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Opening of the United Nations (U.N.) Climate Change Conference, in Doha, in Qatar

DOHA CLIMATE CHANGE MEETING

The annual United Nations (U.N.) Climate Change Conference took place in Doha, the capital of Qatar, between November 26, and December 8. Around 17,000 people attended. They included officials from almost 200 countries, members of many different international organizations and climate scientists. Abdullah bin Hamad al-Attiyah, the deputy prime minister of Qatar, was the president, or leader of the conference.

Around 50 years ago, scientists first began to discover that the amount of carbon dioxide in the Earth's atmosphere was increasing. Most people now believe that much of it is the result of human activity, or the burning of fossil fuels, such as oil, natural gas, and coal. In most countries, fossil fuels are used for generating electricity, heating, transport, and cooking. The amount

of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere is now thought to be the highest it has been for about 800,000 years.

Nearly all scientists think that this extra carbon dioxide, and other gasses such as methane, in the atmosphere are acting in a similar way to a greenhouse. They claim that these gasses are causing average world temperatures to rise and the Earth's climate to change.

Not all scientists agree on what will happen if average world temperatures continue to increase. Many predict that there will be a rise in the sea level and more extreme weather such as heat waves, floods, droughts, freezing temperatures, and powerful storms. Some even worry that if nothing is done to slow global warming, then certain areas, especially those only a few feet above sea level, will become uninhabitable within 50 to 100 years. Yet others believe that, so far, the increase of

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greenhouse gasses in the atmosphere has not made much difference.

Records for world temperatures go back around 160 years. Scientists calculate that over this period there has been an average rise in the world temperature of nearly 1°C. Many scientists suspect that an average rise above 2°C will probably have severe effects on the climate. Some are now predicting that within the next 100 years the average temperature may have risen by as much as 4°C.

Many countries now say that they are trying to find ways of making electricity in a “clean”, or sustainable way. Examples are wind, wave, and solar power. Yet burning fossil fuels is still one of the least expensive and easiest ways of generating large amounts of electricity. One of the problems is that the cost of electricity can affect a country’s economy. Few people or companies want to pay more for electric power.

For the last 20 years, the U.N. has been organizing large meetings to discuss what should be done about climate change and global warming. Many people believe that all countries in the world need to agree to reduce their carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gas [emissions](#). What’s more, they say, any agreement about the amount by which each country has to reduce its emissions must be legally binding. The U.N. agrees with this. Yet getting all countries to agree to a legally binding agreement has been very difficult.

Countries are often described as “developed” (or wealthy) and “developing” (less wealthy). Some developed countries, such as Britain, the U.S. and several European nations, first started burning fossil fuels over 150 years ago.

Developing countries, such as China, India and Brazil, also use

large amounts of fossil fuels. Yet they only began to do so much more recently. Developing countries claim that as developed countries were first to start burning fossil fuels they have caused the problem. They believe that these richer countries should cut their carbon emissions and provide money to pay for renewable energy projects in developing countries.



Doha

The only legally binding carbon emission reduction agreement, or treaty, that exists is called the [Kyoto Protocol](#). It is named after the city in Japan in which it was signed, in 1997. Many developed countries signed this treaty, but not all of them. The U.S., for example, refused. At the time the Kyoto Protocol did not include any developing countries.

However, many things have changed since 1997. For example, today, developing countries such as China and India produce huge amounts of carbon dioxide. About 28% of all the world’s carbon emissions are now thought to come from China. The figure for the U.S. is 16%. Yet many more people live in China and India than in the U.S. China therefore argues that, per person, it produces much less carbon dioxide than the U.S.

For many years the U.S. and several other countries have insisted that it would not be sensible for them to sign a legally binding agreement. They say that they would only agree to do so if developing countries, which have high carbon emissions,

such as China, India, Russia and Brazil, also agree to sign the same treaty.

Last year’s U.N. climate change meeting was held in Durban, a city in South Africa. After many years of arguing about setting targets for legally binding carbon emission cuts, an agreement was finally reached. All countries, both developed and developing, said that they would sign a legally binding treaty in 2015. However, this agreement would not start, or take effect, until five years later in 2020.

Much of the time in Doha was spent discussing what should be done before 2020, when the new legally binding agreement starts. All countries eventually agreed to an arrangement called “Loss or Damage”. This means that poor countries will receive money from wealthier ones for any loss or damage that has been caused by climate change. An example of this would be if a small Pacific island country became uninhabitable because of rising sea levels.

Another agreement made was an [extension](#) to the Kyoto Protocol. This was necessary because the treaty signed in 1997 expires at the end of this year.

During the conference, some of those countries that originally signed the Kyoto Protocol agreed to extend it to 2020. After this Kyoto will not be needed as the new legally binding agreement, to be signed by all countries, will begin.

Those that signed the Kyoto extension agreed to continue to cut their carbon emissions until it ends in 2020. Only the 27 member nations of the European Union (EU), Australia and eight other smaller industrialized countries agreed to do this. Yet many people said that this would not make much of a difference, as in total these countries only produce about 15% of the world’s carbon emissions. ■

60-DAY BREAD

A company claims that it has invented a machine that can stop bread from going moldy for up to 60 days. Scientists who work at a university, in the U.S., set up the company. They have named it MicroZap.

Although it is much bigger their machine works in a similar way to a microwave oven. Yet unlike the microwaves used in people's kitchens their machine does not cook or damage the food.

Bread normally starts to go moldy and stale after about ten days. The spores of a type of fungus in the bread cause this to happen.

One common way of making food last longer is by using preservatives. These are normally chemicals that are added to the food as it is produced. Sometimes other chemicals are also used to hide the taste of the preservatives. Preservatives are often added to bread. Nowadays most types of bread sold in supermarkets include preservatives to stop it from going moldy and stale too quickly.



Moldy bread

As a test bread was put through the new machine. Surprisingly, 60 days later it was still as fresh as when it was made. The microwaves used in the machine had therefore killed the fungus spores that would normally make the bread go moldy.

Currently, food waste is a big problem in many richer countries.

Much of the food that people buy, especially bread, is thrown away.

The owners of the company did not invent their new microwave machine to make long lasting bread. It was designed to kill certain types of bacteria, which, when eaten in contaminated food, can be harmful to humans. These bacteria include *E. Coli*, *Salmonella* and *Listeria*, all of which can cause serious food poisoning.

Another reason was to kill MRSA. This is often called a "superbug". MRSA stands for multi-drug-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*. This type of bacteria is now found in many hospitals. It has become resistant to most [antibiotics](#). If a person becomes sick with resistant bacteria, such as MRSA, it's now very hard to treat the illness.

Even though making bread last longer was not its original purpose MicroZap thinks large bread-making companies may be interested in the machine. Some have already contacted the scientists to learn more about their invention.

One worry is that using this type of machine would mean that the bread would be more expensive to make. However, the scientists say that by using their new machine bread-making companies would no longer have to use any preservatives. Another possible problem is that people may not be willing to buy bread that was made many weeks ago. ■

ELECTION IN GHANA

An election for Ghana's president was held on December 7. John Dramani Mahama won with 50.70% of the votes.

Ghana is a former colony of Britain. It became an independent country in 1960. Even though it is

NEWSCAST

SMOKING NESTS — Scientists working in Mexico have discovered that some birds are using cigarette filters when building their nests. They found that two types of birds, which live in cities, now seemed to be doing this. The filters, or cigarette butts, are the part of a cigarette that is thrown away after it has been smoked. One nest contained as many as 40 butts. Some birds are known to use special plants when making their nests. These contain chemicals that keep tiny bugs, or mites, which live on the birds, away. After doing some tests the scientists found that the nicotine in the cigarette butts have a similar affect. This, the scientists say, probably explains the birds' unusual behavior.

a small country Ghana has one of the fastest growing economies in Africa. The country mines a lot of gold and is one of the world's largest producers of cocoa. This comes from the seeds of the cacao tree and is used to make chocolate. Oil was discovered in Ghana several years ago. So the country is now also able to produce and sell its oil to other countries.

In the presidential election there were eight candidates. Mr. Mahama used to be Ghana's vice president. However, last July John Atta Mills, the country's president, died suddenly. This meant that, as vice president, Mr. Mahama had to take over until the next election was held. He has therefore been Ghana's president for the last five months.

