

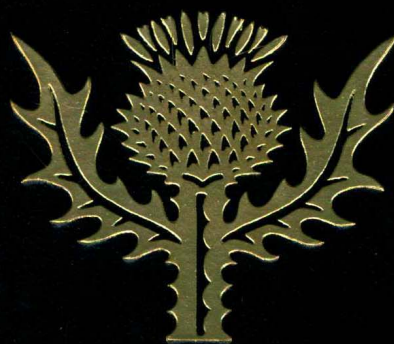


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BRITANNICA  
Book  
of the Year

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Events of  
2010

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2011  
BOOK OF THE YEAR®



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# Foreword

**I**n 2010 much of the world continued to be fraught with tension and uncertainty. Troubling economic news dominated headlines worldwide, while other events—including the explosion of the BP Deepwater Horizon oil rig, which resulted in the spewing of millions of gallons of oil into the Gulf of Mexico—added to the bad news. Worries also emerged about cyberwarfare attacks on governments and the prospect of invasive species thriving in temperatures that were getting warmer by the year. In Yemen al-Qaeda stirred up trouble and gained a foothold in the south of the country by encouraging secessionists to break away from the north, and the militant group established a base from which to coordinate terrorist activities. In the U.S. the grassroots Tea Party movement brewed up a tempest in the political arena with its credo to oppose excessive taxation, immigration, and government intervention in the private sector. In Africa 17 countries, 14 of them former French colonies, marked the 50th anniversary of their independence. The earthquakes in Haiti and Chile brought to the fore the need for smart engineering of buildings to sustain the shocks from massive temblors. On the bright side, the Winter Olympic Games in Vancouver, B.C., provided spills and chills early in the year, and epicureans everywhere savoured the new and interesting concoctions that resulted from the culinary applications of Molecular Gastronomy. All of these topics are covered in Special Reports.

Significant elections took place in Australia, the U.K., and the U.S., where the midterm elections resulted in the Republicans' taking majority control in most states and in the House of Representatives. Some believed that the new and unpopular U.S. health care bill initiated by the administration of Pres. Barack Obama was one factor that led to the Democrats' defeat. The cataclysmic Haiti earthquake, which killed about 220,000 persons, led to billions of dollars in pledges from countries worldwide, but by year's end that country had yet to receive many of the donations. Europe had its fair share of economic woes, especially the countries of the so-called PIIGS; Greece and Ireland had to accept massive bailouts to keep their economies afloat. Putting a positive spin on the news, wind turbines were helping to conserve energy, and China's commercial wind farm began providing electricity to Expo 2010 Shanghai China, a world's fair that attracted some 70 million visitors. In the realm of sports, the first Summer Youth Olympic Games were held in Singapore, and the association football (soccer) World Cup featured a final duel between Spain and the Netherlands, with the former emerging victorious. These stories appear as Sidebars.

A number of sports legends died during the year, including basketball coach John Wooden and three baseball legends: New York Yankees owner George Steinbrenner, longtime manager Sparky Anderson, and Cleveland Indians pitcher Bob ("Rapid Robert") Feller. Hollywood had its share of losses, notably actors Tony Curtis, Dennis Hopper, and Lynn Redgrave. Other prominent deaths included those of Polish Pres. Lech Kaczynski, civil rights activist Dorothy Height, fashion designer Alexander McQueen, writers J.D. Salinger and José Saramago, opera singer Dame Joan Sutherland, and songstresses Lena Horne and Kate McGarrigle.

The personalities of the year featured in biographies include WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange, Supreme Court Justice Elena Kagan, British Prime Minister David Cameron, film director Kathryn Bigelow, pop-culture icon Lady Gaga, golfer Phil Mickelson, and baseball pitcher Roy Halladay. In the Britannica family of authors, we salute longtime geology and geochemistry expert Peter J. Wylie, who is retiring after 34 years.

Though the news was mostly bad in 2010, it was a year in which exciting discoveries were made, technology took greater strides forward, and people bid a final farewell to the decade. There are many more compelling stories to read between the pages of this volume, the *Britannica Book of the Year 2011*. I invite you to discover them.

