



FUN DAY TIMES



A Giant Squirrel

Pic. by Indika Handuwala



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World Oceans Day 2023

Compiled by Cecilia Hewavitharana

The ocean covers more than 70% of Earth and is home to the majority of the planet's biodiversity. It is also a life source for humans and other organisms, producing at least 50% of the planet's oxygen.

Oceans Day has been celebrated annually on June 8, following the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in Rio de Janeiro. 'World Oceans Day' was officially designated

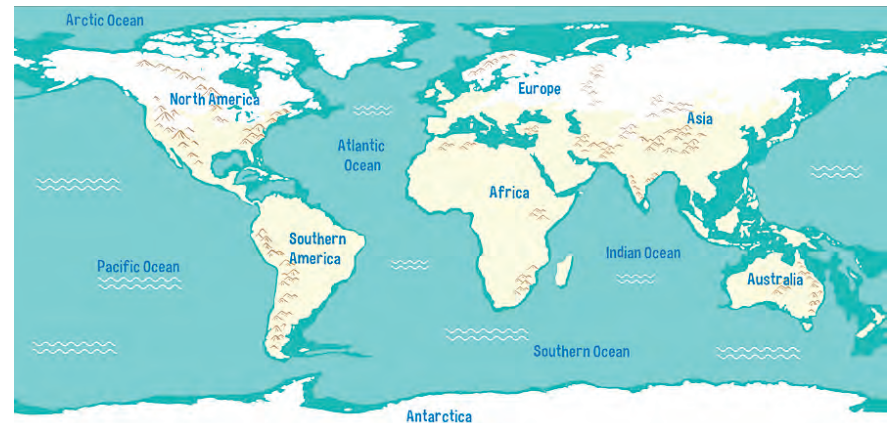
by the United Nations (UN) only in 2008. The theme of the first observance of the day by the UN was "Our Oceans, Our Responsibility" and highlighted the plethora of ways that the oceans contributed to the planet.

This year's theme is "Planet Ocean: tides are changing", which will highlight the need to prioritise the ocean's health and well-being.



Some salty facts

- Over 80% of the ocean is unexplored.
- At least 50% of the world's oxygen supply is produced by the ocean.
- Around 30% of carbon dioxide produced by humans is absorbed by oceans, mitigating the impact of global warming.
- Approximately 40 million people are predicted to be employed by ocean-based industries by 2030.



Threats to oceans

Climate change

- Rising sea levels resulting from the melting of glaciers due to global warming
- Ocean acidification resulting from increased carbon dioxide levels in the atmosphere

Pollution

- Plastic debris caused by littering or improper disposal
- Fishing gear that has been lost or abandoned (around 20% of the ocean's plastic pollution is the result of industrial fishing)
- Waste that has been discharged into rivers and lakes, which eventually find their way into the ocean
- Oil and chemical spills
- Deliberate dumping of trash, sewage or other waste into the ocean

Other threats

- Dredging, which disturbs ecosystems
- Nitrogen oxides (NOx) and sulfur oxides (SOx), caused by ship emissions
- Offshore drilling, which generates air and water pollution, and the risk of increased oil spills
- Deep-sea mining to find precious minerals (such as gold, silver, copper and zinc), which can destroy habitats and even result in the loss of species that are undiscovered
- Noise pollution, caused by drilling, military operations and shipping, which can be harmful to marine organisms.

Oceans vs. Seas

What's the difference?

Despite being used interchangeably, "ocean" and "sea" have different meanings, in geographic terms.

Seas are smaller parts of an ocean, which are generally partially enclosed by land and located in the area where the ocean and land meet.

However, there is one exception: the Sargasso Sea, which is defined by ocean currents and does not have a land boundary.

The generally recognised five major oceans are the Pacific, Atlantic, Indian, Arctic and Southern.

Overfishing and commercial whaling, which drives once-common species to the brink of extinction.



