



December 27, 2012

American English edition

Issue Number 187

## In this issue

**Election** in Japan  
**America's** new secretary of state  
**Extra** slow loris species  
**Space** tourist test flight  
**Referendum** in Egypt  
**South Korea's** presidential election  
**North Korean** satellite launch  
**Human** hands  
**President** Putin answers questions  
**Cyclone** in South Pacific  
**State** visit to Algeria  
**Time's** person of 2012  
**Pitldown** man 100 years later  
**School** shooting in U.S.  
**Fairy** tale manuscript  
**Polio** vaccinations halted  
**Mekong** WWF report  
**Stone Age** cheese making  
**China's** asteroid fly past  
Glossary Crossword and Wordsearch Puzzle



Local people take part in a ceremony at Tikal, an old Mayan site, in Guatemala, on December 21, 2012

## NON-ARRIVAL OF THE END OF TIME

On December 21, newspaper reports in many different countries began with the words “if you are reading this the world did not end today.”

This date, December 21, 2012, marked the end of the 5,125 year “Long Count” Mayan calendar. As this date approached more and more people, in many different countries, began to fear that the conclusion of this calendar was the date of the apocalypse, or the day on which the world would be destroyed.

The Mayan civilization is known to have been many thousands of years old. Historians believe that the civilization began to decline around the year 900. Nobody knows exactly why. Many impressive Mayan buildings, including huge stone pyramids, gradually became lost in the jungles of Central America.

The Maya lived in areas that are now southern Mexico, Guatemala, Belize,

and parts of Honduras and El Salvador. The Spanish took over these areas in the 1500s. Yet the Maya never disappeared completely. Today many people who live in these countries are descended from the Maya. Some still speak Mayan languages and follow Mayan customs.

The ancient Mayan people created a system of writing that used symbols called glyphs. Yet the knowledge of this writing died out soon after the Spanish arrived. Today, many of the ancient glyphs have been deciphered, or decoded, and experts are able to understand what most of them mean.

The Maya had an impressive knowledge of the planets, the stars and how the Sun appeared to move across the sky. They created a complicated calendar. Known as the Long Count, it began in 3,114 BCE. The calendar marked time in cycles, called Baktuns, which were

**LEVEL UP!**

Use

**ONLINE EXTRA**

**Newsademic.com**



TO JOIN VISIT  
[WWW.NEWSADEMIC.COM](http://WWW.NEWSADEMIC.COM)

roughly 394 years long. The number 13 was important to the Maya, and the 13th Baktun supposedly ended on December 21.

In the 1960s a stone tablet was discovered at a ruined Mayan site called Tortuguero, in Mexico. The tablet is thought to be about 1,300 years old. Written on it was a prediction that a powerful Mayan god would return at the end of the 13th Baktun.

In 1975, an American wrote a book about the Maya. In the book he claimed that their Long Count calendar marked the end of human civilization. Since then hundreds of books have been written about the Maya and their calendar. Some predicted that the world would end on this day. Over time this prediction became known as the Mayan [prophecy](#). In 2009, a science fiction disaster movie about the Mayan prophecy was made. Called “2012”, it was a popular movie and many people went to see it.

However, experts on the Maya have always insisted that the end of their calendar did not mark the date of the apocalypse. The Maya, they say, believed that time worked in long cycles. The end of the Long Count therefore marked when a new time cycle, or era, would begin. This, the experts explain, is similar to an odometer (also known as a milometer) in cars. This records the total number of miles or kilometers cars have traveled. When it reaches its highest possible number it goes back to zero again. Even our own calendar works in a slightly similar way. At the beginning of each year it “resets” to January 1.

In the months leading up to December 21, many doomsday, or end of time, predictions were made. Rumors were spread via the internet. In America some people began

buying extra food, candles, soap, and salt. Some even spent large amounts of money on specially designed shelters in which they would be able to survive whatever happened on December 21.

In China officials arrested hundreds of members of a religious group for spreading rumors about the end of the world. In other countries such as Russia and Serbia many people bought extra supplies and made plans to stay in shelters.



*Bugarach village and mountain, in France*

In a village in France, called Bugarach, officials worried that tens of thousands of people would arrive on December 20. Near the village is a high mountain with a flat top. Rumors suggested that Bugarach was the only place in the world where people would be able to survive the apocalypse. Spacecraft, from another planet, would land on the mountain-top and aliens would rescue them.

Some believers of the Mayan prophecy predicted that earthquakes would destroy the world. Others said that a huge solar storm or a comet hitting the Earth would cause the destruction. Other predictions included a collision with a large mystery space object called Planet X, or Nibiru. There were also rumors that all the planets in our Solar System would line up, or be in an unusual alignment on this day. This would then cause a [cataclysm](#) on the Earth. It was estimated that roughly 10% of the world’s population was

fearful that something was going to happen on December 21.

In the weeks and days before December 21, several religious and science organizations made announcements that the world would not end on this day. These included the Roman Catholic Church and NASA (National Aeronautics and Space Administration).

NASA even made a special video called *Why The World Didn’t End Yesterday*. It was supposed to have been released on December 22. Yet NASA began to receive so many calls and emails from worried people that it decided to release its video ten days early. In it NASA scientists showed why the rumors were wrong. For example, the planets in the Solar System were not in alignment. Planet X did not exist and was therefore not approaching the Earth.

There have been many doomsday predictions in the past. Earlier this year a preacher in the U.S. said that the world would end on May 22. Many of those who attended his church believed him. Yet, so far, the Mayan prophecy has been the most widespread “end of time” prediction.

During the night of December 20, thousands of local Maya people took part in special ceremonies to welcome the beginning of a new era. Some of these were held among the ruins of ancient Mayan buildings at Chichen Itza, in Mexico, and Tikal, in Guatemala. Both sites are famous for their large stone pyramids.

About 150 police officers and several police helicopters were sent to Bugarach, in southern France, to control the expected crowds. Many newspaper reporters also went. Yet if lots of people really did believe that they would be rescued by spaceships landing near the French village neither they nor the aliens ever arrived. ■

## JAPAN'S NEW PRIME MINISTER

A general election was held in Japan on December 16. The Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) won easily. Its leader, Shinzō Abe, has therefore become the country's new prime minister.

Japan's parliament is called the Diet. It is made up of two "houses", a Lower and an Upper House. Officially the Lower House is called the House of Representatives, and the Upper House the House of Councillors.

The country is what is known as a constitutional democracy. This means that the emperor, currently Emperor Akihito, is Japan's head of state, but the prime minister and his government run the country.

The prime minister is the leader of the political party with the most seats in the Lower House. Important decisions are made in this house, which is the more powerful of the

two. These decisions then have to be approved by the Upper House. The recent general election was for the Lower House, which has 480 seats, or members.



Japan's new prime minister, Shinzō Abe

The last election for the Lower House was held three years ago. Then the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) won. This was unusual as the LDP, which, apart for 11 months in 1993 and 1994, had been in power since 1955.

Over the last three years, while it has been in charge, the DPJ has had three different leaders. Therefore the country has also had three different prime ministers, Yukio Hatoyama, Naoto Kan and Yoshihiko Noda. Mr. Hatoyama and Mr. Kan chose to resign. Mr. Noda only took over a few months ago.

Recently, Japan has had a number of difficulties. In 2011, there was a powerful earthquake under the sea near the northeast of the country. This also caused a tsunami, or giant wave. The earthquake and tsunami caused much damage and thousands of people were killed. A nuclear power station was also affected. After several explosions there was a radiation leak. A large area around the power station was evacuated. Many of the country's other nuclear power stations have been shut down as a safety [precaution](#).

There has also been a serious disagreement with China. This is over several small uninhabited islands in the East China Sea. Both countries claim to own them. Another problem is the economy. In the past Japan had one of the most successful economies in the world. However, for the last 20 years the economy has hardly improved at all.

In the election the LDP won 294 seats. This was 118 more than three years ago. The DPJ got only 57. Before it had 230. The remainder of the seats went to smaller parties. When a party wins by a large number of seats or votes like this it is often called a "landslide".

