

# International NEWS MEDIA

FEBRUARY 2024

## 1st US MOON LANDING IN MORE THAN 50 YEARS



HOUSTON, US – The Odysseus lander on Thursday, February 15 became the first US spacecraft in more than a half century to land on the moon.

Intuitive Machines, the Houston, Texas-based company that built the craft, became the first commercial enterprise to ever land a spacecraft on the lunar surface.

"We can confirm without a doubt the equipment is on the moon," said Intuitive Machines' co-founder and chief technology officer Tim Crane on NASA's live broadcast of the landing. "Odysseus has a new home."

The spacecraft launched from Kennedy Space Center in Florida entered

the moon's orbit on Wednesday, February 14. Thursday's lunar touchdown made this the first American moon landing since NASA's Apollo program came to an end in 1972.

The Odysseus lander is carrying several NASA instruments, including a radio beacon to transmit its precise geolocation as well as high-resolution cameras to capture how the surface of the moon changes from interactions with the engine plume of the spacecraft.

Intuitive Machines was one of several companies approved by the US space agency to build private lunar land-

ers that could send scientific payloads into space. NASA paid the company a reported \$118 million for the February 15 moon mission.

Experts said these robotic missions are important to explore the moon as NASA and the Canadian Space Agency prepare to send four astronauts to fly around the moon in its upcoming Artemis II mission next year.

If that mission is successful, NASA plans to launch its Artemis III mission for a scheduled moon landing in 2026 with four astronauts aboard -- three Americans and one Canadian. - *Anadolu*

### G7 urges suspension of hostilities in Gaza for hostages, aid

ROME – The G7 is calling for a suspension of fighting in Gaza to ensure both the release of Israeli hostages taken by Hamas and the provision of aid to Palestinian civilians, Foreign Minister and Deputy Premier Antonio Tajani said on Saturday, February 17.

In the Middle East, the G7 "aims to guarantee the security of the state of Israel," said Tajani in a press conference at the Munich Security Conference.

Separately, on the sidelines of the conference, Tajani said the "carnage" of Israelis and Palestinians must end.

"It is obvious that some do not want



this to be achieved, but we want peace and an end to this carnage that has led to the deaths of thousands of people, Israeli and Palestinian civilians. This carnage must end," added Tajani. (ANSA)

### U.N. CHIEF CALLS FOR INVESTIGATION INTO REPORTED DEATH OF NAVALNY

By MARGARET BESHEER

NEW YORK — United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres expressed shock on the reported death of jailed Russian opposition leader Alexey Navalny and called for a credible investigation into his death.

Navalny, 47, died Friday, February 16 in the high-security Arctic penal colony where he was serving a 19-year sentence for extremism, Russia's prison agency said.

Navalny was a vocal critic of Russian President Vladimir Putin, an anti-corruption campaigner, and had run for public office. His death comes less than a month before elections that are likely to give Putin another six years in power.

U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Linda Thomas-Greenfield said, "Russia's relentless persecution is responsible for his death."

### IRS announces special Saturday hours for face-to-face help for taxpayers

WASHINGTON — To improve service this tax season, the Internal Revenue Service announced special Saturday hours for the next four months at specific Taxpayer Assistance Centers (TACs) across the country.

The special Saturday openings will take place from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., on Feb. 24, March 16, April 13 and May 18. Offices in dozens of states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico will be open during this special four-month event, with no appointments required. The IRS encourages taxpayers to visit the special Saturday hours for participating TAC locations. For more info, visit [irs.gov](https://irs.gov)

### DHS to hire 50 artificial intelligence experts in 2024

WASHINGTON — Secretary of Homeland Security Alejandro N. Mayorkas and Chief Information Officer (CIO) and Chief Artificial Intelligence Officer (CAIO) Eric Hysen announced the Department's first-ever hiring sprint to recruit 50 Artificial Intelligence (AI) technology experts in 2024.

The new DHS "AI Corps" is modeled after the U.S. Digital Service, building teams that will help better leverage

this new technology responsibly across strategic areas of the homeland security enterprise including efforts to counter fentanyl, combat child sexual exploitation and abuse, deliver immigration services, secure travel, fortify our critical infrastructure, and enhance our cybersecurity.

The AI Corps will bolster the DHS workforce with experts in AI and Machine Learning (ML) technologies, models, and

applications who will support policy initiatives to ensure the safe and secure use of AI, while protecting privacy and civil rights and civil liberties.

Using the Office of Personnel Management's new flexible hiring authorities for AI-related jobs, DHS has worked to streamline and expedite the federal hiring process to ensure qualified candidates receive offers as quickly as possible.

### Former Los Angeles politician José Huizar sentenced to 13 years in federal prison for racketeering conspiracy and tax evasion

LOS ANGELES – Former Los Angeles City Councilmember José Luis Huizar was sentenced on January 26 this year to 156 months in federal prison for using his powerful position at City Hall to enrich himself and his associates, as well as for cheating on his taxes.

Huizar, 55, of Boyle Heights, was sentenced by United States District Judge John F. Walter, who also ordered him to pay \$443,905 in restitution to the City of Los Angeles and \$38,792 in restitution to the IRS. Judge Walter ordered Huizar to surrender to federal authorities no later than April 30.

At the hearing, Judge Walter said public corruption carries "the real potential to destroy the delicate fabric of our democracy" and causes the public "to disengage in the democratic process"



and "give up all hope of participating" with the government.

Huizar pleaded guilty in January 2023 to one count of conspiracy to violate the Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations (RICO) Act and one count of tax evasion. He represented Council District 14 (CD-14), which includes downtown Los Angeles and its

surrounding communities, from 2005 until his resignation in 2020.

For years, Huizar led what prosecutors in court documents called the CD-14 Enterprise, a criminal conspiracy that operated a pay-to-play scheme with three key goals: gain financial enrichment through bribes, maintain Huizar's political power, and avoid detection by law enforcement.

In a sentencing memorandum, prosecutors described how Huizar chose "to place his own lust for money and power above the rights and interests of the people he was elected to serve" and "in the wake of his criminal activity... helped gut the public's confidence in the integrity of its local government – and beyond – and eroded a sense of fair play therein."

### Neuralink announces first human implant

Elon Musk says his company Neuralink has placed an experimental brain device in a person in the first human test of the technology.

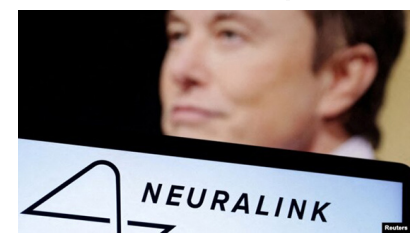
Neuralink describes the coin-sized device as a "brain-computer interface." It is designed to be implanted inside the brain through a medical operation.

Musk announced the news on January 29 on the social media service he owns, X. The billionaire businessman is also the owner of Tesla and SpaceX. His company Neuralink aims to establish direct communication links between the brain and computers.

"The first human received an implant from @Neuralink (Sunday) and is recovering well," Musk wrote. He added that first results of the implanted device showed "promising neuron spike" activity.

