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*Undersea volcano erupts near Tonga, in the Pacific Ocean*

## NEW PACIFIC OCEAN ISLAND

A violent volcanic eruption has created a new island. The volcano is under the sea, about 39 miles (62 kilometers) from the coast of the main island of Tonga in the Pacific Ocean.

The eruption began on March 16, throwing rock, gasses and ash high into the sky. Luckily, the wind blew the gasses and ash away from Tonga, so people on nearby islands were not in any danger.

Tonga is made up of a group, or archipelago, of more than 170 islands. The islands are about 500 miles (800 kilometers) north of New Zealand, near the islands of Fiji. Most Tongans live on the main island of Tongatapu.

Earthquakes occur because the surface of the Earth, called the crust, is made up of huge pieces called tectonic plates. These "plates" fit together like a jigsaw. They float on the mantle, a layer of hot liquid rock beneath the crust. Movements

in the mantle can cause the plates above to move. The edge of one plate can slide over or under another. The edges can also slide past, move apart from, or crash into each other. Any of these movements can create strong vibrations, which we call earthquakes.

Volcanoes also arise from the movement of the Earth's tectonic plates. As the plates move, hot liquid rock from the mantle can burst through the cracks between them. The liquid rock cools and forms a mound. As more bursts through, extra layers are added so the pile of rock grows bigger. Layer after layer is added, forming mountain-like structures. Many have a deep cavity or crater at the top, where each eruption blasts away rock left from the last one.

Some volcanoes can erupt from the sides as well as from the top. Scientists called volcanologists record crater

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SOON**

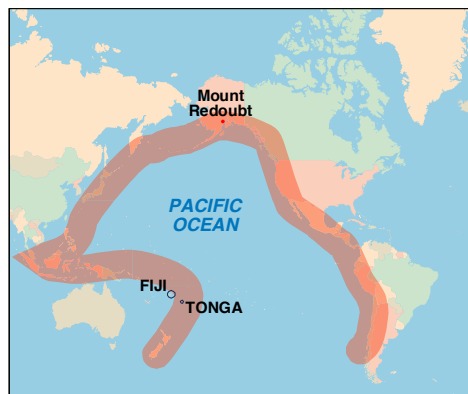
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temperatures to try to predict when another eruption will occur. They also monitor the gasses given off by the volcano, and local earth [tremors](#).

The islands of Tonga are on what has been nicknamed the “Ring of Fire”. This is a line that runs along the west coast of North and South America, the east coast of Asia, and through Indonesia, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines and New Zealand. Seven different tectonic plates come into contact with each other along the Ring of Fire. This is why more than 75% of the world’s volcanoes are found around the edge of the Pacific Ocean.

Many volcanoes rise above the Earth’s surface as mountains. Examples include Mount Vesuvius in Italy, Mount Fuji in Japan and Mount St. Helens in the U.S.



Ring of Fire

However, lots of volcanoes are under the sea. The layers of rock released with each underwater eruption pile on top of each other. Eventually, they can rise above the sea level and form an island.

Several islands in the Pacific Ocean were formed by underwater volcanoes. For instance, many of the islands that make up Hawaii were created in this way. This is what has happened with the present volcanic eruption near Tonga.

When lava and gasses erupt in shallow water, a type of rock called

pumice is created. As the lava and gasses cool rapidly, air is trapped in the pumice. This makes it very light – it can float on water! Two years ago another small volcanic island appeared near Tonga. Pumice formed by this eruption floated more than 1,200 miles (1,920 kilometers) to reach Australia.

Scientists think ash and pumice from the current volcano could drift to beaches on the south coasts of the islands of Fiji.

The volcanic eruption close to Tonga that formed the new island was followed by a strong earthquake on March 20. It was felt more than 1,875 miles (3,000 kilometers) away in New Zealand.

One danger that can follow the eruption of an underwater volcano or an earthquake is the formation of giant waves called tsunamis. These can travel long distances across the ocean, flooding islands in their path. The Tongan government issued a tsunami warning, but canceled it within hours as the danger had passed.

People living in Nuku’alofa, the capital of Tonga, watched the volcano as it lit up the night sky. Boats of sightseers have also approached the new island. One had to quickly sail away after an explosion sent a cloud of ash rushing towards the boat. A local airline has also been taking people to photograph the new island from the air.

Scientists are observing and monitoring the eruption, and calculating the size of the new island. They expect that the island will only be there for a few years before it is eroded away by the waves.

Meanwhile in the state of Alaska, in the U.S., Mount Redoubt began to erupt on March 23. It is also on the Ring of Fire. This volcano last erupted 20 years ago. ■

## SOUTH AFRICA STOPS VISIT BY DALAI LAMA

South Africa will host the Soccer World Cup in 2010. The competition happens every four years and is one of the world’s most-watched sporting events. In preparation, the organizers planned a conference on March 27.

People attending the conference were going to discuss how the game of soccer could help stop [racism](#) and [xenophobia](#). The organizers invited Nobel Peace Prize winners to speak at the conference. Nobel Peace Prizes are awarded each year to the person or people that a panel of judges believes has done most to promote peace.



Dalai Lama

One person invited to the conference was the Dalai Lama, the Buddhist spiritual leader from Tibet. The Dalai Lama was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1989.

On March 23, South African government officials made a surprising announcement. They declared the Dalai Lama would not be allowed into the country. The officials said he would only be able to visit South Africa after the World Cup had finished. The only explanation the officials gave was that a visit from the Dalai Lama “was not in the best interests of South Africa at this time”.

Many South Africans were surprised and angry about the decision. Although the government would not

admit it, many people are sure the announcement had been made because of China.

In 1950, the Chinese army marched into Tibet. China claims many Tibetans were being treated as slaves by their leaders and had to be freed. A few years later, Tibetans staged an [uprising](#) against the Chinese. The uprising failed and thousands of Tibetans were killed.

Many, including the Dalai Lama, fled to Nepal and northern India. Since leaving Tibet the Dalai Lama, now aged 73, has lived in northern India. Many people have accused China of destroying Tibet's ancient Buddhist culture.

The Dalai Lama has often traveled to other countries. The Chinese government gets angry when he meets world leaders. It accuses the Dalai Lama of trying to get support for Tibet to become an independent country.

The Dalai Lama insists he does not want Tibet to become independent, but believes it should have more [autonomy](#) within China.

South Africa's trade with China is increasing. Many Chinese companies have plans to make investments in South Africa. Therefore most people think the South African government stopped the Dalai Lama from visiting because it would upset China.

After they heard the news, other Nobel Peace Prize winners said they would refuse to attend the conference as a protest. These people included Archbishop Desmond Tutu and the former president of South Africa, F. W. de Klerk.

On March 24, the organizers of the conference said they had decided to cancel it. Other people due to attend were Queen Rania of Jordan, South Africa's former president Nelson

Mandela and former president of Finland Martti Ahtisaari – last years Nobel Peace Prize winner ■

## WORKERS STRIKE IN FRANCE

On March 19, thousands of people in France went on strike. Many marched through the streets of the biggest towns and cities. The protesters say the government is not doing enough to solve France's growing financial problems.

The strike was arranged by the country's largest workers' organizations – called trade unions. Trade union leaders claimed over three million people in France had taken part in the protests. The police estimated it was about half as many.

