

NEWS KIDS CAN TRUST

NEWSPAPER OF THE YEAR*



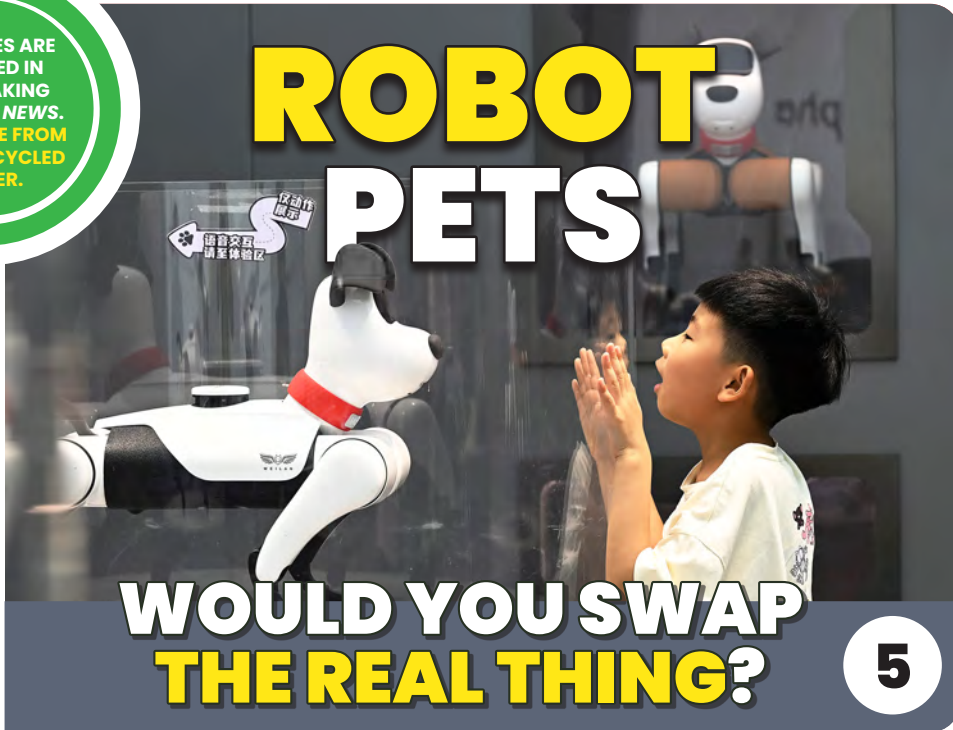
First News



Issue 972 £2.95 31 January – 6 February 2025

2.6M READERS*

ROBOT PETS



WOULD YOU SWAP THE REAL THING?

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NEWS SPORTS ENTERTAINMENT
INTERVIEWS PUZZLES COMPETITIONS



NO SCHOOL TODAY

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THE CLIMATE CRISIS CLOSES CLASSROOMS FOR MILLIONS OF CHILDREN

* Newspaper Awards 2023, Niche market Newspaper of the Year. First News readership is 2,626,625. Source: Opinion Matters 2020. First News is the widest-read of all children's publications audited in the UK. First News supports children's charities.

MEET THE TEAM



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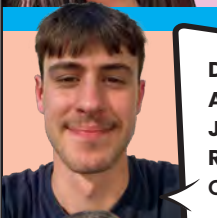
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HAVE YOU HEARD?

Snappy stories to get you talking!



BOTTLE RETURN SCHEME IN 2027

The UK government has said it will give people money back when they return single-use bottles and cans. The Deposit Return Scheme, due to start in October 2027 in England and Northern Ireland, aims to reduce litter and increase recycling by turning old bottles and cans into new drinks containers. Circular Economy Minister Mary Creagh said: "This is a vital step as we stop the avalanche of rubbish filling our streets and rivers."



STUDY AI'S EFFECT ON KIDS, SAYS UNI

Scientists from the University of Oxford are calling for better ways to study how artificial intelligence (AI) affects young people's mental wellbeing. They want clearer research methods to understand AI's effects on children and teenagers. They say it's important to act now before AI becomes even more common in young people's daily lives. Dr Karen Mansfield, who led the study, explained that without better research, we might struggle to make rules that keep children safe when using AI.

THEY SAID THAT!

"Our fossil fuel addiction is a Frankenstein's monster, sparing nothing and no-one."

– UN Secretary-General
António Guterres



UN LEADER BLASTS FOSSIL FUELS

United Nations (UN) Secretary-General António Guterres has criticised the world's "addiction" to using fossil fuels, at a big meeting of world leaders. He made the comments days after it was revealed that 2024 was the hottest year for the planet ever recorded, and after Donald Trump took the US out of the Paris climate agreement.

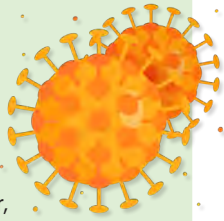
PRINCE HARRY WINS NEWSPAPER COURT CASE

Prince Harry has won a big court case against News Group Newspapers (NGN), publishers of *The Sun*. NGN admitted to wrongly collecting private information about Prince Harry between 1996 and 2011. This included hiring private investigators to gather personal details about him and his family, including his late mother, Princess Diana. The settlement, which includes more than £10 million in legal costs, marks a major victory for the Prince in his ongoing fight to protect his privacy from the press.



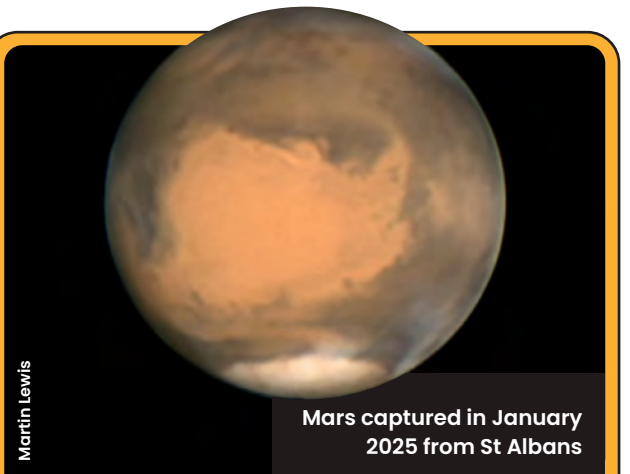
COVID-19 LINKED TO LAB LEAK

America's Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) has suggested that Covid-19 likely came from a Chinese laboratory rather than from animals. The intelligence agency's new director, John Ratcliffe, shared this view, but experts warn there isn't strong evidence to support it. The assessment was made with "low confidence", which means they don't have solid proof. While many scientists still believe the virus came from animals naturally, this theory offers an alternative idea.



ONE MILLION HENS TO BE CULLED IN UK

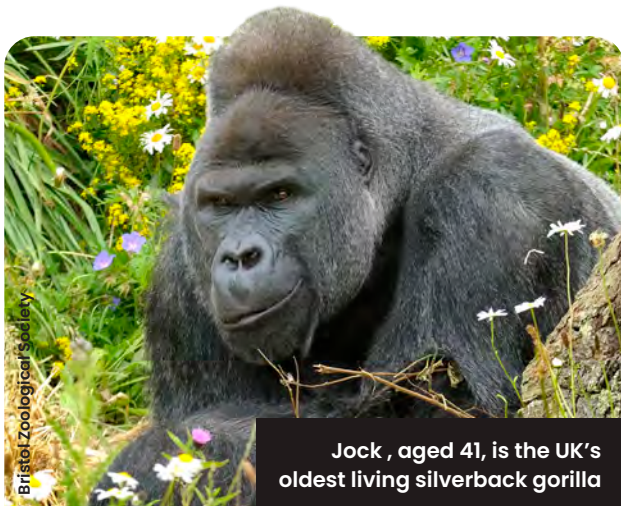
A major UK egg producer must cull (kill) one million hens after discovering bird flu at its Shropshire farm. The outbreak at Griffiths Family Farms has led officials to set up special protection zones to stop the disease from spreading. Farm owner Elwyn Griffiths called the situation "devastating" for the business and staff. Health experts say the risk to people is very low, and eggs and chicken products remain safe to eat if properly cooked. The farm is now working with government officials to manage the outbreak and protect the remaining birds.



Mars captured in January 2025 from St Albans

RARE PLANET PARADE

A rare astronomical display featuring four planets and the moon is set to dazzle stargazers across the UK in early February. Venus, Mars, Jupiter and Saturn will all be visible in the night sky from the UK in the best planet line-up since 1980. Experts say such a spectacular view won't happen again until 2036. The celestial event coincides with National Astronomy Week, from 1-9 February, which includes over 250 activities at schools and museums across the country. Highlights include live planet viewing through telescopes, talks about space and chances to meet astronauts.



Jock, aged 41, is the UK's oldest living silverback gorilla

GORILLAS LEFT IN DISTRESS AFTER ZOO BREAK-INS

Gorillas at a former Bristol Zoo site are experiencing high levels of stress due to repeated trespassing incidents. Security staff have reported multiple break-ins at the Clifton location, where some animals remain while waiting to be transferred to a new, bigger home. The unwanted visitors have triggered loud alarms, particularly affecting Jock, the UK's oldest silverback gorilla. Keepers say the disruptions are affecting the animals' sleep and daily routines.



The awards ceremony will be on 19 June, hosted by top author Joseph Coelho (left)

FIRST NEWS TEAMS UP WITH THE CARNEGIES!

First News is delighted to be teaming up with this year's Carnegies book awards! The Carnegies celebrate the best writing and illustration in books for children and young people. Every spring, schools, libraries and homes are invited to join in a shadowing process and pick two winners for the Shadowers' Choice Awards. Fancy taking part? You can register now at carnegies.co.uk/take-part.

BILLIONS OF BANANAS BINNED



A new study reveals that British households waste massive amounts of fresh food annually. It says 3.2 billion bananas are thrown away each year – about 115 per home. Research from the supermarket Aldi shows that while a third of Brits aim to eat healthily, more than half admit to throwing away nine pieces of fresh food weekly, costing around £520 per year. Other common foods wasted include tomatoes and potatoes, with 2.8 billion of each thrown out annually.



BIRDS CAUSED PLANE CRASH, SAY INVESTIGATORS

Investigators have found that the South Korean crash that killed 179 people in December happened after the plane hit a flock of ducks. Scientists found feathers and DNA from Baikal teal ducks in both engines of the Jeju Air Boeing 737. The plane hit a concrete barrier after making an emergency landing at Muan International Airport. Airport officials are now changing safety barriers across the country to prevent similar accidents in the future.

JAPANESE SCHOOLS MAKE DIGITAL MOVE

Japan is planning a major change in education by allowing schools to use only digital textbooks by 2030. The education ministry's proposal means schools can choose between traditional paper books or digital tablet versions. Currently, high school students use digital books alongside printed ones in English and maths classes. These e-textbooks include helpful extras like videos and sound. Officials will spend the next few months deciding if schools can use both types of books in the same class. They're also looking at how to use QR codes to add extra learning materials.

LGBTQ+ HISTORY MONTH

FEBRUARY

A chance to celebrate the lives and achievements of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer/questioning (LGBTQ+) people.

WORLD NUTELLA DAY

5 FEBRUARY

The perfect excuse to celebrate chocolate spread!

CALENDAR DATES



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



CLIMATE CRISIS STOPS SCHOOL

54 million pupils missed lessons in the worst-affected country, India.

UNICEF has revealed that nearly a quarter of a billion children worldwide had their education interrupted by the global climate crisis last year.

Extreme weather like heatwaves, floods, cyclones and droughts forced schools to shut in 85 countries in 2024. This impacted 242 million kids – one seventh of all school pupils around the world.

The worst-affected children were those in poorer countries, and the region that suffered most was South Asia. There, 128 million pupils missed some lessons.

Heatwaves were the most common cause of school closures, but more than 400 schools in Pakistan were ruined by floods in April while, over in Mozambique, another 330 were destroyed by Cyclone Chido in December and Tropical Storm Dikeledi in January.

UNICEF boss Catherine Russell said that climate change is threatening kids' health, safety and long-term

THEY SAID THAT!

"Children are more vulnerable to the impacts of weather-related crises... They heat up faster, they sweat less efficiently, and cool down more slowly than adults."
UNICEF Executive Director Catherine Russell

education. "Children can't concentrate in classrooms [with] sweltering heat, they can't get to school if the path is flooded or if schools are washed away," she said.

UNICEF says that the impact of the climate on education is being "overlooked". It wants world leaders to get plans in place that will enable children to carry on learning, even when extreme weather events strike.

"Children's futures must be at the forefront of all climate-related plans and actions," said Russell.

A row over runways...



Planes parked at Heathrow

THE UK could agree to make three of its airports bigger soon.

It's part of the government's plan to boost the economy. It will decide this year whether or not to give the go-ahead for Luton Airport to have a new terminal, Gatwick to have a second runway and Heathrow to have a third one.

A third runway at Heathrow has been talked about since 2009, but local residents have fought against it.

Even the Prime Minister, Keir Starmer, voted against it in 2018. If he changes his mind now, it will upset environmental and nature groups.

Friends of the Earth campaigner Jenny Bates has warned that the airport plans are "hugely irresponsible in the midst of a climate emergency", and that they'd go against Mr Starmer's "promise to show international leadership on climate change".



Keir Starmer

Instagram wants TikTok stars

META is offering social media influencers £4,000 if they join its platforms Facebook and Instagram.

