



## I'm a romantic

### Sean Bean on sex scenes and his five marriages

MAGAZINE

## 25 best secret beaches in Europe



WEEKEND

# Winter of woe means long waits for patients

### Only six in ten will be seen within four hours

**Oliver Wright** Policy Editor  
**Kat Lay** Health Editor  
**Steven Swinford** Political Editor

As few as six patients in ten will be dealt with by hospital A&E departments within four hours this winter, ministers have been warned as concern grows that the NHS is heading for an "unprecedented" crisis.

Whitehall projections suggest that the health service in England is on track to miss the mandatory four-hour waiting time target by a record margin as it struggles with a shortage of beds and exceptional demand on services.

A senior government figure said the winter looked "incredibly bleak" as an increase in Covid-19 infections and a resurgence of winter flu could push the NHS to breaking point.

In June, 72.1 per cent of patients were treated, transferred or admitted within four hours, marginally higher than in March, the worst month on record, when the figure was 71.6 per cent.

The target is for 95 per cent of patients to be dealt with in four hours, but it has not been met since 2015. Figures for July are to be published next week, but are expected to have remained poor.

Typically, NHS performance dips in winter. In December 2019, before the pandemic, 79.8 per cent of patients were seen within four hours, the worst

performance on record at the time. NHS bosses have said that the pressures this summer have been as bad as those usually felt in the winter.

A government source said: "The central assumption is that hospitals will only be able to deal with six in ten patients arriving at A&E within the current time limit, but it could be worse. Winter is looking incredibly bleak."

The Royal College of Emergency Medicine described the 60 per cent projection as "optimistic".

A Whitehall source said: "Ministers are aware that the NHS is facing an unprecedented crisis but until a new prime minister is in place there is a limited amount that can be done."

"What needs to happen is for the Treasury, No 10 and the health department to get together and agree a plan... to include not just the NHS but how it interacts with social care."

Louise Ansari, from the patient watchdog Healthwatch England, said that further deterioration would lead to "a tipping point in public trust, with people losing faith that the NHS will be there for them in an emergency".

Health leaders are understood to be particularly concerned about pressures this winter because of a combination of strains on the system. This summer's A&E delays have been caused mostly by a shortage of hospital beds because  
**Continued on page 2, col 3**



High drama Emily Maitlis has teamed up with the makers of *A Very British Scandal* to dramatise her notorious Newsnight interview with the Duke of York. Page 5

## Goal!



SPORT

### The new season starts

24-page pullout



WEEKEND

### Britain's wild cycling guide



9 771742 498769

3 1

## World

# Argentina names third economy chief in a month

**Argentina**  
**Stephen Gibbs**  
 Latin America Correspondent

If Sergio Massa needed any reminder that he has one of the most difficult jobs in the world, it came when he arrived at the presidential office to be sworn in as Argentina's third economy minister in a month.

As his black government van drew towards the palace's iron gates this week, protesters surrounded it. First a few, then dozens began banging at the tinted windows. "You are garbage" they jeered. It looked like they were trying to break in, before his security team intervened and led him to safety.

Massa, 50, a respected former Speaker of the Argentine parliament, has

centre-left government of President Fernández is blowing through its own reserves at a rate of \$60 million a day. With state coffers running low, that has heightened the risk of a default, something that has happened ten times since Argentina gained independence from Spain in 1816, and three times this century, most recently in 2020.

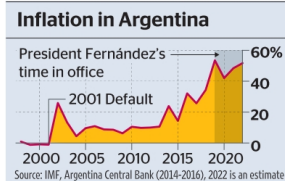
Economists blame the government's profligate spending and the difficulty of obtaining credit because of previous defaults. About 22 million Argentini-ans, half the population, receive some form of government benefit. Basic income for all, regardless of employment, was one of the demands of a march that attracted tens of thousands to central Buenos Aires last month.

Aggravating the crisis is infighting within the government over its response. On one side is Fernández, 63, who has been persuaded that reining in spending is necessary. Against him is his radical left-wing vice-president, Cristina Fernández de Kirchner, a former president who has resisted all efforts at austerity.

For much of this year Kirchner had indicated that Martin Guzmán, Fernández's long-serving economy minister, did not have her support. Last month he quit and was replaced by Silvina Batakis, who was seen as to the left of Guzmán. She lasted 24 days before being sacked while holding meetings in the United States.

Massa has been portrayed as a "superminister" because his role combines the economy, productive development and agriculture. But he has been quick to dampen any notion that he has superpowers. "Magic doesn't exist," he said when he was appointed.

Outside the Casa Rosada presidential palace, where demonstrators are now nearly permanently encamped, one resident explained how he saw the dilemma that Massa, or anyone in his thankless job, faces. "I've seen five presidents come and go and nothing improves," Alvaro Gómez told *The Epoch Times*. "Half of our country doesn't want a job, and the ones that do, don't want to pay the taxes for the others."



been made responsible for stabilising an economy in dire straits, in a country all too familiar with financial meltdown.

Inflation, now at 60 per cent, is forecast to hit 90 per cent by the year's end. Fewer than half of Argentine adults have a job. There is a run on the banks, with the equivalent of \$1 billion withdrawn in the past month alone.