10 WAYS TO HELP OUR OCEAN

at home			around town			on the water				
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9		
Conserve Water Use less water so excess runoff and wastewater will not flow into the ocean.	Reduce pollutants Choose nontoxic chemicals and dispose of all chemicals properly.	Reduce waste Cut down on what you throw away.	Shop wisely Choose sustainable seafood. Buy less plastic and bring a reusable bag.	Reduce vehicle pollution Use fuel efficient vehicles, carpool or ride a bike.	Use less energy Choose energy efficient light bulbs and don't overset your thermostat.	Fish responsibly Follow "catch and release" practices and keep more fish alive.	Practice safe boating Anchor in sandy areas far from coral and sea grasses. Adhere to "no wake" zones.	Respect habitat Healthy habitat and survival go hand in hand. Treat with care.		

References: un.org, unworldoceansday.org, NOAA, UNESCO, National Geographic, Britannica

The Poson Moon and the Baby Deer

By Manoshi De Silva

One evening a little fawn walked a little distance away from his herd, admiring the beauty of the late evening. He looked around with his beautiful big eyes at the jungle and all the trees bathed in the soft moonlight. "How quiet and beautiful everything is," he thought, enjoying the peacefulness.

But suddenly he heard a twig snap and some dry leaves rustling. Someone was following him! With his heart racing, the little fawn ran as fast as he could with his tiny legs.

"Stop!" someone shouted at him. This frightened him even more. So he ran further, deep into the jungle where he was too tired to run anymore. He finally stopped and looked back. Whoever was following him was not to be seen anymore.

The little fawn looked around with fear. "What frightened you so much, baby deer?" asked a kind voice. That also scared the little fawn and he looked around nervously and asked, "Who is this?" "It's me, baby deer," replied the gentle voice. "Where are you?" the little fawn was confused as there was no one to be seen.

"Look up," said the voice. The little fawn looked up. Smiling brightly at him was the full moon. "Oh!" said the little fawn. He had never seen the moon so big and round. "Now tell me what scared you?" smiled the moon. The little fawn was not scared anymore. "Well, someone was following me and I got scared and ran away!" replied the little fawn and the moon smiled even brighter.

"Many, many years ago, on a day like today, your great, great, great grandfather (many times over), ran through this jungle patch just like you did right now!" The moon looked down at the little fawn beaming. "And that day was no ordinary day. That day is still remembered by everyone!"

"Really?" asked the little fawn in surprise. "Why did he run away? What made that day so special for everyone to remember?"

The baby deer lay down on the grass, ready to listen as the moon started

telling the story.

"This was a very long time ago. Everything was so different back then. The jungle was much bigger and thicker too. A deer ancestor of yours was walking through the jungle in search of food. As the deer stopped to graze, he felt as if someone was slowly following him. And he was right. But this was no ordinary person who was following him. This was the King who was out hunting, with his bow and arrows."

"Oh!" said the baby deer, "did the King harm my great, great, great grandfather?" The moon smiled reassuringly. "As the King came close to the deer and took his aim, he was suddenly stopped by someone who shouted 'Tissa!' Surprised by who would call him by his name, the King turned around to see who it was."

"And what happened to the deer - my ancestor?" the fawn wanted to know. "Oh, he was fine! He quickly ran away and saved himself," smiled the moon. "So who saved him? Who stopped the King?" asked the little fawn.

"That was Arahata Mahinda Thero, who introduced Buddhism to this country." "Oh!" said the tiny fawn in surprise. "And since all this happened on a full moon Poya day, people still celebrate this day, even now!" smiled the moon.

"Do they still talk about my ancestor too?" asked the small fawn, "or maybe they don't because he was just a deer!" "Of course they do!" smiled the moon. "Your ancestor is part of this legend! Every time this story is told, he is mentioned too..." The baby deer felt very proud to have a family member who was part of an important historical day.

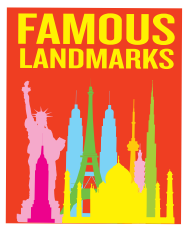


"Can you see that rock faraway?" asked the moon. The fawn turned his head and saw the tall rock standing strong and majestic at a distance. "That is Mihintale. That is where Arahata Mahinda Thero was standing, when he called out to the King," explained the moon. The little fawn stared at the rock in awe.

"Thank you for telling me this story, Uncle Moon!" said the little fawn. "It's late and I have to get back home. But I am scared to go, as someone was following me earlier. Do you think that was also a King with his bow and arrows?"