Karen Sparks  
Director and Editor

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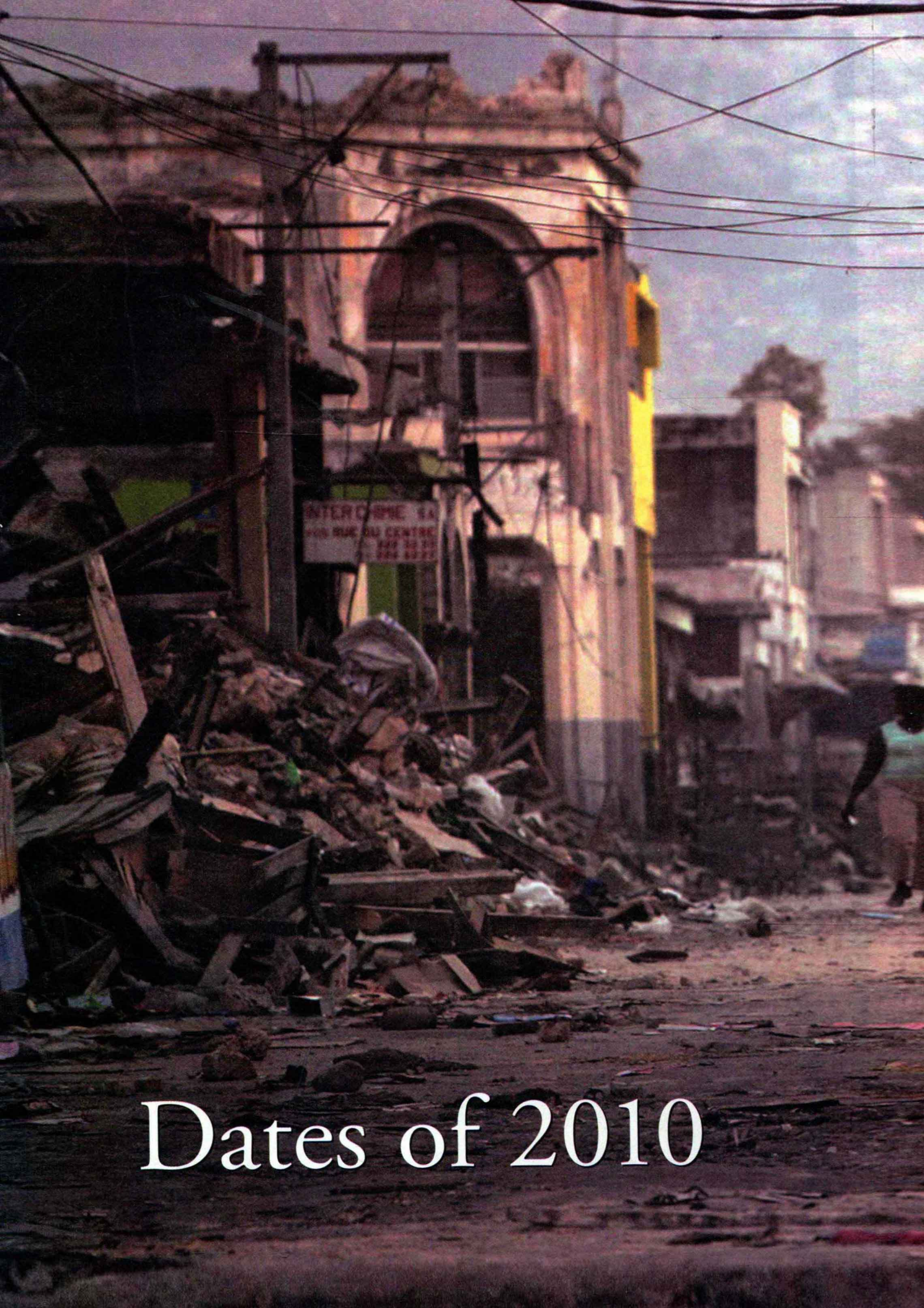


*In 2010, as economies around the world struggled to recover from the Great Recession of 2008–09, continuing high unemployment, particularly in developed countries, triggered protests, including this banner in London's Parliament Square depicting a long line of job seekers.*

Facundo Arrizabalaga—EPA/Landov







Dates of 2010





*A few lone individuals wander amid the wreckage on a street in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, after the city and surrounding areas were severely damaged by a devastating earthquake and several aftershocks in January.*

Gregory Bull, File/AP



# January

*Parliament has collapsed. The tax office has collapsed.  
Schools have collapsed. Hospitals have collapsed.*

Haitian Pres. René Préval,  
describing effects of the previous day's earthquake, January 13

**1** A suicide truck bomber attacks a crowd watching a volleyball match in the village of Shah Hasan Khel outside South Waziristan in Pakistan, killing some 91 people; it is thought that the assault is aimed against an anti-Taliban militia being organized in the village.

