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NEWSPAPER OF THE YEAR*



First News

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NEWS SPORTS ENTERTAINMENT
INTERVIEWS PUZZLES COMPETITIONS



UK HOLDS HANDS WITH UKRAINE



by editor in chief Nicky Cox MBE

BOTH our King and prime minister shook hands with Ukraine's president this week after he had a difficult meeting with US President Donald Trump.

Ukraine has been at war with Russia since its President Vladimir Putin launched a full-scale invasion of Ukraine three years ago.

Donald Trump said he would end the war within days of becoming president again. But, when Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy visited him for peace talks last

weekend, they had a very public argument.

The two didn't reach an agreement, with Trump warning Zelenskyy: "You're either going to make a deal or we're out."

Before returning to Ukraine, President Zelenskyy came to the UK, where His Majesty King Charles and Prime Minister Keir Starmer shook his hand.

A meeting was held with European leaders, after which Keir Starmer announced a peace plan for them all to work with Ukraine to defend the country from Russia. They hope to get support from the USA for their plan. Check out the *First News* app for updates to this story.



MEET THE TEAM



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Nicky Cox



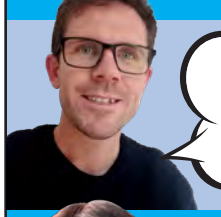
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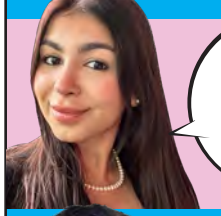
Sub
Steve Smith



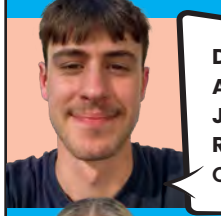
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Ian Eddy



Senior Reporter
Chris Towers



Junior Reporter
Safiyyah Choudry



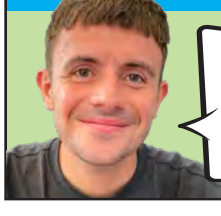
Digital Assistant/
Junior Reporter
Charlie Baker



Children's Engagement Lead
Milly Rusling



Creative Director
Richard Robson



Senior Designer
Dan Jordan

HAVE YOU HEARD?

Snappy stories to get you talking!



GIRLS' FOOTBALL GETS MAJOR BOOST

The Football Association (FA) has unveiled new plans to keep promoting equal opportunities for girls in football across England. The campaign, called Made For This Game, aims to inspire girls from all backgrounds to engage in football, whether playing, coaching or refereeing. The FA says there has been a 56% increase in women and girls playing football thanks to the success of the Lionesses and the Let Girls Play campaign, which started in 2021. The FA has committed to ensuring that nine in ten schools provide equal football access for girls by 2028.



CHILDREN'S APP SAFETY INVESTIGATED

The UK's data protection office is looking into how apps use your information. The Information Commissioner's Office is focusing on TikTok, Reddit and Imgur, and aims to make sure children aged 13-17 are protected online. Officials want to check if these apps are properly keeping kids safe from harmful content. TikTok's algorithm, which suggests videos to watch, is being examined closely. This comes after previous research found that some apps showed dangerous content to new teenage accounts within minutes.



THEY SAID THAT!

"This is cool, I'm really happy that a song about underwear now has a BRIT award, very important stuff."

– Charli XCX

CHARLI XCX SCORES BIG AT THE BRITS

Charli XCX dominated the BRIT Awards, winning five trophies including Best Artist, Album and Song of the year. The 32-year-old Essex singer's *Brat* album and hit single *Guess*, which features Billie Eilish, earned her the top prizes. Despite feeling like an "outsider" throughout her career, Charli celebrated how "culture caught up" with her vision.



WICKED WINS TWO OSCARS

The hit musical *Wicked* won Oscars for Best Costume Design, making Paul Tazewell the first black man to win the prize, and Best Production Design. The movie's stars, Ariana Grande and Cynthia Erivo, opened the show with a performance of *Defying Gravity* that got a standing ovation. The film's sequel, *Wicked: For Good*, will be released in November, continuing the story of Glinda and Elphaba.

FRUIT PIGMENTS FIGHT PLASTIC

New research shows that colour compounds called anthocyanins, which are found in nuts, fruits, veggies and flowers, may protect against damage caused by microplastics to the human reproductive system. Microplastics contain harmful chemicals that can enter the body and affect multiple organs. The researchers, from the Finland-China Food and Health Network, say that anthocyanins could lead to new treatments that help more people to have children.



JOBLESS YOUTH NUMBERS HIT RECORD HIGH

Nearly a million young people in the UK are not working, studying or in training – the highest level in more than ten years. Data from the Office for National Statistics shows that 987,000 people aged 16-24 are missing out on these opportunities – a big jump from 877,000 last year. Experts warn this could harm both young people's futures and the economy. The government plans to introduce a "youth guarantee" programme to help young people get more education and training.

SPACE STATION 'TOO CLEAN'



Scientists in the US say that the International Space Station (ISS) might be too clean for astronauts' health. The research found fewer microbes (tiny forms of life) on the ISS than on Earth, which could explain why crew members often experience skin rashes and infections. Before, these symptoms were blamed on zero gravity, but now experts say that making the space station slightly dirtier might actually benefit astronauts' wellbeing by boosting their immune systems.



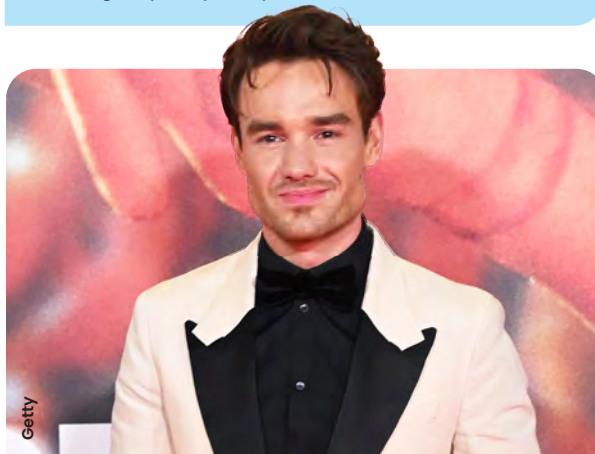
TIM BURTON EXHIBIT SMASHES RECORDS

An exhibition about film director Tim Burton has become the Design Museum's most popular show, with more than 171,000 visitors so far. The World Of Tim Burton features sketches, props and costumes from movies like *Beetlejuice*, *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* and *Wednesday*. Burton said: "I'm blown away by the response." Due to its success, the museum has extended the exhibition by five weeks until 26 May.



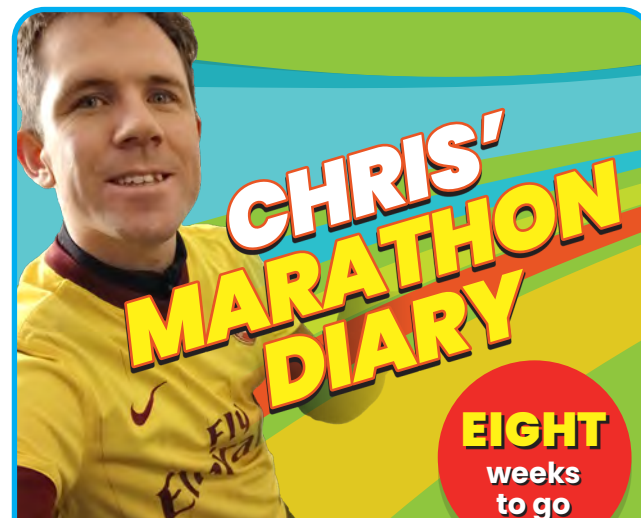
YOUNG PEOPLE DEBATE IN PARLIAMENT

Members of the Youth Parliament (MYPs) gathered in the House of Commons at the end of February for the annual UK Youth Parliament meeting. More than 300 MYPs aged 11-18 debated issues such as the voting age, minimum wage and free public transport. In a historic moment, a member from Dundee West became the first to use British Sign Language for their speech in the chamber, with an interpreter relaying their message. The event, organised by the National Youth Agency, aims to give young people a voice in politics and policy making (a policy is a plan of action).



LIAM PAYNE'S FAMILY CRITICISE NEWS MEDIA

One Direction star Liam Payne's family has asked the media to be more respectful when writing about the singer's death in Argentina last year. The day after a tribute video was played at the BRIT Awards, they shared how worried they are about Liam's seven-year-old son, who they say is struggling to understand losing his dad while seeing so many news stories about him.



Hi, guys! I'm Chris, one of your reporters at **First News**. This is week three of my training diary for the London Marathon on 27 April!

If you read last week's diary, I'll cut right to the chase – yes! I stuck to my plan this week and proudly ran a 13-mile half-marathon. It was dark by the time I got home and there were a few wobbly-knee moments, but my trusty stash of jelly babies got me through.

But, oh boy, it came at a price. We're taught in PE how vital it is to warm up and warm down either side of exercise, so I did lots of stretches once I got home. It worked, too... until 24 hours later when, after another day at the **First News** office, my left calf seized up so badly, I had all the flexibility of a gingerbread man!

Our designer Dan, a keen runner (more on him soon!), was very reassuring. He said it's delayed onset muscle soreness (DOMS) – and is normal after running such a distance for the first time. He recommended rest, drinking lots of water and eating a little salty food.

Who knew chips would be part of the marathon diet!

Why I'm running for...

In low-income countries, nine in ten girls are offline. To tackle this problem, UNICEF is working to ensure equal access to the internet, digital skills and schooling in science, technology, engineering and maths. In 2023, UNICEF helped nearly 40 million children and adolescents (half of them girls) access education.

unicef
for every child



Find out more at tinyurl.com/ChrisInTheMarathon

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY 8 MARCH

Celebrates the amazing achievements of women across the world. This year's theme aims to 'accelerate action' for gender equality.

COMMONWEALTH DAY 10 MARCH

This year's theme is 'Together We Thrive', celebrating countries working together for peace and unity.

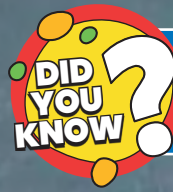


Go to the
First News app
for daily news posted
throughout the week.



DRONES SOLVE NARWHAL TUSK MYSTERY

Narwhals are sometimes known as the 'unicorns of the sea'



A NARWHAL tusk can grow up to 3m (10ft) long!

O'Corry-Crowe, FAU/Watt, DFO

DRONES have been flown over the sea to find out what narwhals use their mysterious tusks for in the wild.

Narwhals are whales that have a long, spiral tusk. Scientists have wondered for ages what this tusk, which is actually a big tooth, is used for, besides finding a mate.

Now, researchers from Florida Atlantic University's (FAU) Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institute and Canada's Department of Fisheries and Oceans have used drones to study these Arctic whales more closely.

The drone footage has shown the first evidence of narwhals using their tusks to explore, forage (find food) and play. Recordings show how the animals use their

tusks to investigate their prey and interact with bird species who might try to steal food from them.

Research professor Greg O'Corry-Crowe at FAU said: "Some of the interactions we saw appeared competitive in nature, with one whale blocking, or trying to block, another whale's access to the same target fish, while others may have been more subtle, possibly communicative."

The footage isn't just providing information on narwhals' tusks. It's also helping experts to look at how the species is being affected by environmental changes in the Arctic, including global warming.

Gaza war spills into West Bank

THE Gaza war is affecting the West Bank more than ever before, says the United Nations (UN).

Since the Gaza ceasefire came into force on 19 January, 40,000 people have been forced to leave their homes in the West Bank – the largest displacement in the area since 1967.

The West Bank is on the west bank of the River Jordan, with Israel to the north, west and south. Around three million Palestinian Arabs live there under the rule of the Palestinian Authority and Israeli military.

Many are left fearing they will never be able to return home because roads and buildings have been destroyed. Vital services such as healthcare, water and electricity are also cut off, says the UN.

Meanwhile, more than 5,000 children are missing out on an education, with some not being able to attend school for more than ten weeks.

"The West Bank is becoming a battlefield... This must end," said the UN's Philippe Lazzarini.

Mustafa Tamaizeh from the charity Oxfam says "urgent action" must be taken so that aid agencies are given access to Palestinians in need.



UK cuts foreign aid budget

MORE than 130 charities have urged the government to change its mind about cutting the money it gives to help other countries.

Prime Minister Keir Starmer

announced last week that he would be reducing the amount of money given to those in need across the world, so that the UK can spend more on its own armed forces to defend itself.

The UK wants to spend £13.4bn more on defence from 2027, but Mr Starmer said that, to find the money, the government will have to cut aid.

Charities have said cutting the money will have "devastating" consequences. Save the Children called it "a betrayal of the world's most vulnerable children".

The PM said it was a "difficult and painful" decision but "necessary" to protect the UK.

Donald Trump announced similar measures in the US, cutting more than 90% of the US Agency for International Development's foreign aid contracts.



PM Keir Starmer

EDITOR'S COMMENT

UKRAINE is a peaceful country that was attacked by its larger neighbour Russia (front page).

Nicky Cox MBE



When one country invades another without good reason, it breaks international rules and threatens the safety of all nations.

That's why other European countries are getting together to try to find a peace plan to help Ukraine and its leader, President Zelensky. Supporting Ukraine means standing up for fairness and freedom. If Russia succeeds, other countries might think they can use force to get what they want, leading to more wars.

Respect for other countries means a safer world for everyone.



The Svalbard Global Seed Vault



African plants

MORE than 100,000 seeds from across Africa have been stored in the Svalbard Global Seed Vault in Norway. The vault is the world's largest back-up of seeds in case of a natural disaster. The new seeds have come from 177 different species, including the Sudan teak tree, which is known for being very strong.