This is not the first time Mr. Abe has been Japan's leader. He was prime minister for 12 months between 2006 and 2007. Yet then he chose to stand down because of ill health. Before the election Mr. Abe said that he would improve Japan's economy and be stricter with China over the island disputes. ■

## SECRETARY OF STATE ANNOUNCEMENT

On December 21, Barack Obama, the president of the U.S., announced that John Kerry would be America's new secretary of state. He will take over from Hillary Clinton. Having done the job for the past four years Mrs. Clinton recently declared that she had decided to step down.

In the U.S., the secretary of state is one of the most important positions in the government. This person is responsible for foreign policy, or dealing with other countries. He or she spends a lot of time traveling all over the world. In many other countries the person who does a similar job is called the foreign minister.

## NEWSCAST

**DANGEROUS HOUSEWORK** — A man in Poland told his wife that he wanted to help with some of the housework. She was surprised, as her husband rarely helped cleaning or tidying their house. She suggested that he do some of the ironing, as she had to go to work. The man set up the ironing board so he could watch the television at the same time. While ironing the telephone rang. The man was concentrating on the television program and, instead of picking up the phone, he held the hot iron to his ear. One side of his face is now covered in bandages. Doctors have said that he should make a full recovery from the burns. The man's wife says that she will not ask him to do any more housework in the future.

Mr. Kerry, who is 69 years old, is an elected senator for the state of Massachusetts. He is therefore a member of the United States Senate. To take up the position of secretary of state he will now have to give up his Senate seat. An election will therefore need to be held in Massachusetts to choose his replacement.



John Kerry

Like Mr. Obama Mr. Kerry is a member of the Democratic Party. In 2004, he was the Democratic Party's nomination for the presidential election. However, in that election the Republican Party's candidate, George W. Bush, won.

Many people think that Mr. Kerry would have liked to be the secretary of state when Mr. Obama was first elected as president in 2008. Then Mr. Obama chose Mrs. Clinton. However, over the last four years Mr. Kerry has acted as an [envoy](#) for the American president. In this role he has traveled to and met several other countries' leaders including those of Pakistan and Afghanistan.

Mrs. Clinton has been a very popular secretary of state. It's thought that the leaders of many other countries would have liked her to continue for another four years. Mr. Obama also wanted her to stay. After she confirmed that she wished to leave Mr. Obama had to appoint someone else. Mr. Kerry was probably not his first choice. Many believe that Mr. Obama wanted Susan Rice, who is the American

ambassador to the United Nations (U.N.), to have the job.

However, Ms. Rice became involved in a disagreement about an attack that took place on an American embassy in Libya several months ago. The disagreement led to questions being asked about whether the embassy was properly protected. Recently, she announced that she did not wish to be chosen for the position of secretary of state.

Mr. Kerry is expected to start his new job in January. Some people think that Mrs. Clinton would like to be the Democratic Party's nomination for the next presidential election in 2016. This, they say, is the likely reason why she decided not to stay on as secretary of state for another four years. If Mrs. Clinton does take part in the next election and wins she would be the U.S.'s first woman president. ■

## NEW SLOW LORIS

An international group of scientists has discovered a new type, or species, of slow loris. The new species of primate lives in forests in the Philippines and on the island of Borneo, most of which is part of Indonesia. A primate is an animal that belongs to the same group as humans, apes and monkeys.

Slow lorises are found in South East Asia as well as Bangladesh, the northeastern part of India and a part of China. They look more like lemurs, which are only found on the island of Madagascar, and African bush babies, than apes or monkeys. Slow lorises have a long body. Their arms and legs are about equal in length. Adults can be up to 15 inches (38 centimeters) long.

Slow lorises' hands and feet are able to hold tightly on to tree branches. Their long bodies can twist and extend, or stretch. Slow lorises are therefore expert tree climbers. They eat small animals, fruit and certain types of vegetation. The animals are nocturnal, so they are more active during the night. Their large eyes help them to see in the dark. Unusually for a mammal they have a toxic, or poisonous bite.

Slow lorises have black or dark fur around their large eyes, which makes them look as if they are wearing a mask. However, different types have different colored fur patterns.

There are a number of different species of slow loris. It was thought that there were three types living in Borneo and the Philippines. Yet from studying their fur patterns the scientists discovered that one of these was actually a different species. Four other types are known to live in Bangladesh, northeast India and a part of China.



Slow loris

Organizing or classifying living things into groups, or types, is called taxonomy. Living things are put into large groups called phyla, then classes, orders, and families. Next comes the genus, and within that the species. The slow loris genus is *Nycticebus* (so all types have this name). The new species has been given the name *Nycticebus kayan*. The species name comes from the Kayan River, which flows through a part of Borneo.

The slow loris' toxic bite comes from a gland near their elbows. They lick this and the gland's **secretion** when mixed with their saliva is poisonous. If threatened the slow loris will lick this gland and then try to bite their attacker. A bite from a slow loris can make a person very ill. The animals also lick the fur of their babies, which covers their offspring in poisonous saliva. It is thought that they do this is to deter, or put off, possible predators.

All types of slow loris are endangered. Large areas of the forests in which they live have been cut down. Many are captured and then sold as pets in Asia. To stop the animals from biting they have some of their teeth pulled out. This means that the slow lorises cannot feed properly and many die soon afterwards. ■

## SPACEPLANE TEST FLIGHT

A spaceplane, called SpaceShipTwo, successfully completed an important test flight on December 19, in the U.S. This was the first flight the spaceplane had completed with its specially designed rocket engine installed.



WhiteKnightTwo carrying SpaceShipTwo

A company called Virgin Galactic is building SpaceShipTwo. The company's boss, Sir Richard Branson, is a businessman from Britain. He hopes that Virgin Galactic will be able to take people,

(the company's boss calls them space tourists) to the edge of space.

When passenger flights start SpaceShipTwo will be taken, or carried, to a height of 11 miles (17.6 kilometers) by another aircraft called WhiteKnightTwo. This aircraft looks like two planes that are joined by one of their wings.



SpaceShipTwo

Once WhiteKnightTwo reaches the correct height SpaceShipTwo, with its six passengers and two crew members on board, will be released. After this the spaceplane will use its own rocket engine to go straight up in the air at a speed of about 2,500 miles (4,000 kilometers) per hour.

Soon after it reaches a height above the Earth of about 62 miles (100 kilometers) the spaceplane will start to come down again. Passengers will have windows on each side as well as one above them. From this height, at the edge of the atmosphere, the passengers will be able to see the **curvature** of the Earth and the dark color of space. They will also be able to float in zero gravity. This period of weightlessness will last for only five minutes before SpaceShipTwo begins its descent.

During this last part of its flight, SpaceShipTwo will act like a glider. It will not be powered by an engine, but will just glide back to the place from which WhiteKnightTwo took off. The whole trip is expected to take about two and a half hours.

The spaceplane is being built in the state of New Mexico, in the U.S. This is where the recent test flight took place. WhiteKnightTwo took the space plane up to a certain height. It was then released to glide back to the Earth. A number of similar tests have been done before. Yet this was the first time that SpaceShipTwo had descended with its complete rocket engine installed. During the test the rocket engine was not switched on, or used.

Passenger flights are planned to start sometime in 2013. Space tourists who want to travel on SpaceShipTwo will have to do some safety training before the trip. They will also have to pass a medical exam to make sure that they are healthy enough to take the flight. Virgin Galactic claims that it has already sold around 300 tickets. Each ticket costs \$200,000. ■

## EGYPT'S REFERENDUM

A referendum, or vote in which all adults can take part, has been held in Egypt. The vote was to decide whether Egyptians agreed to a new constitution, or set of rules by which the country will be governed in the future. The proposed new constitution has recently been drafted, or written.

The referendum vote was held on two days. Those living in some parts of the country voted on December 15. The vote for the remainder took place one week later, on December 22. The result was announced several days after the second vote. Of those who took part around 64% voted "yes", or that they agreed with the new constitution. Yet only 33% of those who could vote decided to do so.