The yearlong celebration marking the bicentennial of composer Frédéric Chopin's birth begins with a ceremony in his birthplace, Zelazowa Wola, Pol., and a concert in Warsaw.

**2** Afghanistan's legislature rejects 17 of the 24 people nominated for cabinet positions by Pres. Hamid Karzai for his second term of office.

A magnitude-5.3 earthquake in the eastern Pamir Mountains devastates the villages of Rog and Gishkon in Tajikistan; some 20,000 people are left homeless.

**3** The United States and the United Kingdom close their embassies in Sanaa, the capital of Yemen, in view of apparent threats from the terrorist

organization al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula.

**4** The price of a barrel of crude oil closes at \$81.51, its highest price since October 2008.

The world's tallest building is ceremonially opened in Dubai, U.A.E.; the 160-story, 828-m (2,717-ft)-high tower, which dwarfs the Taipei 101, the previous record holder, is given the name Burj Khalifa in honour of the leader of Abu Dhabi, which gave financial assistance to Dubai at the end of 2009.

**5** Pres. Ólafur Ragnar Grímsson of Iceland vetoes legislation passed in 2009 to compensate the governments of Britain and the Netherlands for funds they used to repay depositors who lost money when the Icelandic banking system collapsed in late 2008.

Beset by demands and intimidation from the Islamist militant group al-Shabaab, the UN World Food Programme announces the indefinite suspension of much of its program in southern Somalia.

**6** Hirohisa Fujii resigns as Japan's finance minister just before the presentation of the budget for the next fiscal year to the legislature; he is replaced by Deputy Prime Minister Naoto Kan.

In Turkmenistan, Turkmen Pres. Gurbanguly Berdimukhammedov and Iranian Pres. Mahmoud Ahmadinejad ceremonially open a natural gas pipeline that runs from Turkmenistan to Iran.

A suicide car bomber detonates his weapon outside a traffic police station in Makhachkala, the capital of the Russian republic of Dagestan; seven police officers are killed.

**7** China's central bank raises its short-term interest rate slightly; the move is regarded as a significant one.

In southern Egypt thousands of Coptic Christians riot in response to an overnight drive-by shooting in Naj' Hammadi in which six Christians were killed.

The University of Alabama defeats the University of

Texas 37-21 in college football's Bowl Championship Series title game in Pasadena, Calif., to win the NCAA Football Bowl Subdivision championship.

**8** Switzerland's Federal Administrative Court rules that the Financial Market Supervisory Authority overstepped its authority when it ordered the banking giant UBS to give U.S. investigators financial data on some 300 clients suspected of tax evasion.

Pres. Hugo Chávez of Venezuela announces a devaluation of the country's currency; Venezuela's economy shrank by 2.9% in 2009.

The U.S. Department of Labor reports that the unemployment rate in December 2009 remained at 10% but that the economy lost 85,000 jobs.

**9** Togo withdraws from the African Cup of Nations association football (soccer) tournament after the team bus was ambushed and three of those aboard, including an



assistant coach, were killed en route to a match in Cabinda, Angola.

**10** After three days of race riots in Rosarno, Italy, in southern Calabria, some 1,000 guest workers from sub-Saharan Africa have been evacuated to immigrant centres.

Ivo Josipovic of the opposition Social Democratic Party wins the runoff presidential election in Croatia.

Voters in the French overseas *départements* of Martinique and French Guiana both reject proposals for greater autonomy from France in referendums.

Solar physicist Jacob Heerikhuisen reports that the ribbon of energetic neutral particles found by NASA's Interstellar Boundary Explorer (IBEX) spacecraft at the edge of the solar system in 2009 may indicate a galactic magnetic field reflecting solar particles back into the solar system.

**11** Peter Robinson temporarily steps down as Northern Ireland's first minister as a scandal unfolds involving loans taken by his wife for her lover.

Figures are released showing that China has passed the U.S. to become the largest automobile market in number of vehicles sold; data released a day earlier showed that it has also passed Germany to become the biggest exporter of manufactured goods.

