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Pope Francis at the Mass that celebrated his inauguration as the Roman Catholic Church's new pontiff

A SOUTH AMERICAN POPE

Over 200,000 people crowded into St. Peter's Square, in the Vatican, on March 19. All had come to take part in a special Mass, or religious service. The Mass celebrated the **inauguration** of the new pope, or pontiff. Six days earlier Pope Francis had been chosen as the head of the Roman Catholic Church. As pontiff he is now the religious leader of the 1.3 billion people in the world who follow the Roman Catholic faith.

The Vatican is the headquarters of the Roman Catholic Church. Even though Vatican City is in Rome, the capital of Italy, it is a separate city-state. Vatican City is the smallest independent state, in both size and population, in the world. The pope is also known as the Bishop of Rome.

Pope Francis, whose former name is Jorge Mario Bergoglio, is 76 years of age. He was born in Argentina. Before

being selected as the new pontiff he was the leader of the Roman Catholic Church in Argentina and the archbishop of Buenos Aires, the country's capital city. The families of both his mother and father originally came from Italy.

Last month, Pope Benedict the Sixteenth announced that he had decided to retire, or stand down. This was unusual. Normally pontiffs continue to lead the Catholic Church until they die. Only then is another person selected to take over. The last pope to stand down was Pope Gregory the Twelfth in 1415, almost 600 year ago. Pope Benedict, who is from Germany, is 85 years old. He said that he had decided to retire because of his age and poor health.

There is a special procedure for choosing a new pontiff. This is called a conclave, or papal conclave. Currently the Roman Catholic Church has 203 cardinals. They come from 69 different

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countries. These people are the Catholic Church's most senior officials. While all cardinals can take part in a papal conclave only those under 80 years of age can vote. The new pope does not have to be one of the cardinals. Yet it is very unusual for anyone else to be selected.

The conclave takes place in the Sistine Chapel, which is in the Vatican. The walls and ceiling of the chapel are covered in paintings, or murals. Most were completed over 500 years ago. Michelangelo (1475 – 1564), the famous Renaissance artist, painted the chapel's ceiling and end wall. One of his ceiling murals shows the fingers of "God" and "man" only a few centimeters apart. Called *The Creation of Adam*, it is one of the most famous paintings in the world.



White smoke above the Sistine Chapel's roof

When a papal conclave takes place two metal stoves are set up inside the chapel. A chimney is put on the roof. This is connected to the stoves by a long pipe made out of copper. The ballots, or voting papers, used by the cardinals are burned in one of the stoves. The other is used to send signals. These tell the people waiting in St. Peter's Square whether or not a new pontiff has been appointed.

The cardinals meet in the Sistine Chapel and discuss which person they think would be best as the next pope. A series of secret votes are then held. The first ballot takes place on the first afternoon of the conclave. If no one

gets more than two-thirds of the votes more ballots are held the following day. This continues until one person gets the required number of votes.

Every time a vote takes place special chemicals are burned in one of the stoves. These make either black or white smoke. Black smoke coming out of the chimney tells the people in St. Peter's Square that the cardinals have yet to reach an agreement. White smoke signals that a new pontiff has been chosen.

In 2005, the papal conclave finished within 24 hours. Then Pope Benedict was elected on the fourth ballot. This time there were five votes before the cardinals came to an agreement. On March 13, white smoke appeared above the roof of the Sistine Chapel.

The name of the new pontiff is announced soon after he has been chosen. Popes decide on their own papal names. Pope Francis said that he chose his name as a [tribute](#) to St. Francis of Assisi (1182 – 1226). St. Francis was a friar. Even though he was born into a rich family, he decided to give up his wealth and live in poverty. He preached about God and the Bible, and had many followers. He founded an organization, or order, of monks that became known as the Franciscans. Today, the Franciscans are a large organization that has groups all over the world.

Pope Francis is the first Jesuit to become the leader of the Roman Catholic Church. As a Jesuit he is a member of the Society of Jesus. This group was first set up in the mid 1500s. Today there are around 20,000 Jesuits. Most but not all are priests. Jesuits spend a lot of time helping the poor and often work in schools and universities.

Jesuits do not [aspire](#) to become senior priests, or bishops. Therefore

Mario Bergoglio's appointment as an archbishop, in 1998, was unusual. As archbishop of Buenos Aires he continued to live in his small flat, or apartment, instead of moving to the archbishop's palace. He also cooked his own meals, traveled on local buses and spent much of his time with the city's poorer families. He was made a cardinal in 2001.

As well as being the first pontiff to be called Francis, and the first Jesuit to become the leader of the Catholic Church, Pope Francis is also the first non-European pope.

Many heads of state and elected leaders attended Pope Francis's inauguration Mass. They included the kings of Belgium and the Netherlands. Angela Merkel, the chancellor of Germany, and the prime minister of Spain, Mariano Rajoy, also attended. Joe Biden, the American vice president, represented the U.S. Leaders of other religious faiths were also invited.

Most people living in South American countries are Roman Catholics. Dilma Rousseff, the president of Brazil, Rafael Correa, the president of Ecuador and the president of Chile, Sebastián Piñera, were all at the Mass. Cristina Fernández de Kirchner, the president of Argentina, arrived in Rome a few days before the Mass. She was the first elected leader to visit Pope Francis at the Vatican.

On March 19, large crowds gathered in the early hours of the morning in the main square next to the cathedral in Buenos Aires. They watched the Mass in St. Peter's Square, which was broadcast on large screens.

During the Mass Pope Francis gave a short homily, or sermon. He talked about the need to protect and help children, the elderly and all those who are in need. ■

CYPRUS BANKING CRISIS

Thousands of protesters gathered outside the parliament in Nicosia, the capital of Cyprus, on March 19. Inside the elected members of parliament were discussing what many people are now calling “the Cyprus banking **crisis**”.

Since 2004 Cyprus has been a member of the European Union (EU). In 2008, it became one of the 17 EU member countries that use the euro as their currency. This group of countries are often called the ‘eurozone’.

In recent years several eurozone countries have had severe financial problems. Either their governments had borrowed too much money and were having trouble paying some of it back or their banks had gotten into difficulties. These countries include Greece, Portugal, Ireland, and Spain.

The European Central Bank (ECB) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) agreed to lend these countries extra money. Providing these types of “rescue” loans is called a bailout.

Of all the countries in the EU Cyprus has one of the smallest economies. However, since it joined the EU Cyprus’s two largest banks have expanded their operations. Over the last ten years many people from Russia have moved to Cyprus. Most of them use these banks. Many Russian companies and wealthy people living in Russia also keep some of their money in banks in Cyprus.

The banks lent large amounts of money to Greek borrowers. Now, because of the recent problems in Greece, the banks are unlikely to get much of this money back. The banks also lent money to local companies to build new houses. Yet, over the last few years, houses in Cyprus

have lost much of their value. Many companies that borrowed to build houses are therefore also having difficulty in paying the money back.

Because of these problems the banks in Cyprus are running out of money. This means that they are now in danger of collapsing, or having to shut down. The Cypriot government also has financial problems. It therefore does not have any money to help the banks.



Nicos Anastasiades, the president of Cyprus

On March 15, Nicos Anastasiades, the president of Cyprus, met with EU leaders as well as the ECB and IMF. They all agreed to provide a bailout of €17 billion (\$22 billion). Of this €10 billion (\$12.3 billion) would be used to rescue the banks.

However, the EU leaders said that the bailout would only be given if people in Cyprus helped to pay for some of the money that the banks needed. The banks were told that they were to keep a certain percentage of the money in everyone’s bank accounts. For people with larger amounts this would be about 10%. For others it would be around 6%. To stop people taking all their money out, the banks were ordered not to open.

This type of thing has not happened with other bailouts. EU leaders explained that the difference with Cyprus is the large amount of Russian money that has been paid into its banks. EU leaders suspect that some of this money may have been made unlawfully. Russia is not

a member of the EU. The EU leaders believe that Russians, with bank accounts in Cyprus, should help to provide some of the money for the bank rescue.

Most people in Cyprus are very angry about the bailout plan. Russia is also annoyed. Vladimir Putin, the Russian president complained. In the recent past Russia has lent the government of Cyprus €2.5 billion (\$3.23 billion). It says that it may now demand that this is returned.

