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THE CANTERS

Digital Magazine By Asian Burg

Copenhagen Crowned The World's
Most Livable City
For 2026



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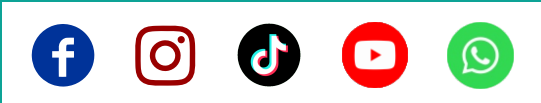
About Asian Burg

Asian Burg is an independent media and knowledge platform dedicated to food, health, agriculture, nutrition, culture, lifestyle and public awareness, published through its digital magazine, The Canters. The platform aims to bridge the gap between scientific knowledge and everyday living by presenting credible, research-based and socially relevant content in an accessible format.

Founded with the vision of promoting informed choices and healthier communities, Asian Burg focuses on evidence-driven storytelling, expert opinions, public health awareness and cultural perspectives on food and society. The platform brings together nutritionists, academicians, policy practitioners, development professionals and young writers to create meaningful dialogue around contemporary challenges.

Through its digital magazine, social media platforms, website and multimedia content, Asian Burg engages an audience that includes students, professionals, researchers, health concious, readers and community as a whole across the globe.

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Publisher

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Munir Abi Hadi

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Research & Content Contributors

Academicians, nutrition experts, development professionals, analyst, opinion makers and independent researchers contributing evidence-based articles and opinions.

Digital Media & Production

Asian Burg Creative Team

Design & Layout

Asian Burg Studio

Photography & Visual Content

Asian Burg Media

Social Media & Audience Engagement

Asian Burg Digital Team

Contact Information

Website: www.asianburg.com

Email: info@asianburg.com

Facebook: Asian Burg

Instagram: @asianburg

YouTube: Asian Burg

WhatsApp: +92 327 7771258

Editorial Note

Every edition of The Canters carries a promise to be honest, curious and present in the world as it actually is. This issue keeps that promise in full measure. We open on the mind itself with a piece on the neuroscience of visual learning and the quiet, constant rewiring the brain performs each time we learn to recognise something new. From there we turn to the plate asking whether personalised nutrition, built on DNA and the microbiome can ever scale beyond the privileged few who can currently afford it.

*Beyond science, this issue moves across terrain both cultural and pressing. We step into the cinema for Christopher Nolan's *The Odyssey*, where ancient legend meets his unmistakable grit. We slow down for traditional celebrations, the customs that keep communities tethered to their own continuity and we look at this year's ranking of the world's most livable cities, a reminder that urban life is being quietly redefined around us.*

This edition also marks days that deserve more than a passing mention. World Chocolate Day gives us reason to trace the history behind the world's favourite indulgence. World Hepatitis Day and World Population Day ask us to sit with harder truths, one a disease too often left undiagnosed, the other a planet reckoning with its own numbers. On the field, we recap the moments and storylines that carried Wimbledon 2026.

We close with pieces that ask the questions we cannot look away from: one on regenerative agriculture and the weight it carries for soil, climate and biodiversity, one on the staple foods that quietly feed nations and one on the hidden heat, an unflinching look at why women so often carry the heavier burden as temperatures rise.

It has been, as always, a privilege to bring these pages together. We are grateful to every contributor, every reader and every voice that trusted us with their story.



Preface

Some editions arrive quietly and some arrive insisting on being noticed. This edition of The Canters belongs to the second kind. The world we are covering in these pages is one still learning itself in real time, in front of us. The brain rewires with every new thing it learns to see. Diets are being rewritten at the level of genes and gut bacteria. Temperatures are climbing and the weight of that climb is not falling evenly, women carry more of it than most conversations admit. Nations are still being fed by the same staple crops that have carried them for generations, even as the ground beneath those crops shifts.

And yet, alongside all of that, there is a mythic film worth losing an afternoon to. There are traditional celebrations that refuse to fade no matter how fast the world moves. There is a city somewhere quietly becoming the best place in the world to live. There is chocolate and the simple, stubborn joy of it. There is Wimbledon and its grass courts full of noise and nerve. There are days set aside to remember what disease and population and hunger still ask of us and we have tried not to look away from any of them.

This is why The Canters exists, because we believe readers deserve both the hard truths and the human warmth, the science and the spectacle, the heat data and the delight. We have tried, in every article and interview on these pages, to hold all of it together without letting any piece of it go.

How Visual Learning Reshapes The **Brain**: New Evidence from MIT

Dr Kanza Aziz Awan

A scientific look at neural plasticity, object recognition and what learning really does to the visual system

For decades, one question has divided neuroscientists that when we learn to recognize something new, does the brain's visual system actually change or does it stay largely untouched while the real work of learning happens elsewhere? A new study from MIT's McGovern Institute for Brain Research, carried out with York University in Toronto, offers one of the most detailed answers yet and the findings challenge some long held assumptions about how the brain protects its own visual pathways.



What Is the IT Cortex?

The inferior temporal cortex or IT cortex, sits near the end of the brain's visual processing pathway. By the time information reaches this region, an object's key features are represented clearly enough that scientists can decode what a subject is looking at and even predict the kinds of errors they are likely to make, simply by reading patterns of neural activity. Because of this, the IT cortex has become a central focus for anyone trying to understand how the brain represents and learns about the visual world.



A Long Running Scientific **Debate**

Researchers have historically split into two camps on this question.

One view held that visual processing pathways remain largely stable during learning, protecting everyday perception from being disrupted every time something new is learned.

The opposing view pointed to evidence that visual areas do shift measurably when humans and other primates learn to tell objects apart.

To settle the disagreement, the MIT and York team recorded neural activity directly from the IT cortex of animals as they viewed and identified images comparing untrained animals with those that had already learned to recognize objects such as elephants and chairs including when shown at different sizes, angles or against unfamiliar backgrounds.