The new constitution and referendum have caused many arguments

in Egypt. Almost two years ago Hosni Mubarak, who had been Egypt's president for 30 years, was forced to step down. This happened after tens of thousands of people demonstrated against him. The army then took control. However, military leaders promised that they would arrange new elections for the country's parliament and president.



People line up to vote in the referendum on Egypt's new constitution

In the parliamentary elections an organization called the Muslim Brotherhood did well. The Muslim Brotherhood is both a religious and a political group. It also exists in other Arab countries. When Mr. Mubarak was in charge, the Muslim Brotherhood was banned in Egypt. The election for a new president took place last June. Mohamed Morsi won. He is also a member of the Muslim Brotherhood.

A committee, or group of people, has been working to draft a new constitution. Some people were unhappy about this group. They claimed that it included too many Muslim Brotherhood supporters.

Many people in Egypt support the Muslim Brotherhood. Yet there are also many others who don't. These people worry that the new constitution contains too many religious laws. They believe that Egypt should be a secular state. This means that religion and the way in which the country is governed are kept separate. Many of those who dem-

onstrated to get rid of Mr. Mubarak want Egypt to be a secular state.

Before the referendum took place there were large demonstrations in the capital city, Cairo, and the city of Alexandria. Some of those who dislike the new constitution surrounded the presidential palace, in Cairo. Thousands of people that support the Muslim Brotherhood also took to the streets. Military leaders arranged for soldiers to be used to try to keep the rival groups apart.

The new constitution will now become law. Its rules set out how Egypt is to be governed. As the rules have changed new elections for the parliament will now have to take place. It is expected that these will be held within the next few months.

Some people worry that Egypt has now become dangerously divided. They say that those who support the Muslim Brotherhood and those who are unhappy about the new constitution are unlikely to ever agree with each other. ■

## NEW PRESIDENT IN SOUTH KOREA

In the Republic of Korea, which is better known as South Korea, elections for the country's president take place every five years. The latest presidential election was held on December 19. Park Geun-hye won. Ms. Park will be the country's first woman president.

In South Korea a person is president for only one term of five years. In the latest presidential election there were two candidates, Ms. Park and Moon Jae-in. Ms. Park got 51.6% of the votes and Mr. Moon 48%.

Ms. Park was born in 1952. Her father, Park Chung-hee, had also been president of South Korea. He was in

charge of the country for 18 years from 1961 to 1979. President Park was a former army general. He seized control of South Korea in 1961. For much of his time as president he governed the country as a dictator.

In 1974, Ms. Park's mother was assassinated, or killed, by a North Korean spy. Five years later her father was also assassinated. A senior army officer, who worked closely with President Park, shot and killed him. After Ms. Park's father was assassinated another army general took over the running of the country.

It was not until 1987 that South Koreans were able to vote for their leaders again. Then, for the first time in many years, a presidential election was held in which all adults were able to vote.

Today South Korea has one of the world's most successful economies. Several of its larger companies are

## NEWSCAST

**OWL COLLISION** — A man, in the U.S., was driving to work in the early hours of the morning. Suddenly, an owl swooped in front of his moving car. The man stopped. When he got out he saw that the owl's head was stuck in the car's radiator grill. As the owl was flapping its wings and had very sharp claws, or talons, the man thought that he would not be able to free the bird by himself. So he drove very slowly to his place of work, a distance of about eight miles (13 kilometers). There he telephoned the local wildlife department. One of their members of staff, wearing thick gloves, and the driver then managed to free the owl. Surprisingly the bird was unhurt and sometime later was able to fly away.



world leaders in computer technology, shipbuilding and industrial design. It also has more high-speed internet connections than any other country.



*Park Geun-hye, South Korea's new president*

However, when Ms. Park's father seized control of the country 51 years ago it was very poor. Nowadays, many people living in South Korea believe that the country's success was made possible by the decisions that Ms. Park's father made when he was president. Yet others believe that President Park did many bad things. These, they say, include [suppressing](#) both democracy and human rights.

Mr. Moon, Ms. Park's rival in the election, is a former human rights lawyer. In the 1970's he was arrested and sent to prison for demonstrating against President Park.

In the election its thought that most people over 50 years old, or the older generation, voted for Ms. Park. Many younger people are believed to have supported Mr. Moon.

Ms. Park has never married. She was elected as a member of the South Korean parliament (known as the National Assembly) in 1998. She is a member of the Saenuri Party (or New Frontier Party). The current president, Lee Myung-bak, is also a member of this political party.

Mr. Lee, who won the last presidential election five years ago, will officially hand over to Ms. Park next February. Until this time Ms. Park will be known as the "president-elect". ■

## NORTH KOREAN ROCKET LAUNCH

A large ceremony took place in Pyongyang, the capital of North Korea, on December 17. The ceremony marked the first anniversary of the death of the country's former leader Kim Jong-il. It was also held to celebrate the successful launch of North Korea's first satellite, five days before.

North Korea is a very secretive country. Since North Korea was founded, soon after the end of the Second World War in 1945, members of one family have ruled the country. The leaders are appointed, or chosen, and there are no elections. A few days after the death of Kim Jong-il one of his sons, Kim Jong-un, was confirmed as North Korea's new leader. Not very much is known about him but he is thought to be about 30 years old.



*North Korean rocket before launch*

North Korea is often described as a [hereditary](#) dictatorship. Many believe that North Koreans have been "brainwashed", or persuaded to believe that their leaders are god-like

and never do anything wrong. People living there may not leave the country without special permission and few visitors are allowed. North Korea spends much of its money on weapons and its huge army.

North and South Korea are very different countries. In 1950, North Korea invaded the South. During the war, which lasted for three years, China helped the North. The United Nations (U.N.), with mostly American troops, assisted the South. The war ended in a truce. Yet no peace treaty has ever been signed between the North and the South.

Nowadays, South Korea elects its own leaders. It has a very successful economy and some of the world's largest companies come from South Korea. The North is run as a dictatorship. When compared to South Korea it is very poor. Many of its people, especially those who live outside Pyongyang, do not have enough to eat.

In recent years, North Korea has carried out several underground nuclear tests. The country is therefore known to have developed nuclear weapons. When Kim Jong-il was in charge, North Korea agreed more than once to stop developing nuclear weapons in return for gifts of oil and food from other countries.

Eight months ago, North Korea announced that it was going to use a rocket to launch its first satellite into space. Many countries including the U.S., China, Japan, and South Korea believed that this was really an excuse for North Korea to test an intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM). These powerful missiles, or rockets, can launch satellites into space, but they can also be used to carry a nuclear weapon, or warhead, over very long distances. These countries warned North Korea not

to continue with its rocket launch. Japan and South Korea threatened to shoot the rocket down if it were to fly over their territory.

The first launch took place on April 13. Yet, after 90 seconds, the rocket broke apart and fell back into the Yellow Sea, to the west of the country.

On December 12, North Korea tried again. Later that day it was announced that this launch had been successful and North Korea's first satellite was now orbiting the Earth. Scientists in the U.S. confirmed that North Korea had managed to put a satellite-like device into space. However, they are not yet sure if it is working.

North Korea has always insisted that its satellite launches are not meant to threaten other countries and are only done for peaceful reasons. Many countries were surprised by the rocket launch. They thought that after the accident last April it would take North Korea much longer to try again. As its latest rocket launch was successful some people suspect that North Korea is now planning to do more underground nuclear tests. ■

## HUMAN HANDS

Researchers from a university in the U.S. have recently completed a study on the human hand. They believe that their work shows that the human hand has evolved to do two very different things. One is to hold items and the other is to act as a type of weapon.

Some of our nearest relatives are chimpanzees. Yet, like other monkeys and apes, the hands of chimpanzees are very different to human hands. For example, monkeys have long palms and thumbs but humans

have short palms and long thumbs. The human hand is able to grip, or hold, things in several different ways. Yet apes do not find this so easy to do.

It seems that our hands changed, or evolved, over a very long period of time, to be different from those of monkeys. Their hands were useful for climbing, but human hands could both firmly hold and use stone tools. Being able to use stone tools in this way meant that early humans, or hominids, began to evolve in a different way.

