in recent midterm elections, which saw Trump's Republican Party swept out of power in both houses of Congress by Democrats.

The U.S. Federal Reserve's preferred inflation gauge came in at a three-year high in October, as prices are pushed up by the effects of Trump's war on Iran, tariffs, and the massive AI investment boom.

Fed policymakers, responsible for keeping inflation to a long-term two-percent target, say that most price effects of Trump's previous tariff rollout have passed through the economy -- but any new levies could push prices up further.

The new tariffs are likely to come into effect in January at the earliest, the senior U.S. official said.

The USTR began its investigation on excess manufacturing capacity and production in March, days after the U.S. Supreme Court struck down Trump's previous slew of tariffs.

- 'Hollowing out' -

Trade lawyer Ryan Majerus told AFP that he expected this probe to be among "the most important" actions for the Trump administration, given its underlying concern that factories with excess capacity start operations abroad and "never get turned off, even if there's no demand."

This potentially leads to an oversupply of goods, depressed prices and a "hollowing out" of U.S. manufacturing, he added.

While the U.S. Supreme Court struck down Trump's global tariffs in February, his sector-specific duties remain intact.❑



NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte arrives at the Chancellery in Berlin on November 23, 2026 for a meeting with the German Chancellor.

Trump to hold talks with NATO chief in Florida

West Palm Beach, United States

U.S. President Donald Trump is to meet NATO chief Mark Rutte on Wednesday, just days after describing Russian leader Vladimir Putin as his "friend."

The closed-door meeting at Trump's Florida residence comes amid stepped-up efforts to bring about an end to the war in Ukraine.

It also comes on the heels of Trump's visit to China during which he greeted Putin as his "friend," a description which Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky took issue with.

"For us, he is a killer," Zelensky told CNN.

Rutte was asked about Trump's comments in an interview with "Fox & Friends" on Wednesday.

"What President Trump is doing, also in the meeting in Shenzhen, is testing Putin," the NATO secretary general said.

"How serious is he? Is he willing to come to the negotiating table? Is he willing to really engage in talks.

"So let's keep the pressure on. I think it is working, and we have to keep that going."

Trump, accused by critics of siding with Moscow over Kiev, said following his meeting with Putin that the Russian leader wants to see the war between Russia and Ukraine end by "diplomatic means."

The Florida meeting comes as European nations have expressed a desire to join preliminary talks that have so far only included Ukraine, the United States and Russia.

Rutte said any agreement is going to have to include security guarantees for Ukraine.

"When the war ends, either with a peace deal, preferable, or if not possible, a long-term ceasefire, we need to make sure that Ukraine has the security guarantees going forward," he said.

"But the most important thing here," Rutte added, "is that we have to make sure that Ukraine has what it needs to keep the fight going, being so successful and putting that maximum pressure on the Russians."❑

The art of the steal: John Turturro on learning to pickpocket

Los Angeles, United States

Truly skillful pickpockets -- as American actor John Turturro explains -- are magicians.

He should know: he learned the art from a professional as he prepared for his starring role in "The Only Living Pickpocket in New York," a moving film about an aging criminal struggling to make his way in America's largest city.

"He worked with me and showed me how... if someone's on a pole in the subway, you can't touch their skin," he said of his work with illusionist Apollo Robbins, known as "The Gentleman Thief."

"You approach so their space doesn't feel invaded," he told AFP.

"You're coming in from the side, so your hand is just touching it like this," he said, demonstrating on his own wristwatch an imperceptible movement of the fastener.

With the strap unhooked, the thief goes in for his bounty, touching his mark for the only time.

"If you bump into them for a second, it's gone. The watch is gone."

After being tutored on the skill, Turturro had lots of dry runs with colleagues on set.



U.S. actor John Turturro poses on the red carpet during the opening ceremony of the 23rd Marrakech International Film Festival in Marrakesh on November 20, 2026.

"I did it to plenty of people," he laughed, but always "people who wouldn't arrest me!"

- Family -

"The Only Living Pickpocket in New York" follows Harry, a pickpocket who spends his days caring for his bedbound and comatose partner, Rosie (Karina Arroyave), and his nights eeking out a living on the streets.

But the city where he once found a decent enough keep has changed: hardly anyone carries cash and the iPods and phones they do have are practically worthless.

Even his one-time nemesis, Detective Warren ("Breaking Bad's" Giancarlo Esposito), finds himself sidelined within a police force that now prioritizes cybercrimes.

The plot thickens when Harry robs the wrong person. Backed into a corner, he decides to stake everything on one final, grand trick.

To prepare for the role -- which has generated Oscar buzz as a potential Best Actor -- Turturro sought to understand how someone falls into a life of larceny.

"A lot of these people came from difficult circumstances," he said, but they lived within a code of honor, and usually worked in teams which formed a kind of family.

"The people who were really good could do it by themselves, but... they had to graduate to that.

"They have this moral code that they don't rob from people who are drunk or really old or handicapped."

- Changing -

Written and directed by Noah Segan, "The Only Living Pickpocket in New York" has a nostalgic feel that highlights how fast technology is changing our society.

Turturro, 69, says as the son of a seamstress and a construction worker he has a respect for his character's facility with his hands, and understands his sense of unease in the modern world.

"I understand technology, but I don't understand it as a replacement for relating to other human beings," he said.

A lifelong New Yorker, the actor, seen recently in Apple's cult hit "Severance," embraced a production that highlights the changes in the city where he was born.

"When I was younger, I could see anything I wanted to see," he said of the range of live performances available in America's theater capital.

"I could sit in the back, but I could see it."

"New York is safer now," he said. "But it was more affordable when it was more dangerous."

"The Only Living Pickpocket in New York" is in select US cinemas now.❑

Taylor Swift: 'Toy Story' song a welcome break from personal ballads



Taylor Swift presents Brooks & Dunn with the Willie Nelson Lifetime Achievement award onstage during the 60th Annual Country Music Association Awards at Music City Center on November 18, 2026 in Nashville, Tennessee.

Los Angeles, United States

Taylor Swift, Oscar nominee? Penning a song for "Toy Story 5" offered the pop superstar the chance to write from a "fresh perspective" and pay homage to the animated film franchise she's loved since childhood.

And "I Knew It, I Knew You" also could open the door for Swift to earn an Academy Award nod.

"I'm loving, you know, writing from a fresh perspective," Swift told a recent press event. "Having a break from writing about my personal life is always kind of a relief."

The 36-year-old released "I Knew It, I Knew You" in June, shortly before the premiere of "Toy Story 5."

The country pop ballad touching on themes of friendship, nostalgia and reunions notched Swift two Grammy nominations including the coveted Song of the Year award, which she has never won.

And it's considered a potential contender for Best Original Song at the Oscars.

The track did lose this week at the Country Music Awards in the Single of the Year category to Ella Langley's ubiquitous "Choosin' Texas."

Swift co-wrote her song with her frequent collaborator Jack Antonoff.

It's inspired by Jessie, the animated cowgirl who in the franchise's fifth installment struggles to remain relevant in the face of a tablet's arrival.

Reflecting on the fear shared by Jessie and the other toys that technology could render them obsolete, Swift said she remains optimistic despite transformations within cultural industries including music and film.

The singer-songwriter said that human creativity still connects with audiences in a way that technology cannot replicate.