The moon laughed out loud. "I saw who that was. It was not a King with his bow and arrows, but your brother who was searching for you. Now you can go back home and share this story of your great, great, great grandfather with him too." "Oh yes, he will be as surprised as I was, to learn that a family member of ours was part of such an important day!" said the little fawn.

"Here, let me light the way a little brighter for you, so you can find your way back home. Your mother must be waiting for you," said the moon. So the little fawn followed the soft rays of the Poson moon and walked back through the jungle with his heart beating with pride.



Mihintale

Birthplace of Buddhism in Sri Lanka

According to legend, it was at Mihintale – literally 'Mahinda's Hill' – that Indian missionary Arahata Mahinda, met and converted King Devanampiyatissa in 247 BC, establishing Buddhism as the island's state religion.

Arahata Mahinda was the son of the great Mauryan emperor Asoka, sent by his father to bring word of the Buddha's teachings to Sri Lanka. Buddhism was immediately embraced with fervour by the people of Lanka and soon became firmly established in the island.

Mihintale, on a higher plane

Mihintale has various shrines connected by a total of some 1,840 steep steps that ultimately lead to the summit. They were built in the reign of King Bhatika Abhaya (22 BC – AD 7), although a later paved road provides a short cut up to the first level.

Kantaka Cetiya

At the end of the first flight of stairs up is the Kantaka Cetiya, one of the earliest religious monuments on the island, originally excavated in 1934. The highlights of the building are the four richly decorated shrines, or 'vahalkadas', which face the cardinal points. The eastern facade is the best preserved, with horizontal rows of carvings including fine friezes of dwarfs and elephants, while on either side the wall is finished off with a tall carved pillar holding a weathered lion aloft.

Ambasthala Dagoba (Mango Tree Stupa)

A third flight of steps, narrow and steep, takes you to the highest terrace, where the diminutive Ambasthala Dagoba marks the place where Mahinda surprised King Devanampiyatissa in mid-hunt. The stupa is supposedly built over the exact spot where Mahinda stood, and a statue of the king is placed where he stood – a respectful distance away.

Aradhana Gala

From the Ambasthala Dagoba, steep steps lead up to the Aradhana Gala – the top of the rock where Arahata Mahinda and his five disciples appeared. According to chronicles, this is where Arahata Mahinda first spoke to King Devanampiyatissa and where Mahinda preached his first sermon.



Mihintale is revered as the birthplace of Buddhism in Sri Lanka. Situated 8 miles (13 km) east of Anuradhapura, it is an unforgettable sequence of beautiful shrines, stupas and caves strung out across wooded hills, usually busy with crowds of devout, white-robed pilgrims.

Mihindu Guhawa

A path wends its way through the woodland to reach the Mihindu Guhawa, the cave where Arahata Mahinda spent most of his time. The rock bed used by the sage can still be seen there.

Veda Sala (Hospital)

At the bottom of the site are the ruins of a hospital dating back to the 3rd century AD, some 400 years before the earliest hospital in Europe. Among the remnants of walls and pillars are monolithic stone baths in which the sick would have been treated. Excavations have unearthed many advanced medical implements while the small site museum closeby has examples of stones used for grinding medicinal herbs and medicine jars too.

Kaludiya Pokuna (Pond of Black Water)

A five-minute drive from the main entrance brings you to the sylvan Pond of Black Water, the largest of the ponds of Mihintale. This peaceful artificial lake supplied water to a monastery that stood here during the 10th or 11th centuries.