Most of the protesters are people who directly, or indirectly, work for the government. These people do what is described as “public sector” jobs. People who work in the public sector include those employed in schools, universities, hospitals, and government offices. In France many people employed by train and bus companies are also public sector workers.



Workers' demonstration in Paris, France

Some people who are employed by private companies – called “private sector” workers – such as those working in shops and for car makers and oil companies, also joined the protests. The biggest demonstration was in Paris, the capital of France.

## NewsCAST

**SUPERMAN RECORD** — A comic book has been sold for a record amount in an internet auction. The comic was printed in 1938. It is particularly special because it's the first comic ever to feature Superman. By 1939, Superman had his own comic book series and the character became more and more popular, featuring in movies and television programs. When it was first printed, the comic book cost \$0.10. The person who sold it first bought the comic book from a second-hand bookshop for \$0.24 in 1950 – nearly 60 years ago. In the auction, he sold it for \$312,000.

On the day of the strike, many schools and hospitals had to close. The number of trains and busses was reduced. Many flights were also delayed or postponed as airport workers joined the protests.

Like many other countries, France has been affected by the worldwide financial problems. Some companies have had to reduce the number of people they employ. Others may be forced to go out of business. The number of people without jobs is getting higher. [Unemployment](#) in France is expected to reach 10% by the end of this year. Many public sector workers are worried that the government is planning to reduce their wages or even make them [redundant](#).

The protesters blamed the president of France, Nicholas Sarkozy, for the problems. They say he has been making the wrong decisions and is not providing the help that lower-paid people need.

Trade union leaders are demanding the president announce he will not cut any public sector



jobs. The leaders also want him to increase the minimum wage. Another demand is to make the highest-paid people in France pay more taxes.

Some people disagree with their demands – especially increasing taxes for the higher-paid people. Many of these people create jobs and money by running successful businesses or setting up new companies. Some argue if these people are forced to pay more in taxes, they may leave France and go to work in other countries.

President Sarkozy says he understands why people are worried about their jobs. Yet he insisted the protests would not make him change his mind about how to deal with the country's problems. ■

## SCHOOL SHOOTING IN GERMANY

On March 21, a memorial service was held in a church in the town of Winnenden in southwestern Germany. 900 people, including Angela Merkel, the Chancellor of Germany, attended. The service was for 15 people who were shot and killed nine days earlier.



Tim Kretschmer

On March 12, Tim Kretschmer, aged 17, took one of his father's guns and 200 bullets, and went to Albertville high school in Winnenden. Tim Kretschmer had been a student at the school, so he knew where all the classrooms were.

He entered one of the classrooms and pointed the pistol at some of the students.

At first, they thought it was a joke, but then Tim Kretschmer started to fire the gun. He went to another classroom, where a teacher tried to protect her students. She was shot dead. Kretschmer killed three teachers and nine students – eight of them girls – in the school. Some other students were injured.

Police quickly arrived and took the other students to safety. By this time Tim Kretschmer had stopped a car in the street. He held the gun to the driver's head and forced him to drive to Wendlingen, a town 25 miles (40 kilometers) away. Once there he got out of the car and shot and killed three other people. The police surrounded the building he was in, but Tim Kretschmer shot himself before they could enter.

The shootings shocked the whole of Germany. Most people could not understand why the German teenager had taken a gun to his former school. Tim Kretschmer had recently had some medical treatment as he was thought to be suffering from depression. People who knew him said he spent many hours playing violent video games on his computer.

Tim Kretschmer's father, a businessman, kept a large collection of guns in their house. This is legal in Germany, but the owner has to have a license for each gun. Owners must also make sure guns are kept in a secure place. Tim Kretschmer's father may now be charged by the police for not keeping all of his guns locked up.

During the memorial service, pupils from Albertville school lit candles that spelled out the names of the students who had died. Thousands of people watched the service

on a large screen at a sports stadium. It was also broadcast live on German television.

After the service, some of the parents of the students that had died gave a letter to Chancellor Merkel. The letter asked her to introduce new laws to ban guns and put restrictions on violent video games. ■

## SUGAR SHACKS OPEN FOR BUSINESS

Across central and eastern parts of the U.S. and Canada, spring has brought the beginning of maple syrup season.



Maple tree tap and tube

Maple syrup is a sweet sticky syrup usually eaten on pancakes, ice cream, and waffles. It can also be used as a cooking ingredient, or to make sweets. The syrup is made from the sap of two types of maple trees. More than 80% of the world's maple syrup is produced in Canada.

The weather has to be exactly right for the maple trees' sap to flow properly. This means maple syrup can only be produced during a few weeks of spring in the northern hemisphere. This is when the temperature stays below freezing at night, but rises above freezing during the daytime.

Maple sap is collected by drilling holes just under the bark of the maple tree. This is called "tapping" the

## CATHEDRAL ROOF NEARING COMPLETION

The Sagrada Família is a Roman Catholic cathedral being built in the city of Barcelona, in Spain. The leading architect working on the building has recently predicted the roof will be completed next year. This means the first service can be held – 127 years after building work first started!

The cathedral was designed by Antoni Gaudi. He first began work on the Sagrada Família in 1882. The building design was very complicated. The plan was for the cathedral to have 18 tall towers of various heights. Nearly every part of the building is to be covered in intricate carvings. The work has therefore taken a very long time.

Since the construction began, many problems have caused delays. Antoni Gaudi spent the last 14 years of his life working on the cathedral. Yet the deaths of several family members affected him and he did less and less work on the building.

Mr. Gaudi died in 1926. He is buried in the cathedral. After Mr. Gaudi's death, the work was taken on by several

other architects. The latest one has worked on the building for 40 years.

Another problem was that Mr. Gaudi kept changing his mind about the plans for the building. The only remaining set of his plans was destroyed during the Spanish Civil War in 1938. This means the architects have found it difficult to work out exactly how Mr. Gaudi wanted the cathedral to look.

The work on the cathedral is being paid for by the tourists who visit it. The building has become one of the most popular tourist attractions in Spain. Last year, over two million people visited the cathedral.

The Spanish government has plans to build a tunnel for a high-speed train near the cathedral. A number of engineers have warned that this could damage some parts of the building.

Although the roof is expected to be completed in 2010, work on the rest of the cathedral is still not due to be finished until 2026.



Sagrada Família cathedral

tree. A tube is then pushed into the hole. The sap is collected as it flows out of the tree and through the tube. Sugar maple trees can be tapped in several different places. They can also be tapped year after year.

The maple sap is pumped into a large tank called an evaporator. The building that houses the evaporator is known as a sugar house, sugar shack, or *cabane à sucre*. The evaporator is heated and the sap begins to boil. The water in the sap evaporates and the sap becomes a thick sweet syrup. The syrup can then be packed into glass bottles or metal cans to be sold.

The sap can be boiled for different lengths of time and at different temperatures. This means it can turn into sugar, toffee or even a creamed maple butter. It takes about 10.6 gallons (40 liters) of sap to make 2.1 pints (one liter) of maple syrup.

During the 1800s, maple farmers tapped their trees by hand and hung buckets on the trees to collect the sap. Boiling the sap to turn it into

syrup took many days. Many different forms of entertainment became associated with the sugar shack, as people waited while the sap boiled. Now many Canadians visit sugar shacks at “sugaring off” time to enjoy games, dancing, music and meals based on what farmers used to do many years ago.

