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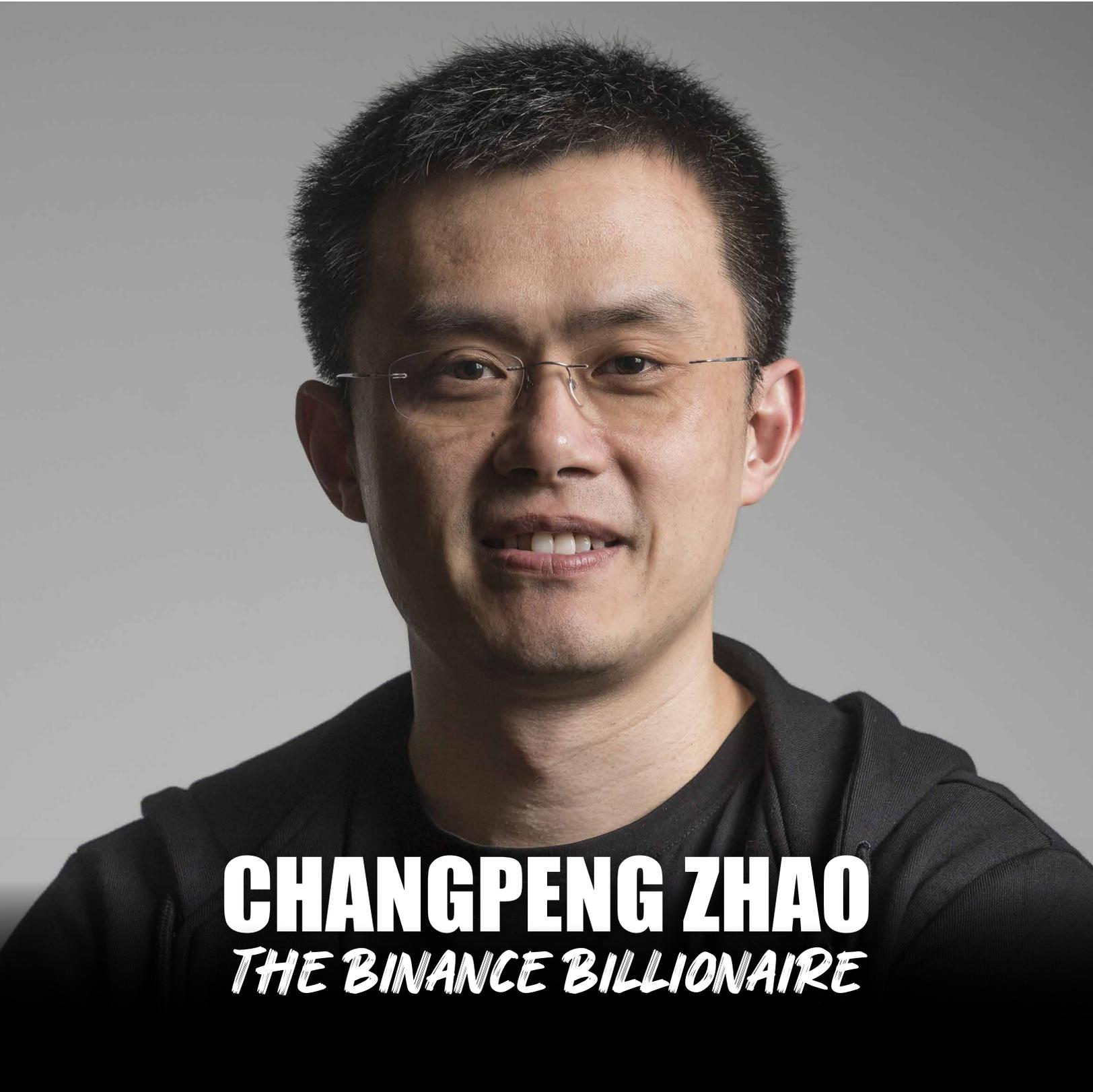
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**P/35** —  
Rest in Peace Japan's longest-  
serving former prime minister

**P/49** —  
"Telomiova" for Sustainable Water  
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**CHANGPENG ZHAO**  
*THE BINANCE BILLIONAIRE*

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# Sustainability in Cryptocurrency?



**T**here are two buzz words on everyone's minds- sustainability and cryptocurrency, but as separate entities.

The people on the planet have finally understood that action needs to be taken soon enough to make a difference- and sustainability has come into the limelight. People and organisations are becoming more aware of their carbon footprints, trying to minimise the environmental load of everything they do.

On the other hand, in an increasingly digital world, cryptocurrency has emerged as something everyone wants to try a hand at. If people aren't directly involved in crypto, they can't wait

to learn to get there. The general consensus is that there are so many types of cryptocurrencies and many of them aren't aligned to environmental goals- they take up a considerable amount of energy.

It's safe to say that crypto has been taking the world by storm. The same world that is looking to be more sustainable, more conscious of leaving the planet in a better state. However, considering that cryptocurrency mining in general (using Proof of work as a consensus especially) is extremely energy intensive, the congruence of both of these seems unlikely- or does it?

It's, therefore, a matter of relief that the recent past has seen the surge of green

cryptocurrencies that have a lower environmental impact than its traditional variants. It is clear that digital currencies have come around and will be staying behind for a long time- and so sustainability is more of an urgent need than an intention.

There are several digital currency platforms that are popular but a majority of them are a huge disappointment on the sustainability front. There are so many alternatives for crypto enthusiasts to explore, so a sustainable one is recommended!

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6



6 | Changpeng Zhao - The Binance Billionaire

12



12 | The revolutionizing world of Blockchain

30



30 | Boris Johnson resigns as PM, political drama ends in Britain

31



31 | French, German, Italian Leaders Arrive In Kyiv

35



35 | Former Prime Minister of Japan Shinzo Abe Assassinated

40 | Welcome to Malawi!

47 | International water activist Mina Guli - RUN BLUE campaign

55 | Apple to add 'lockdown' safeguard on iPhones, iPads, Macs

*It is my strong view that our constant and transparent communication is what sets us apart from the “old way of doing things”, even and especially in tough times.*

Changpeng Zhao



# CHANGPENG ZHAO

## THE BINANCE BILLIONAIRE



[www.linkedin.com/company/binance/posts](https://www.linkedin.com/company/binance/posts)

**T**here's a tale oft told of a person who was once a retail worker, doing their best to supplement family income who emerges the ranks to eventually become a billionaire. Following a similar tangent is the story of 45 year old billionaire Changpeng 'CZ' Zhao.

### Burgers to Billionaire

Every other story online chronicles the start of Zhao's journey from flipping a burger or two at McDonald's, refereeing

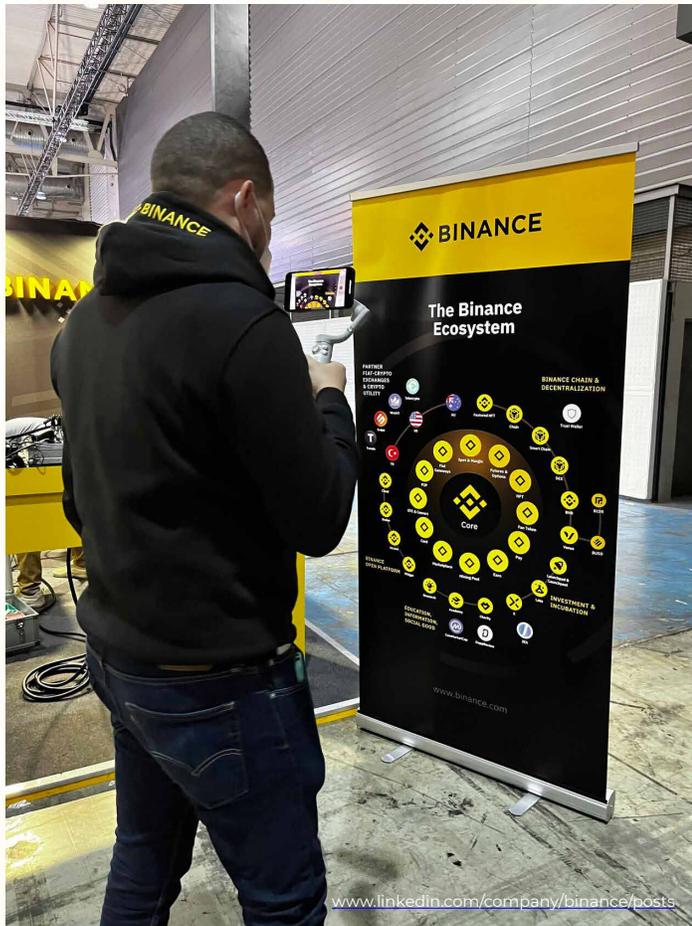
volleyball games to running the graveyard shift at the gas station, so it only seemed right to outline his illustrious career trajectory



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from here to earning a degree in software development. He is far from flipping burgers for work now, holding the post of Founder and CEO of Binance, the world's largest cryptocurrency exchange. He's also deemed to be the richest crypto-billionaire there is. In most interviews, when this is brought up, Zhao simply shrugs it away saying, "I don't really care about the money."

In 2005, CZ founded Fusion Systems based in Shanghai catering to stockbrokers with high-frequency trading systems. Zhao was not new to the world of



cryptocurrency- he was, in fact, a rather seasoned expert in the field.

Not long after, he sold his house, invested a million dollars in Bitcoin and lost a huge chunk of that money. But the conviction remained. Binance was built leveraging on Zhao's experience at Blockchain LLC in 2013 which is a bitcoin wallet provider as well as

**The word risk means different things to different people. Some people say risk. Some people say opportunity.**

OKCoin that is a cryptocurrency exchange, holding office of the CTO for under a year.

### Building Binance

Binance holds the reputation of being the world's largest cryptocurrency exchange, when quantifying the daily volume of cryptocurrency



trading. Established in 2017, Binance is registered in the Cayman Islands. It was previously headquartered in China- eventually shifting headquarters, servers and base out of the country into Japan owing to the unappreciated cryptocurrency regulatory involvement of the Chinese government.

Since 2017, Binance has been behind the launch of two cryptocurrencies- Binance Coin and Binance Smart Chain.

Binance Coin, going by the BNB symbol, came first. It started off on the Ethereum blockchain but is now on the Binance chain. This primary coin was created to be a simple



**When you reach success, there's multiple reasons- you've got to do almost 99 things right. To fail, you have to do one thing wrong.**

utility token to pay trading and transaction fees on the platform. Fees can be paid on Binance using this coin.

Binance Smart Chain, on the other hand, goes by BSC. It was launched in September 2020. This cryptocurrency combines 21 approved validators for the use of proof of stake and proof of authority which combines to create Binance's 'Proof of Staked Authority'.

This cryptocurrency exchange has been well received by its 90 million+ users all over the world with over 600 listed cryptocurrencies, extremely low transaction fees and the user-friendliness of the platform.



## The Binance Ecosystem

CZ has been a trailblazer in the industry, creating a complete ecosystem within the crypto space under the Binance banner.

- **Binance Exchange**

This is the central offering of the company, is the fastest as well as the largest crypto exchange on the trade volume front.

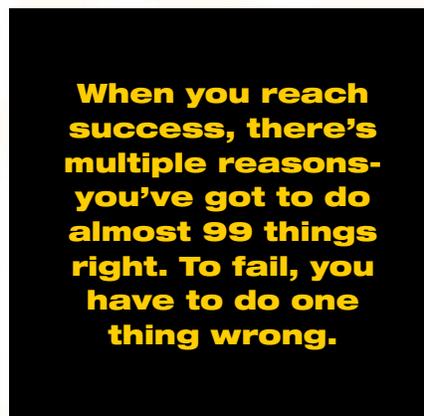
- **Binance Chain**

The Binance Chain is a blockchain software system which is led by the community. The contributors and the developers for the Binance Chain are based worldwide. It has a decentralised exchange feature

called Binance DEX.

- **Trust Wallet**

Binance's Trust Wallet is created as a secure and decentralised wallet. Through the Trust Wallet, users can send, receive and store their digital assets.



- **Binance Academy**

For those interested in learning about blockchain and crypto, Binance Academy is an open access learning hub, with resources to gain a better understanding.

- **Binance Research**

The Binance Research arm of the ecosystem offers reports, insights and analysis from trusted sources within the crypto space.

- **Binance Launchpad**

Entrepreneurs can explore Binance Launchpad as an exclusive token launch platform. The sky's the limit to bringing interesting crypto projects to life.



**Brand ambassador Khaby Lame, the most followed creator on TikTok through this partnership will:**

- **Drive crypto education**
- **Launch exclusive Khaby Lame NFT collections**
- **Debunk crypto & Web3 myths**
- **Grow the industry & Binance ecosystem**



• **Binance Labs**

Encouraging incubations, investments and empowering projects in the blockchain space, Binance Labs is an infrastructure impact fund set up to make a difference.

• **Binance Info**

For in depth objective and unbiased information on cryptocurrency, look up Binance Info. It is an open platform with aggregators from all over the globe.

• **Binance Charity**

This arm of Binance is a not-for-profit foundation created to advance philanthropy and



**Don't play a game where they can change the rules when you are just about to win. Just leave and let them play with themselves.**

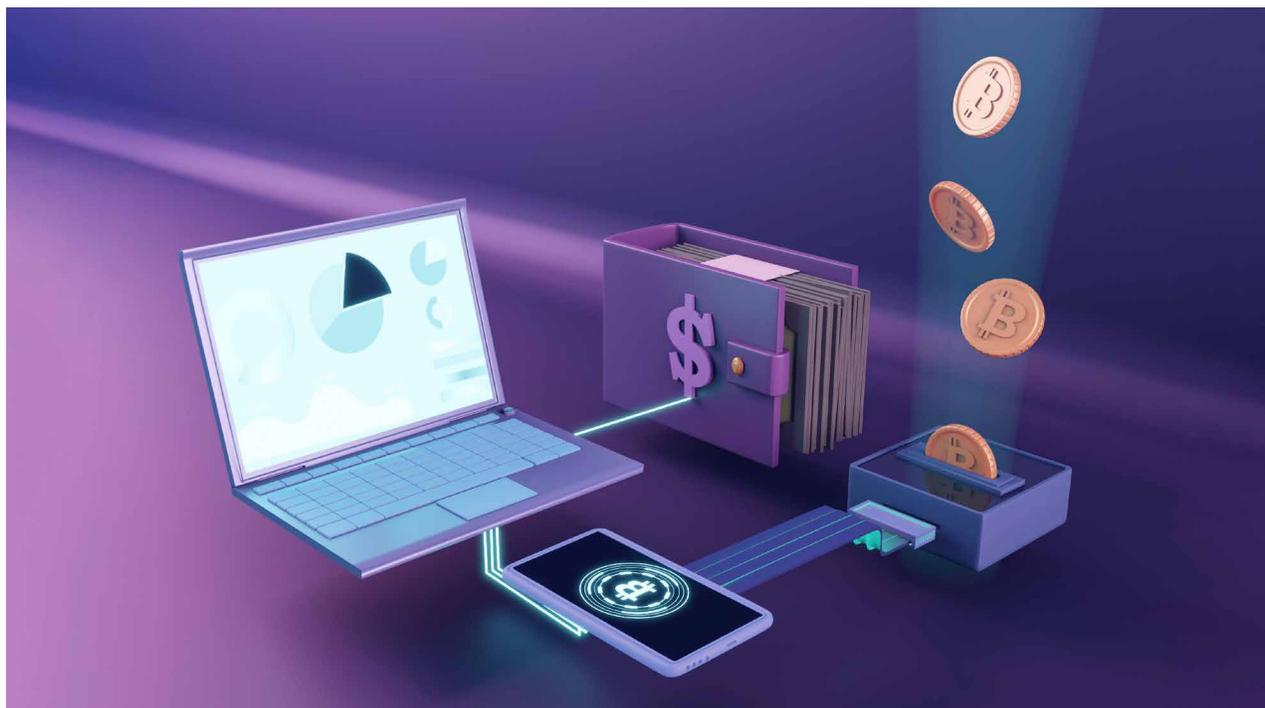
sustainable development using blockchain.

**The Binance Work Culture**

Changpeng Zhao elaborates on why Binance culture stands out- diversity and passion. He believes in a system free of office hours and micromanagement which is a possibility only thanks to the passion people have for their work. The diverse workplace works towards a singular mission.

Changpeng Zhao's humble disposition and carefree wardrobe sense may not make him seem like the richest man in crypto in the world- but, he is. CZ is rich, humble, the crypto-king- the Binance Billionaire.

# The revolutionizing world of Blockchain



**W**ith the world of DeFi transforming before our eyes, staying ahead of new changes in fintech and digital currency is key to understanding the current market.

## What is a Blockchain?

A blockchain network is a digital, encrypted, and decentralized medium of exchange. Unlike the US Dollar or the Euro, no central authority manages and maintains a blockchain's medium of exchange's value. Instead, these tasks are broadly distributed among a digital currency's users via the internet.

Blockchain is a shared, immutable ledger that facilitates the process of recording

transactions and tracking assets in a business network. A blockchain is essentially a digital ledger of transactions duplicated and distributed across the entire network of computer systems on the blockchain. Each block in the chain contains several transactions, and every time a new transaction occurs on the blockchain, a record of that transaction is added to every participant's ledger. The decentralized database managed by multiple participants is known as Distributed Ledger Technology (DLT).

Blockchain is a type of DLT in which transactions are recorded with an immutable cryptographic signature called a hash. This means advanced coding is involved in storing and transmitting digital currency data between wallets and public

ledgers. Encryption aims to provide security and safety.

Bitcoin was the first decentralized blockchain conceptualized by Satoshi Nakamoto in a 2008 paper titled "Bitcoin: A Peer-to-Peer Electronic Cash System." Nakamoto described the project as "an electronic payment system based on cryptographic proof instead of trust." Since then, over \$7 trillion worth of bitcoin has been transferred.

## Blockchain and its legal considerations

Along with the explosion of interest in blockchain, there is a growing need for clarity regarding the legal implications of these new currencies and the technologies that drive them.



## Contractual Issues

One of blockchain technology and digital currencies' most striking features is their self-executing "smart contracts." Smart contracts are a set of promises, usually specified in a digital currency format, that act as the basis upon which the parties in a transaction fulfill their specific promises. A smart contract automatically pays the other party when performing their contractual duties. Due to smart contracts' unique nature and inherent complexity, whether they fit into the legal framework of traditional contract law is difficult to determine.