Mr. Mahama's main rival in the election was Nana Akufo-Addo. He got 47.75% of the votes. Mr.

Akufo-Addo had also taken part in the last election in 2008. Then he lost to Mr. Atta Mills by less than one percent.

For presidential elections in Ghana there is a “run-off” system. This means that if no candidate gets more than 50% of the votes a second vote, or run-off is held. This is between the two candidates who got the highest number of votes in the first round. Yet this time there will be no run-off, as Mr. Mahama got just over 50% of the votes.



John Dramani Mahama, president of Ghana

In many countries, including Ghana, a local organization, often called the Electoral Commission, arranges elections. It organizes where and how people can vote and the counting of all the votes. It also declares who has won. For the election to be fair those working for the Electoral Commission have to be **neutral** and not favor any of the candidates.

About six months ago, the Electoral Commission created a new list, or register, of all those people who could vote in the election. To do this it used what’s known as a biometric system of registration. This works on people’s fingerprints. Therefore, only those who had registered before were able to vote. The Electoral Commission would therefore be able to easily work out who had voted. It also made it difficult for there to be any cheating by people voting more than once or pretending to be others.

On the day of the election there were problems with some of the biometric devices. Where this happened long lines formed as people waited to vote. For this reason the Electoral Commission decided to extend the voting for another day.

Many of Mr. Akufo-Addo’s supporters were unhappy about the result. He claimed that some votes had been miscounted. However, several organizations, such as the Commonwealth and ECOWAS (Economic Community of West African States) sent observers to Ghana to check on how the election was run. These observers declared that the election was fair and the result was correct.

After the result was announced, Mr. Mahama made a speech in Accra, the capital city. During his speech he asked all the losing candidates “to work with him to make a better Ghana”. ■

KAMCHATKA VOLCANO ERUPTS

At the end of November, one of the volcanoes on the Kamchatka Peninsula began to erupt. Within a few days two large fissures, or long deep cracks, had opened on the sides of the volcano. Hundreds of cubic feet of lava per second then began to flow from these cracks down the side of the volcano.

The Kamchatka Peninsula is in the far east of Russia. Few people live there. It is one of the most volcanic places in the world. There are more than 150 volcanoes in Kamchatka of which about 30 are still thought to be active.

Volcanoes are often described as being active, dormant or extinct. An active volcano is one that has erupted during the last several hundred years. If a volcano last erupted

several thousand years ago it is called dormant. Extinct volcanoes are those that are thought unlikely to erupt ever again.

The outer layer of the Earth is known as the “crust”. Tectonic plates are huge sections of the Earth’s crust that move about slowly on the magma, or hot liquid rock, that is deep below the surface.

Volcanoes are often found where tectonic plates are pulling apart or being pushed together. This movement can create a gap in the Earth’s crust that allows the magma to come to the surface.

The Kamchatka Peninsula is located on what scientists call the “Ring of Fire”. This is a horseshoe-shaped line running around the edge of the Pacific Ocean. Along it a number of tectonic plates meet and bump into each other.

When magma reaches the surface and comes out of a volcano it is called lava. During an eruption hot lava can flow down the sides of a volcano until it eventually cools and becomes hard rock. Ash and gasses can also be released from an erupting volcano.



Plosky Tolbachik eruption. The black areas are the volcano’s lava flows

The volcano that has recently started to erupt is part of what is known as the Tolbachik volcanic **complex**. This is made up of two different volcanoes. One is called Plosky Tolbachik and the other Ostry

Tolbachik. Plosky means flat and os-try sharp. The fissures have opened on the side of Plosky Tolbachik.

The Tolbachik volcanic complex is roughly 213 miles (343 kilometers) from Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky. This is Kamchatka's capital and the region's largest city

Records of volcanic eruptions in the Kamchatka Peninsula first began in 1740. Since then Plosky Tolbachik has erupted ten times. The last eruption was in 1975. "The Great Tolbachik Fissure Eruption". Scientists in Kamchatka believe that the amount of lava now coming from the fissures is much greater than it was 37 years ago. ■

HELIUM BALLOON BAN?

Each year, around Christmas, several science lectures are broadcast on television in Britain. This year one scientist's talk will be about helium. During the lecture he will suggest that helium should no longer be used for party balloons.

Helium is a gas that is lighter than air. This is why balloons that are filled with it will float high up into the sky if they are not held or tied to anything. The gas does not have a color, smell or taste and does not burn. Its name comes from Helios, the Ancient Greek God of the Sun. Helium is found deep below the ground in some natural gas fields. It was first discovered in the U.S., in 1903.

Helium is the second lightest and second most common element in the Universe. The most common and lightest is hydrogen.

Helium cannot be man-made, or produced [synthetically](#). Today, around 75% of the world's helium comes from the U.S. As it cannot be man-made the gas is what's known as a

non-renewable, or a limited resource. This means that in the future there is a danger that it will not be possible to find anymore and the Earth's supplies of the gas will run out.



Helium filled balloons

Although many people only know helium from its use in party balloons and advertising airships, or blimps, the gas has several other important uses. For example, helium is used to cool certain types of equipment that are used in medical scanners. People and young babies who have breathing difficulties are often given helium mixed with oxygen. This can help them to recover from their medical problems.

The British scientist claims that using helium in party balloons is a waste of a useful resource. When used in this way the gas eventually escapes into the atmosphere and out into space. The scientist says that it is unlikely that supplies of helium will run out soon, but they may do so in 30 to 50 years time. He suspects that in the future people will be surprised to learn that, many years ago, a valuable resource like helium was used for party balloons. ■

TUNNEL COLLAPSE IN JAPAN

Early in the morning on December 2, parts of the ceiling of a busy motorway tunnel in Japan collapsed. The heavy ceiling [panels](#) crushed several cars. One of the vehicles

caught fire and the tunnel was filled with smoke.

The Sasago tunnel is about 50 miles (80 kilometers) from Tokyo, the capital city. It is what's known as a twin-bore tunnel. This means that there are two separate tunnels, one going in each direction. The two tunnels, which go through a mountain, are about 2.7 miles (4.3 kilometers) long.

The tunnels were opened 35 years ago. Each is lined with heavy panels made from concrete that are eight inches (20 centimeters) thick. The collapse happened near the middle of the tunnel in which traffic travels towards Tokyo. Around 270 concrete panels dropped from the ceiling onto the roadway below.



Sasago tunnel, in Japan

Japan has many earthquakes. At first, it was thought that an earthquake had caused the ceiling panels to fall. However, no earthquake was recorded at that time but there had been one five days earlier.

Most of those who were traveling through the tunnel when the panels fell either managed to stop their cars or kept driving to the end of the tunnel. Those who had stopped ran and walked back to the entrance. Rescue workers rushed to the tunnel to put out the fire and to try to reach those who were trapped. Later that day officials confirmed that nine people had died.

In Japan different companies own the freeways and the tunnels

they pass through. The company that owns the Sasago tunnels claimed that they had recently been checked. However, some people think that these checks were not proper inspections. Others said that no repair work or maintenance had been done on the ceilings of the tunnels since they were opened in 1977.

Japan is a very mountainous country. There are at least 1,500 motorway tunnels. About 375 of these were built around the same time as the Sasago tunnel. Each is lined with similar concrete panels. Some people now worry that these other older tunnels may also be unsafe. Government officials said that all motorway tunnels would now be inspected to make sure that there is no danger of another ceiling collapse. ■

CHEMICAL WEAPONS WARNING

At the beginning of December, the leaders of the U.S. and Britain, warned the government of Syria about its possible use of chemical weapons. They hinted that if these were used against the Syrian people the two countries would send specially trained troops to Syria to capture the country's chemical weapon stores.

The violence in Syria first began nearly two years ago. It started after the government ordered the army to use weapons to stop street protests. The demonstrators want the country's president, Bashar al-Assad, to step down. Mr. al-Assad and his family have controlled Syria for the past 40 years. His opponents also claim that many government officials in Syria are corrupt, or dishonest, and that the police have too many powers.