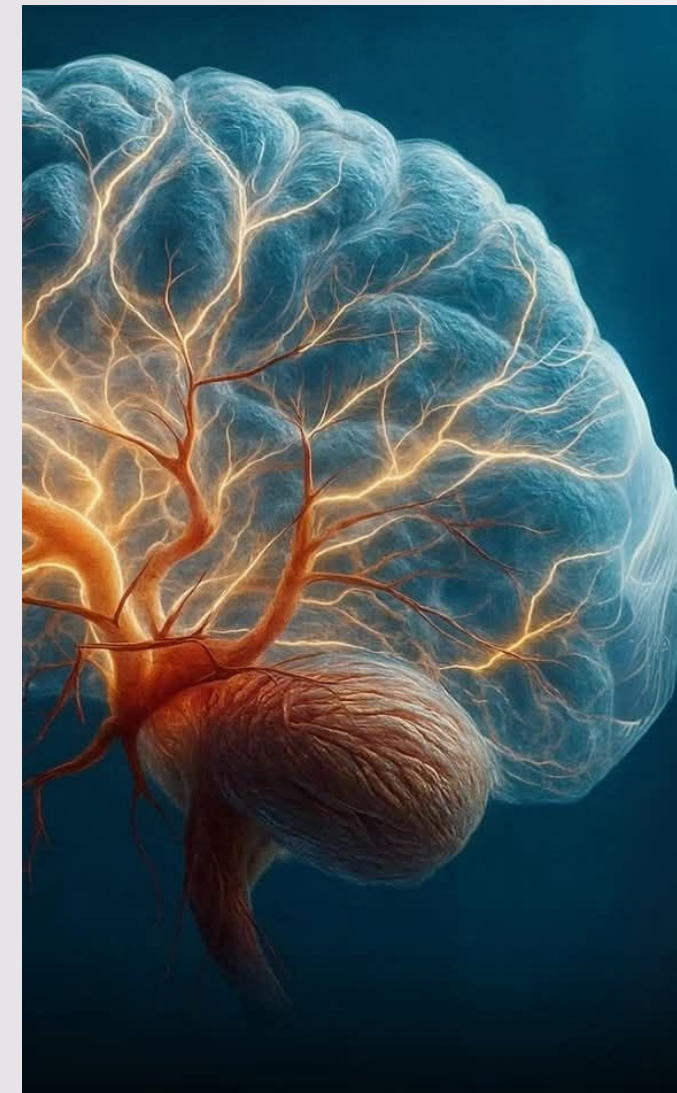
Subtle but Consistent Change

The overall pattern of activity in the IT cortex looked broadly similar whether or not an animal had been trained suggesting learning does not radically rewrite this high-level visual representation. Within that similarity, however, the researchers found small but reliable differences in how individual neurons responded once an animal had learned a category of objects, evidence that some genuine reshaping does take place.

Modelling the Learning Process

To understand what these subtle shifts might mean, the team turned to computational modelling. Lead author Lynn Sørensen trained a set of artificial neural networks, structured to resemble the IT cortex to identify the same object categories the animals had seen. The models learned through gradient descent, a method that gradually reduces errors by adjusting internal parameters, a process not generally believed to reflect how biological brains actually learn.

Only some of the models learned in a way that matched the animals' behavior. In those that did, the IT-like layer changed in ways that closely mirrored what the team had observed in real brains suggesting these models can still offer genuine insight into biological learning even where the underlying mechanism differs. Sørensen described the approach as building in silico versions of future experiments, a kind of playground for testing questions that go beyond what an experimenter might intuitively expect.



Where Most of the Change Happens

Notably, most of the changes that allowed the models to learn occurred outside the IT cortex itself in stages closer to behavior. Co-author Kohitij Kar noted that this points to substantial processing happening further along the pathway between the region the team recorded from and the eventual behavioral response. Senior author James DiCarlo explained that the earlier working assumption was that learning happens mostly downstream of the visual system, sparing it from being reshaped around every new object encountered. This study suggests otherwise: even a region as central as the IT cortex shifts subtly to become more attuned to whatever has just been learned.

Wider Implications

That subtle shift may carry consequences beyond the object being learned. The same small changes that help the brain recognize an elephant more easily could also make certain other visual tasks marginally easier or harder, an effect difficult to predict without computational modelling.

The team's models also showed that learning increased the amount of information the IT cortex held about where objects were located in space, a finding that could help inform better designed training strategies for visual learning tasks, new approaches for people with atypical sensory processing and more accurate predictions of how specific training regimes reshape perception over time.



A Brain That Never Stops Adjusting

What this research makes clear is that learning is never confined to a single part of the brain. Even regions once thought to be fixed and protected like the IT cortex, quietly adjust themselves each time we master something new. These changes are small but they are real and they ripple outward in ways that are only now becoming visible through the combination of careful animal recordings and computational modeling.

For a species that spends its entire life learning to see the world differently, from a child recognizing a face for the first time to an adult mastering a new skill, this offers a reassuring picture. The brain does not need to be rewritten to accommodate new knowledge. It simply refines itself, one subtle shift at a time striking a careful balance between staying stable enough to function and staying flexible enough to grow.



The advertisement features a man with a beard and short brown hair, wearing a red polo shirt and a black watch, pointing towards the camera. In the top left corner is the Mario's PASTA logo, which consists of a circular emblem with a red ribbon and the text "Mario's PASTA". Below the logo, the Urdu text "کچھ اس
میں نیا
گندم سے بنا!" is written in a large, stylized font. At the bottom, there is a collection of Mario's PASTA products, including bags of fusilli, bowtie, and elbow macaroni, a box of lasagne, a box of spaghetti, a box of vermicelli, and a box of tomato ketchup. The products are arranged in a row, with some overlapping.

The Science And Sustainability Of Personalized Nutrition

The End of One Size Fits All

Dr. Aiza Qamar



For most of modern nutritional history, dietary guidelines have been built on averages. Recommended vitamin intakes, caloric requirements and portion sizes were derived from population level studies and applied uniformly, regardless of who was actually eating, what their genes looked like or how their gut bacteria behaved.

This approach has been useful, shaping public health messaging that improved population nutrition over the decades. But it has also produced a frustrating reality that two people can follow the exact same diet and see dramatically different outcomes. One thrives on a high carbohydrate diet while another develops insulin resistance on the very same plan. A diet held up as the gold standard for one person can fail another entirely.

Personalized nutrition also known as precision nutrition is the emerging field attempting to resolve this paradox. Rather than treating dietary science as a population level exercise, it moves the conversation down to the individual, drawing on genomics, microbiome science, metabolomics and artificial intelligence to acknowledge what makes each person metabolically unique.



The Biology Behind Individual Variation

Nutrigenomics examines how small, common variations in DNA alter the enzymes, receptors and transport proteins involved in nutrient metabolism. Lactose intolerance is the most familiar example but genetic variation shapes how people process nearly every nutrient category. Carriers of certain MTHFR gene variants cannot efficiently convert folate into its usable form and may need methylated folate instead of standard supplementation. Similarly, carriers of the APOE4 allele show a stronger LDL cholesterol response to saturated fat than others, even when outwardly similar in health. Genes governing caffeine metabolism, vitamin D activation, omega-3 conversion and even bitter taste sensitivity further shape individual dietary needs and preferences.

The Gut Microbiome has emerged as an equally powerful determinant of nutritional response. The human gut hosts an estimated 38 trillion microbial cells whose collective genome encodes metabolic capabilities the human genome alone does not possess. A landmark Weizmann Institute study published in *Cell* in 2015 monitored blood glucose responses in eight hundred people eating standardized meals and found that gut microbiome composition predicted glycemic response better than measures such as body mass index. One participant spiked sharply after a banana but barely reacted to a cookie, while for another the pattern reversed entirely. Gut bacteria ferment fiber into short chain fatty acids that regulate appetite hormones and insulin sensitivity and since microbial communities differ between individuals, so does this metabolic output from identical meals.



