

Jailed for the Truth
September 21, 2018
Brian S. McGrath



SENTENCED Wa Lone (center) leaves court in Myanmar. He is one of two journalists sent to prison this month for reporting on violence against the Rohingya people.

YE AUNG THU—AFP/GETTY IMAGES

A court in Myanmar has sentenced two journalists to seven years in prison. The judge ruled that Wa Lone and Kyaw Soe Oo got hold of secret government documents. The journalists pleaded not guilty. Many think the ruling is unfair.

The journalists were arrested while doing their job. They were reporting on military attacks against Rohingya people. The Rohingya are an ethnic minority in Myanmar. Some 700,000 of them have fled to neighboring Bangladesh to escape recent violence. The United Nations (U.N.) is calling for criminal charges against military officers.

Wa Lone warned the crowd outside the court. Leaders are “destroying freedom of the press in our country,” he said.

Other journalists in Myanmar have faced trouble. More than 30 have been charged with crimes for their work there in the past few years. Myanmar’s government says reports of violence against Rohingya are “fake news.”

Nikki Haley is U.S. ambassador to the U.N. She called the convictions “another terrible stain” on Myanmar’s government. She added: “In a free country, it is the duty of a responsible press to keep people informed and hold leaders accountable.”

Found: Plant-Eating Shark
September 21, 2018
Shay Maunz



NOT JUST A MEAT EATER Scientists say the bonnethead is the first shark known to eat plants. FTLAUDGIRL—GETTY IMAGES

Researchers have discovered a type of shark that eats plants in addition to animals. It is the first shark known to be an omnivore.

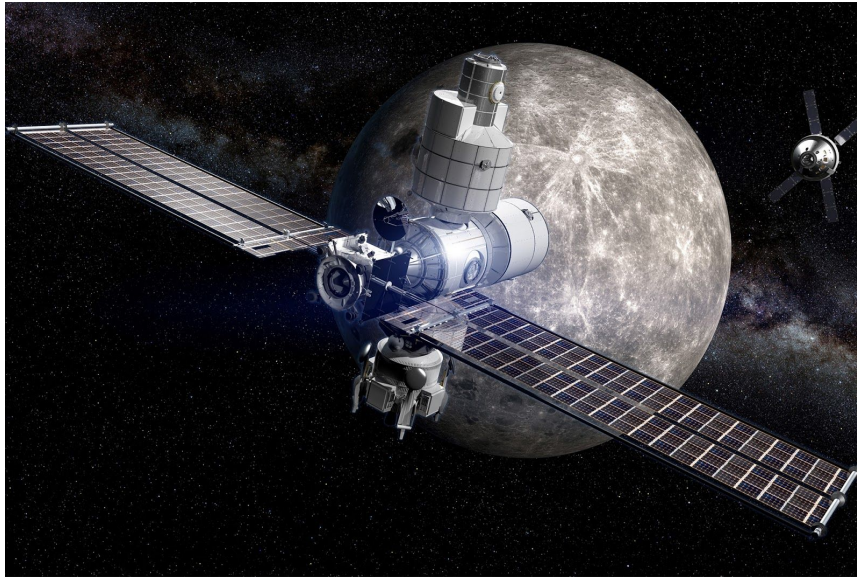
Bonnethead sharks live in shallow coastal waters of the United States, Central America, and South America. Their habitat is filled with seagrass. Scientists have long known that the bonnethead eats the grass, as well as animals like squid and fish. They thought the shark ate the grass accidentally. But researchers at the University of California, Irvine, discovered enzymes in the shark's gut that break down plant matter. This shows that the bonnethead eats the grass on purpose, and gets nutrition from it.

Samantha Leigh headed up the study. She told the AP that this is "yet another indication of why we need to preserve this vegetation."

Moon Mission

September 14, 2018

Jeffrey Kluger for TIME, adapted by TFK editors



CHARGED UP An illustration shows the Gateway orbiter circling the moon. Solar panels will turn sunlight into electric energy to power the orbiter's propulsion system.

People first set foot on the moon on July 20, 1969. Astronauts Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin stepped from the Apollo 11 spacecraft. They planted an American flag on the moon's surface. After that, NASA sent six more missions to the moon. Then the United States government stopped funding them. NASA hasn't sent a crew to the moon since 1972.

Now the space agency is planning a return trip. In December 2017, President Donald Trump signed a Space Policy Directive. It put lunar exploration back at the top of NASA's agenda.

NASA wants to change the way astronauts explore the moon. The Apollo 11 crew spent 21 hours, 36 minutes there. Future astronauts could spend up to six weeks at a time orbiting the moon and visiting its surface. This will be made possible by the Lunar Orbital Platform-Gateway.