Former St. Louis Cardinals slugger Mark McGwire, who holds the Major League Baseball record for home runs in a single season, publicly admits that he used steroids throughout the

1990s; his record of 70 home runs was set in 1998.

The Pak Institute for Peace Studies reports that 3,021 Pakistanis were killed in terrorist attacks in 2009, 33% more than in the previous year, and that 667 people were killed in air strikes from American drones.

**12** The Internet company Google announces that it will cease cooperating with censorship of search results in China and that it may withdraw from China entirely; it cites cyberattacks that took place the previous month, many of which appeared to target Google e-mail accounts of Chinese human rights activists.

A devastating magnitude-7.0 earthquake flattens Port-au-Prince, the capital of Haiti, and the death toll is feared to be enormous; among the buildings destroyed or heavily damaged are the national cathedral, the presidential palace (*photo below*), those housing the parliament, the tax office, and the Ministries of Commerce and Foreign Affairs, and the headquarters of the UN mission in the country.

Hundreds of people march in Abuja, Nigeria, to protest the lengthy absence of Pres. Umaru Musa Yar'Adua, who has been in Saudi Arabia getting medical treatments since late November 2009.

Saudi Arabia announces that its forces have killed hundreds of al-Huthi insurgents in the border village of Al-Jabri, and fighting between Yemeni forces and al-Huthi rebels takes place in Sa'dah, Yemen.

**13** The UN releases a report saying that in 2009 in Afghanistan 2,412 civilians were killed—a 14% increase from the previous year—and that 1,630 of them were killed by Taliban and other insurgent groups; the figure is the highest since the fall of the Taliban regime in late 2001.

The journal *Nature* publishes online a study led by Jennifer Hughes and David Page of the Whitehead Institute in Cambridge, Mass., in which it was found that the human Y chromosome, the male-determining chromosome, constantly renews itself and undergoes rapid evolutionary change; it had been thought that the chromosome was decaying.

**14** Iraq's Independent High Electoral Commission surprises observers by barring 499 candidates from running for office in upcoming legislative elections because of their ties to the outlawed Ba'ath Party.

The European Central Bank leaves its benchmark interest rate at 1%, and its president, Jean-Claude Trichet, warns that Greece should not expect special treatment from the bank.

Aid begins to trickle in to the decimated city of Port-au-Prince, where Haitian Pres. René Préval says that 7,000 people have been buried in a mass grave, and the death toll is thought to be in the neighbourhood of 200,000.

**15** After three days of negotiations, Moussa Dadis Camara, leader of the ruling junta in Guinea, agrees to remain in exile in Burkina Faso and to allow the deputy leader, Sékouba Konaté, to oversee a transition back to democracy.

Russia's legislature ratifies a protocol to reform the European Court of Human Rights; with this final ratification, the court may now



Logan Abassi—Minustah/Getty Images



commence implementing the procedures set forth in the protocol.

Radio Mashaal, a Pashto-language station of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, begins broadcasting in the border regions of Pakistan.

**16** Iraq's legislature rejects 10 of the new cabinet choices offered by Pres. Hamid Karzai and the following day begins its winter break.

The Dakar Rally concludes in Buenos Aires; the winners are Spanish driver Carlos Sainz in a Volkswagen automobile, French driver Cyril Despres on a KTM motorcycle, Russian driver Vladimir Chagin in a Kamaz truck, and Argentine driver Marcos Patronelli in a Yamaha ATV.

**17** Violent fighting between Christians and Muslims breaks out in Jos, Nigeria; over the next three days, some 400 people, most of them Muslims, are killed.

Conservative candidate Sebastián Piñera wins the runoff presidential election in Chile, defeating Eduardo Frei of the ruling Concertación coalition, which has held power for some 20 years.

At the Golden Globe Awards in Beverly Hills, Calif., best picture honours go to *Avatar* and *The Hangover*; best director goes to James Cameron for *Avatar*.

**18** An attack by a group of armed militants on the central bank in downtown Kabul is repulsed, leading to a street battle pitting the militants against Afghan soldiers and police that lasts for hours; all seven militants,

three soldiers, and two civilians are killed.

Jean-Marie Doré, head of the opposition coalition Forces Vives, is chosen to serve as prime minister of a transitional government in Guinea.

At Thoroughbred horse racing's 2009 Eclipse Awards, the four-year-old filly Rachel Alexandra is named Horse of the Year.

Sylvie Kauffmann is named the first woman to become executive editor of *Le Monde* in the respected French newspaper's 65-year history.

