

English articles

It's useful to read articles in English, even if you don't understand every word - it will help you increase your vocabulary and keep up to date with things happening in English-speaking countries!

*This page will be updated on **Mondays**. The first article is aimed at a B1 and upwards level and the second article is aimed at a B2 and upwards level*

Articles of the week



International Women's Day protests demand equal rights and an end to discrimination, sexual violence



By MEHMET GUZEL and ANDREW WILKS Associated Press

ISTANBUL (AP) — Women took to the streets of cities across Europe, Africa, South America and elsewhere to mark International Women's Day with demands for ending inequality and gender-based

violence.

On the Asian side of Istanbul, Turkey's biggest city, a rally in Kadikoy saw members of dozens of women's groups listen to speeches, dance and sing in the spring sunshine. The colorful protest was overseen by a large police presence, including officers in riot gear and a water cannon truck.

The government of President Recep Tayyip Erdogan declared 2025 the Year of the Family. Protesters pushed back against the idea of women's role being confined to marriage and motherhood, carrying banners reading "Family will not bind us to life" and "We will not be sacrificed to the family."

Critics have accused the government of overseeing restrictions on women's rights and not doing enough to tackle violence against women.

Erdogan in 2021 withdrew Turkey from a European treaty, dubbed the Istanbul Convention, that protects women from domestic violence. Turkish rights group We Will Stop Femicides Platform says that 394 women were killed by men in 2024.

"There is bullying at work, pressure from husbands and fathers at home and pressure from patriarchal society. We demand that this pressure be reduced even further," Yaz Gulgun, 52, said.

Women across Europe and Africa march against discrimination

In many other European countries, women also protested against violence, for better access to gender-specific health care, equal pay and other issues in which they don't get the same treatment as men.

In Poland, activists opened a center across from the parliament building in Warsaw where women can go to have abortions with pills, either alone or with other women.

Opening the center on International Women's Day across from the legislature was a symbolic challenge to authorities in the traditionally Roman Catholic nation, which has one of Europe's most restrictive abortion laws.

From Athens to Madrid, Paris, Munich, Zurich and Belgrade and in many more cities across the continent, women marched to demand an end to treatment as second-class citizens in society, politics, family and at work.

In Madrid, protesters held up big hand-drawn pictures depicting Gisele Pélicot, the woman who was drugged by her now ex-husband in France over the course of a decade so that she could be raped by dozens of men while unconscious. Pélicot has become a symbol for women all over Europe in the fight against sexual violence.

Thousands of women marched in the capital Skopje and several other cities in North Macedonia to raise their voices for economic, political and social equality for women.

Organizers said only about 28% of women in the country own property and in rural areas only 5%, mostly widows, have property in their name. Only 18 out of 100 women surveyed in rural areas responded that their parents divided family property equally between the brother and sister. "The rest were gender discriminated against within their family," they said.

In Nigeria's capital, Lagos, thousands of women gathered at the Mobolaji Johnson Stadium, dancing and signing and celebrating their womanhood. Many were dressed in purple — the traditional color of the women's liberation movement.

In Russia, the women's day celebrations had a more official tone, with honor guard soldiers presenting yellow tulips to girls and women during a celebration in St. Petersburg.

German president warns of backlash against progress already made

In Berlin, German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier called for stronger efforts to achieve equality and warned against tendencies to roll back progress already made.

“Globally, we are seeing populist parties trying to create the impression that equality is something like a fixed idea of progressive forces,” he said. He gave an example of “large tech companies that have long prided themselves on their modernity and are now, at the behest of a new American administration, setting up diversity programs and raving about a new 'masculine energy' in companies and society.”

Marchers in South America denounce femicides

In South America, some of the marches were organized by groups protesting the killings of women known as femicides.

Hundreds of women in Ecuador marched through the streets of Quito to steady drumbeats and held signs that opposed violence and the “patriarchal system.”

“Justice for our daughters!” some demonstrators yelled in support of women slain in recent years.

In Bolivia, thousands of women began marching late Friday, with some scrawling graffiti on the walls of courthouses demanding that their rights be respected and denouncing impunity in femicides, with less than half of those cases reaching a sentencing.

Kirsten Grieshaber contributed to this report from Berlin.

How a canoe helped turn Hawaiian culture into a source of pride and even influenced Hollywood



By AUDREY McAVOY Associated Press

KANEOHE, Hawaii (AP) — Hawaii's American colonizers once banned the Hawaiian language in schools. Some Native Hawaiians tried to lighten their skin with lye. Many people believed Polynesian voyagers had simply lucked into finding the islands by drifting on logs.

But a canoe launched half a century ago helped turn Hawaiian culture from a source of shame to one

of pride, reviving the skill of traveling the seas by decoding the stars, waves and weather. That vessel — a double-hulled sailing canoe called the Hokulea, after the Hawaiian name for the star Arcturus — would even influence the Disney blockbuster “Moana” decades later.

To mark the anniversary, the Hokulea's early crew members gathered Saturday for ceremonial hula and kava drinking at the Oahu beach where the canoe launched on March 8, 1975, and where they began their first training sails.

“It's a vehicle of exploration. It's a vehicle of discovery,” Nainoa Thompson, the CEO of the Polynesian Voyaging Society, said in an interview. “It's also been our vehicle for justice as Native Hawaiians, as Pacific Islanders, as a very unique, special culture of the Earth.”