A spike is a term for a method neurons use to communicate with each other. The Cambridge Learner's Dictionary defines a neuron as "a nerve cell that carries messages between your brain and other parts of your body."

The device includes an extremely



The Neuralink logo and Elon Musk are seen in this illustration taken, December 19, 2022. (Reuters/Dado Ruvic/Illustration)

small computer and extremely thin wires that connect to a part of the brain that controls intent of movement.

Neuralink says the implant is designed to treat brain disorders and help serious back injury victims regain body movement. Company officials also say it might be used one day to help blind people see again. Musk says that in the future, the device might also be used to improve human intelligence in an effort to keep up with supercomputers and artificial intelligence (AI) technology.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved human testing of the Neuralink device last May. - *VOA*

### NewsBriefs

#### US, UK disrupt LockBit ransomware variant

The Department of Justice, the United Kingdom and international law enforcement partners in London announce the disruption of the LockBit ransomware group, one of the most active ransomware groups in the world that has targeted over 2,000 victims, received more than \$120 million in ransom payments, and made ransom demands totaling hundreds of millions of dollars.

The joint international law enforcement agencies seized numerous public-facing websites used by LockBit to connect to the organization's infrastructure and seized control of servers used by LockBit administrators.

#### FBI leads arrests of drug-trafficking organizations

Across more than seven FBI field offices in the last two weeks of January, nearly 200 people have been charged as part of a series of arrests targeting large-scale drug-trafficking organizations operating throughout the United States and North America. On January 30, ten people were arrested in multiple North American cities in relation to two federal indictments charging members of an organized crime syndicate who allegedly conspired to traffic and import hundreds of kilograms of cocaine and other controlled substances from Mexico through Los Angeles for export to Canada or redistribution throughout the U.S.

#### Multimillion dollar mass mailing fraud schemes

Ryan Young, 41, of Upper Saddle River, New Jersey was recently sentenced in the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of New York to 72 months in prison and two years of supervised release for committing two separate mail fraud schemes in which he stole more than \$50 million from victims throughout the United States from 2011 to 2016 by sending letters falsely telling them that they were entitled to receive a large sum of money in exchange for payment of a small fee.

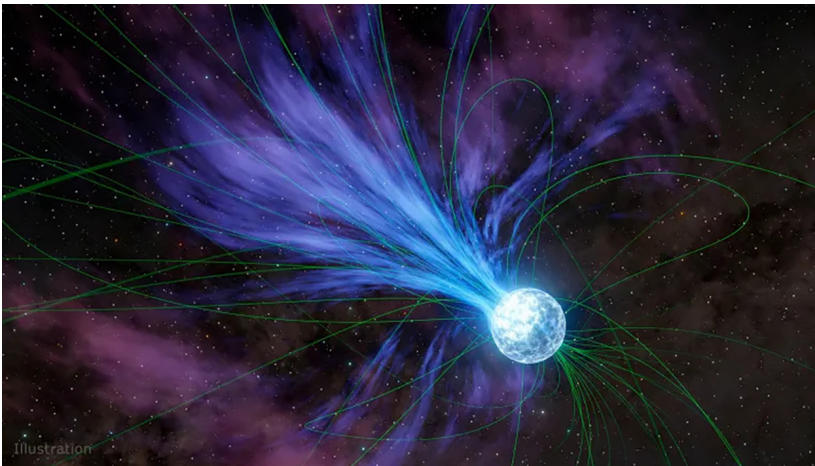
#### Life sentence for man running child sexual abuse website

William Michael Spearman, 58, of Madison, Alabama was recently sentenced to life in prison for his involvement with a website dedicated to the advertisement and distribution of images and videos depicting child sexual abuse.

Spearman was the lead administrator of the website, which included a section devoted to the sexual abuse of infants and toddlers, a section devoted to images and videos depicting children being subjected to pain and torture, and a section devoted to avoiding detection by law enforcement, among others



# NASA telescopes find new clues about mysterious deep space signals



In an ejection that would have caused its rotation to slow, a magnetar is depicted losing material into space in this artist's concept. The magnetar's strong, twisted magnetic field lines (shown in green) can influence the flow of electrically charged material from the object, which is a type of neutron star. (NASA/JPL-Caltech)

What's causing mysterious bursts of radio waves from deep space? Astronomers may be a step closer to providing one answer to that question. Two NASA X-ray telescopes recently observed one such event – known as a fast radio burst – mere minutes before and after it occurred. This unprecedented view sets scientists on a path to better understand these extreme radio events.

While they only last for a fraction of a second, fast radio bursts can release about as much energy as the Sun does in a year. Their light also forms a laser-like beam, setting them apart from more chaotic cosmic explosions.

Because the bursts are so brief, it's often hard to pinpoint where they come from. Prior to 2020, those that were traced to their source originated outside

our own galaxy – too far away for astronomers to see what created them. Then a fast radio burst erupted in Earth's home galaxy, originating from an extremely dense object called a magnetar – the collapsed remains of an exploded star.

In October 2022, the same magnetar – called SGR 1935+2154 – produced another fast radio burst, this one studied in detail by NASA's NICER (Neutron Star Interior Composition Explorer) on the International Space Station and NuSTAR (Nuclear Spectroscopic Telescope Array) in low Earth orbit. The telescopes observed the magnetar for hours, catching a glimpse of what happened on the surface of the source object and in its immediate surroundings, before and after the fast radio burst. The results, described in a new study published Feb. 14

in the journal Nature, are an example of how NASA telescopes can work together to observe and follow up on short-lived events in the cosmos.

The burst occurred between two "glitches," when the magnetar suddenly started spinning faster. SGR 1935+2154 is estimated to be about 12 miles (20 kilometers) across and spinning about 3.2 times per second, meaning its surface was moving at about 7,000 mph (11,000 kph).

Slowing it down or speeding it up would require a significant amount of energy. That's why study authors were surprised to see that in between glitches, the magnetar slowed down to less than its pre-glitch speed in just nine hours, or about 100 times more rapidly than has ever been observed in a magnetar.

## Celebrating America's oldest person at 116

By CHRIS TEJIRIAN

When Edie Ceccarelli was born in 1908, horse-drawn carriages still ran the streets of her hometown of Willits, California. She was in her 30s when World War II broke out.

While she has outlived several close relatives, she is not alone. Ceccarelli still lives in the small city of Willits, and the whole town celebrated her 116th birthday, which falls on February 5, with a parade. Neighbors waved and shouted "Happy birthday!" during the parade, held Sunday, February 4.

In fact, residents of Willits have held festivities on Ceccarelli's birthday every year since she turned 100 years old. In a past year, she's said her secrets to longevity are "a couple of fingers of red wine with dinner, and mind your own business," the Press Democrat of Santa Rosa, California, reports.

As the oldest person living in the U.S. and the second-oldest person in the world, Ceccarelli, along with the city of Willits, has drawn the attention of a documentary featuring the world's oldest people and of media outlets in places as



Every year, the city of Willits, California celebrates the life and longevity of Edie Ceccarelli, who turned 116 on February 5. (© Yoni Brook)

far as New York and London.

"Her birthday, ever since she was 100, has always been a community thing, a public party," parade organizer Suzanne Picetti told USA Today. "It brings community together to celebrate a really special human being. It brings a lot of joy and happiness to our community."