## Jurisdictional Issues

The main idea behind blockchain technology that underpins digital currencies is that it involves no way to pinpoint a ledger's actual location. Accordingly, transactions conducted on blockchain offer greater privacy than transactions conducted on traditional platforms. But

this advantage poses a complex jurisdictional challenge:

Since the nodes of a blockchain transaction are located in different jurisdictions, they may be subject to conflicting legal frameworks.

Digital currency software's "residence country" is challenging due to the ledger's lack of a physical location.

Blockchain's transnational nature makes determining applicable laws and selecting the proper jurisdiction for blockchain disputes exceedingly tricky.

For any national regulator, enforcing laws among blockchain users, transactions, or projects is herculean because of the technology's cross-border reach.

## Data Theft/ Financial Fraud/ Money Laundering

Data theft and financial fraud are additional pressing

legal concerns surrounding distributed ledger technology. The blockchain's promise of anonymity—and its apparent freedom from regulations—can entice many users involved in illegal activities to use digital currencies for their financial transactions.

In 2017, a researcher at Cornell University identified a severe security flaw in the Ethereum blockchain that put \$250 million at risk of theft. Similarly, digital currency wallet maker Ledger recently compromised 1 million email addresses in a data security breach. Access to the personal information—such as full names, postal addresses, and phone numbers—of ledger's 9,500 customers was also stolen. Whether existing data laws can address data theft and financial fraud from blockchains remains unclear.

Several commentators suggest blockchain transactions provide criminal organizations a new way to commit fraud, money laundering, and other financial



crimes. This criticism stems from currency traders' ability to remain anonymous. Indeed, these mediums have been used for "dark-market sites," where criminals can buy and sell illegal items with little chance of being identified. Various governmental agencies have labeled drug dealers exchanging drugs for digital currency as the "new generation of criminals."

## Tax Implications

The IRS has defined digital assets as property rather than currencies in the US. This means that individual investors are subject to capital gains tax laws when reporting profits and expenses on their annual tax returns, regardless of where they purchased digital coins.

## Legal and Regulatory Concerns for Investors

Since February 2020, blockchains such as Bitcoin have been legal

in the United States—and most other developed countries, such as the United Kingdom, Japan, and Canada. However, although the IRS considers Bitcoin and other virtual currencies legal, some concerns still surround their legal validity.

Any centralized issuing authority does not back digital assets, and intrinsic goods, such as gold or silver, do not underlie digital currencies' value. Instead, their value depends upon the value other owners and investors ascribe. Since any centralized regulatory body does not back them, investors may have few legal resources if any complications arise from their digital transactions or ownership.

## Blockchain: Why it's here to stay

Blockchains have been capturing headlines and investor attention for understandable reasons. However, the real question is,

Will this last? After all, behind all the hype, issues with these digital-native currencies must be worked out. Investors and everyday money users don't want to get caught holding a worthless asset. While questions abound about how things will eventually shake out, it looks like the burgeoning digital currency industry is here to stay.

All digital assets are very volatile and highly speculative bets. Investors (especially new investors) should exercise prudence. However, behind the wild fluctuations in value, there is increasing adoption of digital currency. According to a poll conducted by Pew Research in late 2021, only 16% of Americans have ever invested in, traded, or used digital currency. And according to Crypto.com research, global digital users approached 300 million early in 2022, just shy of 4% of the total global population.

Investing in blockchain and related assets like NFTs is risky.



This is new tech and industry still in the very early stages of development. Just as the internet and the companies synonymous with it have drastically changed over the past two decades, so will the blockchain and digital space. As the tech matures, various uses will coalesce around a few leaders. In other words, out of the more than 10,000 digital

currencies in existence today, most will likely lose money if you buy them now and hold them for the long term.

### Conclusion

Whether you're looking for a secure and straightforward way to buy goods online, invest funds or experiment with new tech, blockchain may be just

what you need. With instant settlements, zero or low fees, and increased security, digital currencies will undoubtedly increase in popularity. Thus, more and more people are looking for information on digital currency trading for beginners. By getting to grips with it now, you'll know how to buy, sell and trade with digital as digital currencies evolve.



**Pratik Gauri, Founder and CEO of Sire.org -a 5th Generation Blockchain ecosystem creating 5th Industrial Revolution |Venture Capitalist |Entrepreneur 35u35 |TIMES 40u40 |GreenBiz 30u30 |Asiaone 40u40 | WEF Global Shaper | TEDx Speaker**

Pratik Gauri holds the reputation of being the creator of the Fifth Industrial Revolution, aiming to transition the world from a 'for-profit' economy to a 'for-benefit' economy. He is the Founder and CEO of Sire.org- where Blockchain meets Sustainability. Gauri's entrepreneurial ventures are based on the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs). In addition to this, he is a serial Indian social entrepreneur, investor, public speaker and writer.

# Aboard the Cryptocurrency Carousel!

**T**he world of decentralised digital currencies, more popularly known as cryptocurrency, began with Bitcoin.

This has paved the way, allowing many other types of cryptocurrencies to grow. From where we stand today, a decade

since the inception of Bitcoin, there's an orbit of various types of digital currencies that exist simultaneously, constituting this confusing cryptocurrency carousel.

Being the first on the scene, Bitcoin does demand a bulk of the market's attention but other cryptocurrencies have

been climbing the ranks and making a mark. Started in 2008 by an author going by the name of Satoshi Nakamoto, it has changed digital currency as we know it.

All aboard the Cryptocurrency carousel! Which one to go for, outside of Bitcoin? How many are there? What should I consider?

*Here's a list of top 10 cryptocurrencies that are not Bitcoin!*

## 1. Ether

When did it start? 2013

Who started it? Vitalik Buterin

Moment of fame: Ethereum emerged as a better alternative to the ever-so-popular Bitcoin as it offered more opportunities than just money transfer.

Moment of doom: In 2016, an incident involving the theft of \$50 million Ether raised security concerns.



## 2. Bitcoin Cash

When did it start? 2017

Who started it? An offshoot of Bitcoin started by Bitcoin miners and developers

Moment of fame: Preparing for the future of Bitcoin and allowing it to scale better by enabling faster transactions.

Cons: Low level of adoption of Bitcoin Cash.



## 3. Binance Coin

When did it start? 2017

Who started it? Binance founder Changpeng Zhao

Pros: The user-friendliness, low fee and multi-level delivery of the platform.

Cons: Regulatory trouble in certain parts of the world.



## 4. Tether

When did it start? 2014

Who started it? Reve Collins, Craig Sellars and Brock Pierce

Moment of fame: It was a revolution in the blockchain field when it came out.

Cons: Tether has been at the centre of several controversies involving theft, issues of reserve, concealing losses and a lot more.



## 5. USD Coin

When did it start? 2018

Pros: Higher level of transparency, good passive income source, quicker and low cost.



## 6. Solana

When did it start? 2020

Who started it? Anatoly Yakovenko

Moment of fame: Solana offers the advantage of fast transactions at minimal to no cost.

Moment of doom: Experts in the field remain unconvinced that Solana is decentralised, owing to its high transactional speed.



## 7. Dogecoin

When did it start? 2013

Who started it? Jackson Palmer and Billy Markus

Moment of fame: An Elon Musk tweet!

Moment of doom: What started off as a joke, eventually grew to become the centre of several scams.



## 8. Litecoin

When did it start? 2011

Who started it? Charlie Lee

Moment of fame: Quicker processing, larger circulating supply and mining can be done on laptops and PCs.

Moment of doom: Doesn't fare too well against its competitors.



## 9. Cordano

When did it start? 2015

Who started it? Charles Hoskinson

Moment of fame: Energy efficient and quicker transactions.



## 10. Stellar

When did it start? 2014- 2015

Who started it? Jed McCaleb, Joyce Kim

Moment of fame: High level of transparency, accessibility and high-level support from experienced team



# Bitcoin plunges as major crypto lender halts operations



**T**he price of bitcoin and other cryptocurrencies plummeted after a major cryptocurrency lender effectively failed and halted all withdrawals from its platform, citing “extreme market conditions.”

It's the latest high-profile collapse of a pillar of the cryptocurrency industry. These meltdowns have erased tens of billions of dollars of investors' assets and spurred urgent calls to regulate the freewheeling industry.

Bitcoin was trading at roughly \$22,400, down more than 16% from a day before. Ethereum, another widely followed cryptocurrency, was down roughly 17%. Investors have been selling riskier assets such as

digital currencies and technology stocks as the Federal Reserve raises interest rates to combat high inflation.

The cryptocurrency lending platform Celsius Network announced that it was pausing all withdrawals and transfers between accounts in order to “honor, over time, withdrawal obligations.” Celsius, with roughly 1.7 million customers and more than \$10 billion in assets, gave no indication in its announcement when it would allow users to access their funds.

Lending platforms such as Celsius have come under scrutiny recently because they offer yields that normal markets could not support, and critics have called them effectively Ponzi schemes.

Francisco Orduna, 36, said he was referred to Celsius about a year ago and was attracted to the company's promises of high yields on his crypto holdings.

“It was easy to overlook the risk because users got used to these weekly interest payouts from Celsius,” Orduna said. He pulled most of his money out of Celsius but said he had still residual holdings trapped on the platform.

It is the second notable collapse in the cryptocurrency universe in less than two months. The stablecoin Terra imploded in early May, erasing tens of billions of dollars in a matter of hours. Stablecoins have been seen as relatively safe, because they're supposed to be backed by hard assets, such as a currency or gold.



Just like Terra, Celsius had sold itself as a safe place for cryptocurrency holders to deposit their funds. Even while Celsius was failing, the company's website advertised that users can "access your coins whenever, keep them safe forever."

"There is a lot of work ahead as we consider various options, this process will take time, and there may be delays," Celsius said in a statement.

The move surprised investors and depositors. In online chats, they questioned why their investments weren't protected.

Orduna said he pulled his money out of Celsius partly because of the Terra implosion. There have been reports that Celsius had invested part of its users' funds

in Terra, and there were concerns that Celsius was taking too high of a risk with depositors' funds.

"I started to worry whether the yield they were offering was truly sustainable," he said.

It's unclear whether Celsius depositors will get all their funds back. A cryptocurrency lender is not regulated like a bank, so there's no deposit insurance and no legal framework for who gets their money back first, like in a bankruptcy. It's possible that Celsius' investors, which include Quebec's pension fund and the prominent venture capital fund WestCap, may get their investment back before Celsius' depositors will.

WestCap did not respond to a request for comment. The

Pension Board of Canada also did not respond to a request for comment. "This was yet another bank run. You're not reinventing anything here. They were promoting their services as a better savings account but in the end, you're just another unsecured lender," said Cory Klippsten, CEO of Swan Bitcoin, who has been publicly skeptical of Celsius' business model for years.

Terra, and its token Luna, offered similar yields on customer deposits. Those tokens collapsed after huge customer withdrawals forced Terra's operators to liquidate all of the assets being used to support their currencies. The collapse of Terra has spurred calls for reform from the cryptocurrency industry, and calls for Congressional regulation. ●

# Jury Convicts Seattle Woman In Massive Capital One Hack



**A** federal jury convicted a former Seattle tech worker of several charges related to a massive hack of Capital One bank and other companies in 2019.

Paige Thompson, 36, a former Amazon software engineer who used the online handle “erratic,” obtained the personal information of more than 100 million people — a data breach that prompted Capital One to reach a tentative \$190 million settlement with affected customers. The Treasury Department also fined the company \$80 million for failing to protect the data.

Following a seven-day trial, the Seattle jury found her guilty of wire fraud, unauthorized access to a protected computer and

damaging a protected computer. The jury acquitted her of other charges, including access device fraud and aggravated identity theft. Thompson’s attorneys argued that she struggled with mental health issues, never intended to profit from the data she obtained, and said in court papers “there is no credible or direct evidence that a single person’s identity was misused.”

Federal prosecutors said she didn’t just steal the data, but also planted software on servers she unlawfully accessed to steal computing power to mine cryptocurrency.

“Far from being an ethical hacker trying to help companies with their computer security, she exploited mistakes to steal valuable data and sought to enrich herself,” Seattle U.S.

Attorney Nick Brown said in a news release.

Wire fraud is punishable by up to 20 years in prison, while the other charges can bring a five-year maximum. U.S. District Judge Robert Lasnik is scheduled to sentence Thompson in September. In interviews with The Associated Press following her arrest, friends and associates described Thompson as a skilled programmer and software architect whose career and behavior — oversharing in chat groups, frequent profanity, expressions of gender-identity distress and emotional ups and downs — mirrored her online handle. At one point, two former roommates obtained a protection order against her, saying she had been stalking and harassing them.

Thompson joined Amazon in 2015 to work at Amazon Web Services, a division that hosted the Capital One data she accessed. She left that job the next year. Some friends said they believed the unemployed Thompson — destitute and, by her own account, grappling with serious depression — believed the hack could bring her attention, respect and a new job.

“She wanted data, she wanted money and she wanted to brag,” assistant U.S. attorney Andrew Friedman told the jury, according to the news release. ●

# New rules for crypto assets will protect consumers and innovators



**I**n 2022, that work is already well underway. For instance, in March 2022 Treasury released its consultation paper on licensing and custody requirements for crypto asset secondary service providers. Feedback has landed in Treasury's inbox over the past few weeks.

Stakeholders have engaged in this regulatory reform process in good faith.

The orderly process in Australia is in contrast to the messy state of affairs in the US. In 2021, the US Congress saw 35 separate and competing bills and resolutions introduced, dealing with various aspects of crypto regulation.

Some of those bills have bipartisan sponsorship, such as

the one proposed by US Senators Kirsten Gillibrand (Democrat - New York) and Cynthia Lummis (Republican - Wyoming). But there is still no mechanism to achieve consensus.

Regulations will help clean up scams and protect consumers

Labor did not take a comprehensive policy on cryptocurrency regulation to the recent federal election.

It is likely the regulations will be carried by the newly minted minister for financial services, Stephen Jones. Jones has warned in the past that cryptocurrency is a "massive loophole for money laundering" and likened investing in crypto assets to "swimming outside the flags." Labor members of the senate committee have also expressed

concern about cryptocurrency-based scams and the need for enhanced consumer protections.

These are legitimate issues. The Treasury Department's current proposal already addresses them, in three ways.

First, licensing will be required for secondary service providers such as digital currency exchanges, cryptocurrency brokers, custody management businesses, and NFT market operators. This provides regulatory certainty to industry and provides consumers with a clear signal about who the legitimate operators are.

Importantly, limiting licensing to secondary providers ensures that primary developers can continue to build innovative crypto projects.



Second, licensed companies will have to follow new rules. Proposed rules include enhanced obligations to comply with anti-money laundering laws, along with requirements to prevent fraudulent scams and providing avenues for dispute resolution.

Read more: Crypto theft is on the rise. Here's how the crimes are committed, and how you can protect yourself

Third, licensing will come with liquidity requirements or an obligation to hold crypto assets held on trust for consumers. This aims to prevent the situation

where a digital currency exchange goes bust – such as MyCryptoWallet in 2021 – and leaves consumers as unsecured creditors with no recourse.

Further, cybersecurity standards will guard against theft from digital currency exchanges – such as the BitMark hack in 2021.

### **No going back**

There is certainly space for the Labor government to put its own stamp on the legislation. Further measures around consumer education targeted at preventing cryptocurrency-based scams,

or better enabling consumers to obtain due diligence from licensed financial advisors, are possible additions.

But Australia cannot afford to go back to square one. That would only see innovation move offshore and consumers unprotected for longer.

Industry voices have said that they are ready to work with the new government. But the federal government needs to have the “diamond hands” confidence to HODL, allowing the current reform process to continue.



# The Next Big Cryptocurrency Altcoins: Gnox (GNOX), Avalanche (AVAX), and Solana (SOL)



Crypto investors are facing a bearish market and are prompted to look around in search of the next big altcoins. A key question that comes to mind is: Which cryptos and tokens will survive the current market conditions and outlive the rest? All hope is not lost, however, as the altcoins of Gnox (GNOX), Avalanche (AVAX), and Solana (SOL) show strong potential for longevity despite the current state of the market.

## Gnox (GNOX)

Since it was granted a Know Your Customer (KYC) badge by the reputable Soken security firm, Gnox has been experiencing an excellent presale performance. It recently outperformed its 52% price increase last May 21, reaching a 60% price growth in the last few days. Gnox may be one of the next big cryptos mainly because of its innovative features. It is the first DeFi earning protocol to offer yield farming as a service, making it suitable for long investment. It

also implements a buy-and-sell tax that directly benefits holders and rewards longstanding investors, making it ideal for those who want to stay in crypto for the long game. As of this writing, approximately 49 million tokens have already been sold during the pre-sale period, which is a testament to the high demand for this token.

## Avalanche (AVAX)

Avalanche is a blockchain that is based on smart contracts. Since its inception, it has attracted investors because of its ability to provide exceptional scalability at a relatively lower cost. While Ethereum can achieve finality for a transaction in about 10 seconds, Avalanche does it in one. As such, Avalanche has been dubbed as an Ethereum killer. It also recently launched Core, which is a browser extension that enables access to the full range of web3 features, and the Core app, which is designed to help bridge Bitcoin to DeFi, enabling investors to gain rewards in the process. This altcoin is unfortunately not immune to the impacts of a bearish market and experienced a price drop of 45% in the last month. However, with a strong total value locked (TVL) of \$3.2 billion and a price increase of 13% in the last few days, AVAX could flex its resilience in the near future.

## Solana (SOL)

Similar to Avalanche, Solana is also touted as an Ethereum killer. It utilizes a unique proof-of-history (PoH) system that facilitates quick transactions at a low cost, making it a strong contender for Bitcoin. The token is all about high-performance that is well-suited to decentralized app (DApp) builders.

Passive income can also be achieved via staking, making SOL very attractive to investors. While Solana experienced a price dip in the early days of 2022, it was, however, able to bounce back. Since the major crypto crash of May, SOL has been making consistent gains. With that, analysts continue to identify it as one of the top 10 altcoins in the market.

## Key takeaway

During these challenging times, many investors feel lost and confused, looking for options for relocating their investments. With proper analysis and decision-making, investors can still identify the next big cryptocurrency altcoins. Each of the above three could be a strong starting point to reclaim your investment position in the crypto space.

# The rise of using cryptocurrency in business



## Considering the benefits of crypto

An increasing number of companies worldwide are using bitcoin and other digital assets for a host of investment, operational, and transactional purposes. As with any frontier, there are unknown dangers, but also strong incentives. Explore the kinds of questions and insights enterprises should consider as they determine whether and how to use digital assets.