In 1980, Thompson became the first Hawaiian in six centuries to navigate to Tahiti without a compass or other modern instruments — a span of about 2,700 miles (4,300 kilometers).

Hawaiian culture had long been repressed

Thompson, 71, remembers stories from his grandmother, born less than a decade after the U.S.-backed overthrow of the Hawaiian Kingdom in 1893. Teachers beat her for speaking Hawaiian, and her uncle tried to wash the brown off his skin with lye.

When she had children, she didn't teach them Hawaiian.

“If her children tried to be Hawaiian, they would get hurt in the new society,” Thompson said. “And so you have to become something else.”

A resurgence of Hawaiian pride and identity starting in the late 1960s and 1970s set off a cultural renaissance. Artist Herb Kane began painting ancient canoes based on drawings from European explorers and got the idea to build a double-hulled canoe with tall, triangular sails similar to those his ancestors had used hundreds of years earlier.

Debunking the drifting log theory

At the time, many people accepted the notion that Polynesians settled islands by accident.

Norwegian explorer Thor Heyerdahl had theorized that Polynesians arrived from South America, pushed west by the prevailing winds and currents. In 1947, he set out to prove it by floating from Peru on a log raft. He landed in the Tuamotu Islands north of Tahiti and wrote a best-seller.

Heyerdahl's theory took hold even though Hawaiians for generations had passed down stories of people who traveled from the distant lands – including Kahiki, possibly what is today known as Tahiti — by canoe, bringing with them edible plants such as ulu, or breadfruit.

Kane, University of Hawaii archaeologist Ben Finney and Honolulu surfer Tommy Holmes wanted to challenge the drifting log concept. They started the Polynesian Voyaging Society, intent on sailing a canoe to Tahiti without modern instruments.

They needed a navigator. Traditional long-distance voyaging skills had all but disappeared, but a Peace Corps volunteer on the isolated atoll of Satawal in Micronesia told them about Pius “Mau” Pailug, who had been taught navigation from childhood. Over about a month in 1976, Pailug guided the Hokulea from Hawaii to Tahiti — about the same distance from Hawaii to California.

Some 17,000 people thronged the Tahitian shore to greet them and witness what one crew member

called “the spaceship of our ancestors.”

Former Hawaii Gov. John Waihe'e was in his 20s then, and a delegate to the 1978 state Constitutional Convention. The Hokulea's success spurred delegates to make Hawaiian an official state language even though few residents still spoke it, he said. They also created the Office of Hawaiian Affairs to improve the well-being of Native Hawaiians.

“It helped us believe in everything that we were doing,” Waihe'e said.

Today, two dozen schools have Hawaiian language immersion programs, and Census data show more than 27,000 people in Hawaii, and 34,000 in the U.S., speak Hawaiian at home.

Bringing dignity to the elders

In 1978, an ill-prepared crew set out for Tahiti in poor weather, and the Hokulea capsized just hours after leaving port. Crew member Eddie Aikau paddled his surfboard to get help. The Coast Guard rescued the canoe, but Aikau was never found.

The voyaging society overhauled itself in response, setting clear goals and training requirements. Thompson studied at a Honolulu planetarium and spent over a year under the tutelage of Piailug. In 1980, he navigated to Tahiti.

Thompson said he felt a deep obligation to fulfill Aikau's wish to follow the path of his ancestors and “pull Tahiti out of the sea.” But he didn't celebrate when the Hokulea got there.

“I just went into a quiet, dark place and just told Eddie we pulled it out of the sea,” Thompson said. “There's no high fives. It's too profound.”

In decades since, the society has sailed the canoe around the Pacific and world, including New Zealand, Japan, South Africa and New York.

It inspired other Pacific Island communities to revive or newly appreciate their own wayfinding traditions.

In Rapa Nui, Chile — also known as Easter Island — islanders have embarked on long-distance canoe voyages. The University of Guam has a navigation program. Similar trends have surfaced in the Cook Islands, French Polynesia, Samoa and Tonga, said Mary Therese Perez Hattori, the director of the Pacific Islands Development Program at the East-West Center.

“We come from very, very ancient societies,” said Hattori, who is Chamorro, the Indigenous people of the Mariana Islands. “Hokulea sort of helped us remind the world of this.”

Hollywood makes a blockbuster

Hokulea's influence spread in 2016 when Disney released “Moana,” an animated film about a 16-year-old girl who learns wayfinding about 3,000 years ago.

Thompson spoke to hundreds on the movie's creative team about wayfinding and the importance of canoes to Pacific culture, said Aaron Kandell, a Hawaii-born writer who worked on the movie.

Kandell, who is not Native Hawaiian, spent a year studying navigation with the Polynesian Voyaging Society during his 20s and incorporated that into the script, including where Moana learns to use her outstretched hand to track the stars and runs her hand in the ocean to feel the currents.

Crew members taught animators about coconut fiber ropes so they would look right when Moana pulls on them, Kandell said.

The Polynesian Voyaging Society's initial plan was to sail to Tahiti once, supporting a documentary, book and research papers. Thompson remembers pushing Hokulea's hull into the water with the crew back in 1975.

“It was really a moment — I didn't recognize it — but this was going to change everything,” he said.

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