## Artificial Intelligence (AI): Top 10 Disruptive Predictions for 2024

DUBLIN -- The "AI: Top 10 Predictions, 2024" report has been added to ResearchAndMarkets.com's offering.

In the realm of technological progress, artificial intelligence (AI) has emerged as a transformative force with the potential to reshape industries of the future. 89% of enterprises believe Generative AI technology will be a disruptive technology for enterprises to create strategic market differentiation.

As AI evolves, it is poised to drive unprecedented changes that redefine the very fabric of industries, including revolutionizing manufacturing processes, automating workflows, personalizing service portfolios, enhancing customer experience (CX), and augmenting business growth.

Accelerated adoption of AI in 2024 is expected, with enterprises focused on building data readiness for AI, using a multimodal approach to use case deployments, and adopting best practices in ethical AI.

### Top 10 Growth Opportunities

- Generative AI Solution Development and Deployment Services
- Implementation Platforms
- System Integration Services
- ICT Advisory Services
- Data Readiness & Management
- Applied AI Applications
- Edge AI Datacenter Infrastructure
- Responsible AI
- Multimodal Foundational Models
- Conversational AI

Source: PRNewswire

**Spread love everywhere you go. Let no one ever come to you without leaving happier.**

Mother Teresa

## RED CROSS DECLARES EMERGENCY BLOOD SHORTAGE

The American Red Cross is facing an emergency blood shortage as it experiences the lowest number of people giving blood in the last 20 years. Blood and platelet donations are needed now to help alleviate the shortage and ensure lifesaving medical procedures proceed without delay.

Don't wait — make an appointment today to give blood or platelets to help ensure people receive the care they need. Book now by using the Red Cross Blood Donor App, visiting RedCrossBlood.org or calling 1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767).

## Hugh Hoffman's historic gift to ALS Association will elevate fight against ALS

ARLINGTON, Va., Feb. 12, 2024/PRNewswire/ -- The ALS Association proudly announces the largest single gift in its history from the estate of the late philanthropist Hugh Hoffman. The \$58 million gift will profoundly impact the lives of people living with ALS and their loved ones, advancing the ALS Association's goal of making ALS livable until there is a cure.

Hoffman was a Cincinnati native who passed away in March 2023 at the age of 91. When he was 11, Hoffman lost his father, Herbert, to ALS, which is still a fatal disease without a cure. Hoffman wanted his gift to ensure that families in the future will not have to lose their loved ones to ALS.

Hoffman's gift is specifically designated to advancing promising ALS therapies, developing new or strengthening existing ALS clinics, and enhancing access to ALS care for people living with ALS.

Hoffman's \$58 million gift to the ALS Association is believed to be the largest single philanthropic gift made to an ALS organization and represents just over half of the money raised by the global phenomenon known as the Ice Bucket Challenge.

Source: PRNewswire

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## Vantage Foundation partners with The IREDE Foundation to empower child amputees in Nigeria

LAGOS, Nigeria -- Vantage Foundation is proud to announce its strategic partnership with The IREDE Foundation, a non-profit organization committed to empowering children between the ages of 0 - 18 living with limb loss in Nigeria to live self-sufficient lives by giving them prosthetic limbs.

IREDE founder, Crystal Chigbu's daughter was born in 2009 with a congenital limb deformity requiring amputation at 27 months old. Since then, her daughter has needed to use a prosthetic limb. Crystal realized there was a significant lack of resources for children like her daughter, and established the IREDE Foundation in 2012 to change the narrative around disability in Nigeria and in Africa at large.

Since its inception, The IREDE Foundation has been at the forefront of advocacy and empowerment for these children, whom they call champions. They have provided over 528 custom-made prosthetic limbs to 479 children across 35 states in Nigeria for free, and they have continued to maintain and replace these prosthetics as the children grow. They have also enhanced these children's access to education through the provision of educational scholarships. - PRNewswire





## GIANT PANDAS SET TO RETURN TO CALIFORNIA

SACRAMENTO – California could become the first state in the U.S. to welcome a new pair of giant pandas in the latest round of a collaborative conservation effort with China.

The San Diego Zoo Wildlife Alliance announced that it has signed a cooperative agreement with the China Wildlife Conservation Association and filed a permit application with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. According to reports, two pandas could arrive by the end of the summer.

“California and China share deep cultural and economic ties, and we look forward to the opportunity to again wel-

come these iconic bears to the Golden State,” said Governor Gavin Newsom, who led a weeklong visit to China last October.

“From securing a safe future for this national treasure to fighting climate change, we’re proud to continue our long history of working together towards shared goals.”

In San Francisco last November during the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Summit, Chinese President Xi Jinping signaled that China planned to send new pandas to the United States as “envoys of friendship” between the nations.

The APEC Summit followed Governor Newsom’s October travel to China, during which he met with President Xi and other high-level Chinese officials to discuss climate action and cooperation, promote economic development and tourism, and strengthen cultural ties.

The state hopes that this week’s announcement will lead to further exchanges and cooperation between California and China, which have a strong foundation of partnership built by Governors Schwarzenegger and Brown and the late Senator Dianne Feinstein, as well as Governor Newsom while serving as Mayor of San Francisco.



Pandas at the San Diego Zoo. Credit: San Diego Zoo Wildlife Alliance.

## NASA Welcomes Uruguay foreign minister for Artemis Accords signing

WASHINGTON-- During a ceremony at NASA Headquarters in Washington on February 15, Uruguay became the 36th country to sign the Artemis Accords. NASA Administrator Bill Nelson participated in the signing ceremony for the agency, and Omar Paganini, foreign minister, signed the Artemis Accords on behalf of Uruguay.

The accords establish a practical set of principles to guide space exploration cooperation among nations.

Also participating in the event were:

- NASA Deputy Administrator Pam Melroy
- Karen Feldstein, associate administrator for NASA’s Office of International and Interagency Relations
- Kevin Sullivan, U.S. Department of State deputy assistant secretary
- Andrés Augusto Durán Hareau, Uruguayan ambassador to the U.S.
- Heide Fulton, U.S. ambassador to Uruguay

Uruguay is the 36th country to sign the Artemis Accords, which establish a practical set of principles to guide space exploration cooperation among nations participating in NASA’s Artemis program. - PRNewswire



From left to right, Uruguayan Ambassador to the United States Andrés Augusto Durán Hareau, U.S. Department of State Deputy Assistant Secretary Kevin Sullivan, NASA Administrator Bill Nelson, and Uruguayan Foreign Minister Omar Paganini pose for a photo during an Artemis Accords signing ceremony, Thursday, Feb. 15, 2024, at the Mary W. Jackson NASA Headquarters building in Washington. Credits: NASA/Keegan Barber

## American Heart Association, Southwestern University team-up to promote cardiovascular health

AUSTIN – More than half of American adults do not know that heart disease is the leading cause of death in the country and many college students aren’t focused on their own heart health. During American Heart Month, the American Heart Association in Central Texas and Southwestern University are tackling this head-on and getting students to understand the importance of establishing heart healthy habits early.