Tesla

SALES of the company's electric cars fell by almost half (45%) across Europe and the UK in January. Tesla is now valued below \$1 trillion (£0.79tn) for the first time since November 2024. Experts say that competition from other big electric car manufacturers is to blame, alongside Tesla boss Elon Musk getting more involved with US politics.



CHECK OUT OUR NEW WEEKLY QUIZ!

Test yourself on this week's news with our new quiz, included with every subscription. Play with your family, friends or by yourself. Read this week's issue to get all the answers right!

Ask a grown-up/bill-payer for your **WEB ID** to use the app.





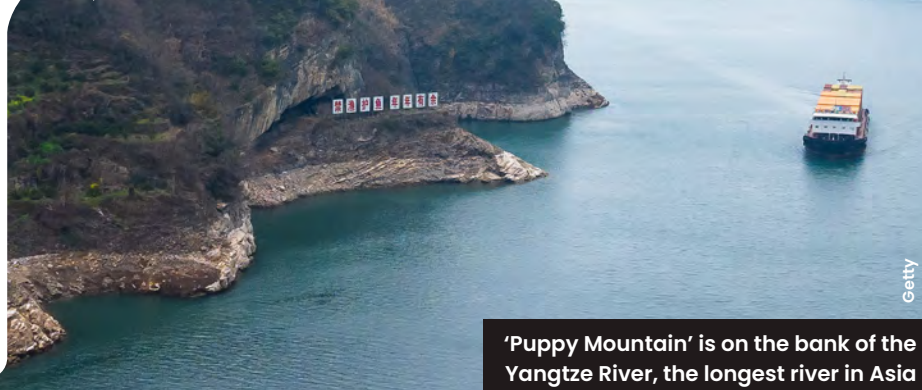
CAN YOU SEE THE PUPPY'S FACE?

THIS mountain has existed in China for a very, very long time – but this week, it went viral!

Why? Because a tourist took a photo of it and spotted that its shape resembles a puppy's head!

Guo Qingshan, from Shanghai, posted his snap online and captioned it Puppy Mountain. In ten days, it drew 120,000 likes and millions of views on Chinese social media sites, with other users even sharing photos of their dogs to see who had the closest match.

Guo said of his discovery: "It was so magical and cute. The puppy's posture is like it's drinking water, or it's looking at some fish!" Can you see it?



'Puppy Mountain' is on the bank of the Yangtze River, the longest river in Asia



Do girls like to bike?

AROUND twice as many boys as girls are cycling in the UK, a report has found.

The charity Sustrans asked children aged six to 15 whether they "often cycled". In response, nearly two in ten boys said yes – but fewer than one in ten girls said the same.

One girl – a secondary school pupil from Swansea – told researchers that she used to cycle, but now she's stopped. "It's not really seen as cool, and we can be quite self-conscious about that," she said, adding that she felt like most cycling gear was designed for men.

However, half of the children in the study said that they'd like to cycle more.

Many supported ideas like cycle lanes, quiet paths and slower speed limits for cars, to make cycling easier and safer.

Rachel Toms, from Sustrans, said: "Children want to cycle and expect our leaders to tackle the barriers stopping them." She said it's important for children

to "feel safe to get on their bike and get all the lifestyle and health benefits cycling offers."

Do you feel safe when cycling?

Vote at first.news/polls



Careers Week has us thinking of the future

WHAT do you want to be when you're older?

That's a question you might have heard a few times over the past week, as lots of schools celebrated National Careers Week. But the truth is, even adults in work now are feeling a little unsure about the future!

● The rise of AI

Lots of people in creative roles and the music and film industries have been fighting back recently against their talents being copied or replaced by artificial intelligence (AI).

In a recent *First News* poll, three-quarters of you told us that you were worried about AI taking human jobs.

Prime Minister Keir Starmer is keen to make Britain a "world leader" in AI. He says that it will "drive incredible change in our country" – not by taking our jobs, but by making them easier.

● Favourite companies

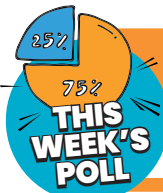
The 2025 BBC Bitesize Careers Survey revealed the companies that UK teenagers dream of working for.

Top of the list for the second year running was the NHS – ahead of Google, Apple, NASA and Tesla.

● Dream job

The BBC survey also found that being a doctor was the dream job for the 4,000 13 to 16-year-olds that it asked.

However, we'd love to find out what the answer is for all you millions of *First News* readers at primary and secondary schools across the UK – so do let us know in the poll below!



What's your dream job?

Vote at first.news/polls



Have you been discussing jobs in class as part of National Careers Week?

Britain's bees buzzing off

BUMBLEBEE numbers in Britain were at their lowest on record last year.

Findings from the Bumblebee Conservation Trust's annual *BeeWalk* report revealed that the average population between 2010 and 2023 dropped by almost a quarter in 2024. The experts put this down to the cold, wet weather that we had in spring

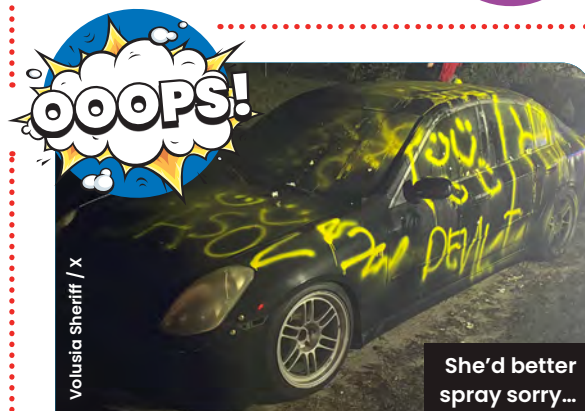
and early summer.

Spring is an important time for bees because it's when the queen bees build their colonies and grow their young.

Bad news for bees is bad news for the countryside, as we need them to pollinate our crops and wildflowers.

24

There are 24 species of bumblebee in Great Britain



She'd better spray sorry...

A WOMAN in Florida was arrested after a savage act of revenge went VERY wrong.

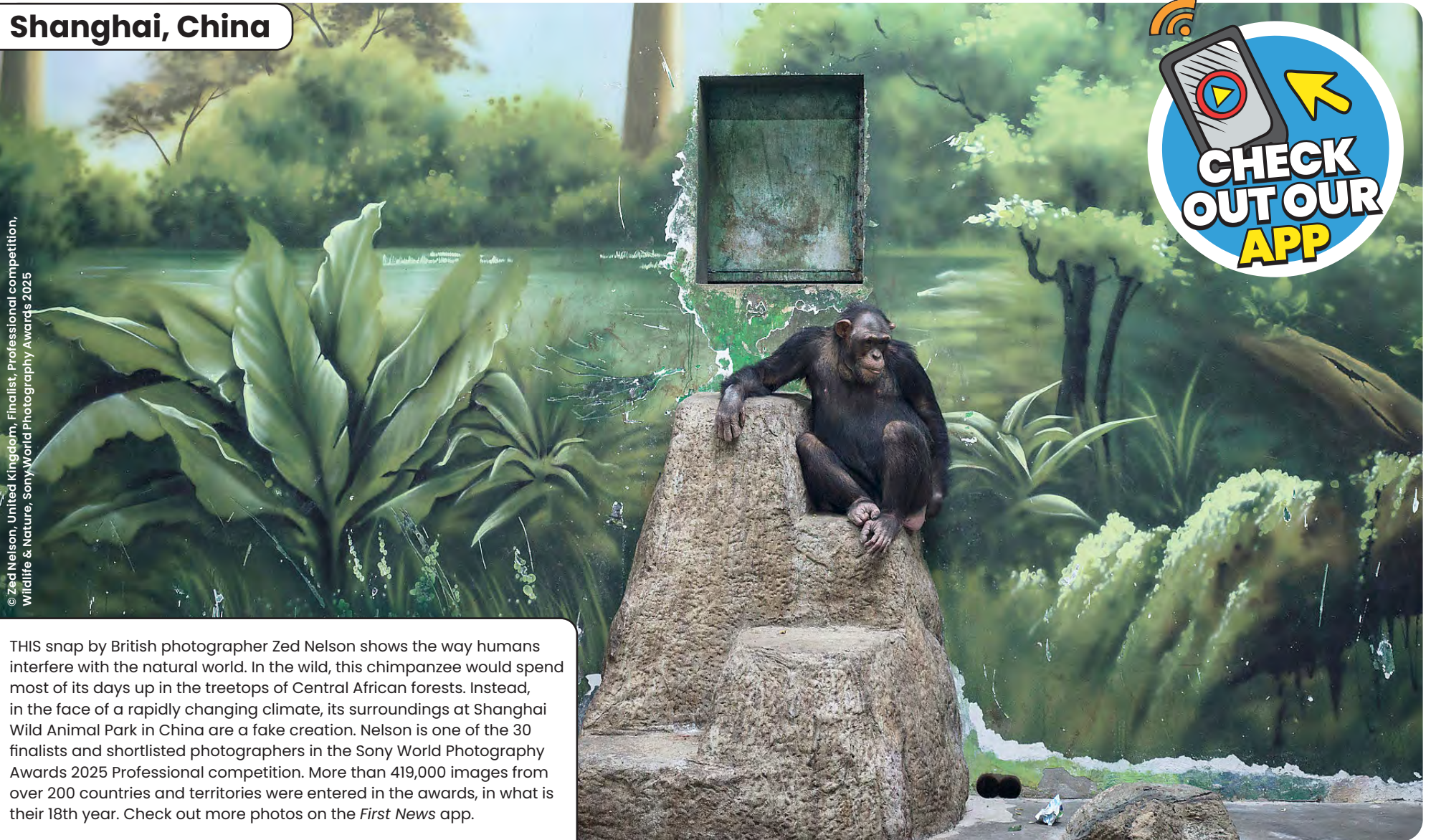
Cops in Volusia County said the 18-year-old had told them she was upset with her ex-boyfriend, so she decided to spray-paint his car and splatter it with eggs.

She was caught after officers spotted yellow paint on her jogging bottoms.

Worst of all, the car that she wrecked didn't belong to her ex-boyfriend at all – it was actually his neighbour's!

**Shanghai, China**

© Zed Nelson, United Kingdom, Finalist, Professional competition, Wildlife & Nature, Sony World Photography Awards 2025



THIS snap by British photographer Zed Nelson shows the way humans interfere with the natural world. In the wild, this chimpanzee would spend most of its days up in the treetops of Central African forests. Instead, in the face of a rapidly changing climate, its surroundings at Shanghai Wild Animal Park in China are a fake creation. Nelson is one of the 30 finalists and shortlisted photographers in the Sony World Photography Awards 2025 Professional competition. More than 419,000 images from over 200 countries and territories were entered in the awards, in what is their 18th year. Check out more photos on the *First News* app.

Athens, Greece

CLASHES break out between police and civilians in front of the Greek parliament, two years on from the country's worst rail disaster. People are angry at how little has changed since a deadly train crash. A total of 57 people died and many more were injured, but nobody has been held responsible. Many believe that the incident has been covered up to protect powerful people.

Şanlıurfa, Turkey

THIS is one of two baby macaques that were rescued after someone tried to sneak them into Turkey illegally. Border officers found them hidden in a vehicle, before taking them away for further care.



Getty

Düsseldorf, Germany

CARNIVAL season has kicked off in Germany. The Düsseldorf Rosenmontagszug (Rose Monday Parade) sees several thousand people take to the streets in fancy dress.

Bangkok, Thailand



Getty

PEOPLE have been flocking to this statue of Optimus Prime after reports of it bringing good luck. The icon is the leader of the Autobots in the Transformers movie series, but now seems to have more important duties for local businesses in Bangkok.

A CHILDREN'S THEATRE PARTNERSHIP, UNICORN THEATRE
AND SHEFFIELD THEATRES PRODUCTION



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UPLIFTING, PROFOUND,
AND FULL OF HEART”**

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BASED ON THE NOVEL BY
MALORIE BLACKMAN
ADAPTED BY WINSOME PINNOCK



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18 – 22 MAR	LIVERPOOL PLAYHOUSE	7 – 10 MAY	POOLE LIGHTHOUSE
26 – 29 MAR	SALFORD LOWRY	14 – 17 MAY	BLACKPOOL GRAND THEATRE
2 – 5 APR	COVENTRY BELGRADE	21 – 24 MAY	NORTHAMPTON ROYAL & DERNGATE
8 – 12 APR	WOLVERHAMPTON GRAND THEATRE	4 – 7 JUN	CANTERBURY MARLOWE THEATRE
23 – 26 APR	NORWICH THEATRE ROYAL	10 – 14 JUN	LEICESTER CURVE



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**ULLAPOOL****Mega purchase promotes nature**

Conservation charity the Scottish Wildlife Trust has bought the huge 7,618-hectare Inverbroom Estate, to restore it for nature and people. The £17.5m purchase was possible thanks to a private donation – the largest in the Trust's 60-year history. This is good news for local wildlife including otters (inset) and pine martens, and will see river woodland and peatland habitats restored. The work will also benefit the climate as healthy peatlands, which are made up of soil and plants, are one of the most effective ecosystems for carbon storage. The Trust will work with local farmers to boost sustainable practices.