Metabolomics offers a dynamic, moment to moment snapshot of how someone is actually processing nutrients, rather than inferring it from genetics alone.

Continuous glucose monitors provide a consumer accessible version of this feedback and platforms such as ZOE, developed with researchers at King's College London, Massachusetts General Hospital and Stanford, combine this data with microbiome sequencing to predict individual responses to specific foods with far greater accuracy than population level tools.

Applying Personalized Nutrition

Genuine personalized nutrition therapies typically combine blood biomarker panels, microbiome sequencing, genetic testing and ongoing metabolic monitoring, assessed by a clinical nutritionist or an AI-driven platform to produce tailored recommendations on macronutrient ratios, nutrient timing or specific supplementation.

Recommendations built from a genetic panel alone, without this broader context, represent a considerable simplification, though they have still helped raise public awareness of gene-diet interactions.

One growing area is chrono nutrition, the alignment of food intake with an individual's circadian biology. Metabolic efficiency and insulin sensitivity vary across the day and this rhythm itself varies

between people. A morning chronotype may achieve optimal metabolic efficiency from an early, high carbohydrate breakfast, while an evening chronotype's metabolic peak may shift several hours later.

Personalized chrono nutrition is therefore about not just what to eat but when, calibrated to an individual's biological clock.

Personalized Nutrition and Sustainable Living

A common tension in nutrition discourse is the perceived conflict between what is optimal for individual health and what is sustainable for the planet. Red meat offers highly bioavailable iron that some individuals genuinely need, even though its environmental footprint is substantially higher than plant-based alternatives.

Approached thoughtfully, personalized nutrition can help resolve this tension rather than deepen it. By identifying precisely which nutrients a person actually needs, it reduces the inefficiency of blanket, high consumption strategies. Someone without the FADS gene variants affecting omega-3 conversion may get adequate EPA and DHA from plant sources without fish oil, while someone with strong natural iron absorption may not need red meat at all. The result is more targeted, lower waste consumption, eating according to what the body genuinely needs rather than population level maximums designed for the most vulnerable.

Practical Principles Worth Adopting

Research consistently shows that eating a broad range of plant foods, rather than large amounts of any single category, better supports gut microbial diversity and metabolic resilience. Aiming for thirty or more different plant foods each week as recommended by the American Gut Project, is sensible, economical and environmentally sound.

Personalized nutrition also favors identifying specific deficiencies and addressing them precisely through whole foods before turning to supplements, rather than defaulting to the blanket supplementation common in the wellness industry, meaning fewer energy intensive supplements are produced unnecessarily. Scheduling meals around periods of peak metabolic activity, typically earlier in the day, requires no expensive technology, simply attention to energy levels, hunger signals and sleep quality, though wearables such as continuous glucose monitors are making finer personalization increasingly accessible.





Challenges and What Lies Ahead

Despite its promise, personalized nutrition faces a real validation gap. The effect sizes of individual genetic variants are often small and many underlying studies rely on relatively small cohorts, making it risky to translate population level associations into recommendations for a single person. Large trials such as PREDICT, conducted across the US and UK have clarified how complex individualized metabolic responses truly are but the field still lacks long term evidence that personalized interventions outperform excellent generalized guidance.

The approach also remains expensive with comprehensive genomic testing and continuous monitoring out of reach for much of the world and research still concentrated in wealthy, well-nourished populations whose findings may not generalize elsewhere. There is also the matter of data. Genomic sequences and metabolic profiles are among the most sensitive information a person can share and questions of ownership, secondary use and security remain largely unresolved.

Conclusion

Personalized nutrition stands as one of the most compelling frontiers in food and health science today. The convergence of genetics, microbiome research, metabolomics and machine learning is producing a far more sophisticated understanding of human metabolic individuality, one steadily being translated into practical dietary guidance. Rather than averaging human complexity away, it respects it. The future of nutrition was never about finding one ideal diet. It lies in understanding that every individual has their own and comprehending those differences with scientific rigor and genuine sustainable intent may be one of the defining challenges of food science in the twenty first century.



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Christopher Nolan's The *Odyssey*

Where Ancient Myth Meets Cinematic Engineering

Munir Hussain Chopra

A look at how one of history's greatest epics is being brought to the screen through sheer analogue craftsmanship

More than 2,700 years after Homer first penned The Odyssey, one of history's greatest epics is returning to the big screen through the vision of acclaimed filmmaker Christopher Nolan. Renowned for pushing the boundaries of cinema, Nolan has chosen to bring the legendary tale to life using the spectacular IMAX 70mm format, a decision that transforms the film into not only an artistic achievement but also something close to an engineering marvel.

A Timeless Story Worth the Grandest Canvas

At its heart, The Odyssey tells the timeless story of Odysseus, King of Ithaca, whose greatest challenge begins only after the Trojan War ends. His decade long voyage home is filled with treacherous seas, mythical creatures, vengeful gods and impossible choices. Along the way he confronts the Cyclops, resists the enchanting Sirens, outwits the sorceress Circe and survives the wrath of Poseidon. Yet beyond its breathtaking adventures, the epic explores profound themes of perseverance, wisdom, loyalty, sacrifice and the universal longing to return home, a message that has resonated across civilisations for centuries precisely because it remains so deeply human.



From Analogue Film to Digital Finish

Once filming concludes, the exposed reels are transported in specially protected canisters to laboratories, where they undergo a traditional photochemical development process. The developed negatives are then scanned into a digital workflow for editing, visual effects and colour grading, a striking blend of analogue craftsmanship and modern technology working in tandem.

Even the finished film is monumental in scale. A complete IMAX 70mm print stretches nearly 11 miles and weighs approximately 270 kilograms. Projecting it requires specialised platters and powerful IMAX projection systems, available in only around 40 theatres worldwide. Audiences fortunate enough to watch the film in its original format will experience Nolan's vision exactly as intended, while most viewers will instead see a digitally cropped presentation.

A Demanding Technical Undertaking

To match the scale of this legendary narrative, Nolan embraced one of the most demanding filmmaking technologies ever created. Unlike modern digital cameras, IMAX 70mm cameras are colossal machines weighing between 100 and 240 pounds. Their sheer size requires several crew members simply to transport and operate them, turning every shot into a carefully choreographed undertaking in its own right.

The challenges extend well beyond the camera's weight. The powerful film transport mechanism generates intense mechanical noise making it extremely difficult to capture clean dialogue during filming. To work around this, the camera is enclosed in a specialised soundproof housing known as a blimp, which reduces the noise but adds further weight and complexity to an already demanding production.

A Journey as Epic as the Story Itself

Christopher Nolan's The Odyssey is therefore, far more than a cinematic adaptation of a literary masterpiece. It is the convergence of ancient storytelling and cutting edge engineering, where every frame reflects an uncompromising pursuit of excellence. Much like Odysseus himself undertakes an arduous journey to reach home, the film embarks on an equally extraordinary journey of its own, from massive cameras and miles of film to giant projection systems, long before it ever reaches an audience.