## Why consider using crypto?

According to one estimate from late 2020, and that doesn't include bitcoin ATMs. An increasing number of companies The use of crypto for conducting business presents a host of

opportunities and challenges. As with any frontier, there are both unknown dangers and strong incentives. That's why companies venturing to use crypto in their businesses should have two things: a clear understanding of why they are undertaking that action and a list of the many questions they should consider.

This paper endeavors to provide you and your company with an overview of the kinds of questions and insights enterprises should consider as they determine whether and how to use crypto. So, if your company plans to participate in crypto, it's important to think ahead, prepare, and engage in a thoughtful manner. (For considerations related to investing in crypto currencies and digital assets, please consult Deloitte's complementary report, *Corporates investing in*

crypto: Considerations regarding allocations to digital assets.)

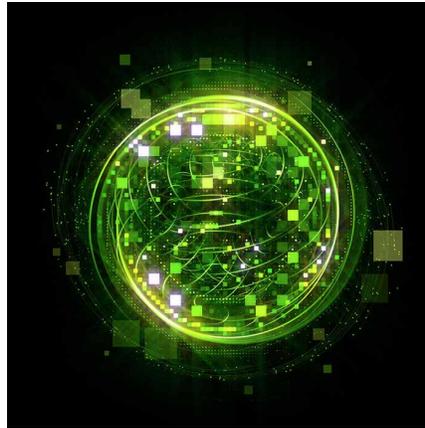
## What can crypto do for your company?

To spark your company's thinking about crypto, here are some of the rationales behind why some companies are currently using crypto:

- Crypto may provide access to new demographic groups. Users often represent a more cutting-edge clientele that values transparency in their transactions. One recent study found that up to 40% of customers who pay with crypto are new customers of the company, and their purchase amounts are twice those of credit card users.
- Introducing crypto now

may help spur internal awareness in your company about this new technology. It also may help position the company in this important emerging space for a future that could include central bank digital currencies.

- Crypto could enable access to new capital and liquidity pools through traditional investments that have been tokenized, as well as to new asset classes.
- Crypto furnishes certain options that are simply not available with fiat currency. For example, programmable money can enable real-time and accurate revenue-sharing while enhancing transparency to facilitate back-office reconciliation.
- More companies are finding that important clients and vendors want to engage by using crypto. Consequently, your business may need to be positioned to receive and disburse crypto to assure smooth exchanges with key stakeholders.
- Crypto provides a new avenue for enhancing a host of more traditional Treasury activities, such as:
  - Enabling simple, real-time, and secure money transfers
  - Helping strengthen control over the capital of the enterprise
  - Managing the risks and opportunities of engaging in



digital investments

- Crypto may serve as an effective alternative or balancing asset to cash, which may depreciate over time due to inflation. Crypto is an investable asset, and some, such as bitcoin, have performed exceedingly well over the past five years. There are, of course, clear volatility risks that need to be thoughtfully considered.

## Two primary paths for using crypto

The first question to ask when considering using crypto in your company's operations is: Do we hold crypto on our balance sheet or simply adopt crypto-enabled payments? To determine the right path for your business, you need to make a careful determination of the best fit for your business objectives. Consider the potential benefits, drawbacks, costs, risks, system requirements, and more. The following sections will provide some broad considerations around two different paths as your company embarks on its crypto journey.

## Enabling payments: "Hands-off"

Some companies use crypto just to facilitate payments. One avenue to facilitate payments is to simply convert in and out of crypto to fiat currency to receive or make payments without actually touching it. In other words, the company is taking a "hands-off" approach that keeps crypto off the books.

Enabling crypto payments, such as bitcoin, without bringing it onto the company's balance sheet may be the easiest and fastest entry point into the use of digital assets. It may require the fewest adjustments across the spectrum of corporate functions and may serve immediate goals, such as reaching a new clientele and growing the volume of each sales transaction. Enterprises adopting this limited use of crypto typically rely on third-party vendors.

The third-party vendor, acting as an agent for the company, accepts or makes payments in crypto through conversion into and out of fiat currency. This may be the simplest option to pursue. And, in all likelihood, it may cause relatively few disruptions to a company's internal functions, since the "hands-off" approach keeps crypto off the corporate balance sheet.

The third-party vendor, which will charge a fee for this service, handles the bulk of the technical questions and manages a number of risk, compliance, and controls issues on behalf of the company. That does not mean, however, that the company is



necessarily absolved from all responsibility for risk, compliance, and internal controls issues. Companies still need to pay careful attention to issues such as anti-money laundering and know your customer (AML and KYC) requirements. And, of course, they also need to abide by any restrictions set by the Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC), the agency that administers and enforces economic and trade sanctions set by the US government.

## Identify your company's path and develop a road map

Crypto is viewed by some as a critical part of the evolution of finance. When your company chooses to engage with crypto, that triggers changes across the organization, as well as changes in mindset.

As with any technology change or upgrade, there is a need for an implementation plan. That plan should include, but is not limited to, these types of questions:

- What is the overall

strategy?

- What are the short-term and long-term objectives?
- What partners, internal and external, does the company need to involve? Can leaders identify effective champions for the effort across the enterprise, in all relevant departments?
- Will the decisions and actions the company takes now allow for flexibility and scaling of efforts later?
- How can the company integrate the security needs of operating in the digital asset ecosystem with existing security and cyber efforts in the company?
- How does the company implement the introduction of crypto? Does it begin with a payments-only, “hands-off” approach? Or does it engage “hands-on”?
- What resources will the company need above and beyond those it currently has? What new expertise

might it need?

- What will the implementation road map look like?
- How will the company evaluate progress as it implements? Does the company have the necessary processes in place to monitor the execution of transactions and vendor performance?
- What does the final state before launch look like?

This can be a complex endeavor. That's why, before engaging in a more robust launch, some companies have chosen to pilot the use of crypto just as they would pilot a new technology. One type of pilot a number have chosen is an internal intradepartmental pilot. It's based in Treasury, since Treasury is typically responsible for internal funding of the company and its departments and subsidiaries. The pilot can begin with the purchase of some crypto, after which Treasury uses it for several peripheral payments and follows the thread as the crypto is paid out, received, and revalued. ●

# Ethereum suffers brutal drop in value after investors dump \$282 million



**A**n aggressive sell-off has led to millions of dollars being wiped off the cryptocurrency's valuation, while its overall price has plunged.

The cryptocurrency ethereum, which is the second most valuable coin in the market after bitcoin, has experienced a brutal drop in value after an aggressive sell off by investors.

Leading into the weekend, ethereum's value sank by 15 per cent in just two days, dropping to \$US1661 (\$A2347), which was its lowest level since March 2021.

It's an even bigger drop compared to November's price, with the cryptocurrency down 75 per cent from its record peak of \$US4878 (\$A6893).

Analysts said at least \$US200 million (\$A282 million) of ethereum was sold off in just one day and it dropped 25 per cent

in just one month. All of the top 10 cryptocurrencies fell in the past week by at least 3 per cent except cardano, which is up 6 per cent on the week, according to CoinMarketCap data.

Ethereum currently has a market capitalisation of \$US184 billion (\$A260 billion), which is down by 8.9 per cent. But there's more pain to come for investors according to a renowned crypto sceptic after the market meltdown.

David Gerard, author of *Attack of the 50 Foot Blockchain*, told *Nine's 60 Minutes* he was concerned about the lack of regulation in the industry, where celebrity endorsements from the likes of NBA star LeBron James had created a market full of manipulation, scammers and crooks.

"Everyone loves the siren call of a number going up and they think, here's my chance," he said.

"[But] we have to think about the real victims, the mums and dads, the grannies who think their retirement should go into crypto. There's a real human cost here and that's the ordinary people who get scammed. You can't get rich for free. You'd think that was obvious, but people keep hoping there's a way out and that they'll get ahead, but it's always a false hope. Some people do great but more people get absolutely wrecked."

He warned much of the crypto industry had turned into a dangerous cult.

"The majority of volume, the way the market works, the way pricing is set, it all happens in a completely, literally unregulated environment," he said.

"This crash has really brought it home to people that actually, the music's going to stop sometime. The people who bought in just the last six months, they're basically going to be stuck with magic beans and they're trying to work out how to offload them. A lot of them are just going to have to take the hit and it's not going to be nice."

The cryptocurrency market suffered one of its biggest crashes on record last month after the complete collapse of two of the most popular and supposedly "stable" coins, terra and its sister token luna.

# UK Provides Increased Support For Ukraine's Energy Sector



**B**usiness Secretary announces a £5 million support fund for providing safety and security equipment to Ukraine's civil nuclear sector.

- UK government announces further £5 million to support Ukraine's energy sector, helping provide safety and security equipment for their civil nuclear sector
- follows £10 million announced last week to fund and help reconnect power across the country, and a further £7 million previously allocated to supply generators
- this builds on the ongoing

UK-wide effort to support Ukraine in the face of Russia's brutality

The UK's Business and Energy secretary, Kwasi Kwarteng, announces today a £5 million support fund designated to providing safety and security equipment to Ukraine's civil nuclear sector, supporting the country's ongoing effort to stand with Ukraine.

The civil nuclear support fund will see high-priority items, which could include personal protective equipment, communications systems, and radiation monitoring equipment, supplied to Ukraine. This will enable the high levels of safety and security required to be fully restored at

Chernobyl and Ukraine's other nuclear sites following Russian attacks.

The provision of vital equipment to Ukraine also contributes to widespread efforts to supply equipment for guard forces and to enhance the detection of the illicit movement of materials within Ukraine and across its borders, helping the country recover from Russian control of Chernobyl.

***Business and Energy Secretary Kwasi Kwarteng said:***

*Energy systems play an indispensable role in ensuring national security and economic resilience.*



*Today the UK is ramping up our support to the Ukrainian people in their time of need by helping reconnect power across the country and protecting the safety and security of Ukraine's nuclear sector, ensuring their frontline is fully equipped in the face of Russia's brutality.*

**Melinda Simmonds, UK Ambassador to Ukraine said:**

*Ensuring Ukraine has access to available energy will not only make sure the economy continues to function, but will also keep people warm and allow hospitals to provide emergency healthcare when it's needed.*

*I'm proud of all the UK is doing*



*to support Ukraine in the face of Russian aggression.*

Today's news follows the Foreign Secretary's announcement last week of a £10 million Energy Support Fund, forming part of a package to help Ukraine defeat Putin and rebuild the country. This fund will help keep Ukraine's energy system running in wartime, enabling essential repairs to energy infrastructure and helping reconnect power across the

country. The package included both immediate financial and longer-term support for the Ukrainian people, utilising UK expertise and British businesses to accelerate Ukraine's economic recovery.

Together this brings UK support for Ukraine's energy sector to £22 million, including the UK's £7 million donations of over 850 generators earlier this year that is already in use, helping to power essential services such as hospitals and shelters.

These support packages come as international partners and allies from around the world joined together last week for the Lugano Conference on Ukraine's Recovery in Switzerland in a united stand with Ukraine.

# Boris Johnson resigns as PM, political drama ends in Britain



**B**oris Johnson resigned as leader of Britain's Conservative Party, paving the way for selecting a new prime minister after dozens of ministers left his government in a heated 48-hour political drama.

"It is the will of the parliamentary Conservative party that there should be a new leader of that party, and therefore a new Prime Minister," Mr Johnson said outside 10 Downing Street.

Mr Johnson, 58, said he would stay as Prime Minister until a replacement is found.

He had fought hard against a Cabinet revolt. He said he was "sad... to be giving up the best job in the world", justifying fighting

on in the final hours to deliver the mandate he won in a Brexit-dominated general election in December 2019.

"And let me say now, to the people of Ukraine, that I know that we in the U.K. will continue to back your fight for freedom for as long as it takes," he added in his six-minute address.

Mr Johnson's few remaining aides in the Tory party stood by his wife, Carrie, over their daughter, Romy.

The BBC and others reported that the Conservative leadership election would be held in the summer. The winner would replace Mr Johnson at the party's annual convention in early October. Defense Minister Ben Wallace and Indian-origin

Rishi Sunak, whose departure as finance minister sparked a cabinet exodus, were among the early pioneers to succeed Mr Johnson, according to a YouGov poll of Conservative Party members.

Foreign Secretary Liz Truss, another potential contender, said Mr Johnson had "made the right decision" as she cut short a trip to Indonesia for a G-20 meeting. "We need calmness and unity now and to keep governing while a new leader is found," she tweeted.

Mr Johnson won in 2019 with a resolution to "get Brexit done", following Britain's shock referendum decision three years ago. But for many, the populist, anti-traditional leader had ousted his welcome.

# French, German, Italian and Romanian Leaders Arrive in Kyiv



**T**he leaders of France, Germany, Italy and Romania arrived in Kyiv in a show of collective European support for Ukraine as it tries to resist Russia's invasion, marking the highest-profile visit to Ukraine's capital since Russia invaded its neighbor.

The French president's office said President Emmanuel Macron, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz and Italian Premier Mario Draghi had traveled to Kyiv together, and that Romanian President Klaus Iohannis will join them there.

After getting off the train in Kyiv, Macron said they would visit sites where attacks occurred.

"It is an important moment," he said. "It is a message of European unity toward Ukrainians."

Macron said they will speak with Ukrainian officials about "both the present and the future."

The European leaders are to meet with Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy. The economies of France, Germany and Italy are the three largest in the EU.

The leaders arrived on a special overnight train provided by the Ukrainian authorities, and held long meetings in the dining car after midnight to align their positions ahead of meeting with Zelenskyy.

The visit carries heavy symbolic weight given that the three Western European powers have often faced criticism for not providing Ukraine with the scale of weapons that Zelenskyy has been begging them for, and for their willingness to keep speaking to Russian President Vladimir Putin — something Baltic and Central European leaders have found unacceptable.

Hopes were high among Ukrainians that the visit could mark a turning point by opening the way to significant new arms supplies.

The visit comes as EU leaders prepare to make a decision June 23-24 on Ukraine's request



to become a candidate for EU membership, and ahead of an important NATO summit June 29-30 in Madrid.

Also, NATO defense ministers are meeting in Brussels to weigh more military aid for Ukraine. The U.S. and Germany announced more aid, as America and its allies provide longer-range weapons they say can make a difference in a fight where Ukrainian forces are outnumbered and outgunned by their Russian invaders. During a trip to Ukraine's neighbors Romania and Moldova, Macron said a "message of support" must be sent to Ukraine before EU heads of state and government "have to make important decisions" at their Brussels meeting.

"We are in a moment where we need to send clear political signals — we, Europeans, we the European Union — toward Ukraine and the Ukrainian people," he said.

Macron is deeply involved in diplomatic efforts to push for a cease-fire in Ukraine that would allow future peace negotiations. He has frequent discussions with Zelenskyy and has spoken on the phone several times with Russian President Vladimir Putin since Putin launched the invasion in late February.

Scholz had long resisted traveling to Kyiv, saying he didn't want to "join the queue of people who do a quick in-out for a photo opportunity." Instead, Scholz said a trip

should focus on doing "concrete things."

Germany announced that it will provide Ukraine with three multiple launch rocket systems of the kind that Kyiv has said it urgently needs to defend itself against Russia's invasion.

Defense Minister Christine Lambrecht said Germany will transfer three M270 medium-range artillery rocket systems along with ammunition to Ukraine.

Germany said the transfer, which echoes similar moves by Britain and the United States, will be accompanied by training and will have "a swift and significant battlefield impact."

# Former Prime Minister of Japan Shinzo Abe Assassinated



**T**he former prime minister of Japan was assassinated in the city of Nara. He served in the office longer than anyone before stepping down in 2020.

Shinzo Abe, Japan's longest-serving prime minister, died on 8th July 2022 at 67, after being shot while campaigning for a candidate ahead of the upcoming national elections.

Mr Abe served as prime minister from December 2012 to September 2020, the longest consecutive reign since Japan created a European-style government led by a prime

minister in the late 19th century. He also occupied the job in an earlier stint from 2006 to 2007 and held the record for most total days in office.

The heir to a political dynasty, Mr Abe championed a revival in the economic and military strength of a country that began to stagnate in the 1990s after its meteoric rise from defeat in World War II.

"Ladies and gentlemen, Japan is back," Mr Abe said in a February 2013 speech in Washington. "Japan is not, and will never be a tier-two country."

He was a proponent of the U.S.-

Japan military alliance and built a rapport with then-President Donald Trump, playing golf five times together and speaking dozens of times on the phone. Earlier, in 2016, he had guided then-President Barack Obama to Hiroshima, in the first visit by a U.S. president to the site of the atomic bombing, and he was the first Japanese leader to address a joint session of the U.S. Congress.

The police arrested a suspect, Tetsuya Yamagami, 41, on an initial charge of attempted murder.

The Japanese Fire and Disaster Management Agency said that Mr Abe had been shot in his right

neck and left chest. Footage on social media showed Mr Abe, 67, collapsed and bleeding on the ground in the western city of Nara, near Kyoto.

Prime Minister Fumio Kishida, who had been on the campaign trail in Yamagata Prefecture and returned to Tokyo after the shooting, said at a news briefing before Mr Abe's death was announced that the attack was a "heinous act." He added, "It is barbaric and malicious, and it cannot be tolerated."

Mr Abe was giving a campaign speech on behalf of Kei Sato, 43, a member of the Liberal Democratic Party from Nara who was running for re-election in the Upper House of Parliament. Mr Abe had been speaking for less than a minute when two blasts were heard behind him.

Yoshio Ogita, 74, the secretary-general of the L.D.P.'s local chapter, was standing next to Mr Abe. He said he heard two loud



sounds and saw a plume of white smoke rising into the sky. "I didn't know what had happened," he said in a telephone interview. "I saw him collapse."

Images shared on social media showed a man being tackled after the shooting near Yamatosaidaiji Station. The man was a Nara resident, according to NHK, the public broadcaster. The police said they had retrieved a crude weapon.

Mr Abe was Japan's longest-serving prime minister. He served two terms, from 2006 to 2007 and from 2012 to 2020. He resigned in 2020 because of ill health.

Gun violence is rare in Japan, where just 10 shootings that contributed to death, injury or property damage were reported in 2021, according to statistics from the National Police Agency. In those incidents, one person was killed and four others were injured. The figures do not include accidents or suicides.



# Rest in Peace Japan's longest-serving former prime minister



Former Japanese prime minister Shinzo Abe has died after being shot while campaigning on a street in Nara, in the country's west. Abe was rushed to a hospital, where doctors battled to save him. It was confirmed just before 7 pm on 8th July 2022 that he had died.