"If I were to look back at the year in music, I think there are two perfect albums that I love that I always go back to," Swift said, before pointing to Olivia Dean's "The Art of Loving" and Rosalia's "Lux."

Both received Album of the Year Grammy nominations, and are in the running at February's show against Swift's "The Life of a Showgirl."

"Those albums are great because they're human, they're human-made, they're about human experience, and that's why humans connect to them," Swift said.

"Humans are still winning this."❑

Canada pushing controversial bill on personal data access

Toronto, Canada

Canada is advancing legislation that would give law enforcement new powers to access personal digital information, a proposal facing international criticism over concerns it undermines privacy and cybersecurity.

A joint letter last week from more than 20 civil society groups, including Amnesty International, called the legislation "an impending catastrophe" and asked Prime Minister Mark Carney to step in before the bill -- facing final Senate review this week -- becomes law.

Leading tech companies, including Meta, have said that if the bill passes unchanged, it might be forced to withdraw certain services from Canada to avoid complying with rules they claim would increase vulnerability by weakening encryption protections.

But Ottawa insists the legislation, called the "Lawful Access Act," is solid.

The government has defended provisions that would compel companies that provide electronic services to retain more metadata about their customers, while lowering the threshold for police and intelligence agents to access to that data.

In certain cases, public officials could demand digital information without a warrant.



Canada's Prime Minister Mark Carney attends the plenary session of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Summit in Shenzhen, in China's southern Guangdong Province, on November 19, 2026.

"Canada is the only country among the Five Eyes and G7 that lacks lawful access legislation," said David Taylor, spokesman for Public Safety Minister Gary Anandasangaree.

The bill brings Canada "in line with our partners," Taylor told AFP, adding that Anandasangaree believes it "strikes an appropriate balance between public safety and privacy rights."

- 'Significant concerns' -

A digital advisory group at the United Nations human rights office said the bill "raises significant concerns regarding lawful interference with the right to privacy."

Matt Hatfield, who heads the civil society group OpenMedia, said: "No democracy should force basic services to keep a 'filing cabinet' of sensitive data on millions of its citizens suspected of no crime, just in case police want it one day."

The battle echoes a dispute between Apple and the UK, where London reportedly demanded that the U.S. tech giant grant it access to users' encrypted data, sparking a legal challenge.

Canada says law enforcement needs better real-time access to digital information to fight crime, including a wave of extortion threats delivered through WhatsApp -- Meta's encrypted messenger service.

The government bill therefore mandates that private organizations develop "technical capabilities, including capabilities related to extracting and organizing information," which could then be shared with authorized public officials.

- 'Pandora's box' -

Natalie Campbell, senior director for North American government and regulatory affairs at the Internet Society, said this provision "opens a Pandora's box of problems."

For Campbell and other digital security experts, any new means to extract and share personal data from an encrypted system amounts to a backdoor that can be exploited by malicious actors.

"There is no back door that only the good guys can walk through," she said, telling AFP that the capacity for criminal groups to exploit a so-called backdoor is increasing exponentially as artificial intelligence advances.

Taylor, the public safety ministry spokesman, told AFP the legislation has been mischaracterized.

The bill "does not permit or compel companies to introduce systemic vulnerabilities or so-called 'backdoors.' Any claims suggesting otherwise are incorrect," he said.

The new technical requirements in the bill are about "ensuring that a safe bridge exists for providers to deliver data that is lawfully sought. "It is about how the data are pushed out. Not about someone from the outside going in to extract it," he said.❑

Gruesome ancient Athens mass grave goes on display

Athens, Greece

The 2,700-year-old remains of dozens of youths put to death in a mass execution in ancient Athens went on display Wednesday in a specially constructed underground chamber south of the Greek capital.

The ancient necropolis in Faliro, south of Athens, has been found to contain over 2,000 dead of all ages, in addition to a number of buried horses.

In 2016, archaeologists found 79 men arranged in three trenches, tied together in groups. Many had corroded iron shackles around their wrists, and most were young adults or juveniles.

Experts working on the decade-long project have said the men were in their prime, and had all received a killing blow at the base of the skull with a blunt instrument.

Visitors to the macabre display, which lies at the centre of a dark, winding corridor beneath the park area of the Stavros Niarchos Cultural Centre, are greeted by a sign at the entrance warning: "Real skeletons of people who died violently are exposed in the area."

"Please consider this for the continuation or termination of your visit."

Inaugurating the 920-square-metre display, Culture Minister Lina Mendoni said the find sheds light on "one of the darkest pages" in Athens' long history, a time when rival groups fought for control of the city before political reforms gave rise to decades of democracy.

The men had met a "violent, tragic death", Mendoni said.

Dubbed the "Captives of Faliro" by the media, the skeletons were temporarily relocated for their protection, until the new 7.5-billion-euro ($8.2 billion) structure could be completed in 2023.

- Failed conspiracy -

The men had lived in the seventh century BC, a period of turmoil in ancient Athens before the city's golden age that saw Athens' victory over the Persian Empire and the creation of the Parthenon.



This photo shows the remains of dozens of youths put to death in a mass execution in ancient Athens around 2,700 years ago, on display in a specially constructed underground chamber at the Stavros Niarchos Foundation Cultural Centre in Athens on November 25, 2026.

Experts believe they were likely supporters of the Cylonian conspiracy -- a failed attempt to seize power in the city -- who were subsequently put to death. ❑

Spectacular but squawky, starlings get icy welcome in Rome

Rome, Italy

All roads lead to Rome, including for raucous starlings whose noisy, messy habits have left residents of the capital determined to send them flying.

Known for their spectacular aerial displays, a behaviour known as murmuration, and for their exceptional vocal mimicry, starlings migrate in the millions to Italy from northern Europe in winter in search of warmth.

For years, the city has tried in vain to chase the unwelcome visitors from the trees in busy areas where they rest to build up strength before the breeding season.

A three-day experiment this week in a northeast Roman neighborhood may have worked, with shopkeepers and citizens blaring an ear-shattering noise simulating a starling distress call from their windows, in the hope it would deter them from settling in.

"It's nature. They're birds flying in trees, so I don't think we can claim the right to get rid of them," Matteo Zocchi, the councilor charged with environmental issues for Rome's third administrative borough, told AFP.

Zocchi said officials were realistic about what could be done about the "hundreds of thousands" of starlings in his neighborhood, with the goal being just to "push them away a bit to give this area some breathing space".



Residents look at starling flocks that come to spend the night in the trees of their neighbourhood, in Rome on November 19, 2026.

"The problem has been huge because we've had to clean the streets constantly," he said.

Mesmerizing in the air but disruptively loud at bedtime, the social, polka-dotted birds swoop down from the sky at dusk to roost in leafy trees, their cacophonous chatter impossible to ignore.

- Beware Geronimo -

When the birds fly off at dawn to feed in open fields, pavements and cars are covered by slippery guano, an unpleasant by-product of their visit.

Some residents and shoppers on Rome's hard-hit Viale Jonio have taken to using umbrellas as protection.

Roberto Benenato, 29, who works at a pastry shop underneath the avenue's line of plane trees, said it's been impossible to park on the street for fear of returning to a guano-covered vehicle.

"But the worst thing... is really the horrible stench of guano we've had these past weeks. It would get right up your nose, into your head. You couldn't breathe properly. Really unpleasant, let's say," he said.