Copenhagen Crowned The World's Most Livable City For 2026



A look at the rankings shaping how the world measures quality of life

In a fast-changing world, it is reassuring to know that some things remain constant. Copenhagen has once again claimed the top spot on the Economist Intelligence Unit's annual list of the world's most livable cities holding onto the title for a second consecutive year and pushing Vienna, the previous three-time leader, into second place.

How the Rankings Work

The Economist Intelligence Unit, a sister organization to The Economist magazine, ranked 173 cities across the globe on a range of factors including education, stability, healthcare, infrastructure and culture. Copenhagen earned perfect scores in three of these categories, stability, infrastructure and education, a combination that has helped secure its position at the very top of the index for another year running.

According to a spokesperson from the Economist Intelligence Unit, Copenhagen's continued success reflects a winning combination of excellent stability and infrastructure scores, strong culture and environment ratings and consistently high-quality public services.

Rising and Falling Fortunes

Australia continues to make a strong showing this year with Melbourne climbing to third place and Sydney jumping from sixth to fourth. Switzerland's Zurich, which had tied with Vienna for second place last year, slipped three spots, while fellow Swiss city Geneva settled just behind it in sixth. Japan held two places in the top

ten with Osaka retaining seventh position and Tokyo rising three places to round out the list at tenth, helped by improved scores in culture and environment.

Elsewhere, the effects of regional instability were clearly visible. The war involving Iran weighed heavily on Gulf cities with Oman's capital Muscat falling fourteen places to 123rd and Kuwait City dropping twelve spots to 105th both reflecting steep declines in their stability scores.

A Mixed Picture Closer to Home

The United Kingdom showed signs of recovery after a difficult previous year marked by rioting and unrest. Manchester emerged as the country's highest ranked city for the second time taking 52nd place ahead of London at 54th and Edinburgh at 64th.

Across the Atlantic, New York rose three places to 66th, largely on the back of falling crime rates and a reduced perceived risk of terrorism both of which boosted its stability score. Honolulu remains the highest ranked American city overall despite slipping two places to 25th, while Vancouver held its position as the only North American city to feature in the global top ten coming in at ninth.



Asia's Quiet Climb

While Western Europe remained the strongest performing region overall with an average score of 91.7, that figure was slightly lower than the previous year. Asia, by contrast saw its average livability score rise by 0.3 to 73.9, driven largely by improved healthcare provision, particularly across Chinese cities. Fuzhou, in the country's southeast, climbed seven places to 93rd following a nationwide upgrade in healthcare scoring.

A spokesperson from the Economist Intelligence Unit noted that healthcare scores had been revised upward across the board for Chinese cities reflecting national improvements in funding and the introduction of a new long-term care insurance system.



At the Bottom of the List

Damascus remains the lowest ranked city in the world, while Tehran fell sharply to 164th place as a direct consequence of the ongoing conflict and Kyiv slipped further to 166th.

Industry director at the Economist Intelligence Unit, Ana Nicholls, explained that the global average livability score remained unchanged from the previous year, as stability declines in the Middle East were effectively offset by healthcare improvements across Asia. She added that gains across Asian cities mean the region now holds nine places in the global top twenty, compared with seven for Europe.



The Full Top Ten

1.Copenhagen, Denmark



2.Vienna, Austria



3.Melbourne, Australia



4.Sydney, Australia



5.Zurich, Switzerland



6.Geneva, Switzerland



7.Osaka, Japan



8.Adelaide, Australia



9.Vancouver, Canada



10.Tokyo, Japan



A Snapshot of a Changing World

Beyond the numbers, this year's rankings offer a broader reflection of how global stability, healthcare investment and quality of life are shifting in tandem. As some regions grapple with the fallout of conflict and unrest, others are steadily climbing through sustained investment in public services and infrastructure, a reminder that livability is never fixed but constantly being reshaped by the forces at play in the wider world.

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Wimbledon 2026: Where Nearly 150 Years of Tradition Met a New Era

Rafia Batool

A look back at the history, character and defining moments of the world's most iconic tennis tournament

There are sporting events, and then there is Wimbledon. Held every summer on the iconic grounds of the All-England Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club in south west London, The Championships have been captivating the world since 1877, long before tennis had any real global reach and well before a single professional player had ever set foot on Centre Court. What has endured across nearly a century and a half of change is something genuinely rare, an event where history and world class competition exist comfortably side by side, year after year.

A Modest Beginning

The first Wimbledon Championship was held on 9 July 1877, organized by what was then known as the All-England Croquet and Lawn Tennis Club. The tournament was announced in the weekly sporting magazine *The Field*, inviting amateurs to enter for a fee of one guinea. The sole event on offer was the Gentlemen's Singles and in front of around two hundred spectators, twenty-seven-year-old Spencer Gore defeated William Marshall in just forty-eight minutes, a modest beginning for what would go on to become the most prestigious tournament in tennis.

What began as a small local event, staged partly to help fund the repair of the club's pony roller has since grown into a global spectacle watched by millions. By the early 1900s Wimbledon had already outgrown its all-England identity. The move to Church Road in 1922, the start of the Open Era in 1968, the installation of the retractable roof in 2009 and the steady growth of prize money have each marked significant milestones along the way.

What Makes Wimbledon Unique

Of the four Grand Slams on the tennis calendar, Wimbledon remains the only one still played on grass, the surface on which lawn tennis was originally born and the one that continues to produce the fastest and most unpredictable version of the game. The grass itself is perennial rye, maintained at precisely eight millimeters throughout the tournament, setting it apart from the hard courts of the Australian and US Opens and the clay of the French Open. Players are still required to wear almost entirely white, a rule dating back to the Victorian era that remains strictly enforced with even the shade of white closely policed. The Royal Box on Centre Court, regularly attended by members of the Royal Family, lends the tournament a ceremonial quality no other Grand Slam quite replicates, while the strawberries and cream, over one hundred and ninety thousand portions served across the fortnight using Grade 1 Kent strawberries delivered fresh each morning, complete a picture of tradition that belongs entirely to Wimbledon.

Around half a million spectators visit the tournament each year, making it one of the biggest fixtures on the UK's sporting calendar. Many come as much for the atmosphere, the strawberries and the famous game of spot the celebrity in the crowd, as for the tennis itself. That balance between evolution and tradition is precisely what continues to give Wimbledon its enduring character.



Why Wimbledon 2026 Stood Out

The 2026 Championships stood out not because they abandoned tradition but because they successfully blended innovation with history in a way few editions have managed before.

For the first time in the tournament's history, players on the main show courts were permitted to challenge certain chair umpire decisions using video review technology, one of the most significant rule changes in Wimbledon's one hundred- and forty-nine-year history and a clear step toward modern officiating.