## **Who is Shinzo Abe?**

Shinzo Abe was the longest-serving minister in the country's history. He was briefly in office from 2006 to 2007 as Prime Minister but was forced to resign due to medical complications from ulcerative colitis.

Undeterred, he was once again elected in September 2012 and stayed in office until September 2020. He resigned once again, citing health reasons.

## **What is Abe's politics?**

Abe is a conservative. He is political blue blood who was groomed to follow in the footsteps of his grandfather, former prime minister Nobusuke Kishi.

His political rhetoric often focused on making Japan a "normal" and "beautiful" nation with a stronger military and a bigger role in international affairs. His push to normalise Japan's defensive posture angered some parts of the population. Supporters of Abe said that his legacy was a stronger US-Japan relationship that was meant to bolster Japan's defence capability. But Abe made enemies too by forcing his defence goals and other contentious issues through parliament, despite strong public opposition.

## **How old is Shinzo Abe?**

Shinzo Abe is 67.

## **Does Shinzo Abe have a family?**

Yes. He is married to Akie Matsuzaki, the daughter of the president of a well-known Japanese chocolate factory. The couple has no children. Abe's brothers are also well connected in Japan. His elder brother Hironobu Abe became the president of Mitsubishi Shoji Packaging Corporation, and his younger brother Nobuo Kishi is the senior vice-minister for foreign affairs.

## **Why was Abe giving a speech in Nara?**

Abe was in Nara campaigning ahead of the election for the parliament's upper house.

# Biden says US sending medium-range rocket systems to Ukraine



**T**he Biden administration says it will send Ukraine a small number of high-tech, medium-range rocket systems, a critical weapon that Ukrainian leaders have been begging for as they struggle to stall Russian progress in the Donbas region.

The rocket systems are part of a new \$700 million tranche of security assistance for Ukraine from the U.S., including helicopters, Javelin anti-tank weapon systems, tactical vehicles, spare parts, and more, two senior administration officials said. The officials spoke on the condition of anonymity to preview the weapons package formally unveiled. The U.S. decision to provide the advanced rocket

systems tries to strike a balance between the desire to help Ukraine battle ferocious Russian artillery barrages while not providing arms that could allow Ukraine to hit targets deep inside Russia and trigger an escalation in the war.

In a guest essay published in *The New York Times*, President Joe Biden confirmed that he's decided to "provide the Ukrainians with more advanced rocket systems and munitions that will enable them to strike key targets on the battlefield in Ukraine more precisely."

Biden had said that the U.S. would not send Ukraine "rocket systems that can strike into Russia." Any weapons system can shoot into Russia close enough to

the border. The officials said that the aid package expected to be unveiled would send what the U.S. considers medium-range rockets — they generally can travel about 45 miles (70 kilometres).

According to the senior administration officials, the Ukrainians have assured U.S. officials that they will not fire rockets into Russian territory. One official noted that the advanced rocket systems would give Ukrainian forces greater precision in targeting Russian assets inside Ukraine.

The expectation is that Ukraine could use the rockets in the eastern Donbas region, where they could both intercept Russian artillery and take out Russian positions in towns where

fighting is intense, such as Sievierodonetsk. Sievierodonetsk is vital to Russian efforts to capture the Donbas before more Western arms arrive to bolster Ukraine's defence. The city, which is 90 miles (145 kilometres) south of the Russian border, is in an area that is the last pocket under Ukrainian government control in the Luhansk region of the Donbas.

Biden added in his New York Times essay: "We are not encouraging or enabling Ukraine to strike beyond its borders. We do not want to prolong the war to inflict pain on Russia."

It's the 11th package approved so far and will be the first to tap the \$40 billion in security and economic assistance recently passed by Congress. The rocket systems would be part of Pentagon drawdown authority, involving taking weapons from U.S. inventory and getting them into Ukraine quickly. Ukrainian troops would also need training on the new systems, taking at least a week or two.

Officials said the plan is to send Ukraine the High Mobility Artillery Rocket System, or HIMARS mounted on a truck and carrying a container with six rockets. The system can launch a medium-range rocket, which is the current plan, but can also fire a longer-range missile; the Army Tactical Missile System, which has a range of about 190 miles (300 kilometres), is not part of the plan.

Since the war began in February, the U.S. and its allies have tried to walk a narrow line: send Ukraine weapons needed to fight off

Russia, but stop short of providing aid that will inflame Russian President Vladimir Putin and trigger a broader conflict that could spill over into other parts of Europe.

Over time, however, the U.S. and its allies have excited the weaponry into Ukraine. The fight has shifted from Russia's broader campaign to take the capital, Kyiv, and other areas, to more close-contact skirmishes for small businesses and pieces of land in the east and south. To that end, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has been pleading with the West to send multiple launch rocket systems to Ukraine as soon as possible to help stop Russia's destruction of towns in the Donbas. The rockets have a more extended range than the howitzer artillery systems that the U.S. has provided Ukraine. They would allow Ukrainian forces to strike Russian troops from a distance outside Russia's artillery systems.

"We are fighting for Ukraine to be provided with all the weapons needed to change the nature of the fighting and start moving faster and more confidently toward the expulsion of the occupiers," Zelenskyy said in a recent address.

Ukraine needs multiple launch rocket systems, said Philip Breedlove, a retired U.S. Air Force general and NATO's top commander from 2013 to 2016.

"These are critical capabilities that we have not gotten them yet. And they not only need them, but they have been very loud in explaining they want them," said Breedlove. "We need to get serious about

supplying this army so that it can do what the world is asking it to do: fight a world superpower alone on the battlefield."

U.S. and White House officials had no public comment on the specifics of the aid package.

"We continue to consider a range of systems that have the potential to be effective on the battlefield for our Ukrainian partners. But the president's point is that we won't be sending long-range rockets for use beyond the battlefield in Ukraine," State Department Ned Price said. "As the battle has shifted its dynamics, we have also shifted the type of security assistance that we are providing to them, largely because they have asked us for the various systems that will be more effective in places like the Donbas."

Russia has been making incremental progress in the Donbas as it tries to take the remaining sections of the region not already controlled by Russian-backed separatists.

Putin has repeatedly warned the West against sending greater firepower to Ukraine. The Kremlin said Putin held an 80-minute telephone call with the leaders of France and Germany in which he warned against the continued transfers of Western weapons.

Overall, the United States has committed approximately \$5 billion in security assistance to Ukraine since the Biden administration, including roughly \$4.5 billion since Russia invaded on Feb. 24.

# Thailand Makes Marijuana Legal, But Smoking Discouraged



**T**hailand made it legal to cultivate and possess marijuana which like a dream come true for an ageing generation of pot smokers who recall the kick the legendary Thai Stick variety delivered.

The stated intention of the country's public health minister to distribute 1 million marijuana seedlings, has added to the impression that Thailand is turning into a weed wonderland.

Some Thai advocates celebrated it by buying marijuana at a cafe that had previously been limited to selling products made from the parts of the plant that do not get people high. The dozen or so people who turned up at the Highland Cafe were able to choose from a variety of buds with names such as Sugarcane, Bubblegum, Purple Afghani, and UFO.

"I can say it out loud, that I am a cannabis smoker. I don't need to hide like in the past

when it was branded as an illegal drug," said 24-year-old Rittipong Bachkul, the day's first customer.

So far, it appears there would be no effort to police what people can grow and smoke at home, aside from registering to do so, and declaring it is for medical purposes.

For the time being, however, would-be marijuana tourists might want to proceed with caution.

Thailand's government has said it is promoting cannabis for medical use only, warning those eager to light up for fun that smoking in public could still be considered to be a nuisance, subject to a potential 3-month sentence and 25,000 Thai baht (\$780) fine.

And extracted content, such as oil, remains illegal if it contains more than 0.2% of tetrahydrocannabinol, or THC, the chemical that makes people high.

The status of marijuana is still in considerable legal limbo because while it is no longer treated as a dangerous drug, Thai lawmakers have yet to pass legislation to regulate its trade.

Thailand has become the first nation in Asia to decriminalize marijuana — also known as cannabis, or ganja in the local lingo — but it is not following the examples of Uruguay and Canada, the only two countries so far that have legalized recreational marijuana on a national basis.

Thailand mainly wants to make a splash in the market for medical marijuana. It already has a well developed medical tourism industry and its tropical climate is ideal for growing cannabis.

"We should know how to use cannabis," Public Health Minister Anutin Charnvirakul, the country's biggest marijuana booster, said recently. "If we have the right awareness, cannabis is like gold, something valuable, and should be promoted."

But he added, "We will have additional Ministry of Health Notifications, by the Department of Health. If it causes nuisances, we can use that law (to stop people from smoking)."

He said the government prefers to "build an awareness" that would be better than patrolling to check on people and using the law to punish them.

Some immediate beneficiaries of the change are people who have been locked up for breaking the old law.

"From our perspective, a major positive outcome of the legal changes is that at least 4,000 people imprisoned for offences relating to cannabis will be released," Gloria Lai, Asia regional director of the International Drug Policy Consortium, said in an email interview.

"People facing cannabis-related charges will see them dropped, and money and cannabis seized from people charged with cannabis-related offences will be returned to their owners." Her organization is a network of civil society organizations worldwide advocating drug policies "grounded in principles of human rights, health and development."

However, economic benefits are at the heart of the marijuana reforms, projected to boost everything from national income to small farmers' livelihoods.

There is concern over whether the benefits will be distributed equitably.

One fear is that giant

corporations could be unfairly served by proposed regulations involving complicated licensing processes and expensive fees for commercial use that would handicap small producers.

"We have seen what happened with the alcohol business in Thailand. Only large-scale producers are allowed to monopolize the market," said Taopiphop Limjittrakorn, a lawmaker from the opposition Move Forward party. "We are worried a similar thing will happen to the cannabis industry if the rules are in favour of big business," His party wants laws now being drafted to tackle the problem.

Small operators are keen to move into the marijuana sector anyway.

In eastern Thailand's Sri Racha district, Ittisug Hanjichan, owner of Goldenleaf Hemp, a cannabis farm, led his fifth training course for 40 entrepreneurs, farmers, and retirees. They each paid about \$150 to learn tips on nicking seed coats and tending the plants to get quality yields.

One of the attendees was 18-year-old Chanadech Sonboon, who said his parents used to scold him for trying to secretly grow marijuana plants.

He said his father has changed his mind and now sees marijuana as a medication rather than something to be abused. The family runs a small homestay and café and hopes to one day provide cannabis to its guests.



**A**frican's Warm Heart, Malawi, is beating faster now, and the legendary welcome is there for all who wish to experience the unrivalled combination of Lake, Landscape, Wildlife & Culture in one of Africa's most beautiful and compact countries. Recently crowned as one of Lonely Planet's Best in Travel Top Countries for 2022 (a remarkable second appearance on that prestigious list in recent years) Malawi's tourism is set to return to the upward trajectory it was on pre-pandemic.

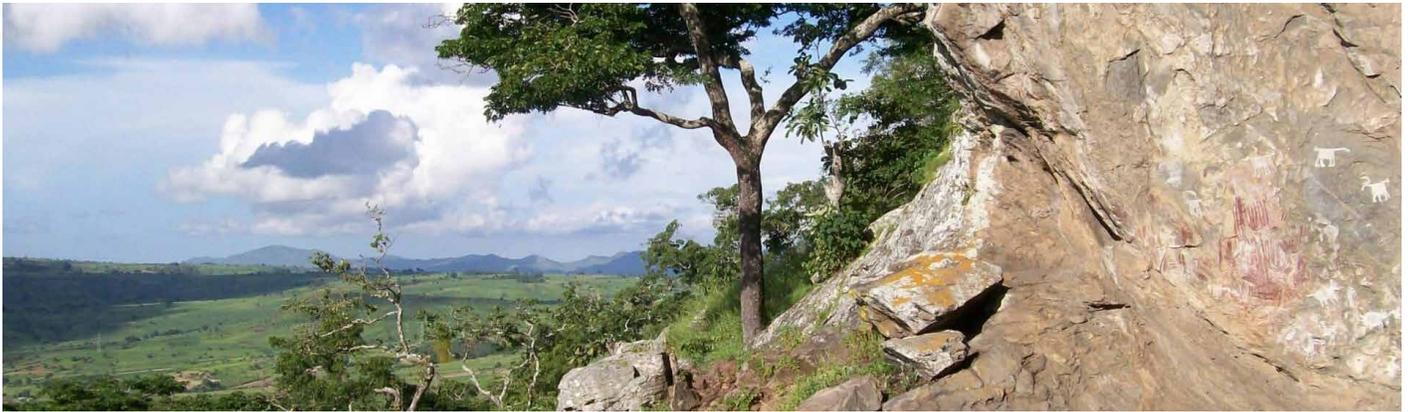
Described as the 'Warm Heart of Africa', this relatively little-known

gem of this diverse continent has so much to offer; wildlife, culture, adventure, scenery, and of course the third largest lake in Africa. A year-round destination, some even go as far to describe Malawi as the most attractive and complete destination in Africa! This may seem to be an extravagant claim for such a relatively small country but the truth lies in the unique combination of attractions that Malawi has to offer.

Where else will you find such rich cultural interaction and such a genuinely warm welcome in a country at peace with itself? Where else can you experience such a diverse scenic

kaleidoscope in such a small area? Here you have central Africa's highest mountain, vast high plateaux with seemingly limitless views, forests and unspoilt game parks and, the jewel in the crown, Africa's third largest and most beautiful lake – truly an inland sea. With thrilling safaris now rivalling its neighbours thanks to the sustainable wildlife revolution brought about by Africa Parks, it's easy to see why Malawi is now proving so popular.

Malawi's tourist industry is vital to the overall economy of the country and supports huge numbers of local Malawians through employment and



community projects, as well as helping conserve the country's natural riches. As it attempts to recover from the damage caused by COVID-19, and continue in its important role, the industry is doing all it can to ensure the well-being of its visitors. A set of national COVID-19 Health & Safety protocols for tourism has been established, that have resulted in the award of the World Travel & Tourism Council's Safe Travels Stamp. WTTC's Stamp was established to show travellers which destinations have adopted globally standardised health and hygiene protocols in order that they can experience 'Safe Travels'.

The jewel in the crown of the country's tourist experiences is Lake Malawi, "discovered" by the missionary-explorer Dr David Livingstone just over 150 years ago. Although totally landlocked, Malawi is not denied

its "inland sea". This vast body of freshwater fringed by beaches of golden sand is not only a scenic wonderland but it provides water sport opportunities for those looking for something beyond sun, sand and swimming.

### Lake Malawi

Lake Malawi is the jewel in the crown of the country's tourist attractions. This is the 'inland sea' of the otherwise land-locked Malawi. This vast body of crystal-clear freshwater fringed by beaches of golden sand is not only a scenic wonderland but it provides water sport opportunities for those looking for something beyond sun, sand and swimming. As one of the first Europeans to set eyes on the Lake Malawi over 150 years ago, the missionary-explorer Dr David Livingstone christened it the 'Lake of Stars'.

### Lake Chilwa

Lake Chilwa is Malawi's second largest lake, though considerably shallower than Lake Malawi at just a few metres deep. In times of drought, or even at the end of the dry season, it shrinks perceptibly. In the past it has been even bigger than today.

Lake Chilwa was designated a Ramsar Wetland of International Importance in 1997, the only one in Malawi. The lake supports massive populations of important bird species, particularly waterfowl and including huge numbers of lesser moorhen, lesser gullinule, black crane and glossy ibis.

#### **Places to Visit on Lake Malawi**

In South Malawi, between Mangochi and Monkey Bay



is a long line of wonderful beaches backed by a variety of accommodation. Monkey Bay is a functional port town, but round the headland is Cape Maclear and the Lake Malawi National Park, a UNESCO World Heritage Site and a veritable aquarium of tropical fish. In recent years, a number of high-quality lodges have been built in this area.

## Lake Malawi National Park

The Lake Malawi National Park is the world's first freshwater national park and a World Heritage Site, found at Cape Maclear at the southern end of Lake Malawi. The park includes a land area around the cape and bay as well as the Lake and islands up to 100 metres (330ft) off shore. Here is a veritable aquarium of tropical fish in crystal clear waters providing a

colourful kaleidoscopic display. The countless thousands of freshwater fish, the mbuna, are more abundant and varied here than anywhere else in the world.

## Nkhata Bay

Nkhata Bay is at the most northerly point on Lake Malawi reached by David Livingstone during his expeditions through Africa over 150 years ago. Its small sheltered harbour is a focus for the Lake's fishing industry but it is also becoming increasingly important as a tourist centre. As a vibrant port town in the north of Malawi, it is often referred to as the gateway to the islands. It has a wonderful craft market and a bustling (almost Caribbean) feel to the town.

The Ilala can be used to access Likoma Island and there are also now an increasing number of

smaller boats offering access to Likoma.

## Marelli Islands

The Marelli Islands group consists of three islands: Maleri, the largest, is 168 ha, Nankoma, 65 ha and Nakantenga, 18 ha. They are located opposite Senga Bay, 3 km from the shore in the remarkably clear waters of Lake Malawi. The Marelli Islands are 3 of the 13 islands that fall under the protection of Lake Malawi National Park, the first fresh water National Park in the world. Due to the large array of habitat types present on the archipelago, varying from rocky shorelines to small wild sandy beaches and from wooden hill sides to reedy lagoons, the Marelli Islands are home to a wide range of animal's species.



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Photos provided by Jonathan Ramael

## Likoma Island

Off the eastern shore of the Lake is Likoma Island, a small piece of Malawian territory in Mozambican waters. The University Mission to Central Africa (David Livingstone's mission) set up their headquarters on Likoma in the 1880s in part to try to fight the slave trade that used routes across Lake Malawi.

Likoma's primary claim to fame is its magnificent cathedral. St Peter's matches the size of Winchester Cathedral in the UK, yet is here on an island in the middle of a lake in the

middle of Africa! Work began on this extraordinarily ambitious construction project in 1903 when the mission was fortunate to have a trained architect on its staff.

### Places to Visit in North Malawi

#### Chintheche

These are some of the best beaches on the lake. 15km south of Chintheche is the very popular Kande Horse & Stables Guest House where horse riding can be enjoyed from excursions of a few hours up to two-week tours. You can even ride the horses into the lake. As well as all the

lake activities and horse riding, both Makuzi and Kande offer occasional yoga retreats. In addition to the beautiful lakeshore, there is a site of historical interest at nearby Bandawe Mission.