The parliament in Cyprus refused to agree to the ECB and IMF demands. However, Mr. Anastasiades said that if the bailout money was not received the banks would collapse. If this happened, he explained, many people would lose all their money, most businesses would have to shut down and Cyprus would have to give up the euro. More talks will now have to be held with the EU, ECB, IMF and Russia to find a solution. ■

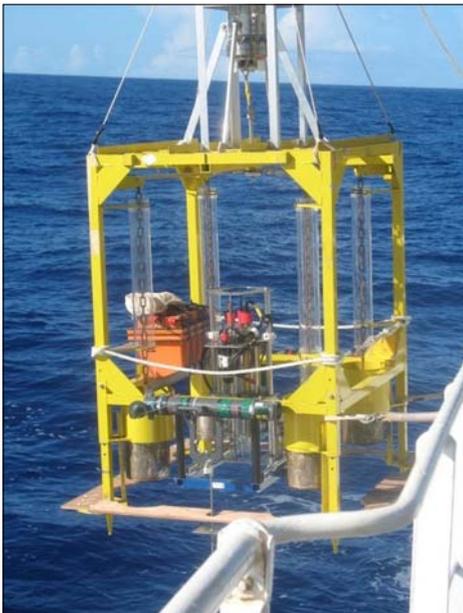
NEWSCAST

FAKE FINGER FRAUD — A doctor in Brazil has been arrested for an unusual crime. When workers arrive or leave the hospital, where she worked, they put a finger on a biometric device. This recognizes their fingerprint and records when they start and finish work. The amount people are paid depends on how many hours they work. The doctor was found to be carrying six fake fingers made of silicone. Each was a copy of a fellow worker’s finger. The doctor had been placing the silicone fingers on the biometric device when she came to work. She then did the same as she left. The owners of the fake fingers were therefore being paid for doing nothing.

DEEPEST OCEAN MICROBES

A Danish-led international team of scientists have been researching some of the deepest places in the world's oceans. To their surprise they discovered that a large number of tiny organisms, or microbes, live at the bottom of the Mariana Trench, in the Pacific Ocean.

The Mariana Trench is off the coast of the Pacific Ocean's Mariana Islands. The deepest part is about 6.8 miles (11 kilometers) below the surface of the sea.



The robot that tested sediment samples at the bottom of the Mariana Trench and brought them to the surface (Anni Glud)

The depth of the Mariana Trench is about the same distance below sea level as the height at which many passenger aircraft fly above the ground. If you could stand at the bottom of the trench you would be instantly crushed. This is because the pressure from the weight of water above your head would be roughly 1,000 times higher than it is at the surface. What's more the water temperature at this depth is close to freezing.

Below 656 feet (200 meters) there is no light in the seas and

oceans. The organisms that live at the bottom of the Mariana Trench are therefore not just able to withstand the pressure and cold but the darkness as well.

It is estimated that about 2% of the world's oceans are deeper than 3.7 miles (six kilometers). The seawater below this depth is known as the hadal zone, or hadal depths. This name comes from Hades, the Ancient Greek god of the underworld.

The scientists lowered a specially designed robot, or lander, into the trench. The robot was able to take samples of the sediment, or layer of sand, at the bottom. This sediment contains tiny bits of dead plants and fish that have sunk to the bottom. This is what the microbes feed on.

The lander was also able to work out how much oxygen was in the sediment samples. Nearly all living things use oxygen. A smaller amount of oxygen in the sediment therefore suggested that it contained a larger number of microbes.

The scientists used the robot in a similar way at a different part of the ocean, which was half as deep. Surprisingly there seemed to be ten times as many microbes living in the sediment at the bottom of the Mariana Trench. This may be because the walls of the trench act like a **funnel**. Therefore, when compared to other parts of the ocean more bits of dead plant and fish sink into these very deep trenches.

The robot also brought sediment samples up to the surface. The scientists then studied these. They were able to confirm that the samples from the Mariana Trench contained many more microbes. However, most of them did not survive. This is because the microbes are used to living under great pressure in the cold and the dark.

The lander was also fitted with lights and video cameras. A few larger organisms were filmed swimming along the bottom of the trench. These were amphipods, or shrimp-like creatures, about one inch (2.5 centimeters) long. ■

GREENLAND ELECTION

In an election, which was held on March 12, Aleqa Hammond's Siumut (Forward) party won 14 of the 31 seats in Greenland's parliament.

Most people expect that Ms. Hammond will be able to persuade another party to work with her own. Siumut would then have a majority, or more than half of the seats, in the parliament. So, as Siumut's leader, Ms. Hammond will become Greenland's first female prime minister.



Aleqa Hammond

Only 57,000 people live in Greenland, which is the world's largest island. It used to be a Danish colony. In 1979, Denmark gave Greenland permission to set up its own parliament. Now it is a self-ruling province of the Kingdom of Denmark. The parliament, known as the Landsting, is in Nuuk, Greenland's capital city.

The Landsting can rule on things such as schools, hospitals and medical care. Other areas, such as finance and dealing with other countries, are looked after by Denmark. Two members of Greenland's Landsting also attend the Danish parliament.

Greenland makes money by selling the fish and shrimp that its fishermen catch. However, it still relies on Denmark, which currently gives its former colony 3.5 billion kroner (\$607 million) each year. This money is used to pay for public services such as schools and hospitals.



Nuuk, Greenland's capital city

In recent years, many valuable mineral resources have been found in Greenland. These include oil and gas fields, which are under the seabed, iron ore and uranium. Rare earths have also been discovered.

Rare earth is the name given to a group of 17 elements. Many have difficult names to remember or pronounce, such as praseodymium or lanthanum.

Today rare earth elements are very important. Some people even describe them as “21st century gold”. This is because they are needed to make many of the latest high tech items such as flat-screen televisions, electric cars, wind turbines, computers and cell phones. They are also used in military equipment such as missiles. Rare earth elements are useful because they have special thermal, optical, electrical, and magnetic [properties](#). Currently about 95% of all the rare earth elements used in the world come from China.

In recent years, warmer temperatures have been melting much of the sea ice around Greenland. This means that it is easier for large ships to reach the island. Any resources

that are mined can now be easily transported to other countries.

Many people in Greenland want companies from other parts of the world to start mining these resources. However, others would like to protect Greenland's seal hunting and fishing traditions.

Inuit Ataqatigiit (IA), the other main political party, has governed Greenland for the last four years. Both Siumut and IA agree that Greenland needs to make money from its resources. Yet they disagree on how this should be done.

IA wants to allow international mining companies to bring thousands of workers to Greenland and create jobs for local people. Ms. Hammond argues that these companies should not be able to make their own decisions in Greenland. She also says that mining companies should pay a royalty, or fixed amount, for everything that they dig up, or extract, from Greenland.

Ms. Hammond went to university in Montreal, in Canada. She is able to speak several languages including Greenlandic, Danish, English and German. ■

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

Each year, on March 8, it is International Woman's Day (IWD). Nowadays IWD is celebrated in many countries. On this day people remember both what women have done in the past, and their achievements today. Yet IWD is also used to remind people that, in many countries, inequalities between men and women still exist.

The first IWD was held in 1911, just over 100 years ago. Then, events were held in Denmark, Germany, Austria, and Switzerland.

Over one million women and men attended. They were [campaigning](#) for women to have the right to both vote and stand in elections. In most countries, at that time, women were not allowed to do this. They also said that women should be entitled to the same training and education as men, and to fair working conditions in places such as factories.



Today the United Nations (U.N.) promotes and sponsors IWD. It has its own organization that works to stop inequalities between men and women in all its member countries. It is called U.N. Women and led by Michelle Bachelet. She was the president of Chile from 2006 to 2010. Ms. Bachelet says that even though many things have changed over the last 100 years, inequality is still common.

For example, of all the children in the world who do not get a basic primary school education, most are girls. This means that in many countries it is much harder for girls to go on to study at college or university.

In recent years the U.N. has chosen a theme for IWD. This year it was “A promise is a promise: Time for action to end violence against women”.

Violence is a problem. In many countries there are frequent attacks

on women. Over the last 12 months two of these attacks have made news headlines all around the world. Both incidents shocked most people who read or heard about them.

In one, Malala Yousafzai, was shot in the head while she was on a bus on her way home from school. Ms. Yousafzai, who is 14 years old, lived in northern Pakistan. She had been campaigning for better education for girls in her country. The person who attacked her supports a militant Islamic group that believes that women should not have an education. Ms. Yousafzai survived the attack and is now living in Britain.