Timing is everything when it comes to disrupting the starlings.

Once snug on their branches to rest overnight, the birds don't budge -- meaning that the moment to dissuade them from settling in is immediately after arrival.

In the past, city officials used just the distress call to ward off the starlings.

But given the perceived increase in their numbers this year, they chose a multi-pronged effort, including lights from lasers directed into the trees.

More impressive was a raptor named Geronimo who was calmly promenaded on the arm of his falconer beneath the trees, never once leaving his perch.

For three days this week, city residents and shopkeepers were invited to tune into the live broadcast of the distress calls and point their stereo speakers, laptops or cellphones towards the trees for an hour beginning at 4:15 local time (1515 GMT).

- Falling numbers -

Starlings in Rome are a draw for tourists and photographers mesmerized by their murmurations.

They choose the city to roost because it affords better protection from predators than open countryside.

But no one knows exactly how many arrive in the city each winter -- either from northern and eastern Europe or from other parts of Italy.

A 2021 study by conservation coalition BirdLife International found their numbers were decreasing moderately in the country as a whole.

Starling expert Alessandro Montemaggiori of Rome's Sapienza University says they have been migrating to Rome for 80 years.

A decade ago, there were an estimated one million in the city at night in winter. By some accounts, that number may have fallen by half now.

From a rooftop on Thursday at sunset, one could see several murmurations weaving through the sky and then gathering in the distance.

Suddenly the birds were directly overhead, the sky nearly black as the piercing noise from distress calls blasted out from rooftops and balconies.❑

EU must set out timeline to end cage farming: court



Demonstration outside the European Commission calling on the EU to honour its commitment to phase out the use of cages in animal farming, on the day of the ruling by the General Court of the European Union in the End the Cage Age case, at Schuman Roundabout in Brussels, Belgium, on November 25, 2026.

Brussels, Belgium

An EU court told the bloc Wednesday to set out a new timeline for plans to ban cages for farm animals, ruling it had failed to adequately follow up on a popular petition.

The European Commission had pledged in 2021 to put forward legislation by the end of 2023 to bar farmers from rearing hens, rabbits, sows and other animals in cages.

But it failed to do so, prompting the promoters of an EU petition calling for a ban that had gathered about 1.4 million signatures to request a new timeline -- eventually resulting in a court case when that was not forthcoming.

The Luxembourg-based General Court, the European Union's second-highest, found in favor of the animal rights' campaigners.

"The commission is under an obligation -- which is not limited in time -- to set out a timeline for all the measures which it intends to take in response to such an initiative," the court said.

The ruling was cheered by dozens of campaigners gathered outside the commission headquarters in Brussels, where they installed a giant inflatable caged pig.

"It's an exceptional victory," said Debbie Tripley, a director at Compassion in World Farming, an animal welfare group among the proponents of the 2018 "End the Cage Age" petition.

"They have to come forward with a timeline for those proposals," she told AFP.

Under the "European citizens' initiative" system, the commission has to address petitions that gather over one million signatures across at least seven EU countries -- although it is not legally bound to agree to their demands.

But once it states it intends to take action, the commission has to keep the public and the European Parliament posted on a timeline in line with the principle of "good administration", the court said. ❑

Why 'Rock Stacking' is more dangerous than you think

(Oranjestad)— "Rock stacking" is not illegal in Aruba, but its impact on nature is harmful as the stones form part of the natural habitat of small animal species living in Aruba's wilderness. Conservation organizations repeatedly warn people not to participate. To understand the growing opposition to the practice of stacking rocks, it is necessary to understand the deep and negative impact behind it.



The act, called rock stacking, has been practiced for thousands of years and was originally used to guide people on hikes or travelers in mountainous regions, as well as for rituals, burials, and memorials. However, the modern trend is quite different. Today, the popularity of rock stacking has less to do with utility and tradition and more to do with social media. An American artist based in Colorado, Michael Grab, noted that the trend really began gaining popularity around 2014 and 2015, before it exploded and became an international art form.



The reasons behind participation vary widely, ranging from something purely practical or a tradition from the past, to an activity for its "beauty." For many, it is about leaving a mark, creating "art," or simply enjoying the process of balancing rocks. In recent times, those who participate in this—especially in Aruba—do so to leave proof of their presence or simply to post on social media.

Although it may seem harmless, there are several problems and negative impacts behind it. One of these is that many animal species hide under rocks to live, reproduce, or escape predators. If you move a rock, you may be destroying a home. If you stack one on top of another, you may expose prey to predators. Whether this is done in nature areas, along the coast, or in desert environments, it can destroy entire colonies and, in the worst case, threaten species that are already endangered.



There are microorganisms and small species such as insects or certain snakes that live in the soil beneath rocks commonly used for stacking. These rocks help trap moisture underneath, allowing the ecosystem to sustain itself. When you remove a rock, the soil is exposed and the moisture can dry up, killing all living organisms that depend on that humid environment.

Additionally, each rock is full of life—everything from aquatic plants to microorganisms attaches to them. Especially when it comes to rocks near the sea, they create habitats for some marine animals. Holes in the rocks can hold eggs, supporting them until the animals hatch. An expert explained that removing rocks from a fragile environment is essentially the equivalent of removing bricks from someone's house while also taking everything out of their refrigerator.

There is also the issue of erosion and soil damage, because rocks help hold the ground in place, sealing the surface and helping manage excess water, even allowing new life to grow. When these rocks are removed, the soil becomes loose, significantly increasing the rate of erosion in that area.

This erosion can cause sedimentation in nearby bodies of water, negatively impacting aquatic habitats and water quality.

Rocks along the coast are part of a natural ecosystem and play an important role in protecting the shoreline from erosion and the force of the ocean. When people remove or stack rocks, it affects coastal stability, increases the risk of erosion, and damages ecosystems. According to South African National Parks, this is particularly relevant for an island like Aruba—especially considering that most, if not all, rock stacking on the island takes place near coastal areas.

It is understandable that rock stacking may seem like a fun activity to do while off-roading; however, the survival, protection, and conservation of the island are just as important—if not more so—to ensure that in the future there will still be an island for both locals and visitors. We want our visitors to appreciate what Aruba has to offer—in a healthy and sustainable way.❑





Don't miss out on L'Avenue's Special Menus!



(Oranjestad)—Up to grab lunch or an early dinner after a day of shopping or cruising? Come and enjoy L'Avenue's Lunch and Early Bird Special, and take part in a unique Belgian experience found only at L'Avenue. Located in a cozy nook at The Cove Mall—a short walking distance from the Holiday Inn and Paseo Herencia, this Belgian bistro is home to exquisite yet affordable cuisine that is sure to satisfy your palate.

Explore L'Avenue's extensive lunch menu, complete with a variety of sandwiches, soups and salads. Feeling something a bit more filling? Try their famous ribs with beer sauce (a favorite among guests), renowned "Koninginnehapje" or fresh muscles flown in every week! From Wednesdays through Sundays, don't miss out on their lunch special; For only $14, enjoy some of L'Avenue's delectable items, including Fish and Chips on Fridays, Schnitzel on Wednesdays and their Angus beef burgers on Thursdays, complemented with soft buns made in house. On Saturdays and Sundays, enjoy a full pitcher of Sangria of Mimosa with your friends!

Lunch at L'Avenue is available Wednesdays through Sunday from 11 am to 4 pm.