However, the researchers believe that as well as being able to use stone tools the shape of human hands was important for another reason. This was so that a **clenched** hand, or fist, could be used as a weapon. Many animals have natural weapons. These include antlers, teeth, claws, and horns. Yet a hand can only become an effective weapon if it is turned into a fist.



Monkeys, however, are not able to turn their hands into fists. They can curl their fingers but cannot do this tightly. A “monkey fist” is therefore shaped a bit like a doughnut with an empty space, or a gap, in the middle of it. When turned into fists human hands do not have an empty space. Also the bones in a human hand make it very strong when it becomes a fist.

The researchers did many tests with boxers and people who take part in other sports where they strike

with their hands. They measured the force with which their hands struck a punch bag. The tests were done with different shaped hands. For instance, an open palm or semi clenched fist. They discovered that striking the punch bag from the side with a clenched fist created the most force. Also the structure or stiffness of the bones when the hand becomes a fist made it much more powerful.

The researchers say that their work suggests that human hands did not evolve just to be able to hold things and use stone tools. The ability to form strong fists, with which to fight off other competing groups, was also important. Therefore those with the “strongest” fists may have had an advantage and were more likely to survive. ■

## PRESIDENT PUTIN'S PRESS CONFERENCE

Each year, during which he has been the president of Russia, Vladimir Putin has agreed to take part in a large press conference. Reporters working for Russian newspapers and television companies are invited to the event. Mr. Putin will then answer any questions that the reporters ask.

Mr. Putin won the presidential election that was held in March this year. However, this was not the first time that he had been elected as Russia's leader. Mr. Putin had won two previous elections and was president of the country between 2000 and 2008.

Before the recent election, presidents were elected for a term of four years. Yet the Russian constitution, or rules by which the country is governed, was recently changed so that presidential terms were increased

from four to six years. The next presidential election will therefore not be held until 2018.

After winning the election in 2000, Mr. Putin decided his country needed strong leadership. To make the changes he wanted, he began to restrict some of the freedoms that had only just appeared in Russia. For example, television news stations and newspapers were no longer allowed to criticize the government. Political protests and demonstrations were also restricted.



Vladimir Putin ([www.kremlin.ru](http://www.kremlin.ru))

Russia has huge supplies of oil, natural gas, and other valuable natural resources. As president, Mr. Putin reformed the Russian oil and natural gas companies. The country began to earn large amounts of money from selling these resources to other countries. The lives of many ordinary Russians improved. Although some people complained that Russia was not a proper democracy, most admired their president.

More recently, there have been some street demonstrations against Mr. Putin. These have taken place in the larger cities of Moscow, the capital, and St. Petersburg. Those who took part in them were unhappy that Mr. Putin had been allowed to stand for reelection again earlier this year. However, many Russians support him. In the most recent election he got 64% of the votes.

Around 1,200 news reporters attended the press conference. It

lasted four and a half hours, much longer than any previous ones.

During the conference Mr. Putin was asked many serious questions about recent disagreements with the U.S. The Russian president said that it was wrong for American leaders to criticize Russia when there were many similar problems in their own country.

Many other questions were asked about Syria, where fighting broke out two years ago. Syria's president, Bashar al-Assad, and his country's army have been fighting against anti-government forces, or rebels. Traditionally Russia has supported the government of Mr. al-Assad. Yet most other countries, including the U.S., have recently declared that they want the rebels to succeed.

As well as serious questions some were humorous. One reporter invited the president to go on an ice-fishing trip. Another asked for an [autograph](#) for his daughter. One even suggested that an island near Japan be renamed "Putin Island". This island used to belong to Japan. Yet it was seized by Russia after Japan surrendered at the end of the Second World War in 1945. Mr. Putin suggested that a more sensible idea would be to call the island Pushkin or Tolstoy Island. Both were famous Russian writers. ■

## SOUTH PACIFIC CYCLONE

A very powerful tropical storm, or cyclone, has badly damaged many houses and buildings in Samoa and Fiji, two Pacific island countries. The cyclone, which was given the name Evan, struck Fiji on December 17, several days after it had hit the two main islands of Samoa.

Cyclones are similar to typhoons and hurricanes. The name "typhoon"

is used for these storms when they happen in the northwest Pacific Ocean. In the Indian Ocean and southwest Pacific they are called "cyclones" and in the Atlantic and Eastern Pacific Oceans "hurricanes".

Cyclone Evan caused widespread damage in Apia, the capital city, on Samoa's largest island. Floodwaters and banana trees, which had been blown down, blocked many roads. Samoa's largest electricity power station was damaged and a water treatment plant, near Apia, destroyed. Some buildings at the main airport were also blown down. Workers at the power station say that it may take two months to fix.



Satellite picture of Cyclone Evan (NASA)

Officials in Samoa said that Cyclone Evan was one of the worst storms to hit the island nation for at least 20 years. Wind speeds of up to 130 miles (210 kilometers) per hour were recorded. It's thought that at least ten people died. Around 5,000 are now living in special shelters, as their homes were badly damaged or destroyed.

Fiji is a group, or archipelago, of around 320 islands. Of the 110 inhabited islands most people live on

the two largest ones, Viti Levu and Vanua Levu.

The western parts of Viti Levu were worst affected by the cyclone. Here the storm lasted for 12 hours. Power lines and trees were blown down. Roads were closed because of landslides and floods. Thousands of people sheltered from the storm in special [evacuation](#) centers. There are many tourist hotels, or resorts, on some of Fiji's smaller islands. Before the cyclone arrived visitors at these resorts were moved to larger hotels on Viti Levu for their safety. Many of the buildings in Lautoka, Fiji's second-biggest city, were damaged.

However, officials in Fiji said that even though some people were injured no deaths have been reported. The governments of Australia and New Zealand announced that they would send help to both Pacific island countries. The U.S. also said that it would give assistance to Samoa. ■

## FRANCE AND ALGERIA

François Hollande, the president of France, made a state, or official, visit to Algeria on December 19 and 20. During the visit he met with the country's president, Abdelaziz Bouteflika. Mr. Hollande also made a speech to members of the Algeria's parliament.

Mr. Hollande became the French leader last May. This was his first trip to Algeria since he was elected as president of France. Algeria is a former French colony. It became an independent country 50 years ago. Mr. Hollande's visit was arranged as part of Algeria's 50th anniversary celebrations.

However, the two countries have had a difficult past. Many Algerians

believe that France should make an official apology for what happened while their country was a French colony.

France took control of Algeria in 1830. It then ran the country for the next 132 years. During this time thousands of French people went to live in Algeria. Yet some Algerians were treated badly by the French and many had their lands taken away from them. In 1954, a war broke out between the French and the Algerians who wanted them to leave.

The war lasted for eight years. In France it is known as the Algerian War, but in Algeria it is called the Algerian Revolution. During the war both sides committed terrible crimes. Some Algerians claim that as many as 1.5 million people died in the war. However, historians say that the more likely figure is between 300,000 and 400,000. Around 30,000 French soldiers were killed in the fighting.



Abdelaziz Bouteflika (L) president of Algeria, François Hollande, (R) president of France

Eventually, France realized it could not win. It agreed to end the war and allow Algeria to become an independent nation. Soon afterwards, over one million people in Algeria, mostly those whose families had originally come from France, fled the country. These people were fearful of what would happen to them after the French army left Algeria. Nearly all went to France.

There were also many Algerian soldiers in the French army. They

## NEWSCAST

**BANK CRASH** — Customers in a bank in the city of Wuhan, in China, had to move quickly and get out of the building. A car had suddenly appeared in the bank after smashing through one of the building's large windows. Everyone thought that people inside the car were about to rob the bank. Yet the only person in the car was the driver, a 46 year old woman. She explained that while parking outside the building she had accidentally pressed the car's accelerator instead of its brake. Police and firefighters managed to push her car back through the window and out onto the street. The police said that she would be charged with dangerous driving.

too tried to leave and get to France. Many of those who did not manage to do so were imprisoned or killed. Today there are many people in France who are descended from those whose families used to live in Algeria.