The US company says it will give a 'breakthrough bonus' to popular content creators who haven't had a Facebook or Instagram account before. All they need to do is post at least 60 new, original reels on Facebook and 30 on Instagram, within 90 days of joining.

The offer might be linked to TikTok's possible ban in the USA. TikTok is owned by a Chinese company called ByteDance, and it has 170 million users in America. For some, content creating is their job so, if it gets banned, it's likely that they'll be looking for a new platform to post on.

On his first day as US President, Donald Trump signed an executive order to delay the ban of TikTok by 75 days, so it still could be allowed to continue in the country.

EDITOR'S COMMENT



Nicky Cox MBE

WHEN Greta Thunberg started her school strikes for the climate, adults said she should be in class, not disrupting her education.

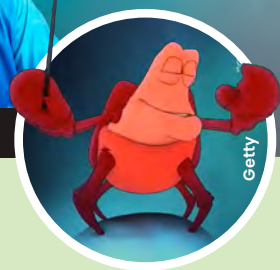
But, it turns out that the climate crisis itself is leading to millions of children worldwide missing out on lessons (this page).

So, it's the adults who have a lot to learn! Those with the power to make change need to listen up and get on with action against climate change.

As well as meaning that kids in 85 countries missed out on school last year, climate change is causing other problems for human life like extreme weather events, failing food crops and lack of clean water. Come on, adults!

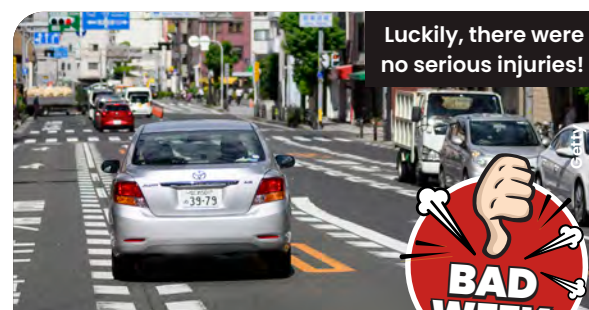


Mr Koch, under the sea!



Sebastian the crab

THE Disney star sang that life is better "down where it's wetter, under the sea" – and perhaps he was right! A man named Rudiger Koch just spent 120 days living in an underwater home (a new world record) and almost regretted returning to the surface. "It's beautiful... impossible to describe. You have to experience that yourself," he said.



Luckily, there were no serious injuries!



Driving in Osaka

THE morning rush hour in Osaka, Japan, got really wild when a 47-year-old motorist caused EIGHT different accidents in the space of just 35 minutes. On one street, she hit three cars, two pedestrians, one motorbike, one scooter and one building before police finally stopped her and brought an end to the chaos.

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.



TRUMP: WEEK 1

How did he spend his first days as president?

DONALD Trump has completed his first week back as the president of the USA.

The 78-year-old promised that, under his influence, America will enjoy a “golden age”, and he’s set to work achieving that with speeches, chats with foreign leaders and executive orders (signed documents to change some of the ways that the country works). Here are some of the things he’s done so far...



Invited Canada to be part of the USA

Trump said that the US buys \$250 billion (£201 billion) more from Canada than it sells, and that that’s “not fair”. He wants to charge Canada more to buy US goods, but that it “could always become a state [of the US]” to avoid having to pay higher prices.

Pardoned rioters

Trump pardoned about 1,500 of his supporters who rioted in anger after he lost the 2020 US election. This means he let them off the hook – but some of them have rejected his pardon. One, US Navy veteran Jason Riddle, said: “It’s almost like [Trump] is trying to say it didn’t happen... I did those things. They weren’t pardonable.”

Told Russia to stop the war

During his election campaign, Trump said that, if he became president, he’d stop the war between Russia and Ukraine in 24 hours. It’s still ongoing, but he has told Russian President Vladimir Putin to stop the “ridiculous” war – otherwise, he’ll hit Russia with financial penalties.

Began changing the US military

While flying on the president’s jet, Air Force One, Trump signed a ban on plans to improve diversity and equality in the US military, and brought back 8,000 service personnel who were thrown out for refusing to get a Covid-19 vaccine.

Had a chat with Keir Starmer

Mr Trump had a 45-minute phone call with the UK’s prime minister, who congratulated him on his return to the White House. They spoke about the ceasefire deal that has stopped the war in Gaza, the economy and about Trump’s affection for the royal family. Mr Starmer was the first European leader to speak to the new president, and it’s likely that Trump will be invited to visit the UK soon.

Visited Los Angeles

Trump and his wife Melania flew to Los Angeles (LA) for a closer look at the destruction caused by the city’s recent wildfires. He said that some neighbourhoods looked like they’d been “hit by a bomb”. California’s governor, Gavin Newsom, told him: “We’re going to need your help.”



The Trumps land in LA

Most millionaires think they’re too powerful

TWO-THIRDS of the world’s millionaires think that the super-rich had too much influence on the US election, which saw Donald Trump return to the White House.

Mr Trump was strongly supported by figures like the world’s richest man and the owner of X, Elon Musk.

In a poll, nearly 3,000 millionaires agreed that, because people like Musk control social media platforms, newspapers and TV channels, they have the power to sway people’s opinions and persuade lawmakers to do what they like.

The poll was carried out for Patriotic Millionaires, a group of more than 370 millionaires and billionaires from 22 countries.

One of them, Scottish actor Brian Cox, said: “The super-rich... manage what we read, what we watch, the information we’re given and, ultimately, how we vote.”

The group wants politicians to do something to keep their power in check. They found that seven in ten millionaires think they should pay higher taxes in order to reduce global inequality and to make life better for other people.

Why did children riot last summer?

OF THE CHILDREN WHO RIOTED...

9/10 were boys

8/10 were white

8/10 were from northern England

CHILDREN got involved in violent riots last summer, partly because they don’t trust the police, a new report by the Children’s Commissioner has found.

In July and August, fake news about Muslims and immigrants was spread online and through social media. It sparked dangerous riots in towns and cities across the UK.

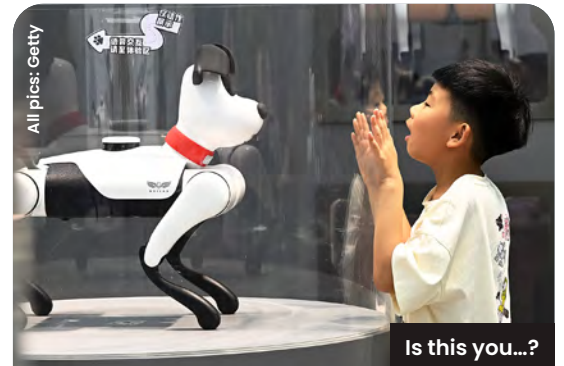
Cars and buildings were attacked, and police arrested 1,280 people for getting involved – including at least 147 children.

The Children’s Commissioner, Rachel de Souza, spoke to 14 of the 73 children whose punishments have been decided, and has shared the three main reasons they rioted:

- **Curiosity:** some got caught up in the moment without thinking properly.
- **Calls for change:** some feel there aren’t enough activities for young people and opportunities in their community.
- **A distrust of police:** some mentioned bad past experiences with police.

Anti-immigration and racist views may have played a part, but weren’t the main reasons, Ms de Souza found.

She said that her findings don’t excuse the children for the harm they caused last summer. However, it’s the job of adults to “create a more positive experience of childhood” for kids in the UK.



Is this you...?

WOULD YOU SWAP YOUR PET FOR A ROBOT?

A SURVEY by the RSPCA has revealed that a quarter of the UK would be up for having a robot pet!

Grown-ups aged 25–34 were the most keen. More than four in ten of them would take a robot pet into their homes and, with AI making robots smarter, a quarter of people would even be happy for robots to replace real pets!

“Many of us think the amazing bond we have with our animals is irreplaceable, but others love the idea of robot pets,” said Gemma Hope from the RSPCA.

We’d love to know what **you and your classmates** think about this – is it better to have a living, breathing pet, or one that you didn’t have to walk, train and clean up after?

We’ll report on what you tell us in next week’s issue – so be sure to vote in our poll!

Would you like to have a robot pet?

Vote at first.news/polls

The RSPCA has just launched ‘The Big Conversation’. Between now and 17 March, the charity wants at least 10,000 people to give their opinion on how we treat animals, and if that should change. To take part, visit animalfutures.rspca.org.uk.



An elephant (not a person)

A JUDGE in the USA has ruled officially that elephants are **NOT** people.

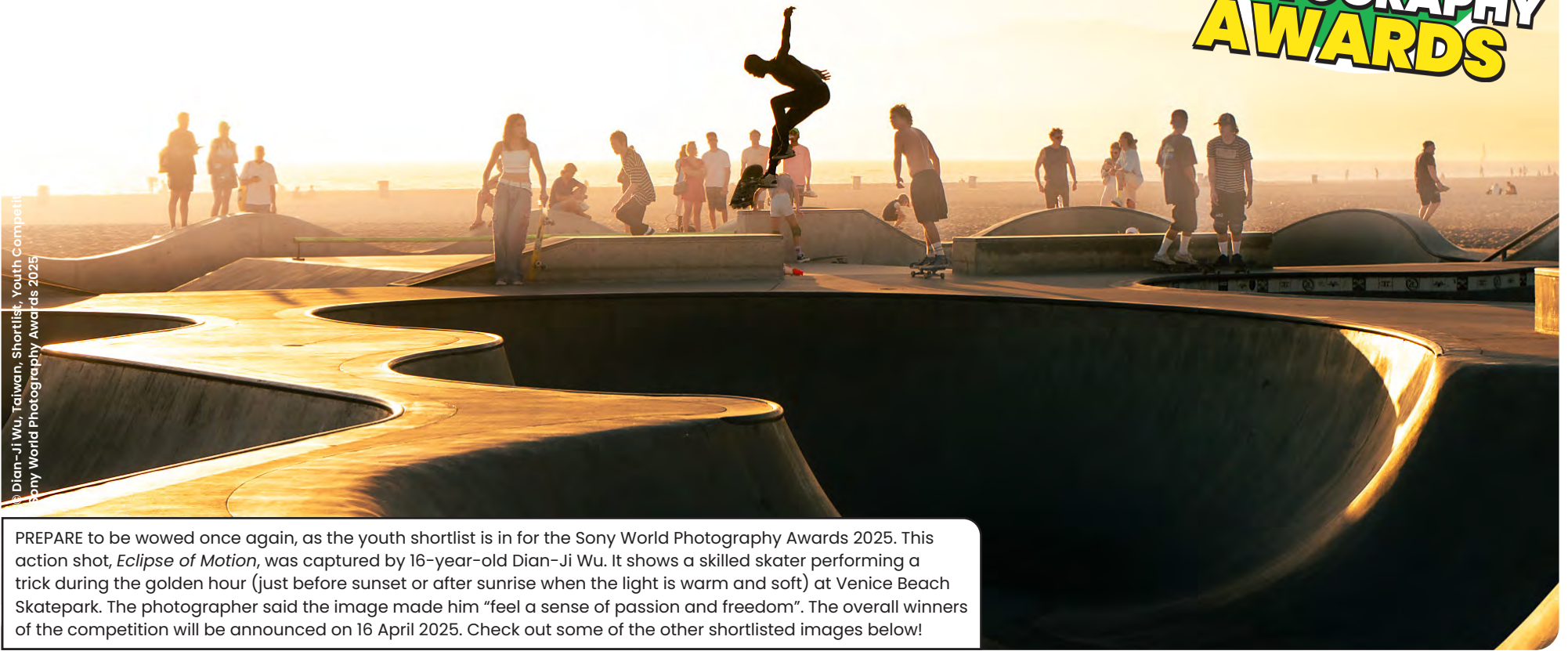
An animal rights group had tried to ‘free’ five old-aged elephants that they said were imprisoned at a Colorado zoo.

To do this, they wanted to trigger a legal process that is designed to let humans challenge their imprisonment in court.

However, State Supreme Court judge Maria Berkenkotter said, while the elephants are “majestic”, they aren’t people – and that animals don’t have the same rights as us, no matter how clever they may be.



Los Angeles, USA



© Dian-Ji Wu, Taiwan, Shortlist, Youth Competition, Sony World Photography Awards 2025

PREPARE to be wowed once again, as the youth shortlist is in for the Sony World Photography Awards 2025. This action shot, *Eclipse of Motion*, was captured by 16-year-old Dian-Ji Wu. It shows a skilled skater performing a trick during the golden hour (just before sunset or after sunrise when the light is warm and soft) at Venice Beach Skatepark. The photographer said the image made him “feel a sense of passion and freedom”. The overall winners of the competition will be announced on 16 April 2025. Check out some of the other shortlisted images below!

Anilao, Philippines



© Tinnapat Netcharussaeng, Thailand, Shortlist, Youth Competition, Sony World Photography Awards 2025

NIGHT Surfer by Tinnapat Netcharussaeng shows an argonaut, which is a type of octopus. The animal is ‘surfing’ on a leaf 15m (49ft) below the water’s surface.

Schwarzberg, Germany



© Matteo Botta, Switzerland, Shortlist, Youth Competition, Sony World Photography Awards 2025

SCHWARZBERG and the River by Matteo Botta shows the majestic Schwarzberg mountain. Botta used a drone to capture the dreamy shot.



Fiorano Modenese, Italy

A SIGHT we should start getting used to! More than 1,000 Ferrari fans gather at the car maker's test circuit for their first glimpse of Lewis Hamilton in red. The legendary British F1 driver joined Ferrari after 12 memorable seasons with Mercedes.