One sugar shack tradition is called maple taffy (toffee) pulling. Maple syrup is boiled in a pan. When it reaches a certain temperature, it is poured in long lines onto the cold snow. The sudden cold temperature makes the liquid syrup solidify into a chewy toffee. It takes a little practice to roll up the string of maple toffee onto a stick to make a maple lollipop! ■

## RAINFOREST JUDGMENT

The most senior court in Brazil has made an important judgement on the future of native Indians living in the country's huge rainforests. On

March 19, the court in Brasília, the capital of Brazil, announced that 50 farming families working in a native Indian reservation in the state of Roraima will have to leave.



Roraima is in the north of Brazil. Of the 400,000 people who live in the state, about 30,000 are native Indians. Most Indians in Roraima live within special reservations set up by the Brazilian government.

In Brazil, the rights of native Indians to live in certain areas of the Amazon Rainforest causes many arguments. Some people believe parts of the rainforest should be cleared for farmland. This would increase

the amount of rice, soybeans and beef that Brazil produces, which could then be sold to other countries.

However, reservations on which native Indian people live cannot be cleared for farmland. The native people live and work there without cutting down the trees. Indian people and their ancestors have lived in these areas for thousands of years.

Over 30 years ago, several large farms were started in what is now the Raposa Serra do Sol – the largest Indian reservation in Roraima. The farmers cleared areas of the rainforest to grow rice and soybeans and raise cattle. Then in 2005, the Raposa Serra do Sol Indian reservation was officially created by the Brazilian government. Since then, fighting has broken out between some of the Indians and the farmers.

Last year, the government announced the country's most senior court would study the problem and

decide if the farmers would be allowed to stay.

Environmentalists say cutting down large areas of the world's rainforests has an effect on global warming. The trees absorb some of the extra carbon dioxide produced by burning fossil fuels – oil, natural gas and coal. Most scientists agree that this extra carbon dioxide in the atmosphere is causing world temperatures to rise.



Native Indians celebrate the court's decision

The farmers who now have to move have been offered other land owned by the government. Yet they say the new area is not large enough for 50 families, and the soil there is not as **fertile** as their farms in the Raposa Serra do Sol reservation.

Many environmental organizations were pleased with the decision. They hope the case will set a **precedent** and that the court will now make similar judgements in other areas of the Amazon Rainforest in Brazil. ■

## RUSSIA TO RENEW WEAPONS

On March 17, Dmitry Medvedev, the president of Russia, made an announcement to senior commanders of the Russian navy, army and air force.

President Medvedev said Russia is planning to spend a lot of money modernizing and upgrading the country's military equipment. This

includes weapons such as tanks and planes, as well as nuclear missiles and bombs. Increasing spending on military equipment like this is called rearmament.

In his speech, President Medvedev said this is necessary to protect Russia from the U.S. and NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization). He expects that the rearmament will be complete by 2020.

NATO was set up by the U.S. in 1949. Several European countries joined. Canada also became a member. All NATO members have to help the others if they are attacked by another country.

At the end of the Second World War in 1945, the U.S. and the Russian-led Soviet Union became enemies. This became known as the Cold War. Most European countries applied to join NATO because they felt threatened by the Soviet Union. By joining NATO, they knew other members would help them if they were ever attacked. The Cold War ended in 1991, when the Soviet Union collapsed.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union Russian, leaders spent very little money on their armed forces. Old equipment that broke down was not repaired and no new equipment replaced it.

This changed in 2001 after Vladimir Putin became president. However, experts agree that the military technology used by the U.S. is still much more advanced than that used by the Russian armed forces.

After 1991, many Eastern European countries that had been part of the Soviet Union became independent. Several of them, such as Latvia, Hungary and Estonia, have now joined NATO.

Recently, two other former Soviet Union countries, Ukraine and

## NewsCAST

**NEW POLICE GUARDS** — In India, rodents such as mice cause many problems. They often get into places where food, such as grain, is stored. Officials say hundreds of tons of grain are eaten by rodents every year. Now they are causing another problem. In one Indian state, mice got into the room in which police records are kept. The mice chewed up official papers. To stop this, the police have used two new employees – large domestic rats – to scare the mice away. The rat guards are fed on milk and roti – a type of bread. They have been so good at their job that officials are now thinking of using pet rats to protect food storage areas.





Georgia, applied to join NATO. The U.S. would like them to become members, but other NATO countries have blocked the applications. Most experts believe this is because European countries do not want to anger Russia.



Russian president, Dmitry Medvedev

When he was president of the U.S., George W. Bush wanted to set up a “missile shield” in Poland and the Czech Republic. Both countries are now members of NATO. Russia does not want an American missile shield so close to its border. The U.S. insisted the missile shield was designed to protect Europe and the U.S. if missiles were fired at them from a Middle Eastern country such as Iran. However, Russia does not believe this. It claims the shield could fire missiles into Russia.

President Medvedev and the new American president Barack Obama are due to meet soon. Some experts think the rearmament announcement was meant to try to persuade President Obama to cancel the missile shield and stop supporting Ukraine’s and Georgia’s NATO applications. ■

## ROBOT FISH

A team of scientists has designed a new way to check pollution levels in water.

The scientists have developed a fish-shaped robot that can detect

chemicals, or pollutants, in the sea or rivers. It does this with specially designed sensors. When the fish robot is released into water, the sensors can detect and check the levels of pollution.

The fish has been designed by scientists at a university in Britain. The project has been paid for by an engineering company. Five robot fish are being built. Each is five feet (1.5 meters) long and costs \$28,000 to make.

Trials of the fish are expected to start soon. If they are successful, the fish will be released into the sea – close to a port – off the coast of northern Spain next year.

The robot fish can swim around on their own and do not need to be remote-controlled. They run on batteries. Before their batteries run out, the robot fish will automatically swim to a recharging or docking station kept out at sea. While recharging the fish will pass the information they have collected to the docking station. This information will be transmitted by wireless technology to people working at the port.



Robot fish

The fish have been designed not only to detect pollution, such as oil, but also chemicals that can dissolve in water. The scientists who designed the robots say they will be able to find any tiny leaks of chemicals coming from ships in port. The ship owners can then be alerted so

the leaks can be fixed before they become a bigger problem.

The scientists say they had a good reason to make their robots look like fish and not mini-submarines. Over millions of years, fish have evolved into a very energy-efficient shape. This means the shape of the robot fish and its swimming movement make maximum use of its batteries. The robot fish swim at about two miles (3.2 kilometers) per hour and the batteries will last for eight hours. ■

## NEW LEADER TAKES OVER IN MADAGASCAR

Andry Rajoelina is the former mayor of Antananarivo, the capital city of Madagascar. On March 21, he officially became leader of the country. Four days earlier, the elected president of Madagascar, Marc Ravalomanana, had been forced to resign.

Mr. Rajoelina and Mr. Ravalomanana have been rivals since Mr. Rajoelina was elected mayor of the capital city at the end of last year. Mr. Rajoelina is a former DJ and a successful businessman.

After he was elected mayor of Antananarivo, Mr. Rajoelina began to criticize the president. He accused President Ravalomanana of being a dictator. The president then announced he was closing down the mayor’s television station. Mr. Rajoelina retaliated by organizing weekly protests.