Early Bird Special

L'Avenue takes pride in being the only Belgian restaurant on the island that still makes fine dining and easy elegance accesible to all. And their goal of being an inviting, warm bistro doesn't stop at their lunch special. Guests can also enjoy their Early Bird Special, starting from 5 pm to 7 pm. Enjoy this stunning and inexpensive 3-course meal special at a comfortable price of $37 per guest. Start off with their Soup of the Day or Croquette for starters, follow it up with perfectly cooked pork tenderloin in a gorgeous mushroom sauce or Caribbean Grouper, and top it all off with a decadent Dame Blanche. Complete your meal with a selection of L'Avenue's finest wine.

Not feeling wine? Try one of L'Avenue's unique selection of Belgian beers—the largest collection on the island. They have all the classics; including the Trappist-style quadruple St Bernardus Abt 12 and Rochefort Trappist. Each beer is served in their own unique glass to enhance your drinking experience.

L'Avenue is known as one of the best on the island for its Belgian and French flavors, but does not shy away from offering a flexible menu for their guests' needs. L'Avenue is happy to cater to guests with dietary restrictions, making sure that each guest gets well taken care of!

Enjoy the best of what Belgium has to offer

L'Avenue is situated at The Cove Mall in Palm Beach. Lunch is available Wednesday through Sundays from 11 am to 4 pm. Their Early Bird Special starts at 5 pm to 7 pm. Their dinner menu is available from 5 pm to 10 pm. For more information or to book a reservation, visit www.lavenuearuba.com or call (+297) 6996400.❑





Happy Thanksgiving from us to you!

(Oranjestad)—The Aruba Today Team is celebrating Thanksgiving with you!

For years now, we have counted on the unwavering support of our readers and clients, so this year we are giving thanks to you and your family.

We hope you spend a warm and cozy Thanksgiving, surrounded by family, friends and delicious food!



Explore Aruba!

(ORANJESTAD)—Aruba Today collected some things to do BEYOND the beach. 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.

Arikok National Park

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. 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 34 square kilometers of 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

Natural Bridge

One of Aruba's favorite tourist attractions is the Natural Bridge. For thousands of years, pounding waves and strong winds have slowly chiseled away the limestone cliffs along Aruba's north coast to create several natural bridges. The largest of these bridges used to be the famous Natural Bridge. The bridge was a formation of coral limestone cut out by years of pounding surf, and was one of the largest of these types of spans in the world. It stood some 23 feet (7 meters) above sea level and spans more than 100 feet (30 meters). Unfortunately the bridge collapsed on September 2, 2005. Despite this, it is still the most photographed natural bridge and it remains a popular tourist attraction in Aruba, with the adjacent and intact Baby Bridge also meriting a visit. The Natural Bridge is the perfect stop while touring Aruba. There is no admission fee or set hours for visiting. Quench your thirst with refreshing beverages & refuel your tank with local snacks.





The Lourdes Grotto

Named in commemoration of the famous French religious landmark, was created under the guidance of a priest named "Erkamp" and parishioners in the year 1958. The grotto, a shrine built into the rocks is located in Seroe Preto, just off the main road to San Nicolas. A statue of the Virgin Mary, weighing 700 kilos, was hoisted into place in the grotto. Every year, on February 11 (feast of Lady of Lourdes), a procession leaves from the St. Theresita church in San Nicolas to the grotto, where a mass is performed. The grotto is located road-side and can be visited daily. Just make sure you park safely in the event you wish to stop for pictures at this location.❑



ARUBA TODAY

Fruit Loose & Veggie Boost

Aruban fruits and vegetables



Fresh fruits make a tropical holiday's picture complete. Whether you see the mango's hanging in the trees or the fresh fruit cocktail on the side table of your pool bed, the link is there: you are in the tropics. Aruba grows her own fruits and veggies and there are some pretty out-of-space local species you may never had heard of, but really healthy and delicious.

Mispel



This is a fruit with a character (5-10 cm/2-4 inches). It does not ripe until it is picked or falls off the tree. Mispel is hard with a sandpaper like texture when immature, soft and juicy when ripe. It's technically a berry, but contains a skin similar to that of a kiwi. It's grainy and sweet, with a light, musky flavor. The sap or gum from the tree is also a source of 'chicle' the original ingredient used to make chewing gum. Rich in tannins, antioxidants shown to contain anti-inflammatory compounds, and vitamin C, essential for healthy immune function. Season: year- round.

Kenepa



Ovoid green fruit that grows in bunches on trees up to 30m high. The fruit is related to the lychee and have tight, thin but rigid skins. Inside the skin is the tart, tangy, or sweet pulp of the fruit covering a large seed. The pulp is usually cream or orange colored. Kenepa strengthens the immune system, and prevents the reproduction of bacteria and viruses in the body. This fruit is highly recommended to treat lung infections and urinary tract infections. It also helps to cure insomnia and rejuvenates the nervous system. Season: the fruit typically ripen during the summer.

Druif



There is no chance you did not bump into one of the sea grape trees while spending your vacation on Aruba. The sea grape plant is often used in ocean-side landscaping in sandy soil right on the beach and it produces clusters of fruit that resemble grapes. Are sea grapes edible? Yes, they are. Animals enjoy sea grapes and humans can eat them as well, and they are used to make jam. They contain very low calories and sugar, enabling good bacterium to digest food and excrete waste quickly which is effective in preventing constipation. Season: Sep-Oct.

Shimarucu



Maybe Aruba's most popular wild fruit tree. You may have noticed cars at the side of the road and people picking those red berries. Well, that's Shimarucu. The local habit to stop for these delicious fruits goes from generation to generation. Its fruit's degree of sour depends on the amount of rain it gets. Red Shimarucus tend to taste better than orange. The fruit has super power: a true vitamin bomb. Adults only need to eat 3-4 of these berries to meet their daily recommended amount of Vitamin C. Season: Rainy months (Oct-Jan).

Tamarind

A delicious, sweet fruit that has a wide variety of uses and applications, both for medicinal and culinary purposes. It is a medium-sized bushy tree with evergreen leaves and fruit that develops in pods characterized by long, brown shells. Inside is a sticky, fleshy, juicy pulp, which is the Tamarind fruit. Both sweet and sour in taste, the fruit contains a significant level of vitamin C, as well as vitamin E, B vitamins, calcium, iron, phosphorous, potassium, manganese, and dietary fiber. There are also a number of organic compounds that make tamarind a powerful antioxidant and anti-inflammatory agent. Season: March.

When it comes to veggies the island certainly offers a home-grown selection. They taste delicious and have their specific talents to boost your immune system.

Concomber chiquito



This is a sort of local squash, but looks like a cucumber with prickly skin. The taste however is bitterer than the cucumber and the vegetable is smaller in size but bigger in width. Inside is a soft, fleshy pulp and seeds, just like the cucumber. Concomber chiquito is grown in the island and used in salads and 'stoba' (stew) or on its own in vinegar. The veggie contains multiple B vitamins, including vitamin B1, vitamin B5, and vitamin B7 (biotin). B vitamins are known to help ease feelings of anxiety and buffer some of the damaging effects of stress. Additionally this veggie is rich in two of the most basic elements needed for healthy digestion: water and fiber. Season: year- round.