Bangkok, Thailand



HUNDREDS of panda sculptures are displayed to celebrate the Chinese New Year and mark the 50th anniversary of friendly relations between Thailand and China.



London, UK

A VISITOR discovers the hidden kingdoms of life underground in *SOIL: The World At Our Feet*. The immersive exhibition is now open at Somerset House.

New Orleans, USA



A STATUE of jazz legend Pete Fountain is covered in snow as a rare winter storm hits.

Beijing, China



ONE of the many vibrant decorations on show at the Beijing Shiyuan Lantern Festival.



LLANDUDNO

Has anyone seen our Queen?

A sculpture of Queen Victoria has disappeared after more than 130 years. The bronze bust was introduced to the Llandudno seafront in 1890, three years after the Queen's Golden Jubilee, which marked her 50 years on the throne. But, after surviving two World Wars, it has gone missing in mysterious circumstances. Police are appealing for any information, as locals fear that it was stolen to be melted down for scrap. Councillor Donald Milne said everyone was "very saddened" to discover that the historic bust was missing.



The sculpture looked out over the sea

iStock



The Fringe is a highlight of the city

EDINBURGH

Taxes for tourists

Edinburgh will become the first place in the UK to introduce a city-wide tourist tax. From 24 July 2026, a 5% charge will apply to hotels as well as bookings through websites like Airbnb. It's part of the government's plan to raise an extra £50m per year. The Scottish capital welcomes thousands of tourists every August for the Fringe festival, as well as for other vibrant events. Tourist taxes are already common across Europe in cities including Rome, Paris, Amsterdam, Vienna and Berlin.

WILTSHIRE

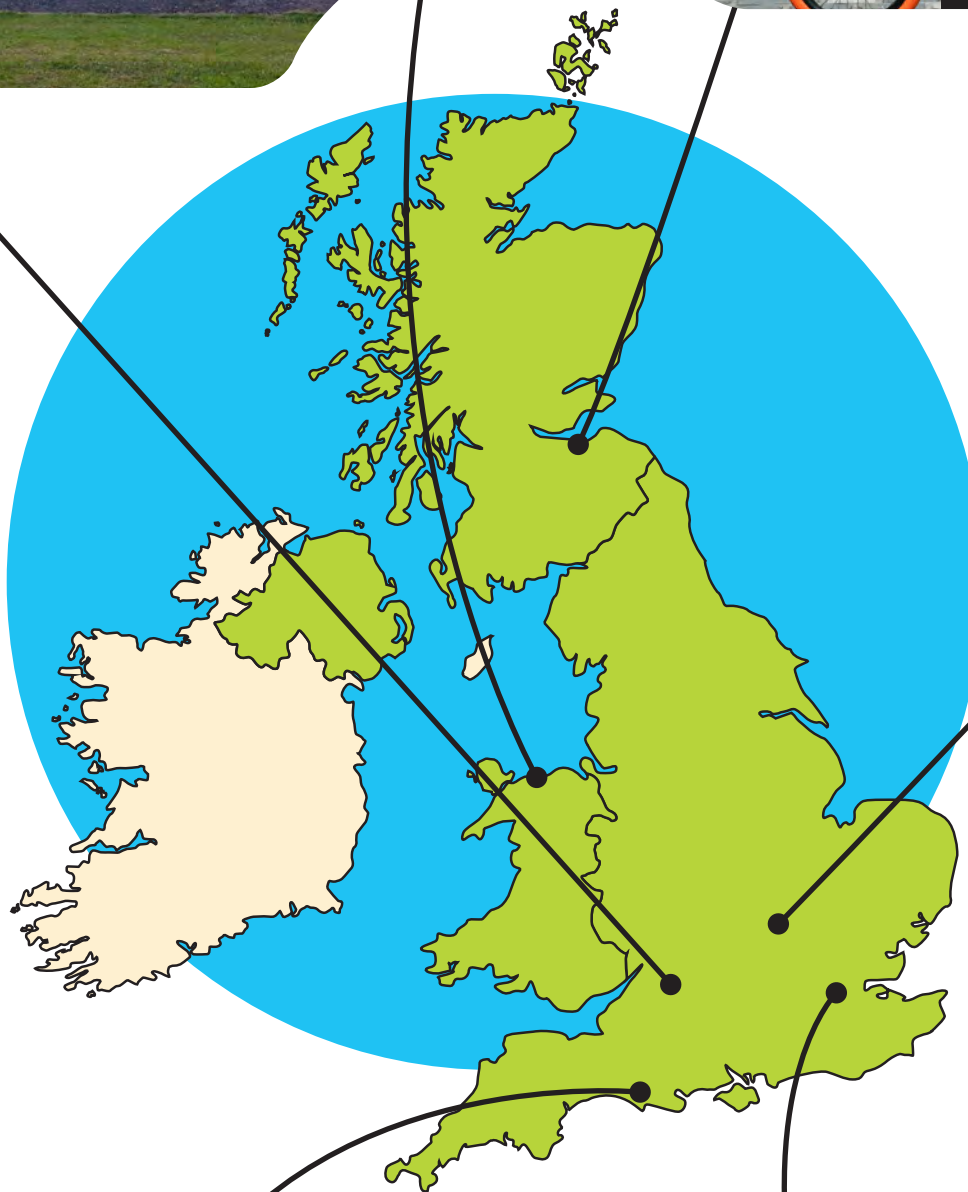
Spiny success

A hedgehog that was rescued from the cold has been released after seven weeks of recovery. Alberta was taken into RSPCA Oak & Furrows after being found soaked by heavy rain and covered in fleas and ticks. She also had shorter spines near her head, suggesting a very close call with a garden tool used for cutting grass. Since then, the blonde hedgehog has gained weight and had a good clean. Staff were satisfied that she was back to full strength, and she was released back into the nearby woodland.



RSPCA Oak & Furrows

Adorable!



An ichthyosaur was a sea creature



Milton Keynes Museum

MILTON KEYNES

Meet ancient Iggy

Are you eager to meet Iggy? The fossilised remains of the 180-million-year-old ichthyosaur are part of a new immersive exhibition in the city's museum. The Ancient Gallery, which has been eight years in the making, celebrates the rich history of the local area. Visitors will be able to discover rare finds like toys and jewellery, as well as majestic woolly mammoths, which once roamed what is now Milton Keynes. These artefacts and animals are much older than the city, which celebrated only its 58th birthday on the gallery's opening day.

DORSET

Gladiator gems

Original gladiator artefacts from Roman Britain are on display as part of a UK-wide tour. *Gladiators of Britain* will explore the brutal history of the people who would fight to the death in front of a roaring crowd. A highlight of the exhibition is the Hawkedon Helmet, the only confirmed piece of gladiatorial armour from Roman Britain. Artefacts will reveal the popularity of gladiators in society around 2,000 years ago. *Gladiators of Britain* is on at Dorset Museum & Art Gallery until 11 May. Then it will move on to Northampton, Chester and Carlisle.



Getty

The Hawkedon Helmet was worn in the amphitheatres of Britain

LONDON

Soup-er pupils

The annual Winter Soup Sale returns to Borough Market to warm up Londoners. From 12-2pm on Tuesday 4 February, pupils aged 11-16 will be selling soups made with veg they've grown at school. It's part of the Young Marketeers Programme, which helps kids develop cooking skills and grow their own food. All the money raised from the day will be donated to Plan Zheroes, which provides spare food for charities near the market. The only question left to ask is, classic chunky vegetable or a hearty leek and potato?



School Food Matters

Warming up those cold winter days



THE FASTEST WINDS IN THE UNIVERSE

An artist's impression of WASP-127b

ESO/L. Calçada



THE fastest winds ever measured in our own solar system are on the planet Neptune, where they whizz round the planet at 1,800km/h (1,120mph)! Compare that to Earth, where the record is a puny 407.5km/h (253mph).

IF you think it's been a bit breezy in the UK lately, just be thankful you don't live on WASP-127b, where scientists have just recorded the fastest winds ever seen.

The winds whip round the planet at supersonic speeds of up to 33,000km/h (20,500mph). That's around 18 times faster than any winds ever measured in our own solar system.

WASP-127b is an exoplanet, which is a planet outside our solar system. This one is roughly 520 light years away, so it's unlikely that humans will

ever be able to travel there.

Using the European Southern Observatory's Very Large Telescope in Chile, astronomers also found that WASP-127b's poles are cooler than the rest of the planet, and that there's a temperature difference between parts where it's morning and the places where it's evening.

"This shows that the planet has complex weather patterns just like Earth," says Fei Yan, one of the authors of a study published in *Astronomy & Astrophysics*.

Trump v science

US President Donald Trump gave two orders in his first days back in the White House that were widely seen as being bad for science, the planet and people's health.

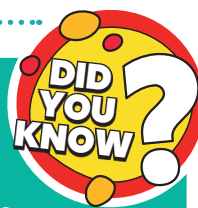
Mr Trump took the US out of the Paris Agreement on climate change and the World Health Organization (WHO), and both moves were cheered by his supporters. The president promised to cut climate action and "drill, baby, drill" for more oil, in a bid to put "America first".

However, many experts say that all it will do is put China first in the race to dominate green energy industries such as batteries and solar panels.

"President Trump is trying to turn back the clock on America's clean energy leadership at the expense of American people and their health," said Debbie Weyl at



A polio vaccination campaign in Gaza that was organised by the WHO and UNICEF



THE US helped to form the WHO in 1948 and is its main funder, providing around a fifth of the money it needs. Without these billions of dollars, the WHO "could be severely weakened, making every country less healthy and safe," global health experts Lawrence O Gostin and Benjamin Mason Meier wrote in *Science*.

the World Resources Institute. She said it would "raise energy prices for American families, and pollute our air."

Other experts have pointed out that the US has been a victim of climate change, including from more destructive wildfires and hurricanes.

Although it's possible that Congress (the US parliament) could block the decision to leave the WHO, experts have said that it would give the US less influence over global health and make it more vulnerable to diseases, including the bird flu that is currently sweeping through dairy farms across the US.

"It's not really like the border, where you can kind of seal off the Mexican border so that you can stop immigrants. Germs don't know borders."

– Global health expert Lawrence O Gostin

This report is from the Science Museum in London

SCIENCE MUSEUM GROUP

AS science became fashionable and was demonstrated across London in the 1700s, new and surprising objects using principles of science were being introduced to the market.

Among the gadgets of the time is the one pictured here, on display in the Science City gallery. This is a polemoscope, also known as a jealousy glass. It's disguised as an opera glass, which was like a mini telescope that gave people a closer view of the performers on stage. However, it served a much more personal purpose – thanks to two lenses and an angled mirror inside it, users could sneakily observe their neighbours at the theatre. While they seemed to look straight ahead into the glass, the inner mirror would actually show them what was happening next to them – allowing them to spy on their neighbours without being caught!



A polemoscope from 1763

Science Museum Group



DRONES CHASE AWAY BEARS

Wesley Sarmento/Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks



A bear is chased across a field with a drone. Inset: Wesley Sarmento used to use his specially trained Airedale terriers to do the job, but he says they kept going after cats and porcupines instead

A BEAR manager in Montana, US, has been using drones to keep dangerous grizzly bears away from towns and farms.

Grizzly bears have been a protected species since the 1970s, which has led to an increase in their numbers. This conservation success, though, has meant the bears venture nearer to populated areas in search of food. The bears can kill people and livestock, and cause damage to property.

Wesley Sarmento found that flying drones with thermal cameras was safer and better at chasing bears away from people and animals than the dogs he used to use.

Sarmento says the bears appear to have learned to stay away, creating fewer conflicts between humans and these powerful animals. He says it also means the bears are less likely to get into trouble, describing it as a “win-win”.

Plant project wins prize

A RARE Welsh plant has been saved from being lost forever, thanks to Chester Zoo’s prize-winning conservation efforts.

The project, which brought the critically endangered *Cotoneaster cambricus* back from the brink of extinction, won the Great British Wildlife Restoration prize, voted for by 80 UK politicians.

The shrub, found only on the Great Orme limestone headland in Llandudno, was down to just six plants in the 1970s.

Zoo experts grew 30 new plants from seeds and planted them back in the wild, bringing the current total to nearly 100.



Chester Zoo



José Alberto Almazán-Catalán

Lost rabbit species found

SCIENTISTS have rediscovered a rare, black-tailed rabbit species in Mexico that hasn’t been seen for over a century.

Wildlife expert José Alberto Almazán-Catalán and his team spent five years searching for the Omiltemi cottontail in ten areas of the mountain forests of Guerrero state, and found it in seven.

This species is smaller than other rabbits, has shorter ears and has a distinctive black tail.

Local villagers helped the search by sharing their knowledge of the rabbit, which they sometimes hunt for food. Scientists are now working to protect the rabbit population.



ANEESHWAR'S ANIMAL OF THE WEEK

MULTI-WORLD RECORD HOLDER!

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...

PRAYING MANTIS



iStock

HABITAT:

They prefer to hang out in sub-tropical and tropical deserts, grasslands and meadowlands.