On court, Jannik Sinner successfully defended his men's singles title, defeating Alexander Zverev in a four-set final that further cemented his position as the leading player of his generation. On the women's side, Linda Nosková captured her first ever Grand Slam singles title, a breakthrough moment that signaled the rise of another young star in the women's game.

The tournament also announced its largest ever year on year increase in prize money, with a total prize fund of £64.2 million and singles champions each taking home £3.6 million. Even first round losers received a significant pay increase, reflecting the sport's continued financial growth.

Off court, the All-England Club unveiled a newly renovated player area featuring advanced recovery and treatment facilities, improved gyms, personalized nutrition services and new wellness technology, upgrades designed to help athletes recover and perform at the highest possible level throughout the fortnight.

Perhaps most notably, the tournament highlighted a continued generational shift, with the "Big Three" era giving way to a new wave of talent. Jannik Sinner, Carlos Alcaraz and Linda Nosková led the charge, alongside a strong run from Naomi Osaka and several young players making unexpectedly deep tournament runs.



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Fifa World Cup 2026 At A Glance

The 2026 FIFA World Cup concluded after six weeks, with 104 matches played across the United States, Canada and Mexico. Spain claimed its second World Cup title, defeating defending champion Argentina in the final, and now holds titles across both its men's and women's national teams.

The tournament debuted an expanded 48 team format, bringing first time qualifiers such as Cape Verde, Curaçao Jordan and Uzbekistan into the competition and producing memorable underdog stories, though the larger group stage also meant fewer early eliminations and a slight dip in early competitiveness. A new seeding system kept top ranked teams apart, ultimately setting up a final worthy of the occasion.

Mandatory hydration breaks and stricter time-wasting rules shaped play throughout, improving player welfare and pace but drawing some criticism over disrupted flow and added advertising. Attendance was record breaking, with 99.7 percent stadium capacity and over 6.5 million spectators, despite concerns over high ticket prices.

The tournament also faced political controversy, including visa restrictions, questions around Iran's participation and allegations of political influence over disciplinary decisions, while Video Assistant Referee (VAR) remained broadly reliable but drew scrutiny for inconsistency in the knockouts.

Overall, the 2026 World Cup was the largest and among the most debated editions in the tournament's history, expanding global representation while raising lasting questions about structure, commercialization and governance.

Regenerative Agriculture

Restoring the Earth Through Sustainable Farming

Professor Dr. Hengyi Xu

A pathway towards climate resilience, healthier soils, biodiversity conservation and stronger communities

For thousands of years, agriculture has been the foundation of human civilization. Yet the modern transformation of farming, driven by intensive cultivation, chemical inputs, monocropping and excessive land exploitation has created a growing environmental challenge. While industrial agriculture has succeeded in increasing food production, it has also contributed to soil degradation, water pollution, biodiversity loss and rising greenhouse gas emissions.

Amid these challenges, regenerative agriculture has emerged as a promising approach that aims not only to produce food but also to restore the natural ecosystems that support farming in the first place. Unlike conventional agricultural models that often focus on extracting maximum yield from the land, regenerative agriculture centers on rebuilding soil health, enhancing biodiversity, capturing carbon and creating food systems built to last.

Healing the Soil: The Foundation of Regenerative Farming

Healthy soil sits at the very heart of sustainable agriculture. Decades of intensive farming, including excessive tillage, synthetic fertilizers and chemical pesticides, have steadily reduced soil fertility by disrupting natural nutrient cycles and depleting organic matter.

Regenerative agriculture relies on practices such as cover cropping, compost application, crop rotation, reduced tillage and the integration of livestock to restore soil structure and biological activity. These methods encourage the growth of beneficial microorganisms, improve water retention and strengthen the soil's ability to store carbon.

In many ways, healthy soils act as a natural climate solution. By capturing atmospheric carbon dioxide and storing it underground, regenerative farms can help reduce greenhouse gas concentrations while simultaneously improving agricultural productivity.



A Climate Smart Solution

Agriculture occupies an unusual position, both affected by climate change and a contributor to it. Extreme weather events, prolonged droughts and shifting rainfall patterns increasingly threaten global food security, while conventional farming practices continue to release significant volumes of carbon emissions.

Regenerative agriculture offers a climate friendly alternative by transforming farmland into a genuine carbon sink. Practices such as agroforestry, planting trees alongside crops and maintaining permanent soil cover help absorb carbon, reduce erosion and build resilience against climate shocks.

In California, where prolonged droughts have placed enormous pressure on agricultural production, many farmers have turned to regenerative methods such as compost application and cover cropping. These approaches have improved soil water holding capacity allowing farms to better withstand dry conditions while reducing their dependence on irrigation.



Protecting Biodiversity: Bringing Life Back to Farmland

Modern agriculture has often replaced diverse ecosystems with large scale monocultures, steadily reducing habitats for insects, birds and other wildlife. This decline in biodiversity threatens natural pollination, pest control and the broader balance of farm ecosystems.

Regenerative agriculture actively encourages biodiversity by promoting mixed cropping systems, planting native vegetation and creating habitats for beneficial insects and wildlife. A diverse farm ecosystem tends to be naturally stronger requiring fewer chemical interventions while supporting healthier food production overall.

In Australia, regenerative farming initiatives have focused on restoring degraded landscapes through rotational grazing, native vegetation protection and improved soil management. Farmers across regions such as New South Wales and Queensland have shown how restoring natural processes can improve land productivity while protecting local ecosystems at the same time.



Small-scale farmers, Indigenous communities and local food producers have long practiced principles similar to regenerative agriculture, understanding intuitively the importance of living in harmony with nature. Today, modern regenerative movements are rediscovering these traditional ecological approaches and combining them with contemporary scientific research.

Despite its growing potential, regenerative agriculture continues to face several challenges. Limited awareness, a lack of standardized certification, financial barriers and insufficient research support have all slowed wider adoption. Despite increasing global interest, regenerative agriculture still accounts for only a small portion of the world's farmland.

The Future of Farming: Working with Nature, Not Against It

As the world confronts the interconnected challenges of climate change, food insecurity and environmental degradation, regenerative agriculture offers a genuinely hopeful vision for a more resilient future. It reframes the role of farming, shifting it from simply producing food to actively restoring ecosystems and protecting the resources future generations will depend on.

The future of agriculture may not depend on producing more from the land, but rather on healing the land so that it can continue producing for centuries to come. Regenerative agriculture is a reminder that farms are not merely fields for cultivation, they are living ecosystems where soil, plants, animals, climate and communities exist together, each depending quietly on the health of the others.

From Soil Health to Human Health

The impact of agriculture extends well beyond the environment, reaching directly into human nutrition. Declining soil quality and intensive farming systems have been linked with reduced nutrient density in some crops, while the highly processed food systems associated with industrial agriculture have contributed to the rising global burden of non-communicable diseases, including obesity and diabetes.