This was the location for the second attempt by Dr Robert Laws to establish a Livingstonia Mission. As at Cape Maclear, malaria took its toll and the missionaries moved further north to the present site on the Kondowe Plateau. The church remains, with its laterally sided pulpit and banked seating, as do a number of missionary graves.



### *Livingstonia Mission*

## Karonga

Set on the shores of Lake Malawi, Karonga is one of Malawi's most northern townships and a place of growing interest. It has an interesting but turbulent history as a centre for the notorious nineteenth century slave trade and, later, as the site of a First World War battle between German-ruled Tanzania (known as Tanganyika at the time) and British-ruled Malawi (Nyasaland at the time). The town's cemetery has a number of military graves from the battle.

Karonga is the largest town before reaching the Tanzania border and so a useful place to re-stock and re-fuel for those on a multi-country itinerary. It also has a fee simple lodge.

## Manda Wilderness (Mozambique)

A massive 100,000 ha area of Mozambique land which runs to the eastern shore of Lake Malawi forms the Manda Wilderness Community Reserve. This is a genuine unspoilt wilderness – branchiostegal and riverine forest, savannah, swamps and streams, mountains and miles of beautiful deserted white-sand beaches lapped by crystal clear fresh water. The reserve has been set up and administered with the commitment and active involvement of the local communities.

Although part of Mozambique, Manda Wilderness is very much part of the Malawi 'circuit' and Easiest access to Manda is from Malawi's Likoma Island. Accommodation is provided at the barefoot luxury of Nkwichi Lodge, at one of the most pristine

white sand beaches to be found on Lake Malawi. The lodge is another community-based development.

## Malawi's Wildlife

Malawi is blessed with a rich diversity of flora and fauna and has no less than nine National Parks and Wildlife Reserves. Although it may not have quite the sheer numbers of large mammals as some of its better-known neighbours, it makes up for this in other ways by providing intensive and exclusive wildlife viewing in unspoilt areas of genuine wilderness with very few other visitors looking on. Malawi is also in the middle of a wildlife revolution with massive investment in a number of its protected areas resulting in a boom in wildlife numbers and, so far, two of its parks & reserves becoming home to the 'Big 5'.

# Explorers find WWII Navy destroyer, deepest wreck discovered



**A** U.S. Navy destroyer that engaged a superior Japanese fleet in the largest sea battle of World War II in the Philippines has become the deepest wreck to be discovered, according to explorers.

The USS Samuel B. Roberts, popularly known as the “Sammy B,” was identified broken into two pieces on a slope at a depth of 6,985 meters (22,916 feet).

That puts it 426 meters (1,400 feet) deeper than the USS Johnson, the previous deepest wreck discovered last year in the Philippine Sea also by American explorer Victor Vescovo, founder of Dallas-based Caladan Oceanic

Expeditions. He announced the latest find together with U.K.-based EYOS Expeditions.

“It was an extraordinary honor to locate this incredibly famous ship, and by doing so have the chance to retell her story of heroism and duty to those who may not know of the ship and her crew’s sacrifice,” Vescovo, a former Navy commander, said in a statement.

The Sammy B. took part in the Battle off Samar, the final phase of the Battle of Leyte Gulf in October 1944, in which the Imperial Japanese Navy suffered its biggest loss of ships and failed to dislodge the U.S. forces from Leyte, which they invaded earlier

as part of the liberation of the Philippines.

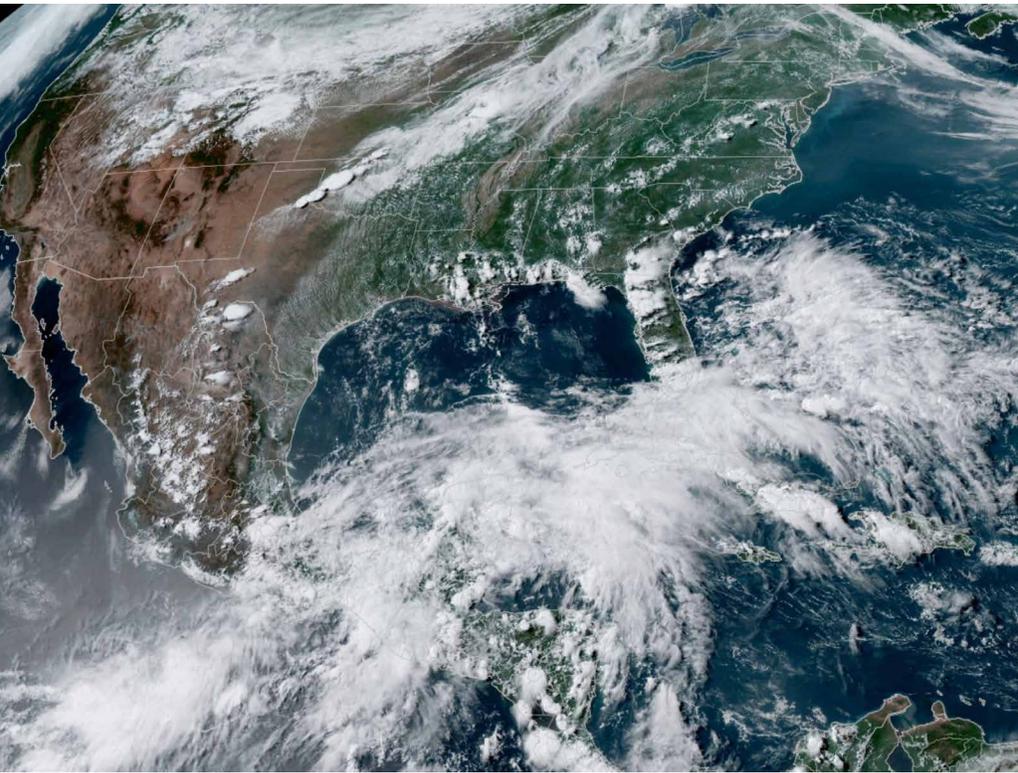
According to some records, the destroyer disabled a Japanese heavy cruiser with a torpedo and significantly damaged another. After having spent virtually all its ammunition, she was critically hit by the lead battleship Yamato and sank. Of a 224-man crew, 89 died and 120 were saved, including the captain, Lt. Cmdr. Robert W. Copeland.

According to Samuel J. Cox, a retired admiral and naval historian, Copeland stated there was “no higher honor” than to have led the men who displayed such incredible courage going into battle against overwhelming odds, from which survival could not be expected.

“This site is a hallowed war grave, and serves to remind all Americans of the great cost born by previous generations for the freedom we take for granted today,” Cox said in a statement.

The explorers said that up until the discovery, the historical records of where the wreck lay were not very accurate. The search involved the use of the deepest side-scan sonar ever installed and operated on a submersible, well beyond the standard commercial limitations of 6,000 meters (19,685 feet), EYOS said.

# Agatha Made History As The Strongest Hurricane; Causes Landslides



**H**urricane Agatha made history as the strongest hurricane ever recorded to come ashore in May during the eastern Pacific hurricane centre. Making landfall on a sparsely populated stretch of small beach towns and fishing villages in southern Mexico.

The storm came ashore in Oaxaca state as a strong Category 2 hurricane, with maximum sustained winds of 105 mph (165kph), then it quickly lost power as it moved inland over the mountainous interior.

Agatha was downgraded to a

tropical storm its sustained winds down to 70 mph (110 kph). The U.S. National Hurricane Center said the storm should dissipate overnight, but warned that the system's heavy rains still posed a threat of dangerous flash floods for Mexico's southern states. Torrential rains and howling winds whipped palm trees and drove tourists and residents into shelters. Oaxaca state's civil defence agency showed families hustling into a shelter in Pochutla and rock and mudslide that blocked a highway.

Heavy rain and big waves lashed the beach town of Zipolite, long known for its clothing-optional beach and bohemian vibe.

"There is a lot of rain and sudden gusts of strong wind," said Silvia Ranfagni, manager of the Casa Kalmar hotel in Zipolite. Ranfagni, who decided to ride out Agatha at the property, said, "You can hear the wind howling."

In the surfing town of Puerto Escondido, people took shelter and put up plywood to prevent windows from breaking in the strong winds. The government's Mexican Turtle Center — a former slaughterhouse turned conservation centre in Mazunte — was closed to visitors because of the hurricane.

Agatha quickly gained power and it was the strongest hurricane on record to make landfall in May in the eastern Pacific, said Jeff Masters, a meteorologist with Yale Climate Connections and the founder of Weather Underground.

He said the region's hurricanes typically get their start from tropical waves coming off the coast of Africa.

"Since the African monsoon typically does not start producing tropical waves until early- or mid-May, there simply aren't enough initial disturbances to get many eastern Pacific hurricanes in May," Masters wrote in an email. "In addition, May water temperatures are cooler than they are at the peak of the season, and wind shear is typically higher."

# International water activist Mina Guli has arrived in Africa for the RUN BLUE campaign



**W**ater advocate, ultra-marathon runner and businesswoman

Mina Guli arrived in Kenya, 11 June, to kick off the African leg of the RUN BLUE Campaign, which will see her completing 200 marathons around the world by March next year.

Australian-born Guli is the CEO of Thirst Foundation, a non-profit organisation delivering ground-breaking action to protect the world's freshwater resources.

The purpose of the RUN BLUE campaign is to raise awareness, to demonstrate the urgency of the water problem we are facing and to drive commitments to concrete action on water by governments, companies and organisations across the world in advance of the UN Water Conference in March 2023.

The campaign started on 22 March 2022 (World Water Day) in Australia and Guli has just completed the Central Asia stage, where she ran 14 marathons in

Tajikistan and Uzbekistan (for an overall campaign total of 41). 'Over the last few weeks I have run past old fishing boats stranded in what are now desert sands of the Aral Sea, through communities and along the Amu Darya River up to its source high in the Pamir Mountains – the Fedchenko Glacier' said Guli, addressing the UN High Level Meetings held recently in Dushanbe.

Along her route she was joined by thousands of people, and met government officials and water



experts. "We have a problem. A water crisis. It's urgent and it's threatening our communities, our societies and our economies. I've seen it and I want the world to see it too," says Guli, 'not only to see it, but to take action to solve it'.

"We want to see action from companies- companies use almost 90% of the world's freshwater, either directly or indirectly," she says. 'It's actions from governments. But ultimately it's action from all of us, everywhere'.

During the next three months, Guli will run marathons across Kenya,

Uganda, Tanzania, Malawi, Zambia, Botswana and South Africa.

This leg of the RUN BLUE campaign will end in Cape Town, at the end of August, before moving on to Turkey, Europe, Latin America, Asia and the United States where it will finish on the steps of the United Nations in New York at the opening of the UN Summit on Water.

Guli will run through communities and areas most affected by the water crisis and meet people, companies, water experts and government officials, sharing their

stories and lifting up their voices, putting water onto the global agenda and driving commitments to concrete action by companies and governments in Africa and around the world.

"I'm not expecting you to get out and run, but I am asking you to take action on water. To run your governments, your companies and your lives, blue. To assess your water risks, to protect our precious ecosystems and boost biodiversity, and to reach across borders and barriers to engage in collective action to protect the one thing we cannot live without," she states. ●

# “Telomiova” for Sustainable Water Access and Climate Resilience



**T**he One Drop Foundation and the Prince Albert II of Monaco Foundation proudly announce the launch of their new Telomiova Project in Madagascar.

What a perfect way to celebrate World Water Day! The One Drop Foundation is to join forces with the Prince Albert II of Monaco Foundation kicking off our brand-new partnership with Helvetas. The One Drop Foundation and the Prince Albert II of Monaco Foundation proudly announce the launch of their new Telomiova Project in Madagascar.

Following a call for proposals in March of this year, the innovative initiative submitted by the nonprofit Helvetas was selected. The combined financial contribution of the One Drop Foundation and the Prince Albert



II of Monaco Foundation amounts to \$1.5 million.

The Telomiova Project is innovative in how it combines a multidimensional approach to WASH services access, One Drop's Social Art for Behaviour Change approach, and sustainable natural

resource management in an effort to increase climate resilience for approximately 69,000 people, 54% of whom are women.”

It aims to improve access to sustainable water, sanitation, and hygiene services, and to reduce vulnerability to climate change. It will impact approximately 69,000 people (54% of whom are women).

“Telomiova” is the name of a five-petalled flower that starts out an intense blue, transitioning to a lighter shade as it ages, and eventually turning white as it wilts.

In the Malagasy language, telomiova means “yesterday-today-tomorrow.”

One Drop also finds inspiration in the flower's five petals—one for each stage of WASH-related behaviour change



- **Inaction**
- **Awareness**
- **Preparation**
- **Action**
- **Consolidation**

The 5-year Telomiova Project aims to improve climate resilience, protect natural resources, and ensure sustainable access to safe water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) services for the most vulnerable populations in 15 communes in the Menabe region of Madagascar. The Telomiova Project will positively impact schools, health care facilities, and communities, and it will look to create long-term impact by ensuring sustainable infrastructure, implementing One Drop Foundation's Social Art for Behaviour Change approach, and strengthening the adaptive capacities of local organizations with respect to climate change.

More specifically, the project will use One Drop's A-B-C for Sustainability model, ensuring that sustainable infrastructure investments are accompanied by behaviour change with respect to WASH and the protection of

natural resources. Additional focuses include reinforcing the population's ability to adapt to climate change and disaster risks and empowering women entrepreneurs to implement income-generating activities that create value for renewable natural resources, or that otherwise contribute to preserving the environment.

### **One Drop Foundation**

The One Drop Foundation is an international organization created by Cirque du Soleil and Lune Rouge founder Guy Laliberté with the vision of a better world, where all have access to living conditions that allow empowerment and development. Our mission is to ensure sustainable access to safe water, sanitation, and hygiene for some of the most vulnerable communities through innovative partnerships, creativity, and the power of art. Together with its partners, the One Drop Foundation deploys its unique Social Art for Behaviour Change™ approach designed to promote the adoption of healthy water, sanitation, and

hygiene-related behaviours and empower communities. For this to be possible, the One Drop Foundation creates novel fundraising initiatives supported by a visionary community of partners and donors. The One Drop Foundation is celebrating 13 years of turning water into action, with projects that will soon have improved the living conditions of over 2.1 million people around the world.

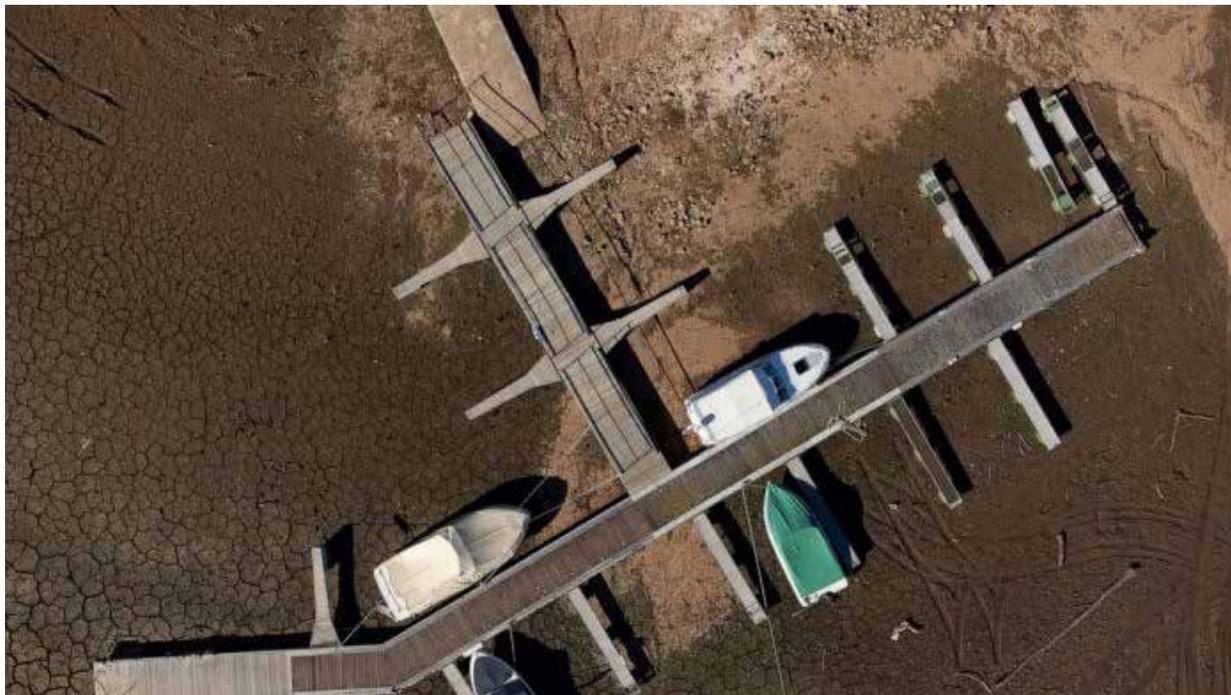
### **Prince Albert II of Monaco Foundation**

inspired by his own observations and in the light of the alarming scientific evidence, H.S.H. Prince Albert II of Monaco made a personal commitment by launching, in 2006, his Foundation to act against the environmental dangers threatening our planet and making populations vulnerable. The Foundation focuses its efforts on three principal domains of action: climate change, biodiversity and water resources, and funds initiatives in the fields of research and studies, technological innovation, and socially-aware practices.

### **Helvetas**

Helvetas is an independent development organization based in Switzerland, with affiliated organizations in the United States and Germany. Helvetas was founded in 1955 and has long-standing experience implementing development projects in 30 developing and transition countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America and Eastern Europe.

# Heat, drought and wildfires: Torrid spell torments Portugal



**P**ortugal is bracing for a heat wave, with temperatures in some areas forecast to climb as high as 43 C (109 F) this weekend just as a severe drought grips the country.

The Civil Protection Agency, a Portuguese government body that coordinates official responses to emergencies, said it is placing crews on high alert because of the risk of wildfires.

About a third of the country faces an extreme risk of forest fires, authorities say.

The high temperatures are forecast to last at least a week. The national weather service IPMA says what it calls “tropical nights,”

when temperatures stay above 20 C (68 F) after sunset, are likely. The hot spell comes as much of Portugal endures a drought. At the end of June, 96% of the country was classified as being in either “extreme” or “severe” drought — the two highest categories.

The weather service says that over the nine months since last October rainfall was just over half the average for the period and was the second-lowest since 1931, when reliable national records began.