The Inverbroom Estate is larger than the City of Dundee

Snowdrops are an important source of food for bees



National Trust/Bec Hughes

WALLINGTON**One million snowdrops**

The National Trust is celebrating the planting of one million snowdrops at its Wallington estate. Thousands of visitors have come together every February half-term for the last nine years to plant the white flowers. On 2 March, families put on their gardening gloves one more time to help plant the final 100,000 snowdrops and reach the huge milestone. Then, they joined a celebratory snowdrop parade led by the Northumbrian Pipers. Simon Thompson, the head gardener at Wallington, said: "It's been fascinating to slowly watch our spring landscape change and flourish year after year."

ANGLESEY**Records galore**

What better way to celebrate your country's annual day than by smashing some records? Guinness World Records teamed up with Welsh language broadcaster S4C for St David's Day (1 March), and some proud Welsh natives took on steam train pulls, skilful trapeze stunts and typing the longest place name in Europe with just one finger. Elyn Baker pecked out Llanfairpwllgwyngyllgogerychwyrndrobwilllantysiliogogogoch in just 15.33 seconds! All the action was on TV show *Guinness World Records Cymru 2025*, which aimed to bring attention to the beauty of the Welsh language.



The name was coined in the late 19th century in a bid to attract tourists



The UK is home to 35% of the global grey seal population

WINTERTON-ON-SEA**Spot the seals**

Cutting-edge technology has been used to count accurately the number of seals on a beach. Natural England's two-year project monitored seal populations at Winterton-on-Sea with drone imagery captured from 110m above ground. Then, artificial intelligence (AI) was used to pick out the adult seals from their whitecoat pups. Overall, the drone counted 8,500 seals, compared to the 6,200 seen by volunteers on the ground. But, while technology may be the future of counting seals, people will remain crucial to protecting them.

LONDON**Art fair returns**

Vibrant colours will return to Battersea Park this spring in the Affordable Art Fair. From 12–16 March, thousands of artworks from across the UK and all over the world will be on display. Incredible female artists will take centre stage in celebration of International Women's Day (8 March) and Women's History Month. Highlighting living female artists is important, as they still only represent 25% of the market. New for this year is a collection of art perfect for children's bedrooms. The art will be on sale from £100.



Affordable Art Fair

GILLINGHAM**Super campaigner wins animal award**

A volunteer who has dedicated hours of her own time making life better for animals has won an RSPCA award. Super campaigner Chantal Highsted spreads awareness of the RSPCA's work and is also an official Wildlife Friend of the charity. Thanks to her campaigns in schools and online highlighting animal welfare issues, she has been honoured in the RSPCA's Impact Awards for 2024. One of her successful campaigns saw her become a Cool Dog Summer Champion. She asked Kent Wildlife Trust to put up hundreds of Dogs Die In Hot Cars posters on popular country walks.



Chantal, from Gillingham, is joined on litter-picking trails by her adopted dog Brownie

RSPCA



FIGHTING A VIRUS WITH WATCHES

ALTHOUGH most people probably want to forget about the Covid-19 pandemic, scientists say that we need to think harder about how we can prepare better for the next one – and say that smartwatches could be our best weapon in the fight against a new virus.

Many viruses are at their most contagious (readily passed on) before people start to feel ill, which is why things like Covid-19 and flu are able to spread so quickly.

Lots of smartwatches are capable of measuring things like a person's heart rate, skin temperature and how much they're sweating, and a report in *PNAS Nexus* says that these watches are 90% (nine out of ten times) accurate at diagnosing the flu.

In a pandemic, if people knew they were ill, they could avoid other people and help to stop the virus from spreading far and wide.

"With early detection literally at our fingertips, I see a lot of reason to hope," says one of the researchers, Märt Vesinurm, from Aalto University in Finland.



PANDEMIC – an outbreak of a disease that affects a lot of people over a very wide area, such as an entire country or the whole world.



SINCE countries spent billions dealing with Covid, researchers say that in another pandemic it might be cheaper for governments to give everyone in the country a smartwatch so that cases are caught earlier.



Some early Christmas cheer



FEEL free to start making plans for Christmas 2032, as NASA and the European Space Agency (ESA) say there's no chance of asteroid 2024 YR4 hitting the Earth.

There were a lot of excited media reports about how the asteroid could smash into our planet on 22 December 2032, and at one stage there was a 3.1% (three in a hundred) chance that it would happen.

However, after more observations of the asteroid's path, that probability has now dropped to around 0.001%. That means it's overwhelmingly unlikely to happen – a probability of 0.001% means a one in 100,000 chance.

As we get more data, that will probably drop even further, so sleep soundly, and remember that the world isn't as scary as the headlines often make it seem.

SCIENTISTS rate the danger of an asteroid using something called the **Torino Impact Hazard Scale**, which goes from zero (no danger) to ten (a certain collision that could wipe out life on Earth). Asteroid 2024 YR4 was rated three for a while, but has now dropped down to zero.



People protest against US government cuts to science, health and education projects

Scientists fight back

SCIENCE journals generally stay out of politics, but an article by the editors of *Nature* has strongly criticised US President Donald Trump's "assault" on science in America.

"It is hard to put into words" how much damage is being done to scientific research, the article says. It goes on to accuse Mr Trump's government of having "a desire to downgrade, if not eliminate, independent, science-based evidence and expert advice".

Mr Trump and his friend Elon Musk, the boss of SpaceX and Tesla, have been responsible for cutting projects and jobs "that are key to protecting public health, the environment and people's safety and security", the editors say, adding that cuts to climate science have dealt a "severe blow to tackling climate change" and helping poorer countries adapt to it.

Trump and Musk are on a mission to save the US lots of money by slashing the size of the government, but many are unhappy with the scale of the cuts.

This report is from the Science Museum in London

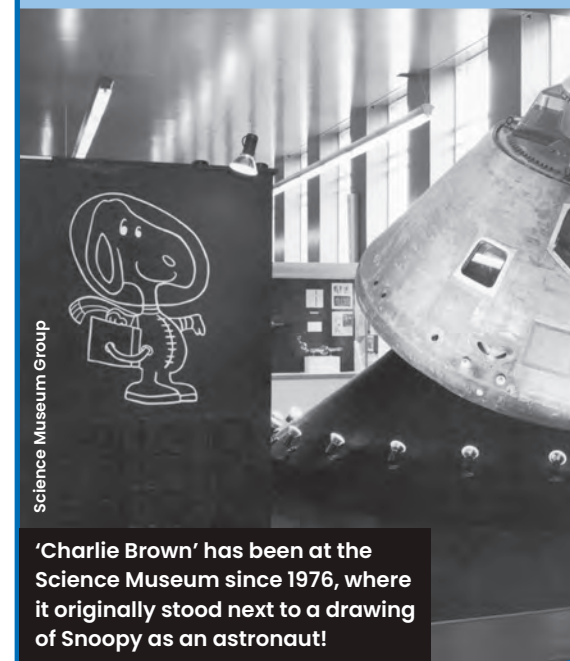
SCIENCE
MUSEUM
GROUP

NASA's Apollo 11 mission in 1969 succeeded in getting humankind to the moon.

But before Apollo 11, ten other Apollo missions had taken place to test the safety of the spacecraft and astronauts, ensuring the moon-landing mission was a success.

Apollo 10 was the last practice run to the moon. The astronauts' mission was to get close to the moon and scout the Apollo 11 landing site. Because the mission required the lunar module to 'snoop around' but without landing, the crew named it Snoopy. This is why the command module, the spacecraft that carries the astronauts back and forth to Earth, was nicknamed Charlie Brown, after Snoopy's loyal owner in the *Peanuts* cartoons.

You can see the Apollo 10 command module in Making the Modern World at the Science Museum.



'Charlie Brown' has been at the Science Museum since 1976, where it originally stood next to a drawing of Snoopy as an astronaut!



DEEP-SEA FISH SURFACES IN MEXICO



AN oarfish from the deep sea, rarely seen at the surface, has been spotted on a beach in Mexico.

The shimmering fish, typically found at depths of 200 to 1,000 metres, was noticed by tourists, who attempted to guide it back to the water.

Despite being nicknamed the “doomsday fish” due to myths linking them to natural disasters, researchers have found no connection between oarfish appearances and earthquakes.

Scientists believe that changing ocean conditions might explain recent sightings.

The injured fish was reportedly taken to a marine biologist for examination.

Beavers return to UK rivers

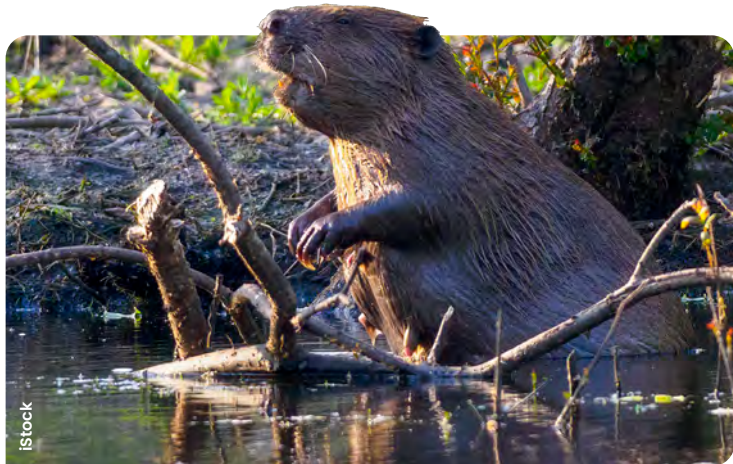
THE UK government has approved plans for beavers to be reintroduced into rivers across England.

The native species, once extinct in Britain, will help create wetlands and reduce flooding.

The Wildlife Trusts have led this campaign for years, and the first legal beaver release took place in Scotland in 2009.

Studies show these water-loving animals improve river health, filter pollution and support other wildlife.

Natural England will begin granting licences within a year, with the first wild releases expected this autumn.



Deadly hornets' diets revealed

SCIENTISTS have discovered that Asian hornets eat more than 1,400 different insects, including important pollinators such as bees.

These invasive hornets, now spreading across Western Europe, pose a serious threat to many local ecosystems.

Researchers from the University of Exeter examined hornet larvae from several countries.

While European honey bees were their favourite meal, these predators also feast on bumblebees, wasps, beetles, butterflies and spiders.

Lead researcher Siffreya Pedersen said: “Most insect populations are in decline due to factors such as habitat destruction and chemical pollution. The expanding area inhabited [lived in] by Asian hornets poses an extra threat.”



ANEESHWAR Kunchala is a ten-year-old wildlife campaigner and officially the world's youngest newspaper columnist! He shot to fame as a finalist on *Britain's Got Talent*. Now, he's presenting the documentary *Save Our Wildlife* from Sky Kids and Sky Zero. You can watch it at first.news/climatecrisis.

Aneeshwar's Animal of the Week is the...

FLAMINGO



HABITAT:

● They usually live in the shallows of saltwater or brackish water (where salt and freshwater mix), but some live in extremely salty water.

FUN FACTS:

- A group of flamingos is called a flamboyance (flamboyant means stylish).
- Both flamingo parents feed their chicks with a liquid they produce called crop milk.

SPECIAL SUPERPOWER:

● Flamingos get their pink colour from their food, mainly brine shrimp. Their bodies break down the pigments, turning their feathers pink.

CONSERVATION STATUS:

● Greater flamingos are the most common and they are of least concern, says the International Union for Conservation of Nature.



We're asking you to send in photos of your own drawings or paintings of wildlife to add to an online gallery. Ask a parent, guardian or teacher to send in your photos by emailing them to yournews@firstnews.co.uk. You can view the gallery by asking a responsible adult to scan this QR code.



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RSPCA



OLDEST LLAMA EVER!

A LLAMA named Whitetop has picked up a Guinness World Record for being the oldest living llama in captivity ever, at 27 years and 250 days old!

The snow-coloured animal lives at Victory Junction camp in North Carolina, USA, where he interacts with children who have serious illnesses.

Staff say Whitetop loves being petted. "He'll just lay

there and he lets kids run up to him and love on him," says Billie Jo Davis, barn director at Victory Junction.

Whitetop's daily routine includes eating hay and spending time with his animal friends – two miniature donkeys and a highland cow. Staff credit his age to "camper interactions, a balanced diet, good pasture [grassland] mates, and great vet care".

Katy Perry heads to space!

POP star Katy Perry will join five other women on a historic space journey on Blue Origin's New Shepard rocket this spring.

It will mark the first all-female space mission since the Soviet Union's Valentina Tereshkova's solo mission in 1963.

The 11-minute flight will take the crew past the Kármán line, which is recognised worldwide as the space boundary.

Lauren Sánchez, fiancée of Blue Origin owner Jeff Bezos, has organised the mission.

She says they are "paving the way for women" in space exploration.



Getty

Lost teen survives mountains



AN 18-year-old hiker has survived ten days lost in China's Qinling mountains by drinking stream water and melted snow, and eating toothpaste.

Sun Liang became stranded after his electronic devices died, and he broke his arm in a fall while trying to find his way to safety.