Yambo

Family of Okra, also known as 'lady's fingers': a green flowering plant. Okra belongs to the same plant family as hibiscus and cotton. A classic favorite dish in Aruba is Sopi di yambo. It has long been favored as a food for the health-conscious. It contains potassium, vitamin B, vitamin C, folic acid, and calcium. It's low in calories and has a high dietary fiber content. Recently, a new benefit of including okra in your diet is being considered. Okra has been suggested to help manage blood sugar in cases of type 1, type 2, and gestational diabetes. Season: year- round.

Bonch'i Cunucu

A long, small bean, boiled for a side dish or snack. Long beans have a chewy, crunchy texture–more so than snap beans–and a flavor reminiscent of the dry navy bean or asparagus. Besides stir-fry, soups and salads, the long bean is a good choice for stewing, braising (to remain chewy and firm), sautéing, shallow frying, and deep frying. With cooking, the long bean's bean flavor intensifies. Long beans are low in calories, about 45 calories per cup, and rich in vitamin A and also contain vitamin C and potassium. Season: year-round.

Pampuna



In the endless summer of Caribbean living we only have to concern ourselves with a wet season and a dry season. Still we do indulge heavily in the pleasures of pumpkin and enjoy Caribbean pumpkin recipes year round. A popular dish in Aruba is Sopi di Pompuna, don't miss it. This dish is made of pumpkin soup, and parsley. Pumpkins are rich in flavonoid polyphenolic antioxidants such as xanthin, lutein and carotenes and also contain vitamins. Pumpkin seeds are a good source of omega-3 fatty acids, vitamins, minerals and proteins. Pumpkins are used to make desserts, breads and soups.❑

Meet Aruba's biggest hero, Boy Ecury



(Oranjestad)—As part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands and due to its strategic geolocation, Aruba was unexpectedly involved in the Second World War. As is known around the globe, this chapter in world history is one of the most tragic yet, and many soldiers and rebels have died on the front line during this time.

One of those rebels who have fought against the Nazi regime, was an Aruban named Segundo Jorge Adelberto "Boy" Ecury. Born in Aruba on April 23rd, 1922, Boy spent his childhood on the island, before being sent to The Netherlands by his father when he was 15 years old to continue his studies abroad. This was in 1937, three years before WWII broke out.

During the war, he actively participated in the rebellion in The Netherlands against the Nazi regime, but his rebellious streak and constant drive to fight for justice began even before the war broke out. Being a person of color with a Haitian heritage living in The Netherlands made him vulnerable to discrimination, and this inspired him to be an activist, to stand up and fight against discrimination and oppression.
After seeing the horrific bombings of Rotterdam first-hand, he decided to join the resistance. At the same time, he was still studying and living with family in Tilburg. It was there where he met people who printed and distributed the rebellion newspaper. This would be the first of three rebellion group that he would join throughout his 4-year service to the resistance.

Boy's primary task as member of the group was to distract the German soldiers while others ran into hiding into alleyways. This he was able to do because of his skin color and confronting demeanor. Boy also participated in the multiple sabotaging operations against the German military occupying The Netherlands. These included bombings on German military trucks and trains. The group also helped people go into hiding, as well as opened fire against allies of the Nazi regime. In these operations, Boy really stood out for his cold bloodedness.

In 1943, he received a notice to be placed for work in Germany. This he refused, of course, and went into hiding using multiple addresses in multiple cities. Because he was a wanted man, he of course could not continue to be active as a rebel. However, stubborn and naturally rebellious as he was, he always tried to join in on the operations regardless.

In 1944, after his friend Luis de Lannoy, a fellow rebel from Curacao, was arrested and executed, he moved to Delft, where he joined his third and last group in Rotterdam. During this time, he wrote a goodbye letter for his family, possibly knowing the risks of him being active again in the big cities.



Eventually, he proved himself right. On November 5th, 1944, Boy Ecury was arrested by German soldiers. He was placed in the "Oranjehotel" prison in Scheveningen, The Hague, where he was questioned. Despite being sold out by an acquaintance, he himself never gave away the names of his comrades. Famously, he told his cell mate: "I will die with a smile on my face." On November 6th, 1944, Ecury was executed. He was only 22 years old.

Ecury was buried with military honor. In 1949, the Aruban Government erected a monumental bust of him in front of what is now the linear park trail, and in 1984 he received the Resistance Memorial Cross postmortem.
Boy's life motto was this: "In my father's house, there is no place for a traitor."❑

Source: "De Kolibrie op de Rots (en meer over the geschiedenis van Aruba)" by Evert Bongers.

Forgotten gems: Open air movie theaters

(Oranjestad)—During the span of over 100 years, Aruba only saw five open air movie theaters. Now practically obsolete on the island, these theaters were once frequently visited by locals and migrants in the 20th century.

The first open air theater was constructed in 1920 and was commissioned by Shon Eduard (Eddy) de Veer. This theater was located at the Hotel Colombia in Oranjestad, which is now where the Aruban census office is located. The theater was simple; it only consisted of a screen, and visitors had to bring their own chairs to enjoy the popular silent movies of the time.

American migrants who worked in the refinery and lived in the Lago Colony in Sero Colorado also had their piece of the pie with their Open air Theatre, which formed part of the Esso Club, also known as the Pan-Am Club. It was at this theater that "Talkies" were first streamed, movies with sound. This theater mostly streamed American blockbusters for the American expats, this way making sure that these migrant were not missing out on entertainment from their home land.

In the 1950's and 60's, Savaneta saw their own open air theater, located in front of the Marinier's Kazerne (Marine Barracks). This theater was mostly visited by the neighboring marines, who didn't have much entertainment other than movies at that time.

The last and most recent open air theater was constructed in the form of a drive-in theater. A popular American concept, the Drive Inn located in Balashi was a hot spot for teenagers, who had the habit of cramming all their friends in one car to go see the movies. For this phenomenon there was a separate price that you had to pay called the "car crash".

This theater closed around 2012, but was re-opened during the pandemic in July 2020, where movies were streamed on a gigantic screen set up in front of stacked containers. However, this nostalgic form of entertainment did not last very long as it was closed again only a year or two later. Nowadays you can still see the stacked containers when you drive near the bridge in Balashi.❑

Source: "De kolibrie op de rots en meer over de geschiedenis van Aruba" by Evert Bongers.