Regenerative farming supports healthier food systems by encouraging diverse crop production, improving soil nutrient cycles and strengthening the connections between farmers, consumers and local food networks. A healthier planet begins with healthier soils and healthier soils, in turn, help nourish healthier communities.

Empowering Farmers and Communities

Regenerative agriculture is not only an environmental movement it is equally a social and economic one. By reducing dependence on expensive chemical inputs, regenerative practices can help farmers build long-term sustainability and strengthen their relationship with the land they work.



Tea Time

Egg & Milk Cookies



BAKED WITH LOVE,
ENRICHED WITH EGG & MILK

Opus

DIL Walon ki CHOCOLATE



SCAN TO
EXPLORE



The World On A Plate: Staple Foods That Feed Nations

Saira Ifthikhar

A journey through the grains, roots and dishes that sustain cultures across the globe
Every country carries its story on a plate and nowhere is this more visible than in the staple foods that have quietly shaped civilizations for centuries. From the wheat fields of the Americas to the rice paddies of Asia and the resilient root crops of Africa, staples reveal as much about geography and history as they do about nutrition.

Wheat and Corn: The Backbone of America

Wheat and corn have shaped America's food story for centuries, forming the foundation of everything from bread to countless everyday dishes. Both are rich in carbohydrates for sustained energy, while also offering fiber, B vitamins and essential minerals that support daily nutrition.



Germany's Bread Culture

Germany's celebrated bread culture rests on a foundation of wheat and rye. Rye in particular is valued for its dense fiber content, its mineral richness and its ability to support healthy digestion, qualities that have made German bread a staple far beyond its borders.

Rice: The Grain That Connects Continents

Across Saudi Arabia, Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Singapore, France, Italy and Indonesia, rice remains the grain that quietly connects vastly different cultures. It provides essential carbohydrates for energy, while brown rice varieties in particular contribute additional fiber, vitamins and minerals to traditional diets.



Wheat: A Staple Across Continents

In Australia, Pakistan and Türkiye, wheat forms the foundation of countless meals, transformed into breads and flatbreads that anchor everyday cooking. Beyond energy, it supplies plant-based protein, fiber and important nutrients such as iron and B vitamins.



Wheat and Rice Together: Asia's Dual Harvest

India, Iran and China rely on a combination of wheat and rice, a pairing shaped by centuries of farming tradition. Together these grains provide energy, carbohydrates, protein, fiber and the micronutrients that fuel some of the world's most diverse cuisines.



Potatoes: From Survival Crop to Cultural Icon

In Ireland and Peru, the humble potato evolved from a survival crop into a genuine cultural favorite. Rich in carbohydrates, potassium and vitamin C, it continues to provide lasting energy for daily life in both countries.



Couscous: A Symbol of Moroccan Hospitality

Made from wheat, couscous stands as a symbol of Moroccan hospitality, offering carbohydrates, plant-based protein and important minerals. It pairs beautifully with vegetables and meats forming the heart of many traditional Moroccan meals.



Maize: More Than a Crop in Kenya

In Kenya, maize is best described as a way of life rather than simply a crop. It provides energy, fiber and essential nutrients forming the base of dishes such as ugali that continue to nourish communities across the country.

Teff: Ethiopia's Tiny Nutritional Powerhouse

Tiny in size but remarkably nutrient dense, teff is rich in fiber, plant protein, iron, calcium and other essential minerals. It forms the base of injera, Ethiopia's beloved traditional flatbread and remains central to the country's culinary identity.



Cassava and Yam: Nigeria's Resilient Roots

Cassava and yam both resilient root crops provide valuable energy through complex carbohydrates across Nigeria. Alongside their energy value, they contribute meaningful amounts of fiber, potassium and other important nutrients to everyday diets.

Rice and Beans: Brazil's Iconic Pairing

Brazil's iconic rice and beans combination remains both affordable and deeply nutritious. Rice supplies steady energy, while beans contribute protein, fiber, iron and minerals, together forming one of the most balanced traditional meals found anywhere in the world.

A Shared Thread Across Different Tables

What emerges from this global tour of staple foods is a shared thread running beneath enormous cultural diversity, the quiet, practical wisdom of communities that built entire cuisines around whatever grain or root grew best in their soil. These staples remain, even today, far more than sources of energy. They are inherited knowledge, passed down through generations feeding both bodies and traditions in equal measure.



Since 1987
Taste of Pakistan

SHARING SWEET MOMENTS
WITH EVERYONE



LAYERS

About us



Like a fantasy that feels unreal, every delicacy by 'Layers' holds a charm that enchants with every bite, allowing one to be swept into a moment of bliss, making all your dessert dreams come true!

Founded in **Lahore** in **2020**, the philosophy of Layers Bakeshop was simple; to create connections through desserts while striking the ideal balance between flavor and feeling.

Since the beginning, Layers has secured an irreplaceable spot **in the hearts of people**.

No of branches: **46**

Recent launches

Lemon cheesecake

St. Sebastian cake





The Hidden **Heat**

Why Women Suffer More When Temperatures Rise

Jaweria Nazeer

A closer look at the biology and lived experience behind rising summer temperatures

As summers grow hotter and heatwaves more frequent, a pattern is becoming increasingly clear. Extreme heat does not affect everyone equally and women in particular bear a disproportionate share of the strain. What might look like ordinary discomfort during a hot spell is, for many women, a genuine stress test on the body, one shaped by hormones, biology and everyday life circumstances that often go unnoticed.

A BIOLOGICAL DIFFERENCE IN HOW BODIES COPE

Women's vulnerability to heat comes down to two main factors, hormone levels and the way the body physically responds to heat.

Women tend to produce less sweat and begin sweating at a higher temperature than men. This makes it harder for the body to shed excess heat quickly and equally hard to judge when it is under strain, simply because there is less visible sweat to signal the problem. Women also typically have a higher core body temperature and a greater body fat percentage than men, which acts as an additional insulating layer during hot weather.

Layered on top of this is the natural rise and fall of estrogen and progesterone, hormones that shift significantly during the menstrual cycle, perimenopause, menopause, pregnancy and breastfeeding. These fluctuations can already put the brain's temperature regulation system out of balance placing extra pressure on the cardiovascular system precisely when it is least needed.



More Than Biology

Biology only tells part of the story. Socioeconomic circumstances, including lower income or being the primary caregiver for family members can significantly affect how well a woman is able to protect herself during hot weather.

Age adds another layer of risk. Since women generally live longer than men, they are more likely to fall into older age groups, where vulnerability to heat rises sharply. Older adults are also more prone to conditions such as dementia, which can affect the ability to recognize thirst or to require medications like diuretics both of which increase susceptibility to heat stress.

The Menstrual Cycle and Heat Sensitivity

Sensitivity to heat also shifts throughout the menstrual cycle. In the days before a period, rising progesterone can raise core body temperature, adding to discomfort during hot weather. Once the period begins, estrogen, the hormone that helps regulate the body's temperature control system, drops sharply placing further strain on the heart's ability to cool the body down.