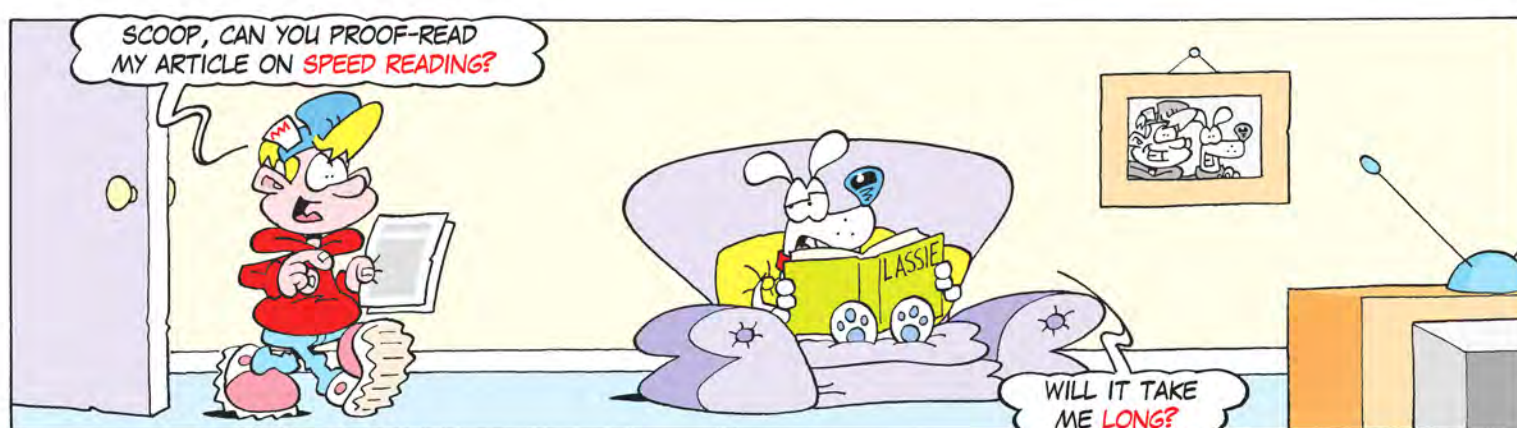
Despite freezing temperatures, he sheltered behind a rock using leaves as bedding until rescuers found him.

His family had to pay £8,700 for the rescue, which involved more than 30 people.

The trail that Sun hiked, the Ao-Tai Line, is officially closed due to being too dangerous – more than 50 people have gone missing there in the last 20 years.



Written and illustrated by Paul Palmer





BILLY'S RED NOSE DAY CHALLENGE

RED Nose Day is back on 21 March! To mark this year's campaign, British racing driver Billy Monger took on the epic challenge of completing the Ironman World Championship in Kona, Hawaii. The challenge involves swimming, biking and running. Here Billy tells us all about his experience.



3. A CHALLENGE FOR A CAUSE

Before leaving the UK, I was lucky to meet people from projects supported by Comic Relief. The Running Charity is such an amazing organisation, and I was able to see how donations really do change people's lives for the better. With every mile covered, I want to raise as much as I can for those who need it most.



6. READY TO RUN!

Now nearly nine hours into my challenge, I switched into my running blades for the final push... a full 26.2-mile marathon! I pushed through, having to walk a lot of the way. But as I neared the finish line, roars of support from the crowds helped me take the final few metres of the hill at a run.



4. WE'RE OFF – LET THE SWIM BEGIN!

Here we go – it's all starting to feel real. At the start line, I was nervous about how my body would handle the pressure of the Ironman challenge in Hawaii. I quickly had to put those fears behind me as I set off on the first stage of the challenge – a 2.4-mile swim. I managed to finish the swim in good time, despite being stung twice by jellyfish!



7. AT THE FINISH LINE

I did it! All that hard work finally paid off and it couldn't have gone better. That look on my face is one of pure relief as I crossed the finish line. It was the longest day of my life, but I couldn't have dreamed of having a better race.



5. ONTO THE BIKE

Straight out of the water, I was into the saddle for a massive 112-mile cycle. That's the equivalent of cycling from London to Birmingham! I'd never cycled this far before, and I had to contend with some strong winds. I managed to dig deep and complete the cycle in 7 hours, 26 minutes and 50 seconds.

8. I'M OFFICIALLY AN IRONMAN!

Wow! This has been a challenge of a lifetime, but it's all for such an amazing cause. Knowing that the money raised is going to help so many vital Comic Relief-funded projects in the UK and across the world is such a special feeling. It's all just about starting to sink in.



TUNE IN!

You can watch Billy's journey on BBC One and iPlayer in the week leading up to Red Nose Day, which returns on Friday 21 March. To find out more about how you can get involved with Red Nose Day, visit comicrelief.com/rednoseday.

1. IN THE BEGINNING

I arrived in Hawaii dreaming of becoming the youngest ever double leg amputee to complete an Ironman World Championship, while also raising vital funds for Comic Relief. I had the course record in my sights too – but it wasn't until I got here that the reality of what I was about to take on really started to sink in.

2. GETTING PREPPED

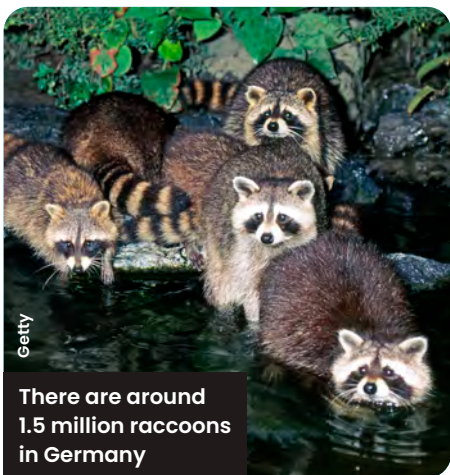
The days leading up to the Ironman gave me and my body the chance to get used to the conditions I was about to face. Before training for this challenge I'd never run a marathon; I'd never cycled for 7-8 hours in a row; I'd never swum 4km – let alone in the ocean! I knew this was going to be my biggest ever test.



GERMANY

Bad news for raccoons taking over German city

Authorities are set to allow hunters to shoot raccoons all year round in the German city of Kassel. The city is home to 200,000 people and 30,000 raccoons. It's been branded the 'raccoon capital of Europe', because its population of the furry mammals has more than tripled in 20 years. While some enjoy living side-by-side with the animals, others are fed up with them knocking over their bins, breaking into their homes and pooping on their carpets. Some argue that year-round shooting will be pointless because the raccoons are multiplying too quickly.



There are around 1.5 million raccoons in Germany



USA

New rules for journalists at the White House



It's Trump's way or the highway...

It's been announced that President Donald Trump's team will pick and choose which journalists are let inside the White House. Space can get pretty tight in the president's famous Oval Office. For decades, to keep things fair, an independent group called the White House Correspondents' Association has rotated which journalists are given access. However, Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt said that, from now on, her team would decide "who

gets to enjoy the very privileged and limited access in spaces such as Air Force One [the president's plane] and the Oval Office." Critics say this is damaging to press freedom. Mr Trump has already banned journalists from Associated Press because the news agency refuses to call the Gulf of Mexico, the 'Gulf of America', like he wants them to.



CHILE

Huge power cut hits eight million homes

A state of emergency was declared in Chile last week when a major blackout left most of the country in the dark for hours. The government blamed the power cut, which struck on Tuesday 25 February, on a system failure. It had major effects on the country. Soldiers were sent to areas that were affected and people were made to stay at home during certain hours. Hospitals and prisons had to fire up emergency generators, and the third day of Viña del Mar, the biggest music festival in Latin America, was cancelled. Most services were restored the next day.



Chile's capital city, Santiago

"What happened today was outrageous. It's intolerable that one or several companies should affect the everyday life of millions of Chileans."

— President Gabriel Boric



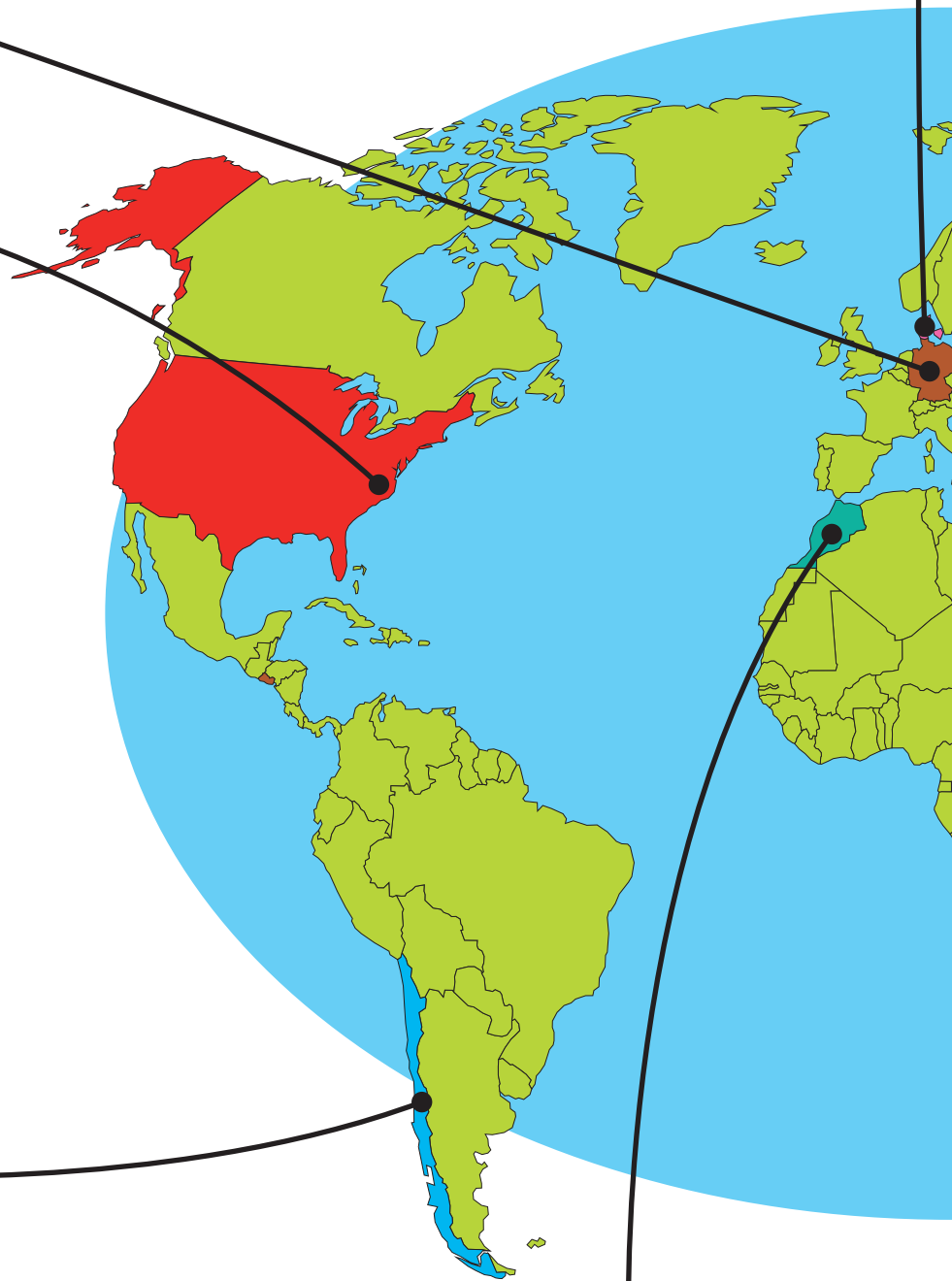
DENMARK

Museum expert discovers 'wooden Stonehenge'



How the pillars may have looked

An ancient ring of 45 timber pillars has been found in the ground in Denmark, and it may be as much as 4,000 years old. Sidsel Wählin, a museum curator who stumbled upon the pillars last month, called it an "extraordinary find". Experts have compared it to Stonehenge, and reckon it shows that civilisations from Britain and Denmark during the Stone Age and Bronze Age might have shared the same ideas and customs. The ring lies in Aars, North Jutland, and has a diameter of around 30m (98ft).



MOROCCO

King asks people not to kill sheep for this year's Eid

King Mohammed VI of Morocco has asked his people not to slaughter sheep for Eid al-Adha this year. The Muslim festival is known as the Feast of Sacrifice, and observers mark it by slaughtering an animal and sharing the meat with their family and the poor. However, Morocco's sheep population has plummeted as a result of seven years of drought, and meat prices are soaring. The king has warned that slaughtering sheep "would cause significant harm to our people, especially those with limited income".



Sheep numbers are down



CHINA

Fake mourners flock to funeral home for noodles

Hungry locals are dead keen on the noodles served at a humble Chinese funeral home – so much so, some are disguising themselves as mourners, just to get their fill. The canteen at the Erlong Funeral Home in Guizhou serves tasty £1 dishes for customers who come to visit their deceased loved ones while they're being prepared for their funeral. The noodles recently went viral on social media and, now, crowds of outsiders are sneaking in, too. To solve the problem, the home has decided to give away 50 free dishes to the public every day – as long as they don't disturb genuine mourners.



One worker says the queue for noodles can be hours long



SOUTH KOREA



More babies – and marriages saw a big rise, too

Births up for the first time in nine years!

The birth rate in South Korea rose last year for the first time in nine years. Early government figures show that 238,300 babies were born in 2024 (up from 230,000 in 2023). However, the population is still dropping. South Korea has one of the world's lowest birth rates, and one of the longest life expectancies. This means the country's average age is rising, which

puts the country's future at risk because there are more people in retirement and fewer young people in work. Officials argue that more young foreigners should be invited to move to South Korea. Its population was 51.83 million in 2020, but it's expected to drop to 36.22 million by 2072. Meanwhile, Japan's birth rate last year was its lowest in 125 years.



JAPAN

The world's smallest park!

What if we told you that there's a park in Japan that isn't big enough for a kick-about, a picnic or even for one person to have a little lie down? It's in the town of Nagaizumi, and it's just been recognised by Guinness World Records (GWR) as the smallest park in the world. It was built near the town hall in 1988, but GWR judges were only invited to come to see it for the first time in December. How small is it? Well, it covers an area of 2.5 square feet (a quarter of a square metre) – roughly the same as this open double-page spread of *First News* that you're reading!