The other incident happened in India. There, a 23 year-old student was traveling on a bus. Seven men attacked her. The woman had to be flown to Singapore for special medical treatment. A few days later, she died from her injuries.

NEWSCAST

DRAGON GIRL — Scientists have just confirmed that some ancient bones found on a beach on the Isle of Wight, in Britain, are from a new type of ancient flying reptile. It lived around the same time as the dinosaurs, between 220 million and 65 million years ago. The scientists have named the creature *Vectidraco daisymorrisae*. *Vectidraco* is Latin for “dragon from the Isle of Wight”. Yet *daisymorrisae* is not Latin or Ancient Greek. A nine year old girl found the fossil and the scientists decided to name the flying reptile after her. Daisy Morris discovered the bones several years ago. Realizing the bones were unusual Daisy’s parents sent them to a dinosaur expert at a nearby university.

In some countries, such as China, Vietnam, and Russia, IWD is a national holiday. In these countries it is similar to Mothers’ Day or Mothering Sunday when people give gifts to the women in their families. ■

CEASEFIRE ANNOUNCEMENT

On March 21, Abdullah Öcalan, who is being held in a prison in Turkey, made an historic announcement. He said that he decided that the organization he leads, the Kurdistan Workers’ Party (PKK) is now prepared to agree to a ceasefire.

The PKK was formed in the 1970s. At first it wanted to set up an independent country called Kurdistan. The Kurds are a separate people without a country. They have their own customs, culture and language. Others have always ruled the places in which they live.

Around 25 million Kurds live in the region where the borders of Turkey, Syria, Iraq, and Iran meet. In Turkey there are about 15 million Kurds, which is roughly 20% of the country’s population.

In the 1990s the PKK fought a war with Turkey. Over 35,000 people were killed. In 1999, Turkish secret agents managed to capture Mr. Öcalan, in Kenya. Since then he has been held as a single prisoner on a small island near Istanbul, Turkey’s largest city.

Since the capture of Mr. Öcalan, fighting between the PKK and the Turkish army has continued. Over the last two years this fighting has caused the deaths of nearly 900 people. Nowadays the PKK claims that it is fighting for the right to have a local Kurdish government instead of independence. Not all Kurdish people living in Turkey support the PKK.

The Turkish army has found it difficult to defeat the PKK. One reason is that many PKK fighters are based across the border in northern Iraq. The PKK has about 7,000 fighters, half of which are thought to be in Iraq.



The Turkish government has always claimed that the PKK is a terrorist organization. The U.S. and European Union (EU) member countries also believe that the PKK is a terrorist group. This, they say, is because of its attacks on both the Turkish army and civilians.

The Peace and Democracy Party (BDP) is a Kurdish political party in Turkey. In the recent past its leaders have said that the PKK should give up its fight.

Last year, it became known that Turkish government officials had been visiting the island where Mr. Öcalan is being held. Many people suspected that discussions about a ceasefire or peace talks were taking place. In recent days the PKK agreed to release eight Turkish soldiers and officials. These people had been held captive in northern Iraq for the last two years.

Mr. Öcalan chose to make his announcement on March 21. This was the day that Kurdish people began to celebrate Nowruz, or the beginning of their New Year. Most people in Turkey hope that, after many years, the fighting between Turkish forces and the PKK has now finally ended. ■

BLACK DEATH DISCOVERY

Archaeologists working with a railway construction company, in London, the capital of Britain, have uncovered thirteen 650 year old skeletons. It's believed that the bones are of people who died from what's known as the "Plague". Also called the Black Death the Plague was a **pandemic** that is thought to have killed at least 25 million people in Europe.

In recent years, work has started on building a new railway in London. Called Crossrail, the new railway is currently the largest construction project in Europe. It includes about 31 miles (50 kilometers) of new tunnels. Eight huge machines are being used to excavate these tunnels deep under the city.



Skeletons uncovered in tunnel shaft

Along the route of the new railway large circular shafts are being dug down to the tunnels. The discovery was made soon after digging work began on one of these shafts at a place called Charterhouse Square. The skeletons, which were laid out in two neat rows, were about eight feet (2.4 meters) below the ground. Pieces of pottery were found nearby. Experts said that these dated to the mid 14th century.

The Black Death arrived in Europe in 1328 and lasted until 1351. There were also smaller outbreaks of the Plague for the next 60 years.

The disease is believed to have killed about one third of the European population at the time. In many cities around half of the people who lived in them died. Then people did not know what caused the disease or how it spread. Many thought that it was a punishment from God.

The Black Death is believed to be a version of a disease called bubonic plague, which still exists today. Fleas, which have bitten rats carrying the disease, can spread it if they then go on to bite a human. Nowadays bubonic plague can be cured with the correct medical treatment.

It's thought that the Black Death first began in China. It eventually reached the Black Sea. From there the Plague quickly spread throughout Europe. All the wooden ships of the time had rats on board. So by following the trade routes these ships helped to spread the disease from one country to another.

People believed that the bodies of those who had died should be buried quickly. This, they believed, would stop the disease from spreading. Carts were pulled through the streets on which dead bodies were piled. They were then buried outside towns and cities in mass graves known as plague pits.

The 13 skeletons recently found in London, which were of both men and women, were in individual graves in neat rows. The archaeologists therefore think that these people were some of the first to die from the disease. Later, because so many were dying, it was not possible to do this and mass graves were used. One historical record suggests that as many as 50,000 people were buried in a plague pit near Charterhouse Square.

Tests will now be done on the bones to see if they contain traces

of the bacterium that is thought to be the cause of the Black Death. Experts say that there is no health risk, as this bacterium cannot survive in the soil for long.



Archaeologists working in the tunnel shaft

Currently there is a team of around 100 archaeologists working on the Crossrail project. So far, along the route of the new railway, they have made many discoveries. These include hundreds of skeletons, Roman coins, an ancient pathway from the Bronze Age, and the 38,000 year old bones of a woolly mammoth. ■

ENGINEERING PRIZE

On March 18, it was announced that five people would share a new worldwide prize for engineering. This was the first time that the \$1.5 million prize, called the Queen Elizabeth Prize for Engineering, had been awarded. The announcement was made, in London, the capital of Britain.

The prize has been organized by the Royal Academy of Engineering. Eleven large companies from Britain, Germany, Japan, and India have donated the money for the award. They include BP, one of the world's largest oil and natural gas companies, and Tata Steel. The Tata Group, which has its headquarters in India, is a **conglomerate** with operations in more than 80 countries.

The organizers say that one reason for the new prize is to encourage more students to study engineering. Recently, several large companies in Britain, which need to employ qualified engineers, have complained. They claim that not enough younger people are studying subjects such as science, engineering, technology, and mathematics when they go to university.



Another reason, the organizers say, for setting up the Queen Elizabeth Prize was that there is not a Nobel Prize for engineering.

For over 100 years, Nobel Prizes have been awarded for chemistry, physics, medicine, literature, and peace. These awards are named after Alfred Nobel. He was a well-known Swedish chemist and businessman who invented dynamite. Before he died in 1896, he arranged for part of his large fortune to pay for all future Nobel Prizes. The organizers of the engineering prize hope that, in the future, their award will become as important as Nobel Prizes.

The Queen Elizabeth Prize for Engineering will be awarded every two years. It is named after Britain's current monarch and head of state, Queen Elizabeth the Second.

A judging panel, made up of 16 people, chooses the winners. The prize is awarded for an engineering project or invention that has helped, or benefited, people from all around the world. For this first prize the panel received hundreds of nominations from many different countries.

The five engineers who jointly won the prize all helped to set up the internet. They include Sir Tim Berners-Lee, who invented the world wide web, and Marc Andreessen, the person who created the first widely used browser. The other three, Robert Kahn, Vinton Cerf and Louis Pouzin, developed the internet protocol (IP). This helps computers communicate with one another. Sir Tim is from Britain, Mr. Pouzin comes from France and the others are all Americans.

The winners will all attend a special ceremony, in London, in June. Queen Elizabeth will formally present them with the award as well as their share of the prize money. ■

PERSIAN NEW YEAR

On March 21, people in Iran celebrated the beginning of Nowruz. This is the Persian, or Iranian, New Year. In Farsi (the Persian language) Nowruz means "new day".

