

Lifestyle | Features



Serengeti's lion king dies at 12

A majestic lion famed for its amber eyes and thick golden mane has died in a battle for territory in Tanzania's Serengeti National Park, wildlife officials said Thursday. Twelve-year-old Bob Junior was mauled to death by younger rivals last week, Tanzania National Parks Authority spokesperson Catherine Mbene told AFP. "It is common for animals to fight for territory at a certain age, especially lions," Mbene said. "Bob Junior was killed in the fight."

Often called the King of the Serengeti, the lion was an easy spot among tourists and tour operators because of its thick mane—a trait inherited from father Bob. The patriarch's nickname was inspired by the dreadlocks of Jamaican reggae star Bob

Marley. Mbene said the authority was treating Bob Jr's death as natural.

"In pure conservation, we don't alter anything, and that's why we could not shift the ageing lion to a sanctuary or other protected place." African lions typically have a lifespan of up to 18 years in the wild, according to conservation group Cats for Africa.

Serengeti in northern Tanzania is estimated to have between 3,000 and 3,500 lions, according to wildlife officials. But the big cats are under growing pressure as human population expands into ancient migration and hunting grounds. In 2020, Tanzania relocated 36 lions from the Serengeti after attacks on humans and cattle. — AFP

In US, 'tip fatigue' raises questions about sacrosanct habit

To tip, or not to tip? That is the question many Americans are grappling with in a country where the tip is king—but even at a grocery store? Or for a bunch of flowers? "Either way, you feel guilty," said Matt Schottland, 41, in downtown Washington, a salad and a fruit juice in hand. In the United States, tipping is not a matter of debate in restaurants. A gratuity of around 15 to 20 percent of the value of a meal is a must, as it often makes up the bulk of the waiter's salary. But for a sandwich to go? For Schottland, outside of restaurants, the answer is generally no. Unless the employees are "super nice", or he is feeling particularly generous.

But no solution is perfect. If he tips, he may feel "guilty in some way or annoyed or resentful" for spending more money. And if he doesn't leave anything, he feels "guilty" toward the employees. "It's not a great system," he sighs. The dilemma is relatively new. Tipping is spreading into more and more walks of life, making bills heftier in businesses where it was never expected before.

In response, experts warn of the risk of "tip fatigue," a scenario in which Americans, overworked and hit by inflation, will no longer know where to tip, or how much. And that phenomenon is in turn likely to open up debate on the increasingly criticized system of remuneration in the hospitality industry.



Tip options are displayed on a credit card reader at a store in Washington, DC. — AFP

'Guilt'

According to Dipayan Biswas, professor of marketing at the University of South Florida, this expansion is largely due to "digital kiosks," the electronic checkouts that have become ubiquitous in recent years. On these screens, on which customers pay their bill, companies can add a lot of options, including tips. In order not to cough up, the customer must deliberately click on the "no tip" button. "That makes a lot of people uncomfortable. They don't want to do that," says Biswas. "Companies utilize the guilt factor." The strategy works on Hannah Koban, 30, who admits she does "tip a lot more than I used to." The continual request for a gratuity for the server "does feel like a little bit more pressure," says the lawyer.

And digital kiosks sometimes suggest amounts of up to 30 percent of the total, well beyond the usual rate. As a result, "trying to figure out like, when to tip, when not to tip, what is the appropriate tip, is it like always 20 percent now? I don't know. And so I feel like I'm googling constantly when I should be tipping," said Koban.

She may smile at the whole thing, but she said she has "friends who are quite upset." Biswas fears that if Americans feel they have to tip everyone, there will be less for those who really need it the most, like restaurant waiting staff.

For Saru Jayaraman, president of the One Fair Wage association, which defends a "fair" salary for waiters, to speak of tip fatigue is "missing the point." "If we're sick of continuously tipping, then join the movement to end the subminimum wage for tipped workers," she advised. The pandemic, by reducing the number of times people were eating out, exposed the fragility of the remuneration system for waiters, in which their bosses pay less than the legal minimum wage.

While Americans have since then returned to restaurants, the sector-known for its stressful working conditions—is still struggling to recruit. The industry is undergoing "a revolution" because its employees are "resigning en masse," said Jayaraman. — AFP

"We're sick of being seen as thugs," said Mohamed Ali Ayari, a rapper from a down-at-heel Tunis district, where jobless youth are finding a voice through music, cinema and photography. The Tunisian capital's working-class districts have suffered from decades of state neglect and poor services, and residents say the stigma attached to their neighborhoods shuts them out of the job market. "This contempt and these prejudices really complicate our lives," said Ayari, a resident of the overcrowded Douar Hicher suburb.