Guinness World Records



INDIA

Cinema sued over its too-long trailers!

Do you like the adverts and trailers that play before a film? Sometimes, there are a lot of them. In India, a man has sued a cinema chain because he thought they went on for too long! The 30-year-old went to see a war film with his friends at a PVR Inox cinema in Bangalore in December, and was upset that he had to sit through 25 minutes of adverts. He'd been planning to work after the film finished, but was late for his appointments. The court agreed: "Time is considered as money – each one's time is very precious." PVR Inox was ordered to pay him nearly £500 for wasting his time, causing "mental agony" and to cover his legal fees.



25%
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THIS WEEK'S POLL

Are the adverts that play before films too long?

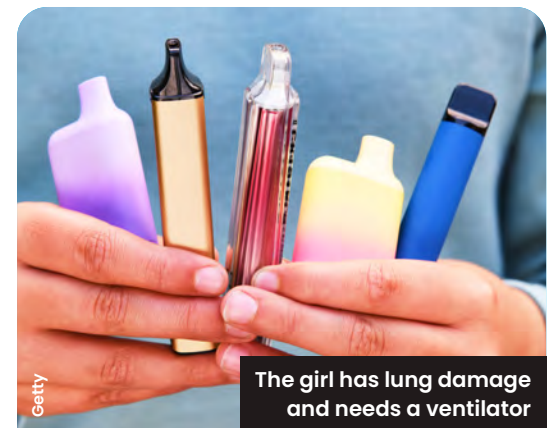
Vote at first.news/polls



THAILAND

Girl, aged 12, in hospital after vaping for two years

A 12-year-old schoolgirl is in a critical condition in Thailand after vaping and consuming herbal energy drinks since the age of ten. Thai newspaper *The Nation* reports that she was first admitted to Satuek Hospital with breathing difficulties, vomiting and weakness. Three other children from the girl's school, in Year 6, Year 7 and Year 9, have also required treatment after vaping. Authorities are investigating the sale of vapes in the area and have arrested two people working in a shop nearby.



Getty

The girl has lung damage and needs a ventilator



GLADIATOR... READY!

BETWEEN crushing her opponents every Saturday night on *Gladiators*, Jodie Ounsley (aka Fury) has written a guide to believing in yourself and following your dreams!



Jodie was the first deaf female rugby player to play for England!

Hi Jodie! Can you explain your book, in a nutshell?

It's like a life guide to empower kids. I speak about my own experiences and things I've learned, hoping I can pass that on to kids. It's a mix of trying to find your dream and the struggles you might face. I've kept it real! Sometimes you see successful people and think they've had no challenges.

Breaking down the title

● Be strong...

"[In the book], there's a message, especially to girls, of being proud of being strong if they're into fitness. But the book's not about saying: 'Everybody in the gym, you have to play sports!' Rather, if you have setbacks, knowing that you're strong enough to overcome those."

● ...be brave...

"It's being brave in terms of putting yourself out of your comfort zone and doing things that scare you – good things can come from it! I've done a lot of things where I've pushed myself into doing something, and afterwards I've wondered what I was worried about."

● ...be confident

"It's easier said than done to say: 'Be confident!' – it's more about how you can grow it. At school, I was a shy and nervous person. I had a great group of friends... but due to my disability, I did feel different. It starts with learning to accept who you are, being proud of that, then confidence comes."

● You've overcome big challenges, Jodie. You were born deaf in both ears, so how does that affect you?

Yes, I was born profoundly deaf – no hearing whatsoever in both ears. I had my cochlear implant fitted when I was 14 months old. It doesn't 'give' you hearing, but it sends signals to your brain, and you interpret it as sound – the science behind it is crazy! A lot of the time, I communicate by lip-reading and body language. Most of the time I might hear some of the words, and kind of have to fill in the gaps.

● In rugby and on *Gladiators*, you've performed in arenas with a lot of noise going on – that must be hard.

Yeah, I've played in rugby stadiums all over the world... in the arena on *Gladiators* it's another level, the atmosphere's electric! I told the production team how they could make it a little easier for me. It's very visual – the numbers, different lights flashing... even the referee's arm signals are for me. It looks like they just did all that to make the show look cool, but behind the scenes, they've gone above and beyond.

"Gladiators is another level – the atmosphere's electric!"

● You're an inspiration for girls who want to get into sport. Do girls today feel more encouraged to be sporty?

When I was at school, girls' rugby was around, but now it's really taken off. I remember going to the PE department to ask if we could start a girls' rugby team and they said: "Girls don't want to play rugby." Now, it's crazy, going into schools and seeing the number of girls playing rugby. It's a lot more positive. Even with football, with the Lionesses, that's skyrocketed as well. It's nice that girls can see that on TV. Now, women are in the gym because they want to be fit and strong, which is so refreshing to see.

Keep Smashing It: Be Strong, Be Brave, Be Confident by Jodie Ounsley is out now.



If you're a fan of the musical *Six* – or just its banging tunes – you might like this, too! New book *Six Queens*, by Lydia Monks, shines a light on the finer details of Henry VIII's wives' lives. There's a lot more to them besides just being (temporarily) married to a king! It's out now.

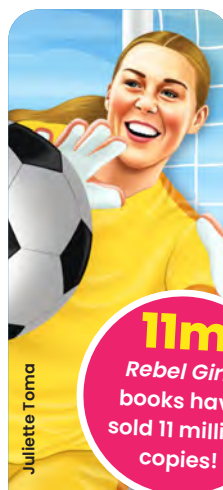
Rebel girls return!

JUST in time for International Women's Day, a brand-new edition of the inspiring *Good Night Stories for Rebel Girls* has arrived in bookshops.

Inside are more than 100 stories of pioneering women and their greatest moments of triumph. These include 22 fresh stories, including those of Taylor Swift, Greta Thunberg and footy hero Mary Earps (right). What's more, the women have been beautifully illustrated, thanks to the talents of over 80 female artists from across the world.

Our favourite part? At the end of the book is a blank page, waiting for you to write your own story.

Good Night Stories for Rebel Girls (New Edition) by Elena Favilli and Francesca Cavallo is out now.



11m
Rebel Girls
books have
sold 11 million
copies!

Recommended reads

in partnership
with Peters



Wicked women

THERE'S nothing little about the women in these books – they're all inspiring leaders who have left their mark on history, and are great role models for boys and girls alike.



Girls Who Changed The World by Michelle Roehm McCann

You're not too young to make an impact! From queens to spies, authors to activists, find out the remarkable things that girls throughout history have achieved.

Fantastically Great Women Scientists And Their Stories by Kate Pankhurst

It's British Science Week this week, so meet the amazing women scientists throughout history who explored the stars, cured diseases and made life-changing discoveries!



Ada Lovelace

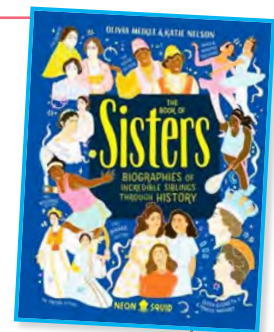
Ada Lovelace by Maria Isabel Sánchez Vegara, illustrated by Zafouko Yamamoto

Get to know Ada Lovelace as she grows from curious child to the legendary mathematician who became the world's first computer programmer.



The Book Of Sisters by Olivia Meikle and Katie Nelson

What famous sisters do you know? Explore history through the stories of powerful sisters, from the courts of Imperial China to the French Revolution.



Roar – A Celebration Of Great Sporting Women by Sam Quek

Win or lose, these athletes give their all! Be inspired by the heart-pounding, difficulty-defying experiences of high-profile sporting women.



IS IT **FAKE** OR **FACT**?

CAN you tell if a story is the real deal or made up? Every week, we'll be challenging you to see if you can sniff out the news from the nonsense! See what you think of this story, then turn the page upside down to see if you were right.

RACCOON DOG ON THE LOOSE

A RACCOON dog is on the loose in north Wales. Natural Resources Wales said the animal was last seen near Llyn Tegid, Gwynedd, on 29 January. Residents have been asked to report any sightings of the dog but not approach it as its behaviour may be "unpredictable". Raccoon dogs are now illegal to breed or sell in the UK.



A raccoon dog is similar to a fox

Check out more on spotting fake news at:

• first.news/fakeorfact • first.news/spotfakenews

Or get yourself a free copy of our updated 28-page special edition, all about making sense of the news, how to spot bias, fake news and much more! Go to first.news/fake-news



This story is TRUE. Raccoon dogs are real animals and one is on the loose in north Wales. The animals originate from East Asia and are a potential threat to the UK's wildlife, which is why rules have been put in place about breeding or selling them.

IN NEXT WEEK'S ISSUE!



JUNIOR JOURNALISTS DISCOVER WIGHTWICK MANOR



TOM & JERRY'S BIG BIRTHDAY!



DON'T MISS IT!

HOVERFLY HEROES

CAN YOU SOLVE THE BIGGEST RIDDLE OF THE YEAR?

When Caspia discovers a bundle of dusty letters, everything changes. Each letter contains a riddle about a plant - a citizen of a mysterious world called the **Green Kingdom**.

On a quest to discover the secrets hidden in the clues, Caspia walks the concrete streets of New York and finds that

happiness can be found anywhere if you are just brave enough to put down roots.

From the internationally award-winning author of *Inkheart*, **Cornelia Funke's** latest spellbinding adventure invites you to **unlock the secrets of the Green Kingdom...** if you can solve the riddles in time.

Beautifully illustrated by **Melissa Castrillón** and co-written with ethnobotanical herbalist **Tammi Hartung**



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SABRINA TOUCHES DOWN!

SABRINA Carpenter has touched down in the UK! The pop princess is bringing her Short n' Sweet Tour to London, Glasgow and Manchester this week, after already performing in Birmingham. To celebrate, we discovered 12 fantastic facts about Sabrina...

1. Sabrina AnnLynn Carpenter was born in Quakertown, Pennsylvania, USA, on 11 May 1999.

2. She has two older sisters, Sarah and Shannon, and one half-sister called Cayla.

3. Sabrina's family are all creative! In fact her aunt is Nancy Cartwright, who voices Bart Simpson in *The Simpsons*.

4. Growing up, Sabrina liked to upload videos of herself singing to YouTube. She'd do covers of tracks by her favourite artists, including Christina Aguilera, Taylor Swift and Adele.

5. Sabrina once came third in a singing competition on TV called *The Next Miley Cyrus Project*.

6. She signed a record deal with Disney Music Group's Hollywood Records when she was just a teenager. She released her first album, *Eyes Wide Open*, in 2015.



Sabrina with her Grammy Awards



Performing with Taylor Swift on her Eras tour

7. Sabrina acts too! Her first big role was in the Disney Channel series *Girl Meets World*.

8. She starred on Broadway in the musical *Mean Girls*, but it was closed down after only a few performances because of Covid.

9. Sabrina signed with Island Records in 2021, and is still with them today.

10. Her sixth studio album, *Short n' Sweet*, reached No 1 in the UK and the US, and features hit tracks including *Espresso* and *Please Please Please*.

11. In 2025, she won two Grammy Awards for Best Pop Solo Performance for *Espresso* and Best Pop Vocal Album, and she was presented with the Global Success Award at the BRITs.

12. Sabrina is the only female artist in UK chart history to hold the No 1, No 2 and No 3 singles at the same time!



WHAT'S HOT

• New *Descendants* movie in the works

A fifth *Descendants* movie is officially coming to Disney+!

The movie will feature new descendants, including

Red's sister Pink, Max Hatter,

Luis Madrigal and Hazel Hook. The film's official title will be announced at a later date.



Disney/Descendants: The Rise of Red



• *Hunger Games* musical set to open this autumn

The Hunger Games: On Stage will open at the brand-new Troubadour Canary Wharf Theatre in London this October. This will be the first-ever live stage adaptation of the famous book by Suzanne Collins. Tickets go on sale on 27 March at www.thehungergamesonstage.com.

• New trailer for *A Minecraft Movie*

The final trailer for *A Minecraft Movie* has been released! The movie, starring Jack Black, sees our heroes discover the Nether. Catch all the hilarious action when it hits cinemas on 4 April. The trailer was on the *First News* app, where you can still see it.



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• Zendaya joins *Shrek 5*!

A teaser trailer for *Shrek 5* has been revealed, and Zendaya is joining the star-studded cast! The actor is playing Shrek's daughter Felicia. In the new clip we see the ogre family gathered round a magic mirror asking: "Who's the fairest of them all?" *Shrek 5* is set to be released in December 2026.



UK'S BIGGEST GAMES EVENT

WE'RE only one month away from the UK's biggest games extravaganza – the London Games Festival!

The festival is returning to the capital for its tenth anniversary. Hundreds of thousands of visitors will attend a variety of events, but what can we expect?

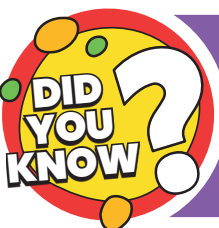
What's on?

The festival kicks off with New Game Plus, giving fans the chance to get their hands on over 70 exciting new releases from around the world. If you'd rather take a back seat, international speakers will be taking to the stage to share their stories. These include Dmitri M Johnson and Mike Goldberg – co-founders of Story Kitchen, which is one of the production companies behind the blockbuster movie adaptation of SEGA's *Sonic the Hedgehog*. The festival will also descend on famous places like Trafalgar Square (below) for some free games and outdoor activities.