FUN FACT:

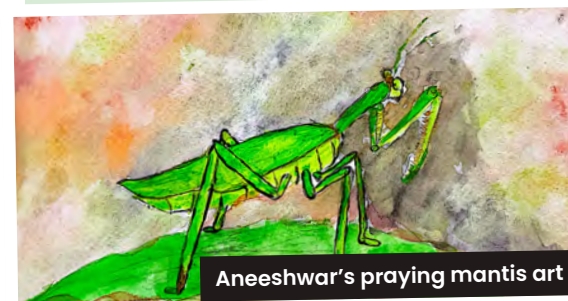
Praying mantises are true masters of disguise. They blend in with their surroundings and mimic the appearance of leaves and twigs

SPECIAL SUPERPOWER:

They can turn their heads 180° each way, and strike with their powerful front legs, which have dagger-like spikes to pierce their prey.

CONSERVATION STATUS:

There are thousands of species, but the International Union for Conservation of Nature has listed the European mantis (*Mantis religiosa*) as of least concern.



Aneeshwar’s praying mantis art

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.





WORLD'S OLDEST CHOIR!

A GROUP of British singers have set a world record for being the oldest choir on the planet!

The Prime Timers, who have an average of 94, are made up of 17 residents from care homes in Stratford-Upon-Avon, and they performed at a special Christmas concert in December. The oldest member was 99, while the youngest was a mere 87.

Famous singer Tony Christie, 81 (above), joined the talented group on stage to perform popular songs including *Amarillo* and festive favourite *Silent Night*.

Speaking before the performance, choir member Chris Righton, 91, said he wasn't nervous.

"You can't have nerves. You've got rid of them all by the time you're 90," he added.

Mittens the flying cat!



AN eight-year-old Maine coon cat named Mittens flew between New Zealand and Australia three times in 24 hours after being left behind in an Air New Zealand plane's cargo hold.

The mix-up occurred when baggage handlers failed to spot Mittens' cage behind a wheelchair after a flight to Melbourne from Christchurch.

The cat was discovered after the plane landed back in New Zealand, so staff turned the heaters on in the hold for the trip back to Australia.

She was finally reunited with her owner Margo Neas in Melbourne, who said: "She basically just ran into my arms and just snuggled up in here and just did the biggest cuddles of all time."

TRUMP'S DIET COKE BUTTON RETURNS

DONALD Trump has reinstalled his infamous 'Diet Coke button' in the Oval Office after returning as US president.

The small button on the historic Resolute Desk in the White House allows him to instantly order his favourite fizzy drink.

The button's return was noticed after his inauguration (presidential ceremony) on 20 January, where Mr Trump was also seen enjoying his favourite drink during lunch.

A favourite bust of Winston Churchill also made a return.



JOKE OF THE WEEK

haha ha

How does a cat answer the phone?
"Meow may I help you?"

Paper Boy!

Written and illustrated by Paul Palmer





CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH WEEK

3-9 February

YOUR mental health and wellbeing matter! That's why, to mark this year's Children's Mental Health Week, we asked medical experts from the Luna app to help three readers get their top questions answered. Here are the results...



Meet the experts

Luna is a health and wellbeing app that's built primarily for girls and teenagers, with the help of experts. You can track your emotions, learn about growing up and get expert advice. These questions have all been answered with the help of one of Luna's medical experts, Dr Emma Dickie (pictured). Dr Emma is a GP who is passionate about female health and mental health.



PEOPLE ALWAYS SAY PLAYING VIDEOGAMES LIKE FORTNITE ARE BAD FOR YOUR MENTAL HEALTH? ARE THEY? – JAMES, NINE

SHOULD I WORRY ABOUT NOT FEELING 'HAPPY' ALL THE TIME?

– ARABELLA, NINE

Luna says: You don't need to worry at all. It's actually completely normal to feel a range of emotions!

Life isn't always about being happy and, sometimes, it's too much pressure to always expect yourself to be happy.

It might help to see your emotions like the weather. Sometimes it's raining, and other times it's sunny. It's normally not sunny all the time, and if it was then we would miss out on the rainy days and how refreshing they are.

So, when you're feeling down, try to avoid getting stuck in that emotion and instead focus on things that bring you joy, purpose and peace. This can be meeting up with friends, going for a walk, picking up an interesting new hobby, or simply spending time alone reading or writing in a journal. Sometimes it's the little things that make the biggest difference.

And finally, it's always a good idea to talk to either a parent or a trusted adult if you find yourself feeling sad or low most of the time, or you're having difficulty feeling happy about things. They can help you figure out if anything may be causing this, and find ways to help you.



Luna says: Well, in truth, it depends a lot on how you play and how much time you spend on playing.

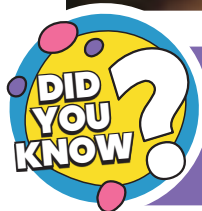
Games can actually be good for you in some ways. For example, a game like *Fortnite* might help with skills like problem-solving, quick thinking and teamwork. We also know that lots of young people like to use games as a way to wind down and hang out with friends after a long day at school, so there's a social side to it, too.

With all that being said, it's really important not to overdo it – that's where it can be tricky for mental health.

If you're playing for hours and hours, this could mean you end up skipping things like a good amount of sleep, avoiding your homework, or not hanging out with family. This, in turn, might start to affect how you feel – even if it's not obvious at the start.

Depending on the game itself, it might also be quite scary or stressful, which also isn't great for overall wellbeing.

Balance is key. If you're unsure about how much is too much, think about whether you're fulfilled in other parts of your life – ask yourself: "Am I getting eight to ten hours of sleep?"; "Have my family said they miss spending time with me?"; "Is my schoolwork going well?"; "Is this game making me feel more happy than stressed?"



1 IN 5 children experience mental health difficulties.





THE NEWS IS FULL OF ENVIRONMENTAL DISASTERS AND WARS, IT'S HARD NOT TO WORRY ABOUT THE FUTURE AND HOW THEY WILL AFFECT ME. HOW CAN WE IGNORE THIS? – LUELLA, 12

Luna says: While staying informed is important, it's essential to recognise when the news is affecting your mental health, such as constantly worrying about world events to the point where you can't sleep or think about anything else.

While it's true that many world events are unsettling and shocking, I also want to flag that social media platforms often exaggerate events with misleading titles and unchecked stories, creating even more unnecessary panic.

So the first important thing is that when you are looking at the news, focus on well-known sources like established newspapers, trusted news websites, or official government announcements for accurate and balanced information. Try to be wary of headlines that seem overly dramatic or too good to be true.

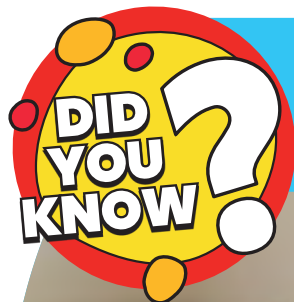
Another thing that may help is fact-checking – this makes sure you're getting the right information. You could do this by looking for multiple sources that report the same facts, and verified experts like scientists, doctors or other professionals can also offer reliable insights, especially on complicated topics like the environment or health.

If you feel overwhelmed though, know that it's okay to take a break. You could instead focus on activities that bring you peace and happiness, like sports, drawing or spending time with friends and family.

Discussing your concerns with friends or family can also be a huge help – it reminds you that you're not alone and can often reassure you about what's really going on.

Often it's impossible to make sense of certain scenarios and tragedies that happen in the world, but by getting your thoughts and feelings out in the open (such as by speaking to a trusted adult or journaling), you will feel less burdened by them. If you keep your thoughts inside, the worries may keep growing in your mind.

If you do ever feel like your worries are impacting your everyday life, it's very important that you seek support from a parent first, and together you can decide if it's a good idea to speak to a doctor – your feelings are valid, and they'll want to support you.



IT'S important to get around 8–10 hours of good-quality sleep every night to recharge. Our bodies also follow patterns, and when it gets used to going to sleep and waking up at the same time, it regulates itself better.



HOW CAN I FEEL MORE CONFIDENT WHEN I AM TRYING SOMETHING NEW? – LUELLA, 12

Luna says: Trying something new can be pretty scary, but often it's our mindset that's holding us back.

Firstly, think about your 'why' – why do you want to try this? Hold on to that 'why' when you start to have doubts, as it can be a great motivator.

The next thing to think about is your expectations. If you're holding yourself to the highest standard and looking to achieve perfection, it's possible that your goals will put you off or make you question your progress.

Know that no-one starts out at anything new perfectly – and that's fine! It's all part of the process.

If you're worried that the people around you will be judging, for example if you're looking to try out a new sport or audition for something, know that 99.9% of the time people are too focused on themselves to notice or mind what you're up to. And other people who do notice are usually happy to help out – it's even a great way to make new friends!

And finally, if you're really not feeling confident, you can always ask someone to do it with you. This could be a friend, a parent or a sibling. Often, we can find strength in numbers, and having someone we know by our side can help give us an extra confidence boost.

Putting yourself out there isn't always easy, but this is your chance to grow – celebrate even the smallest wins, like just showing up and trying. Confidence grows with experience, and these things take patience and self-love.



Need help or advice?

There are lots of great places you can turn to for help and support. Here are just a few:

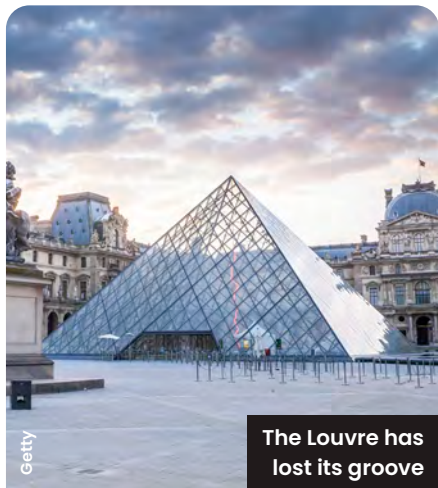
- Childline: childline.org.uk or 0800 1111
- Young Minds: youngminds.org.uk
- Place2Be: childrensmentalhealthweek.org.uk
- Luna: search "we are Luna" in app stores or go to weareluna.app. Please note, *First News* is not affiliated with Luna and there are in-app purchases.



 **FRANCE**

World's most popular museum is in bad shape

The Louvre, a famous national art museum in Paris, is too busy, leaking and in need of a better café! That's the verdict of its director, Laurence des Cars. The sorry state of the tourist hotspot was made public after a private letter that she wrote to France's culture minister was seen by *Le Parisien* newspaper. "Visiting the Louvre is... not always easy," she wrote. She said there aren't enough toilets or food options, some of the galleries are in poor condition and its iconic glass pyramid makes the place too hot in the summer. The Louvre is home to Leonardo da Vinci's *Mona Lisa* painting, and is the most popular museum in the world. It's built to welcome four million visitors per year, but last year, 8.7 million flocked through its doors.



The Louvre has lost its groove

 **USA**

Private firefighters protect wealthy homes



A new LA wildfire, named the Hughes Fire, forced thousands to flee last week

Rich residents in Los Angeles (LA) are hiring private firefighters to protect their homes. Over 15,000 buildings in LA are thought to have been destroyed in the past month in a series of wildfires that the city's regular fire crews have struggled to cope with. It's become more popular for wealthy residents to pay between £1,600 and £12,000

per day for private teams to set up sprinklers and keep careful watch over their million-dollar properties. However, critics say that this creates inequality and divides the city, because at the same time that mansions are being guarded, people from poorer areas who can't afford that service are seeing their homes burn down.

 **SOUTH GEORGIA**

Giant iceberg on track to smash into British island

The world's largest iceberg is spinning through the southern Atlantic Ocean on a collision course with a British overseas territory. South Georgia is a paradise for wildlife like penguins and seals, but if the iceberg runs aground on the island's beaches or smashes to bits, it could block the island's animals from finding food.

An iceberg like no other

The iceberg is called A23a. It's visible from 850,000 miles away in space, and some of its cliffs are taller than the Shard skyscraper in London. As it drifts north, warmer waters are causing these cliffs to melt and plummet into the ocean. It's now about the size of the county of Cornwall – and just slightly smaller than South Georgia itself. See p23 for a map of the iceberg's journey.