ARUBA TODAY

CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

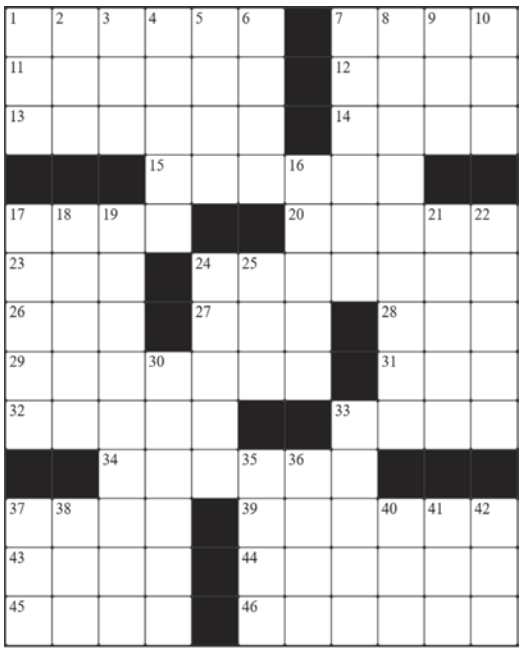
1. "Scram!"
7. "Get lost!"
11. Levy
12. Valentine trim
13. Stove part
14. High point
15. Soothing
17. Monument Valley sight
20. Crude home
23. "Exodus" hero
24. First, to Francisco
26. Rifle or revolver
27. Darling of baseball
28. Hosp. workers
29. New software version
31. Spotted cube
32. Solemn
33. Taunt
34. Blood component
37. Lotion additive
39. Jacket parts
43. Andean nation
44. Showy shrub
45. Small sound
46. Not harmful

DOWN

1. Feeding time need
2. Aussie bird
3. Spring mo.
4. Island nation of the Pacific
5. "Understood"
6. Small seabird
7. Ski event
8. Island nation off Africa
9. Court feat
10. Cowboy nickname
16. Owned by thee
17. Wise man
18. Blow one's top
19. Island nation of Southeast Asia
21. Bert's buddy
22. Luckless one
24. What the Devil wears, in a film title
25. Scepter
30. Anger
33. Island nation of Asia
35. Thick cut
36. Puzzle book feature
37. Phone download
38. Director Spike
40. Yale rooter
41. Pants part
42. -- Francisco



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.

11-25 CRYPTOQUOTE

ZCGP VJM BHKLG KP ECG SJHPKPF, FKTG ECBPRL WJH ECG YKFCE, WJH VJMH YKWG, WJH VJMH LEHGPFEC.

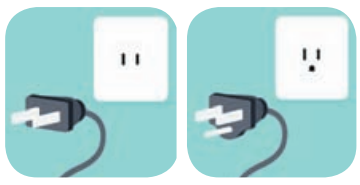
— EGDMSLGC

Yesterday's Cryptoquote: SOMETIMES THE SMALLEST THINGS TAKE UP THE MOST ROOM IN YOUR HEART. — A.A. MILNE

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

Difficulty: ★★★ 11/26

©2026 King Features Syndicate, Inc.

Answer to previous puzzle

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

Difficulty: ★★★ 11/25

©2026 King Features Syndicate, Inc.

'Made history': Pakistan cheers as astronaut flies pioneering mission



Islamabad, Pakistan

Cheers erupted in the packed auditorium of Islamabad's space agency before dawn on Wednesday as a Pakistani astronaut cleared the launch tower on a groundbreaking mission thousands of kilometers away in northwest China.

Muhammad Zeeshan Ali, a Pakistan Air Force pilot and payload specialist, is the first foreign astronaut to fly on a Chinese space mission and also the first non-Chinese national to board the Tiangong space station.

As Pakistan's national anthem rang out at the Islamabad headquarters of the national space commission, hundreds of scientists, students and officials -- many of whom had gone without sleep -- watched Ali lift off on a big screen aboard the Shenzhou-24 alongside two Chinese crewmates.

"I feel goose bumps just seeing the launch," Zainab Abbasi, a physics and astronomy student, told AFP after watching the launch at the Space and Upper Atmosphere Research Commission (SUPARCO) building in the Pakistani capital.

"I could have never imagined that so soon in my life I would see a Pakistani astronaut go to space," said Abbasi, a keen amateur astronomer.

Ali is the first Pakistani to reach orbit, though adventurer Namira Salim travelled to space on a commercial suborbital flight in October 2023.

Ali will spend one week in orbit and return on the Shenzhou-23 spaceship, which is already docked at the Tiangong station.

- 'Our astronaut' -

Muhammad Yousaf Khan, the head of SUPARCO, said he had been worried that there would be few attendees given the 5:18 am (0018 GMT) launch time.

"But now I see there isn't a seat left," he said, pointing to the crowded room where many audience members were clutching Pakistani and Chinese flags.

"That shows how attached everyone is to our astronaut, this mission and the hard work behind it," he added.

While Pakistan's space agency has launched six satellites in the past 30 months, Khan said Ali's lift-off had set pulses racing in a special way.

"With every launch our hearts were pounding, hoping it would succeed and the satellite would do everything it was designed for. But today we all feel something different," he added.

The space agency chief said Ali would carry out four experiments in orbit -- among them studies of microalgae, self-healing materials for spacecraft and growing quinoa beyond Earth.

These were chosen from more than 300 proposals for spaceflight experiments sent in by Pakistani universities, Khan explained.

The selection process for astronauts was grueling, with more than 50 candidates screened.

19 of them were then sent to China for tests and two were eventually picked: Ali from the Pakistan Air Force and Khurram Daud from the navy, SUPARCO said.

- 'Made history' -

Their training, which included centrifuge and underwater drills, ran about seven months instead of the planned six.

Pakistan's space program began in 1961, and its first rocket, Rehbar 1, blasted off the following year.

Now it is partnering extensively with close ally China to achieve its spaceflight goals.

The two countries signed a deal in February 2025 setting up a Chinese government training program for Pakistani astronauts.

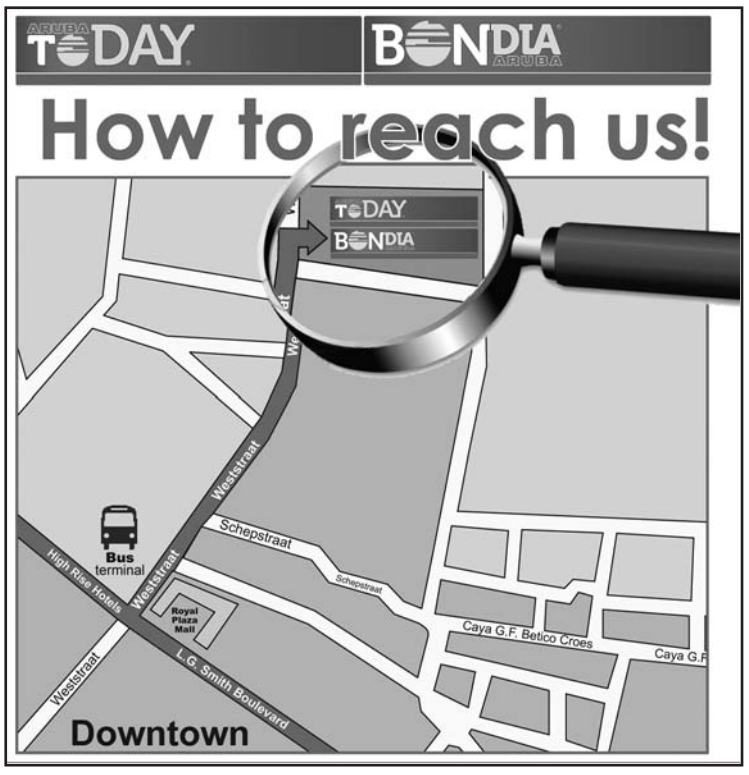
Asked whether Pakistan would build its own technology or keep depending on China, Professor Raza Akbar of the Institute of Space Technology (IST) said developing any independence from Beijing would be "a gradual process".