Mariem Chourabi poses for a picture in Fouchana near Tunis.

The 23-year-old works as a security guard, but his dream is to become a famous rap artist. "I want to come out into the light," he raps in a recent video clip, produced with the help of peace-building charity International Alert.

Ayari was among the winners of a recent competition by International Alert, asking young people from four neglected Tunis districts to express themselves through music, documentary or photography, focusing on the theme of violence. "People... experience violence on a daily basis—some practice it and others

suffer it," said Houcem Ayari of International Alert. "We decided to channel that into cultural activities."

In a drab building in Douar Hicher, rapper Ayari sits in a tiny room converted into a studio and records his latest track, with backing vocals from neighborhood friends. Ayari and his friends agreed a lack of cultural spaces makes it easy for people to be dragged into crime.

'Therapy against depression'

Wassim Tayachi, 22, said he and his friends "chose music to talk about ourselves and our lives, the lost youth and



Mohamed Ali Ayari, a rapper from a down-at-heel Tunis district, listens to headphones at a recording studio in Douar Hicher.

those of us who want to succeed, the police who attack us verbally and physically, the state that neglects us and society that stigmatizes us." He said coming from poorer neighborhoods makes it harder to find a job or get official paperwork. "A state that doesn't listen to its young people can't give them anything," Tayachi added.

Ayari said he wants to become a successful rapper. But he doubts he can achieve his dreams in the North African nation, where a long-running socio-economic crisis has pushed many young

people to try to reach Europe—including on dangerous and overcrowded inflatable boats across the Mediterranean.

Meanwhile, he said he uses rap as "therapy against depression and illegal temptations." Another winner of the competition was a documentary depicting social and economic injustice, sexual harassment, shabby public transport and school absenteeism in the district of Fouchana.

They are issues close to the heart of Mariem Chourabi, who has qualified as a tax accountant and has set up a centre to give children extra education support—all by the age of 24. Many young people here "want to succeed more than others because their difficult circumstances push them harder", Chourabi said.



Mohamed Ali Ayari (center), a rapper from a down-at-heel Tunis district, stands at a recording studio in Douar Hicher. — AFP photos

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'Environmental violence'

Belhssan Jabri, a qualified civil engineer, won the photography category of

the competition. "We deserve not to be neglected," said the unemployed 26-year-old from the working-class district of Sidi Hassine. Jabri's work focuses on what he calls "environmental violence", showcasing public spaces near his home strewn with trash.

"These could be places for sports or cultural activities, or gardens, instead of being permanently cluttered with overflowing rubbish bins," he said. Jabri said those in power should find "real will" to change things for the better. "There are doctors, engineers, artists and many educated and qualified young people in our neighborhood," he said. "Stop focusing on the negative side and stigmatizing young people from working-class neighborhoods." — AFP

Rome's Pantheon to charge for tourist entry

One of Rome's oldest and best loved monuments, the Pantheon, will soon start charging for entrance, officials said Thursday—drawing a mixed reaction from tourists. The price for entry, which is currently free, has yet to be fixed but would not exceed five euros (\$5), while minors and Rome residents would be exempt. The change was "based on common sense", Culture Minister Gennaro Sangiuliano said, and the price "modest" for Italy's most visited cultural site.

The 2,000-year-old building is currently a consecrated church and part of the proceeds from ticket sales will go towards the diocese of Rome. Most of the money — 70 percent—will go to the culture ministry, which will bear the costs of cleaning and maintenance. Among the tourists visiting the Pantheon on Thursday, reaction to the news was mixed. "It makes sense. Conservation

requires money, and it doesn't shock me to make tourists contribute," said Gustavo Rojas, a 37-year-old from Chile.

'Open to everyone'

Alessandra Mezzasalma, a 46-year-old Italian tour guide, however, told AFP, it was "shameful". "The Pantheon, and historical monuments in general, are collective assets and they should remain open to everyone. Culture must be as inclusive as possible," she said. "If I had to pay, we wouldn't have gone in," said French tourist Clara Dupond, 21. The other major churches in Rome, including St Peter's Basilica, are free to visit, but museums and monuments such as the Colosseum are ticketed.

One of the best-preserved relics of ancient Rome, the Pantheon is famed for its extraordinary dome, which measures 43 metres (140 feet) in diameter and includes a circular opening through which light and occasionally rain fall. It was built as a temple in the first century BC before being radically rebuilt under Emperor Hadrian at the start of the second century AD. After falling into neglect, it was given a new life after being consecrated as a church in the seventh century under Pope Boniface IV. — AFP



This aerial file photo shows the Pantheon monument in Rome.



In these file photos people attend the inauguration of the new lighting of the Pantheon in central Rome. — AFP photos

