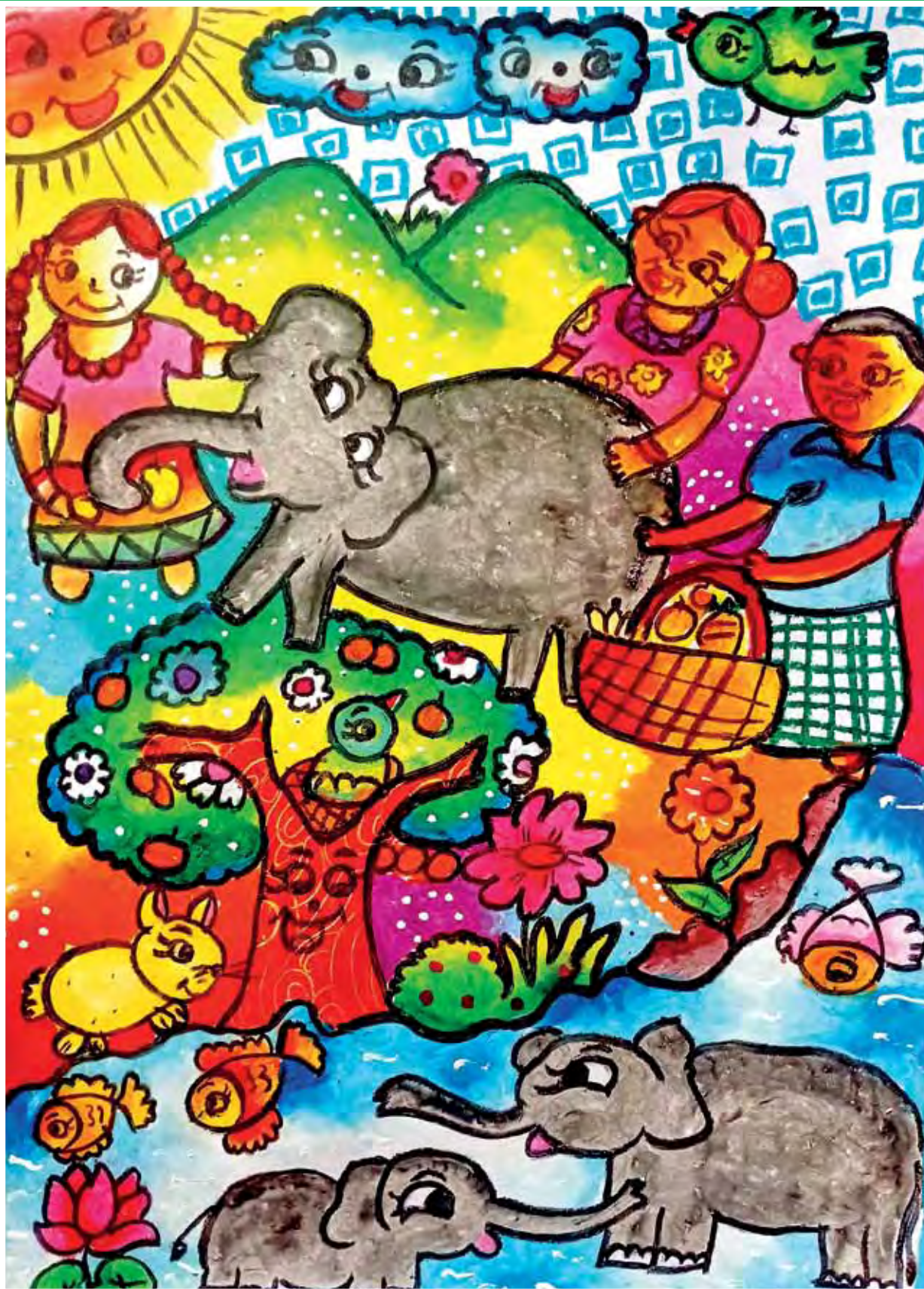




FUN DAY TIMES



Art by Minudi Gamage (8 years)

WINNERS

POETRY & ESSAYS
PAGES 2 & 5

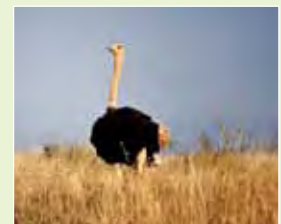


LANDMARKS
PAGE 3



FUN STUFF
PAGE 4

ONLINE



ANIMALS
PAGE 6

KIDS NEWS

PAGES 7 - 8



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.