**19** Japan Airlines, Japan's flagship carrier, files for bankruptcy protection; the airline faces wrenching reorganization.

In Massachusetts, Republican candidate Scott Brown wins election over Democrat Martha Coakley to fill the seat in the U.S. Senate that was long held by Ted Kennedy.

After lengthy and contentious negotiations, the venerable British candy maker Cadbury agrees to be acquired by the American-based food and beverage giant Kraft Foods.

**20** A riot between rival gangs breaks out in the prison in Parral in Mexico's Durango state; 23 inmates die in the violence.

A magnitude-6.1 aftershock rattles Port-au-Prince, Haiti, where people continue to die for lack of medical attention; the dearth of infrastructure is one element hampering the efficient deployment of aid.

**21** In a politically explosive ruling, the U.S.

Supreme Court overturns two previous decisions that were issued in 1990 and 2003 and rules that spending on political campaigns by corporations is protected free speech and cannot be curtailed by the government; Justice John Paul Stevens files a vigorous dissent.

Angola's legislature approves a new constitution that, among other things, replaces the direct election of the president with a system in which the party that wins the majority of seats in legislative elections will choose the president.

NASA's Goddard Institute for Space Studies releases figures showing that the decade 2000–09 was the warmest on record, agreeing with conclusions earlier disseminated by the National Climatic Data Center.

The carmaker Toyota Motor Corp. issues a recall for 2.3 million cars from model years 2005–10 to fix a reported problem with accelerators' becoming stuck, causing unintended acceleration; in November 2009 Toyota recalled 4.2 million vehicles to address a problem of accelerator pedals' getting stuck under floor mats.

The American television network NBC agrees to pay *The Tonight Show* host Conan O'Brien \$32.5 million to quit the network; it plans to return Jay Leno as host of the show, which he left in May 2009, undoing a plan that was put in place in 2004.

**22** U.S. government figures reveal that unemployment rates rose in December 2009 in 43 states, reaching record highs in Delaware, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Florida.

On a beach of the French island of Corsica, a boatload

of 124 would-be migrants who had apparently been put ashore the previous night is found; many of the migrants are Kurds from Syria.

**23** British officials say that the owner of ATSC Ltd. has been arrested on fraud charges; hundreds of bomb detectors the company supplied to the Iraqi government have been found to be useless.

*Yokozuna* Asashoryu defeats *ozeki* Harumafuji to win his 25th Emperor's Cup at the New Year Grand Sumo Tournament in Tokyo.

**24** Heavy rains cause mud slides in the area of Machu Picchu in Peru, killing some five people and cutting off road and rail access to the Inca site; hundreds of stranded visitors have to be airlifted to safety.

The Independent Election Commission of Afghanistan postpones the country's legislative elections from May 22 to September 18, saying that the logistic challenges are too great to make the earlier date possible.

**25** Bombs go off at each of three large hotels that cater largely to foreign journalists and businesspeople in Baghdad; at least 36 people are killed.

**26** A far-reaching new constitution, the country's 38th, is proclaimed in the Dominican Republic.

The carmaker General Motors announces that it has found a buyer for its Swedish unit Saab; Spyker Cars, a Dutch manufacturer



Raveendran—AFP/Getty Images



of elite sports cars, has agreed to acquire the unit.

A military and cultural parade in New Delhi marks Republic Day on the 60th anniversary of India's constitution. (Photo above.)

The ticket sales of the movie *Avatar*, directed by James Cameron, reach \$1.86 billion, making it the highest-grossing film in history; the previous sales leader was the 1997 movie *Titanic*, also directed by Cameron.

**27** Voters in Sri Lanka reelect Pres. Mahinda Rajapakse in a landslide in the country's presidential election.

Deposed Honduran president Manuel Zelaya flies into voluntary exile in the Dominican Republic, and Porfirio Lobo is sworn in as Honduras's new president.

U.S. Pres. Barack Obama delivers his first state of the union address; he focuses on initiatives to create more jobs and increase employment.

In San Francisco, Apple CEO Steven P. Jobs introduces a tablet computer called the iPad; it combines features of laptops, smartphones, and electronic readers.

**28** At an international conference on Afghanistan in London, Afghan Pres. Hamid Karzai says that he plans to attempt reconciliation with Taliban members and that it could take as long as 10 years for the Afghan military to be able to take over responsibility from U.S.-led coalition forces.