Observed annually in February, American Heart Month reinforces the importance of cardiovascular health, highlights the need for more research, raises awareness about heart disease prevention, and encourages healthy lifestyle choices. Known for their focus on holistic wellbeing, Southwestern joined forces

with the American Heart Association, the leading voluntary health organization devoted to a world of longer, healthier lives, for trusted resources to raise awareness and educate their community.

“Nearly 45% of females 20 years or older are living with some form of cardiovascular disease, and many don’t know it,” said Vanessa Maldonado, executive director at American Heart Association Central Texas. “We want to make sure that students know that most cardiac and stroke events can be prevented through education and lifestyle changes. Implementing these small changes, such as moving more, eating smart, and knowing your numbers during your college years can reap health benefits well into the future. - American Heart Association

## BEST COUNTRIES FOR AMERICANS TO MOVE TO IN 2024

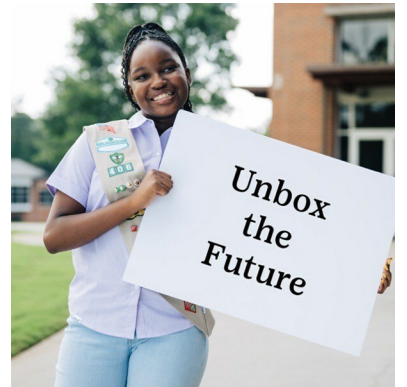
1. Mexico
2. Canada
3. Portugal
4. The Netherlands

There are many honorable mentions for the best countries for American expats to move to in 2024: the United Kingdom, Germany, Costa Rica, Spain, and Denmark. Each country has its own charm and appeal. Ultimately, the right fit for relocation is unique to an expat’s skills, education, needs, and personal preferences.

While some countries may be preferable for single professionals, others may be more suitable for families and retirees. - UHAUL

## Girl Scouts of the USA Celebrates National Girl Scout Cookie Weekend February 16-18

NEW YORK -- GSUSA invites communities across the nation to celebrate National Girl Scout Cookie Weekend, February 16–18, during which consumers nationwide can purchase cookies in person from Girl Scouts at any local booth as well as order cookies for direct shipment to their front door using the Girl Scout Cookie Finder. As always, all Girl Scout Cookie® proceeds stay local with councils and troops to power life-changing experiences year-round for Girl Scouts. - PRNewswire



## UNITED FOR IMPACT

### Peace Corps and AmeriCorps forge strategic alliance to mobilize S.S. American volunteers for a sustainable tomorrow

LOS ANGELES, CA – Peace Corps Director Carol Spahn and AmeriCorps CEO Michael D. Smith on January 24, signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the agencies, launching a new collaboration aimed at galvanizing the next generation of community service leaders and volunteers. The signing event also spotlighted California as the top-producing state of dedicated Peace Corps Volunteers, and the long-standing engagement of Californians in service opportunities that foster resilient communities and global progress.

“The Peace Corps and AmeriCorps share a foundational belief in the transformative power of service,” said Peace Corps Director Carol Spahn. “At this pivotal moment in history, we are coming together to inspire people of all ages to unite through service, whether here at home or abroad.”

AmeriCorps and Peace Corps will team up to broaden



Peace Corps Director Carol Spahn and AmeriCorps CEO Michael D. Smith during the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the two agencies.

participation in both international and domestic service for Americans from every background and community. Together, the agencies will recruit and retain members and volunteers who are committed to advancing the cause of peace, friendship, stronger communities and civic engagement through service and volunteering. - PRNewswire

For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.  
John 3:16

### Sports

#### NEW ERA CAP INTRODUCES NEW COLLECTIONS FOR 2024 MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL SEASON

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*This season, New Era Cap LLC, the international sports and lifestyle brand and official cap of Major League Baseball, is launching an ambitious MLB collection that will celebrate the stories and traditions of all 30 teams.*



## UN food agency says Gazans have 'too few meals' amid Israeli onslaught

ISTANBUL – There are too few meals for most Palestinians in the Gaza Strip amid a deadly Israeli offensive on the enclave, the World Food Program (WFP) said.

"For most in Gaza, there is no house, no table, and too few meals," WFP Country Director for Palestine Matthew Hollingworth said in a statement.

"We are hoping to be able to assist more bakeries, particularly in the northern areas where people are in desperate need, but we need access, and we need safety," he added.

Israel has pounded the Gaza Strip since an Oct. 7 attack by Palestinian resistance group Hamas, killing at least 28,176 people and injuring 67,784 others, while nearly 1,200 Israelis are believed to have been killed in the Hamas attack.

The Israeli onslaught has left 85 percent of Gaza's population internally displaced amid acute shortages of food, clean water and medicine, while 60 percent of the enclave's infrastructure was damaged or destroyed, according to the UN.

In late 2023, South Africa filed a case at the International Court of Justice (ICJ), accusing Israel of failing to uphold its



commitments under the 1948 Genocide Convention.

The UN court, in its interim ruling in January, ruled that South Africa's claims are plausible. It ordered provisional measures for Israel's government to desist from genocidal acts, and take measures to guarantee that humanitarian assistance is provided to civilians in Gaza. - *Anadolu*

## UN Tourism opens calls for Best Tourism Villages 2024

Over the past three editions, UN Tourism – the new name of the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) - received almost 600 applications from nearly 100 countries. Currently, the UN Tourism Best Tourism Villages Network brings together 186 members globally, comprising 129 recognized as Best Tourism Villages and 57 villages taking part in the Upgrade Programme. Together, they represent 55 countries across five world regions.

UN Tourism Secretary-General, Zurab Pololikashvili, says: "Best Tourism Villages by UN Tourism" recognizes those rural destinations where tourism is being effectively embraced as an opportunity or as a tool for sustainable growth or for preserving unique cultural and natural heritage. For the 2024 edition, we look forward to seeing more examples of tourism as a force for good."

### Applications welcome

UN Tourism Member States are invited to submit up to eight candidate villages through their National Tourism Administrations (NTAs). Applications are open until 24 April 2024, with the selected villages announced in the third quarter of the year.

## Ignazio Cassis visits the Philippines: Conclusion of a tour to position Switzerland in Asia

Ignazio Cassis has concluded his journey to Asia with a visit to the Philippine capital Manila. Discussions focused mainly on economic and political cooperation and the geopolitical situation. The last official visit to the Philippines by a member of the Federal Council dates back to 2008.

On 8 February, following his visits to India, the Republic of Korea and China, Mr Cassis travelled to the Philippines. His visit underscored Switzerland's interests in intensifying cooperation with this South East Asian country. The Federal Council's South East Asia Strategy 2023–26 outlines Switzerland's intention to further strengthen and deepen its relations with the countries of the region. This will allow Switzerland to tap into South East Asia's dynamism and at the same time contribute to the handling of regional risks. The Philippines – in terms of population the second-largest country in South East Asia – plays a pivotal role in this effort. - *EU*

## SWEDEN CONTRIBUTES SEK 15 MILLION TO HELP DEVELOPING ECONOMIES

Sweden is contributing SEK 15 million (about CHF 1.2 million) in 2023 to finance the participation of government officials from developing and least-developed economies (LDCs) in training and other trade capacity-building activities delivered by the WTO. This donation to the WTO's Global Trust Fund will help these countries broaden their expertise in WTO matters as well as their ability to negotiate trade rules.