Write the name of the competition and the date clearly

at the top of your entry and include the following details:

Full Name (including Surname),

Date of Birth, Address,

Telephone Number and School.

Please underline the name most commonly used.

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

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

Closing Date

for this week's competitions:

May 27, 2026

Telephone: 2479337/2479333

Email: fundaytimes1@gmail.com



Win super books from



Age: 9 years and below

Word Count: 150

Topic: My mother

Win: More Wishing Chair Stories by Enid Blyton

Mollie and Peter are home for the holidays, and their wonderful wishing chair is ready to whisk them away to magical lands!

They'll meet a mysterious witch's cat, visit the Land of Wishes and even find gold at the end of the rainbow!



Write at the top of your Essay

■ Book Competition ■ Essay Topic



Age groups:

6 – 10 years / 11 – 15 years

Word limit: 100 Words

6 – 10 years

Melting Emotionally

The North Pole is weeping bitterly,
From dawn to dusk,
Me, the King of the North Pole,
Banishing piece by piece.
My sons and daughters,
Polar bears,
Are far from their offsprings,
In different plates of ICE.
I scream...
But not even a soul can hear me,
I am the 'SEA ICE'.
The King of the North Pole,
Who is melting emotionally,
In a pool of warm tears,
As a consequence of deleterious,
Global warming and Ozone depletion,
Due to careless anthropogenic activities,
So, my beloved humane humans,
Think twice,
Of the role played by you.

Kaveen Gnanaweera
Brisbane Int. School, Nugegoda

Or fundaytimes1@gmail.com

Poetry Competition

This is your chance to get your poem published here. Entries should be in your handwriting and clearly certified by a teacher or parent as your own creation. Your poem should be posted to Funday Times with 'Poetry Competition' written at the top of the entry. The winner of each age category will be awarded a British Council Young Learner's Library membership.

11 – 15 years

Whispers of winter

The land is locked in her cold embrace,
Before lies a world of white,
Blanketed in a layer of snow,
With only a hazy bitter sunlight.

Icicles glitter in pale sunbeams,
On branches of dormant trees,
Mist swirls around silent villages,
Which battle against the coming freeze.

A deafening stillness echoes around,
As the moon begins to rise,
The land is cloaked in her light milky glow,
When the stars light up the skies.

Fleecy clouds glide across the sky,
Swimming in the silver moonlight,
Loneliness lingers, but will never change,
The tranquility of the night.

Nulara Jayawickrama
Methodist College, Colombo 3

Please write the date at the top of your entry.

Please note that copied poems will be disqualified

Age: 10 – 12 years

Word Count: 150 – 200

Topic: The Vesak Festival

Win: Matilda by Roald Dahl

Matilda is a brilliant child with a magical mind.
But her parents have decided she is a waste of space and her headmistress Miss Trunchbull is a terrible bully who thinks children are rotten and should be locked up.

It's time for Matilda to find the power to change her story and show them how extraordinary children can be...



Age: 13 – 15 years

Word Count: 200 – 250

Topic: What I can do for my mother

Win: The Time Machine by H. G. Wells

Born out of H. G. Wells' literary vision of the future, 'The Time Machine' published in 1895, is an extraordinary work of early science fiction.

A Victorian Time Traveller gives a first-hand account of his journey into the future...



Book Competition



9 years and below

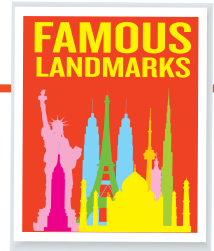
My favourite
Avurudu sweetmeat
Ananya De Silva
Musaeus College,
Colombo

10 – 12 years

Celebrating the Sinhala and Tamil New Year
Lisathma Munasinghe
Sujatha Vidyalaya, Nugegoda

13 – 15 years

Sinhala and Tamil New Year Customs
Senuli Munasinghe
Negombo South Int. School



Dambulla Cave Temple



The Dambulla Cave Temple, located in central Sri Lanka, just outside the town of Dambulla, is one of the most important cultural and religious sites in Sri Lanka. A sacred pilgrimage site for 22 centuries, it is the largest, best-preserved cave-temple complex in Sri Lanka.