NEWSCAST

DISAPPEARING CHATEAU — People in France were shocked when they noticed that a well-known 300 year old château, or large house, near their village had disappeared. A wealthy Russian businessman had recently bought it. The Russian man said that he too was surprised when he returned from a business trip to discover that the house was no longer there. He claims that he had arranged for a group of builders from Poland to repair the building. They seem to have misunderstood him. Instead of repairing the château they knocked it down. The businessman has now promised to pay to have a replica of the château built.

As the violence spread, some members of the Syrian army changed sides and joined the protesters. Yet many people in certain parts of the country still support Mr. al-Assad and his government. More recently fighting has been taking place in Syria's two largest cities, Damascus, the capital, and Aleppo. So far it's thought that the violence has been the cause of over 40,000 deaths. The anti-government fighters, or rebels, have set up an organization called the Free Syrian Army (FSA).

Some people think that the rebels are now winning the civil war in Syria. Recently, rebel forces managed to capture the airport at Damascus. Yet within a few days the Syrian army had forced them to withdraw. The Syrian air force has been bombing certain parts of the capital city, which are now controlled by rebel fighters. Some people think that Mr. al-Assad is likely to order the use of more destructive

weapons if the Syrian army is about to be defeated.

Turkey supports the rebels. Turkish leaders are worried that Syrian missiles could be fired into their country. Since the violence first started tens of thousands of Syrians have crossed the border into Turkey to get away from the fighting.

Turkey is a member of NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization). At the request of the country's leaders other NATO members have recently agreed to send Patriot missiles to Turkey. These can be used to shoot down any Syrian missiles aimed at Turkey before they land. It is expected that the Patriot missiles, as well as the troops trained to operate them, will be sent to Turkey from Germany, The Netherlands and the U.S.



Patriot missile

Although it has never admitted it, Syria is known to have stores of chemical weapons. These are believed to be different types of highly poisonous, or toxic, gases. These types of weapons are very dangerous and can quickly kill many thousands of people. They can be dropped from planes or fitted to both short- and long-range missiles. Chemical weapons are often described as Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD). Under international law, it is illegal to use them.

In the past, a Syrian official announced that if the country had

chemical weapons they would never be used against their own people. However, he also said that military commanders might decide to use them if another country were to attack Syria. ■

PHILIPPINES HIT BY POWERFUL TYPHOON

A very powerful tropical storm, or typhoon, struck the Philippine island of Mindanao on December 4 and 5. It caused widespread damage and the deaths of at least 800 people.

Typhoons are very powerful tropical storms that occur in the western Pacific Ocean. They bring strong winds and very heavy rainfall that can affect large areas. Similar storms in the Atlantic and eastern Pacific Ocean are known as hurricanes. In the Indian Ocean they are called cyclones.

When these storms form they are given a nickname. The latest typhoon to hit the Philippines was called Bopha.

The Philippines is made up of two main larger islands, Luzon and Mindanao, and many smaller ones. It is not unusual for as many as 20 typhoons to strike the country each year. However, most affect the northern island of Luzon and it is unusual for them to hit the southern island of Mindanao. Yet almost exactly one year ago Mindanao was struck by a similar powerful storm, called Typhoon Washi.

Because of the damage caused by Typhoon Washi many people paid more attention to the warnings about Typhoon Bopha. Before it struck local officials evacuated around 87,000 people. These people were thought to be in danger so they were moved to evacuation centers

in safer areas. Thousands of soldiers were also sent to the area to help with the evacuation.

Similar to hurricanes there are five categories of typhoon. These categories depend on the storm's wind speeds. Category 1 is the least powerful and 5 the most. Just before Bopha hit Mindanao it became a category 5 typhoon. Its wind speeds were as high as 130 miles (209 kilometers) per hour.

The large amounts of rain caused widespread flooding and huge landslides. Many villages were either buried in mud or completely washed away. Roads were blocked and bridges collapsed. Thousands of banana and coconut trees were blown down. Over 80,000 homes were destroyed. Electric power was cut off. After the typhoon had past, the army had to use helicopters to take food, clothing and water to those who had lost all of their [possessions](#).



On December 7, Benigno Aquino III, the president of the Philippines, visited the areas worst-affected. He said that everything was being done to help the 300,000 people whose homes had been badly damaged or destroyed. Mr. Aquino said that there would be an investigation to find out why one of the evacuation centers, where many people had been sheltering, had been washed away.

Once typhoons hit land they gradually weaken. However, those that strike the Philippines often pick up strength again after they cross the country and reach the South China Sea. Then, it is not unusual for them to eventually strike China or Vietnam. Typhoon Bopha did not do this. Instead it moved to the north. Later, on December 9, it hit the most northerly part of Luzon. However, by this time the storm had become much weaker. ■

MOON MAP SURPRISE

Scientists working at NASA (National Aeronautics and Space Administration) have recently released pictures of a new type of map, or view, of the Moon. The pictures surprised many scientists. This is because they show that, billions of years ago, the Moon must have been hit by many more asteroids and comets than was previously thought.

The pictures were created by twin space probes called Ebb and Flow. The two space probes are part of a NASA space mission called GRAIL. This stands for Gravity Recovery and Interior Laboratory. Each spacecraft is about the size of a washing machine. They were specially designed to map the Moon's gravitational field and its [structure](#). The GRAIL mission began at the end of last year when a large rocket was used to launch Ebb and Flow into space.

For the past 12 months, the twin space probes have been orbiting the Moon. They are on different sides of the Moon, but as they go around, they transmit, or send, radio signals to each other. These signals show the exact distance from one probe to the other.

The Moon does not have a smooth surface. It isn't a perfectly round shape. Therefore, the elevation, or height, of the surface changes, where there are mountains, bumps, and craters. The Moon's gravitational pull changes very slightly depending on the height of the surface area. So when one probe is above a higher area its distance from the other also changes by a very small amount. By recording these changes in distance, NASA scientists have been able to create an accurate map of the Moon and its gravitational field.

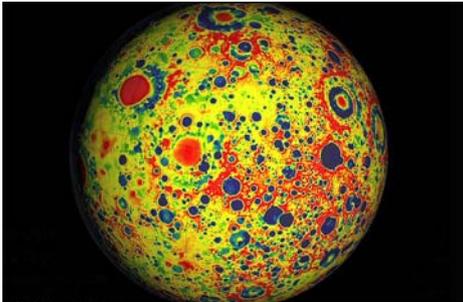


Image of the Moon created by the Ebb and Flow space probes showing impact craters (NASA)

The new Moon map shows many thousands of impact craters. The Moon is not far from the Earth. The map therefore suggests that the Earth was probably also hit by as many asteroids and comets billions of years ago. However, looking at a map of the Earth today these impact craters cannot be seen.

On the Earth, over very long periods, the outlines of these asteroid impacts have been eroded, or worn away, by wind, water and ice. New layers of rocks forming on top of these craters may also have hidden many of them.

The outer part, or crust, of the Earth is made up of huge tectonic plates. These plates are very slowly moving apart, sliding past, or pushing against each other. This movement can, over very long periods of time, create things such as

mountain ranges. Therefore, tectonic plate movement could have also destroyed the outlines of very old impact craters.

These forces, erosion and tectonic plates, do not exist on the Moon. This explains why all the impact craters can still be seen even though most are billions of years old.

Ebb and Flow have also been able to measure the thickness of the Moon's crust, or its outermost layer. This ranges between 21 to 27 miles (34 to 43 kilometers). This was also a surprise as it was thought to be as much as 12 miles (20 kilometers) thicker than this.

The GRAIL mission will end later this month when Ebb and Flow are "switched off". After this, both space probes will eventually crash-land on the Moon's surface. ■

AIR POLLUTION IN TEHRAN

Tehran, the capital city of Iran, has some of the worst air pollution in the world. On December 3, the pollution in the city became so bad that a government minister said that anyone who was able to leave the city for a few days should do so.

Because of the pollution officials in Tehran also said that all schools, universities, government buildings, businesses and factories in the city should close for the next two days. Hospitals and banks would stay open but people were warned not to make any journeys unless they were necessary. Everyone was told to stay inside as much as possible to avoid breathing in the polluted air.

Old cars, taxis, trucks, motorcycles and busses cause most of the air pollution in Tehran. The gasoline made in the country is of lower grade, or not of very good quality.

This means that road transport in Iran produces more air pollution than vehicles in other countries, which use better grades of gasoline. To travel around the city most people have to use road transport. This means that bad traffic jams often occur.