Former French prime minister Dominique de Villepin is acquitted of charges that he was part of a conspiracy to besmirch the reputation of Pres. Nicolas Sarkozy in 2004 with false information; three other defendants are found guilty.

The U.S. Senate confirms Ben Bernanke to a second term as chairman of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve.

*The Fall of Heaven*, the first play written by crime novelist Walter Mosley, adapted from his novel *The Tempest Tales*, has its world premiere at the Cincinnati (Ohio) Playhouse in the Park.

A report in *Science* magazine online describes findings that the amount of water vapour in the stratosphere has decreased by about 10% over the past 10 years, reducing the rate of global warming by approximately 25%; in 1980–2000 increased water vapour from methane emitted in the industrial period likely increased the rate of warming.

**29** The U.S. Commerce Department reveals that the country's GDP in the last fiscal quarter of 2009 expanded at an annual rate of 5.7%, its fastest expansion since the third quarter of 2003, but that the economy shrank drastically for the year as a whole.

Spain's government proposes broad and deep spending

cuts in an effort to decrease its budget deficit; unemployment in Spain in the last fiscal quarter of 2009 is reported at 18.8%.

**30** A large group of masked gunmen attack a house in Juárez, Mex., where high school students are attending a party; at least 16 people are shot to death.

American Serena Williams defeats Justine Henin of Belgium to win the Australian Open women's tennis championship; the following day Roger Federer of Switzerland defeats Briton Andy Murray to take the men's title and extend his record string of Grand Slam victories to 16.

Top awards at the annual Sundance Film Festival in Park City, Utah, go to *Winter's Bone*, *Restrepo*, *Hap-pythankyoumoreplease*, and *Waiting for Superman*.

**31** At the African Union's annual summit meeting in Addis Ababa, Eth., Pres. Bingu wa Mutharika of Malawi succeeds Libyan leader Muammar al-Qaddafi as chairman of the union.

Egypt wins the African Cup of Nations in association football (soccer) for a record seventh time when it defeats Ghana 1–0 in the final match in Angola.

At the Grammy Awards in Los Angeles, the top winner is Beyoncé, who wins six awards, including song of the year for "Single Ladies (Put a Ring on It)"; the award for record of the year goes to the Kings of Leon for "Use Somebody"; the album of the year is Taylor Swift's *Fearless*; and the best new artist is the Zac Brown Band.



# February

“ *He had a dream to participate in the Olympic Games. He trained hard, and he had this fatal accident. I have no words to say what we feel.* ”

International Olympic Committee president Jacques Rogges after the accidental death of Georgian luger Nodar Kumaritashvili hours before the opening ceremony of the Vancouver Winter Olympics, February 12

**1** UN officials announce that 55 countries, representing 78% of global greenhouse gas emissions from energy use, submitted emission-reduction plans to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change by the deadline set by the Copenhagen Accord; the pledges, which do not include submissions from Russia or Mexico and are not enough to meet the goals of the agreement, are regarded as a positive step.

Outside Baghdad a female suicide bomber kills at least 38 Shi'ite pilgrims making their way to Karbala' for a religious observance.

**2** In testimony before the U.S. Senate Armed Services Committee, both Secretary of Defense Robert Gates and Adm. Mike Mullen, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, support the repeal of the "don't ask, don't tell" policy, in place since 1993, that prevents people who are openly gay from serving in the armed forces.

The British medical journal *The Lancet* retracts a 1998 article that suggested that the combined measles, mumps, and rubella childhood vaccination is a cause of autism, in light of a finding by a medical panel that Andrew Wakefield, lead author of the paper, had been dishonest.

**3** The European Commission approves Greece's plan to reduce its deficit, currently 12.7% of GDP.

A bomb goes off in Karbala', Iraq, killing at least 21 Shi'ite pilgrims.

Pres. Cristina Fernández de Kirchner of Argentina formally dismisses Martín Redrado as president of the country's central bank and replaces him with Mercedes Marcó del Pont.

A report posted online by *The New England Journal of Medicine* describes a study in which MRI testing revealed that some persist-

ently unconscious patients show brain activity in response to instructions and are capable of using thoughts to signal answers to yes-or-no questions.

*Walking Man I*, a bronze sculpture by Alberto Giacometti, sells at Sotheby's auction house for £65,001,250 (about \$104.3 million), a new world record price for a work of art sold at auction.