The president owns one of the biggest food companies in the country. Protesters targeted shops that are part of his company. Some were set on fire. During these protests, the police fired guns and over 100 demonstrators were killed. Many local people were shocked by the violence.

Soon afterwards, the president said he had ordered the removal of Mr. Rajoelina from his job. Officially, this meant he was no longer the mayor. Hundreds of Mr. Rajoelina's supporters then marched on the presidential palace. Soldiers guarding the palace opened fire and killed 28 protesters. The president ordered the arrest of Mr. Rajoelina, but he disappeared and went into hiding.

On March 14, Mr. Rajoelina reappeared and announced that all the elected members of the country's parliament had been removed from their jobs. He said he had sent out an order for the president's arrest. Some members of the army declared they were now supporting Mr. Rajoelina.



Andry Rajoelina

Three days later, realizing he no longer had the support of the army, the president agreed to step down. Many people were surprised by how quickly and easily Mr. Rajoelina had taken control of the whole country.

Not everyone in Madagascar supports him. Those that don't have complained. They insist any changes to the government should happen in democratic elections and that Mr. Rajoelina's takeover was illegal.

Mr. Rajoelina has also caused problems for other countries. Madagascar is a poor country, so countries such as the U.S. and France give it money and aid. They don't want to show that they approve of what has

happened in the country so are now deciding whether or not to continue helping Madagascar.

Mr. Rajoelina made a speech on March 21. He said he would obey Madagascar's laws but would make some changes to the rules by which the country is governed. One states the president has to be at least 40 years old – Mr. Rajoelina is only 34. He also said he would arrange for new democratic elections to take place within two years. ■

### "PEKING MAN" OLDER THAN THOUGHT

"Peking Man" is the name given to ancient human fossils found in China. The fossils were dug up near Beijing, the capital of China. The first fossils were discovered in 1921, and at that time Beijing was known as Peking. Digging work then continued in the cave in which they were found for a number of years.

Using new ways of finding out the age of very old objects, Chinese and American scientists have recently announced the Peking Man fossils are around 750,000 years old. This is 200,000 years older than previously thought.

The scientists were able to work out for how long some of the quartz rocks found alongside the fossils in the cave had been there. From this information the age of the fossils could be calculated.

Peking Man was a type of human called *homo erectus* – meaning a man who walks upright. Scientists think these types of humans began to move out of Africa around two million years ago and spread to other parts of the world. Scientists believe the last *homo erectus* died out between 50,000 and 30,000 years ago.

*Homo erectus* was different from modern humans – known as *homo sapiens*. This means "wise" or "knowing" human. *Homo sapiens* are also thought to have originated in Africa, but not until about 200,000 years ago. *Homo erectus*' brain was about half the size of a modern human being's, though he did learn to make use of tools, such as axes made from stone and wood.



Peking Man statue outside the museum near to where the fossils were found in China

The place where the Peking Man fossils were found is one of the most important early human sites in the world. Many small pieces of bone were found. They are believed to come from 40 different skeletons.

In 1937, Japan invaded China. The Peking Man fossils that had been discovered were taken to a science laboratory in Peking. Chinese officials then decided to send them to the U.S. by ship for safekeeping.

The fossils then disappeared on the way to the Chinese port. Where they went is still a mystery. Some think the fossils are still somewhere in China. Others believe they were put on a Japanese ship that was sunk on its way back to Japan. In the 1970s, an American businessman offered a large reward for them. However, no one has claimed it yet. The Chinese government has also set up a group to try to find them.

Luckily one of the scientists had made casts of the fossilized bones before they were lost. He did this



so they could be studied by other scientists. Therefore, only the casts remain of the fossils that were found between 1921 and 1937. ■

## DOUBLE ORGAN TRANSPLANT

A five-year-old girl has become the first person in Britain to have received organ transplants from both her mother and father.

Our bodies have organs that perform functions to keep us alive and healthy. The kidneys are organs that help get rid of waste from the body and keep our blood pressure stable. The liver is an organ that removes **toxins** from our blood and stores nutrients for the body.

In some people, an organ can be damaged or fail to do its job properly. This can happen over time, or in some cases, be a problem from birth.

Jasmine Mirza's liver began failing when she was only one year old. Her doctors could not work out what had caused it to fail.

For some people, it's possible to replace all or part of a damaged organ. This is called a transplant. Most transplanted organs come from someone who has just died. Many people carry a "donor card" or register with their country's health service as an organ donor. Being registered means you have agreed that after your death, your organs can be transplanted into someone who needs them to live. Some organs, such as kidneys, can be transplanted from one living person to another.

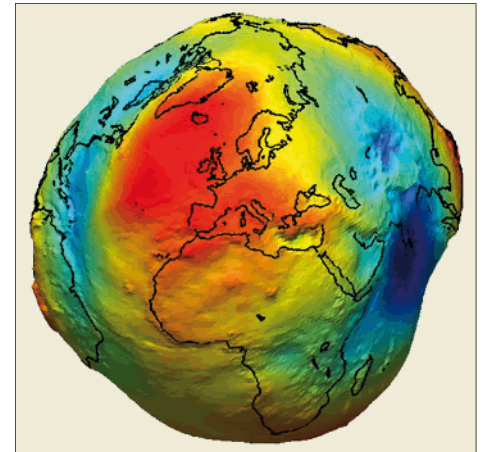
Jasmine's father was able to donate part of his healthy liver to his baby daughter. The transplant was successful. Yet people who have received transplants have to take special drugs to make sure their body accepts the new organ. The drugs Jasmine had to take began to affect her kidneys.

Last year, Jasmine's doctors decided she would need a kidney transplant as well. This time, her mother donated one of her kidneys to her daughter.

Now, five months after her latest operation, doctors say Jasmine is recovering even better than they expected. She is now well enough to start her first year at primary school. ■

In science lessons at school, we learn that if we drop an object, it will fall at a speed of 32 feet (9.8 meters) per second per second. Yet scientists know the pull of gravity is not the same all over the planet. This speed therefore varies very slightly depending on where you are.

The Earth's gravitational pull is slightly stronger at the North and South Poles than it is at the equator. High mountain ranges and deep ocean trenches can also affect gravity.



*Impression of how the Earth would look if it were mapped using the different strengths of gravity*

GOCE is carrying a specially designed instrument called a "gradiometer". This very sensitive instrument will be able to map how gravity changes from one area to the next. Once scientists have a complete "gravity map" of the Earth they will be able to record how melting ice and global warming could be changing ocean currents and sea levels. Ocean currents have a big effect on the climate in many parts of the world. This means studying the speed and direction of these currents is important.

The spaceship will also be able to find out what's happening inside the Earth. For instance, gravity can be affected by the flows of molten rock. GOCE, by recording the

## NewsCAST

**SOFA MYSTERY SOLVED** — A woman in the U.S. started noticing strange noises in her house. After searching, she discovered the noises were coming from a sofa she had recently bought at a second-hand shop. The woman pulled the sofa away from the wall – and found a very hungry cat inside! She spoke to people at the second-hand shop to find out where the sofa had come from, but they didn't know. The woman contacted an animal shelter, which featured her story on the local news. A man then called the shelter. He said he had lost his cat on the same day he had given his sofa to the shop.