Gateway will be a sort of mini space station. It will be much smaller than the International Space Station. Gateway will have five modules, or interlocking parts. One or two of them will house astronauts. Another will provide solar electric power. Others will serve as an air lock for spacewalking astronauts and a docking port for vehicles. Astronauts will travel to the moon's surface and back in a small craft.

NASA plans to use unmanned rockets to send parts for Gateway into lunar orbit. "We're working to have astronauts on the moon by the mid-2020s," says Bill Gerstenmaier. He is a NASA administrator for human exploration and operations.

Brazil Museum Blaze
September 14, 2018



AFTERMATH Brazil's National Museum has been destroyed by fire.

BUDA MENDES—GETTY IMAGES

The National Museum of Brazil, in Rio de Janeiro, was gutted by a fire on September 2. Some 90% of its 20 million artifacts may have been lost.

The 200-year-old building held the largest collection of historical and scientific relics in Latin America. Among them were a five-ton meteorite and the oldest human skull found in the western hemisphere. "Two hundred years of work, investigation, and knowledge have been lost," said Brazilian president Michel Temer.

The cause of the fire is unknown. But in the days after the blaze, protesters gathered at the museum gates. They believe the Brazilian government is to blame. After years of budget cuts, the building had fallen into disrepair. Protesters say the museum was a fire hazard.

Toppled Trees
September 7, 2018
Constance Gibbs



STANDING TALL The Luna baobab tree, shown here, is 55 feet tall and about 1,500 years old.
STEPHAN WOODBORNE

There was once a tree in South Africa so wide it could fit 60 people inside its hollow trunk. The tree reached 62 feet into the sky. It was more than 1,100 years old. But recently, that tree and others like it have died. Scientists are wondering why.

The tree was a baobab (bay-a-bab). A baobab looks like a giant oak turned upside down. Its branches resemble roots reaching toward the sky. It grows in Africa. The baobab is nicknamed the Tree of Life. Baobabs tend to live a long time.

In 2005, scientists began a survey to determine the age of more than 60 baobabs. During the process, they noticed that several of the trees had died. Their results, recently published in *Nature Plants*, show that nine of the 13 oldest baobab trees and five out of six of the largest died in the 12-year study period.

What is Global Warming?

August 30, 2018

Rebecca Katzman



Polar bears and other animal species are becoming threatened as global warming causes changes to their habitats.

PAUL SOUDERS—GETTY IMAGES

Earth's climate is changing at an unprecedented rate. As a result, storms and droughts are becoming more intense. Temperatures are rising. Polar ice caps are melting. This is causing oceans to rise. Low coastal areas are flooding. Animals are losing their habitats. Scientists are sounding the alarm: If we don't make changes to halt global warming, the planet's climate will become increasingly unbearable.

Climate, unlike weather, describes long-term patterns in the conditions of the atmosphere.

Earth's climate as a whole has changed several times throughout history. In the past 650,000 years alone, there have been seven cycles of glacial advance and retreat. Most of these changes are a natural part of Earth's 4.5 billion-year history. They are due to tiny variations in the Earth's orbit, which alter the amount of solar energy reaching the planet.

Scientists say that recent changes in Earth's climate are not due to natural causes. According to NASA, 97% of climate scientists agree there is a direct connection between human activity and the changes occurring on our planet.

France Wins!

July 16, 2018

Rebecca Mordechai with AP reporting



TEAM TRIUMPH France celebrates its win at the 2018 FIFA World Cup on July 15 in Moscow, Russia.

SIPA USA/AP IMAGES

France beat Croatia 4–2 on July 15 to win the 2018 FIFA World Cup. The win makes France a two-time world soccer champion. The country took its first World Cup title in 1998.

The World Cup is held every four years. In this year's international soccer competition, held in Moscow, Russia, 32 countries jockeyed for the top spot.

During the final game, France scored its first goal with the help of a mistake by Croatia. In the 18th minute, Mario Mandzukic, Croatia's striker, headed a free kick over his own goalie's head.

Croatia came back to tie the game with a goal by Ivan Perisic. But France was awarded a penalty kick after a handball was called on Perisic. The head referee made the handball call using VAR, a system using a referee who reviews plays on video footage. It is the first time VAR has been used to make a World Cup penalty decision. "When [VAR] goes in your favor, it's good. When it doesn't go in your favor, it's bad," Croatia manager Zlatko Dalic said. As a result of the call, Antoine Griezmann of France shot a strong goal from the penalty spot.

The youngest star in France's World Cup victory was 19-year-old Kylian Mbappé. In the game's second half, Mbappé sent a right-footed shot from 25 yards past Croatia's goalkeeper, Danijel Subasic. Mbappé is only the second teenager to score in a World Cup final, after Brazilian soccer legend Pelé scored in 1958.