Like other French presidents before him Mr. Hollande said that he would not apologize for what had happened in the past. Yet during his speech to the Algerian parliament he admitted that many people in Algeria had suffered when it was a French colony. The French president described this time as "unjust and [brutal](#)".

Algeria is the largest country in Africa, although much of it is part of the Sahara Desert. Today, mainly because of its large supplies of oil and natural gas, Algeria has one of Africa's more successful economies.

During the visit Mr. Hollande and Mr. Bouteflika agreed that their two countries should increase trade with each other. A large number of French business people accompanied the

president on his visit. They hoped to meet Algerian company owners and be able to work with them in the future. During the trip Renault, the French carmaker, announced that it planned to set up a factory in Algeria.

Mr. Hollande also invited the Algerian president to make a state visit to France. ■

## TIME'S PERSON OF 2012

Barack Obama, the president of the U.S., has been chosen as *Time* magazine's "Person of the Year" for 2012.

*Time* is a well-known American weekly news magazine. It began selecting its "Man of the Year" in 1927 and has done so every year ever since. The person selected appears on the front cover of the year's final issue in December. In 1999, *Time* changed the title from "Man of the Year" to "Person of the Year".

The person chosen in 1927 was Charles Lindbergh. That year, he was the first person to fly across the Atlantic Ocean from New York, in the U.S., to Paris, the capital of France.

*Time* says that its "Person of the Year" is someone it thinks has had the biggest effect on world news over the last 12 months. Yet this could be either a good or bad effect. It insists that the title is not meant to be an award or honor. In the past it has even chosen people who have turned out to be mass murderers, including Adolf Hitler, leader of Nazi Germany, and Joseph Stalin, one of the former leaders of the Russian-led Soviet Union.

Time's Person of the Year is not always a single person, or even a person at all. For example, in 1983 the personal computer was chosen. This year many people predicted that NASA's (National Aeronautics and Space Administration) Mars Rover Curiosity would be selected. NASA landed this unmanned car-sized vehicle on Mars last August. Since then it has been moving around a small area of the planet and sending back important scientific information.

Last year's Person of the Year was not a real person either. Twelve months ago "The Protester" was chosen. 2011 was a year of street protests in many countries. We now call a series of demonstrations in several Arab countries, such as Tunisia, Egypt, Libya and Yemen, the Arab Spring. The leaders of each of these countries had been in charge for many years. Nearly all Arab Spring protesters were complaining about the same things. They wanted to get rid of corrupt leaders and dishonest politicians

and police officials. They also demanded that free and fair elections be held.

Mr. Obama was reelected as the president of the U.S. last November. He will now be the country's president for another four years. This is not the first time Mr. Obama has been Time's Person of the Year. He was also chosen in 2008, the year in which he won his first presidential election.

Mr. Obama is not the first person to have been selected twice. Other double winners include Winston Churchill, a former British prime minister and wartime leader, Joseph

Stalin and three other American presidents, Franklin D Roosevelt, Richard Nixon and George W. Bush.

This year's runner up, or person in second place, was Malala Yousafzai. She is a teenage girl from Pakistan who survived being shot by Taliban supporters. She had been campaigning for better education for girls in her country. Other finalists were Tim Cook, the new boss of the Apple Company and Mohamed Morsi, Egypt's new president.

In 1999, Albert Einstein, the famous scientist, was selected as the magazine's "Person of the Century". ■

## PILTDOWN MAN ANNIVERSARY

On December 18, 100 years ago, a special announcement was made by the Royal Geological Society, in London, the capital of Britain. On this date, in 1912, it declared that a very important discovery had been dug up at a place called Piltdown, in Britain.



Painting of the Piltdown skull being examined.  
Charles Dawson is third from left

The discovery was parts of an ancient human skull. The Society said that the fossilized bones were around 500,000 years old. The remains were believed to be the "missing link" in the evolution between apes and humans. Many years later the discovery was found to be a hoax. Piltdown man has now become one



Cover of Time's last issue of 2012

of the most famous scientific [frauds](#) in history.

Just over 50 years before the discovery at Piltdown Charles Darwin had published his famous book about evolution called *On the Origin of Species*. At the time not everyone thought it true but many scientists believed what Darwin had written about evolution. Darwin's theory said that many hundreds of thousands of years ago humans had evolved from apes.

However, apes could still be found in the world. Some scientists therefore thought that one type of ancient ape must have developed into a human while its close relatives continued to be apes. This type of ancient human was nicknamed the missing link. Yet no fossils of the missing link had been found. Today human evolution is known to be much more [complicated](#) than this.

Charles Dawson and a geologist, who worked at a London museum, found parts of a skull and jawbone. Dawson was an [amateur](#) archaeologist. The bones were discovered in a gravel pit in a place called Piltdown, not far from where he lived. The bones looked as if they may have belonged to a man that was half human and half ape. The jawbone had two teeth. Some animal fossils and stone tools were also dug up nearby.

The ancient human to whom the bones were thought to belong became known as Piltdown man. This type of early human was also given a special name, *Eoanthropus dawsoni* (in Latin this means Dawson's dawn-man).

Dawson died in 1916. The fossilized bones he discovered at Piltdown were locked away and never properly studied.

In 1949, two scientists from Oxford University were able to do

some tests on the Piltdown bones. They found that the skull part belong to a human who died about 50,000 years ago. The jawbone was from an orang-utan, a large ape that comes from South East Asia. The university scientists estimated that it was around 500 years old. The teeth, whose shape seemed to have been altered, were from a chimpanzee. What's more the bones had been stained with a type of chemical to make them look much older.

After it was discovered that Piltdown man was a fake, or hoax, many people wondered who had arranged it. Most think that it must have been Dawson. They suspect that the reason for the fraud was that by making an important discovery he would be able to become a member of the Royal Geological Society.

As part of the 100th anniversary of the famous fraud a group of scientists have been testing the Piltdown bones again. Modern day tests mean that they should be able to find out a lot more information. For example, it might be possible to work out where the bones came from. They hope that this new information will help to prove who placed the bones in the Piltdown gravel pit. ■

## SCHOOL SHOOTING IN U.S.

On December 16, Barack Obama, the president of the U.S. traveled to Newtown, in the state of Connecticut. There he joined many other people in a [vigil](#). This was held to pray for and to remember all those who had been killed in a mass shooting at a nearby school two days before.

The mass shooting took place at the Sandy Hook Elementary School. After forcing his way into the school

a gunman shot and killed 26 people. Six of those who died were adult's, including the school's head teacher. The other 20 were young children all aged between six and seven years old. Immediately after the attack on the adults and children the gunman killed himself.

The gunman was 20 year old Adam Lanza. He lived with his mother in a large house not far from the school. He had an elder brother who no longer lived at home. Lanza's parents had divorced several years earlier.



Sandy Hook Elementary School (Google)

Early in the morning on the day of the school shooting Lanza shot and killed his mother in their home. His mother kept a number of guns in the house. In the past it was not unusual for her to take her two sons to a local firing range to practice shooting guns.

Lanza then drove his mother's car to the nearby elementary school. He took a number of her guns with him, including an assault rifle. These types of weapons can fire a large number of bullets very quickly. Lanza arrived at the school soon after classes had begun. He forced his way through the main door and started shooting. About 700 pupils aged between five and ten go to the school.

When the teachers in other parts of the school heard the shooting they tried to block the classroom doors and hide the children. Armed

police rushed to the school. They began searching for the gunman and rescuing the teachers and children. However, soon afterwards it was confirmed that the gunman had shot and killed himself.



Memorial set up for those who died in the Sandy Hook Elementary School shootings

It is not yet known why Lanza did what he did. It's thought that he may have had some type of personality disorder and found it difficult to socialize with other people. His mother was known to be worried about him. Several years earlier she

had taken him out of a local school and arranged for his education to be completed at home.

The mass shooting was the second worst to have happened at a school or university in the U.S. The worst took place in the state of Virginia in 2007. Then a student shot and killed 32 people in a university. Seventeen others were wounded.