Many women describe fatigue, dizziness, fainting spells and disrupted sleep that coincide with their periods during heatwaves. Blood loss during menstruation also reduces iron levels, which can affect sleep quality and oxygen delivery throughout the body adding yet another burden on the cardiovascular system during periods of extreme heat.



Recognizing the Warning Signs

Extreme heat has been linked to a higher risk of cardiovascular illness and death, particularly among women. During heatwaves, added strain on the heart can cause blood pressure to drop, which combined with fluid and salt loss through sweating, can lead to heat exhaustion. If blood pressure falls too far, the risk of heart attack rises as well.

Menopause and Pregnancy Bring Their Own Challenges

For perimenopausal and menopausal women falling estrogen levels are already linked to hot flashes and night sweats. During heatwaves, these symptoms can become more frequent and more severe, a pattern expected to worsen as global temperatures continue to rise. Women who have undergone chemical or surgical menopause, often as treatment for hormone sensitive cancers or gynecological conditions can experience similar effects.

Pregnancy carries its own risks. Increased metabolic heat and fluid needs make it harder for pregnant women to regulate body temperature, while fluctuating progesterone levels in early and mid-pregnancy can raise body heat further. Later in pregnancy, rising estrogen helps bring temperature back down but the added physical demands of carrying a child still place extra strain on the cardiovascular system throughout the summer months.

A Call for Wider Awareness

Employers, policymakers and communities need to take women's heightened vulnerability to heat more seriously from workplace accommodations to public health planning. Having more women involved in decision making at every level would help ensure these needs are properly understood and addressed.

This is not simply a woman's problem but a societal one. Building awareness around how heat affects women differently, and responding with practical support rather than assumption, benefits everyone navigating an increasingly warm world.

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World Chocolate Day

A Sweet Global Obsession

Chocolate's story stretches back more than three thousand years, from the cacao growing forests of Mesoamerica to the sweet shops and gourmet counters of today. Once treasured by the Maya and Aztecs as a bitter ceremonial drink, it was transformed over centuries into the smooth, sweetened treat now enjoyed in nearly every culture on earth. World Chocolate Day is a celebration of that long journey honoring both the farmers who grow cacao and the traditions that have grown around this small but powerful bean.

Beyond nostalgia, the day is also a reminder of chocolate's deeper significance, economic, cultural and even emotional. It supports the livelihoods of millions of smallholder farmers across West Africa, Latin America and Southeast Asia, while remaining one of the most universally loved indulgences, given as a gift, shared during celebrations or simply enjoyed as a quiet comfort. As conversations around ethical sourcing and sustainable cacao farming grow louder, the day offers a moment to appreciate chocolate not just as a treat but as a product with a story worth understanding.



World Hepatitis Day

The Silent Epidemic

Hepatitis remains one of the most under recognized public health threats in the world, quietly affecting hundreds of millions of people while often going undiagnosed for years. Many forms of the disease, particularly hepatitis B and C, progress silently causing serious liver damage long before symptoms appear. World Hepatitis Day exists to change that pushing for greater awareness, wider testing and improved access to treatment in regions where the disease continues to spread largely unnoticed.

The day also highlights the gap between what is medically possible and what is actually reaching communities in need. Effective vaccines and treatments exist, yet stigma, limited healthcare access and low awareness continue to allow the disease to spread quietly, particularly in low- and middle-income countries. Marking this day is a call to close that gap, encouraging routine screening, informed conversations and stronger public health policy so that hepatitis no longer remains the epidemic nobody talks about.



World Population Day

A Planet at the Crossroads

The world's population continues to grow at a pace that carries significant consequences for resources, infrastructure and policy planning. World Population Day invites reflection on these shifting numbers not simply as statistics but as forces shaping food security, urbanization, healthcare systems and environmental sustainability across the globe. From rapidly growing cities to ageing populations in other parts of the world, the patterns of population change look strikingly different from one region to the next.

This day is also an opportunity to examine the policy choices that come with these trends, including access to healthcare, education and family planning resources that allow individuals to make informed decisions about their own futures. As nations grapple with the dual challenges of overpopulation in some regions and declining birth rates in others, World Population Day serves as a timely reminder that thoughtful, evidence-based policy will be essential in navigating what lies ahead for a planet already stretched across many fronts.

Key Messages



Unicef

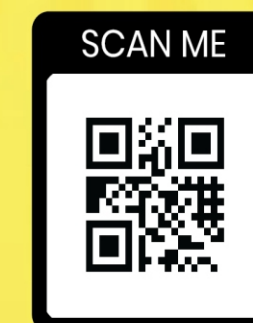
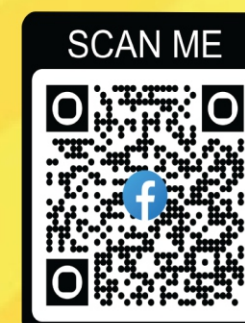
UNICEF continues to play a vital role in improving the lives of children worldwide by ensuring access to education, healthcare, nutrition and protection. Its global efforts in emergencies and development work have made a lasting impact on child welfare and rights.



Sustainable Development Goal

Food security (SDG 2) aims to end hunger and ensure everyone has enough nutritious food.

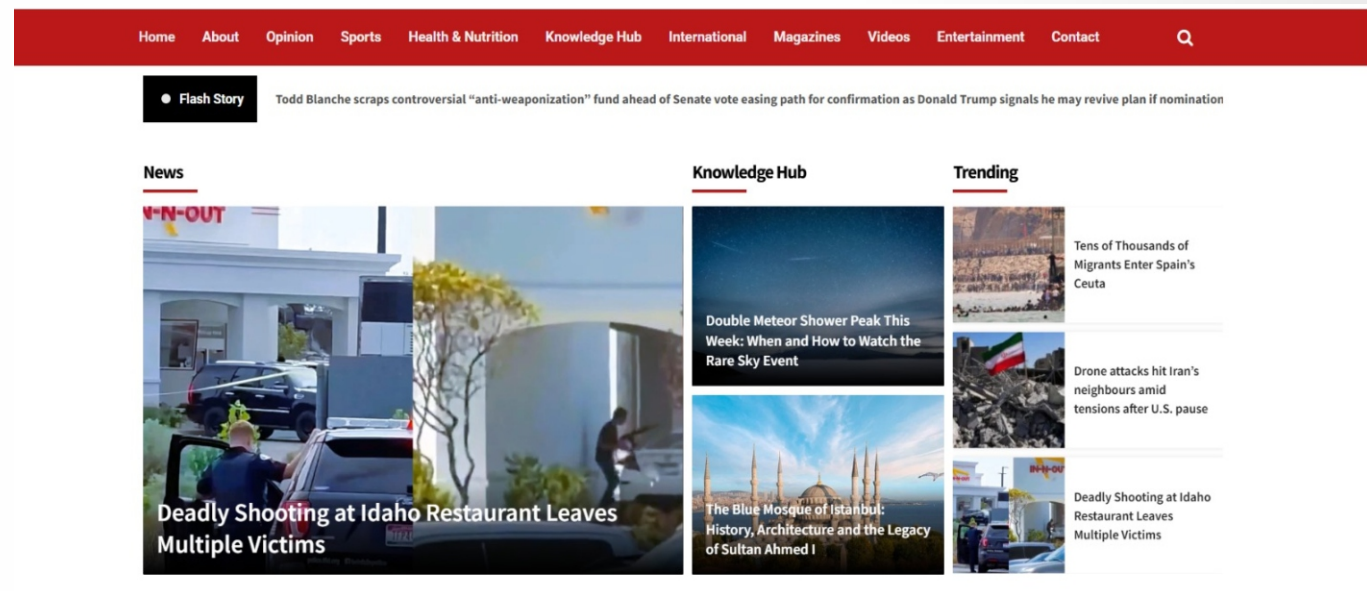
Reducing food wastage (SDG 12) helps save resources and improve access to food for all.