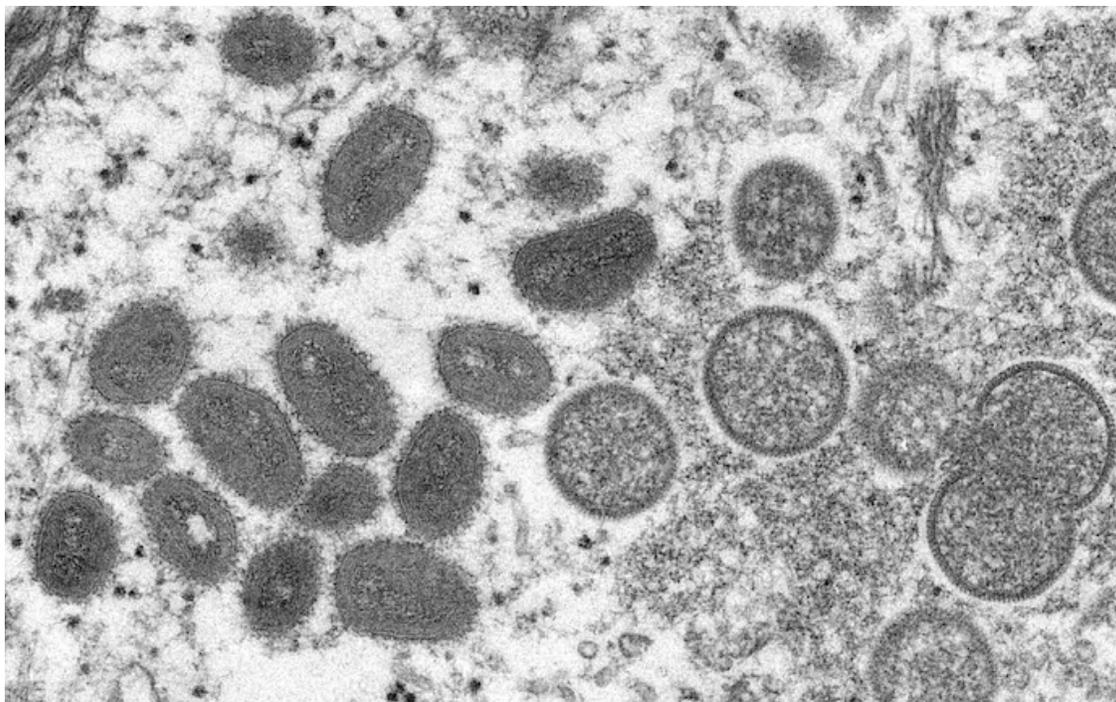
Heat waves and droughts aren’t uncommon in Portugal, but climate scientists say all of southern Europe can expect higher temperatures and lower

rainfall as a consequence of global warming. As extremely dry weather hits Mediterranean nations, the European Union’s executive said the continent faces one of its hardest years when it comes to natural disasters like droughts and wildfires because of increasing climate change.

June was also very dry in Spain, which is Portugal’s neighbor on the Iberian Peninsula, with rainfall at about half the 30-year average and reservoirs on average at 45% capacity — 20 percentage points below the 10-year average, according to government data.

Italy recently endured a prolonged heat wave and is experiencing its worst drought in 70 years. ●

# British scientists say it's unclear if monkeypox has peaked



**B**ritish health officials said they cannot tell if the spread of monkeypox has peaked in the country as they announced another 45 cases, bringing the total in the disease's biggest-ever outbreak beyond Africa to 366 cases.

Britain's Health Security Agency said 99% of the total cases were in men and that nearly all of the 152 men who provided detailed information identified as gay, bisexual or men who have sex with men. About 80% of cases were in London, and the median age of the people infected was 38, the agency said.

"We cannot yet determine if transmission has stopped

increasing," the agency said in a report, citing the reporting delay between when patients experienced symptoms and were confirmed as having monkeypox.

Anyone, regardless of their sexual orientation, is susceptible to the monkeypox virus if they come into close physical contact with an infected person or their bedsheets or clothes.

"Findings show that monkeypox is being distributed in geographically diffuse sexual networks," the British scientists wrote, adding that some of these connections extended beyond the U.K. "Most cases reported having sexual contact with new or casual partners, sometimes in the context of cruising grounds or chemsex," the experts said,

referring to sex combined with drug use. The experts noted that contact details for sexual partners were often unavailable.

Last month, a leading adviser to the World Health Organization said the outbreak in Europe and beyond was likely spread by sex at two recent raves in Spain and Belgium.

Earlier this week, WHO said more than 1,000 cases of monkeypox had been reported in 29 countries that haven't previously had outbreaks of the smallpox-related disease, including the United States, Portugal, Spain, Italy and Canada. Poland reported its first case. No deaths have been reported.

Britain's Health Security Agency



found that many of the cases in the U.K. involved men who reported having sex in saunas, dark rooms or sex clubs.

“Therefore, collaborating with sex-on-premises venues to implement targeted interventions would support outbreak control,” the agency said. It added that using targeted messages on dating apps might also be useful or “support innovative approaches to contact tracing.”

WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said it was likely monkeypox has been transmitting undetected for some time beyond Africa and that the U.N. health agency was concerned the disease might start to infect more vulnerable groups, such as pregnant

women and children. WHO’s top monkeypox expert, Dr. Rosamund Lewis, said earlier this week there was still “a window of opportunity” to stop monkeypox from jumping into the general population and those more at risk of severe disease.

Most monkeypox patients experience only fever, body aches, chills and fatigue. People with more serious illness may develop a rash and lesions on the face and hands that can spread to other parts of the body. In severe cases involving people without access to health care, WHO has noted a death rate of 3 to 6%.

The ongoing outbreak of monkeypox in Britain and elsewhere, marks the first time the disease has been known to

spread among people who have no previous travel links to Africa.

The Africa Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says that so far this year, there have been more than 1,400 monkeypox cases and 66 deaths in four countries where the disease is endemic — Cameroon, Central African Republic, Congo and Nigeria. Genetic sequencing of the virus hasn’t yet shown any direct link to the outbreak outside Africa.

British scientists said they found three mutations in the monkeypox virus spreading in the U.K. that they classed as “high priority” since they were found to worsen the disease in rats. They said more research was needed to tell if the changes were significant.

# Innovations in Healthcare Hasten Recovery for Workers and Athletes



**I**nnovations in healthcare are hastening recovery, helping workers in the most physically demanding positions recover from pain and injury and stay on the job or return to work more quickly. ZetrOZ Systems, developers of sustained acoustic medicine technology for soft tissue injury healing, is one of the pioneers in this trend highlighted in recently published research.

The article “How New Technology Is Improving Physical Therapy,” published in *Current Review of Musculoskeletal Medicine*, spotlights multiple new treatments for orthopedic conditions, including exoskeletons for lower extremity trauma, blood flow restriction therapy, and instrumented insoles. It cites emerging ultrasound techniques

as “changing the way we understand muscle recovery from injury.”

A research study published in the *Global Journal of Orthopedics Research* examined the ZetrOZ sam® 2.0 sustained acoustic wearable ultrasound device in particular. The study found that athletes with musculoskeletal injuries were able to accelerate their healing process and decrease the time to recovery: 87% had improved function, and 55% were able to return to their sport after conservative interventions had failed.

It is one of more than 30 studies and dozens of case studies that document how the ZetrOZ sam® ultrasound device promotes injury healing in athletes and employees in physically intensive lines of work, like construction,

nursing, and logistics. “Disruptive medical technologies keep workers and athletes safe, help them stay productive and get them back in the game,” said George K. Lewis, Ph.D., and CEO of ZetrOZ Systems. “Our contribution to the field – sustained acoustic medicine technology – works by inhibiting inflammation and increasing the rate of tissue regeneration, angiogenesis, and nutrient exchange. That means sam® helps people heal faster and return to work, sports, or any of their daily activities.”

The ZetrOZ Systems sustained acoustic medicine technology is built upon 46 patents and supported by research funded by the federal government. To date, more than 500,000 patients have benefited from ZetrOZ’s sam® technology. ●

# Apple to add 'lockdown' safeguard on iPhones, iPads, Macs



**A**pple said it will roll out a “lockdown” option for iPhones, iPads and Mac computers intended to protect against spyware unleashed by state-sponsored hackers — although enabling that protection will also make these devices less useful.

The safeguard announced is a tacit acknowledgement that not even Apple — the world’s most valuable company — has been able to adequately shield the iPhone and its other products against intrusions from state-backed hackers and commercial spyware. Governments have used these tools to violate the privacy of journalists, political dissidents and human rights activists.

The new feature, called “lockdown mode,” will initially be offered as a test version so that security researchers can help Apple identify any bugs or weaknesses. Apple usually releases its major updates to its device operating systems in late September.

While only a handful of countries appear to have the resources to develop in-house mobile phone hacking tools, private companies like Israel’s NSO Group have been selling phone hacking software to government agencies around the world for years.

The growing hacker-for-hire problem prompted Apple to file a federal lawsuit late last year against NSO Group for breaking

into iPhones and other Apple products. In its complaint, Apple accused NSO Group employees of being “amoral 21st century mercenaries who have created highly sophisticated cyber-surveillance machinery that invites routine and flagrant abuse.”

NSO, which has been blacklisted by the U.S. Commerce Department, has denied any wrongdoing and said its products have been used to thwart child abusers and terrorists.

Unlike the security features that Apple builds into most of its software, the company’s lockdown feature is meant to serve as an emergency button that Apple expects will only be needed by

a small number of its users. The lockdown measure is considered a last resort for people targeted by spyware, since activating lockdown will disable many popular features. That includes sending attachments and links in texts, as well as the ability to receive FaceTime calls from new numbers. Web browsing will also be limited.

But Apple believes the extra layer of protection will be valuable to activists, journalists and other targets of hacking attacks launched by well-funded groups. Users will be able to activate and deactivate lockdown mode at will.

The growing use of encrypted communications through phone apps like WhatsApp and Signal have prompted governments to turn to commercial spyware vendors to gather information on targets.

Such mobile phone spyware vacuums up text messages, emails and photos while secretly controlling a smartphone's



microphones and cameras. Some of the more advanced tools can infect a phone using so-called “zero click” exploits that don't depend on the user inadvertently activating them, such as by clicking on a malicious link.

Google, whose Android mobile phone platform is used by iPhone competitors, has also been targeted by commercial spyware vendors. The company's Threat Analysis Group says it's tracking more than 30 such companies and routinely publishes reports on exploits used to hack into phones, making them far less effective.

Google also offers an “Advanced Protection Program” that uses a special security key hardware to make user accounts harder to hack. The company said it strongly recommends the program for “journalists, activists, business executives, and people involved in elections.”

Separately, Apple also provided more details about a \$10 million grant it pledged last November to help counter large-scale hacking attacks. The money will go to the Dignity and Justice Fund, a philanthropic arm of the Ford Foundation.



# How we describe the metaverse makes a difference

Today's words could shape tomorrow's reality and who benefits from it



Quick, define the word “metaverse.”

Coined in 1992 by science fiction author Neal Stephenson, the relatively obscure term exploded in popularity during the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly after Facebook rebranded as Meta in October 2021. There are now myriad articles on the metaverse, and thousands of companies have invested in its development. Citigroup Inc. has estimated that by 2030 the metaverse could be a US\$13 trillion market, with 5 billion users.

From climate change to global connection and disability access to pandemic response, the metaverse has incredible potential. Gatherings in virtual worlds have considerably lower carbon footprints than in-person gatherings. People spread all over the globe can gather together

in virtual spaces. The metaverse can allow disabled people new forms of social participation through virtual entrepreneurship. And during the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic, the metaverse not only provided people with ways to connect but also served as a place where, for instance, those sharing a small apartment could be alone.

No less monumental dangers exist as well, from surveillance and exploitation to disinformation and discrimination.

But discussing these benefits and threats remains difficult because of confusion about what “metaverse” actually means.

As a professor of anthropology who has been researching the metaverse for almost 20 years, I know this confusion matters. The metaverse is at a virtual crossroads. Norms and standards

set in the next few years are likely to structure the metaverse for decades. But without common conceptual ground, people cannot even debate these norms and standards.

Unable to distinguish innovation from hype, people can do little more than talk past one another. This leaves powerful companies like Meta to literally set the terms for their own commercial interests. For example, Nick Clegg, former deputy prime minister of the U.K. and now president of global affairs at Meta, attempted to control the narrative with the May 2022 essay “Making the Metaverse.”

## **Categorical prototypes**

Most attempted definitions for metaverse include a bewildering laundry list of technologies and principles, but always included

are virtual worlds – places online where real people interact in real time. Thousands of virtual worlds already exist, some gaming oriented, like Fortnite and Roblox, others more open-ended, like Minecraft and Animal Crossing: New Horizons.

Beyond virtual worlds, the list of metaverse technologies typically includes avatars, nonplayer characters and bots; virtual reality; cryptocurrency, blockchain and non-fungible tokens; social networks from Facebook and Twitter to Discord and Slack; and mobile devices like phones and augmented reality interfaces. Often included as well are principles like interoperability – the idea that identities, friendship networks and digital items like avatar clothes should be capable of moving between virtual worlds.

The problem is that humans don't categorize by laundry lists. Instead, decades of research in cognitive science has shown that most categories are "radial," with a central prototype. One could define "bird" in terms of a laundry list of traits: has wings, flies and so on. But the prototypical bird for North Americans looks something like a sparrow. Hummingbirds and ducks are further from this prototype. Further still are flamingos and penguins. Yet all are birds, radiating out from the socially specific prototype. Someone living near the Antarctic might place penguins closer to the center.

Human creations are usually radial categories as well. If asked to draw a chair, few people would draw a dentist chair or beanbag chair.

The metaverse is a human

creation, and the most important step to defining it is to realize it's a radial category. Virtual worlds are prototypical for the metaverse. Other elements of the laundry list radiate outward and won't appear in all cases. And what's involved will be socially specific. It will look different in Alaska than it will in Addis Ababa, or when at work versus at a family gathering.

### ***Whose idea of essential?***

This matters because one of the most insidious rhetorical moves currently underway is to assert that some optional aspect of the metaverse is prototypical. For instance, many pundits define the metaverse as based on blockchain technology and cryptocurrencies. But many existing virtual worlds use means other than blockchain for confirming ownership of digital assets. Many use national currencies like the U.S. dollar, or metaverse currencies pegged to a national currency.

Another such rhetorical move appears when Clegg uses an image of a building with a foundation and two floors to argue not only that interoperability will be part of "the foundations of the building" but that it's "the common theme across these floors."

But Clegg's warning that "without a significant degree of interoperability baked into each floor, the metaverse will become fragmented" ignores how interoperability isn't prototypical for the metaverse. In many cases, fragmentation is desirable. I might not want the same identity in two different virtual worlds, or on Facebook and an online game.

This raises the question of why

Meta – and many pundits – are fixated on interoperability. Left unsaid in Clegg's essay is the "foundation" of Meta's profit model: tracking users across the metaverse to target advertising and potentially sell digital goods with maximum effectiveness. Recognizing "metaverse" as a radial category reveals that Clegg's claim about interoperability isn't a statement of fact. It's an attempt to render Meta's surveillance capitalism prototypical, the foundation of the metaverse. It doesn't have to be.

### ***Locking in definitions***

This example illustrates how defining the metaverse isn't an empty intellectual exercise. It's the conceptual work that will fundamentally shape design, policy, profit, community and the digital future.

Clegg's essay concludes optimistically that "time is on our side" because many metaverse technologies won't be fully realized for a decade or more. But as the VR pioneer Jaron Lanier has noted, when definitions about digital technology get locked in they become difficult to dislodge. They become digital common sense.

With regard to the definitions that will be the true foundation of the metaverse, time is emphatically not on our side. I believe that now is the time to debate how the metaverse will be defined — because these definitions are very likely to become our digital realities. ●

# Contact restored with NASA spacecraft headed to lunar orbit



**NASA** says contact has been restored with a spacecraft headed to the moon to test out a lopsided lunar orbit

NASA said that contact has been restored with its \$32.7 million

spacecraft headed to the moon to test out a lopsided lunar orbit.

Contact was lost after one successful communication and a second partial one, after the spacecraft left Earth's orbit on

its way to the moon, the space agency said. The spacecraft spent nearly a week circling the globe after launching from New Zealand on June 28.

The 55-pound satellite is the size of a microwave oven and will be the first spacecraft to try out this oval orbit, which is where NASA wants to put its Gateway outpost. Gateway would serve as a staging point for astronauts before they descend to the lunar surface.

The orbit balances the gravities of Earth and the moon and so requires little maneuvering and therefore fuel and allows the satellite — or a space station — to stay in constant contact with Earth.



# War Rap: In Ukraine, An Angry Voice Of Music For A Furious Generation



**F**rom the battlefronts of Ukraine comes rap music — filled with the anger and indignation of a young generation that, once the fighting is done, will certainly never forget and may never forgive.

Ukrainian rapper-turned-volunteer soldier Otoy is putting the war into words and thumping baselines, tapping out lyrics under Russian shelling on his phone, with the light turned low to avoid becoming a target. It helps numb the nerve-shredding stress of combat.

“Russian soldiers drink vodka, we are making music,” says

the rapper, whose real name is Viacheslav Drofa, a sad-eyed 23-year-old who hadn't known he could kill until he had a Russian soldier in his sights and pulled the trigger in the war's opening weeks.

One of the ironies of the Feb. 24 invasion launched by Russian President Vladimir Putin is that in ordering the destruction of Ukrainian towns and cities, he is fueling one of the very things he wanted to extinguish: a rising tide of fierce Ukrainian nationalism, forged in the blood of tens of thousands of Ukrainian dead and the misery of millions who have lost loved ones, homes, livelihoods and peace.

Just as many people in France found it impossible to absolve Germany after two invasions a quarter-century apart in World Wars I and II, young Ukrainians say three-plus months of brutality have filled them with burning hatred for Russia.

In France, antipathy for all things German lasted a generation or more. Only in 1984 — four decades after Nazi Germany's capitulation — were French and German leaders Francois Mitterrand and Helmut Kohl able to stand hand-in-hand in reconciliation at a WWI monument in France filled with bones of the dead.

In Ukraine, the young generation

born after the country's declaration of independence from the Soviet Union in 1991 likewise say they cannot imagine feeling anything but disgust for Russia for the duration of their lifetimes.

Otoy's lyrics, with choice expletives directed at Russia and stark descriptions of Russian war dead, speak from the heart — he lost his older brother, a soldier, in the siege of the Azovstal steel mill in the devastated port city of Mariupol.