South Georgia island, and above, the enormous iceberg headed its way

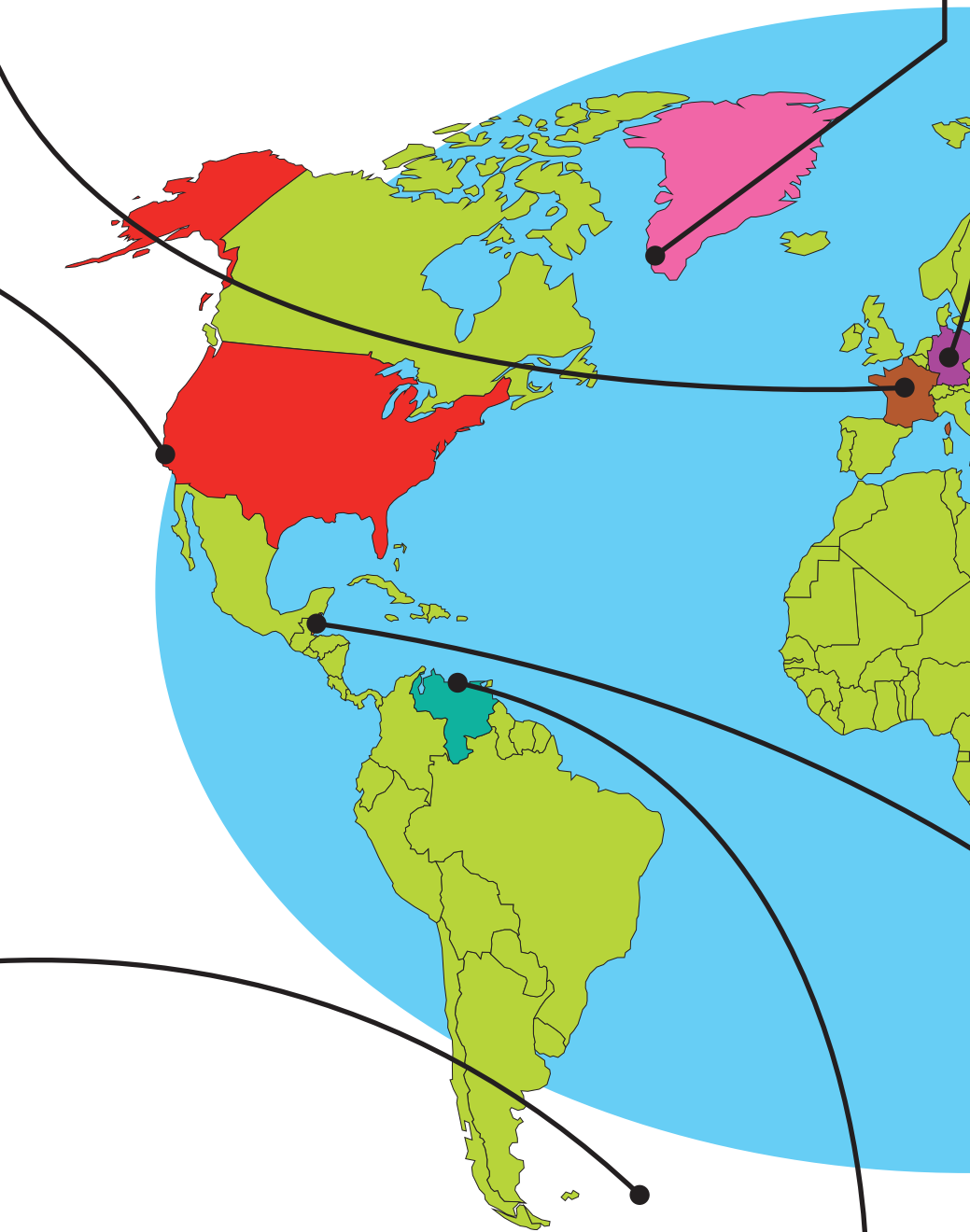
 **GREENLAND**

Denmark ditches unfair parent tests in Greenland



Greenland governs itself, but is part of Denmark

Denmark is to stop using its parenting tests on grown-ups in Greenland. The standard tests are widely used in Denmark to reveal whether new parents are fit to raise children. It asks about their health, their future plans and their outlook on life. Parents who fail can have their babies taken away from them. However, human rights groups have pointed out that it's not suitable for Greenlandic families, because they aren't all fluent in Danish and their culture is slightly different, too. Now, a different test will be created for Greenlandic families instead.



 **VENEZUELA**



President Nicolás Maduro

President says migrants rejected by the USA are "welcome back"

Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro says that those who have left the country in the hope of moving to the USA are welcome to return. Donald Trump is working to tighten America's borders and make it harder for immigrants to enter the USA. Mr Maduro said: "My dear migrant brothers and sisters, Venezuela is waiting for you... everyone will return so we can be happy in this land – working, producing and hugging each other. And you will also have back the most sacred right: the right to party." However, millions have left Venezuela under Maduro's rule, due to economic problems and shortages of food and medicine.

GERMANY

Man survives clinging onto 175mph train

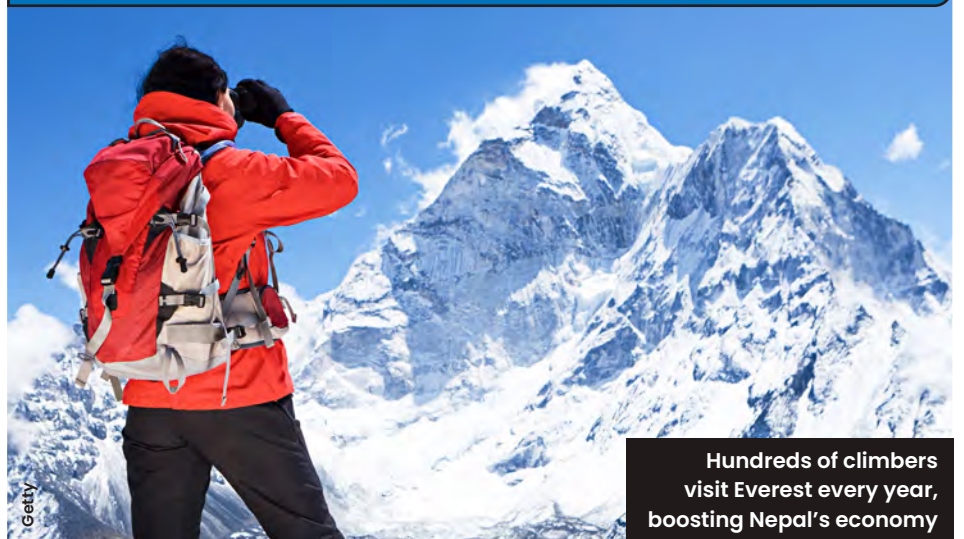
A Hungarian man survived clinging onto the outside of a high-speed train in Germany as it thundered along at 175mph (280km/h). The 40-year-old hadn't bought a ticket for his journey from Munich. When the train made a stop at Ingolstadt, he left his luggage by his seat and stepped off for a cigarette, but the doors shut before he got back on. So, as the train began pulling away, he clung onto the cables between the carriages and rode for about 20 miles (32 kilometres) before the driver stopped the train and he was handed over to the police.



The police said he was "amazingly" unharmed



NEPAL



Hundreds of climbers visit Everest every year, boosting Nepal's economy

The price it costs to conquer Everest just climbed!

Nepal is about to increase the price that it costs to get a permit to climb Mount Everest. Its Department of Tourism has announced that from September, a pass for the two most popular climbing routes will rise from £9,000 to £12,000 – the first price rise in a decade. Nepal hasn't said what the extra cash that it raises will be

spent on, but Lukas Furtenbach, from an Austrian adventure-sports company called Furtenbach Adventures, told the *Guardian* newspaper that the price hike is "understandable". He said: "I'm sure the additional funds will be somehow used to protect the environment and improve safety on Everest."



EGYPT

Giant dinosaur discovery

A giant, meat-eating dinosaur that roamed North Africa 95 million years ago has been discovered – using old photos! The fossils of the newly-named *Tameryraptor markgrafi* were originally found in the Western Desert of Egypt in 1914. They were taken to Germany for storage, but destroyed when Munich was bombed during World War Two. Researchers studied long-lost photos of the fossils, including the dinosaur's skull, spine and hind limbs, and decided it was a two-legged ten-metre-long (33ft) killer, with a horn on its nose.



It was a similar size to *Tyrannosaurus rex*!

THAILAND

Wedding day for thousands of same-sex couples

Thousands of same-sex couples all across Thailand got married last Thursday (23 January), on the first day that it became legal for them to do so. "Today, the rainbow flag is proudly flying over Thailand," wrote Prime Minister Paetongtarn Shinawatra on X. Among the celebrations, a mass wedding was held at Siam Paragon mall in the country's capital city, Bangkok. LGBTQ+ groups had campaigned for decades for marriage equality.



A happy couple ties the knot in Bangkok

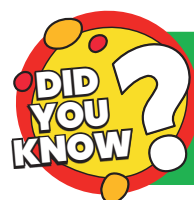
BELIZE

Belize drops Queen Elizabeth II from its bank notes

Belize is taking the late Queen Elizabeth II off its bank notes, and replacing her with two of its national heroes. From June, the country's first prime minister, George Cadle Price, and Philip Goldson, who helped to form Belize's two major political parties, will be printed on the notes instead. Belize was a British colony until it gained independence in 1981. Current Prime Minister Johnny Briceño said: "I know some people will say: 'We don't have the Queen [on the note].' Well, the Queen has died, and that has nothing to do with the Belize dollar."



Belize's first prime minister is on the \$100, \$20 and \$5 notes



THAILAND is the third Asian country to legalise same-sex marriage, after Taiwan in 2019 and Nepal in 2023.

KIDS IN GAZA RETURN HOME

RECENTLY a ceasefire was agreed between Israel and Hamas (the terrorist group that runs Gaza). This week on *FYI*, the team hear from two children, Amal and Rami, who react to the ceasefire and share their hopes on returning home.

What's the situation in Gaza now?

The two sides in the war have agreed to a six-week ceasefire, which means a pause in fighting. Prisoners and hostages are being exchanged, and Palestinians are being allowed to travel back home.

Before the ceasefire began, at least 1.9 million people (90% or nine in ten of the population of Gaza) had been displaced, which means forced to leave their homes.

Although people are now returning, many are finding that their homes were bombed during the war. The United Nations has estimated that more than 90% of the homes in Gaza have been destroyed or seriously damaged. Aid agencies are ready to supply more than 150,000 tents so that people have somewhere to sleep.

Even clearing away all the rubble is expected to take more than 20 years and cost more than a billion dollars. It's not clear where the money will come from to rebuild the homes, businesses and hospitals. Water supplies, sewage systems and power networks will also need to be repaired.

But before any of that can happen, nobody knows if the war is even over. Israel has said that if it needs to carry on fighting Hamas at the end of the ceasefire, it will.

Read more stories about the war at first.news/IsraelGaza.



Palestinians walk back home with their belongings.
Below: destroyed homes in Rafah

Getty

FYI

sky kids

WATCH THE VIDEO

Hear Rami and Amal's stories by getting a responsible adult to scan the QR code below.



*Rami's story

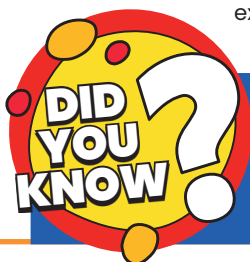


*Rami

*Rami with his mum

"Our life in the tents is not good due to lack of water, food, the heat of the sun, the cold of winter. When it rains, our tents, our beds and clothes get soaked. We spend time drying them. There are no schools. Ours were bombed. I wish to go back to school now that the war is over. I hope they rebuild the schools so we can study. I was very happy when I heard about the ceasefire. I'll go to Gaza City to see my uncle and his children. My family will clean our houses of rubble and dust and repair the broken windows. The columns and roof are intact, but the walls are destroyed due to shelling. We'll use candles until the infrastructure is repaired,

electricity is restored and Gaza is rebuilt. My message to the world is to help us rebuild the schools so we can return to our education and assist in restoring homes. We suffered greatly during this war. It is the hardest experience we've ever faced."



*Amal's story



*Amal

*Amal with her mum

"We live in the cold, suffering from a lack of blankets and water. At night, while sleeping, we shiver from the cold. I wake up and help my mother prepare breakfast, tidy the tent and clean. We are excited and very happy that we are going to return to Gaza. Our house is still standing, but it's damaged. I hope to visit my aunts, sit together, draw, read stories and play together. I miss my room, playing with my toys and sleeping in my bed. God willing, Gaza will be rebuilt in a few years and we will have electricity, water and food. We plan to remain resilient in Gaza and not leave it."

THE Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC), which includes 15 of the UK's leading aid agencies, including the British Red Cross, Christian Aid and Oxfam, launched the DEC Middle East Humanitarian Appeal in October 2024 to help those affected by the conflict. It has so far raised more than £39 million to provide urgent shelter, food and basic supplies. Find out more at dec.org.uk.

* Names have been changed to protect identities.



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.



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! Have a go at the first one here, then turn the page upside down to see if you were right.

DOES A GROUNDHOG PREDICT THE WEATHER IN AMERICA?

ON 2 February, a groundhog called Punxsutawney Phil will come out of his burrow. If he sees his own shadow, some believe there will be six more weeks of winter weather in America. If he doesn't, there will be an early spring. The unusual event is known as Groundhog Day and it's celebrated every year in the USA.



Punxsutawney Phil is perhaps the most famous groundhog in America

Check out more on spotting fake news at:

- [first.news/fakeorfact](https://www.firstnews.co.uk/fakeorfact) • [first.news/spotfakenews](https://www.firstnews.co.uk/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](https://www.firstnews.co.uk/fake-news)



This is a tricky one! The news story is FACT – Groundhog Day is real. But the idea that Punxsutawney Phil can predict the weather is a bit of a legend really!

IN NEXT WEEK'S ISSUE!



SAFER INTERNET DAY



DOG MAN MOVIE



DON'T MISS IT!

HALF-TERM PULL-OUT

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A MAGICAL RED NOSE DAY AWAITS!

MAGICIAN and *Blue Peter* presenter Joel Mawhinney is supporting this year's Red Nose Day campaign, which officially launched this week. We caught up with him to find out more...

● **Why is supporting Red Nose Day special to you?**

Well, I think that we all know that Red Nose Day is such an incredible cause. It's something that I've watched since I was a child and even to be asked to be involved is a great honour. Everyone out there is doing their part, and to just be a small part of that is very important to me.

● **If you had to nominate one of your friends or family to do something funny to raise money, who would it be?**

Either I would nominate my co-presenters on *Blue Peter*, Abby and Shini, to dress up as massive Red Noses on the street. Or I think I would go all the way to my absolute hero, magic legend Derren Brown, because I would just love to see him attempt something funny.