Carved into a massive rock rising above the town of Dambulla, this sacred complex brings together ancient cave art, hundreds of Buddha statues, and panoramic views over the surrounding plains.

The Dambulla Cave Temple (or Rangiri Dambulla Cave Temple) was declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1991. It was granted this status for its exceptional religious art, including numerous murals and over 150 Buddha statues located in five main caves. Often referred to as the Golden Temple of Dambulla, the site is an active place of worship.

History

According to many historical records, the caves were first used in the 1st century BC by King Valagamba, the ruler of Anuradhapura the ancient capital of Sri Lanka who was frequently attacked by South Indian forces. Legends say that King Valagamba used to hide in the caves of Dambulla to avoid his enemies for over 15 years.

During these many stays, it is said that he slowly converted the caves into a place of worship while he had to hide away. Once he regained his kingdom after many years, he then transformed the caves fully into a Buddhist temple to show gratitude for his life being spared.

However, the massive reconstruction aspects of the caves that occurred are attributed to King Nissanka Malla, who became king in the 12th century. King Nissanka Malla was known for his dedication to Buddhism and during his reign he took the caves a step further and significantly expanded and developed them. He commissioned murals and statues to decorate the space.

Over the next several generations of rulers, more and more artwork was added, contributing significantly to the caves' popularity for both pilgrims and Buddhists looking to worship there.

Entrance Area

At the base of the hill, you will first see the modern Golden Temple of Dambulla, marked by a large golden Buddha statue. From here, you begin the walk up to the caves.

The Cave Complex

The Dambulla Cave Temple is made of five main caves carved into a giant granite rock formation. Each of the five caves has a different religious significance, with its own unique features to represent it.

The first cave, the Cave of the Divine King, is the largest and most elaborate cave in the complex.



It has a 14-metre-long reclining Buddha statue, which is the largest in the entire temple. The walls of this cave are adorned with gorgeous frescoes depicting various scenes from the life of Buddha and several Jathaka tales.

The second cave, the Cave of the Great King, is one of the most visually striking. This cave has a large standing Buddha that is approximately 7 metres tall and there are several painted patterns and carvings on the walls. The ceiling also contains many vibrant paintings of lotus flowers.

The third cave is called the Great New Temple and is filled with several smaller Buddha statues. This cave also has many paintings and carvings, though much simpler than the other caves.

The Second New Temple is the fourth cave, and has a seated Buddha statue and a few smaller statues of other deities.

The fifth cave, the Great Western Monastery, is the smallest, and is believed to be the dwelling place for meditating monks. However, it is large enough to have one reclining Buddha statue and a few other small statues.

Amongst these five caves is a large courtyard with beautiful landscaping and filled with many shrines. A Bodhi tree grows near the entrance, which is an important Buddhist symbol.

This combination of lush greenery with the serenity of the caves creates a calming ambiance appreciated by all who visit.

Famous Landmarks Quiz 70

Q: How many caves make up the Dambulla Cave Temple complex?



Famous Landmarks Quiz 69



Savinu Karunathilaka, Galle



To My Mother
by Christina Rossetti

To-day's your natal day;
Sweet flowers I bring:
Mother, accept, I pray
My offering.
And may you happy live,
And long us bless;
Receiving as you give
Great happiness.

A Mother's Name
by Eric Mackay

I love the sound!
The sweetest under Heaven,
That name of mother, —
and the proudest, too.
As babes we breathe it,
and with seven times seven
Of youthful prayers,
and blessings that accrue,
We still repeat the word,
with tender steven.
Dearest of friends!
Dear mother! What we do
This side the grave,
in purity of aim,
Is glorified at last
by thy good name.

Home by Carl Sandburg

Here is a thing my heart
wishes the world had more of:
I heard it in the air of
one night when I listened
To a mother singing softly
to a child restless and angry
in the darkness.

Mother by Lola Ridge

Your love was like moonlight
turning harsh things to beauty,
so that little wry souls
reflecting each other obliquely
as in cracked mirrors . . .
beheld in your luminous spirit
their own reflection,
transfigured as in a shining stream,
and loved you for what they are not.
You are less an image in my mind
than a luster
I see you in gleams
pale as star-light on a gray wall . . .
evanescent as the reflection
of a white swan
shimmering in broken water.