The laws in many countries make it difficult to own guns. Yet in the U.S. it is legal to buy and own them. Many Americans believe that they have a right to own guns. Although they agree that guns should not be used in anger they claim that people have a right to be able to defend themselves.

Last year around 11,000 people were killed by others using guns in the U.S. This is far more than in any other country.

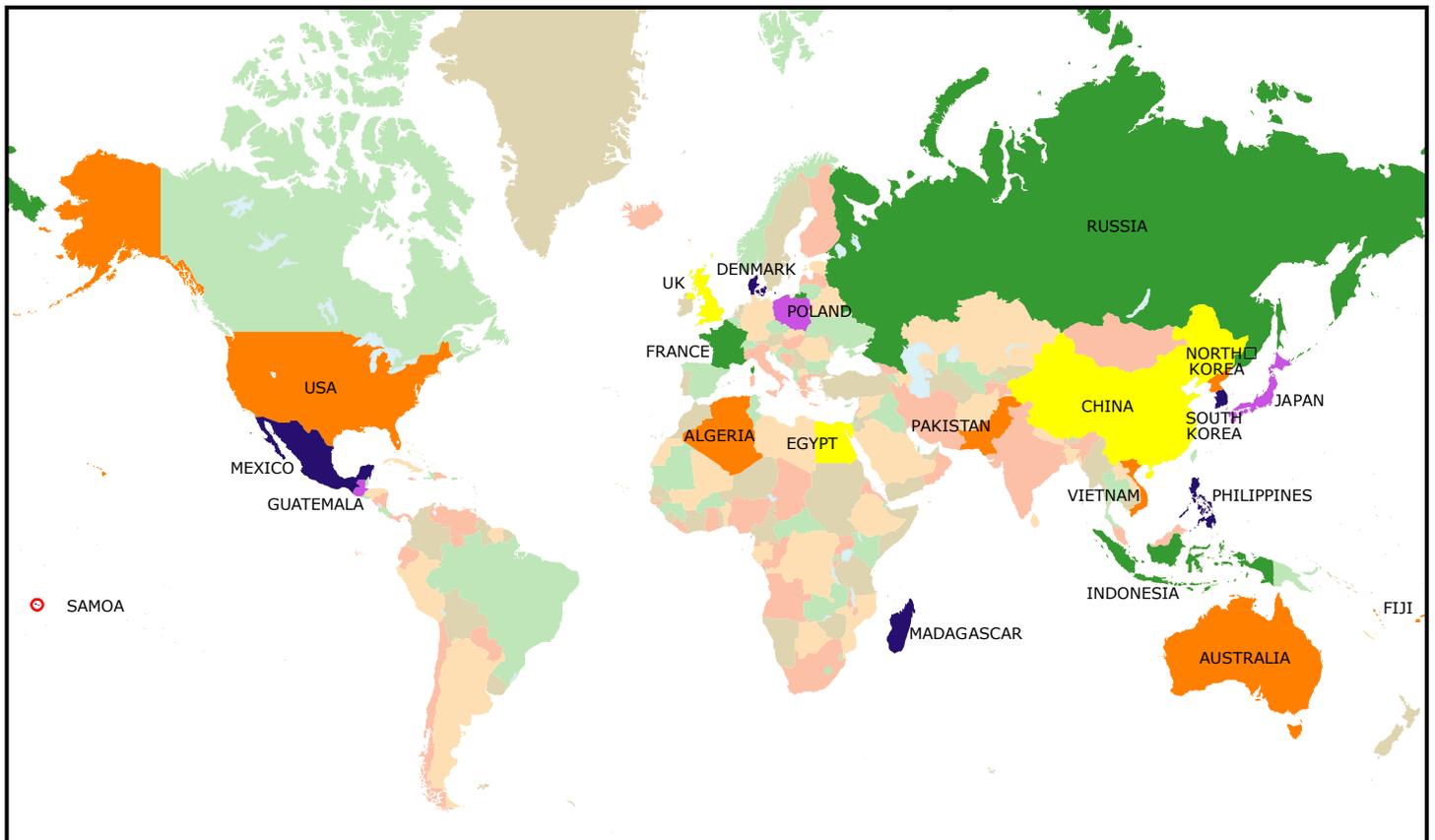
In the past, some politicians have tried to restrict the use and sale of

guns in the U.S. Yet most realize that trying to stop people buying guns loses them votes in elections. It is estimated that Americans own about 300 million guns. This is more than the total number of adults living in the country. However, in the days following the shooting Mr. Obama announced that new gun laws were needed including a ban on the sale of assault rifles. ■

### FAIRY TALE DISCOVERY

A previously unknown story, which was probably written by Hans Christian Andersen, has been found in Denmark. The 700 word hand written manuscript tells a story that may be one of the first fairy tales the famous author ever wrote.

Hans Christian Andersen (1805 – 1875) was a Danish author and



This map shows countries to which news stories refer in this issue. Visit [www.newsademic.com](http://www.newsademic.com) for more detailed world maps.

poet. He wrote many books, poems, plays, and almost 160 fairy tales. Perhaps two of his most famous fairy tales are *The Little Mermaid* and *The Ugly Duckling*. Andersen's fairy tales, or short stories, have been translated into over 100 languages and are read to, or read by, young children all around the world.

Andersen was born in the Danish city of Odense. His parents were not wealthy. He went to a local school, but at the age of 14 moved to Copenhagen, the capital city. He wanted to be an actor. However, he then met someone who agreed to pay for him to finish his education at a grammar school.



Statue of Hans Christian Andersen in Copenhagen, the capital of Denmark

After finishing school Andersen traveled to a number of countries in Europe. He wrote several books during this time from which he made enough money to live on. His first book of fairy tales contained nine stories. These included *The Tinderbox*, *The Princess and the Pea*, *Thumbelina*, *The Little Mermaid*, and *The Emperor's New Clothes*. At first, these stories were not very popular. Yet by the time of his death,

aged 70, he was best known for the many fairy tales he wrote.

The previously unknown story is called *The Tallow Candle*. Tallow is a hard substance made from animal fat that was used to make candles. In the short story the candle gets help from a tinderbox to light itself. Tinderboxes were used to light fires before matches were invented.

An historian found the manuscript. He was looking through boxes of old documents that belonged to wealthy families in Odense, where Anderson grew up. Written on the manuscript is a [dedication](#) to a woman called Bunkeflod. She was a widow who had been married to the local priest. She lived close to Anderson's house. It's known that he used to visit her home to borrow books to read.

Experts are almost certain that Anderson wrote the story and that he gave it to the widow. If so he would have been about 18 years old at the time. This means that *The Tallow Candle* is likely to be one of the famous author's earliest stories. ■

## POLIO VACCINATIONS STOPPED

The United Nations (U.N.) has decided to stop its polio vaccinations in two provinces in Pakistan. The decision was made after eight local health workers were shot and killed between December 17 and 19. The health workers had been visiting families in Karachi, one of the country's biggest cities, in the south, and in the northern city of Peshawar.

The health workers were giving polio vaccines to young children. They were working for the WHO (World Health Organization), which

is part of the U.N. After the killings the WHO ordered all its staff members in Karachi and Peshawar to stay inside and not go out on the streets.



Young boy receiving Polio vaccination

Polio is an infectious disease. People can become infected with the polio virus when they are children, especially when [hygienic](#) conditions are poor. In many cases the virus does little harm. Yet, if it gets into the nervous system, it can cause permanent [paralysis](#), usually in the legs. Victims may never be able to walk again. The virus can spread from person to person.

In nearly all countries, young children are vaccinated against polio. This stops them from getting the disease. The first vaccine for polio was developed in 1950. Today, a more effective one is used. Children can now be vaccinated against polio by simply placing a few drops of liquid on their tongues.

Over the last 20 years, vaccine programs in poorer countries have reduced the number of polio cases. In the 1980s over 350,000 children in these countries were still being paralyzed by polio. Now this figure is down to less than 700 a year.