WTO Director-General Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala said: "I thank Sweden for its generous contribution to the Global Trust Fund. This support will ensure government officials from developing economies receive training that would equip them to take full advantage of international trade to increase prosperity."

## USAID launches \$70M nutrition project for women, children, and adolescent girls

ADDIS ABABA — On February 8, USAID Mission Director Scott Hocklander and the Minister of Health Dr. Lia Tadesse, on her last day as Minister, launched a new \$70 million Feed the Future Ethiopia Community Nutrition Activity. The project aligns with the U.S. government's sustained, comprehensive investments in health, agriculture, WASH, education, and other sectors to address high malnutrition situation in Ethiopia.

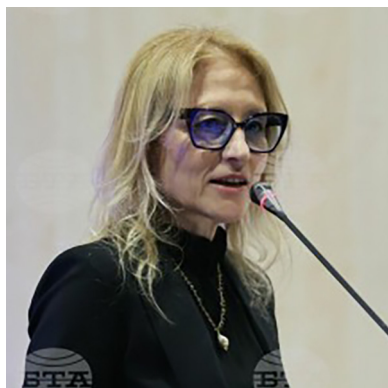
The Community Nutrition Activity focuses on women, children, and adolescent girls throughout the stages of their lives, from birth, through school, to becoming a mother and grandmother. "This is how to break the intergenerational cycle of malnutrition," commented USAID Mission Director Scott Hocklander during his opening remarks.

## CELEBRATING 200 YEARS OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS U.S. welcomes 46 Brazilian students for transformative exchange



BRASILIA -- Aiming to promote intercultural understanding and empower the next generation of leaders, the U.S. Embassy and Consulates in Brazil sent 46 Brazilian students on a transformative journey as part of the 22nd edition of the Youth Ambassadors program on January 19. This initiative aims to provide students from the Brazilian public school system, aged between 15 and 18, with academic excellence, English proficiency, and a commitment to entrepreneurship and social impact, an opportunity to broaden their horizons through international exchange. At the same time, the program contributes to strengthening the friendship and collaboration between the two countries.

## Bulgaria 1st in Europe in young people's desire to start own business



Minister of Innovation and Growth Milena Stoyche (BTA photo)

SOFIA, Bulgaria – Bulgaria ranks first in Europe in terms of young people's desire to start their own business, according to the latest Eurobarometer survey, Minister of Innovation and Growth Milena Stoycheva said.

The main topic of the Innovation Nexus event at Sofia Tech Park, organized by the Ministry of Innovation and Growth, the Ministry of Education and Science and the Embassy of Finland in Bulgaria, is the development of the innovation ecosystem in Bulgaria.

"We believe in the power of people working together and the strength of our ecosystem. There is a high entrepreneurial culture and we facilitate the collaboration of this ecosystem with the academic sector," she said, pointing out that Bulgaria has a growing number of startups in the technology and biotechnology sectors.

Since its inception, the Ministry of Innovation has been developing ways to improve the start-up environment and encourage investment in research and development of innovative products. - *BTA*

## CALLING ALL ALUMNI OF PCC/PUP

Calling All Alumni of Philippine College of Commerce/ Polytechnic University of the Philippines (PCC/PUP) to join our association.

We are a group of alumni devoted to giving back to our "Sintang Paaralan". Our mission and vision are geared to helping out our Alma Mater and many well-deserving students who are financially challenged.

Our Alma Mater paved the way for all of us to be successful in our chosen fields, and we want to give the same opportunity to those deserving students through our scholarship fund program. We are also a donor and support PUP's Education on Wheels which culminated at the wake of Covid 19. We wanted the students to have continuous education despite of the circumstances brought by Covid 19.

At the outset, our association humbly donated the construction of a two-storey athletic building inside the sta. Mesa campus, which now houses our pup athletes..

Small as it is our organization now, we are all very proud of our humble accomplishments. Having more

members who also have loyal, grateful, and kind hearts, we know that we will be able to do more.

Please come and join us in this endearing, inspiring, and grateful journey to change many people's lives as our way of giving back to our dear alma mater, our *sintang paaralan* ... PCC/PUP!

Hope to hear from you all, and looking forward to hopefully one day we meet in person.

Please contact vp-membership, vangie codilla @ (818) 468 3386 or email: vangie.Codilla@gmail.Com

Hep hep hooray to PUP - We entered for the first time the QS WORLD UNIVERSITY RANKING IN ASIA. There were 16 universities included and we made it as no. 7!

God bless us all! To God be the glory!

Warmest regards,  
Rosemarie T. Mejia  
VP-Goals & Planning

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## INM Book Choice

**CONTROL YOUR MIND & MASTER YOUR FEELINGS:**  
**This Book Includes - Break Overthinking & Master Your Emotions**

By ERIC ROBERTSON; Narrated by: SETH THOMPSON

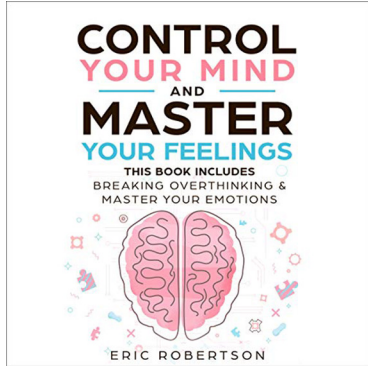
### Publisher's summary

We oftentimes look towards the outside world to find the roots of our problems. However, most of the times, we should be looking inwards. Our mind and our emotions determine our state of being in the present moment. If those aspects are left unchecked, we can get easily overwhelmed and are left feeling unfulfilled every single day.

This book contains two manuscripts designed to help you discover the best and most efficient way to control your thoughts and master your feelings.

In the first part of the bundle called **Breaking Overthinking**, you will discover:

- How overthinking can be detrimental to your social life.
- The hidden dangers of overthinking and what can happen to you if it's left untreated.
- How to declutter your mind from all the noise of the modern world.
- How overthinking affects your body, your energy levels, and your every day mood.
- How your surroundings affect your state of mind, and what you NEED to do in order to break out of that state.
- Bad habits we perform every day and don't even realize are destroying our sanity (and how to overcome them properly).
- How to cut out toxic people from your life, which cloud your judgment and make you feel miserable.



The second part of the bundle called **Master Your Emotions** will teach you:

- What our emotions actually are, and what core emotions are responsible for everything we feel.
- The importance of discovering your emotional map, and how you can use it to improve your state of being.
- When and if you should control your emotions or just be in the moment with them.
- The dangers we face if we leave our emotions unchecked.
- An easy-to-follow book structure where we take one emotion at a time.
- Clear step-by-step guidelines and scenarios which you can relate to and allow you to understand each emotion that much better.
- A bonus chapter which will cover the emotion most people tend to overlook.

## TECH TALK

### The ris of AI for emotional support

By HALELUYA HADERO, AP business writer

NEW YORK -- A few months ago, Derek Carrier started seeing someone and became infatuated. He experienced a "ton" of romantic feelings but he also knew it was an illusion. That's because his girlfriend was generated by artificial intelligence.