## MAPPING EARTH'S GRAVITY

A new European spaceship, or probe, is now orbiting the Earth. It was launched from northern Russia on March 17, on top of a Russian-made rocket. Called "GOCE" (Gravity Field and Steady-State Ocean Circulation Explorer), it has been designed to measure the Earth's gravity. This information will help scientists study the changes in ocean currents.

variations in gravity, will be able to detect the flows of molten rock under the Earth's surface. Therefore, the instrument may be able to give information on earthquakes and volcanoes that are about to happen.

Large areas of oil under the Earth's surface also affect gravity. This means GOCE might also be able to spot undiscovered oil fields and how big they are.



Artist's impression of GOCE

GOCE needs to be close to the Earth's surface to make accurate measurements. Its orbit is therefore only 155 miles (248 kilometers) above the Earth's surface. At this height it is still affected by the pull of Earth's gravity. To stay in the correct orbit the spacecraft has a special "thruster" motor. This motor has to keep running all the time. GOCE only carries enough fuel to run the motor for about 20 months. Once the fuel runs out the spacecraft's mission will end. ■

## NEW PRESIDENT ELECTED IN EL SALVADOR

On March 15, the result of the presidential election in El Salvador was announced. Mauricio Funes was elected president. He won just over 51% of the votes to beat his rival Rodrigo Avila.

Mr. Funes is the leader of the FMLN (Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front). This party was

formed by five **rebel** groups in 1980. It is the first time a leader of the FMLN has become president of El Salvador.

From 1980 to 1992, the FMLN fought the military government of El Salvador in a civil war. It is estimated 75,000 people were killed in the fighting. At the time, the U.S. supported El Salvador's government with money and weapons. The Russian-led Soviet Union supported the FMLN.

The FMLN has lost the last two presidential elections. Many people think this was because it selected former rebel leaders to run for president. Until recently, Mr. Funes was a television journalist. He officially joined the FMLN two years ago. He is the first FMLN leader who did not fight in the civil war. It's therefore likely some people who did not trust the FMLN before were happier to support it in the latest election.

Since the end of the civil war in 1992, the country has been governed by the Nationalist Republican Alliance (ARENA). Mr. Avila, a former police chief, had been selected as the ARENA presidential candidate. He hoped to take over from the current president Antonio Saca, who was elected in 2004.



Mauricio Funes, president-elect of El Salvador

Soon after the votes were counted Mr. Avila admitted he had lost and sent his congratulations to Mr. Funes.

Recently, food and fuel prices in El Salvador have become very

expensive, which has made ARENA unpopular. Mr. Funes promised to bring prices down if he were elected. He also said he would provide money to help small businesses and farms by making bigger companies pay more in tax.

Although the FMLN and the U.S. are former enemies, Mr. Funes said he wanted his government to work closely with the U.S. In 2001, El Salvador decided to use the American dollar as its own currency. Mr. Funes says he has no plans to change this. The American government also congratulated Mr. Funes on winning the election. It says it is happy to work with any government that had been fairly elected.

Mr. Funes is now the president-elect. He will officially take over from President Saca on June 1. ■

## AUSTRALIA STOPS IMMIGRATION

On March 18, the Australian government announced it would change its immigration rules.

Many countries in the world allow people from other countries to move there to live and work. Most have rules and tests that people have to pass to be able to immigrate. There are lots of different ways in which a person could legally move to another country. For example, people living in one country can **sponsor** family members living in a different country to join them. Sometimes, companies will sponsor someone who they want to work for them. People can also prove they have skills or educational qualifications that would be useful to the country to which they want to move.

If a person is successful in applying to move to another country, he or she is given a special document,

or visa. This means the government of the country has given the person permission to live and work there.

Australia is known as a country that is very open to immigration. It has quite a small population for its size. Therefore, the Australian government has encouraged people with the right qualifications from other countries to apply to work there. Australian officials travel to other countries to talk to university graduates and people who have certain skills, to encourage immigration. Australia has a list of jobs that it needs people to fill. Some examples are carpenters, bricklayers, nurses and computer specialists.

Now, the government has removed some jobs from the list. Some experts think soon the only jobs left on the list will be those in hospitals and medical organizations, engineering, and IT (information technology). The government also announced it will cut the total number of visas it gives out.

Most countries, including Australia, are being affected by worldwide financial problems. Many Australian companies are now selling fewer items and services than they once could. Some are having to reduce their numbers of workers or are even being forced to close down.

This is why the Australian government has decided to reduce immigration. It says it has to think of Australians first and does not want too many newly-arrived people to compete for the fewer jobs available.

The recent decision won't affect people who are sponsored by families or companies to work in Australia – only those people who want to go to Australia and find a job once they arrive. ■

## “EVERLASTING LIFE” ON SHOW

A museum in Italy has opened a special exhibit. The museum is displaying different types of mummies from all over the world.

A mummy is a dead body that has been preserved. Sometimes, bodies are preserved on purpose, using special substances or chemicals. A body can also be preserved by the conditions in which the person died. For example, bodies will not decompose in freezing temperatures or in some types of bogs or deserts.

The people best known for mummifying dead bodies are the ancient Egyptians. The oldest known Egyptian mummy is thought to be over 3,000 years old. The ancient Egyptians believed a person traveled to another life after dying. They therefore wanted to preserve the bodies of the dead for their journey to the next life. This was done with special substances and oils, and by tightly wrapping the body in linen and canvas.



*Mummy from Peru, in South America*

In other cases, mummification happens naturally. Perhaps the most famous example of this is a mummy known as Oetzi – also called the “Iceman”. Oetzi died around 5,300 years ago. His body was discovered by two people walking high in the mountains between Austria and Italy in 1991. He was found at the top of the Oetz Valley. Oetzi's body had been almost perfectly preserved because it was covered in ice.

## NewsCAST

**FINGERTIP STORAGE** — Recently, a computer programmer in Finland had a motorcycle accident. He injured his hand and had to have one of his fingers amputated. Doctors created a false finger to fit onto the man's hand. As he works with computers, the man wanted the false finger to help with his job. He therefore decided to have a USB storage device fitted into it. The finger now has two gigabytes of storage space. The programmer uses it to store different types of software. To access the software he takes the false finger off and plugs it into a USB port.

The museum where the exhibition is being held is where Oetzi's mummified body is kept.

The exhibit will also show mummified animals. Ancient Egyptians are known to have mummified cats. It's thought that people originally wanted to preserve the bodies of their pets so they would join them in the next life. Yet archeologists think that later, ancient Egyptians began to believe certain animals were related to different gods. For instance, cats represented a goddess called Bastet. Mummified cats are thought to be special offerings to this goddess.

The museum exhibits include 70 mummies from places such as northern Europe, the Middle East and South America.

During the exhibition, archeologists from different countries will be giving talks at the museum. They will talk about the things they have been able to discover about ancient people from mummies. This includes what people ate, the illnesses they suffered and the clothes they wore. ■



## SENIOR JUDGE GIVEN JOB BACK IN PAKISTAN

On March 23, Iftikhar Chaudhry, Pakistan's most senior judge, officially got his job back.

In 2007, Mr. Chaudhry and several other top judges were removed from their jobs. This was on the orders of Pervez Musharraf, who was president of Pakistan at that time.