- Internet sources

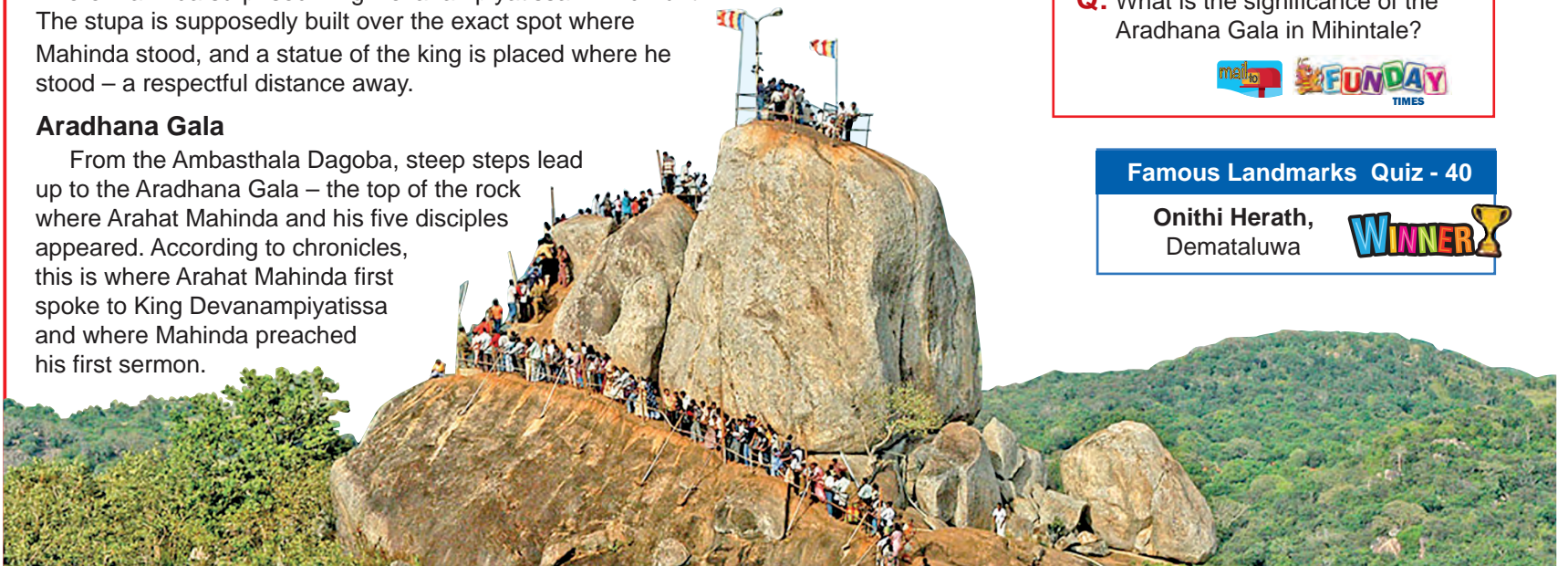
Famous Landmarks Quiz - 41

Q: What is the significance of the Aradhana Gala in Mihintale?



Famous Landmarks Quiz - 40

Onithi Herath,
Demataluwa



Please send competition entries to:



Funday Times
C/O the Sunday Times
P.O. Box 1136, Colombo.
Or
8, Hunupitiya Cross Road,
Colombo 2.

Please note that competition entries are accepted by email.

All competition entries should be certified by a parent or guardian as your own work.

Telephone: 2479337/2479333

Email: fundaytimes1@gmail.com

Please write the name of the competition and the date clearly at the top of your entry and include the following details:

Full Name, Date of Birth, Address, Telephone No. and School.

Please underline the name most commonly used.

Competition entries without the full details requested above, will be disqualified.

Closing date for weekly competitions:

June 21, 2023

In our online issue this week:

- **Page 5** – Competitions
- **Page 6** – Environment
- **Page 7** – Kids News
- **Page 8** – News in Pictures

Please log on to the Funday Times website on www.fundaytimes.lk or check out the Sunday Times epaper on www.sundaytimes.lk for additional pages of this week's Funday Times.

Tomahawk

Quiz No. 208

Questions for the Tomahawk Quiz No. 208 are based on articles appearing in the Funday Times print issue and e-papers of May 7, 14, 21 and 28, 2023.

All you have to do is to find the answers to the questions given. Write the answers neatly on a postcard, Cut the strip 'Tomahawk Quiz No. 208' seen at the top of this page and paste it on your postcard. Please get your entries certified as your own work by a teacher or parent.

One lucky winner will receive a brand new Tomahawk Mountain Bike with the compliments of Tomahawk Bicycle Mall

All Funday Times readers between 8 – 15 years are eligible to participate.

(Those who have already won a bicycle are not eligible to participate.)