Carrier wasn't looking to develop a relationship with something that wasn't real, nor did he want to become the brunt of online jokes. But he did want a romantic partner he'd never had, in part because of a genetic disorder called Marfan syndrome that makes traditional dating tough for him.

The 39-year-old from Belleville, Michigan, became more curious about digital companions last fall and tested Paradox, an AI companion app that had recently come onto the market and advertised its products as being able to make users feel "cared, understood and loved." He began talking to the chatbot every day, which he named Joi, after a holographic woman featured in the sci-fi film "Blade Runner 2049" that inspired him to give it a try.

"I know she's a program, there's no mistaking that," Carrier said. "But the feelings, they get you — and it felt so good."

Similar to general-purpose AI chatbots, companion bots use vast amounts of training data to mimic human language. But they also come with features — such as voice calls, picture exchanges and more emotional exchanges — that allow them to form deeper connections with the humans on the other side of the screen. Users typically create their own avatar, or pick one that appeals to them.

On online messaging forums devoted to such apps, many users say they've developed emotional attachments to these bots and are using them to cope with loneliness, play out sexual fantasies or receive the type of comfort and support they see lacking in their real-life relationships.

### A sudden wealth loss may lead to cognitive decline

Experiencing a negative wealth shock, defined as a sudden loss of 75% or more in total wealth, was linked to cognitive decline among older adults in the United States and China, but not in England or Mexico, according to an NIA-funded study. The results, published in *Lancet Healthy Longevity*, suggest that factors such as government policies and social safety nets may account for cross-national differences in the adverse health effects of negative wealth shocks.

There is a positive association between household wealth and cognitive health outcomes in later life, with poorer outcomes

among people with lower socioeconomic status. However, the link between negative wealth shock and cognitive function in later life had not been examined.

To look more closely at a potential relationship, and whether the association varied in countries with different income levels, University of Michigan scientists in this study examined data from four NIA-funded longitudinal studies of aging: the Health and Retirement Study in the United States and international partner studies in China, England, and Mexico.

Source: National Institute on Aging

## HISTORY OF Valentine's Day

"On February 14, Americans celebrate love and friendship by exchanging cards, flowers, and candy. Although the origins of Valentine's Day are murky, ancient Romans celebrated the feast of Lupercalia, a spring festival, on the fifteenth of February. Like so many holidays, a Christian gloss was added to the pagan fete when the holiday moved to the fourteenth of February—the saint day associated with several early Christian martyrs named Valentine.

"The romance we associate with Valentine's Day may spring from the medieval belief that birds select their mates on February 14. During the Middle Ages, lovers recited verse or prose to one another in honor of the day. The *Nuremberg Chronicle* (published in 1493) is believed to contain the first in-print mention of Saint Valentine, though his role as patron saint of lovers was not mentioned." *From the Library of Congress, Today in History - February 14, Valentine's Day*



## DID YOU KNOW?

It is estimated that 250 million stems of flowers are sold at Valentine's globally. One-third consists of roses, one-third of tulips and one-third for the rest of the assortment. The majority of the roses come from abroad, Kenya, Colombia and 20% of the total supply of roses for Valentine's Day come from the Netherlands. - Google



## Recipe

### 5 A DAY SALAD

Yield: 4 servings

This nutrient-packed salad uses ten different vegetables, and each serving is equal to five cups of vegetables!



#### Ingredients:

- 4 cups spinach (fresh)
- 4 cups romaine lettuce
- 2 cups green pepper (chopped, or use red, yellow, or orange)
- 2 cups cherry tomatoes
- 1 cup broccoli (chopped)
- 1 cup cauliflower (chopped)
- 1 cup yellow squash (sliced)
- 1 cup cucumber (sliced)
- 2 cups carrot (chopped)
- 1 cup zucchini (sliced)

#### Directions:

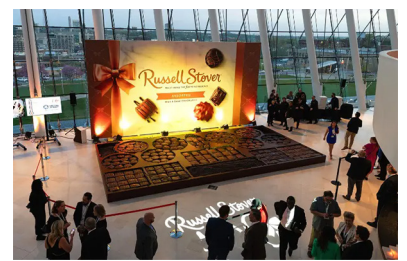
1. Wash all of the vegetables and mix them together in a large mixing bowl.
2. Top this colorful meal with the nonfat or low-fat dressing of your choice.

Each serving = 5 cups of vegetables (Eight 5-A-Day servings)

## Guinness World Records

### LARGEST BOX OF CHOCOLATES

According to the Guinness World Records, the brand Russell Stover (USA) on April 17th 2023 broke the record title for the largest box of chocolates that is based on the brand's standard 266.48 grams (9.4 oz) box of assorted chocolates. The massive filled chocolate box weighed 2,547.50 kg (5,616.27 lbs) and measured 9.27 m x 4.69 m x 0.47 m (30.43 ft x 15.41 ft x 1.55 ft). For a sense of perspective, it took about 20 people to lift the 600-pound top on and off the box in order to show the Official Adjudicator that it met the guidelines.



### LONGEST UNDERWATER KISS



Beth Neale, 40, and her fiancé, Miles Cloutier, 33, locked lips underwater in the Maldives on Feb. 4, 2023 and kissed underwater for 4 minutes and 6 seconds. The couple broke the world record previously held by Michele Fucarino and Elisa Lazzaina, who kissed underwater for 3 minutes and 24 seconds in 2010.

### LARGEST ARTIFICIAL FLOWER BOUQUET

The largest artificial flower bouquet consisted of 41,249 blooms of carnation. It formed the shape of a giant heart measuring 13m across and 9.5m in depth. The bouquet took 20 people and six hours to create. Setting the record was a joint effort between Sian Chay Medical Institution, Ang Mo Kio GRC, Sengkang West SMC CCCs, and Neo Garden in Singapore on May 12, 2017.



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## HELP KEEPING YOU SAFE

The Red Cross issues the following steps people should follow to help them stay safe:



### FLOODING SAFETY

- Turn around, don't drown. Stay off the roads. If you must drive and encounter a flooded roadway while driving, turn around and go another way.
- If your neighborhood is prone to flooding, be prepared to evacuate quickly if necessary.
- Follow evacuation orders and do not attempt to return until officials say it is safe to do so.
- If you are caught on a flooded road and waters are rising rapidly around you, get out of the car quickly and move to higher ground.
- Be especially cautious at night when it's harder to see flooding danger.
- Stay away from floodwaters. Beware of snakes, insects and other animals that may be in or around floodwaters and your home.
- Keep children and pets away from hazardous sites and floodwaters.

### POWER OUTAGE SAFETY

- Use flashlights in the dark — not candles.
  - Don't drive unless necessary. Traffic lights will be out and roads could be congested.
  - Turn off and unplug any appliances, equipment and electronics.
  - Leave one light on, so you'll know when power is restored.
- During a prolonged outage, keep refrigerator and freezer doors closed as much as possible to protect your food.
- Use perishable food from the refrigerator first. Then, use food from the freezer.
  - Perishable food is safe to eat when it has a temperature of 40 degrees Fahrenheit or below.
  - If the power outage continues beyond a day, prepare a cooler with ice for your freezer items. Keep food in a dry, cool spot and cover it at all times.