"Initially we collaborate... we get the technology, we get the mentorship, and collectively we develop," he added.❑

CLASSIFIEDS

Divi Village
Eagle beach
F - building
Studio week # 47
Room # 5508
14 weeks remaining
Price : $ 7000
Call :011-297-630-1307
johnnypaesch@gmail.com

MULTI FAMILY YARDSALE
PARADERA 198-H
Saturday 9am- 4pm
Sunday 9am- 2pm
INFO: 5941527



ARUBA TODAY

Editor
Caribbean Speed Printers N.V.
Aruba Bank N.V. Acc. #332668
Caribbean Mercantile Bank N.V.
Acc. #23951903
RBC Royal Bank Acc. #1330772

Editors
Pilar Flores
Richard Brooks
Angenette Figuereo
Oriana Geerman

Sales
Mark Gomes
Sulaika Croes

Classifieds
classified@cspnv.com

Distribution and Collection
accounting@bondia.com

Social / Website
Juan Luis Pinto

Weststraat 22
T: 582-7800
E: news@arubatoday.com
W: www.arubatoday.com
@ArubaTodayNews

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: Seroe Preto
Tel. 584 4833

OTHER

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

EMERGENCY

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

TAXI SERVICES

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

AID FOUNDATIONS

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

GENERAL INFO

Phone Directory Tel. 118

Like us on Facebook
ARUBA TODAY NEWS

Fake gifts, real losses as AI ads proliferate



Shoppers carry bags along Fifth Avenue in New York City on November 24, 2026, as retailers offer Black Friday discounts ahead of the holiday shopping season.

Washington, United States

Online shoppers endlessly scrolling through gift suggestions this holiday season risk being duped by a blizzard of AI-generated scams touting nonexistent products.

Vertical video advertisements, pulling millions of views ahead of Black Friday, are using artificial intelligence to hawk items such as themed advent calendars, heated robes and pet accessories.

Holiday gift scams are not new, but experts warn that AI has lowered the cost required to create a convincing product demonstration.

Some 43 percent of Americans told an October 2026 shopping survey they had been duped by ads generated by the technology.

"It's been surprising how susceptible all ages are to buying these products," said Dallas-based content creator Maggie McGaugh.

She fronts a popular Instagram series of unboxing videos dedicated to exposing AI-advertised items.

Packages that she receives -- purchased primarily through Chinese-owned e-commerce company Temu because it refunds customers if items are not delivered -- fail to resemble the slickly marketed items seen on social media.

"Most of the items are very poor quality," she said. "The size is much smaller, the fabric is like a cheap costume, the lights are dimmer or you have to build it yourself."

- Cozy robe scam -

Heated, excessively decorated robes are particularly viral this holiday season. Some are styled after the gowns of popular Disney characters that often retail for over $100.

The ads suggest that the item is stocked in physical stores, including H&M.

The global fashion retailer told AFP it had received requests from customers in search of the apparel, but that its name and branding were falsely used to "promote products that are not sold by H&M."

Michelle Richard, known for her "Disney Fashionista" blog, told AFP she was quick to purchase the plush-looking item, but it has yet to be shipped.

"It wasn't until I reported it to my credit card company that I received a lengthy email and more reliable tracking," Richard said. "I am keeping my fingers crossed that the product comes soon and is of the quality it appeared in the ads."

Avid online shopper Tia Evans ordered a similar product in early October after repeatedly seeing ads for it across Facebook, Instagram and TikTok.

"I took a risk on the ad specifically because I had seen it so many times," she told AFP.

She purchased four robes, from a store that catered to African American culture, for more than $200.

Soon after, the website she shopped from went dark, with no reliable tracking information on her order and messages left unanswered by the vendor.

Her bank sent a notification asking if she recognized the purchase. She left the case open in the hopes she "can refer back to it and say: 'Hey, I never got this.'"

Other shoppers reported to AFP that their credit card information had been compromised, used for unauthorized purchases on gambling websites.

Digital media expert Christina Inge said the AI products add to "the perfect storm" of impulse buys around the holidays.

The promotions are tested through "hundreds of ad variations to find the audience for the fake," she said.

But similar to Evans, consumers on Reddit are flagging void tracking numbers and disappearing product listings.

One user told AFP about the purchase of a $280 "smart" Christmas tree gone wrong: "The website vanished after payment, and the only proof of purchase was a fake invoice."❑

AI football talent app heading to Europe



Coach of Switzerland's football team Murat Yakin gestures during a press conference launching in Germany, Austria and Switzerland the AI-powered app Footbao helping young footballers get spotted by clubs through their match and training videos, in Zurich, on November 23, 2026.

Zurich, Switzerland

Artificial intelligence is making its way onto the football pitch through an app designed to identify young talent, which is set for its European launch in January.

The Footbao app, which made its debut in South America, allows aspiring young players to upload videos of matches or training sessions in just a few clicks.

The clips are then analyzed by an AI system which generates reports on the players' technical, tactical, physical and mental attributes.

These are then filtered and presented to professional football scouts.

Created by Swiss investors, the app was first launched in Brazil in 2023 and has since been rolled out in other South American countries, including Argentina, Uruguay and Colombia.

The app already has some 182,500 users and receives around 3,000 videos a week in Brazil alone, its British chief executive Nick Rappolt told a press conference in Zurich this week.

Among its more than 80 partner clubs are the Brazilian sides Santos and Corinthians -- both former world champions.

The app is due to launch in Europe in January, initially in Germany, Austria and Switzerland, before rolling out across the rest of the continent.

Rappolt said that while talented youngsters could easily gain visibility on platforms like Instagram and TikTok, the challenge remains getting noticed by the right people.

He said the app was not aimed at replacing scouts but was intended to facilitate the process of identifying potential players and linking them up with clubs.

Based in Switzerland's Zug canton, the company's investors include Swiss banker Boris Collardi, the former chief executive of Julius Baer private bank; former FC Basel president Bernhard Burgener; and Switzerland's head coach Murat Yakin.

"I see a lot of talented players; they try and maybe the dream didn't come true," Yakin told AFP.

"That's why this platform is important for those players. It's very important for young people to have a second chance.

"With this football app, you can compare your strengths and weaknesses with other players," the former Basel defender said.

"If you never get the feedback from a coach or from scouting, you can compare... the feedback you get from this platform" to that received by others from the same age group, said Yakin.❑

Pistons down Magic, Celtics hold off Wizards

Los Angeles, United States

The Detroit Pistons shrugged off the injury absence of Cade Cunningham to keep their NBA Cup hopes alive on Tuesday with a gritty 104-86 road victory over the Orlando Magic.

Isaiah Joe led Detroit's scoring with 21 points after nailing five three-pointers as five Pistons players finished in double figures.

Orlando, who could have booked their place in the knockout rounds with a victory, started brightly to take a 22-16 lead after the first quarter.

But a devastating scoring burst from Detroit in the second quarter, outscoring Orlando 32-14, changed the contest.

Detroit took a 48-36 lead into half-time and maintained a double-digit cushion for most of the remainder of the game.

"I thought our defense was elite tonight," Pistons coach J.B. Bickerstaff said.

"On a night where we were down some offense, we knew we were going to have to hang our hat on the defensive end of the floor and I love the way that everybody contributed.

"Everybody bought into it and that was the best part. We knew it was going to be a gritty, physical game, but our guys did a great job."

Orlando lead Eastern Conference Group A with a 3-1 record while the Pistons are in third place on 2-1 behind the Toronto Raptors.

The Boston Celtics all but locked up their place in the quarter-finals after holding off a furious rally from the Washington Wizards to score a 131-116 win on the road in the East's Group C.