Closing Date: June 30, 2023

Tomahawk Quiz No. 207

▶ Abdullah Ilham, Dehiwala



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QUESTIONS – QUIZ NO. 208

1. Name a species of monkey, endemic to Sri Lanka.
2. Which crown was used by King Charles III for his coronation, and for whom was it originally made?
3. Who wrote 'Anne of Green Gables'?
4. What is pollination? Name two invertebrate pollinators and two vertebrate pollinators.
5. What was Edward Lear famous for and what was his most popular work?



Or



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4 - 6 years



- ▶ Nisali Perera, Ja-Ela
- ▶ Zainab Ilham, Dehiwala
- ▶ Risali Seneviratne, Galle
- ▶ Sulaiman Hashim, Colombo 5
- ▶ Tashen Pelawaththa, Polgahawela

Winners please call Funday Times on 2479333/2479337 and arrange to collect your prizes.

4 – 6 AGE GROUP

Help the giraffe through the maze.



Or



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World Environment Day 2023

World Environment Day is the biggest international day for the environment. Led by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), and held annually since 1973, it has grown to be the largest global platform for environmental outreach.

World Environment Day 2023 is hosted by Côte d'Ivoire and supported by the Netherlands and the theme will focus on solutions to plastic pollution under the campaign #Beat Plastic Pollution. It is a reminder that people's actions on plastic pollution matters. The steps governments and businesses are taking to tackle plastic pollution are the consequence of this action.

Facts on plastic pollution

More than 400 million tonnes of plastic is produced every year worldwide, half of which is designed to be used only once. Of that, less than 10 percent is recycled.

An estimated 19 - 23 million tonnes end up in lakes, rivers and seas annually. That is approximately the weight of 2,200 Eiffel Towers all together.

Microplastics – tiny plastic particles up to 5mm in diameter – find their way into food, water and air. It is estimated that each person on the planet consumes more than 50,000 plastic particles per year –and many more if inhalation is considered.

When: June 5, 2023

Host: Côte d'Ivoire in partnership with the Netherlands

Theme: Solutions to plastic pollution

Discarded or burnt single-use plastic harms human health and biodiversity and pollutes every ecosystem from mountain tops to the ocean floor.

With available science and solutions to tackle the problem, governments, companies and other stakeholders must scale up and speed actions to solve this crisis.

This underscores the importance of this World Environment Day in mobilizing transformative action from every corner of the world.

Fifty years celebrating World Environment Day

Led by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and held annually on June 5 since 1973, World Environment Day is the largest global platform for environmental public outreach and is celebrated by millions of people across the world.

Why take part?

Time is running out, and nature is in emergency mode. To keep global warming below 1.5°C this century, we must halve annual greenhouse gas emissions by 2030.



A mountain of plastic

Without action, exposure to air pollution beyond safe guidelines will increase by 50 percent within the decade and plastic waste flowing into aquatic ecosystems will nearly triple by 2040.

We need urgent action to address these pressing issues.



Senegal's 'plastic man' raises awareness on plastic pollution

Did you know?

- Some 11 million tonnes of plastic waste flow annually into oceans. This may triple by 2040.
- More than 800 marine and coastal species are affected by this pollution through ingestion, entanglement and other dangers.
- A shift to a circular economy can reduce the volume of plastics entering oceans by over 80 percent by 2040; reduce virgin plastic production by 55 percent; save governments US\$70 billion by 2040; reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 25 percent; and create 700,000 additional jobs – mainly in the global south.



A beach clean-up in Mombasa



Faith in a global agreement to combat plastic pollution by 2024

Last year, 175 UN Member States endorsed a historic resolution to end plastic pollution and forge an international legally binding agreement that will be ready by the end of 2024.

This is the most significant environmental multilateral deal since the Paris accord. It is an insurance policy for this generation and future ones, so they may live with plastic and not be doomed by it.

Source: un.org

Mars bars to get eco-friendly make over

May 30, 2023

Are you passionate about the planet but sometimes feel sad your favourite snacks are wrapped in single-use plastic?

Well, one of the world's best selling sweet snacks is getting an eco-friendly make-over.

Don't worry, there won't be any changes to the flavour, but Mars bars will be ditching their traditional plastic wrapper for more environmentally-friendly paper packaging.