Tehran Province, in which the city is located, is Iran's most urban, or built-up area. Around 12 million people live in the province. Of these more than 8.5 million live in the city of Tehran.

The province is almost completely surrounded by mountains and hills. This, say officials, is one reason the city's pollution is so bad. Pollution and smoke from factories and cars, often called smog, becomes "trapped" over Tehran, especially in the late autumn and early winter months. The mountains block winds and rain that would otherwise blow or wash the smog away.

When the pollution is very bad in Tehran, it is sometimes not possible to see anything that is more than a few hundred feet away. Most people wear facemasks when going out of their homes.



Air pollution (smog) in Tehran

The city's badly polluted air causes many illnesses. These include asthma, allergies, and other **respiratory** infections and breathing problems. Doctors say the number of people suffering from these illnesses has been increasing in recent years. Officials working at the ministry of health said that

recently there has been a big increase in the number of people being hospitalized. Most had breathing difficulties. These officials estimate that as many as 5,000 people die in Tehran each year because of the air pollution. ■

BIRD HUNTING CATFISH

A scientist from a university in southern France has recently produced a study about catfish, which live in the Tarn River, near the city of Albi. His study describes some unusual behavior, which has not been seen before. Some of the catfish are now catching and eating birds that gather by the side of the river.



Catfish near gravel island

There are many different types of catfish in the world. They get their name from the cat-like whiskers on the upper part of their jaws. These are called barbells. Catfish are not native to France. They were introduced to the Tarn River about 30 years ago. The largest catfish in the river are about five feet (1.5 meters) long.

The Tarn River is quite shallow and has small islands of gravel, or small stones. Groups of pigeons often land on these islands. Here they gather by the water's edge to bathe and clean themselves.

The catfish in the river normally eat smaller fish and crayfish, small lobster-like creatures. However,

local fishermen told the scientist that some of the catfish were attacking the pigeons, which had landed on a gravel island. The scientist decided to investigate. From a nearby bridge he was able to film a number of these attacks.



Catfish attempting to catch a pigeon

Some of the catfish swim towards the water's edge when the pigeons arrive. The scientist thinks that by using their barbells the catfish are able to sense the movement of the birds. Every so often one of the fish would suddenly swim up onto the gravel and try to grab a pigeon in its mouth. It would then quickly wriggle back into the water. So, for a short time, the fish was out of the water and stranded on the gravel. Not every attack was successful. If the catfish did manage to catch a pigeon it would pull it back under the water and eat it.

The scientist describes the catfish that hunt pigeons in this way as "freshwater killer whales". This is because of how they catch the birds is similar to what killer whales do in Argentina. They too swim out of the water to grab sea lions that are resting on beaches.

The scientist is not sure why the catfish in the Tarn River have started to prey on pigeons in this way. It may be because there is no longer enough food in the river for them to eat. If this is correct then the bird hunting would be an example of what scientists call

"adaptive behavior". This is when animals seem to learn how to do something new if there is a change in what they normally rely on.

The scientist says that it appears to be the smaller catfish in the river that hunt pigeons and not the larger ones. This, he explains, may be because the smaller catfish find less food in the river. Another possible reason, the scientist says, is that only the smaller ones are able to wriggle back into the river after making an attack. The larger catfish may be too big to be able to do this. ■

TEXTING AT 20

The first ever text message was sent on December 3, 1992. Therefore, December 3, this year marked the 20th anniversary of what has now become one of the most popular ways that many people communicate with each other.

An engineer in Britain sent the first text message. He used his computer to send a typed message to the cell phone of someone who worked for the same company. The message said "Merry Christmas".

Text messages are also known as SMS (short message service) messages. Modern text messaging is when a message is sent from one cell phone to another. People working for the Nokia Company were the first to do this in Finland, in 1993. The first cell network companies to offer their customers an SMS service were also in Finland. When this type of phone messaging service was first invented most cell phone companies did not think that people would be interested in making use of them.

It was not until several years later that text messages began to be

popular. This was after many cell phone networks decided to offer a certain number of text messages in their payment plans for cell phones. Nowadays instead of making a voice call “texts” are often used by people to contact their friends and relatives. In many countries the number of messages sent is now greater than the total number of cell telephone calls made.

Text messaging has become especially popular with younger people. One reason is that a text is less expensive than a cell phone call. Some people think that text messaging is now having an effect on written languages. In English many words are [abbreviated](#) to make the messages shorter and easier to type. In certain other languages people do not use accents when sending text messages.



Governments, companies and other organizations are now using text messaging more and more. In some countries such as Indonesia and China warnings about earthquakes and floods have been sent by text message. Some companies are using texts as a form of advertising. Texting is also a popular way of entering competitions. In several countries texting has now even become a way for people to quickly organize street protests and demonstrations.

Even though the number of texts sent has been greatly increasing over the last 20 years some experts

think that text messaging will now start to decline. This, they explain, is because of website communications, such as instant messaging and social network sites. More and more people are now using smart phones, which connect to the internet. These people, the experts predict, are therefore more likely to use web-based messages to contact each other in future. ▣

KING OF THAILAND'S BIRTHDAY

On December 5, King Bhumibol Adulyadej of Thailand celebrated his 85th birthday. In Thailand the monarch's birthday is a national holiday. It is also the country's Father's Day. Around 200,000 people crowded into the Royal Plaza close to the Dusit Palace, to hear the king give a short speech. The plaza is in the center of Bangkok, the country's capital city. Nowadays the king rarely speaks in public.

Most people in the crowd wore yellow, as this is the color that is [associated](#) with the monarchy. At this time of year many homes, shops and buildings are decorated with flags, pictures of the king, yellow ribbons and other decorations.

King Bhumibol is the world's longest reigning monarch. He became king in 1946, so he has ruled Thailand for 66 years. However, recently he has not been well. For the last few years he has often stayed in a hospital. There he is under the [supervision](#) of a special medical team.

In Thailand, the King is admired by nearly everyone and is very popular. He is held in great [respect](#). In Thailand what's known as lese-majesty is against the law. (Lese-majesty comes from the Latin words that mean “injured majesty”.)

People who insult or make fun of the king can be arrested. Anyone found guilty of these crimes can be sent to prison for up to 15 years.



King of Thailand, Bhumibol Adulyadej

Thailand is a constitutional monarchy. This means that the king is the head of the country, but he does not govern it. The country's elected prime minister and his or her government make all the important decisions.

As a constitutional monarch, King Bhumibol has few powers. The country's constitution says what he can and cannot do. The king's job is to give advice to the elected government and to help unite the country. Britain, Belgium, Spain and Japan are examples of other countries that have constitutional monarchies.

King Bhumibol has seen many changes in Thailand. During his long reign there have been a number of military coups (pronounced “coos”). The last one took place six years ago. A military coup is when the army takes over a country. The king has also worked with over 20 different prime ministers.

Recently, there have been many political demonstrations in Thailand. There are two main groups that oppose each other. These groups are often called the “yellow shirts” and the “red shirts”.

The “red shirts” are supporters of the former prime minister, Thaksin Shinawatra. He now lives outside the country after being deposed by the military coup in 2006. His

daughter, Yingluck Shinawatra, is Thailand's current prime minister. She became prime minister after her party won the last election, which took place in 2011.

The king made his short speech from a [balcony](#) of the Dusit Palace while sitting on a golden throne. During the speech the king called for [unity](#). He said that Thailand would only be successful if everyone in the country agreed to work together. ■

NEFERTITI ANNIVERSARY

On December 6, 100 years ago in 1912, a team of archaeologists from Germany, who were working in Egypt, discovered the Nefertiti Bust. The 3,350 year old painted bust is one of the most famous works of art ever to be found in Egypt.

To celebrate the one hundredth anniversary of the discovery a special exhibition has recently opened in the Neues Museum, in Berlin, the capital of Germany. As well as the bust of the Egyptian queen Nefertiti around 600 items, which were found at the same time, are included in the exhibition. Many of these items, such as vases, food containers and jewelry, have not been displayed since 1913.

The archaeologists dug up the Nefertiti Bust at a place called Amarna. This site is about 185 miles (300 kilometers) south of Cairo, Egypt's capital city. The painted bust, which is missing one eye, was made from plaster and limestone. It is 19 inches (47 centimeters) tall.

