

Lifestyle | Features



A picture taken shows the 3,480-metre high Rifugio Guide del Cervino refuge at Testa Grigia peak between Zermatt Switzerland and Breuil-Cervinia, Italy.



A photograph shows a hut with shutters decorated with the Swiss cross.



A photograph shows a banner marking the Swiss border near the 3,480-metre high Rifugio Guide del Cervino refuge at Testa Grigia peak between Zermatt Switzerland and Breuil-Cervinia, Italy.

Way up in the snowy Alps, the border between Switzerland and Italy has shifted due to a melting glacier, putting the location of an Italian mountain lodge in dispute. The borderline runs along a drainage divide—the point at which meltwater will run down either side of the mountain towards one country or the other. But the Theodul Glacier's retreat means the watershed has crept towards the Rifugio Guide del Cervino, a refuge for visitors near the 3,480-metre (11,417-foot) Testa Grigia peak—and it is gradually sweeping underneath the building.

Frederic, a 59-year-old tourist, opens the narrow wooden door to enter the refuge's restaurant, the light flooding in from outside. The menu is in Italian, not German, and priced in euros rather than Swiss francs. Nonetheless, at the counter, he orders a slice of pie and asks: "So-are we in Switzerland or in Italy?" It is a question worth asking as it has been the subject of diplomatic negotiations that started in 2018 and concluded with a compromise last year—but the details remain secret.

Sleeping on the Swiss side

When the refuge was built on a rocky outcrop in 1984, its 40 beds and long wooden tables were entirely in Italian territory. But now two-thirds of the lodge, including most of the beds and the restaurant, is technically perched in southern Switzerland. The issue has come to the fore because the area, which relies on tourism, is located at the top of one of the world's largest ski resorts, with a major new development including a cable car station being constructed a few meters away.

An agreement was hammered out in Florence in November 2021 but the outcome will only be revealed once it is rubber-stamped by the Swiss government—which will not happen before 2023. "We agreed to split the difference," Alain Wicht, chief border official at Switzerland's national mapping agency Swisstopo told AFP.



Thaw and redraw: Melting glacier moves Italian-Swiss border

His job includes looking after the 7,000 boundary markers along landlocked Switzerland's 1,935-kilometre border with Austria, France, Germany, Italy and Liechtenstein. Wicht attended the negotiations, where both parties made concessions to find a solution. "Even if neither side came out winners, at least nobody lost," he said.

Line in the snow

Where the Italian-Swiss border traverses Alpine glaciers, the frontier follows the watershed line. But the Theodul Glacier lost almost a quarter of its mass between 1973 and 2010. That exposed the rock underneath to the ice, altering the drainage divide and forcing the two neighbors to redraw around a 100-metre-long stretch of their border. Wicht said that such adjust-

ments were frequent and generally settled by comparing readings by surveyors from the border countries, without getting politicians involved.

"We are squabbling over territory that isn't worth much," he said. But he added that this "is the only place where we suddenly had a building involved", giving "economic value" to the land. His Italian counterparts declined to comment "due to the

complex international situation". Former Swisstopo chief Jean-Philippe Amstein said such disputes are typically resolved by exchanging parcels of land of equivalent surface area and value. In this case, "Switzerland is not interested in obtaining a piece of glacier," he explained, and "the Italians are unable to compensate for the loss of Swiss surface area". — AFP

Adele announces rescheduled Vegas residency dates



In this file photo a member of staff sorts copies of the new album from British singer-songwriter Adele, "30" in Sister Ray record store in the soho area of central London. — AFP

Adele delighted fans Monday by detailing the dates for her rescheduled shows in Las Vegas, after postponing them earlier this year the day before she was due to start. The residency entitled "Weekends With Adele" at the Colosseum at Caesar's Palace will feature eight extra shows in addition to the 24 rescheduled dates, and is slated to run from November 18, 2022 through March 25, 2023. "Words can't explain how ecstatic I am to finally be able to announce these rescheduled shows. I truly was heartbroken to have to cancel them," the Grammy Award-winning superstar said on her website.

"But after what feels like an eternity of figuring out logistics for the show that I really want to deliver, and knowing it can happen, I'm more excited than ever!" In a tearful video in January the artist had pushed back the sold-out show saying it wasn't

ready, blaming "delivery delays and COVID." "Now I know for some of you it was a horrible decision on my part, and I will always be sorry for that, but I promise you it was the right one," the 34-year-old said in her statement Monday.

"To be with you in such an intimate space every week has been what I've most been looking forward to and I'm going to give you the absolute best of me. Thank you for your patience, I love you." Last fall the British performer released her first record in six years—"30"—a cathartic, big-balled album that lays bare the emotional torture of navigating divorce. —AFP

Sorvino was best known for his role as Paul Cicero in "Goodfellas," directed by Martin Scorsese and released in 1990, alongside Robert De Niro, Joe Pesci and Ray Liotta.