Mother o' Mine
by Rudyard Kipling

If I were hanged on the highest hill,
Mother o' mine, O mother o' mine!
I know whose love
would follow me still,
Mother o' mine, O mother o' mine!
If I were drowned in the deepest sea,
Mother o' mine, O mother o' mine!
I know whose tears
would come down to me,
Mother o' mine, O mother o' mine!
If I were damned of body and soul,
I know whose prayers
would make me whole,
Mother o' mine, O mother o' mine!

**To My Mother**
by R. L. Stevenson

You too, my mother, read my rhymes
For love of unforgotten times,
And you may chance to hear once more
The little feet along the floor.

Sonnets are full of love, and this my tome
by Christina Rossetti

Sonnets are full of love, and this my tome
Has many sonnets: so here now shall be
One sonnet more, a love sonnet, from me
To her whose heart is my heart's quiet home,
To my first Love, my Mother, on whose knee
I learnt love-lore that is not troublesome;
Whose service is my special dignity,
And she my loadstar while I go and come
And so because you love me, and because
I love you, Mother, I have woven a wreath
Of rhymes wherewith to crown your honoured name:
In you not fourscore years can dim the flame
Of love, whose blessed glow transcends the laws
Of time and change and mortal life and death.


KIDS IN COLOUR

with

Richard

Funday Times together with Richard is happy
to launch a new Art Competition for our readers.

A topic will be given each month.

The paintings should be on **A4 size paper**
and you could use any medium of your choice.

Three winners from two age groups will be selected each month.
Winners will receive an attractive gift pack from Richard.

**All paintings should be certified
by a teacher or parent as your own work.**

Age Groups: 4 – 6 and 7 – 10 years

Topic for May: **Vesak Festival**Closing Date: **May 31, 2026**

Please write your Full Name,
Date of Birth, Home Address,
Telephone Number and School and
paste it on the back of your entry.



Or



fundaytimes1@gmail.com

**In our online issue
this week:**

- **Page 5** – Book Winners' Essays
- **Page 6** – Animals
- **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.

Book Competition



9 years and below

My favourite Avurudu sweetmeat

There are many sweetmeats made during the Avurudu Festival like *Kevum*, *Kokis*, *Aasmi* and *Aluwa*. But my favourite sweetmeat is *Kokis*. *Kokis* is very crunchy and has a unique taste which is why I like it.

According to what my father found in a source from the internet, it said that the word “*kokis*” is similar to the way the Dutch pronounce cookies, which is “*koekjes*”.

Many kids love *kokis* including my little sister Ayana. Some people who don't have a proper set of teeth may not like *kokis* because it is difficult to bite, so they may have a different favourite sweetmeat but *kokis* will always be my favourite sweetmeat.

Ananya De Silva (9 years)
Musaeus College, Colombo

10 – 12 years

Celebrating the Sinhala and Tamil New Year

Blooming ‘*Erabadu*’ trees bring a striking beauty to welcome the New Year. Continuous melodies of the Koel echo through the woods. Fruitful trees signify prosperity. Lovely smells of sweets combine with the scent of paint, to encourage us for a fresh start. People buy garments to celebrate *Avurudu* in traditional attire.

New Year Festival is celebrated by the Sinhalese and Tamils. People from different races inherit diverse customs based on cultural backgrounds. Anointing oil, consuming food and dealing with the well are some Sinhala rituals. The New Year table is a mixture of local and foreign cultures. *Kokis*, inherited from the Dutch, Cake introduced by the British and *Achcharu* brought from the Portuguese are among our favourite dishes. Crackers and fireworks increase the festivity of the traditional New Year. Yet, fireworks are a Chinese heritage shared with us.

Children and adults take part in numerous folk games which help to strengthen the bonds among participants, providing mental and physical accomplishments. New Year is a time for caring and sharing. Further, it provides room to forgive and forget.

Everyone plans for the next year with firm determination. Wishing you all a prosperous, peaceful and happy New Year!