Polio no longer exists in most countries. This is because the vaccinations are successful. However, in some places where children don't receive the vaccine, many still get the disease. There are now three countries in which polio is "endem-

ic”, or found regularly in children. They are Nigeria, Afghanistan, and Pakistan. India was also on the list until this year. Yet recently it was declared to be free of the disease.

The police say that they believe that members of the Pakistani Taliban carried out the attacks on the health workers. However, the group’s leaders have not admitted it.

The Taliban is based in Afghanistan. Its supporters believe that people should live according to strict Islamic laws. For example, their beliefs mean that music should be banned and girls are not allowed to go to school or have any form of education. Those people who live in Pakistan, near the border with Afghanistan, who support the Taliban and have similar beliefs are often called the Pakistani Taliban.

The Pakistani Taliban leaders are suspicious of vaccinations arranged by other countries. They think that the health workers could be spying

for the U.S. This is because of what happened during the U.S.’s search for Osama bin Laden in 2011. Osama bin Laden was the former leader of al-Qaeda. This was the militant group that planned and carried out attacks using passenger aircraft in New York City and Washington DC, in the U.S., in 2001.

Bin Laden was eventually found in northern Pakistan. American troops killed him after launching a surprise attack on the place where he lived.

During the search for bin Laden the Americans got a local Pakistani doctor to carry out fake vaccinations in the area where the al-Qaeda leader was thought to be living. The doctor visited houses to give children injections. The plan was to get DNA samples from the children living in the same house in which bin Laden was suspected to be hiding. The doctor would do this by giving them fake vaccinations. The Americans would then use these DNA samples to check if the children were related to the al-Qaeda leader.

Many people in Pakistan are angry about the attacks on the health workers. Stopping the polio vaccination program, they say, means that it is now unlikely that Pakistan will be declared free of polio for many years. ■

## WWF EXTRA TERRESTRIAL REPORT

The World Wildlife Fund (WWF) has recently produced a report called *Extra Terrestrial*. The report lists 126 new species of animals and plants that were discovered in the Greater Mekong region in 2011.

The Mekong River is 2,980 miles (4,800 kilometers) long and is the

12th longest river in the world. It flows through six countries. The Greater Mekong region is the area around the river. It includes parts of Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand, Vietnam, and the southern Chinese province of Yunnan.



*Yin-yang frog on the cover of the Wild Mekong Extra Terrestrial report*

Scientists say that the Greater Mekong is a region of amazing **bio-diversity**. It is also home to some of the world’s most endangered wild species. These include the Indonesian tiger, Asian elephant, the Mekong dolphin, and Mekong giant catfish.

The WWF says that during the last 14 years just over 1,700 new species have been discovered in the Greater Mekong region. When a species is “discovered”, it means that it is new to science. So local people may know of the species but scientists, called taxonomists, have yet to spend time studying and describing it.

Taxonomists study new species to work out which other living things they are related to, and record their characteristics. The species is

## NEWSCAST

**LUCKY ESCAPE** — A three-year-old boy in Australia has had a lucky escape. Several days before he found nine small eggs near his house. He thought that he would keep them until they hatched. He put the eggs inside a plastic container, which he then placed inside his bedroom wardrobe. A few days later his mother found the container. Inside were seven small snakes and two eggs that had not hatched. Fortunately, the baby snakes had been unable to get out of the container. A reptile expert, who took them away, said that the three year-old was lucky, as they were eastern brown snakes. This type of snake is one of Australia’s most poisonous.

then described as having been discovered. The scientists also study how new species behave, for example, what they eat, and the habitats in which they live.



The new species listed in the Wild Mekong report include 82 plants, 21 reptiles, 13 fish, five amphibians, and five mammals. The report gives extra information on ten of them. One is a type of small catfish, which was found in Vietnam. Using the small fins at the front of its body it is able to “walk” over land. The fins keep it upright while it goes forward as its body makes snake-like movements.

One of the new amphibians is the yin-yang frog. The name comes from its black and white eyes, as they look similar to the yin-yang symbol in Chinese [philosophy](#). In Chinese, yin and yang mean “shadow and light”. According to this way of thinking opposing forces in the natural world (such as water and fire, hot and cold, male and female) are connected and dependent on each other.

Another frog, called Quang’s tree frog, makes unusual sounds. Normally frogs make one sound that they then keep repeating. Yet Quang’s tree frog sounds more like

a bird. It makes several different sounds such as clicks, whistles and chirps. These noises are made in a different order so no “song” sounds the same. Both new frogs, which are only a few centimeters long, were also discovered in Vietnam.

The WWF says that over the last 40 years around 30 percent of the Greater Mekong’s forests have been cut down. Many people depend on the Mekong River for food and to water their crops. In recent years, several large dams have been built on the river to generate electricity. Work has just begun on a huge new dam in Laos. The WWF warns that all this human activity is endangering many of the known and, as yet, undiscovered species in the region. ■

## ANCIENT CHEESE MAKING

A team of scientists has discovered that Stone Age people living in parts of Europe were making cheese around 7,000 years ago. This is several thousand years earlier than cheese making was thought to have first begun.

Over 30 years ago archaeologists working in Poland dug up many pieces, or shards, of pottery. These were believed to have been pieces of pots that were used by a group of farmers. Other items that were discovered in the same place as the broken pots, such as animal bones and seeds, suggest that the farmers kept cattle and planted crops.

Some of the shards of pottery were perforated, or had many small holes in them. At the time it was not known what these pots were used for. Some ideas were for carrying hot coals, making beer or separating honey from honeycombs.

However, one archaeologist suspected that they might have been used for cheese making. If true the pots with the small holes in them would have been similar to a modern day sieve, or colander. These items can be used to separate the solid pieces from a liquid. When the liquid is poured into them it drains through the holes while the solid bits remain in the pot. When making cheese the solid bits in milk, called curds, are separated from the liquid, or whey.

Today, it is possible to carry out special chemical tests on old pottery. From these it is sometimes possible to work out what was kept in the pots. Recently, a group of scientists from Britain and Poland decided to do some of these tests on the perforated shards of pottery that had been found many years ago.



To do this some of the shards were cleaned. Then tiny pieces were broken off and crushed. The pots were made from clay. Any fats that had become trapped in the pores, or very tiny holes, of the clay, were separated from the crushed bits. These fats were then chemically tested. The tests showed that the fats came from milk. Of 50 shards of pottery, which came from 34 different sieves, about 40% contained milk fats. This meant that the

sieve-like pots were almost certainly used to make cheese.

The scientists say that making cheese at this time would have had advantages. Cheese could be transported more easily than milk and can be eaten long after it had been made.

Around 7,000 years ago it's thought that most people were "lactose **intolerant**". Lactose is a type of sugar that is found in milk. People who are lactose intolerant can become sick if they drink milk or eat some of the things that are made from it. In the type of cheese making done by these Stone Age people much of the lactose would have been in the whey, or liquid, which was not used. It's therefore possible that they would have been able to eat the cheese but may have become sick if they drank the milk from which it was made. ■

## ASTEROID FLYBY

On December 13 an unmanned Chinese spacecraft, or space probe, flew within two miles (3.2 kilometers) of a large asteroid. It did so at the same time that the asteroid made its closest approach to the Earth since 2008.

While flying close to the asteroid the Chang'e 2 spacecraft took a number of pictures of the asteroid, which is called 4179 Toutatis. The spacecraft was named after an ancient Chinese Moon goddess, called Chang'e. The asteroid's name, Toutatis, comes from a god that was worshipped by the Celts in parts of ancient Gaul (modern day France) and ancient Britain.

The Chang'e 2 spacecraft was launched two years ago. It was designed as a lunar probe, or a type of

unmanned spacecraft, which would study the Moon. However, after this study ended controllers in China moved the craft to a different area of space. Then, in April this year, it began to travel to the place where it would eventually meet and then fly past the Toutatis asteroid.