President Musharraf, a former army general, had seized power in Pakistan in 1999. Many people think Mr. Chaudhry was fired because he was about to declare that President Musharraf's position as president was illegal.

President Musharraf became unpopular and eventually agreed for new elections to be held in 2008. The elections were contested by the People's Pakistan Party (PPP), the Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz)

Party (PML(N)), and President Musharraf's supporters.

The PPP won the most seats in parliament. In Pakistan the elected members of parliament choose the country's president. As the PPP won the most seats its leader, Asif Zardari, was chosen to be the new president.

Before the election, many people thought if either Mr. Zardari or Nawaz Sharif, the leaders of the PML(N), became president they would reinstate all the judges – including Mr. Chaudhry. Yet President Zardari did not do this. Some think President Zardari is worried that Mr. Chaudhry may insist he answer charges about dishonesty and corruption from many years ago.

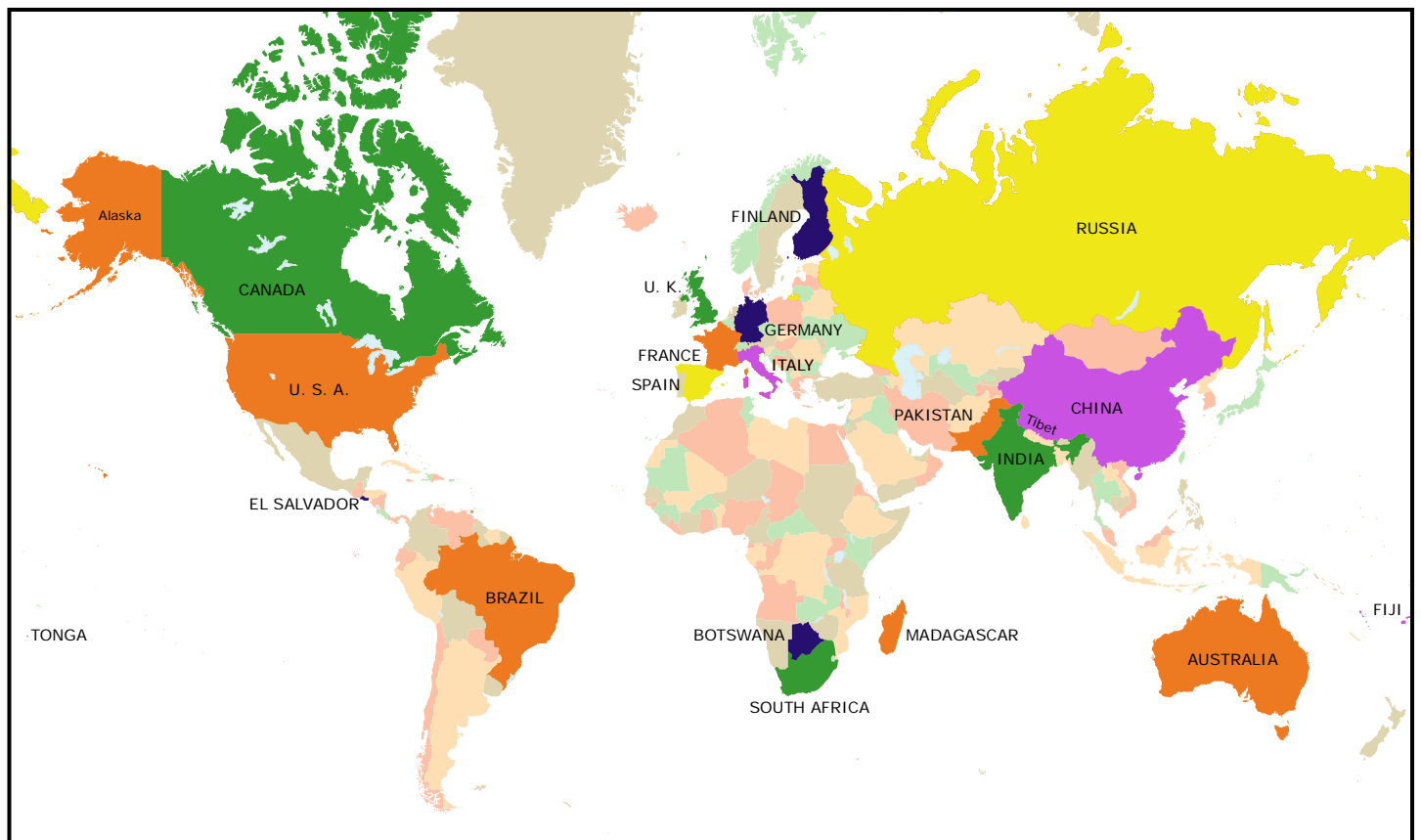
Most people in Pakistan believe judges and the legal system should be independent from politics – similar to many other countries. This,

separation they say, would mean all Pakistani politicians must obey the laws of the country.



Iftikhar Chaudhry

Recently, Mr. Sharif threatened to lead a protest march if Mr. Chaudhry and the other judges were not given their jobs back. He said he would march from Lahore, where he lives, to Islamabad, the capital of Pakistan. This is 185 miles (300 kilometers). President Zardari ordered Mr. Nawaz to be kept under house arrest and said any protest would be banned.



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.

On March 15, a large crowd of Mr. Nawaz's supporters went to his house. The police guarding it disappeared. Mr. Nawaz, driving in a car, began his protest march. Thousands of others followed.

The prime minister and the leader of the army met with President Zardari. They told him thousands of protesters would soon be arriving in Islamabad and the police and the army would not be able to control the large crowds. They advised him to give Mr. Chaudhry his job back. President Zardari agreed, and the prime minister made the announcement on live television.

As soon as they heard the news, Mr. Nawaz and his supporters returned to their homes. Mr. Nawaz now wants Mr. Chaudhry to prepare a legal case against the former president, Pervez Musharraf. ■

## PINK ELEPHANT

A camera crew taking pictures in Botswana have photographed an extremely rare elephant.

The baby African elephant was seen traveling with its mother and the rest of the herd. It stands out from the other elephants because instead of being grey in color, the baby elephant is pink.

Animal experts think the baby elephant is an [albino](#). Albinism is a genetic condition. An albino animal or person has no pigment, or color, in the eyes, hair and skin cells. The pigment in human and animal skin cells gives protection from the sun's harmful radiation. People or animals with albinism don't have this protection so they can get sunburned very easily.

African elephants with albinism are extremely rare. Scientists say

it is much more common among Asian elephants.

Fully grown African elephants are the world's largest land mammals. They can grow to 13 feet (four meters) in height. Both male and female African elephants have tusks. They use them to strip bark from trees and dig for food and water. Elephants also use their tusks to defend themselves and fight. African elephants can live for as long as 70 years.

An expert from the conservation group Elephants without Borders says the pink baby elephant may not survive very long. Its skin can



easily be damaged by the strong sun. Its eyes are also much more sensitive to strong sunshine, and it may go blind. Wild animals that have albinism often don't survive very long, because they cannot camouflage themselves to hide from predators.

Fortunately, the pink elephant is living in a shady area where there are many trees. Observers also think the baby elephant may be adapting to its albinism. It was seen walking in the shade of its mother. This could show that the elephant is aware that it needs to stay out of the sun.