Notoriously distrustful of the currency and the creditworthiness of banks, people have been frantically changing their devaluing pesos into cash dollars. The value of the peso on the black market has sunk by 75 per cent against the dollar since January.

"I'm not actually stashing dollar notes in my mattress, yet, but I try to keep all my savings in hard currency," German Nemer, 22, an engineering student in Buenos Aires, said.

In an effort to support the peso the



Standing ovation All eyes were on Eve-Maud Hubeaux during rehearsals for Verdi's *Aida* at the Salzburg Culture Festival

## Throw-away tat is library's lost treasure

**United States**  
**Keiran Southern** Los Angeles

Opening the pages of a yellowing book, Sharon McKellar, a Californian librarian, often finds long forgotten mementos dropping into her lap. She has discovered family Polaroids, shopping lists and love letters pressed inside the pages.

McKellar, 46, works at the Oakland Public Library and has been carefully documenting the artefacts, posting them to the website Found in a Library Book. The project began a decade ago and was inspired by *Found Magazine*, which also used to collect random ephemera. The website has exploded in

popularity since McKellar updated it in November. "People seem to be really engaged with it," she said.

Among the more than 350 items in the database is a message scrawled in a child's hand about the hardworking president "Borok Obama" and a fake \$3 bill featuring the screaming face of Hillary Clinton.

Other pieces are more personal, including a postcard that begins: "William! Guess this will be my last postcard." McKellar's work has been aided by her colleagues at other Oakland libraries who have sent over their own discoveries, which are then scanned and posted online. She removes any identifying features before uploading every item,

explaining that if she started curating the collection she would inadvertently be adding her own tastes to it.

She said: "The in-depth, long letters and notes are interesting in one way, but I think they're even more interesting when they're next to a gum wrapper or a playing card. And you can sometimes relate to something you see in there and feel a connection."

People have started coming forward with claims of owning the items for the first time. In the past week McKellar has heard from a woman who believes a handwritten note may be hers while another got in touch to say she recognised the writing in a love note as that of her mother's.

## New chapter for the Chelsea, a hotel that lived off its own legend

**Will Pavia**

NEW YORK



The first time Zoe Pappas set foot in the Chelsea Hotel, in the mid-1990s, she considered walking out again. "It was a dump," she says. "It looked like a bad quality bordello." A month in the place confirmed her suspicion that she ought to find somewhere else to live, but Stanley Bard, the proprietor, wouldn't hear of it. "He said: 'Zoe! You can't do that! Nobody moves out of the Chelsea,'" she says.

The New York hotel was still living on its reputation, as a magical space that drew artists and writers and musicians. This was where Arthur C

Clarke wrote *2001: A Space Odyssey*, where Beat writers Jack Kerouac and Allen Ginsberg lived, where Arthur Miller bunked with Marilyn Monroe, where Leonard Cohen had a fling with Janis Joplin and wrote a song about it. In a documentary, *Dreaming Walls*, Patti Smith, explains the attraction. "I've always liked to be where the big guys were," she says, standing on the roof. "Dylan Thomas used to hang out on this very roof."

Bard often accepted works of art in lieu of payment, which explained the eclectic collection of paintings on the walls. Pappas remembers him showing her a series of rooms "even dumper than the one I had", regaling her with tales of who had lived there. Eventually, he found one she liked and she stayed.

Bard was ousted in 2007. From 2011 a succession of developers tried to renovate it. Tenants have endured "11 years of cacophonous noise, dust and diminished services, and life

amidst the wreckage of a demolition/construction site", says Ed Hamilton, a tenant and author of *Legends of the Chelsea Hotel*. The grand red-brick façade was sheathed in scaffolding and the hotel itself seemed to recede into a memory.

Two weeks ago the scaffolding finally came down. At the front, on a humid afternoon a man vacuums the welcome mat. In the lobby, at a sleek wooden counter in the well of a vertiginous staircase that rises 11 floors, tourists are arriving.

The Chelsea has been remade by Richard Born, Ira Drukier and Sean MacPherson, the developers behind boutique hotels in New York and California, who bought it for

\$250 million in 2016. "I have never had a project take quite as long," Drukier says. It was old and there were tenants. The tenants complained that they were being harassed and sued, securing an order from the city that halted work for two years. "Then we had Covid."

With the hotel came a warehouse of paintings by former residents. "The people who lived here all had similar dreams. They all wanted to be a painter, an artist, a writer," Drukier says. "Some succeeded. Some didn't. The ones that succeeded didn't work any harder than the ones that didn't."

Among them was Bettina Grossman, an artist who lived on the

Marilyn Monroe and Arthur Miller, were among the artists to stay at the Chelsea



fifth floor, her flat becoming so full of her work that she had to sleep in the hallway. She died last November. "Now people have 'discovered' her," says Drukier. "Her whole life no one paid any attention to her."

Some tenants remain critical. Hamilton feels that "a half-baked attempt has been made to recreate the look of the old hotel", but is glad some details have been preserved. "The people coming back seem, in many ways, to be the same as those who sought the place out before," he says. "That, as far as I see it, is a problem for Ira and his partners. They want to attract the super-wealthy . . . they are getting are the same old bohemians."

Pappas, a structural engineer who is also president of the tenants association, is delighted with the revived Chelsea. They hotel is back to "the way it was when it opened in the 1880s", she says. "They have put the best quality finishes, the best quality of everything."