Lisathma Munasinghe (12 years)
Sujatha Vidyalaya, Nugegoda

13 – 15 years

Sinhala and Tamil New Year Customs

The Sinhala and Tamil New Year (also called *Aluth Avurudu* in Sinhala), is one of the most celebrated cultural festivals in Sri Lanka. This auspicious celebration is held in the month of April, also known as *Bak* season and it marks the transition of the harvest season, to the beginning of the Sun travelling from *Meena Rashi* to *Mesha Rashi*.

The festival also has ancient customs, traditions and rituals associated with it. The festival helps to reinforce family bonds and get people together peacefully and in harmony.

The festival first starts with the time which is known as the *Nonagethaya*. In this time people participate in religious activities. When the oil lamp is lit, it brings new hope and a new beginning to every family in the island.

Food has a significant role in festivals. When milk-rice is prepared and shared with sweets such as *kevum*, *kokis*, and *aasmi*, participation in the communal enjoyment of food occurs. Sweets are also exchanged with neighbours, regardless of ethnicity or religion, to promote friendship.

Traditional games and the traditions of *Ganu-Denu* emphasize the values of family and community. These traditions bring everyone together.

Through these simple yet significant traditions, the *Aluth Avurudu* becomes a beautiful occasion in the country through traditional spirit, proving that shared customs can unite people.

Senuli Munasinghe (15 years)
Negombo South Int. School



Young Reporters

If you are interested in joining as a Funday Times Young Reporter please fill in the coupon given and send it in to us along with a recent report or interview not exceeding 300 words.

Photographs or illustrations would enhance the report.

Young Reporters who have already enrolled with us, please send in new reports for publication.



Or



fundaytimes1@gmail.com



Young Reporters Coupon

Name:

Date of Birth:

Address:

.....

Telephone:

School:

Parent's approval:

Date:

.....

Ostrich

The ostrich is the tallest and the heaviest of all birds. While the huge ostrich is a bird, it does not fly. Instead it runs.

In one stride, an ostrich can cover up to 16 feet (4.9 metres) — about the length of a mid-size family car! The bird is speedy, too. It can run just over 40 miles (64 kilometres) an hour for a short distance, and can keep up a speed of more than 30 miles (48 kilometres) an hour over longer distances.



The ostrich uses its short wings for balance, holding them outstretched when it runs.

Strong legs can also be used for self-defense. An ostrich will kick with a force mighty enough to kill a lion.

When danger approaches, an ostrich will often lie low to hide, stretching its neck along the ground. Its feather colours blend with the sandy soil where it lives. From far away, it looks like the ostrich has buried its head in the sand. Many people thought that was what ostriches did when they were trying to hide, but that is a myth.

Ostriches live near grazing animals such as wildebeest, antelopes and zebras. The grazers stir up insects and rodents for the ostriches to eat, and the ostriches warn the grazers to dangers such as approaching lions.



COMMON NAME: Ostrich
SCIENTIFIC NAME: *Struthio camelus*
TYPE: Bird
DIET: Omnivore
GROUP NAME: Herd
AVERAGE LIFE SPAN
IN THE WILD: 30 to 40 years
SIZE: 7 to 9 feet
WEIGHT: 220 to 350 pounds



An ostrich group, called a herd, numbers about 12 individuals. Male ostriches compete for control of a group of several females. A herd has a dominant male and a dominant female. She mates only with him, though he may mate with other females as well.

All the egg-laying females, called hens, lay their eggs in the nest of the dominant female. Then that female — whose eggs are positioned in the center of the nest, the most well-protected spot — and her mate take care of all the eggs in that one nest. Each egg can be up to 6 inches (15 centimetres) long and weigh 3 pounds (1.5 kilograms)!

Nations meet to tackle Fossil Fuels; Ceasefire challenged?

May 5, 2026

Last week, 56 countries met in Colombia to try to find a way to end fossil fuels, while struggles over control of the Strait of Hormuz may be challenging the fragile ceasefire between the US and Iran.

Nations meet to tackle Fossil Fuels

Last week, people representing 56 countries from around the world met in Santa Marta, Colombia for the first international meeting focused on ending the use of fossil fuels. The burning of fossil fuels – like oil, coal and natural gas – is the main cause of global warming.

For the countries at last week’s meeting, the question wasn’t whether to stop using fossil fuels, but how to do it, and how to do it fairly. Countries that aren’t yet willing to end fossil fuels – like the US, China, India, Russia and Saudi Arabia – weren’t invited.