But they also give voice to the cold fury shared by many of his peers, now pouring out in song, in art and tattoos, online in hashtags proclaiming, "death to the enemies," and memes targeting Putin, and in fundraising activism for the war effort.

In "Enemy," one of four new tracks that Otoy penned between and during stints on the battlefield driving ammunition and weaponry to front-line troops, he snarls of Russian soldiers: "We're not scared but we are nauseous, because you smell stale even when your heart still beats. Bullets await you, you sinners."

He imagines a taunting conversation with the widow of a dead Russian soldier, singing: "Well, Natasha, where is your husband? He's a layer in a swamp, face-down. Natasha, he won't come home."

Others are riffing off the war, too.

In the furious heavy metal track "We will kill you all," the band

Surface Tension screams: "We will dance on your bones. Your mom won't come for you." The expletive-laced track has accumulated more than 59,000 views since its April 5 release on Youtube.

Iryna Osypenko, 25, was among concertgoers at a fundraising music festival last weekend in the Ukrainian capital, Kyiv, where Otoy gave a fiery performance. She broke down in tears as she explained how the growing reservations she'd had about Russia before the invasion have scaled up into rage.

"I hate them and, I'm sorry, it will never change," she said. "I will explain it to my children and I hope that my children will explain to their children."

Otoy says that if he has kids, he'll do likewise, telling them, "the Russians were killing my family, killing my brothers, my sisters, bombing our theaters, hospitals."

"It's not just that I don't like Russia, I hate this country, and I hate Russian people as much as I can," he said in an interview in his Kyiv apartment, where he records and stores his guns and combat gear.

"If I had the ability to save the life of a dog or the ability to save the life of a Russian soldier, I would pick the dog."

His older brother, Dmitry Lisen, is missing, believed dead in the bombed-out ruins of Mariupol's Azovstal steelworks. He was a fighter with the Azov Regiment, among the units that clung doggedly to the surrounded

plant for nearly three months, becoming an enduring symbol of Ukrainian resistance.

Otoy dedicated his song, "Find My Country," to Azovstal's defenders — rapping in English with the aim, he says, of reaching "people all around the world."

"This is my lands, you boys should leave," he sings, holding a rifle and dressed in combat gear in the track's video on YouTube. "Miss those Fridays we used to have, kisses, twilights, refuse to sleep. Now we soldiers."

His duties of late have included helping at a military hospital with the triage of bodies from Azovstal, turned over by Russian forces in an exchange. His brother's remains are still missing.

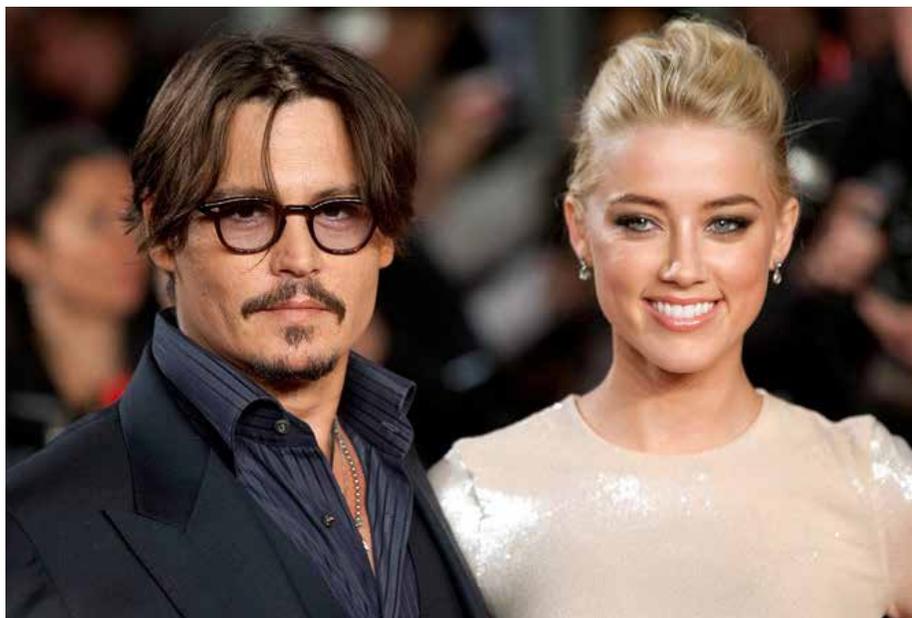
He's also working on his collection of songs largely penned during repeated ammunition runs to troops in the east, where fighting has raged since Russian forces were pushed back in their initial assault on Kyiv.

Themes include life on the front and the camaraderie of soldiers, war-time life for civilians, enmity and fighting for Ukrainian freedom. He says the mini-album reeks of "the smell of war dust."

"I was actually lying on the ground under the airstrikes and bomb shelling," he said. "You can actually feel the smell of, you know, like bombs, dead bodies, and dust, blood and other stuff."

"This is the best way to show your hate, I think."

# Amber Heard ordered to pay \$15 million in court verdict



**A** jury in Virginia found that Depp's defamation claims were justified when they awarded the actor significant financial compensation.

The high-profile court case between Johnny Depp and Amber Heard concluded when a Virginia jury found that Depp had been defamed by his ex-wife. Heard had authored an op-ed in *The Washington Post* in 2018 in which she implied that Depp had abused her during their relationship.

Depp's legal team brought three counts, all of which were found to be valid by the jury and he has been awarded \$15 million. Heard's counter-suit was successful on just one front and she was awarded \$2 million in

compensation. In the course of the trial Depp refuted claims made that he had subjected his ex-wife to repeated physical abuse and instances of sexual violence.

## What did the jury find in the Depp v Heard trial?

During the course of the seven-week trial Heard's legal team were tasked with substantiating the allegations she made in the 2018 essay detailing the claims of abuse. Although she did not name Depp explicitly she described herself as a "public figure representing domestic abuse." An earlier court hearing found that it could be assumed that she was referring to her relationship with Depp.

The jury had a number of factors to consider when judging in

whether or not the content of the essay constituted defamation, by the high bar used in American courts.

They found that not only did Heard knowingly misrepresent the truth in her op-ed, but also that she had acted with actual malice in its publication. The \$15 million awarded to Depp is comprised of \$10 million in compensatory damages and \$5 million in punitive damages.

"From the very beginning, the goal of bringing this case was to reveal the truth, regardless of the outcome," Depp wrote after the verdict was returned.

"Speaking the truth was something that I owed to my children and to all those who have remained steadfast in their support of me. I feel at peace knowing I have finally accomplished that."

Heard's countersuit alleged that Depp and his legal team had defamed her in dismissing her claims as fraudulent. She was only successfully on one count: the jury finding that Depp's former attorney Adam Waldman had defamed her when telling a tabloid that Heard and her friends had deliberately created a hoax.

She was awarded \$2 million from Depp, for whom the lawyer was adjudged to have been representing, in court case.

# K-pop supergroup BTS says it's making time for solo projects



**G**lobal superstars BTS said they are taking time to focus on solo projects, but the company behind the groundbreaking K-pop group said they are not taking a hiatus.

The seven-member group with hits like “Butter” and “Dynamite” talked about their future in a video posted celebrating the nine year anniversary of their debut release. They just released a three-disc anthology album, “Proof,” last week.

Band member Suga asked the group if they should talk about why they were going into a hiatus as they sat down for a group dinner. They discussed having to deal with COVID-19 interrupting their touring plans and music releases, as well as what each one thought about their individual

artistic goals. The group spoke in Korean, and the word “hiatus” was used on English subtitles included on the video.

But a statement from Hybe, the South Korean entertainment company behind BTS, said they’ll still be working on projects as a group, as well as individually. “BTS are not taking a hiatus. Members will be focusing more on solo projects at this time,” the statement said.

No details about future BTS collaborations or the solo projects were announced. BTS has a global fanbase that follows the group and members online and in recent years the group’s profile has rose overseas. The group recently address the UN General Assembly and went to the White House to discuss with President Joe Biden ways to curb violence against Asian Americans.

The band members — J-Hope, RM, Suga, Jungkook, V, Jin and Jimin — opened up about the struggle to develop as individual artists within the K-pop genre.

“The problem with K-pop and the whole idol system is that don’t give you time to mature,” said RM. Some of the group members appeared to be crying during the conversation.

Band member V recalled a conversation he had with J-Hope in which they discussed how working on solo projects would improve their “synergy” as a band. Suga described an interest in trying out new genres.

“We’re each going to take some time to have fun and experience a lot of things,” said Jung Kook to their fans. “We promise we will return someday even more mature than we are now.”

# Chris Rock, The Rock both reportedly offered 2022 Emmys hosting gig



**I**t was probably already pretty unpleasant for Chris Rock to get slapped on national television by Will Smith, international famous movie star. Do you think Rock's going to put himself in a position to get that kind of treatment from a lowly television star, as well?

That's the question we find ourselves asking in light of a new Deadline article tonight, which reports that stand-up star Rock has apparently been offered—and has subsequently declined—an informal offer to host this year's Emmy Awards, scheduled for this September.

This was all behind closed doors, so we don't have any reports on how Rock actually responded to

the offer, but, seriously: What if he got slapped by Jimmy Kimmel? Nobody's coming back from a Kimmel-Slap.

Per said Deadline piece, the Television Academy has been aiming high for this year's hosts; in addition to Rock—who's generally above the weight class of Emmys hosts anyway, given his massive stand-up success—the Academy also reportedly offered the job to that other pop culture Rock: Dwayne Johnson. ("It does not appear likely that Johnson would take on emcee duties either," Deadline writes, which, no; we can't imagine his lingering Ballas affection, or his Young Rock ties, bridging that particular gap.)

Last year's Emmys saw Cedric The Entertainer take on hosting

duties; Kimmel preceded him in 2020, and the year before that, we had the ominous year in which no one hosted the Emmys at all. The Academy is presumably aiming high this year, though, because the 74th Emmys will mark the event's return to the Microsoft Theater, its home for many years, which it was forced to vacate by the pandemic.

Hosting for the Emmys is usually dictated by the network running it on any particular year; NBC, in charge in 2022, last filled the position by tapping Saturday Night Live's Michael Che and Colin Hanks. Production company Done+Dusted has reportedly cast "a wide net" in looking for talent, and, yeah: You're going to need a pretty damn wide net if you're hoping to bag The Rock.

# Justin Bieber postpones tour after syndrome leaves his face partially paralyzed



**J**ustin Bieber is postponing his tour due to a virus that has caused partial facial paralysis.

"I wanted to update you guys on what's been going on," Bieber said in an Instagram video posted. "Obviously, as you can see from my face, I have this syndrome called Ramsay Hunt syndrome, and it is from this virus that attacks the nerve in my ear and my facial nerves and has caused my face to have paralysis."

As the nearly 3-minute video progressed, Bieber demonstrated how his nerves have been affected on the right side of his face.

"As you can see, this eye is not blinking. I can't smile in this side of my face. This nostril will not move," Bieber continued. "So there's full

paralysis on this side of my face." According to the Mayo Clinic, Ramsay Hunt syndrome occurs in people who have had chickenpox and is a shingles outbreak that affects the nerve near one ear and causes one-sided paralysis and hearing loss. It's most common in people over the age of 60. The announcement comes after the "Love Yourself" singer postponed a set of shows in Washington, D.C., and Toronto earlier in the week due to a previously undisclosed sickness.

"So for those who are frustrated by my cancellations of the next shows, I'm just physically, obviously not capable of doing them," Bieber noted in the video. "This is pretty serious, as you can see. I wish this wasn't the case, but obviously my body is telling me I gotta slow down."

During his hiatus, the 28-year-old artist plans to spend time resting and relaxing, assuring his fans, "I'm gonna get better, and I'm doing all these facial exercises to get my face back to normal."

"I love you guys. Thanks for being patient with me," he told his 240 million Instagram followers. "It's gonna be OK, and I have hope. I trust God and I trust that this is all for a reason and I'm not sure what that is right now, but in the meantime, I'm gonna rest and I love you guys."

This is far from the first time Bieber's current tour has been delayed. Originally slated to begin in March 2020, the tour was pushed back two years due to the initial COVID-19 outbreak and was once again put on hold in February when he tested positive for COVID.

# Airbnb permanently bans parties and events around the world



**A**irbnb has permanently banned at-home parties and events on its platform after a temporary measure during the pandemic proved popular among hosts. The firm says the rule has become “much more than a public health measure” since it was introduced in August 2020.

“It evolved into a foundational community policy to support our hosts and their neighbours,” the San Francisco-headquartered firm said.

However, it also removed the limit on how many people can

stay at home. Airbnb said in a statement that the number of complaints about parties has dropped by 44% since the measure was first introduced.

Airbnb also said it would remove the limit on the number of people whose listings are allowed to accommodate at any time.

It had earlier imposed a 16-person limit on occupants due to concerns over the spread of Covid-19.

The firm said, “several types of larger homes can comfortably and safely house more than 16 people – from castles in

Europe to vineyards in the US to large beachfront villas in the Caribbean”.

More than 6,600 guests had also been suspended from using the platform last year for breaking the rules.

“This new and long-term policy was enacted to help encourage and support community safety,” Airbnb said.

“We look forward to sharing updates in the coming weeks and months on our efforts to complement our community policies on parties,” it added. ●

# Beyonce is back: Star releases new single Break My Soul hours early



**B**eyonce has released the first single from her forthcoming seventh solo studio album *Renaissance* earlier than expected – to the surprise and delight of her fans.

“Bey is back and I’m sleeping real good at night,” she declares on the track – *Break My Soul* – which was scheduled for release at midnight EST (5 am GMT).

However, it dropped on Tidal, the streaming service co-owned by her husband Jay-Z a couple of hours earlier, and as a lyric video on YouTube.

“You won’t break my soul,” the 40-year-old singer repeats in the chorus.

“Release your anger, release your

mind / Release your job, release the time / Release your trade, release the stress / Release the love, forget the rest,” continues the new track, which features interjections from rapper Big Freedia.

The catchy dance-friendly track was hailed as “reviving 90s house/dance” as fans raved about it on social media.

One wrote: “I love the fact that we never know where Beyoncé is going musically. *Break My Soul* is the first single but the album could sound completely different. That’s what is so fun about a Beyoncé era. All you know for sure is that you’ll get superb quality music and visuals!”

Beyonce, who has scored three number-one albums and five number-one singles in the UK,

announced that she would be releasing a new album in July after a six-year hiatus.

The 28-time Grammy Award winner also included the subtitle “act i”, hinting that *Renaissance* may be split up into several parts.

The announcement came days after the star wiped her social media profile photos, prompting speculation from fans that new music was on the way.

The pop superstar’s last full-length solo release was *Lemonade* in 2016, which was accompanied by a 65-minute film of the same title and went to number one in many countries.

In 2013, her self-titled album was released in the early hours of the morning without warning.

# Three Michael Jackson songs removed from streaming services



**T**hree Michael Jackson songs have been removed from streaming services after persistent claims they contained fake vocals.

Monster, Keep Your Head Up, and Breaking News posthumously featured on the 2010 compilation album, Michael.

They have since been the subject of a court case brought by a fan who claims the vocals are by a session singer. Sony Music and Jackson's estate said their removal from the streaming sites had nothing to do with their authenticity.

They described the action as "the simplest and best way to move beyond the conversation associated with these tracks once and for all".

The continued: "The focus remains where it belongs – on the exciting news and existing projects celebrating Michael Jackson's legacy", including the Broadway musical MJ and a recently-announced biopic.

Sony responded with a statement saying it had "complete confidence in the results of our extensive research, as well as the accounts of those who were in the studio with Michael, that the vocals... are his own."

When it was released, the back cover of the Michael album said: "This album contains nine previously unreleased vocal tracks performed by Michael Jackson. These tracks were recently completed using music from the original vocal tracks and music created by the credited producers."

The official story is that Jackson wrote and recorded them with production team Edward Casio and James Porte in 2007. Yet rumours persisted that the vocals were provided by an American singer named Jason Malachi, who took credit for them in a 2011 Facebook post.

# It's Grand Slam No. 22 for Rafael Nadal



**R**afael Nadal became the oldest men's singles champion in Roland-Garros history as the 36-year-old stormed to a 6-3, 6-3, 6-0 victory over Norwegian world No.8 Casper Ruud in the final.

Fifty years after late Spaniard Andres Gimeno set the record as the oldest men's champion in Paris, at 34, Nadal has rewritten the history books to lift a record-extending 14th Coupe des Mousquetaires.

Rafael Nadal has also claimed a men's all-time record 22nd Grand Slam title, to increase the gap between himself and his closest rivals Novak Djokovic and Roger Federer, who each have 20. The Spaniard is now a stunning 112-3 win-loss lifetime at Roland-Garros. A marquee audience turned up for the occasion, with

the King of Spain Felipe VI and Prince of Norway Haakon sat side by side in the stands.

Actors Michael Douglas, Sienna Miller and Hugh Grant were also in attendance, while Polish football star Robert Lewandowski returned to Chatrier, a day after witnessing his compatriot Iga Swiatek win the women's singles title.

Three of the first four games went against serve but it was Nadal who managed to consolidate for a 4-1 lead early on as he went on to secure the opening set in 48 minutes. The sun came out for the first time early in the second set and with it came an extra pep in Ruud's step as the 23-year-old broke for a 3-1 advantage.

Ruud is the first Norwegian man in history to reach a Grand Slam singles final and was

facing Nadal for the first time in an official match. The pair are frequent practice partners however, ever since Ruud joined the Spaniard's academy in Mallorca back in 2018.

Nadal struck back immediately and snatched the next five games to take a commanding two-sets-to-love lead.

The former world No.1 hit just five unforced errors in set number two and grabbed a 10th consecutive game to sail ahead 5-0 in the third. There was nothing Ruud could do to halt his opponent's momentum as Nadal cruised to yet another historic title.

In Women's singles Iga Świątek defeated Coco Gauff in the final, 6-1, 6-3 to win the women's singles tennis title at the 2022 French Open.

# Wales ends 64-year wait for World Cup return, beats Ukraine to end



**W**ales registered a 1-0 win over war-disrupted Ukraine in a World Cup qualifier. It secured victory in the 34th minute. The goal secured in the Cardiff downpour was enough to send Wales back to the World Cup as the country with the longest gap between qualifications for the FIFA showpiece. They ended their 64-year unwanted streak in the thrilling match.