## OIL SPILL IN AUSTRALIA

On March 11, a cargo ship got caught in a cyclone, or tropical storm, off the coast of Queensland, in Australia. The ship was carrying large metal containers.

During the storm 31 containers fell off the ship. The large waves then forced some of the containers against the ship. They made a hole in its side. The damage was where

the ship's fuel tanks were. Oil began to leak into the sea from the hole in the side of the ship.



*Oil-covered beach*

Soon afterwards, thick black oil began washing up on beaches north of Brisbane, Australia's third largest city. These beaches are very popular with tourists. Nearly 40 miles (60 kilometers) of the coastline was affected. Many people helped remove the sand covered in oil. They hoped to stop it from getting into nearby [mangroves](#) and rivers.

The oil also covered the sand on Moreton and Bribie Islands. Both islands are national parks. Many turtles, pelicans and other birds became covered in oil. They were taken to Brisbane where experts worked to clean the oil off.

Officials are worried about the oil's effect on fish and local coral reefs. Fishing companies have been warned to test all the fish they catch.

The containers that fell off the ship contained ammonium nitrate which is normally used as a fertilizer. It's thought that the containers may have sunk to the bottom of the sea. An Australian navy ship was sent to try to find the missing containers using radar.

Fertilizer is put onto soil to make plants grow faster. If it gets into the sea, it can cause [algae](#) and underwater plants to grow much quicker. When this happens, the algae grow the fastest and the plants can die.

## NewsCAST

**Robo Croc** — Vets in Florida, in the U.S., say they have performed a successful operation on a crocodile. The reptile had been run over by a car. The accident crushed the crocodile's face and the animal was unable to eat. The vets at Miami Metro Zoo said they performed a four-hour-long operation to rebuild the crocodile's face and jaw. They inserted metal rods and screws to enable the crocodile to open its mouth again. The vets have nicknamed it "Robo Croc". They say they don't expect the crocodile to live for very long, but that it was important to try to help it.

Bacteria then multiply as they feed on the dead plants. Bacteria absorb oxygen. If they use up all the oxygen in the water, fish and other marine creatures will not be able to survive.

The ship sailed into Brisbane to be repaired. At first, the ship's owners thought the leak was small. Yet Australian officials estimated the ship had leaked 66,000 gallons (250,000 liters) of oil into the sea. They are now investigating the accident. Experts think the shipping company will be fined for the cost of cleaning up the oil. Some people say this could be as much as A\$248 million (\$173 million).

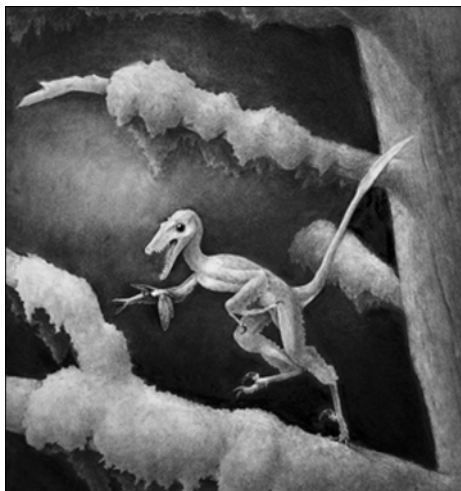
Some of the oil-affected beaches were re-opened to the public on March 21. ■

## DINOSAUR DISCOVERIES

Scientists in North America and China have made two important new dinosaur discoveries.

The newly discovered species in Canada is being described as the smallest meat-eating, or carnivorous, dinosaur to have existed. Its fossil shows it was about the size of a modern chicken.

Although it has only just been identified, the small carnivore's fossil was found almost 25 years ago! At the time it was discovered, scientists thought it was just the fossil of a baby dinosaur from a species they already knew about. Yet when the scientists looked at the fossil again recently, they were surprised to see that the bones showed it was a fully-grown dinosaur.



Artist's impression of a *hesperonychus*

The new species has been named *hesperonychus*. Its fossil shows it ran on two legs and had a big sharp claw on each second toe. The scientists say it was related to the better-known and larger *velociraptor*.

The tiny meat-eating dinosaur fills in some useful information about the ecosystems during the time of the dinosaurs. In modern times, small carnivores outnumber the very large ones. It would make sense, the scientists say, for the same to be true of dinosaur ecosystems. *Hesperonychus* lived about 75 million years ago and probably fed on small mammals and insects.

Meanwhile a newly discovered fossil in northern China is causing **paleontologists** to think differently about what we already know about dinosaurs.

Scientists know some dinosaurs had developed the beginnings of feathers. The first known fossils of feathered dinosaurs come from 150 million years ago. Yet the new discovery suggests some dinosaurs may have had feathers much earlier than this. What is more unusual is that the new discovery comes from a type of dinosaur that was never thought to have feathers at all!

Dinosaurs are divided into two families called *saurischia* and *ornithischia*. Paleontologists think dinosaurs in one group of the *saurischia* family are the ancestors of modern birds. Some *saurischia* fossils show evidence of bristles or feathers. Yet no fossils from the *ornithischia* family have been found that show feathers, only scales – until now.

Now paleontologists say they might have to rethink their ideas on what dinosaurs looked like. The new discovery means many more dinosaurs could have had "fuzzy" coats instead of just scales. ■

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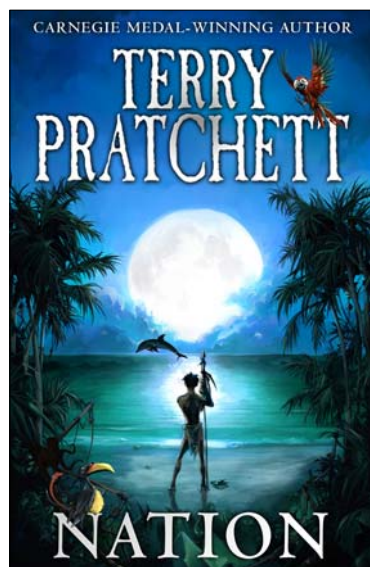
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## B O O K R E V I E W

### HAVE YOU READ ...?



I just finished one magnificently strange novel. Terry Pratchett's latest tale is about heroic ideals dashed and rebuilt, religion and magic, culture and strange nature.

Mau is coming of age on Boys' Island in the Great Southern Pelagic Ocean. He builds a boat to row to The Nation – his home island – where his people will have a great feast prepared for him. He will get his first tattoo and officially be a man.

However, a massive tidal wave dashes his boat – and his dreams of adulthood. He finds his people dead, and their huts demolished.

Others soon wash up on The Nation. Mau discovers a group of English “trousermen”, accompanied by Daphne, an English girl destined to become a princess. She was raised by her hilariously-severe, small-minded grandmother. Daphne is proper and idealistic, polite and reasonable...which means she and Mau have a great deal of trouble understanding each other.

Soon, natives of other islands arrive. Mau makes a name for himself with some heroic acts, and argues with an old priest about the power of the gods in which they all believe. Meanwhile Daphne begins to question her own severe upbringing and family traditions, starting to believe in the religion Mau may be giving up on.

Mau is tormented by the voices of The Grandfathers – the spirits of those who died before. What do they want him to do? Why such ridiculous, senseless tasks and traditions? Daphne then begins to hear the voices of the Grandmothers. What is happening?