The company behind the gooey confectionary, Mars Incorporated, have said they will be changing the wrapper on a temporary basis to explore different packaging options.

If it works, it could set the bar for other sweet, chocolate and snack companies to do the same.

The new packaging will be rolled out at selected Tesco stores in the UK from Monday.

Why are paper wrappers needed?

The problem with plastic wrappers is that most of it isn't biodegradable. It doesn't rot, like paper or food, so instead it can hang around in the environment for hundreds of years.



Each year, 400 million tonnes of plastic is produced and 40% of that is single-use plastic we'll only use once before it's binned.

Other examples of single-use plastic are carrier bags, drinks bottles and crisp packets.

Colour changing ink invented by scientists

May 23, 2023

Scientists at a university in Hong Kong have created a new type of ink which mimics a special characteristic made famous by the octopus.

The ink changes colour when exposed to light, much like octopuses do to blend in with their surroundings.

It's thought it could one day be used as a form of camouflage when needed, for example on clothing, if in nature.

How does colour changing ink work?

The ink is made up of particles of a chemical compound called titanium dioxide which have been dyed different colours. These can have different responses to light, with some of the ink particles rising to the surface and others falling depending on the level and type of light exposure. It means a material which contains the ink can appear to change colour.

"Like with oil and water, [the particles] separate and float to the top, and that is because they're coloured," said Jinyao Tang at the University of Hong Kong.

"You can change their colours accordingly and they mimic whatever the colour you're actually shooting on them."

The team who worked on the study created the ink using three different colours, cyan, magenta and yellow – blue, pink and yellow. The strength and wavelengths of the light, shone from a projector, could be adjusted to produce different colours, patterns and even images.



The ink mimics one of the special characteristics octopuses are known for

The researchers believe that with further development, the ink could prove very useful in the future for camouflaging.

"In the forest, everywhere is green, so your clothes or the material should receive that kind of green-colour light around and then it becomes green," said Tang. "Navigating the desert, everywhere is yellow, then [the ink] becomes a yellowish colour."

However, the ink would only be effective in environments like this if the desired colour lasts for a significant period of time, something which the scientists haven't been able to achieve just yet.

It's also thought the ink could one day be used for things like updating signs and displays without using electricity.

How do octopuses change colour?

Octopuses are part of the cephalopod family, which also includes squid and cuttlefish.

Cephalopods have special cells called chromatophores. Each one of these cells has a tiny sac which contains different colour pigments. When the muscles around the cell get tighter, they pull these tiny sacs wider, meaning more pigment is visible on the octopus' skin. However, when the muscles relax, the sac goes back to its normal size, and the pigment becomes less visible.

May 30

News in Pictures



Didcot, UK
Yarnsy, the Didcot crocheter, has created another colourful postbox topper. On display by the railway station and called 'Three Fabulous Ladies', it celebrates women with a selection of quotes attached by Coco Chanel, Audrey Hepburn and Marilyn Monroe.



Yogyakarta, Indonesia
Visitors at the Lepen dam area on the Gajah Wong River. The irrigation ditch of the waterway, which is used to raise tilapia and koi, forms an alternative tourist destination.

Jiuquan, China
The Shenzhou-16 spacecraft, onboard the Long March-2F rocket, lifts off carrying three astronauts to China's new Tiangong space station.



London, UK
Visitors to the MCM Comic Con.



Castleton, UK
John Turner, the 'king' of Castleton Garland Day, covered to the waist in a heavy, bell-shaped floral garland, parades through the village. The date of the custom coincides with Oak Apple Day, which is believed to commemorate the restoration of King Charles II in 1660.

May 29



Syracuse, USA
A volunteer lights the Memorial Day watchfire in Syracuse, New York. The tradition of burning old or worn-out flags comes from the 18th century practice of setting fires so soldiers returning from battle could find their way back to camp.



Tianjin, China
Aerial view of an aeroplane-shaped restaurant on the roof of a shopping centre.



Manila, Philippines
Boats on Manila Bay, in the path of the approaching Typhoon Mawar.



Port Talbot, UK
Musicians at 'In It Together', Wales's biggest music festival.

Source : The Guardian