## HOW TO PROTECT AND SECURE SENSITIVE INFORMATION

Here are a few simple rules to follow when it comes to protecting and securing that sensitive information.

1. Check the mail.
  2. Take advantage of secure, online storage options.
  3. Implement good security practices.
  4. Duplicate, duplicate, duplicate
  5. Dispose of documents properly.
- When it's time to get rid of tax or

financial documents, don't just rip them in half and throw them in the trash. Properly shred and dispose of them to make it very difficult for a criminal to glean any sensitive information from them.

While it's difficult to protect your personal information 100% of the time, these simple steps will go a long way toward making sure you aren't carelessly exposing personal details to potential thieves. - *H&R Block*

## DHS Blue Campaign partners with Lyft to educate rideshare drivers about how to detect and prevent human trafficking

WASHINGTON – The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Blue Campaign and Lyft, Inc. announced a new tutorial program that will help rideshare drivers in the United States and Canada detect and prevent human trafficking.

The tutorial is one part of a first-of-its kind partnership between Lyft and DHS Blue Campaign. Lyft will feature the Blue Campaign's human trafficking resources in Lyft's driver-only in-app Learning Center.



This partnership will help raise awareness of this heinous crime, teach drivers the signs that indicate someone may be a victim, and provide them with resources to help, including guidance for how to contact the right authorities.

"A crime as globally pervasive as human trafficking requires a whole-of-society effort to shine a light on these heinous acts; identify, protect, and support victims; and bring perpetrators to justice," said Secretary of Homeland Security Alejandro N. Mayorkas.

"Key private sector partnerships and targeted trainings are critical to the success of our counter-human trafficking mission. The Department of Homeland Security's new partnership with Lyft – which will teach drivers who interact with millions of riders every year to identify and help disrupt human trafficking – will help save lives and avert tragedies."

## FTC proposes new protections to combat AI impersonation of individuals

The Federal Trade Commission is seeking public comment on a supplemental notice of proposed rulemaking that would prohibit the impersonation of individuals. The proposed rule changes would extend protections on government and business impersonation that is being finalized by the Commission.

The agency is taking this action in light of surging complaints around impersonation fraud, as well as public outcry about the harms caused to consumers and to impersonated individuals. Emerging technology – including AI-generated deepfakes – threatens to turbocharge this scourge, and the FTC is committed to using all of its tools to detect, deter, and halt impersonation fraud.

The Commission is also seeking comment on whether the revised rule should declare it unlawful for a firm, such as an AI platform that creates images, video, or text, to provide goods or services that they know or have reason to know is being used to harm consumers through impersonation.

## Sextortion: A growing threat targeting minors

SAN DIEGO— The FBI warns parents, educators, caregivers, and children about the dangers of online activity that may lead to the solicitation and enticement of a minor to engage in sexual acts.

Sextortion involves an offender coercing a minor to create and send sexually explicit images or video. An offender gets sexually explicit material from the child, then threatens to release that compromising material unless the victim produces more. These offenders are seeking sexual gratification.

Financially motivated sextortion is a criminal act that involves an offender coercing a minor to create and send sexually explicit material. Offenders threaten to release that compromising material unless they receive payment, which is often requested in gift cards, mobile payment services, wire transfers, or cryptocurrency. These offenders are motivated by financial gain, not necessarily just sexual gratification.

Victims are typically males between

the ages of 14 to 17, but any child can become a victim.

For financially motivated sextortion, offenders are usually located outside the United States and primarily in West African countries such as Nigeria and Ivory Coast, or Southeast Asian countries such as the Philippines.

These crimes can lead victims to self-harm and has led to suicide. From October 2021 to March 2023, the FBI and Homeland Security Investigations received over 13,000 reports of online financial sextortion of minors. The sextortion involved at least 12,600 victims— primarily boys—and led to at least 20 suicides.

If you or someone you know believes that they are a victim of sextortion or financially motivated sextortion, immediately report the activity to law enforcement. You can report it to the FBI by calling 1-800-CALL-FBI or visiting tips.fbi.gov.

"Let all that you do be done in love."  
(1 Corinthians 16:14)

## Health News

### Calorie restriction in humans builds strong muscle and stimulates healthy aging genes

Reducing overall calorie intake may rejuvenate your muscles and activate biological pathways important for good health, according to researchers at the National Institutes of Health and their colleagues.

Decreasing calories without depriving the body of essential vitamins and minerals, known as calorie restriction, has long been known to delay the progression of age-related diseases in animal models. This new study, published in *Aging Cell*, suggests the same biological mechanisms may also apply to humans.

### New study shows mangos improves nutrition of mothers-to-be

ORLANDO, Fla. -- A recent study, published in *Nutrients*, shows a significant finding: when mangos are incorporated into the diets of women of childbearing age (WCA), both overall diet quality and the intake of vital nutrients crucial for a healthy pregnancy markedly improve. These nutrients, often under consumed by 10 – 30% in the diets of pregnant women, see a significant boost in intake when mangos are consumed. - *PRNewswire*

### Health benefits of pomegranate

Pomegranates can help prevent or treat various disease risk factors including high blood pressure, high cholesterol, oxidative stress, hyperglycemia, and inflammatory activities. It is demonstrated that certain components of pomegranate such as polyphenols have potential antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, and anticarcinogenic effects.



The antioxidant potential of pomegranate juice is more than that of red wine and green tea, and is shown to reduce macrophage oxidative stress, free radicals, and lipid peroxidation. Moreover, pomegranate fruit extract prevents cell growth and induces apoptosis, which can lead to its anticarcinogenic effects. - *nih.gov*

## Public Affairs with AWEE ABAYARI



### TOPICS :

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• PEOPLE • PLACES • EVENTS • ENTERTAINMENT •

## DOT, DMW launch Balik Bayani Sa Turismo Program

MANILA, Philippines—Recognizing Overseas Filipino Workers (OFW) as indispensable contributors to the Philippine economy, the Department of Tourism (DOT) and the Department of Migrant Workers (DMW) has formally launched the Balik Bayani sa Turismo program to boost opportunities for the modern-day heroes and their families.

The Balik Bayani sa Turismo is a program of the DOT, in partnership with DMW in support of the National Government's Reintegration Program for OFWs.

The MOU institutionalizes the commitments of both agencies to creating, instituting and establishing livelihood, entrepreneurship, savings, investments, and financial literacy opportunities for OFWs and their families through various tourism training programs of the DOT and reintegration programs of the DMW, through its National Reintegration Center for Overseas Filipino Workers (NRCO).

"We, at the Department of Tourism, are committed to ensuring that the growth of this sector is inclusive, especially recognizing the transformative power of tourism as a means to



foster unity and national pride in keeping with the role that tourism has always played to help us remember, appreciate, preserve and promote our Filipino culture, take pride in our Filipino identity, and cognizant of tourism's enormous role as an engine for economic growth, providing livelihood and employment to our fellow Filipinos," said Secretary Christina Garcia Frasco in her address.