Some parts are hilarious. Strange situations, and the flora and fauna of the island – though similar to our own – are quite bizarre. Beer can be made from roots and spat into to make it less lethal (though one must sing a song before drinking it). There are grandfather birds and tree-climbing octopi. Oh, and there's a parrot who squawks, “Show us your underthings!” at inappropriate times.

The characters have a lot of conflicting ideas. The islanders believe the trousermen are afraid of seeing each others' legs, thus wearing trousers to cover them up. Old Ataba refuses to stop believing in his ancient gods, despite Mau's logical doubts about their usefulness. [Mutineers](#) Cox and Foxflip view the islanders as “savages”, though they themselves are murderers – even the cannibals in this story have better manners and fairer rules for fighting. Reading the characters' arguments made me laugh most – these people try to make sense of the senseless through their own beliefs. Despite the strangeness and odd outcomes, I felt for these characters from mismatched cultures trying to help each other survive and understand life and death.

The Nation also hides a great secret that will cause shockwaves among the superior scientists around the world. I won't tell you much about the climax, but it involves a log in a lagoon, bullets in water, and sharks. It allows Mau some real heroics, in a non-absurd way.

I was surprised at this wondrously weird novel. Where I expected romance, there was none. Heroics came from logical use of force, not passion. Terry Pratchett's use of language here is funny and exciting. This book delivers adventure, philosophy and [satire](#). Pratchett has written of a very different world from his *Discworld* series. This is one of the cleverest novels I have read in years. Best for readers of 14 years and older.

*Nation* by Terry Pratchett. Doubleday/Random House Children's Books

Reviewed by **Craig Purdon**

### WANT US TO REVIEW A BOOK THAT YOU HAVE READ AND ENJOYED?

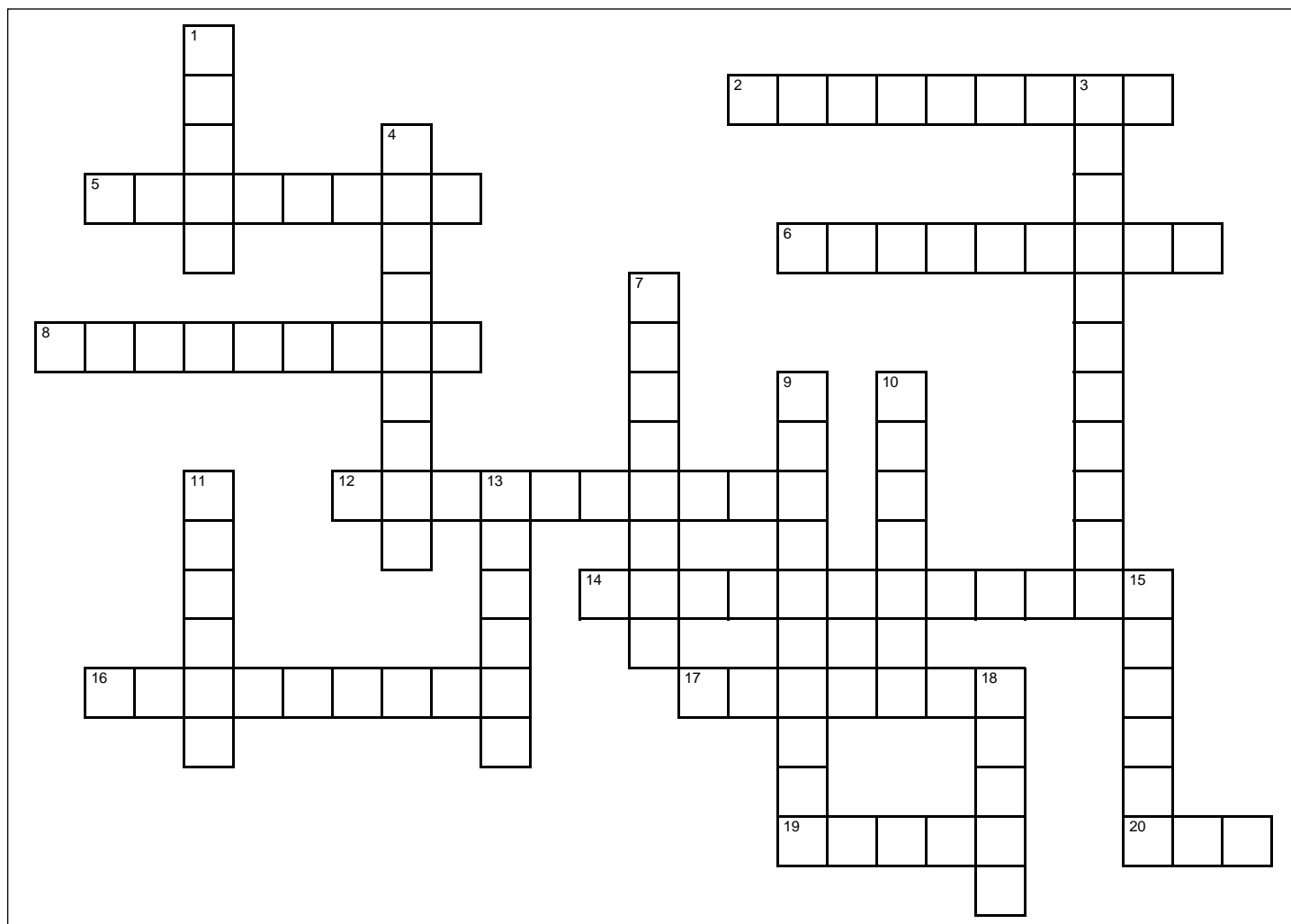
If you do, look for the “recommended book” link in your subscriber menu when you log in to our website.

Complete the form and tell us why you enjoyed the book. If we review your choice, we'll mention your name and include some of your comments.

# GLOSSARY

## PRIZE COMPETITION

**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 find the 20 words in the word search on the next page ➡



### Across

- 2 Noun (Plural)** People, especially soldiers or sailors, who refuse to obey orders (9)
- 5 Noun** The right of a person, group or region to act without consulting another person, official body or government (8)
- 6 Noun** A decision that has already been made, which is then used as a reason why a similar decision should be taken (9)
- 8 Verb** To give someone his or her previous job or position back (9)
- 12 Noun** A feeling of unhappiness and lack of hope for the future (10)
- 14 Noun** The state of not having a job (12)
- 16 Noun (Plural)** Tropical trees with large roots, that grow on muddy river banks (9)
- 17 Noun** Someone who agrees to be responsible for another person (7)
- 19 Noun** Small plants that grow in or near water (5)
- 20 Noun** The watery liquid that carries food to all parts of trees and plants (3)

### Down

- 1 Noun (Plural)** Copies of objects made from plaster of Paris (5)
- 3 Noun** An area of land set aside for indigenous people to live in (11)
- 4 Verb** Cut off - especially a human limb (9)
- 7 Noun** An act of violent opposition by many people against those in power (8)
- 9 Noun** A hatred of foreigners (10)
- 10 Noun (Plural)** Slight earthquakes (7)
- 11 Noun** A person or animal with white skin, white hair and pink eyes (6)
- 13 Noun** Thinking people of one race are superior to members of other races (6)
- 15 Noun (Plural)** Poisonous substances (6)
- 18 Noun** A person who is opposed to the political system in his or her country and tries to change it by using violence (5)

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