● **Why do you think it's important to get involved with things like Red Nose Day?**

I think it's so easy these days to forget how lucky a lot of us are and how privileged we can be, and there are so many people who are suffering in ways that we don't even realise. So, if we can even do a tiny bit each, it really does make a big difference. And the beautiful thing with



Comic Relief

Joel dons his red nose!

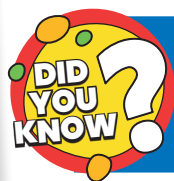
Comic Relief is that there are simple things you can do to make a difference, whether it's getting your Red Nose or lots of Red Noses or finding your own way of fundraising.

● **What would be your ultimate Red Nose Day magic trick?**

We sort of managed to pull off the ultimate Red Nose Day magic trick last year on *Blue Peter*. It wasn't a magic trick, but we went across the UK lighting up monuments in red and when I first heard of the idea, I thought we were using CGI to light up the London Eye. But no, we actually did it and that's about as magical as it gets for me!

● **How did you get into magic?**

I was about five or six and my grandfather was a huge Paul Daniels [a famous magician] fan. It was never going to be football or rugby for me, so magic it was, and I would probably say if you were young and wanted to get into magic, the best piece of advice is to get out there and do it for real people as fast as you can.



IF Joel could pick anyone to be his magician's assistant, he'd choose Emma Watson as Hermione Granger! Who would you choose?

Red Nose Day takes place on 21 March 2025. To find out how you can get involved, visit comicroelief.com/rednoseday



Comic Relief

Joel joins forces with Bluey

IT'S THE GRAMMYS!



Getty

Record-breaking Beyoncé!

THE 2025 Grammy Awards – one of the biggest music awards shows in the world – takes place in Los Angeles on 2 February. Here are our top three facts to know!

1. Beyoncé leads the nominations

Beyoncé has secured a whopping 11 nominations for her album *Cowboy Carter*. That now makes her the most nominated artist in history! The pop superstar is up for Album of the Year, Record of the Year for *Texas Hold 'Em* and Best Pop Solo Performance for *Bodyguard*.



Getty

Can Raye do it for the Brits?

2. Other stars up for gongs

Other big stars nominated include Taylor Swift, Charli XCX, Billie Eilish, Kendrick Lamar and Post Malone. Sabrina Carpenter, Raye and Teddy Swims are all in the running for Best New Artist.

3. Raising money for an important cause

This year's ceremony at the Crypto.com Arena will double up as a fundraiser to help those affected by the LA wildfires. Any money raised will help to support the relief efforts and families in need.



Getty

Teddy Swims



PIG HEART BOY

● **Pig Heart Boy on stage!**

Malorie Blackman's famous book *Pig Heart Boy* has been turned into a brand-new stage show. The show follows 13-year-old Cameron, who has to decide if a pig's heart is better than a human heart that doesn't work. It's showing at London's Unicorn Theatre from now until 22 February, before touring the UK.

● **The Colors Within hits cinemas**

An exciting new anime film is touching down in UK cinemas today (31 January). The film follows Totsuko, a young woman with synaesthesia, a condition often linked to musicians like Billie Eilish, Beyoncé and Hans Zimmer. Totsuko befriends Kimi and Rui and together they form a band. Viewers can expect catchy tunes, colourful scenes and a heartwarming story.





BEWARE THE PIGEONS!



It's funny what you can get up to on a park bench!

EVER looked over at the old man on the park bench and wondered what he was getting up to?

Well, an upcoming PC game will let you experience the thrill for yourself!

You may think we're joking, but *The Bench* is a simulator full of fun puzzles and flocks of pesky pigeons who think you're their personal food provider.

Players will have to find hidden objects in the colourful world, and solve puzzles in their trusty newspaper – just like the one you're reading now!

For the more arty among you, the game has a doodling feature so you can sketch the things you see around you.

It's the debut game from Voxel Studios, which teased exciting news that the game will allow interactions between streamers and viewers.

Voxel said: "Streamers, your viewers will be able to influence your gameplay live in a variety of ways, such as spawning pigeons, raccoons and NPCs (non-player characters) to change the flow of the game."



"Viewers, these interactions can either help or hinder the streamer, so choose where to take the game! All spawns in-game will feature your Twitch username."

A playable demo of *The Bench* will be available on Steam as part of Steam Next Fest this February.



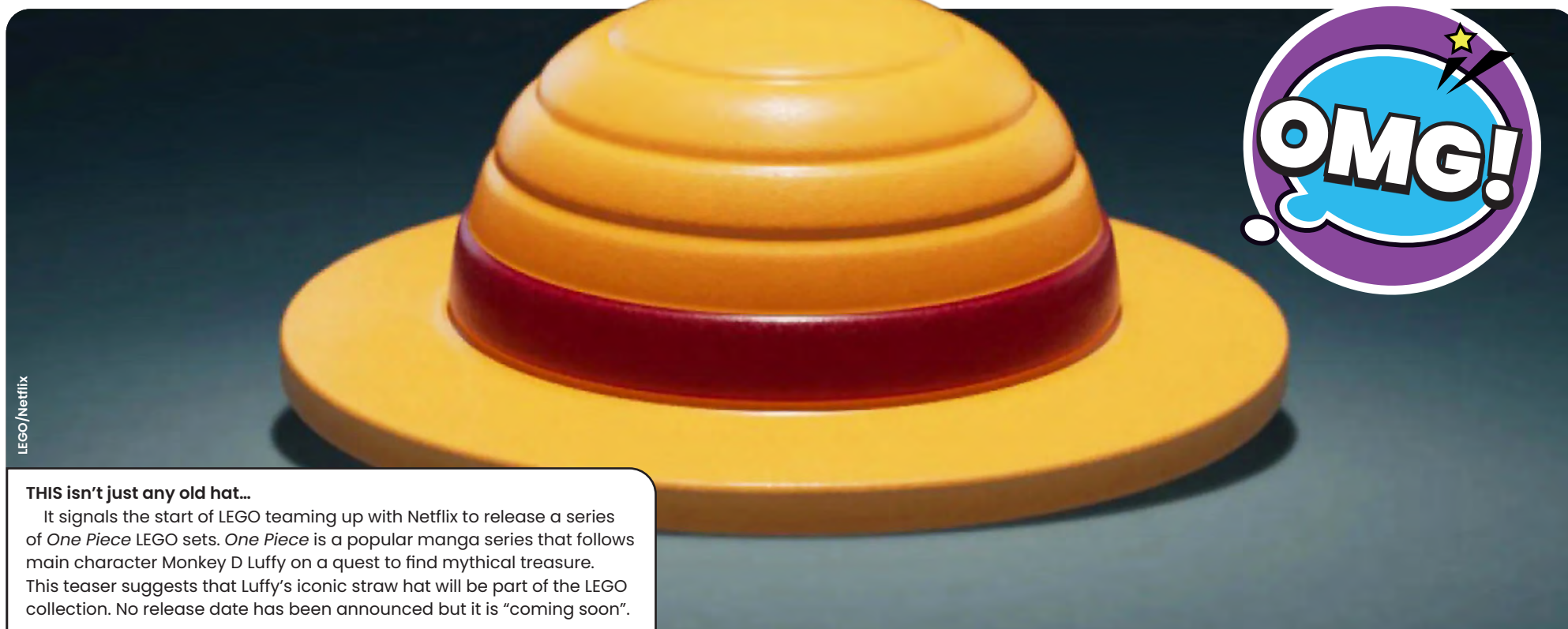
Astro Bot bags more awards

THE awards just keep coming for *Astro Bot*.

The planet-hopping platformer was the big winner at the New York Game Awards 2025, which highlights the best games of the previous year.

Astro Bot picked up Game of the Year, Best Music and Best Kids' Game, with more awards likely to come this gaming season.

Released for PS5 in September 2024 – just before the 30th anniversary of the PlayStation platform itself – the supersized adventure sees players take Astro on a mission to find lost bots across more than 80 levels that are spread over six galaxies and more than 50 planets.



THIS isn't just any old hat...

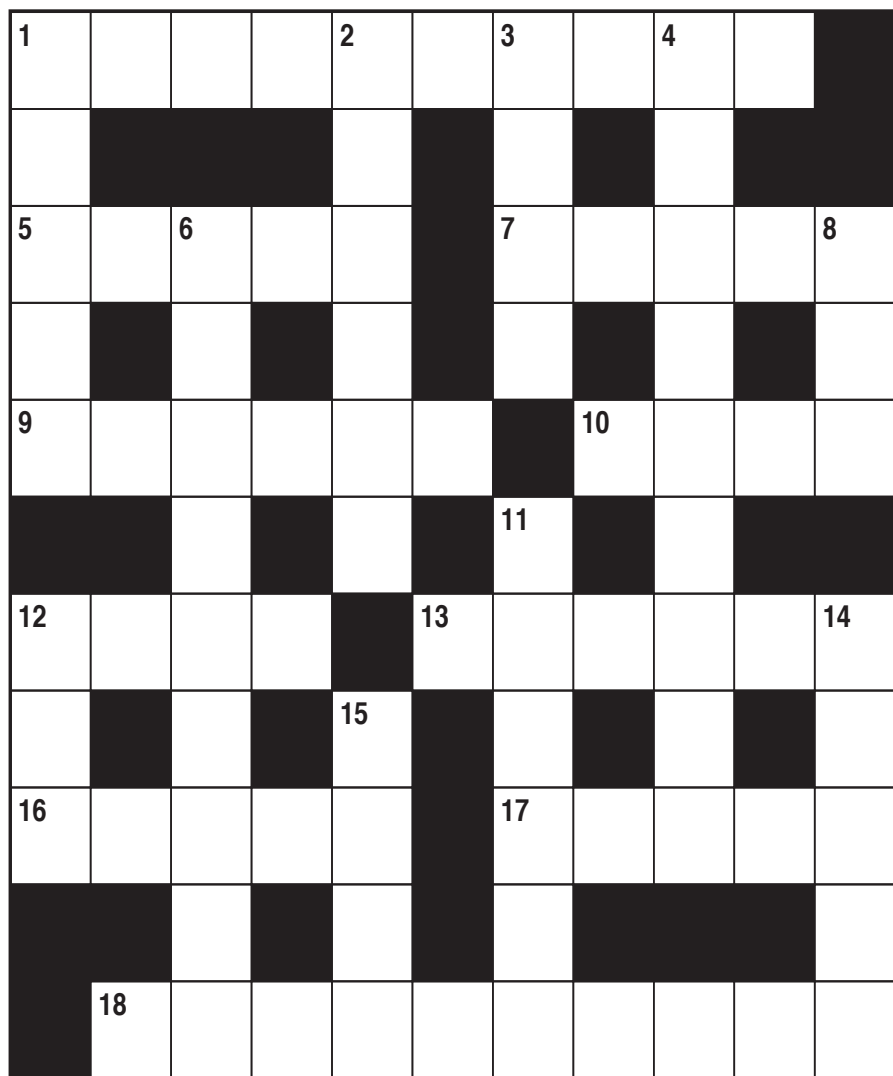
It signals the start of LEGO teaming up with Netflix to release a series of *One Piece* LEGO sets. *One Piece* is a popular manga series that follows main character Monkey D Luffy on a quest to find mythical treasure.

This teaser suggests that Luffy's iconic straw hat will be part of the LEGO collection. No release date has been announced but it is "coming soon".



CROSSWORD

CAN you solve our crossword puzzle using the clues below?



ACROSS

- 1 Comprehend (10)
- 5 Heroes (5)
- 7 Thick liquid put over food (5)
- 9 Large birds of prey (6)
- 10 Item of footwear (4)
- 12 Fix; repair (4)
- 13 Something that you do (6)
- 16 Delicious to eat (5)
- 17 Acquires through merit (5)
- 18 Exciting journeys (10)

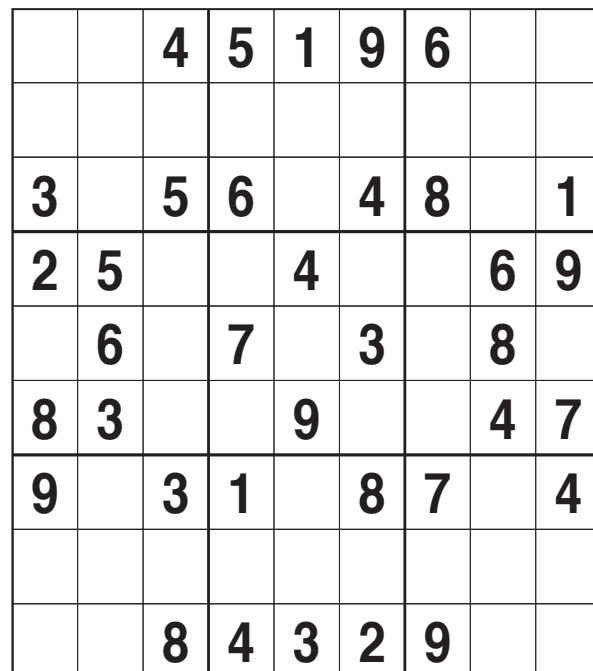
DOWN

- 1 Join together (5)
- 2 Relaxed (6)
- 3 Long and pointed elephant tooth (4)
- 4 Less well-behaved (9)
- 6 Arranged (9)
- 8 Female sheep (3)
- 11 The way a person speaks that shows where they are from (6)
- 12 Greeted; encountered (3)
- 14 Birds lay their eggs in these (5)
- 15 A rubber ring fitted around the wheel of a vehicle (4)