Nowruz is the first day of Fardardin, which is the first month of the year. In the Iranian calendar the year that has just begun is 1392. The New Year holiday lasts for 13 days.

Nowruz dates back over 2,400 years to the time of the Persian Empire. This ancient empire was centered on modern-day Iran. It included parts of Turkey, Iraq, and central Asia. Today many people living in countries such as Turkey, Azerbaijan, Afghanistan, Kazakhstan, and Turkmenistan celebrate Nowruz.

The holiday begins on the day of the spring equinox. This usually occurs on March 21. In the northern hemisphere many people consider this day to be the beginning of spring. Equinox comes from two Latin words that mean "equal" and

"night". Around the spring equinox the length of night and day are about the same. Then, after March 21, the nights get shorter and the days longer.

For many people in Iran, Nowruz is the most important festival of the year. Just before the holiday starts, there is a tradition of people cleaning their handmade Persian rugs. Nowadays, small trucks are used to collect the rugs and take them to the places where they are washed. People also clean their houses at this time.

It's traditional to greet others on Nowruz. After the New Year starts many people visit their family elders and friends. Families make sure that they have plenty of food to share with those who visit them. Presents are often exchanged.

During the holiday, many people leave the larger cities to stay in the countryside. On the 13th day, the last day of the festival, picnics are organized. Most people spend the day outdoors and many take part in singing and dancing.



Haft-Seen table

One important part of the celebrations is setting the table with a number of symbolic items. This is known as Haft-Seen, which means seven "S"s. The items are candles, decorated eggs, water, a goldfish in a bowl, an apple, a mirror, and a bowl of sabzeh. Sabzeh are small wheat or barley seeds that have just sprouted.

Each item symbolizes something. For example, the mirror represents the sky, the goldfish animals, the candles fire, and the apple the Earth. The decorated eggs are a symbol of fertility and rebirth after the winter months. The bowl of sabzeh represents plants, new growth and the coming of spring. Other items such as fresh fruits, garlic, coins, sweet pastries, and a holy book might also be placed on the Haft-Seen table.

Some believe that whatever a person does on Nowruz will affect what happens for the rest of the year. Therefore, if you are kind to everyone you meet, the following year will be good. However, if you get into arguments and disagree with other people it will be a bad year. ■

CELEBRATING ST. PATRICK'S DAY

Each year, on March 17, people in many different countries celebrate St. Patrick's Day. In some cities there are large parades. For many St. Patrick's Day is a religious holiday on which they attend special church services.

St. Patrick is the patron saint of Ireland. A patron saint is one chosen to represent a particular group of people or a country. The island of Ireland is made up of the Republic of Ireland (an independent country, commonly known as Ireland) and Northern Ireland, which is part of Britain.

St. Patrick was a Christian saint. This means that he was someone who has been officially recognized as a very holy person by the Roman Catholic Church. Although there are many legends about St. Patrick, he was a real person. He is believed to have lived sometime between the years 380 and 460.



Shamrock

It's thought that St. Patrick was born in Britain. As a young man he was captured and taken to Ireland as a slave. He eventually escaped and returned to Britain. Later, he became a priest and then went back to Ireland to teach the people living there about Christianity.

One of the most famous legends about St. Patrick was that he **banished** all the snakes from Ireland. Today, although there are a few types of snakes found in Britain, there are none in Ireland.

One symbol of St. Patrick's Day is the shamrock, also known as a clover. Each stem of the plant has three leaves. Stories about St. Patrick say that he would use the shamrock as a symbol to teach people about Christianity. Christians are taught there is one God, but that He has three parts: the Father (God), the Son (Jesus Christ) and the Holy Spirit. The three-leaved shamrock is used as a symbol of this belief, which is known as the Holy Trinity.

Green is the color that is associated with St. Patrick. In Ireland people began wearing green ribbons and shamrocks on St. Patrick's Day hundreds of years ago.

St. Patrick's Day is celebrated in many places. This is because, throughout history, people from Ireland have traveled to many different countries and settled. These countries include New Zealand, Australia, the Caribbean, North and South America and Britain.

Tens of thousands of Irish people emigrated, or moved, to other countries during the 1800s. They did this in the hope of finding a better place to live where they could get a job and earn a living. In the 1800s there were several famines in Ireland so many people chose to leave.

The ancestors of millions of American and Canadian people came from Ireland. Today there are about 80 million people, in many different countries, who are descended from those who left Ireland between the late 1700s and early 1900s. These people are known as the Irish **Diaspora**. Today the population of Ireland and Northern Ireland combined is only about 6.5 million.



Chicago's green St. Patrick's Day river

Many cities around the world organize annual St. Patrick's Day parades. The largest is in New York City, in the U.S. In Chicago there is a tradition of putting green dye in the river that flows through the city. Nowadays the water in the fountain in front of the White House, the home of the American president, in Washington DC, is also dyed green as part of the celebrations. ■

CHINA'S NEW PRESIDENT

The ten-day meeting of the National People's Congress (NPC), in China, ended on March 15. This annual meeting takes place in Beijing, the country's capital city. It is held to pass new laws and discuss those that have been passed before. During this year's NPC the people who have been selected to lead China for the next ten years were formally appointed.

The NPC is held in the Great Hall of the People. This is a large building on one side of Tiananmen

Square, in the center of Beijing. Some people describe the NPC as the largest parliament in the world.

The Communist Party governs China. This is the only political party in the country and no others are allowed. Members of the NPC are therefore not democratically elected, as politicians in many other countries are. Instead Communist Party members select or appoint them.



China's new president, Xi Jinping

About 3,000 people, or delegates, attend the NPC. Leaders in different regions of China and the armed forces appoint these people for a five-year period. Most are members of the Communist Party, and there is usually little disagreement among them.

The Communist Party leaders tend to make the new laws and present them to the NPC to be discussed. It is rare for the NPC to alter or change these laws.

Last November, Xi Jinping was selected to be the leader of China's Communist Party. This meant that he had been chosen to be the country's president for the next ten years. However, he did not officially become the new president until March 14. This was when the NPC delegates formally approved his selection. Mr. Xi has now taken over from Hu Jintao, who has been China's president since 2003.

Mr. Xi is 61 years old. He is what some people in China call a

“princeling”. This describes a son or daughter of a previous senior Communist Party member, who is picked for an important job. Mr. Xi's father took part in the communist revolution over 60 years ago. He worked closely with Mao Zedong, the Communist Party's leader at that time.

Yet during the 1960s and 1970s, a time that became known as the Cultural Revolution, Mr. Xi's father was accused of being a **traitor** and put in prison. Mr. Xi was 16 at the time. He was sent to work on a farm in a remote part of China. His father was later accepted back into the Communist Party. Mr. Xi then went to study chemical engineering at one of the country's best universities.

Mr. Xi joined the Communist Party and held several government jobs in different parts of China. Before being selected as a future leader he was the Communist Party chief of Shanghai, one of the largest cities in the country.

On March 15, the NPC formally approved Li Keqiang as the country's new premier. This person is responsible for the day-to-day running of the country and is the second most important person in China. ■

STATE TO END DEATH PENALTY

On March 15, the elected members, or lawmakers, of Maryland's House of Delegates, or General Assembly, voted on the use of the death penalty in the state. After a two-hour debate the lawmakers voted 82 to 52 to repeal or abolish it.

The death penalty, which is also known as capital punishment, is banned in many countries. Many people believe that it is wrong to kill someone in this way. They argue that people who are guilty of

very serious crimes should be kept in prison for the rest of their lives. Others disagree. They claim that the death penalty is a **deterrent** and that it helps to stop people from committing these types of crimes.

Today roughly 60 countries still execute people who have been found guilty of serious crimes. About 100 have banned capital punishment. Other countries use it very rarely, or only in times of war. For example, last year India executed a man. He had been found guilty of taking part in a terrorist attack in 2008. At least 166 people died in the attack and over 300 were injured. This execution was the first to be carried out in India for eight years.

In Europe, if a country wants to be a member of the European Union (EU) it is not allowed to use the death penalty. Most capital punishment executions are carried out in China. Saudi Arabia is one of the few countries where executions are done in public and not in a prison building.



House of Delegates in Maryland

In the U.S. each of the country's 50 states has its own policy about capital punishment. Currently 32 states still use it. Yet most of these are doing so less frequently. More people now say that they are worried about the risk of an innocent person being given the death penalty. Last year 77 people in the U.S. were sentenced to death.