BAFTA Games Awards

An official partner event of the festival gives us the small matter of one of the biggest nights in gaming. The 21st BAFTA Games Awards celebrate the best in games, highlighting the most innovative and impactful titles of the past year. The awards will be held on 8 April. Find out which games have been nominated for a gong in next week's issue!



LAST year was a record-breaking one for the London Games Festival. There were more than 100,000 in-person attendees who were treated to a showcase of over 300 games!

Now Play This

Calling all aspiring designers! Towards the end of the festival, the picturesque Somerset House will host a celebration of experimental game design. Now Play This brings together original designs from across the globe, exploring how communities get together to create and adapt the rules of play.



The London Games Festival takes place from 2–13 April. Find out more at www.games.london.

DAILY NEWS

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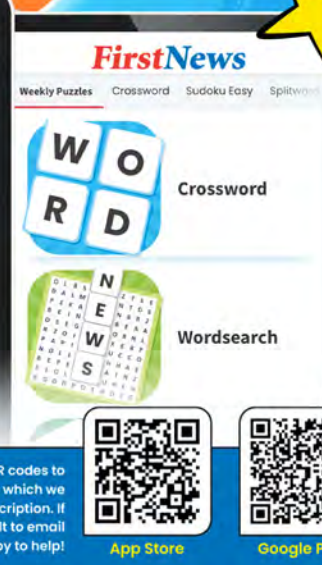
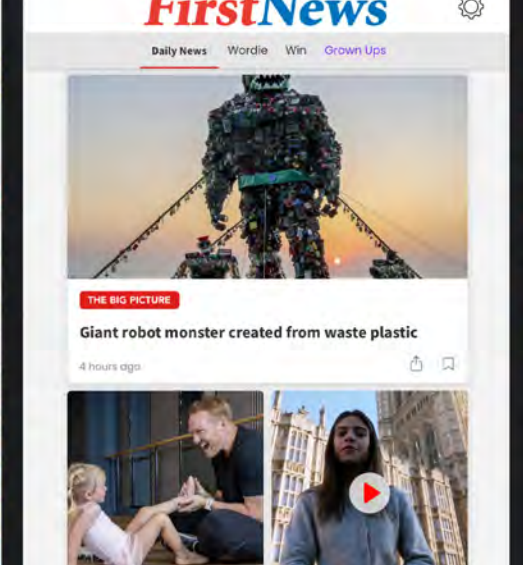
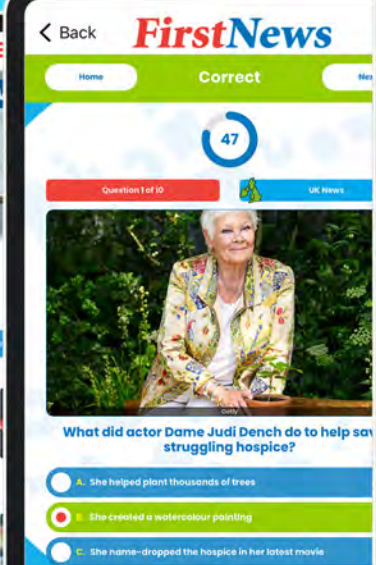
AWESOME PUZZLES

VIDEOS

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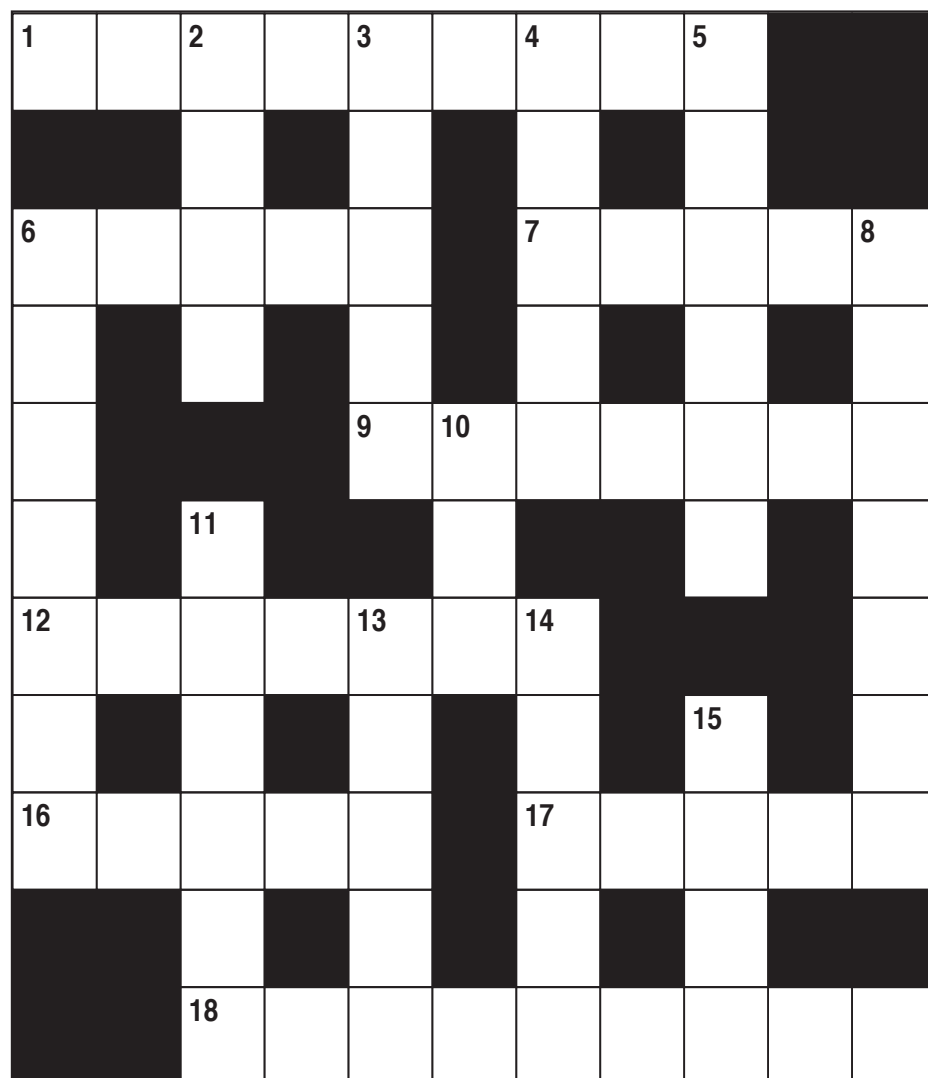


Google Play



CROSSWORD

CAN you solve our crossword puzzle using the clues below?

**ACROSS**

- 1 Full of life; very active (9)
 6 Money container (5)
 7 Enclosed area for sports events (5)
 9 Place that protects people from danger (7)
 12 Sad (7)
 16 Changes (5)
 17 Join together (5)
 18 Crisis (9)

DOWN

- 2 You hear with these (4)
 3 Estimate; prediction (5)
 4 Make fun of (5)
 5 Make (6)
 6 Liquid with a nice smell (7)
 8 E.g. British Airways (7)
 10 Jump on one leg (3)
 11 Selection (6)
 13 Glue (5)
 14 Opposite of old (5)
 15 The king of the jungle (4)



Sudoku

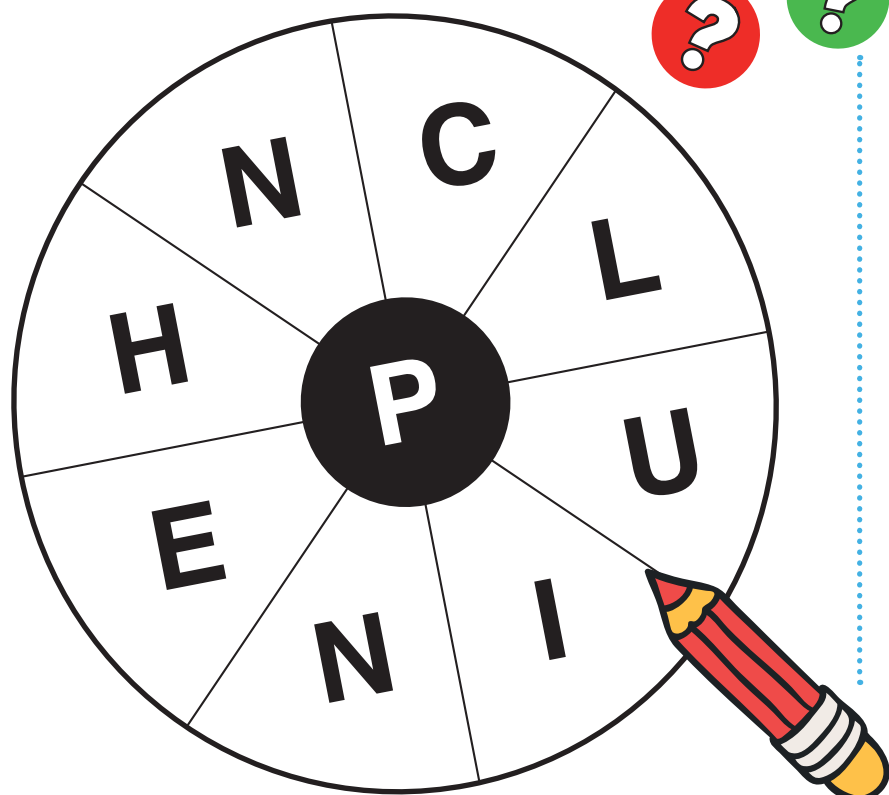
CAN you complete our sudoku puzzle, filling in the numbers one to nine?

	1							9
	6	3	9	2	1	5	8	
		5	7		6	1		
6			4	9	2			1
1			8	6	5			4
		1	2		4	9		
	9	6	1	7	8	2	4	
	5							1

COMPETITIONS: To enter, email us at win@firstnews.co.uk putting 'competition name' (e.g. Holiday), in the subject box or visit firstnews.comps. *First News* competitions are only open to those aged 15 and under and residents of the UK & Republic of Ireland, except employees of *First News*, First Group Enterprises Ltd, Reach plc and any associated companies and their families. Winners will be selected at random from all those with the correct answer. No purchase necessary. *First News* will not enter into any correspondence. All winners will be notified accordingly. If you are a winner, your details will be securely passed on to the person who is providing the prize so they can post it out to you. If you are contacted but don't reply within 28 days, we may offer the prize to another entrant. No cash alternative for any prizes will be offered. The winner may be required to partake in media activity relating to the competition. Your personal data will be held for a maximum of 12 months after the competition and then destroyed. It will not be used for any other purpose unless you have given us permission. If you would like your data deleted before this, please do get in touch with us. You have the right to complain to the ICO if you believe there is a problem with the way your data has been handled.

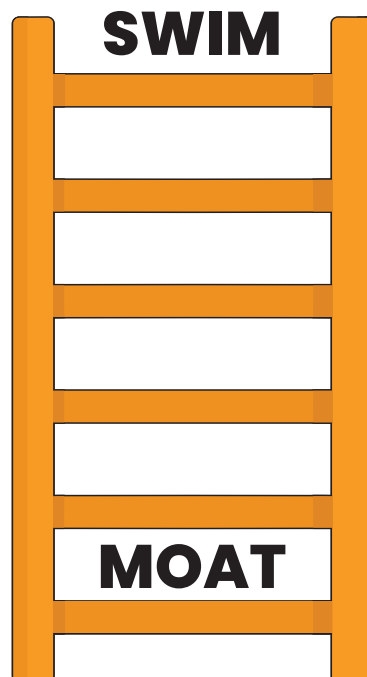
Word wheel

SEE how many words of three or more letters you can make, using the middle letter in each one. And can you find the word that uses all the letters?



Word ladder

SEE if you can get from the top of the ladder to the bottom by changing one letter at a time to make a new word.



ISSUE 976 ANSWERS:

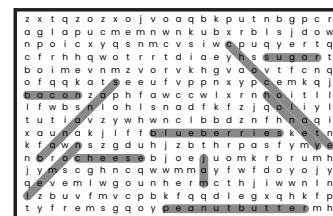
Word wheel: deception.

Word ladder: home, come, came, care, card, ward.

Spot the difference: 1) Blue feather added in the sky 2) Top of building missing in background 3) Woman's earring missing 4) Man's boots changed colour 5) Extra cloud 6) Missing window on left-hand side building 7) Orange circle on man's jumper 8) Woman's necklace changed 9) Window added on right-hand side building 10) Leaf changed colour on left.

P	O	P	U	L	A	T	I	O	N
L	O	R	P	E					
A	T	T	I	C	U	N	T	I	E
Y	H	A	E	I	A				
S	T	E	A	L	S	S	C	A	R
M	S	F	I						
K	E	E	P	A	L	W	A	Y	S
I	P	A	O	N	T				
D	R	A	W	S	W	A	S	T	E
R	K	E							
S	K	Y	S	C	R	A	P	E	R

6	2	3	4	7	1	5	8	9
5	4	1	8	9	2	3	7	6
9	8	7	3	5	6	2	4	1
8	7	5	6	2	3	9	1	4
1	6	2	9	4	7	8	5	3
3	9	4	1	8	5	7	6	2
4	3	8	5	6	9	1	2	7
7	1	6	2	3	8	4	9	5
2	5	9	7	1	4	6	3	8



Enjoying the puzzles?
See the *First News* app for more fun, quizzes and games! This QR code should be scanned by a responsible adult.



SPOT **THE** DIFFERENCE

CAN you spot the ten changes we've made to this bakery scene?