Sudoku

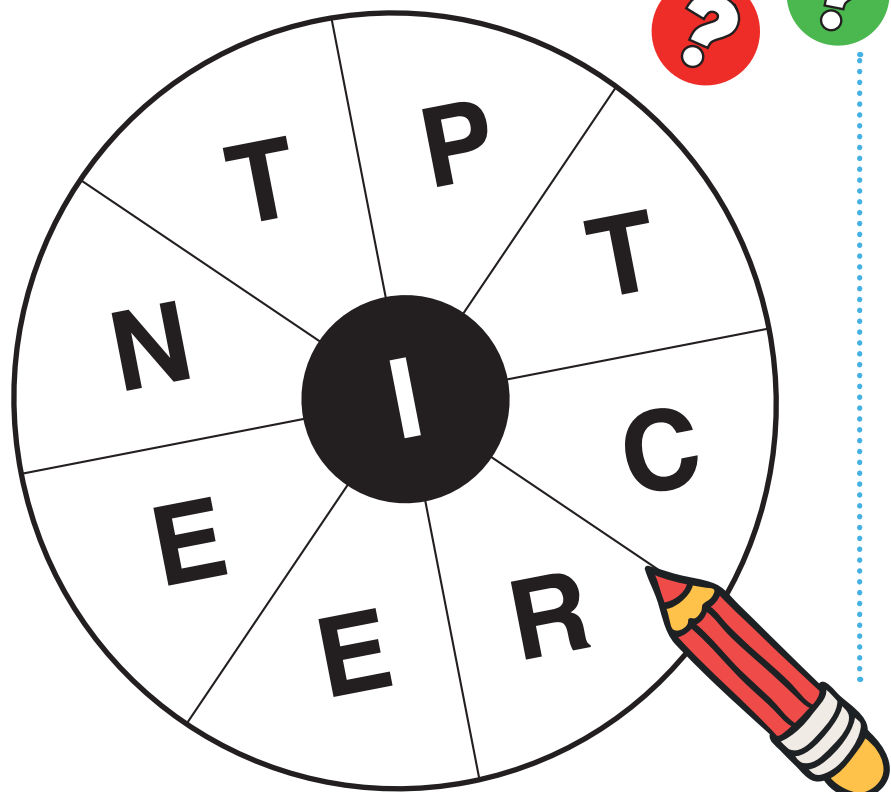
CAN you complete our sudoku puzzle, filling in the numbers one to nine?



COMPETITIONS: To enter, email us at win@firstnews.co.uk putting 'competition name' (e.g. Holiday), in the subject box or visit firstnews.com 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.

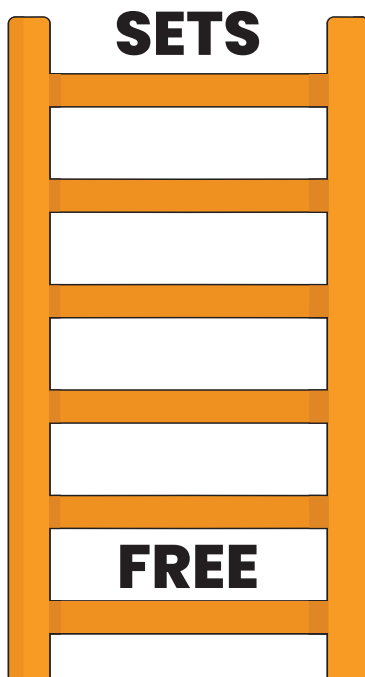
Word wheel

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?



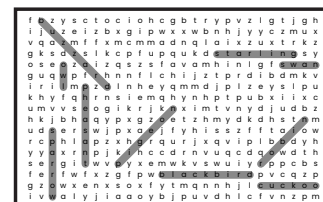
Word ladder

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 971 ANSWERS:

- Word wheel: furthered.
- Word ladder: beak, bead, bend, bind, wind, wing.
- Spot the difference: 1) Text missing on roof 2) Man's eyebrow raised 3) Middle kids' mouth upside down 4) Old lady's glasses missing 5) Middle drink now pink 6) Extra bowl of sauce 7) Extra fish on plate 8) Arms on left now purple 9) Old man's buttons removed 10) Plate of food changed to green colour.



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 ocean scene?



Wordsearch



Can you find all of these ocean creatures in the wordsearch? Tick them off as you go!



- Turtle
- Fish
- Shark
- Whale
- Dolphin
- Seahorse
- Seal
- Penguin
- Octopus
- Crab



k c s s f f r f b a m c r a b e s n d n b c c c b y
 e i v n h p y o h h v v u w t b h m q p z d y k w d
 l k p s o b w z s y y f p l n q a a q p y t r f u o
 w i f y d i x i v y v e z l w e r a e c y b p k d l
 h b t z u v f p f e u x a e u m k n s g j i y x o p
 e z s u s m z k n q t q z w h a l e z i d n n p g h
 h v u m r u y r k c a a q l f k k o o u i s h m e i
 z c t q i t g v r t t f q h a d a b v f v o u p a n
 d f w q b z l b p p h p v d c s d o y v v w s z r a
 u p s q f b p e p s t k n r x f e i i v q e m l y a
 b y y k f e q v u q d v z l i t s a w o w o s o i c
 q m s s x y j p g h l z s x o a v z h w x s d a n r
 d t o o q a o p c m g t q x r q s h z o m m e l e i
 c o z m u t c f g x k s x a d v n p a r r z v a s x
 g v n q c f g p e n g u i n s i f j o a y s g p l n
 y h k o g p s n v j q g z u r e e p z i m r e k h f



CHOOSE LOVE

...and beat bullying

CHLOE Westley was bullied as a child, and it affected her mental health. Here, she writes for *First News* about *The Angel of Dreams*, her new book about a teenage girl with anxiety, and how it was inspired by her experiences.

by Chloe Westley

MY book, *The Angel of Dreams*, follows the journey of Alex, a teenage girl who struggles with anxiety and feeling like she's not good enough.

In her dreams, she enters a fantasy realm where she's challenged to fight the monsters in her head and the memories from her past. In this fantasy realm, she meets the Queen, the dragon, the magician and a boy who changes everything. It's a story about teenagehood, mental health, courage and friendship.

This story was inspired by my own experiences of being bullied from a young age, and the lasting impact it had on my mental health. I felt like I was alone, and that my life would never get better.

Now that I'm all grown up, I want other young people to know that it is possible to heal from these experiences and build a beautiful life for yourself.

Be the hero of your story

I want every reader of this book to know that they are the hero of their own story. Courage isn't something you're born with. Courage is a decision to choose love over fear.

Another message I have for young people is that you get to decide what kind of person you want to be. You can choose kindness. You can choose to be hopeful.

My message to young people who have been bullied is, don't give up. It may feel like things won't ever get better for you, but they will. Your life is precious and you deserve to be happy. I wrote this book so that you could see yourself becoming the hero of your own story. Because in the end, you win every time.

The Angel of Dreams by Chloe Westley is out now.



Kristina Paramonov

HOW TO BE YOUR HERO

Three lessons in *The Angel of Dreams*...

1. "Never, never, never give up"

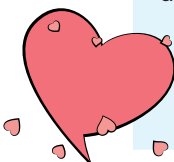
Chloe says: "This quote from Winston Churchill is a great motto for any aspiring hero. No matter how hard it gets, and no matter what others say, your life is worth the effort to keep going and keep moving forward. Never give up!"

2. Heroes aren't born – they're made

Chloe says: "Heroism isn't something you're born with. Heroism grows inside you when you find the courage to move forward, in spite of your fears and your challenges."

3. Shine brightly, in spite of shadows

Chloe says: "Shadows come in many forms, and they can make you doubt your worth. You have a power inside you that can never be extinguished. You are not the bad things that happen to you – you are the light that shines through!"



CHLOE is an author, mental health campaigner and ex-adviser to the prime minister.

While in government, Chloe campaigned for more funding for mental health programmes and worked on anti-bullying campaigns. She loves giving talks and hosting assemblies and writing programmes in schools.

She also recently launched an organisation called The Hero Project. It's a team of youth coaches and mental health experts that partners with schools and libraries to offer mentoring for 12 to 18-year-olds.

● **Teachers!** You can reach Chloe through her site: chloewestley.com



Children's Laureate Frank Cottrell-Boyce

Children's Laureate says reading boosts happiness!

THE Children's Laureate has kicked off a new campaign to boost kids' happiness through reading.

Frank Cottrell-Boyce, a best-selling children's author, said that while children in the UK rank highly for the skill of reading, fewer of you are reading for pleasure – and this is leading to a decline in happiness.

He wants politicians to "make sure that every single child has access to books... and the [powerful] ways

in which they improve long-term life chances". He said that this would be a clear sign "that this country values its children".

Cottrell-Boyce was speaking at a gathering of authors, politicians and education experts in Liverpool, called The Reading Rights Summit.

The title of Children's Laureate is awarded to a different author or illustrator every two years. It's their job to champion the benefits of reading.

Recommended reads

in partnership with Peters



Chinese New Year

THIS week, we're celebrating the Chinese New Year with a list of books all about Chinese culture. It's the Year of the Snake, so slither over to your nearest library or bookshop and look out for them!



Keep Dancing, Lizzie Chu by Maisie Chan

Lizzie wants to help her beloved grandad and ballroom-dancing fan Wai Gong after his wife's death. It's time for the trip of a lifetime from Glasgow to Blackpool!

Front Desk by Kelly Yang

Mia works hard to help her parents make money after moving to America. But will she be able to go for her writing dreams?



Lion Dancers by Cai Tse

Discover the world of lion dancing as Wei and Hung – who used to be best friends but are now bitter rivals – must remember what it means to be a team.

Tiger Warrior: Clash of the Dragon Masters by Maisie Chan

Join the ultimate battle between the evil Dragon King and warrior Jack! Without his zodiac's powers, can Jack triumph?



Paper Dragons: The Fight for the Hidden Realm by Siobhan McDermott

Welcome to an underwater school with dragon boat races and thrilling trials! But a dark force is growing – and students are disappearing, too...

A23a iceberg headed toward collision with South Georgia

The biggest iceberg on Earth is heading toward a remote British island, creating a potential threat to penguins and seals inhabiting the area

- **A23a broke off** from Antarctica's Filchner-Ronne Ice Shelf **in 1986**
- Nearly **twice the size** of Greater London
- Drifted for decades through cold **Antarctic waters**
- Broke off from a vortex in **December 2024** after being caught in it for most of the year near the South Orkney Islands
- Currently **250 km (155 miles)** away from South Georgia
- A23a is slowly decaying from **3,900 sq km** to around **3,500 sq km**
- Its cliffs tower up to **400 m (1,312 ft)**

South Georgia

Iceberg **A23a**

2025

South Orkney Islands

2024

2023

2022

N

0 390 km

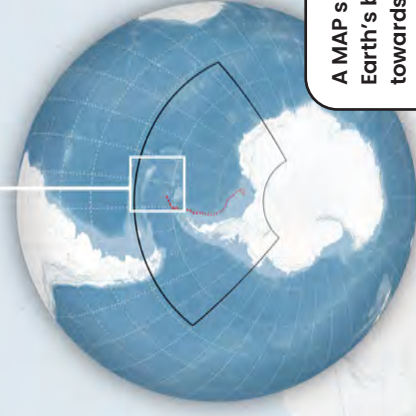
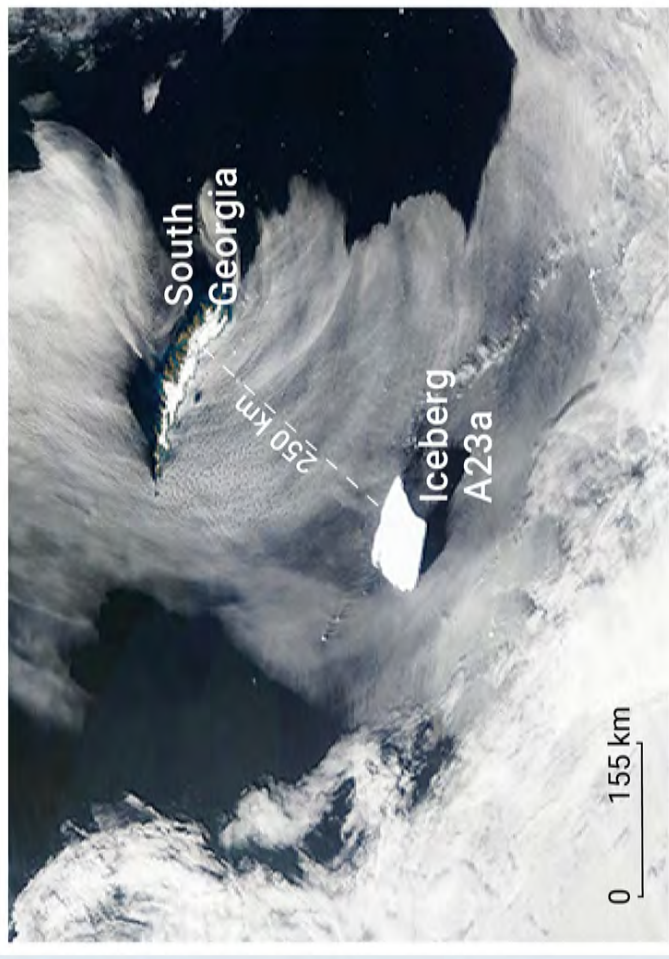
January 23, 2025

Source: NASA

ANTARCTICA

Getty

THE BIG PICTURE



A MAP showing the route taken by Earth's biggest iceberg, as it heads towards a potential collision with the remote island of South Georgia, which is home to important colonies of seals and penguins. To find out more, see our story on p14.