One of the Chang'e 2 spacecraft's pictures of 4179 Toutatis asteroid (CNSA)

Even though it had been planned for many months China's space agency did not make any announcement until it was known that the flypast, or flyby, had been successful. This is the third time that there has been an asteroid flyby. In the past NASA (National Aeronautics and Space Administration) has sent a spacecraft to an asteroid called Eros. Japan's Hayabusa space probe collected samples from another and the ESA's (European Space Agency) Rosetta space probe will attempt to land on a comet in 2014.

However, unlike these other space objects, Toutatis is one that has been listed as "**potentially hazardous**". This is because in the future it could be a danger to the Earth. Toutatis, which has an uneven shape, is about three miles (five kilometers) wide. Most scientists believe that it was probably a large asteroid hitting the Earth 65 million years ago that led to the extinction of the dinosaurs. They think that this asteroid was around six miles (ten kilometers) across.

Scientists are sure that there is no danger of Toutatis hitting the Earth for at least the next 400 years. This time the asteroid passed by at a distance of about 4.3 million miles (seven million kilometers). This is roughly 18 times the distance from the Earth to the Moon. Over the last 30 years Toutatis has flown past the Earth on six occasions. The next time will be in 2016. After that the asteroid will not reappear again until 2069. Then its flyby will be closer, or around 7.7 times the distance from the Earth to the Moon.

In recent years, scientists have discussed what should be done if a large asteroid were to be found heading towards the Earth. There are several ideas. One is to destroy it with a very powerful weapon. Another would be to use a specially designed spacecraft, or "space tractor", to push the asteroid into a different orbit or direction. A further possibility would be for a space probe to fly alongside the asteroid and cover one side of it in a metallic type of spray paint. This too could alter its direction, as it would change the way the light from the Sun affects the asteroid's orbit. ■

## Newsademic.com

**Editor:** Rebecca Watson

**American Editor:** Chris Tarn

### Acknowledgements:

News story photographs by gettyimages

For further details about Newsademic

and subscription prices visit

[www.newsademic.com](http://www.newsademic.com)

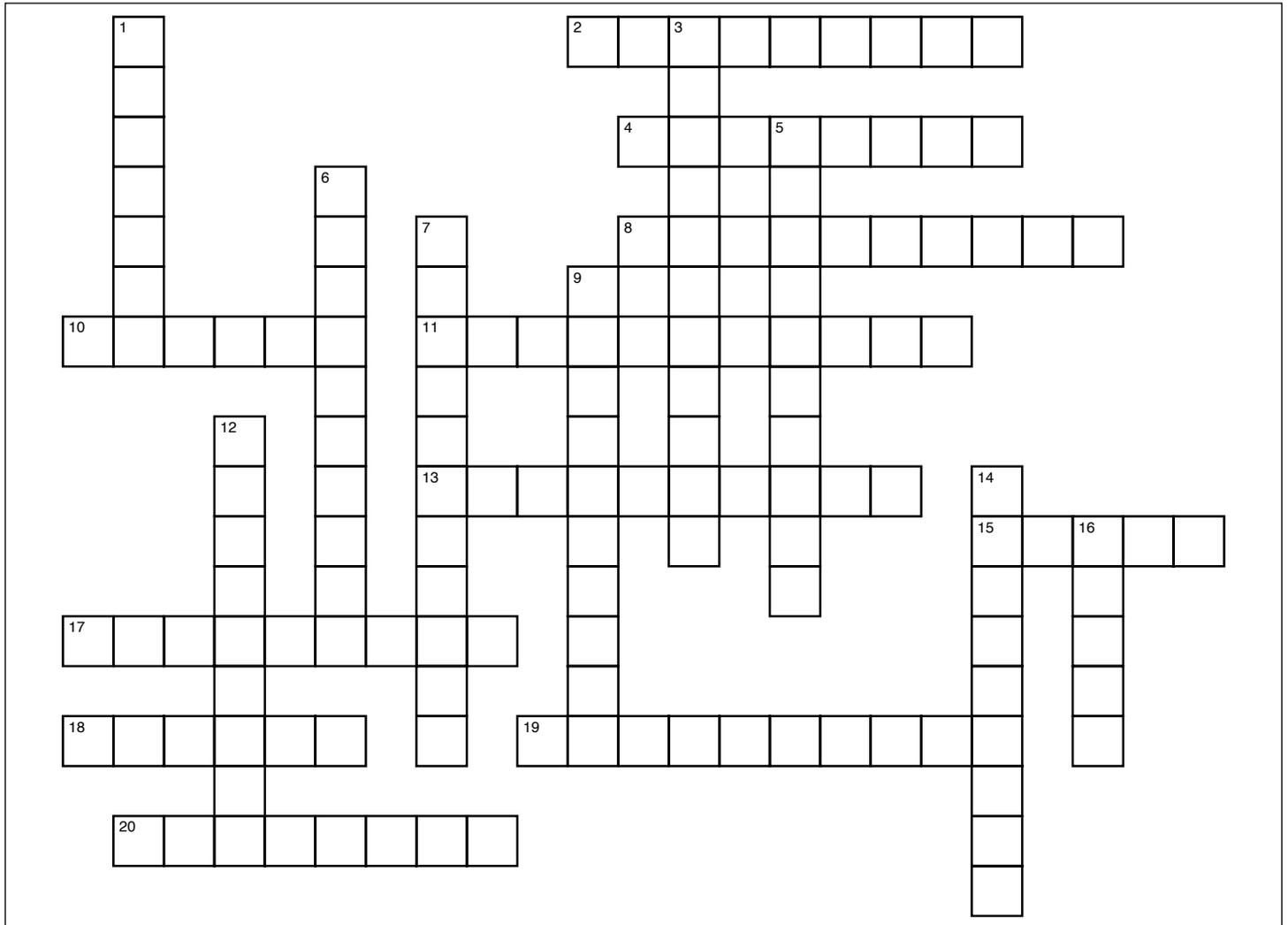
SCHOOL SUBSCRIBERS MAY  
PHOTOCOPY ANY PART OF THIS  
NEWSPAPER FOR USE WITHIN  
THEIR SCHOOL ONLY.

© Newsademic 2012

# ISSUE 187

## 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 *Noun* A sudden violent change in the Earth's surface
- 4 *Noun* A prediction of what will happen in the future
- 8 *Adjective* Describes something taken on or inherited from the previous generation
- 10 *Adjective* Describes someone or something that intentionally causes suffering and pain
- 11 *Adverb* Describes something of which there is a possibility
- 13 *Noun* The movement of people to a place of safety
- 15 *Noun* An official representative, especially one sent by one government to another
- 17 *Noun* Loss of the power to move
- 18 *Noun (Plural)* Acts of producing false information or fake items in order to get what you want
- 19 *Adjective* Not able or willing to endure or put up with something
- 20 *Adjective* Closed tightly together

**Down**

- 1 *Noun* A person who takes part in a sport or other activity unpaid
- 3 *Adjective* Happening on the Earth, instead of in the sky or ocean
- 5 *Noun* Something done to avoid harm or danger
- 6 *Noun* The study of the nature of knowledge, reality, and existence.
- 7 *Verb* Stopping something from happening by using force or authority
- 9 *Noun* A short message at the beginning of a book, on a memorial, or on a piece of music that honors someone or a past event
- 12 *Noun* The amount by which something is curved or bent
- 14 *Noun* A substance that is released from a gland or cell
- 16 *Noun* Guarding a place or period of prayer, especially at night

# ISSUE 187

## 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.

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

Demics are tokens that Individual and Family Subscribers can earn. They are awarded for answering this Glossary Puzzle and/or the Daily News question – accessible by logged in users – correctly. Demics earned can be used by Family and Individual Subscribers in the Newsademic online store.



### GET EXTRA DEMICS\*

\* Only applies to those who have purchased a Newsademic Individual or Family Subscription

If you wish to earn additional Demics log in to [www.newsademic.com](http://www.newsademic.com), go to the Prize Competitions area and submit the missing word. Puzzle entries must be submitted by 10 pm on January 9, 2013 (GMT/UTC).\*

MISSING WORD ANSWER =

ISSUE 186 ANSWERS

P R O T O C O L