Queen Nefertiti was married to the Egyptian pharaoh Akhenaten, who ruled ancient Egypt between 1353 and 1336 BCE. During his reign Akhenaten stopped Egyptians from worshipping many different gods

NEWSCAST

12.12.12 — On December 12, many of us experienced what may be the very last “repeating date” of our lives. This is because 12/12/12 is the last repeating date of the 21st century. The next repeating date will not occur until the 22nd century on January 1, 2101, or 01/01/01. Many people planned to do special things on 12/12/12, as they believed that it would be lucky to do so. In some countries far more people got married on this day than was usual. In certain places mothers expecting to give birth around this time were hoping that their babies would arrive on this day. Those that did have a date of birth that is easily remembered.

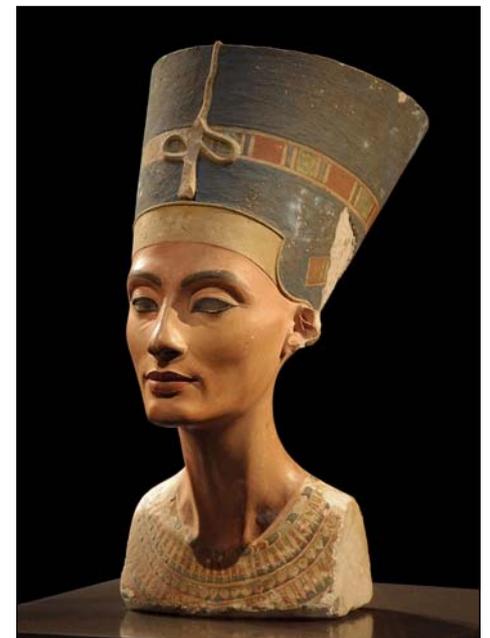
and said that they must only worship one. This is called monotheism. Akhenaten's god was Aten, or the Sun. Although many experts disagree, some think that today's monotheist religions such as Judaism and Christianity have links with the monotheism started by Akhenaten.

Akhenaten built Amarna as a new capital city. Yet soon after his death everyone abandoned the new capital. It is not known why. Yet within a few years Egyptians began to worship the same gods as they had before Akhenaten's time. Statues and carvings of the monotheist pharaoh were deliberately destroyed. This suggests that later ancient Egyptian leaders wanted to delete him from history.

Today when archaeologists are working in other countries they are not allowed to take anything away with them. All they can do is take pictures and samples. Any [artifacts](#) they discover belong to the country in which they were found.

However, many years ago it was different. For example, when the team of German archaeologists were working at Amarna in 1912 they had an agreement with Egyptian officials. Half of what they found belonged to Egypt and they kept the other half.

For many years officials in Egypt have asked Germany to return the bust of Nefertiti. They claim that 100 years ago the German archaeologists tricked local officials. The Egyptian officials say that when all the items dug up by the archaeologists were divided the bust was wrapped up so it could not be seen. It was also put in a place where less valuable items were stored. This meant that the local officials at the time did not pay any attention to the bust.



Nefertiti Bust

Staff working at the German museum insist that the Nefertiti Bust does not belong to Egypt. They claim that documents, which were signed soon after the discovery, prove this. These documents, they say, will be on display as part of the new exhibition.

In the 1920s, the Nefertiti Bust and other items discovered in other parts of Egypt were kept at the Neues Museum. The museum was closed at the beginning of the Second World War (1939 – 1945).

During the war, planes from the U.S. and Britain frequently bombed Berlin. The museum building was badly damaged. The museum's collection, including the Nefertiti Bust, was moved for safekeeping to other parts of Germany. After the war the famous bust was displayed in several different museums. It was eventually returned to the Neues Museum when it was reopened in 2009. ■

CORRUPTION INDEX 2012

Transparency International (TI) is an organization based in Berlin, the capital of Germany. Each year it produces a report about corruption. Its latest report, called the Corruption [Perceptions](#) Index (CPI), was published on December 5.

In the report there is a list of 176 countries. TI gives each a score between zero and 100. Those countries with lower numbers are said to be the most corrupt and the ones with higher numbers the least corrupt.

Corruption, which is sometimes called “graft”, can be described as “the abuse of entrusted power for private gain”. In other words, it describes when people who are trusted with powerful official positions behave dishonestly. These “corrupt” people may demand unofficial payments or favors for doing certain things. These payments are also called bribes.

There can be many types of corruption and it can involve small or very large amounts of money. For example, a police officer might stop

a driver for breaking the speed limit. Yet instead of giving the driver a ticket, a corrupt police officer might say that he or she will accept some money. The driver is therefore able to avoid a bigger speeding fine by paying money to the officer.

Another example is corrupt government ministers. These people might accept money from a company in return for awarding it a business contract. So instead of considering which company would be best for the job the ministers will award the contract to the company that is prepared to pay the largest amount of money, or a bribe. The ministers then keep this money for their own personal use.



Corruption can give an unfair advantage to companies and people who are willing to pay bribes. Officials who are prepared to take or demand bribes are dishonest. In most

TI's top twelve, or least corrupt countries

- 1.= Denmark
- 1.= Finland
- 1.= New Zealand
4. Sweden
5. Singapore
6. Switzerland
7. = Australia
7. = Norway
9. = Canada
9. = Netherlands
11. Iceland
12. Luxembourg

TI's bottom twelve, or most corrupt countries

165. = Burundi
165. = Chad
165. = Haiti
165. = Venezuela
169. Iraq
170. = Turkmenistan
170. = Uzbekistan
172. Myanmar
173. Sudan
174. = Afghanistan
174. = North Korea
174. = Somalia

countries it is illegal. Anyone found guilty of corruption can lose his or her job and may be sent to prison.

However, in some countries corruption is still a big problem. These include larger countries such as Russia, India, and China as well as many poorer developing countries. Large companies from wealthy countries can make the problem worse if they are willing to pay bribes to officials in developing countries.

Hu Jintao, the current president of China, recently made an important speech. During it he said that corruption was one of the biggest problems in China. In China, if government officials are found guilty of taking bribes they can be executed.

To draw up its list of the most and least corrupt countries TI mainly relies on things such as [surveys](#) of business leaders. Some say that making a list in this way can be misleading. This is because it is mainly based on what people think, or their perceptions.

This year's report says that the least corrupt countries are Denmark, Finland, and New Zealand. Each scored 90. Britain was 17th on the list, equal with Japan, and the U.S. came

19th. China was 80th, India 94th and Russia 133rd. The last three, or most corrupt, with eight points each, were Afghanistan, Somalia and North Korea. Greece, at 94th, was the lowest ranked country in Europe. The least corrupt African country was Botswana, which was 30th.

TI claims that ranking countries in this way embarrasses those that are lower down the list. The organization therefore hopes that its list will make the leaders of these countries more determined to reduce corruption. ■

“LOST LEONARDO” PAINTING RETURNS TO ITALY

A painting called the *Tavola Doria* has recently been put on display in Italy. This is the first time it has been seen in the country since 1940,

when it was stolen from a family who lived in the city of Naples. Some people believe that the *Tavola Doria* is likely to be a copy of a part of a much bigger painting, which is known as “The Lost Leonardo”.