WIN!



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CN Climate Champions



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WRITE DOWN YOUR MOST CREATIVE IDEA TO SAVE THE PLANET.

2.

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READ BECAUSE YOU LOVE TO!

Why are so many kids putting down books?



Larry, the Downing Street cat, enjoys reading *First News* or, as he calls it, *First Mews*!

FYI presenter Scarlett headed to a special World Book Day event at 10 Downing Street to interview Education Secretary Bridget Phillipson about enjoying reading.

● **Scarlett:** Reading for pleasure in young people has dropped by a third in the last six years, which is a pretty worrying statistic. Why is that?

● **Education Secretary:** It is a really worrying statistic and I want to make sure that more children have a chance to enjoy the beauty of reading, to really find pleasure and joy in it. That's why events like this we are doing are so important, because we do face a really big challenge. I think reading opens up so many opportunities – the chance to explore new worlds, as well as the obvious benefits that come right throughout your life.

● **Scarlett:** But why do you think reading rates have gone down then, because they've decreased by a significant amount?

● **Education Secretary:** I don't think it's just about children alone. There are lots and lots of distractions in the world, like films, social media and other things. I also think adults have got a role to play in supporting their children to read, by role-modelling and reading, including with their children.

● **Scarlett:** Definitely. Reading is an escape and there's a book for absolutely everyone. It's a really great way to exercise your mind and have a bit of fun while you're doing it. So, what do you plan to do to improve reading rates at school and to promote a love of reading in children?

● **Education Secretary:** So, days like this – what a good day – are incredibly important, and the work that you're doing to raise the profile of this issue and the work

that's going on here this afternoon is really important. It's brilliant that some students across the country have been able to come right into the heart of Number 10 Downing Street today. We want to make sure that we are supporting teachers to teach reading really well. Alongside that, I think there is a responsibility on us to really raise the profile of reading, and that's why I think events like today are so important in encouraging children to take up reading for pleasure.

● **Scarlett:** So, when you were growing up, who was your favourite author and what was your favourite book, and why?

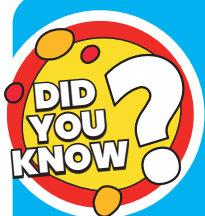
● **Education Secretary:** So I really loved all of *The Chronicles of Narnia* by CS Lewis. And I started out by reading *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*. They were so magical. They took you to another world and I thought they were really powerful and just really interesting! Then,

as I got older, I got more interested in detective novels. I used to read quite a lot of *Sherlock Holmes* and Agatha Christie. They were often books that were given to me by my grandad. He would give me things he'd read, and I'd read them too. And I think that's where adults in our lives, like parents, carers and others, can play a really big role in encouraging reading.

● **Scarlett:** One of my favourite things about World Book Day has always been dressing up. So if you could have come in fancy dress today, who would you have wanted to come as?

● **Education Secretary:** When I was younger I would've liked somebody really strong, probably female role models. I've read lots and lots of Jacqueline Wilson with my daughter. I think Tracy Beaker is a great character, so probably her!

Scarlett with Education Secretary Bridget Phillipson at 10 Downing Street for the World Book Day event



IN a National Literacy Trust survey, only one in three children aged 8 to 18 said that they enjoyed reading in their free time in 2024. But in a *First News* survey of our readers, nearly three-quarters said you read because you love to!



FEATURE ON THE SHOW!

Want to be in an episode of FYI? Just ask your teacher to set up a *First News FYI News Club* at your school by heading to first.news/FYInewsclub to find out more.



FYI is a weekly news show from Sky Kids that helps you stay up to date with what's going on in the world. You can watch loads of cool videos from them by heading to first.news/fyi or on the *First News* app.

FYI

sky kids

WATCH THE VIDEO

Watch Scarlett's interview with Education Secretary Bridget Phillipson by scanning the QR code!





A STARRY ENCOUNTER

THIS week marks both British Science Week and International Women's Day. To celebrate, we've teamed up with the Brownies, Guides and Rangers to share their amazing interview with astronaut Meganne Christian. Here's what happened...



Meganne takes to the mic

● Hi Meganne. So, when do you hope to fly into space?

I'm a reserve for the European Space Agency, which means there are no guarantees for me. I might never get to space, but it's not looking too bad; if the things that are being worked on come off, then it should be in the next couple of years, but no guarantees.

● If you had a bedside table in space, what would you put on it?

Well, I would have to strap it down very well because obviously things fly around in space, but I would definitely take my knitted penguin. She's called Pengaroo and I knitted her about ten years ago now... no, more than that – 14 years ago, actually for my husband, and he started taking her with him around the world. So Pengaroo travels around the world. She's been on my parabolic flights [a way of getting zero-gravity in an aeroplane], she's been to Antarctica, so next she will have to go to space. I would also have to have a good book.

● If you could take any TV character into space, who would it be?

I think Buzz Lightyear has a lot of experience, so I'd probably have to take him!

● How long is a trip to the moon?

Going to the moon is complicated. It's a long way from Earth compared to the International Space Station, which is only 400km away. To get to the moon it takes three to five days, and then it depends how much time you're going to be spending on the moon. So not long from now, there's going to be a station called Gateway that's going to be orbiting the moon. Astronauts will go to Gateway for probably about a month and then come home, so a trip to the moon might be a month and a half.

● What kind of food do astronauts eat in space?

We try to eat pretty similar food to what we have here on Earth when we're in space. Things that we like, because food's really important for keeping up morale, it helps you stay happy. But the thing is, the things you take to space need to be as light as possible and take up as little room as possible, so what you do is you dehydrate the food and get rid of all the water that's inside it. You have to put the water back inside it and maybe heat it up when you're up there in space. But then the kinds of things you eat might be normal meals, like you could have rice and some vegetables and meat or something like that. They've had pizzas in space before, sometimes ice cream and biscuits. And then healthy snacks. When a new mission comes in for example, they tend to have some fresh fruit come in with them, and astronauts are always really excited when the fresh fruit arrives on the station.

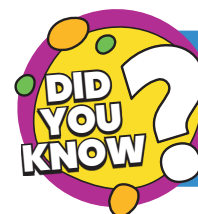


● What's your favourite planet, and why?

My favourite planet is Earth. I suppose it's fair to say I haven't been on any other planets so I wouldn't know, but I think there's something so special about our own planet and that's why we live here. I would love to see some other planets though!

● How long do you have to train to become an astronaut?

All astronauts go through basic training, which takes about a year. Then depending on the mission, you'll have specific training for the kind of experiments that you're going to be running. For example, if you're going to be doing a spacewalk you'll spend a lot of time in the pool. So it can take anywhere from a year to about four years to train for a mission to the International Space Station.



IT takes several hours to prepare for a spacewalk, including putting on the spacesuit!

● What advice would you give us if we wanted to be an astronaut one day?

If you wanted to be an astronaut, I think the wonderful thing is that at this time there are more and more opportunities that are becoming available. We're in a really special moment. In the 2040s the aim is that we'll have humans on Mars, which is really exciting. My advice is to do something that you really enjoy doing because you have to be at the top of your game in whatever you're doing in your life to be selected as an astronaut.

INSPIRING FUTURE GENERATIONS

BACK in February, more than 500 Brownies took over the National Space Centre in Leicester for an out-of-this world adventure, which was made possible thanks to Girlguiding's partnership with the UK Space Agency. Girls aged seven to ten came together to learn about astronaut training, create sunspot viewers and map constellations. The aim of the day was to inspire more girls to get involved with science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM).





HELLO! I'm Milly, the leader of the *First News* FYI News Club.

This week, Omar has written an article about the importance of adults listening to kids. Here at *First News*, we always want to make sure your voices are heard by people in charge. That's why we have these pages! If you want to be a junior journalist, get in touch by asking a trusted adult to email us at yournews@firstnews.co.uk.

THIS WEEK'S POLL!

We asked 3,176 of you:

Will Donald Trump being president be good news for the world?

42%
of you
said YES



58%
of you
said NO

MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD!

Cast your vote in our polls at first.news/polls



LISTEN TO KIDS!

MEET the new home secretary of the Sir David Amess UK Children's Parliament! Omar writes below to tell you about this exciting new role and what his goals are.

by Omar

My name is Omar and I am a Year 4 pupil at Saint Pierre School in Essex. It is an incredible honour to be elected to the cabinet of the Sir David Amess UK Children's Parliament. As home secretary, I want to represent the views of young people who believe in doing what is right.

Recently, I watched the horrific wildfires around Los Angeles and felt deeply



saddened by the terrible loss of life. Scientists have said that climate change was partially responsible for the spread of the fires, and I see this as a warning that we must act. The Los Angeles fires are only one result of climate change, though. In East Africa, the lack of rain is the worst in living memory – animals are dying and nearly 11 million people are suffering from severe hunger. And with sea ice melting, animals that depend on it will struggle to survive. This includes polar bears, walrus, Arctic foxes, snowy owls, reindeer and many other species.

Those who govern the UK need to realise that children care deeply about these issues. If today's politicians truly care about the state of the world, they need to stop dragging their feet. I want to use my position as home secretary to emphasise that our actions in the UK are vital to the planet's future. I want to make politicians answer the important questions, such as: Why are so many houses still poorly insulated and heating systems inefficient? Why



Omar

are we still spending over £12 billion a year on improving roads when we need to get people out of cars and using public transport? Why are we not trying to actively reduce meat sales to prevent the production of greenhouse gases from animal farming?

The UK has done a great job with some aspects of climate change, but we need to do more. We have been a major contributor to global warming since the Industrial Revolution began in 1760, and we need to lead the world in finding solutions. I want to talk to politicians face-to-face and show them how passionate and determined we are to attack all aspects of climate change. It is about doing what is right and giving a meaningful future to us, the children.

A day to remember



JUNIOR journalist Seth headed to a launch event for new TV series *The Thundermans: Undercover*. Find out how he got on!

by Seth Cottington

This experience was one of the best I've ever had. When we arrived at Battersea Power Station, we were shown to Mission Assignment, where we were given some top-secret files. We completed the mission and got rewarded with necklaces!

After a quick photo, we headed into the main room, which was incredible! We did a bit of exploring – there was so much to see, do, eat and drink. We made the most of trying everything *The Thundermans: Undercover*-themed, including smoothies, ice lollies, sweets, cake pops and more.

We then entered the cinema for the screening. The new episodes we saw were amazing! We even got to have a Q&A with Jack Griffo and Kira Kosarin, the lead actors in the show. They gave us loads of secret information and answered all of the questions asked (except the one about who they would like to kick off the set!). Afterwards, we were given bags with a cap and an invisible-ink pen. It was certainly a day to remember!



Disney On Ice

MARGOT went to Disney On Ice to check it out for *First News*! Here's what she thought.

by Margot Garrett

I recently got to be a junior journalist for *First News* and went to see Disney On Ice in London. I was really excited about it and wore my Minnie Mouse headband especially. When we got off the train I saw other children wearing Minnie Mouse headbands, too, and lots of children had dressed up in Disney princess outfits.

It was really big inside the venue. Although there was an ice rink there, it didn't feel cold! Lots of children had flashing toys that they waved around, and they looked really cool in the audience.

The show started and lots of characters skated out, including Mickey and Minnie Mouse. There were also lots of princesses. My favourite was Merida from *Brave*. She shot an arrow across the room and I didn't see it, but my dad pretended to catch it. I liked it when all of the princesses came out and danced on the ice together. Everyone in the audience joined in the dancing, too! My mum's favourite bit of the show was when Moana went across the ice on her boat, and my dad's favourite was seeing the *Toy Story* characters – it was very funny when Hamm the pig came out on ice skates.

I think everyone should go to Disney On Ice – it was amazing!



Margot with a couple of the skaters

NEWS CLUB SHOUT-OUT!

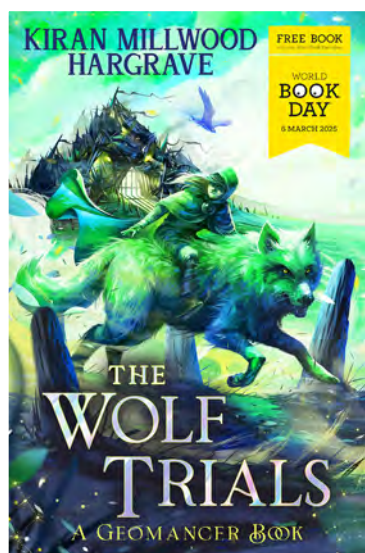
THIS WEEK WE'RE GIVING SHOUT-OUTS TO... Halstead Community Primary School, St Andrew's Church of England Primary School, Muxton Primary School, Cheadle Hulme School and Amberleigh Care!



WORLD BOOK DAY: YOUR REVIEWS!

WE hope that you all had a blast celebrating **World Book Day** on Thursday 6 March. Some of you have sent us some excellent reviews of a selection of this year's brilliant £1 books – take a look!

In partnership with

**WORLD
BOOK
DAY**


The Wolf Trials by Kiran Millwood Hargrave

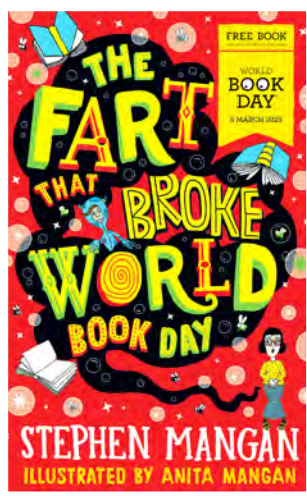
by George and Freya

We thought this book was amazing. It's about a girl named Eira who is trying to earn respect from her mother, who rules the country.