Mandzukic scored again for Croatia, but it was not enough.

The French team and fans exploded with cheers after the match. "We're happy," fan Frederique Pourquet told the Associated Press. "It's the pride of the nation. It unites everyone."

Refugee Numbers at Record High

June 20, 2018

Brian S. McGrath with AP reporting



Rohingya refugees from Myanmar cross the Naf River into Bangladesh in October 2017. Hundreds of thousands of Rohingya have fled violence and persecution in their home country for safety in Bangladesh.

FRED DUFOUR—AFP PHOTO

The world stands with refugees. That is the message of World Refugee Day. The day was established by the United Nations in 2016. It takes place each year on June 20.

On June 19, the United Nations Refugee Agency published its yearly report. The report says that at the end of 2017, there were 68.5 million displaced people in the world. That number included 40 million people displaced within their own countries. Another 25.4 million were refugees. These were people who fled war, violence, or persecution. Asylum seekers made up the remaining 3.1 million. These were people waiting in a foreign country to be recognized as refugees.

In 2017 alone, 16.2 million people were displaced. The numbers were driven by a few major crises. In Africa, disease ravaged the Democratic Republic of the Congo. There was war in South Sudan. In Asia, hundreds of thousands of Rohingya refugees fled violence in Myanmar for safety in neighboring Bangladesh. More than half of the world's displaced people are children.

Jan Egeland is secretary-general of the Norwegian Refugee Council. He says countries need to work together to end war and help people in need. "Rich countries are building walls against families fleeing war, at the same time as less money is available for aid to people in conflict areas," he says. "Let us be inspired by generous recipient countries like Uganda, where vulnerable refugees are protected."

Last year, only about 100,000 refugees were resettled. That is down 40% from 2016. The U.N. says the drop is because countries have lowered the number of refugees they will accept.

Fires Rage in California

June 27, 2018

Rebecca Mordechai with AP reporting



BATTLING THE BLAZE Firefighters work to put out the flames in Spring Valley, California.
PAUL KITAGAKI JR.—THE SACRAMENTO BEE/AP

On Tuesday, wildfires continued to spread through a rural area of Northern California. The area is still recovering from last year's devastating fires. The Pawnee Fire is the biggest blaze. It began on Saturday evening. So far, it has destroyed 22 buildings and forced as many as 3,000 people from their homes.

Governor Jerry Brown has declared a state of emergency in Lake County, where the Pawnee Fire is burning. The area is about 120 miles north of San Francisco.

Firefighters face many challenges, says county supervisor Jim Steele. For one thing, they do not have up-to-date equipment. Plus, there are only a few roads that lead into the county. This makes it difficult for firefighters to get to the scene quickly.

Low humidity and wind have helped the Pawnee Fire spread. Some 2,700 firefighters and more than a dozen aircraft have battled the blaze. By Tuesday, the fire had burned 13,500 acres and was 25% contained. Officials expected the same hot, dry weather for Wednesday.

Terri Gonsalves, 55, evacuated her home on Sunday. A hill behind her house had become engulfed in flames. Now she is staying with her daughter in nearby Middletown. Fire destroyed dozens of homes there in 2015. Gonsalves says people who live in the area are traumatized by years of wildfire. But she adds: "When this stuff happens, we rally around each other."

In addition to the Pawnee Fire, at least a dozen other wildfires are burning throughout California.

Driving Change

June 6, 2018

Constance Gibbs with AP reporting



IN THE DRIVER'S SEAT A woman in Saudi Arabia takes driving lessons to prepare for her ability to obtain a driver's license later this month.

AMER HILABI/GETTY

Ten women in Saudi Arabia made history this week. They were issued driver's licenses.

Until now, women were banned from driving in Saudi Arabia. It was the only country in the world that did not allow women to drive. The country plans to lift the ban for all women on June 24. The 10 women who were issued licenses on Monday already had driver's licenses from other countries. A government statement said another 2,000 women could receive licenses next week, according to the New York Times.

Women and men have protested the ban for decades. Opponents of the ban say driving will give Saudi women more freedom. They will be able to get to and from work on their own. They won't have to pay for taxis or wait for male relatives to drive them.

Tahani Aldosemani is one of the women who got a license on Monday. "Driving for women is not just about driving a car," she said in the government statement. "It enhances strength of character, self-confidence, and decision-making skills."

Women across the Middle Eastern country have been taking driving classes. They are preparing for the driving test people must pass to get a driver's license. Some are even working to become Uber drivers.

Saudi crown prince Mohammed bin Salman is behind the decision to lift the ban. He is next in line for the throne. The prince hopes that lifting the driving ban will boost the country's economy by allowing more women to have jobs.

