

News

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OZ, beat magician



Once upon a time, there lived Ozan Yildirim, grandson of a Turkish immigrant. Ozan grew up in Toggenburg. He completed an apprenticeship in retailing, before working as a sales assistant at Fust. At night, the young man transformed into OZ (pronounced Ozi). He created rhythms in his basement using a software named Fruity Loop. The self-taught artist likes the deep beats of rapper 50 Cent. OZ also enjoys the musical atmosphere of the Caribbean. In 2012, the musician sent a series of tracks to American rapper Meek Mill, whose email address he had been keeping stored safely away. The creations of electronic artisan OZ caught the musician's ear, and he paid 3,000 dollars for them. "These days, a hit is just an email away," said the Swiss star to "Billboard" magazine. From beat to beat, OZ began to work with the greatest names in the world of rap, amongst them Canadian Drake (on "Toosie Slide") and American Travis Scott (on "Sicko Mode"). In June, the latter title had been played 1.4 billion times on musical platform Spotify. "He has a recognisable style and he knows how to capture the moment," said Swiss rapper Stress, discussing OZ. The man concocts his sounds in a recording studio based in Wald (ZH). According to the latest news, he still lives in his native Toggenburg, with his wife and child. His guilty pleasure? Fancy cars, including a Rolls Royce and a Lamborghini. It is said that during a trip to Zurich with friends, he was refused entry into nightclubs, whilst his own beats could be heard from inside. Switzerland doesn't know its own heroes!

STÉPHANE HERZOG

Joe Biden and Vladimir Putin meet in Geneva

Thirty-six years after hosting the legendary summit between Ronald Reagan and Mikhail Gorbachev, Geneva again had the opportunity to cement its reputation for international relations when US President Joe Biden and the Russian leader Vladimir Putin met in the city for talks on 16 June 2021. How the encounter will affect the tense US-Russian relationship is still unclear, as the pair were evidently not in Geneva to make friends. (MUL)

Guy Parmelin meets Joe Biden

While Biden was in Geneva, he also met the president of the Swiss Confederation, Guy Parmelin. Above all, Parmelin used the rendezvous to push for talks on a free trade agreement, while Biden was mainly interested in urging Switzerland to buy US fighter jets. Rumours grew in the ensuing weeks that Switzerland had indeed picked US company Lockheed Martin's F-35 as its new fighter jet. (MUL)

Sobering news for the Swiss crypto market

The prospects of Switzerland soon becoming a safe haven for cryptocurrencies have been dealt a blow. Firstly, the Diem Association – a consortium with ties to Facebook – is moving its headquarters from Geneva to the USA. Diem has been targeting the launch of a global digital currency. Secondly, the Swiss financial regulator FINMA has informed the company Bitcoin Suisse that its application for a banking licence is ineligible for approval. This is sobering news for the Swiss bitcoin and crypto market. (MUL)

Parliament wants to raise the retirement age for women

In June, the National Council followed the lead of the Council of States by approving an increase in the female retirement age from 64 to 65. Women born between 1959 and 1964 would receive small offsetting payments for six years as a result of this change. The higher retirement age for women – a key element in the restructuring of the ailing voluntary old-age and survivors' insurance scheme (OASI) – could come into force in 2022, although the electorate is more likely to have a say first. Left-leaning parties, in particular, want to force a popular vote. (MUL)

Stricter rules on arms exports

Put under pressure by the "Stop arms exports to countries engaged in civil war" popular initiative, parliament is now pushing for stricter rules on arms exports. The Council of States has come out in favour of tightening the restrictions in order to curtail the Federal Council's authority to approve arms exports. The National Council still has to decide on the matter. (MUL)