The four-day meeting was led by Colombia and the Netherlands. It aimed to bring together rich countries, which use the most fossil fuels, and poorer countries, which are most threatened by climate change.

One important challenge the meeting tackled is how to help poorer countries that rely on the money they make from fossil fuels. Switching to clean energy sources, like solar and wind power, can be expensive. And many of these poorer countries already owe lots of money. These countries will need help to find new ways to make money and to pay off their debts.



Colombia’s President Gustavo Petro (centre) and others seen during the meeting last Tuesday.

The meeting also discussed how to help some of the groups most affected by the climate crisis, including poor people, young people and Indigenous people.

The meeting didn’t lead to any new agreements, but it did result in some important steps. France published its plan for ending fossil fuel use. The representatives also agreed to create special teams to work on specific challenges. These include finding money to help poor countries, and helping workers move away from fossil fuel-related jobs.

The next meeting is set for 2027 in Tuvalu. Tuvalu, located in the Pacific Ocean, is an example of a small island nation threatened by rising sea levels caused by climate change.

Will struggles over Strait of Hormuz threaten ceasefire?

The fragile ceasefire between the US and Iran is being challenged by a struggle for control over the Strait of Hormuz. Roughly 20% of the world’s oil and gas pass through this important waterway.



Representatives of the 56 countries at the meeting.

With Iran and the US blocking the strait, fuel prices have been driven up worldwide.

The Strait of Hormuz

On Sunday, US President Donald Trump announced a plan for US warships and planes to protect ships coming through the strait.

Iran said it would attack any foreign military force that entered the waterway.

On Monday, the US helped two ships go through the strait. Iran did attack, but the US military was able to stop the attacks. Later, Iran launched missiles at the US ally United Arab Emirates (UAE) for the first time since the ceasefire began.

The US says it plans to continue helping ships pass through the strait. But it’s not clear how many shipping companies will be willing to risk their ships being targets for Iran. It’s also not clear if the increased activity on both sides might lead to the end of the ceasefire.



A picture from an Iranian news service showing ships anchored in the Strait of Hormuz.

Source: NewsForKids

May 5

News in Pictures



Moscow, Russia
Students dressed in the fashion of the mid-20th century and Soviet-style uniform perform a 'Victory Waltz' as a part of the Victory Day celebration marking the anniversary of victory over Nazi Germany in World War Two.



Pathum Thani, Thailand
A rocket explodes before launch during the annual "Look Noo" rocket-launching competition, a tradition of the ethnic Mon community in which rockets packed with explosives are tethered to cables and fired toward pagoda-shaped targets to honour deceased Buddhist monks and, in some areas, form part of Songkran celebrations, in Pathum Thani province on the outskirts of Bangkok.

Praia, Cape Verde
Cruise ship MV Hondius docks off Cape Verde port, as passengers were not allowed off the ship, while health authorities investigated suspected cases of Hantavirus aboard the vessel, in Praia Port, Cape Verde.



Liuyang, China
Firefighters attempt to bring a blaze under control after an explosion at a fireworks factory in China's central Hunan province. At least 21 people died and 61 were injured in the explosion, state media said.

Yerevan, Armenia
France's President Emmanuel Macron and Armenia's President Vahagn Khachaturyan pay tribute at the eternal flame during a visit to the Tsitsernakaberd Armenian Genocide Memorial in Yerevan.



May 4



London, UK
A boy sits atop a narrow boat during the Canalway Cavalcade waterways three-day festival in Little Venice, London.



Shaftesbury, UK
The annual Gold Hill Cheese Race on 'Hovis Hill', where competitors race up the 72-metre course carrying a 25 kg wheel of cheese. The steep cobbled hill was made famous in Ridley Scott's Hovis bread advert in 1973.



Kapsabet, Kenya
Sebastian Sawe is welcomed during a ceremony by local residents, athletes and officials in Kapsabet, Nandi County, Great Rift Valley, Kenya. The athlete was honoured following his historic victory at the London Marathon.



Ur, Iraq
An aerial view shows members of the Iraqi Antiquities Authority maintenance team working to restore the stairs of the Great Ziggurat Temple in the ancient city of Ur, believed to be the birthplace of Abraham.

Sources: The Guardian & Reuters