In Maryland five men have been executed in the last 37 years. It will

be the 18th state to abolish capital punishment. The last state to make this decision was Connecticut. Its lawmakers voted to abolish the death penalty last year.

For the decision, made by the elected members of Maryland's House of Delegates, to become law it has to be signed by the state's governor, Martin O'Malley. Most people in Maryland expect the governor to do this, as it is known that he disagrees with capital punishment. ■

CITES MEETING IN THAILAND

Delegates from 178 countries met in Bangkok, the capital of Thailand, between March 3 and 14. They were there to represent member countries of the Convention on International Trade of Endangered Species (CITES).

Nowadays, CITES (pronounced sight-ees) conventions take place every three years. CITES meetings are also known as the Conference of all the Parties, or COP. The meeting in Bangkok was called COP16, as it was the 16th time the member countries have met. CITES was first set up in 1973. Therefore, the latest meeting also marked the organization's 40th anniversary.

CITES's job is to make decisions about the trade, or buying and selling, of certain endangered plants and animals. It decides if the trade should be allowed, restricted or banned. In the past CITES member countries have restricted the sale of things such as mahogany wood from the Amazon rainforest, elephant tusks, crocodile skins, corals, and sea horses. In total CITES [regulates](#) the trade of more than 35,000 animal and plant species.



Convention on International Trade of Endangered Species (CITES) meeting in Bangkok

At the convention the member countries discussed and voted on more than 70 different proposals, or suggestions. Many of the discussions were about polar bears, elephants, rhinoceros, tigers, rays, and certain types of shark.

CITES has a system of lists called appendices that say how different plants and animals should be treated. All trade of any plants or animals listed in Appendix 1 is banned. The trade of species contained in Appendix 2 is checked and regulated. Some CITES members, but not all, have banned or restricted trade of certain animals and plants. These species are listed in Appendix 3. Moving animals or plants from one appendix to another, to give them greater or less protection, is known as either "up-listing" or "downlisting".

For many people, the two most important proposals, or votes, at the Bangkok meeting were about sharks and polar bears.

A recent United Nations (U.N.) report says that humans kill about 100 million sharks every year. The report describes how, over the last 100 years, around 90% of the world's sharks have disappeared. The reason, the report says, is overfishing by countries such as Indonesia.

Many sharks are caught and killed for their fins. Most of these fins are

then sold to China. There they are used to make shark-fin soup, which is a popular Chinese dish. Recently, because shark populations are declining, expensive hotels in places like Hong Kong and Singapore have decided not to serve shark-fin soup. In China it has been banned at government [banquets](#). Yet many Chinese people still eat this type of soup.

A decision was made to "up-list" the oceanic white-tip shark, the porbeagle, three types of hammerheads, and the manta ray, to Appendix 2. Yet some countries, such as China, India and Japan, said that they disagreed with trade regulations on oceanic white-tip sharks and hammerheads.

The U.S. proposed that polar bears be uplisted from Appendix 2 to Appendix 1. Yet, even though many members agreed with this proposal a larger number voted against it.

It is estimated that there are 25,000 polar bears in the world. Of these roughly 16,000 live in northern Canada. Canada is the only country that allows the sale of polar bear body parts. Each year around 600 are killed. Native Inuit hunters kill most of these. Canada argues that the Inuit people rely on polar bear hunting to make a living.

The next CITES meeting will be held in South Africa, in 2016. ■

BURNABLE “ICE GAS”

On March 12, officials from a government owned oil and gas company in Japan made an important announcement. They said that the company had successfully extracted what some people are now calling “ice gas” or “fire ice” from deep below the seabed. This was the first time that this had been done. This gas comes from [methane hydrate](#).



Japanese drilling ship, Chikyu

Japan has few natural resources. It therefore has to buy oil and liquefied natural gas (LNG) from other countries. These are burned in power stations, which generate the electricity that the country needs. Until recently much of Japan’s electricity was made from 54 nuclear reactors.

However, two years ago a powerful earthquake and tsunami, or giant wave, damaged one of these nuclear power plants near the coast. This caused a dangerous radiation leak. Since the accident all but two of Japan’s nuclear reactors have been closed for safety reasons. Many Japanese people now say that they want all nuclear power stations in the country to be shut down.

Buying oil and LNG from other countries can be very expensive. Japan therefore hopes to be able to produce electricity by burning the methane gas that can be extracted from methane hydrate. It’s thought that there is enough of this ice gas under the seabed, near the coast of Japan, to

generate all the electricity the country needs for the next 100 years.

Methane hydrate is found all over the world under the seabed. It also exists under land in the Arctic. It is often described as a sherbet-like substance. It is formed when methane gas, from decayed plant and animal matter, combines with iced water that is very cold and under high pressure.

Japan has been researching the use of methane hydrate for many years. Other countries such as the U.S. and China have been doing the same. Yet the Japanese government’s drilling ship, called *Chikyu*, is the first to have successfully produced ice gas from methane hydrate deep under the seabed.

Once brought to the surface the gas was flared, or burned, off. The methane hydrate was 985 feet (300 meters) below the seabed in an area of sea 0.6 miles (one kilometer) deep. Using special equipment Japanese researchers have managed to work out a way of lowering the pressure where the methane hydrate is. This then causes the methane gas to separate from the iced water.

The government-owned oil and gas company now plans to drill to a depth of 4.4 miles (seven kilometers) in places where the sea is around 2.5 miles (four kilometers) deep. In about five years time it hopes to be able to produce enough gas to be used in power stations. When burned methane produces much less carbon dioxide than oil or coal.

Some environmentalists are worried about ice gas. They claim that extracting large amounts of methane from deep under the sea floor might be dangerous. For example, it may result in big undersea landslides, which could cause tsunamis. What’s more methane is a greenhouse gas.

Therefore, large amounts of it “escaping” into the atmosphere, the environmentalists warn, might increase global warming and climate change.

For many years some people have been saying that the world’s fossil fuels, oil, natural gas and coal, are starting to run out. Others are not so sure. Yet some experts now believe that, in the future, most of the world’s energy will come from the methane hydrates that are deep under the sea floor. ■

ANCIENT HEART DISEASE STUDY

Nowadays heart attacks and strokes are often thought of as illnesses that are caused by modern lifestyles. Yet a recent study, carried out by a team of researchers in the U.S., seems to show that these types of illnesses also existed in ancient times.



Mummy and CT scanner

Arteries are vessels that carry blood away from the heart to other parts of the body. Sometimes the wall of an artery can get thicker. This is called atherosclerosis or “hardening” of the arteries. It is caused by fatty substances, such as cholesterol, building up on the inner wall of the artery. In some cases thickening of the arteries can lead to a heart attack.

Many experts believe that hardening of the arteries can be caused by smoking, a lack of exercise, and many of the foods we eat. They argue

that eating too many “fatty foods”, or foods that are high in saturated fats, can lead to atherosclerosis.

The researchers used CT, or CAT, scans of 137 mummies. A CT scan is a type of X-ray that creates a 3D (three-dimensional) image of the inside of the body. The mummies that were scanned came from many different parts of the world such as Peru, southwest America, the Aleutian Islands, in Alaska, and Ancient Egypt.

The researchers found signs of hardened arteries in 47, or over 30%, of the mummies. They also worked out the approximate age of the people when they died. Like today, those who were older seemed more likely to show signs of atherosclerosis.

Similar studies have been done before. Yet these were all on Egyptian mummies. They too showed that many had signs of heart disease. Yet all these mummies were of

richer people. So when compared to ordinary Egyptians they may have had a different diet and lifestyle.

The recent study was the first to look at mummies from different parts of the world. Therefore, when these people were alive they would have had different diets and lifestyles. What’s more, other than those from Egypt, the mummies had been formed naturally by the local climate. This means that they were likely to be ordinary and not wealthier people. The study of the 137 mummies therefore suggests that heart disease was far more common in ancient times, amongst ordinary people, than was previously thought.