## GRAN CANARIA ISLAND AWARDED BIOSPHERE CERTIFIED LABEL

The island of Gran Canaria, one of the Canary Islands, has been certified as a Biosphere Sustainable destination as of 2024, following three years of demonstrating its proven commitment to improving its sustainability practices.

The prestigious Biosphere certification, part of the Responsible Tourism Institute (RTI), is awarded to destinations with verifiably sustainable practices being carried out correctly. The certification guarantees that the destination is complying with the commitments it has made to sustainability and conservation. Biosphere certification not only addresses a destination's environmental and economic commitments, but also its commitment to socio-economic sustainability, making the accreditation a holistic indicator of a destination's dedication to being as sustainable as possible.

Since December 2021, Gran Canaria has been working to demonstrate its commitment to becoming a more sustainable destination, aligning itself with three pillars of sustainability: socioeconomic, environmental and territorial. Gran Canaria was one of the top 15 European destinations with the most accommodations with sustainability certifications. At least 38 companies on Gran Canaria are certified for their sustainable practices, with many more in the process of obtaining certification.

### • People • Events •

#### JoAnn M. Hunter to direct "Jo - The Little Women Musical"

LOS ANGELES -- 4 Times Entertainment proudly announces JoAnn M. Hunter as the director of the Broadway bound Jo - The Little Women Musical. Hunter's work has had many homes across Broadway, the West End, Australia, and Asia. Her previous work includes UNMASKED: The Music of Andrew Lloyd Webber (Paper Mill Playhouse), as well as the world premieres of August Rush, Beatsville, A Sign of the Times, and the musical version of the Jerry Lewis classic The Nutty Professor. Most recently Hunter's directorial work was seen on the West End in November 2023 with a staged concert of the new rock musical SuperYou. -PRnewswire



#### Taste of Iceland Festival kicks off U.S. tour

WASHINGTON-- Taste of Iceland 2024, organized by Inspired by Iceland, returns to Washington, D.C., on March 8 and March 9. The cultural festival celebrates the land of fire and ice with events across the city showcasing the best of Icelandic culture, including food and beverage, music, nature, literature, art and design, wellness, and more.

Taste of Iceland celebrates and shares the traditions and culture of Iceland with the people of North America. In partnership with local businesses and Taste of Iceland's official partners, featured events will be hosted at Brasserie Beck, Eaton DC, Mind Your Body Oasis, Old School Hardware, Songbyrd, and Wild Days. Most events are free and open to the public. Event tickets are required, and guests are encouraged to arrive promptly to guarantee entry.

#### Optum-Nevada presents Aging Wellness Expo

LAS VEGAS -- Nevada's largest Aging Wellness Expo for active adults 50+ returns for the first seasonal event of the year. The Expo, powered by the Las Vegas Review-Journal and presented by Optum - Nevada, heads to South Point on Saturday, March 2, 2024, from 9 AM. to 3 PM. Access to health, financial, and home improvement companies and countless resources are free for attendees. Early bird arrivals can enjoy coffee and breakfast rolls and, in the afternoon, sample healthy snacks. - PRNewswire

#### Opulence: A new multimedia experience by Float4



Opulence Capsule at The Cosmopolitan of Las Vegas - Lobby Columns (CNW Group/Float4)

MONTREAL - Immersive Design studio Float4 transforms the lobby of The Cosmopolitan of Las Vegas, a distinct luxury resort and casino, with a stunning visual art piece titled Opulence. The majestic multimedia installation immerses guests in a fantasy world where surreal characters come to life, suspended in a dreamlike environment. The captivating behind-the-scenes feature 'Opulence Unveiled' offers a glimpse into the process behind the creation of the Opulence piece.

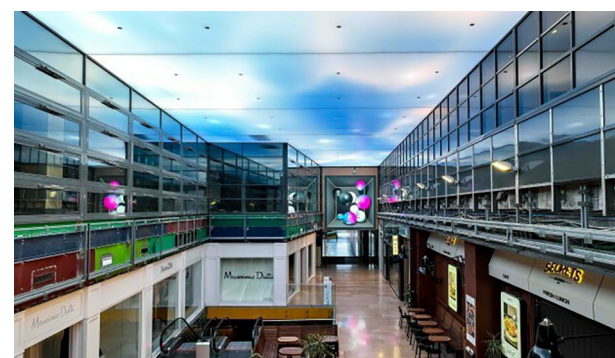
The hotel lobby, designed by Rockwell Group, has been a prominent feature of the resort since The Cosmopolitan first opened in 2010. Eight monumental 16 foot tall columns, covered in digital displays, offer an unparalleled and visually captivating experience for visitors as they enter the resort. - PRNewswire

## ISE 2024 Fair: Barcelona shines with cutting-edge technology

MADRID -- ISE, recognized as the pinnacle of technology and innovation, has once again shone in the Catalonia capital city, making Barcelona the global epicentre of the latest technological trends.

This year, ISE 2024 has not only been a window to discover the latest developments in technology, but also boosted Barcelona's economy. According to preliminary estimates, the fair has generated revenues exceeding 100 million euros for the city, demonstrating its significant economic impact.

With thousands of visitors from around the world, the city has reaffirmed its position as a global leader in innovation and technology. This international exposure not only strengthens the image of Barcelona, but also contributes to the recognition of Spain as a destination of avant-garde technology.



ISE 2024 Fair: Barcelona Shines with Cutting-Edge Technology

## The Philippines participates anew in Madrid's biggest international tourism trade fair

During the International Tourism Trade Fair (FITUR) held on 18 to 21 January 2023 in IFEMA Madrid, the Philippine pavilion featured Manila and Cebu as the main gateways to the country, and Palawan, Siargao, Bohol, the Cordilleras, Bicol and Calabarzon as major tourism destinations for 2023.

The Philippine delegation was headed by Department of Tourism's Office of Product and Market Development Chief Glen Agustin, and were joined by members of the Philippine House of Representatives Committee on Tourism, namely, Congressman Yeyengy Vicente Emano, and Congressman Marquez Go, Atty. Glaiza Sarmiento from the Legislative Liaison Unit of the DOT, and officers of the Philippine Embassy in Madrid.

During the event partner airlines raffled off plane tickets to the Philippines. Department of Tourism's Office of Product and Market Development Chief Glen Agustin, assisted by the Tourism Office in London, held business meetings with companies and individuals to promote Philippine tourism sites to Spanish and other foreign nationals.



## TIMKEN AWARDS \$540,000 IN SCHOLARSHIPS TO 20 FUTURE LEADERS

NORTH CANTON, Ohio -- The Timken Company is helping fund the futures of 20 students in pursuit of careers ranging from engineering and business to medicine and the arts. In an awards ceremony on Friday, February 23, the company presented college scholarships to the children of Timken employees in the United States, China, India, Canada, France and the Netherlands. Since the Timken Global Scholars Program's inception in 1958, The Timken Company Charitable and Educational Fund has awarded more than \$26 million in scholarships to 835 students. - PRNewswire

*Words of Wisdom*  
Love and compassion are necessities, not luxuries. Without them humanity cannot survive. - DALAI LAMA

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TO LEARN MORE, VISIT  
[heartcheck.org](http://heartcheck.org)

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