The following year, he distinguished himself in the television series "Law and Order," where he played a policeman. In 1995, he took on the role of Henry Kissinger in Oliver Stone's film "Nixon." "My father the great Paul Sorvino has passed," his daughter Mira Sorvino, who won an Oscar in 1996 for her role in Woody Allen's "Mighty Aphrodite," said on Twitter. "My heart is rent asunder—a life of love and joy and wisdom with him is over," she said.

Paul Sorvino played a wide variety of supporting roles in movies or in television series, but he was a multi-faceted artist, with a particular love of sculpture and opera. "Most people think I'm either a gangster or a cop or something, but the reality is I'm a sculptor, a painter, a best-selling author, many, many things—a poet, an opera singer, but none of them is gangster, but, you know, obviously I sort of have a knack for playing these things," he said in a 2014 interview in the Orlando Weekly. — AFP

Paul Sorvino, 'Goodfellas' actor and father of Mira Sorvino, dies

US actor Paul Sorvino, famous for his role in the gangster classic "Goodfellas" and the father of actress Mira Sorvino, has died at the age of 83, his family said Monday. "I am completely devastated. The love of my life & the most wonderful man who has ever lived is gone. I am heartbroken," his widow Dee Dee Sorvino wrote on her Facebook page. Born in April 1939 in New York, Paul



Paul Sorvino

Joni Mitchell wows with surprise set at Newport Folk Fest

Joni Mitchell delivered her first full set in more than 20 years this weekend, surprising attendees at the Newport Folk Festival alongside country star Brandi Carlile. The show followed Mitchell's stage cameo earlier this year, when she joined other artists as they performed a moving tribute to her life's work at the MusiCares pre-Grammy gala.

Both moments marked rare public appearances for the trailblazing Mitchell, who in 2015 suffered a brain aneurysm that left her temporarily unable to speak, the aftermath of which has involved extensive physical therapy. Mitchell and Carlile sang duets including the 78-year-old's "A Case of You" and "Both Sides Now," while the Canadian-born folk icon delighted the crowd by playing the lengthy solo from "Just Like This Train" on an electric guitar. Mitchell last appeared at Newport, an annual festival in Rhode Island, in 1969.



In this file photo singer-songwriter Joni Mitchell attends the 2022 MusiCares Person of the Year gala in her honor at the MGM Grand Conference Center in Las Vegas, Nevada. — AFP

Sunday's 13-song set also featured her classic environmentalist anthem "Big Yellow Taxi" and "The Circle Game" along with renditions of "Summertime," "Love Potion No. 9" and "Why Do Fools Fall in Love." The revolutionary singer-songwriter earlier this year was honored as MusiCares' Person of the Year at the charity gala that precedes the Grammys, where she gave a brief performance. The next night she accepted the Grammy for Best Historical Album, appearing in a red leather beret, sunglasses and floral pants, her flowing blonde hair in pigtailed. —AFP



Fishermen clean seaweed out of their fishing nets in Freetown where mass of floating seaweed has for weeks bunged up the otherwise pristine coastline of Sierra Leone's capital Freetown, disrupting beach-goers and damaging fishing gear in a country normally known for its white-sand shores. — AFP

Seaweed onslaught disrupts S.Leone fishing and tourism

A mass of brown seaweed has for weeks choked the coastline of Sierra Leone's capital Freetown, damaging fishing gear and disrupting tourism in a country otherwise known for its white-sand beaches. The West African state has experienced the phenomenon several times in the past, but local people say the problem seems far worse this year. "There is an unprecedented deposit this year," Amidu Kamara, a fisherman at Freetown's Tambakula wharf, told AFP.

He said dead seaweed had destroyed fishing nets and clogged boat engines. "We have to move from one spot to the other to escape the seaweed, but it keeps coming", he added. The stuff is believed to come from the Sargasso Sea, in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean, according to Paul Lamin, a director at the government's Environmental Protection Agency. "My department received reports from other countries in West Africa where the seaweed was found in March and April this

year, but in Sierra Leone it usually occurs during the rainy season and the quantity fluctuates on yearly basis," he said.

Business slow

Normally, Lumley Beach in the west end of the city is packed with young people at the weekends. But nowadays it is desolate. At the Sugarland Beach resort, manager Aruna Foday complained that rotting seaweed had hurt the bottom line. "We are closing the bar and restaurant for now due to the heavy stench from the seaweed and hope to resume after the rains", he said. "Business has been slow for us."

Not all beach-goers were deterred, however. Mohamed Bangura, 23, was kicking a football around with friends on a recent, overcast Sunday afternoon. "We use our bare hands to clean up spaces to play football every weekend," he said, noting that it nonetheless "stinks disgustingly".

Though July and August—when seaweed normally tends to appear—is the low season for tourism, the National Tourist Board has nonetheless launched a clean-up effort. "It's a difficult task because the seaweed keeps coming on an hourly basis," said general manager, Fatmata Kroma, who appealed for help from the community. She noted that man-made waste was also washing up on beaches and posing a further challenge to the tourism industry. "The ocean is not a dustbin," she said. — AFP