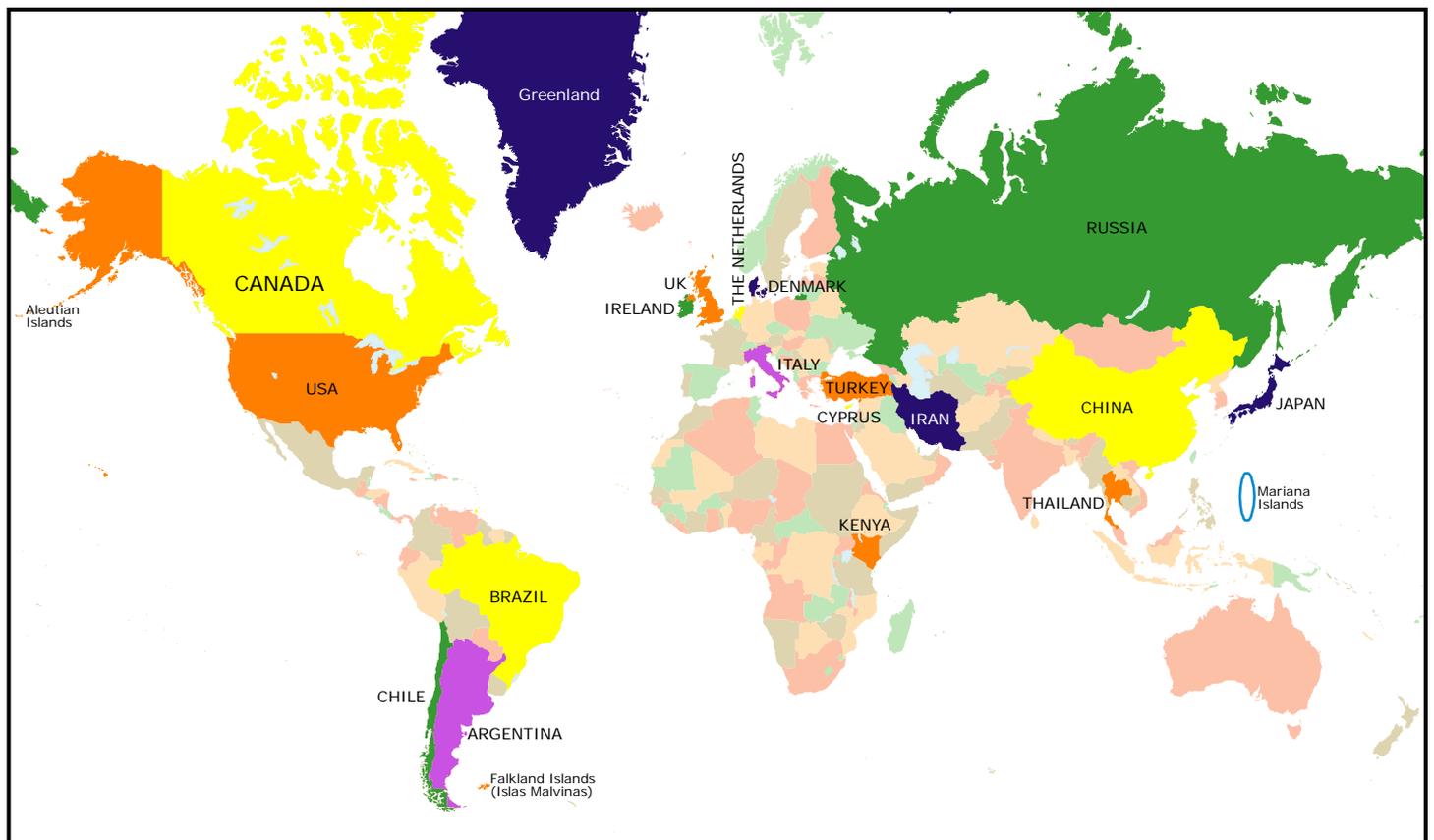
Most experts believe that hardening of the arteries is linked to modern diet and lifestyle. Yet the latest research shows that there are likely to be other causes. For example, it could be genetic, so some people’s

genes make them more likely to suffer from the disease. Another possibility, the researchers say, is that it has something to do with the aging process in humans. ■

ALMA TELESCOPE

On March 13, a special ceremony for the official opening of the new ALMA telescope was held high in the Andes Mountains, in Chile. Many astronomers and officials as well as Sebastián Piñera, the president of Chile, attended it.

ALMA is a radio telescope. Radio telescopes have to be much bigger than optical ones (or those that we use to look at the night skies). This is because the wavelengths of visible light are much smaller than the wavelengths of radio waves. Unlike an optical telescope a radio



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

telescope has a large antenna, or “dish”. The bigger the radio telescope’s dish the farther into space it can “see”. Radio telescopes with a number of dishes, which are connected to each other, are called an [array](#).

ALMA stands for the Atacama Large Millimeter/submillimeter Array. The array has been built on a [plateau](#) about 16,570 feet (5,050 meters) high up in the Chilean Atacama Desert. This is one of the world’s driest places. It hardly ever rains. There is very little moisture in the air, which can affect the light, and almost every night is clear of clouds. This part of Chile is therefore one of the best places in the world for astronomy.

Planning and building ALMA has taken more than ten years and cost US\$1.3 billion. It is a joint project between countries in North America, Europe and Asia, as well as Chile.



Some of the ALMA radio telescope’s dishes with the Milky Way in the night sky above (ESO/B)

ALMA currently has an array of 57 dishes. Each is about 40 feet (12 meters) across. When it is finally completed this summer, there will be 66 dishes. Huge remote controlled transporter vehicles can move each of the dishes around. The dishes are linked together. This means that the array acts as if it was one radio telescope with a single ten mile (16 kilometer) wide dish.

The array is so high up that scientists working there have to have

NEWSCAST

CYCLES CRAPER — Krystian Herba, who is from Poland, as just broken his own world record. Instead of taking the lift he has an unusual way of getting to the top of skyscrapers. Mr. Herba has a specially designed bicycle, which he uses to ride up the stairs. In the past he has cycled to the top of the tallest buildings in Poland, Austria and Germany. When cycling up the stairs of these buildings Mr. Herba does not touch the walls and never takes his feet off the pedals. It took him just under one and quarter hours to ride up the 2,754 steps to the top of the tallest building in Shanghai, one of the biggest cities in China.

an extra supply of oxygen. The base station, from where the telescope is controlled, is around 6,560 feet (2,000 meters) lower down. It is one of the highest buildings in the world. When it is finally completed ALMA will have a [resolution](#) ten times greater than that of the Hubble Space Telescope.

ALMA observes in the millimeter/submillimeter range of light. It can therefore “see” things in deep space that, when observed by optical telescopes, are hidden by gas and dust. This means that ALMA can see into the debris that surrounds stars from which new planets are formed. It can also see where new stars are born in clouds of gas and dust.

Although it has only just officially opened ALMA has already made some important discoveries. It has recorded some of the most distant and ancient galaxies as well as new planets forming around stars. Until now astronomers have found it

difficult to get clear images of these galaxies and new planets as they are shrouded in dust.

The opening ceremony took place at ALMA’s base station. As part of his speech Mr. Piñera said that “Chile has now become the capital of world astronomy”. Canadian and American astronauts, who are currently on-board the International Space Station (ISS), also sent a “good luck” message to all the scientists working on the ALMA project. ■

NEW NEANDERTHAL STUDY

Homo neanderthalensis (usually called Neanderthals) were an early type of human. No one is sure what caused Neanderthals to die out. A recent study, completed by a group of scientists from Britain, may help to explain why this happened.

It’s thought that Neanderthals lived in the Middle East and parts of Europe and Asia between 400,000 and 25,000 years ago. Their name comes from a place in Germany where some of the first Neanderthal bones were discovered, in 1856.

The ancestors of modern day humans (*Homo sapiens*) are believed to have originated in Africa. Around 70,000 years ago these ancient humans began to spread to other parts of the world. *Homo sapiens* first reached Europe roughly 40,000 years ago. Scientists believe that within 10,000 to 15,000 years of their arrival the Neanderthals had all died out.

Several recent discoveries have shown that as well as hunting and gathering food Neanderthals looked after the sick and buried the dead. They also seem to have cooked plants for food and used them as medicines. A recent study showed

that there might even have been some interbreeding between ancient humans and Neanderthals.

Some scientists think that Neanderthals were unable to compete after ancient humans moved into the places where they lived. Yet others suspect that the Neanderthals' food supply may have disappeared, or that their bodies were unable to cope with a sudden change in the climate. There were never very many Neanderthals. Their total population is believed to have been around 15,000.