Jayson Tatum scored 41 points for the Celtics while Paul George added 28 and Neemias Queta 21 to halt Boston's four-game losing streak.

The Celtics looked to be cruising towards a crushing win after racing into a 34-point lead just before half-time.

But the Wizards hit back to outscore Boston 40-24 in the third quarter and got to within seven points of the lead late in the fourth at 119-112.

Boston regrouped down the stretch and a pair of three-pointers from Baylor Scheierman saw the Celtics pull clear.

"We had a tough week last week for various different reasons," Tatum said of Boston's run of four straight losses before Tuesday. "But you can't change what happens. We always try to focus on today," he told NBC.

Tatum was not surprised by the Wizards' rally.

"No lead is safe and they get paid to play basketball too, right?" he said. "They've got a lot of talent over there so it was just a case of trying to weather the storm."

In the late game, the Denver Nuggets missed the chance to clinch their passage to the knockout rounds, stumbling to a 120-101 defeat against the Dallas Mavericks in the Western Conference Group A.❑



Isaiah Joe #17 of the Detroit Pistons reacts after scoring a three-pointer against the Orlando Magic during the fourth quarter of a Emirates NBA Cup game at Kia Center on November 24, 2026 in Orlando, Florida.

Steelers bench struggling Rodgers in final season



Aaron Rodgers #8 of the Pittsburgh Steelers looks on after being sacked against the Philadelphia Eagles in the fourth quarter at Lincoln Financial Field on November 22, 2026 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Los Angeles, United States

Pittsburgh Steelers quarterback Aaron Rodgers has been dropped from the starting line-up for this week's game against the Denver Broncos, potentially signaling the end of the future Hall-of-Famer's career.

The Steelers said in a statement late Tuesday that Rodgers -- who had said previously he will retire after this season -- would be stood down in favor of back-up Mason Rudolph.

"The Pittsburgh Steelers have named Mason Rudolph the starting quarterback for the game this Friday against the Denver Broncos," a Steelers spokesman said.

"Aaron Rodgers will be inactive for the game on Friday."

The move comes with Rodgers, who turns 43 on Sunday, struggling through what is one of the worst seasons of his career.

His passing completion rate for the season is just under 61 percent, and he has been sacked a total of 31 times.

Rodgers, a four-time NFL Most Valuable Player, spent the bulk of his career working with current Steelers coach Mike McCarthy at the Green Bay Packers, where the duo won a Super Bowl together in 2011.

Rodgers's future had been in question ever since the Steelers' playoff exit last season, when the veteran quarterback was sacked four times and was held to just 17 completions in a bruising 30-6 loss to the Houston Texans.

Speaking ahead of the current season, Rodgers confirmed he planned to retire.

"Yes, this is it," Rodgers told reporters when asked if the 2026-2027 campaign would be his last.❑

Double Olympic ski champion Brignone announces retirement

Rome, Italy

Double Olympic champion Federica Brignone of Italy announced her retirement Wednesday, after a short-lived but painful return to skiing following knee surgery.

"After these two days spent on the snow, I realize that my leg still is not right -- and, more importantly, that it hurts too much," she said in a video posted on Instagram.

"I have therefore decided to end my athletic career and will no longer take part in competitions," she said, adding that it was "a very difficult decision".

The 36-year-old said, however, that she "would truly love to open the starting gate one last time, to say goodbye to this world that I love and adore", and would "let you know where and when".

Brignone injured knee ligaments during the Italian championships in April 2025.

She managed to regain fitness in time to win two gold medals on home snow at the Milan-Cortina Games -- in super-G and giant slalom -- earlier this year.

But she cut her season short after the Olympics to continue her recovery, and then decided to have surgery to remove a plate and clean up her knee.

"What you did in Cortina is one of the greatest comebacks in the history of our sport," US star Mikaela Shiffrin wrote in a tribute to Brignone on social media.❑



Gold medallist Italy's Federica Brignone poses on the podium of the women's giant slalom event during the Milano Cortina 2026 Winter Olympic Games at the Tofane Alpine Skiing Centre in Cortina d'Ampezzo on February 15, 2026.

Bills-Chiefs showdown tops NFL Thanksgiving holiday slate

Washington, United States

Kansas City quarterback Patrick Mahomes and Buffalo superstar Josh Allen face a Thursday showdown on the U.S. Thanksgiving holiday that will have a major impact on the NFL playoff picture.

The Bills own the AFC's best record at 9-1 and beating the Chiefs (8-2) would help ensure a home-field edge in the post-season.

"We know what type of team they are," Allen said. "They've been one of the best teams in the league the last 10 years. So, you've got to play your best."

Mahomes, whose club shares the AFC West division lead with Denver, hopes to snap Buffalo's six-game win streak.

"It will be a great challenge for us. We're excited for it," Mahomes said. "You know it's going to take your best football.

"Every time we play each other, it always comes down to the end of the game. It's about who makes the big plays in the big moments. It's always exciting. It's always fun."



Josh Allen #17 of the Buffalo Bills calls for the snap during the game against the Miami Dolphins at Highmark Stadium on November 22, 2026 in Orchard Park, New York.

The Bills have averaged 31 points in their win streak while the Chiefs have won three in a row with 34 or more points each game.

Allen's Bills and Mahomes's Chiefs are 5-5 in all-time meetings, but it's not so even when it comes to realizing and crushing title hopes.

Allen and the Bills are 5-1 in regular-season matchups against Kansas City but Mahomes and the Chiefs are 4-0 in playoff games against Buffalo.

The Chiefs have won three Super Bowls and lost two others in the past seven seasons while the Bills have not reached the Super Bowl since losing four in a row from 1991-1994 and were eliminated from the playoffs by Kansas City in four of the past six seasons.

"It's the most important one because it's the next one," Allen said of the game. "All the seeding implications, that is what it is. We're just trying to find a way to go 1-0 each week."

Cold, windy and rainy conditions are forecast for the contest.

"I take pride in being able to throw the ball in any conditions," Mahomes said.

The Bills-Chiefs contest tops five games to be played around the U.S. Thanksgiving holiday.

Green Bay will visit the Los Angeles Rams on Wednesday in a matchup of 6-4 clubs while Thursday also sees Philadelphia at Dallas and a showdown for the NFC North lead when Chicago visits Detroit. Both are 8-2 with the Bears having won five games in a row and Detroit's streak at six.

Denver (8-2) carries a six-game win streak into Pittsburgh (6-4) on Friday.

- Respect for Allen -

Chiefs defensive coordinator Steve Spagnuolo respects Allen's poise as well as passing and rushing skills.

"You're hoping somewhere along the way he makes a mistake. When he plays (us), it seems like he's on fire and becomes Superman. Somehow we've got to force him into a bad throw," he said.

"They will have a good number of designed quarterback runs. This is a big game for both teams. When that happens, Josh Allen decides he's going to put his body on the line.

"He has this competitive nature about him like all the great ones have where somehow, some way, they are going to will their team to win. I've got a lot of respect for him."

Bills coach Joe Brady wants the Chiefs showdown to be just another game for his players.

"People make it really big, but we have to approach it just like it's the next one," he said.

"If you ride the rollercoaster of emotions, if you make games seem more important, what's it going to look like the following week?

"Consistency is the key. If we get caught up in the environment and emotions of it, we make it more than it needs to be."❑