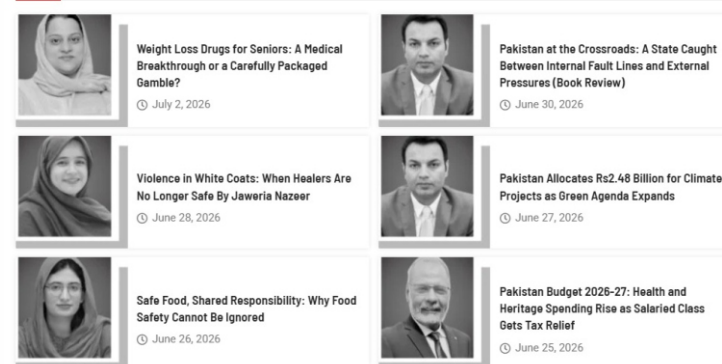
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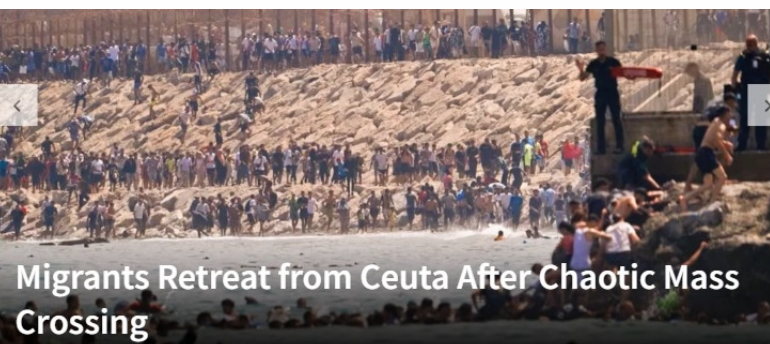
Highlights of the Month



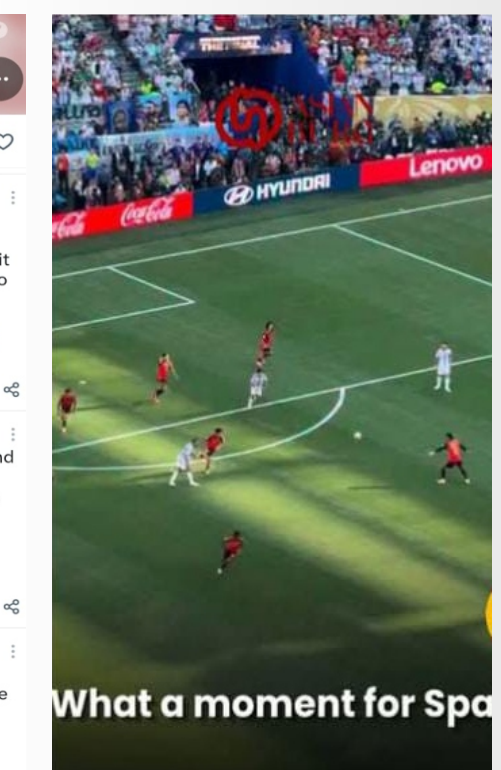
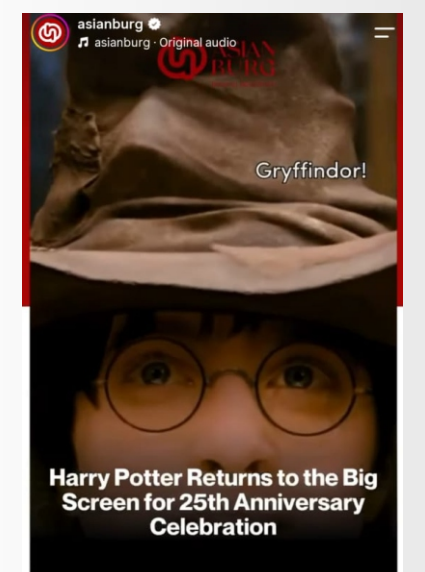
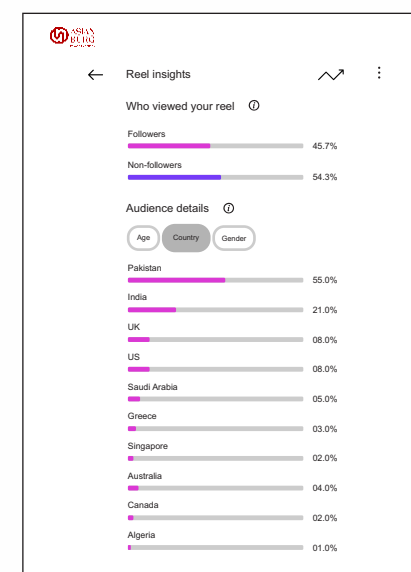
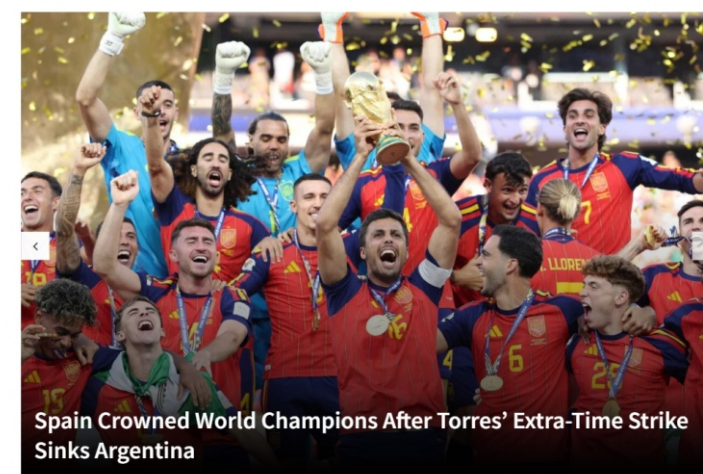
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