“It’s the greatest result in the history of Welsh football,” Gareth Bale said. “I’m just delighted we are going to a World Cup. It means everything, it’s what dreams are made of. I’m speechless. I’m so glad we’ve done it for these amazing fans.”

Bale was one of those spectators for the remaining 10 minutes or so after being substituted when his body could offer no more.

“It was difficult,” Bale said. “I haven’t played too much football these last three or four weeks because of my back spasm, but the most important thing was to get through. I give my all. I was running on empty.”

The Welsh also played their neighbours at the 2016 European Championship when they lost to England on the group stage.

But Wales did go further than England at Euro 2016 in France, reaching the semifinals where Cristiano Ronaldo led Portugal to victory and then the title.

Another soccer great knocked

out Wales at the 1958 World Cup, with Pele netting the only goal in eventual champion Brazil’s quarterfinal win.

Wales did contest the third tournament last year, returning to the European Championship and losing to Denmark in the round of 16. Now Doha is the destination for Wales, which is more accustomed to featuring at Rugby World Cups, having qualified for all nine editions.

## **Wales Vs Ukraine**

“It’s unbelievable — little old Wales at the World Cup,” midfielder Aaron Ramsey said.

Thanks most of all to goalkeeper Wayne Hennessey who thwarted nine shots on target to prevent Ukraine from scoring.

“It’s absolutely incredible — not just for me, everybody who’s been on this pitch tonight,” Hennessey said.

“Gareth, unbelievable free kick again, so I’m absolutely buzzing. It’s unexplainable. He’s so dangerous at free kicks. When he’s on the field stuff happens and for me he’s an amazing talent and a joy to watch.”

This qualification has been achieved with coaching uncertainty. Robert Page stepped up to lead the team on a temporary basis in early 2021 with Ryan Giggs still out of the management job while awaiting trial on charges of domestic violence.

# Finalissima Match



**N**icolas Otamendi and Lionel Messi of Argentina celebrate with a part of the goal net and the Finalissima trophy after their sides victory during the 2022 Finalissima match between Italy and Argentina at Wembley Stadium on June 01, 2022 in London, England.

Lionel Messi stole the show as Copa America holders Argentina powered to a 3-0 win against European champions Italy in the Finalissima at Wembley. Inspired by the peerless Messi, Argentina raced into a two-goal lead in the first half of the prestigious friendly thanks to strikes from Lautaro Martinez and Angel Di Maria. Paulo Dybala capped Argentina's rout, but



after a disappointing season with Paris Saint-Germain by his sky-high standards, it was the sight of Messi back to his imperious best that took the spotlight.

The 34-year-old's eye-catching display featured two assists

and was worthy of his rare appearance at one of football's great cathedrals.

Thrown into the air by his jubilant team-mates after the final whistle, Messi said: "Today was a nice test because Italy are a great team. We knew it was going to be a nice game and a nice setting in which to be champions.

"It was a beautiful final, full of Argentines. What we experienced here was beautiful."

It was another memorable moment for Argentina, who have qualified for this year's World Cup as they extend the golden afterglow from the victory over Brazil that ended their 28-year wait to win the Copa America in 2021.

# Golden State Warriors Beat Celtics To Win Fourth NBA Title In Eight Seasons



**T**he Golden State Warriors are NBA champions once again, topping the Boston Celtics 103-90 for their fourth title in the last eight seasons. Stephen Curry scored 34 points and was named the NBA Finals MVP as the Warriors claimed the franchise's seventh championship overall. And this one completed a journey like none other, after a run of five consecutive finals, then a plummet to the bottom of the NBA, and now a return to greatness just two seasons after having the league's worst record.

"We found a way to just get it done," Curry said after the Warriors accepted the championship trophy and celebrated on the court. With

tears in his eyes and hoarse with emotion, Curry struggled to speak as he explained what allowed the Warriors to capture their latest crown.

"It's part of a championship pedigree, our experience," he said. "We built this for 10-11 years. That means a lot when you get to this stage."

For Curry, Klay Thompson, Draymond Green and Andre Iguodala, it's the fourth championship. The first three rings came in 2015, 2017 and 2018, when Golden State was dynastic and made five consecutive trips to the finals. "They're all unique, they're all special," coach Steve Kerr said of the multiple titles. "This one might have been the most unlikely. ... It takes a group

effort to get it done and we had a great group."

Injuries, including ones that sidelined Thompson for 2 1/2 years, and roster changes changed everything. But this season, with Thompson returning around the midway point, the Warriors were finally back.

Back on top, too. Champions, again, denying the storied Celtics what would have been their record 18th championship, one that would have allowed Boston to break a tie with the Los Angeles Lakers for the most in league history.

This tale for the Warriors ended much differently than what was their most recent finals appearance against Toronto in

2019, one that saw Kevin Durant tear his Achilles tendon in Game 5 and then Thompson tear his ACL in what became the Raptors' title-clincher in Game 6. The aftermath of that loss was exacerbated by Durant's decision to leave that summer in free agency to join the Brooklyn Nets and Thompson's own Achilles injury while rehabilitating his knee injury.

"It all paid off," Thompson said. "It was dog days, a lot of tears shed. ... You knew it was a possibility, but to see it in real-time. ... It's crazy."

It thrust a Golden State team into a rebuild that became a reload. The Warriors used their two-year hiatus from the NBA's biggest stages to retool their roster – adding a past No. 1 draft pick in Andrew Wiggins, who excelled in his first finals, along with another rising star in Jordan Poole.

"This one hits different for sure knowing what the last three years meant, what it's been like," Curry said. "Injuries, the changing of the guard, rosters, the young guys. ... Now, we got four championships. Me, Dray, Klay and Andre."

"Finally got that bad boy," Curry added, referring to the MVP trophy. "It's special. ... Everybody mattered in that process."

For Kerr, it's the ninth championship overall after winning five as a player. He's the sixth coach to capture four titles, joining Phil Jackson, Red Auerbach, John Kundla, Gregg Popovich and Pat Riley. Jaylen Brown led the Celtics with 34 points but Jayson Tatum finished with just 13, shooting just 6 of

18 from the field. Boston also committed 22 turnovers, dropping to 1-8 this postseason when committing 16 or more.

It was just the fifth defeat in 22 title-series appearances for Boston, which turned its season around to have a chance at this crown. Boston was 25-25 after 50 games, then went on a tear to get to the finals and nearly claim what would have been just the franchise's second championship since 1986.

It was the third consecutive season where things were affected by the global COVID-19 pandemic, and while things were closer to normal, pictures and video of the championship celebration will serve as a forever reminder that the virus was still an issue.

NBA Commissioner Adam Silver could not be at the game because he remained in the league's health and safety protocols related to the virus. The redesigned Larry O'Brien Trophy – the golden souvenir given to the NBA champions – was presented to the Warriors by deputy commissioner Mark Tatum instead.

Boston trailed by as many as 22 points but battled back and cut the deficit to eight. A Jaylen Brown 3-pointer made it 86-78 with 5:33 to play, but the Warriors never relinquished the lead.

"Just couldn't withstand their runs," Celtics centre Robert Williams said. "Messing up. They played harder and won tonight." Curry sent Boston fans streaming toward the exits with his sixth 3

of the night to give the Warriors a commanding 15-point lead, 96-81 — then clasped his hands against his face as he ran back down the court, signalling an end to Boston's hopes of extending the series.

"We've had so many great players," Kerr said, "but Steph, ultimately is why this run happens."

## TIP-INS

Warriors: Went 19 of 45 from the 3-point line. ... Improved to 20-1 when Green makes a 3-pointer.

Celtics: Boston's 13-point loss marked the first finals without a single-digit game. ... Former Celtic Ray Allen, a member of Boston's last championship team in 2008, sat courtside. Hall of Famer Robert Parish was also in attendance.

## A RUN, AND A RESPONSE

The Celtics came out firing, riding the energy from a deafening TD Garden crowd to take an early 14-2 lead. Golden State wasn't rattled and responded with a 35-8 run that stretched into the second quarter on the way to building as much as a 22-point lead. The Warriors outscored the Celtics 27-17 for the period and carried a 54-39 lead into the second half as some Celtics fans booed the home team as they left the court.

Boston fought back in the third, but the Warriors found their range from beyond the arc, connecting on six 3s in the quarter.

# Transgender athletes barred from international rugby league



**T**ransgender athletes will be barred from women's international rugby league matches while the sport's governing body formulates its inclusion policy.

Two days after world swimming's governing body effectively banned transgender women from competing in women's events, the International Rugby League said it was continuing to review and update rules about transgender participation in women's international tournaments.

"Until further research is completed to enable the IRL to implement a formal transgender inclusion policy, male-to-female (transwomen) players are unable to play in sanctioned women's international rugby league matches," the IRL said in a statement.

It planned to use the eight-team Women's World Cup, being staged in England from Nov. 1-19 in conjunction with the men's Rugby League World Cup, to help develop a comprehensive policy. The IRL said it last reviewed transgender

participation in international rugby league in early 2021 but now had to consider more recent developments in world sport, including the International Olympic Committee's publication of guidelines for fairness, non-discrimination and inclusion.

"In the interests of avoiding unnecessary welfare, legal and reputational risk to International Rugby League competitions, and those competing therein, the IRL believes there is a requirement and responsibility to further consult and complete additional research," the statement said.



The IRL said it would seek to work with the eight teams competing in the women's World Cup — Australia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Cook Islands, England, France, Canada and Brazil — to obtain data and develop a set of criteria which fairly balance the individual's right to play with the safety of all participants.

The England-based International Rugby League governs the 13-a-side game established in 1908 and played mainly in northern England, Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific.

Rugby union, the original, primarily 15-a-side game governed by the Dublin, Ireland-based World Rugby, does not

allow transgender women to play in women's competition.

International rugby union guidelines state the reason being: "Because of the size, force- and power-producing advantages conferred by testosterone during puberty and adolescence, and the resultant player welfare risks this creates."

World Rugby committed to a formal review of the policy every three years.

FINA, the international swimming federation, adopted a new "gender inclusion policy" that only permits swimmers who transitioned before age 12 to compete in women's events.

FINA also proposed an "open competition category" in international swimming and said it was setting up a working group to spend the next six months investigating the most effective way of establishing it.

Other sports have also been examining their policies around transgender athletes.

The International Cycling Union last week updated its eligibility rules for transgender athletes with stricter limits that will force riders to wait longer before they can compete by increasing the transition period on low testosterone levels to two years rather than one.

# 2023 Dakar: the sand diagonal

**T**here will be a new itinerary for the fourth edition of the Dakar in Saudi Arabia from December 31, 2022, to January 15, 2023 and 1st round of the FIA-FIM World Rally-Raid Championship.

The route will take the pilots from the beaches of the Red Sea to the sands of the Arabian Gulf in Dammam. This crossing of the country will be, in fact, a complete tour as the 14 stages will first lead the Dakar to the north-western mountain regions before heading to the deep southeast for a three-day journey through ocean of dunes in the Empty Quarter.

## AN XXL BIVOUCAC STARTING WITH THE "CHECKS"

The competitors will arrive in Saudi Arabia in friendly atmosphere near the beach the new start format will accommodate the entire Dakar caravan during the final technical and administrative checks, which will take place mainly at the Castellet circuit at the end of November. The structures have been redesigned for the occasion to include entertainment and provide areas for conviviality and interaction. The "Sea Camp" concept consists of taking over a piece of desert by the sea. The adventure has already begun.

## 1 + 14 = 15 DAYS OF COMPETITION

The 2023 Dakar is characterised by its length, with 14 stages plus a prologue for 15 days of competition. The itinerary includes 70% new special stages. It is also the densest rally format in its modern era. The overwhelming majority of the special stages are close to 450 kilometres. The liaison sectors will be shorter, with the finish lines closer to the bivouacs, which will reduce liaison times. In total, with almost 5,000 kilometres of special stages, this edition will feature the longest distance of competition since 2014.

### THREE DAYS IN THE EMPTY QUARTER

The Dakar competitors have become familiar with this immense region of Saudi territory designated as the “Empty Quarter” of the Arabian Peninsula. But forays to the marathon bivouac at Shubeyta in 2020 or loops traced from Wadi Ad Dawasir only revealed a minuscule portion of this vast desert. Thanks to the route that provides communications with the neighbouring state of Oman, a much deeper immersion is now possible and allows for a bivouac to be set up in the extreme-eastern region of Saudi Arabia. The pilots will also have to cope with the challenge of a marathon stage during the three days in the Empty Quarter.

### THE “EXPLORERS” REWARDED

The Dakar has the distinction of assembling the most successful competitors on the planet and enthusiasts who set themselves the sporting challenge of a lifetime with much less pretension. The mutual pride in competing on the same route is part and parcel of the essence of the Dakar. The respective means of the professionals and the amateurs provide additional encouragement to the latter, who will benefit each day from a separate classification and prize money. There will be a list of “Factory” drivers for each category based on the results in their rally-raid careers. “Explorers” will compete for valuable bonuses to validate their improvement in the discipline: equipment, etc.

### RANDOM ROADBOOKS: NO COPYING!

The principle has been known for a long time in elementary schools where teachers sometimes hand out different assignments to two neighbouring students..., which is the best way to ensure that clever competitors will not be tempted to copy. Similarly, the routes of most of the special stages will be split into two over a more or less long section, with the roadbooks of A and B routes assigned randomly. Competitors tempted to follow their predecessors without thinking run the risk of missing their waypoints and thus incur severe penalties.

### BIKES: A BONUS FOR OPENING A STAGE

The sequence of stages causes a yo-yo effect among the leading riders that can give credence to opportunist race strategies. Being the first to start a stage is the most delicate position of all. It so happens that the stage victory can be perceived as a disadvantage to such an extent that some riders voluntarily forego the win to avoid exposing themselves to a quasi-inevitable loss of time the following day. This year, time compensations will be awarded.

### A DIGITAL ROADBOOK FOR EVERYONE

Paper is a thing of the past. For the past several years, “tablets” have appeared in the cars and then trucks before being tested by the elite category riders. The system has been thoroughly

tested and is now ready to be used in all categories. All vehicles will be equipped with this digital version beginning this year.

### DAKAR CLASSIC: TWO NEW CHALLENGES

With 140 vehicles, the second edition of the Dakar Classic was a great success and highlighted the significant differences in potential between the older cars and those from the late 1990s. Thus, an additional speed group, called H0, has been added to define lower average speeds adapted to less powerful cars. There will be two new challenges: “Authentic Codriver Challenge” for vehicles that enter without modern regularity instruments; and “Iconic Classic Club” for original vehicles that participated in the Dakar in the 20th century, thus excluding all “replicas”. A selection committee will limit the number of entries to a maximum of 150.

### “DAKAR FUTURE”: A FURTHER STEP FORWARD

The Dakar saw a decisive step forward in its energy transition in 2022 with the creation of the T1-U category and the spectacular entry of Audi’s hybrid 4x4s, winners of 4 special stages with Carlos Sainz, Mattias Ekstrom and Stéphane Peterhansel. New projects are being developed and progress goes on thanks to the use of biofuels or synthetic fuels that drastically reduce the vehicles’ carbon footprint. ●

# Gabriel Jesus future: Arsenal unsure on transfer after £55m demand from Manchester City



**A**rsenal is weighing up their options after being told Manchester City will demand £55 million from the north London side to sign Gabriel Jesus this summer, sources have told.

Arsenal is in the market to sign at least one forward and has sounded out the 25-year-old over a possible move.

Initial contact has now been made between the two clubs and sources have told that Arsenal has baulked at City's valuation given he only has one year left on his contract.

However, the amount is based on City's respect for the player — who has scored 95 goals in 235 appearances — but also a desire to recoup the €60m fee paid to Borussia Dortmund to sign Erling Haaland.

City boss Pep Guardiola would prefer to keep Jesus but will not stand in the striker's way if he pushes to leave.

Jesus has started 20 Premier League games this season and has previously hinted at his frustration at not being more regularly involved.

Jesus' agent Marcelo Pettinati confirmed to the Guardian last week that talks had taken place and "we like the project" but also that there were six clubs in the frame.

Arsenal has since lost twice to Tottenham Hotspur and Newcastle United, leaving them facing the likelihood of missing out on Champions League football next season.

That will make a deal for Jesus harder to pull off, although

not impossible. Arsenal will wait to see what European competition they qualify for this weekend before deciding their next move but sources have told that Arsenal did not expect to finish in the top four this season and therefore their long-term budgeting has not been significantly affected by the recent slump.

Whether they pursue a deal for Jesus remains to be seen. Head coach Mikel Arteta is a huge admirer of the player having worked with him at City but Arsenal is looking at other options including Paulo Dybala, who will leave Juventus on a free transfer at the end of the season.

Arsenal has made contact with Dybala's representatives to find out what personal terms the player is seeking.

Sources have told that a member of Dybala's entourage held meetings in London and Manchester before flying to Spain and Italy for similar conversations as Dybala assembles his options before making a decision on his next club in the coming weeks.

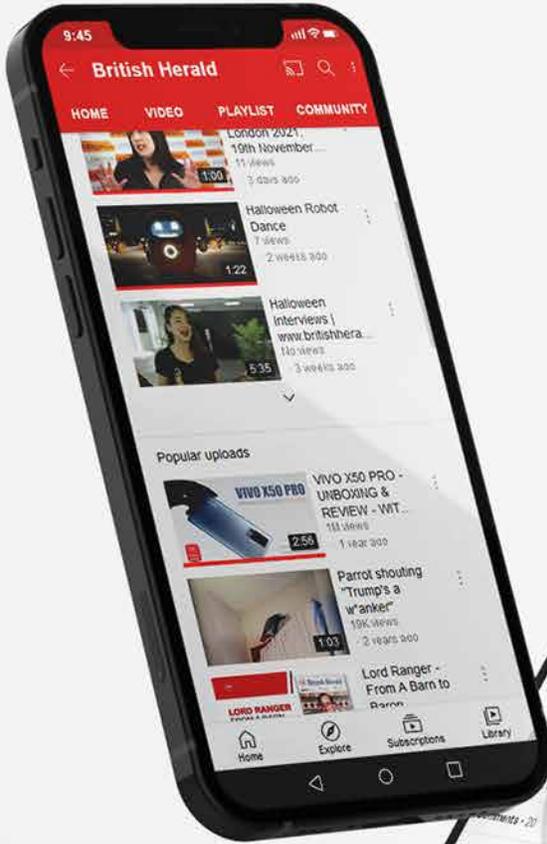
Inter Milan has long been mooted as a possible destination but Manchester United and Newcastle are also among the clubs monitoring Dybala's situation.



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