It had a range of genres, including family, action and adventure – as well as some sorrowful scenes – that make you want the author to write more.

The book's plot is set in a dramatic array of scenery – the description was brilliant, and the book pulls you in, making you want to read on. If you like *The Hunger Games*, then we recommend this book to you.

It changed our view on wolves forever.



The Fart That Broke World Book Day by Stephen Mangan, illustrated by Anita Mangan

by Maaryah and Annie

This book is hilarious, and really exciting to read.

It is set in a normal school just like yours. The story includes lots of characters who are dressed for World Book Day as book characters – so you could dress up as any of them and take this book to school!

We could not stop reading it. It was really entertaining, especially if you like stories about farting teachers! Our favourite character was Ronnie, because he was the reason the adults were farting.

If you want to go on a funny adventure, you should definitely read this book!



The Soccer Diaries: Rocky Takes The Lead by Tom Palmer

by Asa

Soccer Diaries: Rocky Takes The Lead is a fantastic football and friendship book about a girl who moves from England to LA to play football with her new team.

She is then reunited with her old football team, who come from England to play a friendly match. However, Rocky can't decide which team to play for!

I recommend the book for boys and girls aged 8-12 who enjoy playing football. This book might even help with friendship difficulties, or inspire people to keep playing football.

It's cheerful, exciting, sometimes even a little bit thoughtful, and children will definitely enjoy it.



LEGO®: Our Amazing Universe by Jennifer Swanson

by Evelyn

LEGO: Our Amazing Universe is an inspiring book for all children who are interested in LEGO creations and facts about our planet.

I really enjoyed reading about Earth's tectonic plates and other planets in the solar system, and I have learned so much fantastic information about the Arctic and volcanoes. Did you know that if we did not have a bright, grey moon, life on Earth would be very different?

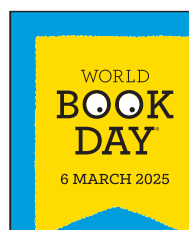
This fascinating book also lets children have some fun by making amazing models with LEGO pieces.

Our Amazing Universe is a wonderful, informative book for all children who enjoy LEGO and our universe.



If you haven't traded in a **World Book Day £1 token** for a **FREE book** yet, there's still time! They're valid until 23 March. Perhaps the reviews above have helped you to decide which book you might choose – but don't forget, there are 11 other books to choose from too, for children of all ages. See the site below for the full selection.

For more information, visit worldbookday.com.



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This Story is a Lie is not suitable for younger readers. Fox & Son Tailors and Ag Buzzdill sa Ghairdin are exclusive to Ireland. Gwyrdd ein Byd is exclusive to Wales.

View the full line-up at worldbookday.com/books

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WHAT DOES THE FUTURE NHS LOOK LIKE?

CHANCES are that most of you have used the National Health Service (NHS) at some point in your life. In fact, most of you will have been born in an NHS hospital. Now, children and young people have had their say on what they want the service to look like in the next ten years. A group of 30 children aged 7-18 and their parents, carers and guardians have shared their experiences and ideas. Here are some of the things they said.



What do you want the NHS to look like in the future?

The group discussed their views on improving healthcare, looking at things like:

- Cutting waiting times for appointments and operations
- Making the system more efficient so that more people can get seen
- Asking what being healthy and happy means to them
- Looking at how technology, such as phones, tablets and smartwatches, can help

Alfred, aged 17, said:

"What will make the NHS better is making it more efficient. The workers in the NHS are amazing and they are brilliant at their job, and I think they really want to help people, but waiting times make it so that people who need help are not being helped."



What is change.nhs.uk?

Last October, the government launched the website change.nhs.uk, which asked anyone aged over 16 – including all 1.5 million NHS staff – to share their views on the NHS and how it can be made better. The platform has already received 1.5 million visits, with over 11,000 ideas submitted so far. Some of the ideas suggested include:

- Pop-up clinics to help with demand
- Setting up an NHS-branded drugs company to make medicines cheaper
- Blood tests for all blood donations to encourage more people to donate and detect health conditions quicker
- There were lots of ideas about what the NHS should stop, including sending out paper letters and leaflets

Health Minister Baroness Merron said:

"The Ten-Year Health Plan being developed by the NHS and government is a significant opportunity to make sure our young people can live healthier lives. It is vital that the Plan reflects the views of children and their parents, as I am sure they have some fantastic ideas about what would help them to lead healthy and happy lives – as well as what doesn't work."

What happens next?

The government will look at all of the ideas and carefully consider each of them. It's hoped they will be able to better understand the priorities of the public, patients and people working in health and care.

What do you want from the NHS? Let us know at newsdesk@firstnews.co.uk.

A HEALTHY YOU!

HEALTH information can help us to stay fit and well. But how do you make sure that what you are reading or watching is trustworthy? We caught up with the Patient Information Forum (PIF) about how to find trusted health information and what to do if you're worried about something you've seen online.

What is health information?

Health information is designed to help you stay healthy. You can get it in lots of different ways, from leaflets at the doctor's to television ads and trusted websites.

The NHS website is the UK's biggest health website. It had 701 million visits last year, includes more than 4,000 pages and provides information about 990 medical conditions.

How can it help me?

Health information can help with things like:

- Knowing how to keep fit and happy
- Finding help and support
- Understanding how your body works

What should I do if I have questions about my health?

You should always talk to a trusted adult if you are worried about your health. With their help, you can look for trusted sources of information. These might include your GP, local hospital, the NHS website or health charities.

What should I do if I'm worried about something I've seen?

If you're worried about health information that you've seen online, tell a trusted adult straight away. Just because a social media channel or influencer has a lot of followers, or your friend has sent you something, doesn't mean it's trustworthy. Six in ten people have seen untrue or misleading information on social media.

How can I check if health information is trustworthy?

- Check it is from a trusted source like the NHS or a health charity
- Look for a publication date. Health information should be reviewed at least every three years
- Look for sources and references. Trusted health information is based on evidence
- Look for the PIF TICK – the independent trust mark for health information

Remember, you should always check anything you find with a healthcare professional such as a doctor or nurse.

What is the PIF TICK?

The PIF TICK is the independently-assessed trust mark for health information. There are 150 Trusted Information Creators certified under the scheme. Some of them produce information specifically for children and young people. When you see the PIF TICK you know that information is evidence-based, up-to-date and easy to use and understand.



Mum Cassie, who has an eight-year-old son, said:

"I do think the NHS is great... but they are not proactive [taking action early] with treating minor things. They just don't have enough doctors and there is not enough funding."

FirstNews Quiz

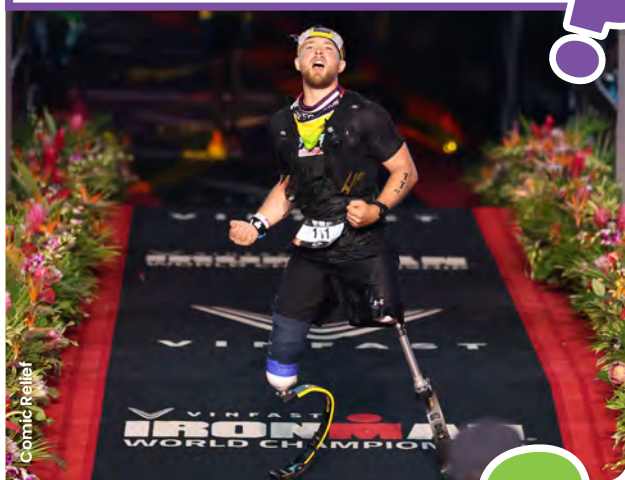
THE answers to all these questions can be found in the pages of this issue. Why not set yourself, or your friends and family, a time challenge to see who can get the highest score in the quickest time? See how well you did by checking the answers at the bottom.

1 Which pop star is heading on a historic space mission?

2 A statue of which Transformer has been bringing people luck in Thailand?



3 What challenge did British racing driver Billy Monger take on for Red Nose Day?



4 When is International Women's Day?

5 Which pop princess has touched down for her shows in the UK?

6 A drone was used to capture images of what animals on an English beach?



7 In which country would you find the world's smallest park?



8 How many snowdrops have been planted at the National Trust's Wallington estate?

9 The UK government has approved plans for what animals to be reintroduced into English rivers?

10 How many Oscars did hit musical film *Wicked* win?



11 Which company saw sales of its electric cars fall by almost half in January?

12 What do scientists say could be our best weapon in the fight against a new virus?

13 A rare fish from the deep sea has been spotted on a beach in which country?



14 How many species of bumblebee are there in Great Britain?

15 Swedish superstar Mondo Duplantis has taken another giant leap in which event?

If you enjoyed this, why not check out our Quiz that you can play online as an individual or with your family? You can find it at firstnews.co.uk/quiz and on the *First News* app!

FirstNews WEEKLY NEWS QUIZ!

Check out our new online Quiz!

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Answers:
1 Katy Perry 2 Optimus Prime
3 An Ironman 4 March 5 Sabrina Carpenter
6 Seals 7 Japan 8 One million 9 Beavers 10 Two
11 Tesla 12 Smartwatches 13 Mexico
14 24 15 Pole vault



ANOTHER GIANT LEAP

SWEDISH superstar Mondo Duplantis has broken the world pole vault record again – the 11th time that he's done it!

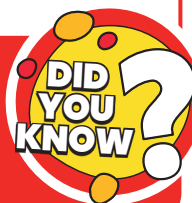
Duplantis had already won with a vault of 6.07m at the World Athletics Indoor Tour Silver meeting in Clermont-Ferrand, France. He then had the bar raised to 6.27m, a centimetre higher than the record he last set back in August, and cleared it at the first attempt!

Duplantis is definitely the man for the big occasion, as he's set world records at the Olympics, World

Championships and World Indoor Championships.

He also ran the 100m in 10.37sec last year, making him the third fastest man in Sweden in 2024!

BRITISH pole vaulter Molly Caudery won in Madrid to take the overall World Athletics Indoor Tour Gold title for the season. Her vault of 4.85m was just 1cm off her personal best.



Whitnell in action during the third round

Even though Tiger Woods is one of the greatest golfers of all time, he's only had a hole in one twice on the PGA Tour in his entire career. And that's why Dale Whitnell's achievement last week was so remarkable – he got two in one round! His feat came during the second round of the South Africa Open, and he'd never bagged a hole in one during a competition before. The odds of getting two in one round are 67 million to one!



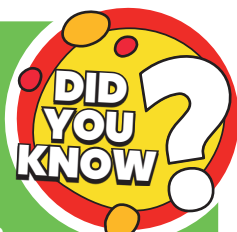
Banks celebrates her latest win

Britain's Charlotte Banks is on fire this season, and has just won her fourth Snowboard Cross World Cup race in a row. She's now won four out of five, so is in great position to take back the overall title she won in 2022 and 2023. In the first team event of the season, Banks and Huw Nightingale also bagged a silver.

Jos Buttler has quit as England's one-day captain after their poor performance in the Champions Trophy. "I've just reached the end of the road," he said. The final is on Sunday 9 March, when India or Australia will play South Africa or New Zealand.



FROM the next football season, goalies will only have eight seconds to hold onto the ball before getting rid of it, otherwise their opponents will be awarded a corner. It's the first time in the sport's history that a corner can be awarded as punishment instead of a free kick or penalty.



England's rugby league team had a very bad day at the office this week, suffering a record defeat as Australia scored 17 tries against them in a 90-4 drubbing. "The effort was there. It was just that they were too good for us," said captain Jodie Cunningham. Amy Hardcastle said the experience was like being in a "washing machine".

Braydon's on the ball

THE FYI presenter takes us through his pick of the week's top footie action.



Plymouth's FA Cup journey came to an end on Saturday, but they gave their fans plenty to be proud of after their performance against the big guns of Man City. Having already beaten Premier League opposition in the previous two rounds, most notably the 1-0 win over Liverpool, they also gave City a fright when they took the lead thanks to a towering header from Maksym Talovierov. But as the Plymouth fans dared to dream of another famous cup scalp, City equalised on the stroke of half-time through youngster Nico O'Reilly, before adding two more in the second half to secure a tough quarter-final tie away at Bournemouth.

Cup holders Man United won't be joining their neighbours in the next round though, as they crashed out on penalties to Fulham. United's season continues to sink with each passing week, and the United fans again had little to cheer in another poor performance at Old Trafford. The tie went to penalties after a 1-1 draw, with Fulham keeper Bernd Leno the hero with two saves from the spot. Fulham now face Crystal Palace at Craven Cottage to battle for a semi-final place.



Fulham players celebrate after Joshua Zirkzee missed the crucial kick for United

Centre Stage are Preston, the only non-Premier League team left in the cup. They beat Burnley 3-0 and were comfortable winners against a side who hadn't conceded a goal since before Christmas, and reach the quarter-finals for the first time since 1966. Exciting times at Deepdale, and they now welcome Aston Villa in what will be a great occasion for them to enjoy.

In the pick of the other games, Brighton beat Newcastle in extra time – Danny Welbeck with the winner there, Palace beat Millwall and Forest squeezed past Ipswich after a penalty shoot-out.

Only eight teams now remain and they will all believe that this could be their year, but whose name will be on the cup in May?

Braydon's Team of The Week: Preston, the cup underdogs still in the mix, who've waited nearly 60 years to get this far again!

Braydon's Player of The Week: Bernd Leno, the Fulham shoot-out hero.

● Watch my weekly video on the *First News* app!

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