Tavola Doria

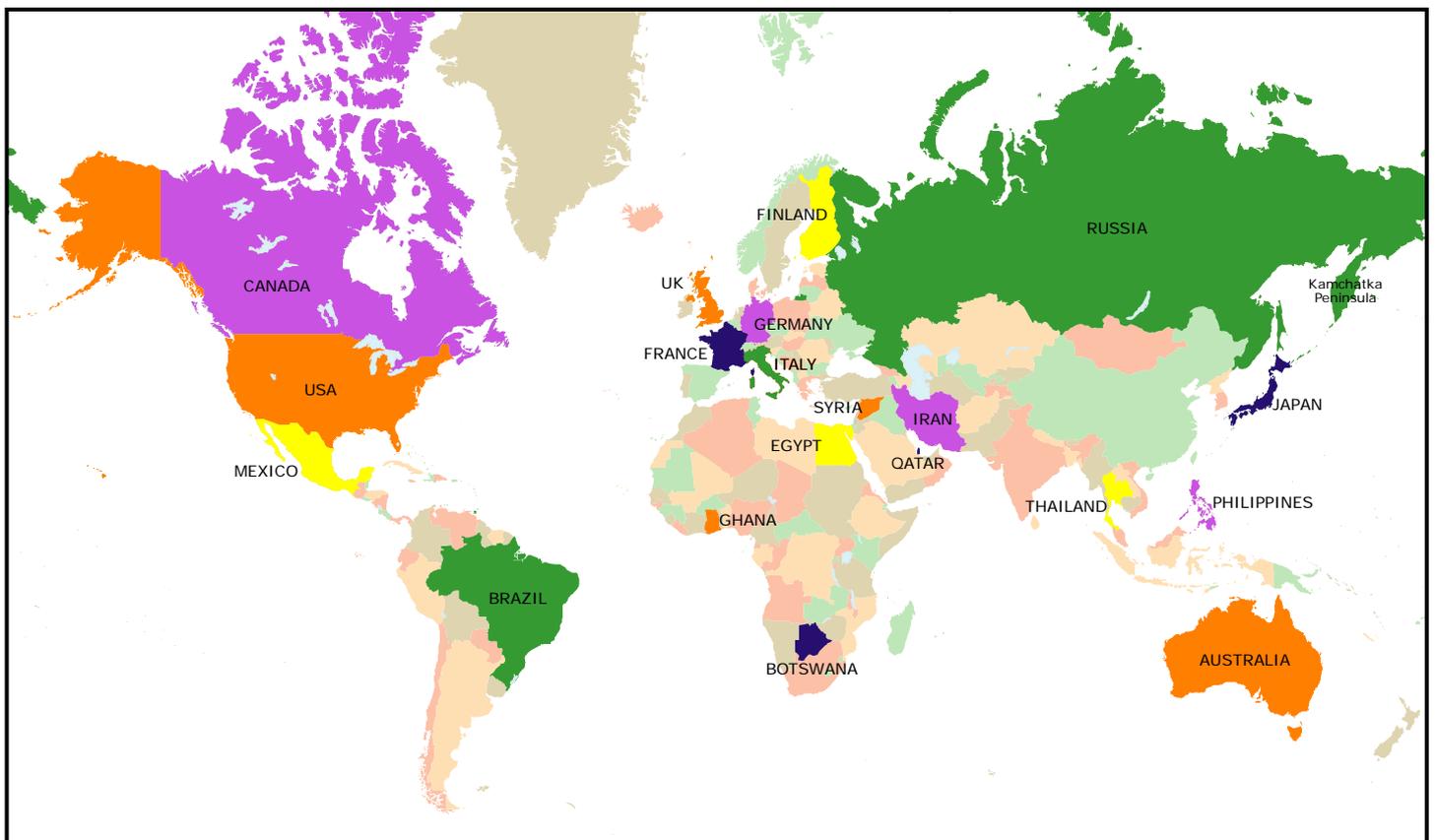
“The Lost Leonardo” is a mysterious large mural, or wall painting, called *The Battle of Anghiari*. Leonardo da Vinci (1452 – 1519) painted the mural on a wall of the town hall in the city of Florence, in modern day Italy. Most art experts believe that this painting no longer exists.

Yet a few think that it could be hidden behind a “false” wall, which was built in front of the painting at a later date.

Da Vinci was a mathematician, engineer, inventor and artist. He is however best known as a painter. One of his most famous works is *The Last Supper*. This is a large mural painted on a wall inside a building, in Milan.

In 1505, da Vinci started work on *The Battle of Anghiari*. It was to be three times the size of *The Last Supper*. This battle was fought in 1440 between a number of cities led by Florence against the City of Milan. Florence won. Over 60 years later the leaders of Florence wanted to commemorate the battle with a huge painting on a wall in the town hall. Da Vinci was asked to do it.

Murals were done with a type of paint that “fixed” or stuck to the



This map shows countries to which news stories refer in this issue. Visit www.newsademic.com for more detailed world maps.

plaster on the wall. However, da Vinci wanted to use a new type of oil paint. He believed that he could produce better colors and finer details with it.

After painting part of the wall da Vinci found his oil paint didn't stick very well. It took a long time to dry and started to run. Fires were lit and put in front of the wall to try to make the paint dry more quickly. In the end only the middle part of the painting was saved. Da Vinci gave up and went to work on other projects.

His unfinished painting stayed on the wall. Then between 1555 and 1572 the room was enlarged. Another painter, called Giorgio Vasari, was asked to redecorate it. Da Vinci's work disappeared.



Drawing, by Rubens, of the central part of "The Battle of Anghiari" by Leonardo da Vinci

Some people believe that Vasari would not have painted over da Vinci's unfinished mural. They suspect that a new, or false, wall was made in front of it and Vasari painted his mural on this wall. Last March an Italian art historian claimed that he had found evidence that da Vinci's unfinished painting is hidden behind Vasari's mural.

Da Vinci made a number of sketches, or plans, for *The Battle of Anghiari*. Some of these drawings still exist. Other artists also made copies. One of the best known is a drawing by Peter Paul Rubens

(1577 – 1640). It shows three people fighting on horseback. These figures are believed to have been the central part of da Vinci's painting.

The *Tavola Doria* gets its name from an art collector who owned it 350 years ago. It is unfinished but it too shows the three horsemen from the central part of da Vinci's painting. Some think that da Vinci painted it. Yet experts say that it is more likely to be a copy that was done around the time that da Vinci was working on *The Battle of Anghiari*.

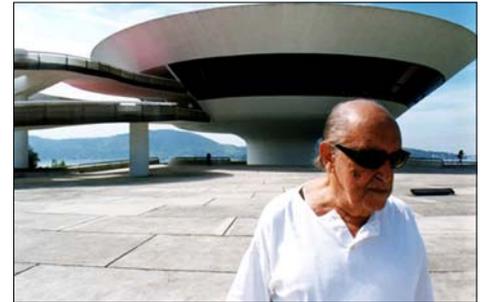
The police in Italy believe that after the *Tavola Doria* was stolen it was taken to Switzerland and then Germany. Later, it was bought by an art collector in the U.S. and then sold to an art museum in Japan. Italian officials have been speaking with the Japanese art museum for many years about the return of the painting. Recently, the Japanese museum has agreed for the painting to be displayed in an art museum in Florence. ■

WORLD FAMOUS ARCHITECT DIES

On December 7, hundreds of people in Brasilia, the capital of Brazil, walked past Oscar Niemeyer's coffin. They did this as a sign of respect. Niemeyer was a famous architect, or person who designs buildings. He had died two days earlier at the age of 104. His coffin had been placed inside the presidential palace, one of the many buildings he designed.

Niemeyer was born in 1907. As a young man he studied art and architecture. He lived in Rio de Janeiro, one of Brazil's largest cities. In 1936, Niemeyer met Le Corbusier, a well-known architect from Switzerland. Le Corbusier had traveled to Brazil to give some talks as well as

offer advice on the design and construction of a large new government building. Le Corbusier was one of the first architects to use what are now known as "modern designs" for large buildings.



Oscar Niemeyer in front an art museum he designed, near Rio de Janeiro, in Brazil

While Le Corbusier was in Brazil Niemeyer worked as his assistant. When the Swiss architect left Brazil Niemeyer took charge of the construction work for the government building. After the work was completed a government official introduced Niemeyer to Juscelino Kubitschek. At the time Kubitschek was the mayor of the Brazilian city of Belo Horizonte. Later, he became the president of Brazil.

Kubitschek asked Niemeyer to design a number of buildings in Belo Horizonte including a church. After doing this he won a competition to design several other buildings in São Paulo, another large city in Brazil. Around this time Le Corbusier was working on the new United Nations (U.N.) headquarters building in New York City, in the U.S. He asked Niemeyer to come to New York to help him.

After working on the U.N. building Niemeyer was asked to design hundreds of different buildings in Brazil. These included churches, museums, schools, hospitals and hotels.

In 1956, Kubitschek was elected as the Brazilian president. One of his plans was to build a

completely new capital city far away from the coast where most of the larger Brazilian towns and cities are. The new city was to be nearer to the center of the country where few people lived.

The president asked Niemeyer to design most of the city's larger buildings. These included many government buildings, a military headquarters, a new cathedral and the presidential palace. Called Brasilia the city became a symbol of modern architecture.