Filchner-Ronne Ice Shelf



GIVE CURLING A GO!



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

This week, Luella has written a great article on how we can use our breathing and move our body to make us feel calm. I love walking in nature and going on runs to help me feel good! But what makes you feel calm? Why don't you let us know and you might feature here on these pages. Or maybe you have something else you'd like to report on – find out how you can do that by reading below!

FEATURE IN YOUR NEWS

If you want to be a junior journalist for *First News* and go to cool press events or write something on a topic that you're passionate about, get in touch by asking a trusted adult to email us at yournews@firstnews.co.uk. Or, get your teacher to sign up to the *First News FYI News Club* at first.news/fyinewsclub.

EVER heard of curling? It's a team sport played on ice! Marianna is skip (captain) of the England junior women's team and was in Finland in December competing in the World Junior-B Curling Championships. She loves curling and thinks everyone should give it a go!

by Marianna Ward

Curling is a sport where each team has four players who take turns throwing stones down a sheet of ice into a target called the house. The team with a stone closest to the centre of the house at the end wins the points. This process is repeated for six to eight rounds and the team with the most points wins.

Since I started curling, I have been to national championships twice, world championships twice (winning three games), been signed up for several programmes in Scotland and made so many friends.

Curling is for all ages and abilities. There is wheelchair curling, curling where you slide out with a broom, or you can use what we call a stick to push the stones, so it really is for anyone. And it's so friendly, too, which is why I love the sport. You should definitely try it out!



Marianna (left) in action at the World Junior-B Curling Championships 2024



Curling is for everyone!



From left to right: Ewan, Professor Sweet and Ewan's sister Imogen



EWAN Sweet, a budding marine biologist, was invited to learn about the work his namesake (someone who has the same name as another person), Professor Sweet, is doing to save the world's coral reefs.

Ewan read about Professor Sweet's work in a newspaper and emailed the University of Derby, asking if he could come and meet him – and he said yes!

Ewan was given a tour of the facilities at the university and got to ask Professor Sweet all kinds of questions.

Ewan said: "I find oceans fascinating, and I want to make a difference to the world one day, just like Professor Sweet."



NEWS CLUB SHOUT-OUT!

THIS WEEK WE'RE GIVING SHOUT-OUTS TO... Notre Dame High School, Dingwall Academy, Downs Junior School, Goetre Primary School and RL Hughes Primary School!



Fallen



ISLA has written a poem called *Fallen* and wanted to share it with you.

Fallen, by Isla, aged 12

There was once a tree on Traffen Island,
With roots as deep as the trees were tall.
Where a family of squirrels made their home,
And the small birds would forever roam.

But it was cut down many moons ago,
Lost in the overgrown grass and weeds.
Overshadowed by the hills of the mainland,
And you would never know, that there once
was a tree,
On Traffen Island.

And now nothing is there,
Just shrubbery laid bare,
No hint of wildlife there,
As if nobody should care.

But now upon the heath,
A tiny seed of hope, waiting
For someone to plant it.
Fulfilling its destiny, as its ancestor did;
To bring joy to the wildlife surrounding.



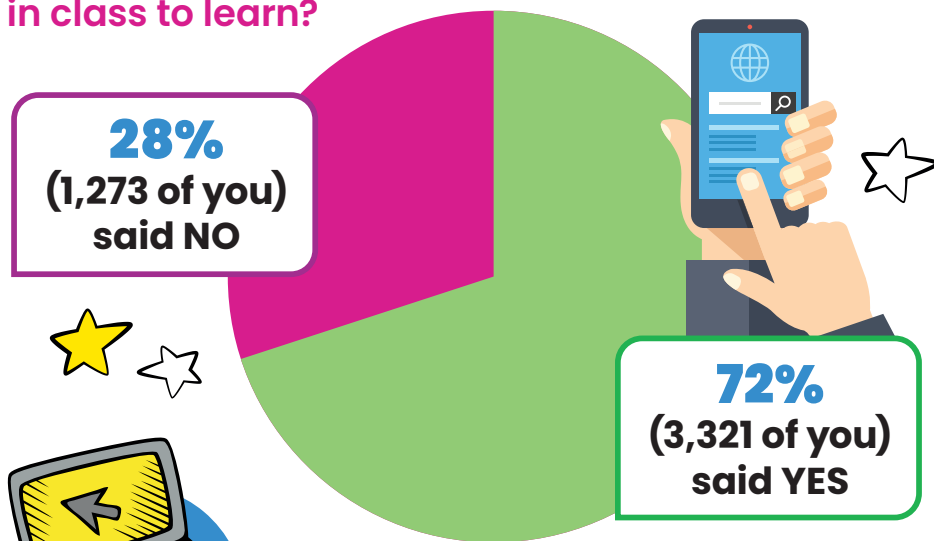
Isla

THIS WEEK'S BIG QUESTION



We asked 4,594 of you...

Do you think you should be able to use phones
in class to learn?



What do you think? Join in the conversation and cast your vote!

Vote at first.news/polls

And, breathe...

NEWS Club member Luella has been talking to an expert about how breathing and movement can help the way we feel. Find out some top tips she learnt!

by Luella

I met Nahid de Belgeonne to talk about how we can use the power of the breath and movement to change the way we feel. Nahid is a somatic movement teacher (helps people to feel more at ease and connected to their bodies). She is known as the nervous system whisperer and explores why we move, think and behave the way we do. This is something she calls The Human Method. It's clever because it uses the connections in the brain and neuroscience (science of the brain) to create practices we can do ourselves at home. I love the ideas – they are simple but help to make you more calm and open, and move more easily.



Luella

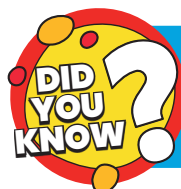


I asked Nahid for any top tips she could share for young people when they are feeling anxious or stressed. Here's what she said:

- Tip 1: Place three fingers on your chest and breathe in for three seconds and then out for three seconds. Repeat several times.
- Tip 2: Shake it out! Stand up and bend your knees. Imagine you are jumping on a trampoline, but without your feet leaving the ground! Let your arms hang loose as you bounce.



Nahid de Belgeonne



BREATHING and movement can help you to feel more relaxed and focused.



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 What fruit do Brits throw away 3.2 billion times each year?



2 What is the name of this legendary F1 driver who has joined Ferrari?



Getty

3 This is Alberta. What type of animal is she?



RSPCA Oak & Furrows

4 How many hens need to be culled at a Shropshire farm?



5 Which famous person is Belize taking off its bank notes?

6 What is the average age of the oldest choir on the planet?



Runwood Homes

7 A rare rabbit species has been rediscovered. What colour is its tail?



José Alberto Almaraz-Castellón

8 Which singer has secured 11 Grammy nominations for her album *Cowboy Carter*?

9 Who won a court case against the publishers of *The Sun*?



10 How many days did Rudiger Koch spend living in an underwater home?



Ocean Builders / X

11 Which rugby tournament kicks off tonight (Friday 31 January)?

12 Which Asian country has become the latest to allow same-sex couples to get married?

13 What has this 180-million-year-old sea creature been named?



Milton Keynes Museum

14 Which museum is home to Leonardo da Vinci's *Mona Lisa* painting?

15 Who is the only player to have scored against all 19 of the clubs that have ever played in the Women's Super League?



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](https://www.firstnews.co.uk/quiz) and on the *First News* app!

FirstNews WEEKLY NEWS QUIZ!
Check out our new online Quiz!

- Answers:**
- 1 Bananas 2 Lewis Hamilton 3 A hedgehog
 - 4 One million 5 Queen Elizabeth II 6 94 7 Black
 - 8 Beyoncé 9 Prince Harry 10 120 days
 - 11 The Six Nations 12 Thailand 13 Iggy
 - 14 The Louvre 15 Bethany England

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All pics: Getty

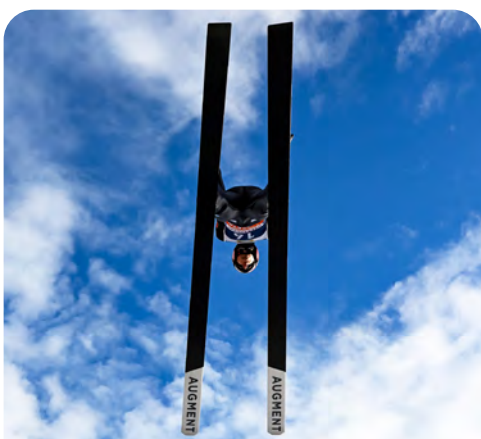
A SPECTACULAR view as the FIS Cross-Country World Cup makes a stop in Switzerland's Engadin region.



THE peloton climbs through the streets of Binissalem in Spain during the Challenge Ciclista Mallorca Femenina.



ARYNA Sabalenka takes her frustrations out on her racket after losing to Madison Keys in the Australian Open final.



AN unusual view of the ski jumping, as Germany's Constantin Schmid takes to the air in the FIS Ski Jumping World Cup in Oberstdorf, Germany.



CHELSEA'S Naomi Girma waves to fans after her record-breaking transfer from San Diego Wave made her the first ever million-dollar signing in women's football.



A COMICAL moment in the match between the New Jersey Devils and the Montreal Canadiens.



France's Paul Willemse gets his marching orders in last year's Six Nations

SEEING RED (BUT NOT FOR LONG)

THE Six Nations kicks off tonight (Friday 31 January), and the big change this season is that referees can now hand out 20-minute red cards.

This means that rather than a team being down to 14 players for the whole match, they can replace the player when the 20 minutes are up.

Refs can still give a permanent red card for serious foul play, but this new rule is designed to punish the player rather than the team.

Another change that's been brought in to try and

speed the game up is only giving kickers 60 seconds after a try to take the conversion.

France play Wales in the first match tonight. The women's tournament starts on 22 March.

SINCE the men's tournament expanded to six teams in 2000, only England and Ireland have avoided winning the wooden spoon (coming last). Italy have won it 18 times!



Hewett (left) and Reid get their hands on the trophy again

Jannik Sinner and Madison Keys won the men's and women's singles titles at the Australian Open, while Britain's Alfie Hewett and Gordon Reid (above) continued their dominance of the tournament with a sixth title in a row in the men's wheelchair doubles. They beat Daniel Caverzaschi and Stéphane Houdet 6-2, 6-4. The week got even better for Hewett when he beat Tokito Oda to win his tenth singles Grand Slam.



Australia's Beth Mooney scored 94 not out, which was four more runs than England's entire team got

The Women's Ashes tour down under went from bad to worse last week, as England lost the third T20 match against Australia. That makes it six losses out of six for England on the tour, so their last hope to save some pride is to win the single Test match that started yesterday (Thursday). England are already 12-0 down, so a win in the Test would only make it 12-4.

France has been embarrassed by multiple complaints about medals from this year's Olympics going rusty and flaking. La Monnaie, the French mint that made the medals and makes the country's coins, blamed new EU rules that ban the use of chromium trioxide in varnish. All faulty medals are being replaced.



The Gladiators celebrate winning their duel

Caledonia Gladiators have won their first major trophy, with a narrow 61-59 win over Oaklands Wolves in the women's Super League Basketball Trophy. Gladiators star Mathilde Domenger scored 17 points to be named MVP (most valuable player). The men's final was a bit more one-sided, with Newcastle Eagles beating Bristol Flyers 97-78.

THE two goals that Spurs captain Bethany England scored against Crystal Palace helped her team to win 3-2, but it also made her the only player to have scored against all 19 of the clubs that have ever played in the Women's Super League!



Braydon's on the ball



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

Bournemouth are now unbeaten in 11 league games following a dominant 5-0 win over high-flying Forest. The Cherries won't want this season to end, and find themselves on their best-ever Premier League run and with a squad of players who have really found their form. They're suffering an injury crisis, but that didn't seem to make much difference at all as they battered Forest with another show of fast-flowing football. They've scored 16 in their last four matches in all competitions and have forwards who are firing. Guess who's next up? None other than Liverpool, in what promises to be a most entertaining game.

Man City beat Chelsea 3-1 to leapfrog their opponents and move up to fourth. City fell a goal behind, but fought back with goals from Joško Gvardiol, Erling Haaland and Phil Foden to move back into the Champions League places. City

Ederson now has two assists in the league this season – the same as Phil Foden and Erling Haaland!



have had an off season by their standards, but have been picking up the points since Christmas to now sit just three points behind Forest. I think the most that City can expect is a top-four finish.

In the pick of the other games, Newcastle beat bottom-of-the-table Southampton with another two goals from Alexander Isak, who now has 17 for the season, and Liverpool beat Ipswich 4-1 to retain their cushion at the top.

Centre Stage this week are Spurs, but for all the wrong reasons! They suffered another defeat, this time to fellow strugglers Leicester. With a run of tough-looking games on the horizon, it wouldn't be much of a surprise to see a new manager in the hotseat soon.

In the WSL, unbeaten Chelsea strengthened their grip on the title with a late victory over Arsenal at Stamford Bridge, and second-placed Man United brushed Brighton aside with a comfortable 3-0 win.

Braydon's Team of The Week: Bournemouth, brilliant again!

Braydon's Player of The Week: Alexander Isak, the Newcastle goal machine!

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

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