Homo sapiens skull (left) and the skull of Homo neanderthalensis or Neanderthal (right)

Neanderthals were slightly shorter than ancient humans, but their bodies were stronger, or more powerful. They also seemed to have brains of a similar size to *Homo sapiens*, even though the shape of their skulls was different.

In their study the group of scientists used the skulls of 13 Neanderthals who lived between 75,000 and 27,000 years ago. They compared these with the skulls of 32 ancient humans who lived around the same time. They then tried to work out which parts of the Neanderthals' brains were in control of different things, or functions.

In modern day [primates](#) the part of the brain that deals with visual information, or images, is roughly [proportional](#) to the size of their eyes. In a similar way the parts of the brain used to control their bodies depends on their body size and strength.

The eye sockets of the Neanderthal skulls are bigger than those of ancient humans. So Neanderthals had larger eyes. The scientists think that the eyes of the Neanderthals living in Europe evolved to be bigger. This, they say, might be because there is less light in Europe than in Africa. This is because Europe is farther to the north.

The scientists worked out how much of Neanderthals' brains controlled visual information as well as how much was needed to control their more powerful bodies. They believe that when compared to ancient humans Neanderthals had "less brain" for other functions. These would include social thinking as well as working and communicating with other groups who lived far away. This, the scientists say, would have been a disadvantage, especially during the ice ages when they had to survive in a much colder climate.

The scientists' study therefore shows that even though the brains of Neanderthals and ancient humans were of the same size they worked in different ways. This could therefore be another reason why Neanderthals were unable to compete with *Homo sapiens*. ▣

FALKLAND ISLANDS VOTE

On March 10 and 11 a referendum, or vote in which all adults can take part, was held on the Falkland Islands. Around 2,900 people live on the islands. Of these about 1,700 were [eligible](#) to vote. The question asked was "do you want the Falkland Islands to continue to be a British Overseas [Territory](#)?" Almost everyone voted "yes". There were only three "no" votes.

The Falklands are an archipelago, or group of islands, in the South Atlantic Ocean. In Argentina the islands are called "Islas Malvinas". The islands are about 290 miles (470 kilometers) off the coast of Argentina. The government of Britain set up a naval base on the Falkland Islands in 1840. Today, nearly all of those who live on the islands are descendants of people who originally came from Britain.



However, Argentina has always claimed that it is the rightful owner of the islands. In 1982, Argentina's military government, or junta, sent an invasion force to the Falklands. Its soldiers quickly took control of the islands. The British government demanded that the junta withdraw all its soldiers. When the junta refused Britain sent a military task force of soldiers, ships and warplanes to the South Atlantic. A war over the islands then broke out.

The Falklands War, or "Guerra de Malvinas", lasted for about ten weeks. The Argentinian forces were defeated and eventually surrendered. About 900 people were killed. Most of those who died were Argentinian soldiers.

Soon after the end of the war, the military junta in Argentina agreed to stand down. Elections were held

in the country for a new president and for other political leaders. Since the end of the war all of Argentina's elected leaders have continued to insist that the "Malvinas" belong to their country.

In 2010, oil and natural gas was discovered under the seabed close to the Falkland Islands. The Argentinian government insists that any natural resources found close to the islands belong to Argentina. Last year Cristina Fernández de Kirchner, the president of Argentina, made an objection to the United Nations (U.N.). She complained that British companies were searching for oil and gas fields near the islands.

Owning an area of land or region is often known as **sovereignty**. Most countries in South America support Argentina's claim for sovereignty of the islands. In the past the government of Britain has said that it would be willing to discuss sovereignty of the Falklands with Argentina. Yet these talks, it explains, could only take place if the people who live on the islands agree.

The British government says that the people living on the islands have a right to self-determination. This means that they should have the freedom to choose their own leaders and not be controlled by another country. Argentina describes the people who live on the islands as "settlers". It claims that as settlers they do not have a right to self-determination.

A governor, who is appointed and sent to the islands by Britain government, is in charge of the Falkland Islands. There are also eight locally elected leaders. These people can make most of their own decisions, but the governor has to agree with them.

Everyone knew that nearly all those who could take part in the referendum would vote "yes". How-

ever, the islands' elected leaders said that they organized the referendum to show other countries, and the U.N., that they want to remain part of Britain. Argentinian officials insisted that the referendum was "meaningless". ■

CHOPSTICKS IN CHINA

A senior official in China, who is in charge of one of the country's forestry organizations, has recently made an announcement about chopsticks. He suggested that Chinese people should stop using disposable, or throwaway, wooden chopsticks. This, he explained, was because too many trees now have to be cut down to make them.



Disposable chopsticks

It's not known exactly when chopsticks were first used, or "invented". One story says that this happened around 2100 BCE. Then, Da Yu, the founder of the Xia dynasty, was in a hurry to travel to an area that had flooded. When a meal was cooked he did not want to wait for it to cool. He found two twigs, or small tree branches, and used them to pick up the food and eat it.

The earliest known chopsticks were found by archaeologists working at the site of one of China's ancient capitals. These are made of bronze and have been dated to

1200 BCE. At first chopsticks were probably used for cooking and not eating. Later chopsticks made of wood became popular both in China and other parts of Asia such as Korea and Japan. It's thought that a type of fork, made from bone, was used in China before chopsticks.

The Romans invented the forks that are used in many countries today. Yet people in many parts of Europe did not use forks until around 300 years ago. Before this most people in these countries used knives and their hands.

China's population is roughly 1.4 billion. Nowadays around 80 billion pairs of disposable wooden chopsticks are used in China each year. Over the last decade this figure has been increasing every year.

The forestry official explained that only 4,000 wooden chopsticks could be made out of one 20 year old tree. He said that currently about 20 million trees are being cut down every year in China to make throwaway chopsticks. He suggested that everyone should carry their own chopsticks around with them instead of using disposable ones.

For many years, some environmentalists have been complaining that China has been cutting down too many trees. This, they say, can increase both flooding and air pollution. Tree roots help surface water drain into the ground. Therefore, if trees are cut down more water gets into the rivers, which then flood. Trees can also help to remove some of the pollution in the air.

China has now become the world's largest importer of wood. Most of this comes from African countries. Some people believe that at least 10% of the wood that is imported by China from Africa has been unlawfully logged, or cut

down. Nowadays China even buys wooden chopsticks that have been made in the U.S.

Some people in China now think that restaurants should charge extra for wooden chopsticks. This, they say, would be similar to shops charging for plastic bags. However, others believe that there is an easier solution. This is to use chopsticks made of metal, which are easy to clean. People in South Korea, for example, have been using these types of chopsticks for many years. ■

KENYA'S ELECTION

On March 9, it was announced that Uhuru Kenyatta had been elected as Kenya's new president. The election had taken place five days earlier. Even though Mr. Kenyatta won some people wonder how he will govern the country. In a few months time he is due to stand trial at the International Criminal Court (ICC).

Many people were relieved that there had been no violence during the election and when the result was announced. This was because of what happened when the previous presidential election was held in 2007. Then, there were violent demonstrations. More than 1,100 people were killed and at least 660,000 were forced to leave their homes.

The two main candidates in the 2007 election were Mwai Kibaki, who had been president since 2002, and Raila Odinga. Each was supported by one of the two main tribal groups in the country. The result was very close. The authorities that organized the election announced that Mr. Kibaki had won. Mr. Odinga refused to accept the result. Violence then broke out between the

supporters of the two men. Eventually an agreement was made. Mr. Kibaki would continue to be president and Mr. Odinga became the country's prime minister.



Uhuru Kenyatta, Kenya's new president

Eight people stood in the recent presidential election. The two main candidates were Mr. Kenyatta and Mr. Odinga. Mr. Kenyatta has been deputy prime minister since 2008. His father was a previous president of Kenya and Mr. Kenyatta is believed to be the country's richest person.

The ICC was set up, or established, in 2002. It is based in The Hague, a city in The Netherlands. The purpose of the court is to put people who are accused of crimes against humanity, war crimes, genocide, and the crime of aggression, on trial.

In 2010, the ICC named Mr. Kenyatta as a suspect. The court declared that he and several others had been accused of crimes against humanity. The crimes, the ICC officials said, were organizing the violence that took place after the last election. Mr. Kenyatta insists that this is not true. However, he has said that he will go to the ICC so he can prove that he is innocent.