Niemeyer used many curves in his designs. These were made possible by the use or reinforced, or extra strong, concrete. Brasilia officially became the capital of Brazil in 1960. Because of the size and modern designs of many of the city's buildings Niemeyer became one of the world's most famous architects.



Oscar Niemeyer's cathedral, in Brasilia

Niemeyer was a member of the Communist Party. In 1964, military commanders in Brazil seized power and took control of the country. As a member of the Communist Party Niemeyer believed that he was in danger. He left Brazil and went to live in Paris, the capital of France. During his time in France he worked on many projects including new university buildings in Israel and Algeria.

Niemeyer eventually returned to Brazil in 1984. He continued to work on new designs until he was over 100 years old. Most of his famous buildings are in Brazil but others are in France, Spain and Italy.

Niemeyer's coffin was taken from the presidential palace in Brasilia and flown to Rio de Janeiro. There it was placed inside the City Hall building. Thousands more people walked past his coffin, which was covered in a Brazilian flag. Many people from all around the world sent messages and flowers. Later, that day Niemeyer's coffin was carried to a local church. A funeral service was held after which he was buried in the church's cemetery. ■

LYON'S LIGHT FESTIVAL

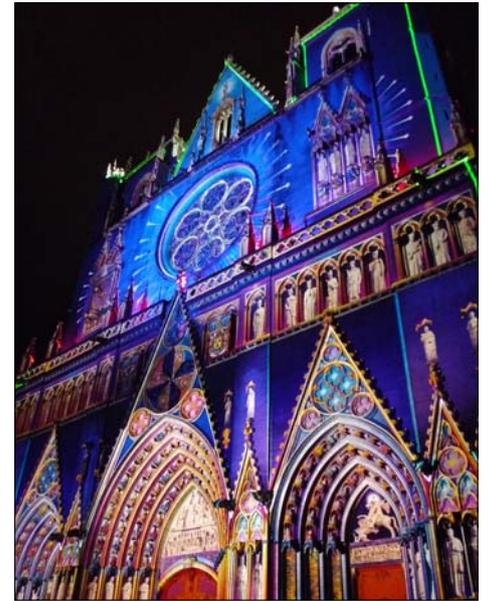
Each year, around the beginning of December, a special four-day light festival takes place in the city of Lyon, in France. Called the Fête des Lumières, this year's light festival was between December 6 and 9.

The Fête des Lumières is organized around the time of a Roman Catholic holy day known as the Feast of the Immaculate Conception. This is on December 8. The holy day celebrates the Virgin Mary, who, in Christian tradition, was the mother of Jesus Christ.

The light festival in Lyon is believed to date back to 1643. At this time there was plague in the country. The plague was a disease that could spread extremely quickly. Those that caught it often died.

Hundreds of years ago there were several times when plague spread across European countries. Today the disease is thought to have been a version of what's known as bubonic

plague. This still exists, but modern day medicines can now be used to cure it.



Illuminated church in Lyon

It is thought that outbreaks of plague in the past were caused by rats that carried the disease. Fleas then spread it. Humans could catch the disease if fleas, which had previously bitten an infected rat, bit them. At the time people did not know what caused the plague or how it spread. Many believed that it was a punishment from God.

In 1643, even though there was plague in the country, it did not spread to the city of Lyon. The people believed that it was the Virgin Mary who had saved their city. The festival was therefore their way of thanking her.

Many years later, the Virgin Mary was believed to have helped the city again. Between 1870 and 1871 there was a war between France and Prussia (a former German kingdom in northern Europe). During the war the Prussian army captured Paris, the capital city. The army then advanced towards Lyon. Yet before it arrived the Prussian military commanders surprisingly decided to turn

back. Many people in Lyon believed that the Virgin Mary had protected their city from the Prussian army.

Traditionally, after dark, homeowners in Lyon light candles, which they put on their windowsills, during the festival. The candles are placed behind pieces of colored glass.

However, nowadays the festival has become a large midwinter *son et lumière* (sound and light show). Many churches, buildings, trees and public spaces around the city are illuminated or have images projected onto them. This year there were about 70 different [installations](#). Unusual ones included a building that looked as if it was falling down, a moving elephant and skeleton-like figures that seemed to walk.

This year, city officials estimated that at least three million people visited Lyon during the Fête des Lumières. ■

ROYAL ANNOUNCEMENT

On December 3, royal officials in Britain announced that the Duchess of Cambridge was pregnant with her first child. The Duchess of Cambridge is the wife of Prince William, the Duke of Cambridge. Many people still call the Duchess, Catherine (or Kate) Middleton. Middleton is her maiden name, or the name by which she was known before she married.

The Duke and Duchess of Cambridge (often called William and Kate) were married in 2011. William is the second in line to the throne of Britain. His father, Prince Charles, who is first in line to the throne, is the eldest son of Queen Elizabeth the Second, Britain's reigning monarch.

The history of Britain's royal family goes back about one thousand years. Since 1688, the country has been a constitutional monarchy. This means that the king or queen is the country's head of state or figurehead, and an elected prime minister and parliament run the country. The reigning monarch therefore does not make the important decisions that affect the country. However, the prime minister has frequent meetings with the monarch. These are to let him or her know what the government plans to do.



Duke and Duchess of Cambridge

Queen Elizabeth the Second's reign began in 1952 after her father, George the Sixth, died. At the time she was only 25 years old. As well as Britain, Queen Elizabeth is the head of state of 15 other countries. Together these are known as the Commonwealth realms. They include Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Jamaica and Papua New Guinea.

The announcement was unusual, as Kate had only become pregnant about 12 weeks ago. Normally an announcement of this type would not be made so soon. This is because at this early stage doctors cannot be sure that the pregnancy will be successful.

The Duchess was suffering from an extreme form of morning sickness and had to be taken to hospital.

Morning sickness can affect some women who are pregnant. Often those who suffer from it feel very ill in the morning, which is how it gets its name.

Royal officials thought that as the Duchess was in the hospital, news about her pregnancy could not be kept secret. They therefore decided to make the early announcement. The Duchess left the hospital several days after the announcement was made.

The reason there was so much worldwide interest in the royal announcement is that when William and Kate's first baby is born the child will be third in line to Britain's throne.

However, this is only because of a recent proposed change in the law. Before, the eldest son of the monarch would become king, even if he had an elder sister. Now the heir is the eldest child whether a boy or

NEWSCAST

MONKEY-PUZZLE — Shoppers in the city of Toronto, in Canada, were surprised to see a small monkey in a large store's parking lot. It was wearing a thick woollen coat and a diaper. The seven month old rhesus macaque monkey was eventually caught. It was then given to an organization that looks after stray animals. This type of monkey is not endangered. Yet, in this part of Canada, it is against the law to keep them. Nobody knew where the monkey came from. Later, a man admitted that he was the animal's owner. He said that the monkey was in a wooden crate in his car. It must have escaped while he was in the store. The man was ordered to pay a fine for keeping an illegal pet.

girl. Previously a female could only be the heir if she had no brothers. This is why Queen Elizabeth the Second became queen. She had one younger sister but no brothers. This change in the law was only possible after all the other Commonwealth realms had agreed to it. ■

ROYAL HOAX CAUSES TRAGEDY

The company that owns a radio station in Australia, called 2Day FM, held a special meeting on December 9. The owners met to discuss what should be done after a hoax, or prank, telephone call was made by two of 2Day FM's presenters five days earlier. The hoax call is believed to have led to the death of a nurse who worked at a hospital in London, the capital of Britain.



2Day FM logo

2Day FM is a popular commercial radio station. It broadcasts in Sydney, the largest city in Australia. As a commercial radio station it makes the money it needs by selling advertising. Well-known Australian companies pay to have their adverts broadcast during the station's different radio shows throughout the day. 2Day FM has a reputation for playing jokes on people.

On December 3, the news that the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge (Prince William and Kate) were expecting their first child was reported around the world. People were

interested in the news because the child would be third in line to the throne of Britain. The news about the royal baby was announced because Kate had to be taken to the hospital. She was suffering from bad morning sickness. This is an illness that often affects pregnant women.

As a joke the two radio presenters decided to telephone the hospital in London and pretend to be Queen Elizabeth the Second (Prince William's grandmother) and Prince Charles (Prince William's father). They planned to ask if they could speak with Kate. Because of the time difference between Britain and Australia it was around half past four in the morning in London when they telephoned.