Since the last election there have been several changes to Kenya's constitution, or rules by which the country is governed. One of the reasons these were made was to stop the violence, which broke out in 2007, from happening again. One rule was

that if no candidate got more than 50% of the votes another election, or run-off, would be held. This would be between the two people who got the most votes. A new electoral commission, or group of people who organize elections, was also set up.

During the election an electronic counting system was used for the first time. Yet it broke down. This meant that the vote counting took longer than expected. Eventually the electoral commission announced that Mr. Kenyatta had gotten 50.07% of the votes and Mr. Odinga 43.31%.

As Mr. Kenyatta got just over 50% of the votes a run-off election will not be held. Mr. Odinga complained about the result. He claimed that thousands of votes had been miscounted. Mr. Odinga declared that he did not want there to be any violence. He told his supporters that he would take his complaint to the Supreme Court, or most senior court in the country.

Mr. Kenyatta will officially take over from Mr. Kibaki on March 26. He will then go to the ICC in July. Governing the country may be difficult as ICC trials can last for many months or even several years. ■

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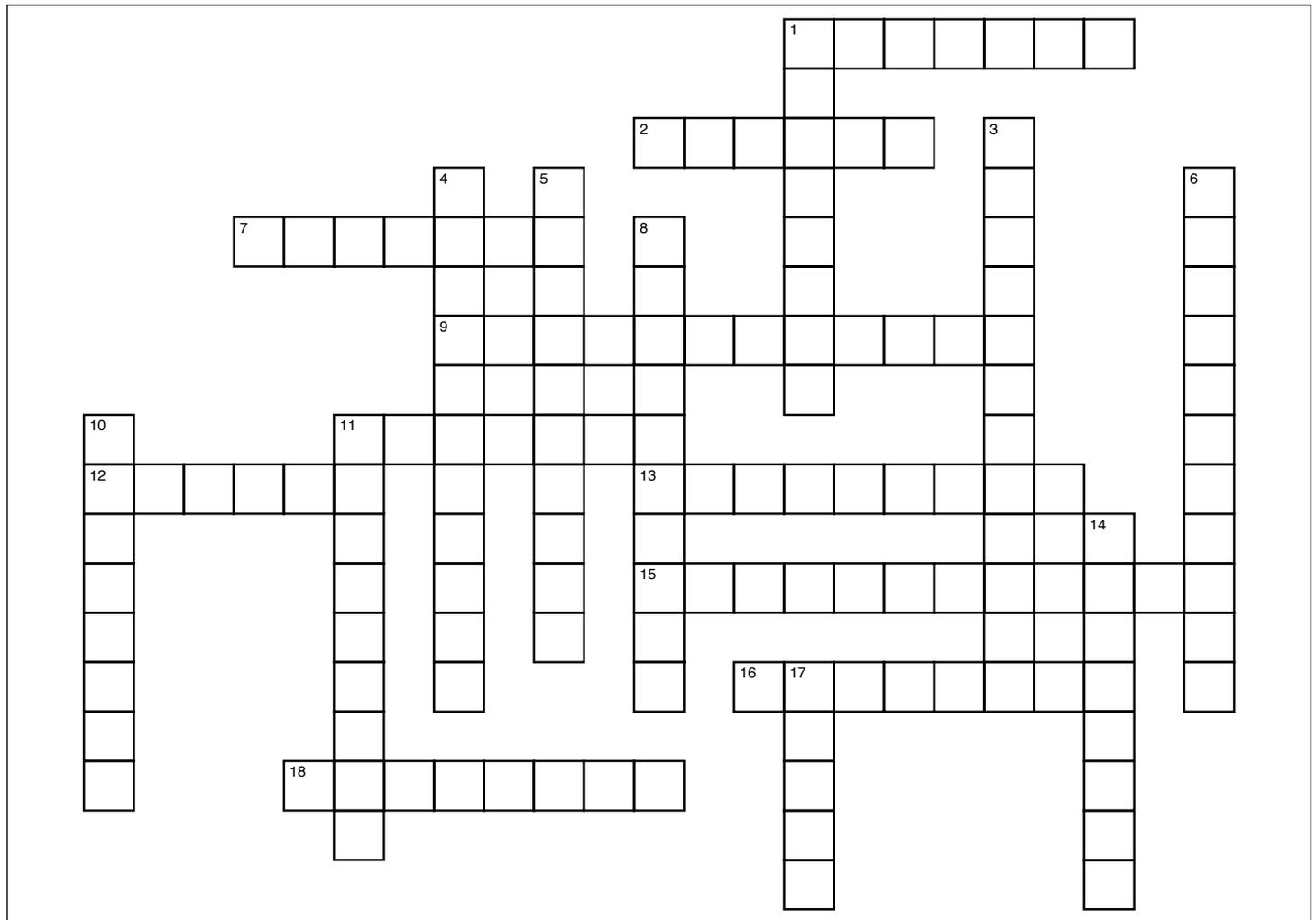
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ISSUE 193

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

- 1 *Noun* An area of high ground with a fairly level surface
- 2 *Noun* Object that has a wide opening at the top, sloping sides, and a narrow tube at the bottom, used for pouring liquids into containers with narrow necks
- 7 *Noun* A chemical compound containing water and some other substance
- 9 *Adjective* In balance according to size or number
- 11 *Noun* Something given or done as an expression of admiration
- 12 *Verb* To have an ambitious plan or desire to do or be something
- 13 *Verb* Uses rules to control something
- 15 *Noun* An official ceremony to mark the beginning of a new period
- 16 *Noun (Plural)* Ceremonial dinner parties for many people, often followed by speeches
- 18 *Noun (Plural)* Types of mammals that have flexible hands and feet and highly developed brains, includes lemurs, lorises, monkeys, apes, and humans

DOWN

- 1 *Noun* An outbreak of a disease that affects a very high proportion of the population
- 3 *Noun* A large corporation that is made up of many companies, which are involved in many different types of businesses
- 4 *Verb* Organizing action in support of a cause or movement
- 5 *Noun* The number of pixels per square inch on a computer-generated display: the greater the number the clearer the picture
- 6 *Noun* The power and authority to run a country
- 8 *Noun (Plural)* The qualities of a substance or material, or the ways in which something can be used
- 10 *Verb* Ordered to leave a country as a punishment
- 11 *Noun* An area of land that belongs to, or is connected with, a particular person or country
- 14 *Noun* Scattering of people who used to belong to one country or region
- 17 *Noun* An orderly and impressive arrangement

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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.



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.

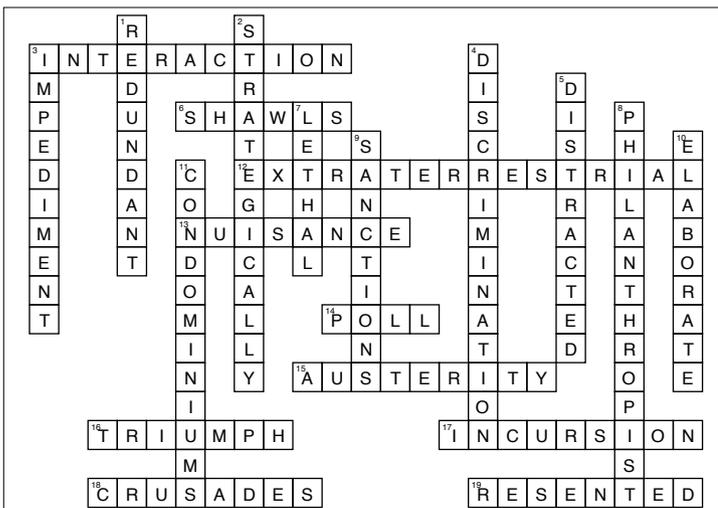


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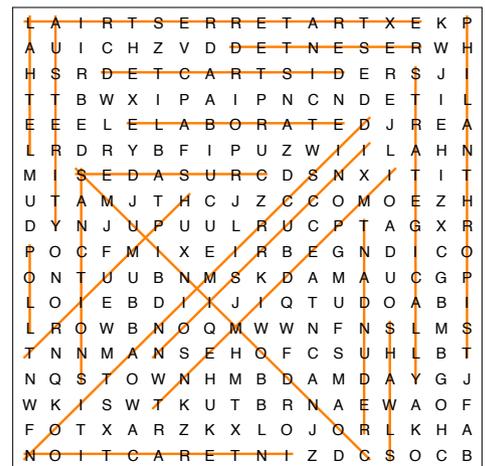
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MISSING WORD ANSWER = _____



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