There was no receptionist in the hospital at this time so a nurse answered the call. To the surprise of the presenters the nurse seemed to believe that they were the Queen and Prince Charles. She then put the call through to another nurse who was looking after Kate. She too believed that the telephone call was real. This nurse then gave the presenters some information about Kate's medical problems and how she was feeling.

The radio station recorded the telephone conversation. After its bosses listened to the hoax call they decided to broadcast it on the radio. When people heard the conversation most were surprised that the two nurses thought that they were speaking with the Queen and Prince Charles. This was not just because the radio presenters' voices sounded different but because of some of the things they said.

The hoax telephone conversation was reported in newspapers and broadcast on radio and television news stations around the world.

2Day FM then started repeating parts of the call throughout the day. A recording was posted to the radio station's website.

What happened was embarrassing for the hospital. However, Prince Charles said that he was not angry and understood that it was meant to be a joke.

Unfortunately, within a few days the joke became a tragedy. On December 7, it was reported that the nurse who had answered the call had been found dead. The nurse seems to have taken her own life, or committed suicide.

When the news about the death of the nurse was heard in Australia the owners of 2Day FM apologized for what had happened. All broadcasts of the hoax call were stopped. The two presenters were told not to come to work until the owners of the radio station had decided what to do. Both are reported to be very upset.

The owners also declared that all advertising on the station would be stopped for a time. Many think that this was because they are worried that larger companies will now decide to stop advertising on 2Day FM. ■

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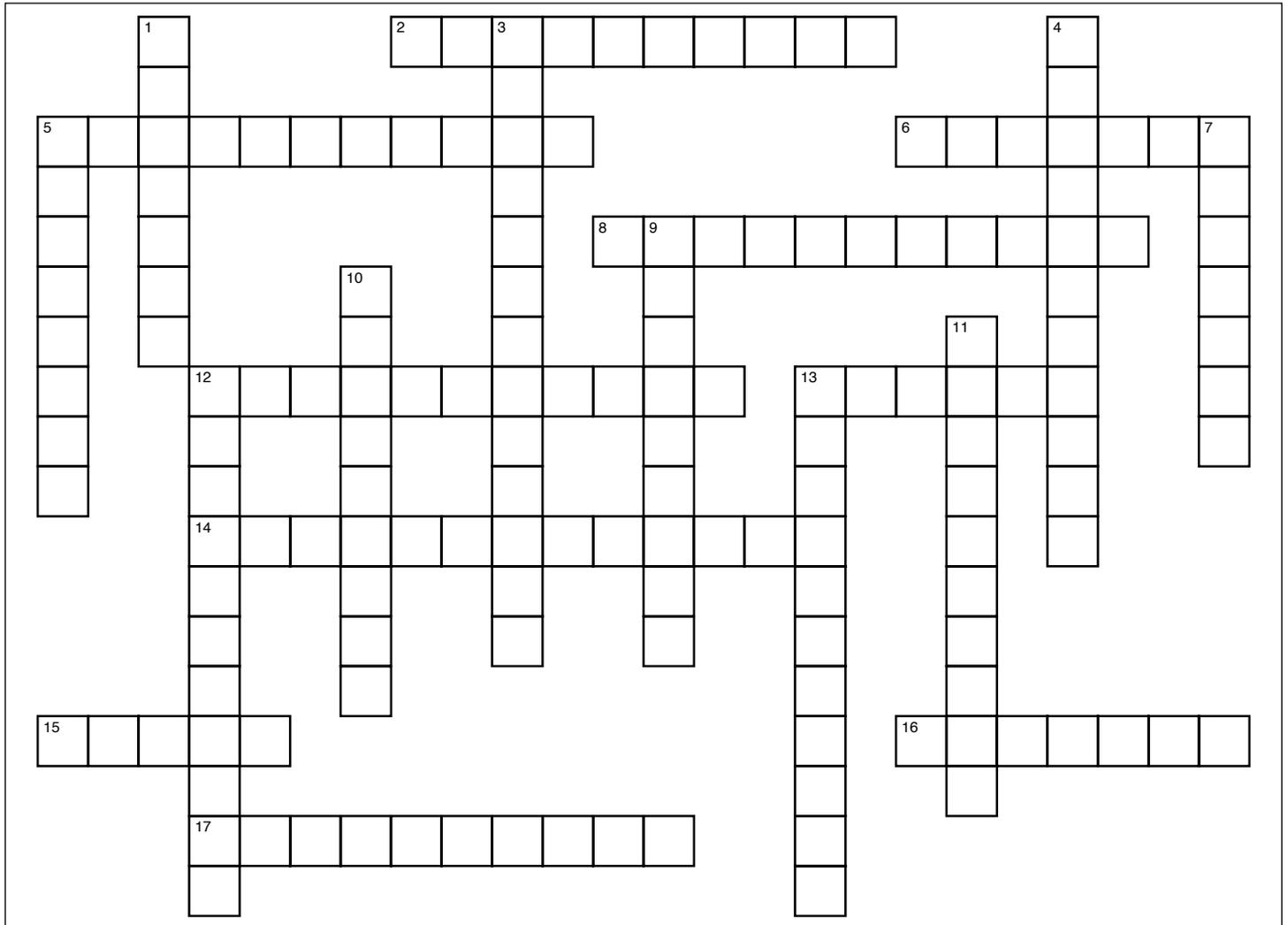
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ISSUE 186

GLOSSARY PUZZLE

INSTRUCTIONS: ① Complete the crossword. The answers are highlighted in orange in the news stories. There are 25 words highlighted and you need 20 of them to complete the crossword. ② Once you have solved the crossword go to the word search on the next page ➡



Across

- 2 *Verb* Connected with someone or something
- 5 *Noun (Plural)* The ways in which something is understood or thought of
- 6 *Noun* Admiration felt or shown for a person who you believe has good qualities or ideas
- 8 *Adjective* Related to breathing
- 12 *Verb* Made shorter, especially written words
- 13 *Noun (Plural)* Flat pieces of wood, metal or other material that fit into, or on, something larger
- 14 *Noun (Plural)* Large devices, systems, or pieces of equipment
- 15 *Noun* Being joined together or in complete agreement
- 16 *Noun* A place, especially a group of buildings, made up of a number of interconnecting parts
- 17 *Adjective* To do with business or trade

Down

- 1 *Noun (Plural)* Investigations to find out what people think based on a series of questions
- 3 *Adverb* Describes making things from artificial substances, often copying something natural
- 4 *Noun* The act of looking after or overseeing a group of people, person or organization
- 5 *Noun* Formal international agreement
- 7 *Noun* A sad event that results in great loss and misfortune
- 9 *Noun* An addition to the length of something
- 10 *Noun* The way in which parts of an area, object, or system are organized or arranged
- 11 *Noun* The opinion that people have about something or someone
- 12 *Noun* Medicines taken to kill bacteria that cause disease
- 13 *Noun (Plural)* Things you own or are carrying

ISSUE 186

GLOSSARY PUZZLE *CONTINUED*

INSTRUCTIONS: ③ Find 19 of the 20 crossword answers in the word search. Words can go vertically, horizontally, diagonally and back to front. ④ After finding the 19 words write down the 20th (or missing) word under the puzzle.

S N O I S S E S S O P M G L U F Q S
 Y N S Y V F K D E T A I C O S S A N
 N V O Q Z V L C E B Q P D U T K C O
 T J K I G K D A S T E V V T U F A I
 H O B L T G D Y I X A D H T I K O T
 E V F W J A E K O C O I H F U S N P
 T K F O B V L X X T R C V B L O X E
 I O R X R V I L C E U E E E I X F C
 C F U U E J J E A N R T M S R P J R
 A L S U R L P H O T R U I M A B N E
 L S L R D S P I D A S V T T O Z B P
 L A E F E R T M G G R N H C V C R A
 Y O N R M A K E O E M C I N U F Z W
 L S A I T T D R P C B T T Y L R L Z
 Z L P U Y Y W U F K C T O T K Q T A
 P S P B N C S C I T O I B I T N A S
 M E M F J C A Y Y E X T E N S I O N
 R E S P I R A T O R Y I S U K P J O

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