**4** The Democratic Unionist Party members of Northern Ireland's legislature approve a government agreement negotiated with Sinn Féin to transfer police and justice functions to local control on April 12.

Indian linguist Anvita Abbi reports that with the January 26 death of Boa Sr, the last known speaker of the Andamanese language of Bo, the language, which is thought to be among the oldest in the world and is believed to have originated in Africa, is extinct.

A team of paleontologists publishes in *Science* magazine online a full-colour portrait of the extravagant plumage of *Anchiornis huxleyi*, a 150-million-year-old theropod. (Illus. right.)

Yokozuna Asashoryu announces his retirement from sumo in the face of reports that he had attacked a man outside a nightclub in Tokyo the previous month.

**5** At least two explosions take place in Karbala', Iraq, among the crowd of Shi'ite pilgrims marching to the final resting place of Imam Hussein on the final day of a religious observance; a minimum of 27 people die.

In Karachi, a bomb mangles a bus carrying Shi'ites to a religious procession, and within a few hours another bomb explodes in a hospital where the wounded from the first attack were taken; at least 25 people are killed in the attacks.



The U.S. Department of Labor reports that the unemployment rate in January fell to 9.7% although 20,000 jobs were lost from the economy during the same period.

**6** In Northern Ireland, the Irish National Liberation Army declares that it has surrendered its weapons; of the groups that signed the 1997 truce bringing peace to the province, it is the last to lay down its arms.

A winter storm that began the previous day leaves the mid-Atlantic U.S. states buried in snow, with more than 51 cm (20 in) in Washington, D.C., and a record 76 cm (30 in) in Baltimore, Md.; the governors of Delaware, Maryland, and Virginia declare states of emergency.

**7** Former prime minister Viktor Yanukovich wins the runoff presidential election in Ukraine, though his opponent, Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko, does not concede.

Laura Chinchilla of the ruling National Liberation Party is elected president of Costa Rica.

In Miami Gardens, Fla., the New Orleans Saints defeat the Indianapolis Colts 31–17 to win the National Football League's Super Bowl XLIV; it is the first time the Saints have won the championship.

The Escogido Lions (Leones) of the Dominican Republic defeat the Caracas Lions (Leones) of Venezuela 7–4 to win baseball's Caribbean Series.

**8** Former opposition presidential candidate Sarath Fonseka is brutally arrested by the military police in Sri Lanka; the following day Pres. Mahinda Rajapakse dissolves the legislature to force early elections.

The space shuttle *Endeavour* blasts off from the Kennedy Space Center in Florida on a mission to the International Space Station; it carries a seven-windowed cupola and the Tranquility module, which is the last major U.S. component to be installed on the station.

Nielsen figures show that some 106.5 million people watched the Super Bowl on February 7, passing the 105.97 million people who watched the series finale of the television program *M\*A\*S\*H* to make the football game the most-watched TV program in American history.

**9** Nigeria's legislature passes a motion to recognize Vice Pres. Goodluck Jonathan as the country's acting president in view of the lengthy absence of its president; the constitution requires the president to transfer authority in the event of his absence or

incapacity, but he has not done so.

Pres. Omar al-Bashir of Sudan and Pres. Idriss Déby of Chad agree to stop supporting rebels in each other's countries and to engage in direct talks and joint projects.

Haiti's government raises the death toll from the earthquake that took place on January 12 to 230,000.

**10** Civil servants in Greece engage in a one-day strike to protest austerity measures proposed by the government to reign in its budget deficit.

Iran slows Internet service and shuts down text messaging in an effort to prevent large opposition demonstrations for the following day's celebration of the anniversary of the Islamic Revolution; it also blocks Gmail (Google's e-mail service) in a stated effort to persuade people to use a recently announced national e-mail service.

**11** At a summit meeting in Brussels called by European Council Pres. Herman Van Rompuy, EU leaders agree to aid Greece in order to safeguard the euro but, at the behest of Germany, offer

no specifics beyond monitoring the country's austerity plan.

South Korean news organizations report that North Korean Prime Minister Kim Yong-Il the previous week apologized for the country's currency reform, which had caused inflation and deprivation, and lifted the ban imposed under the reform on the use of foreign currency.

Pres. 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih of Yemen announces an immediate cease-fire with al-Huthi rebels; a rebellion had flared up in late 2009.

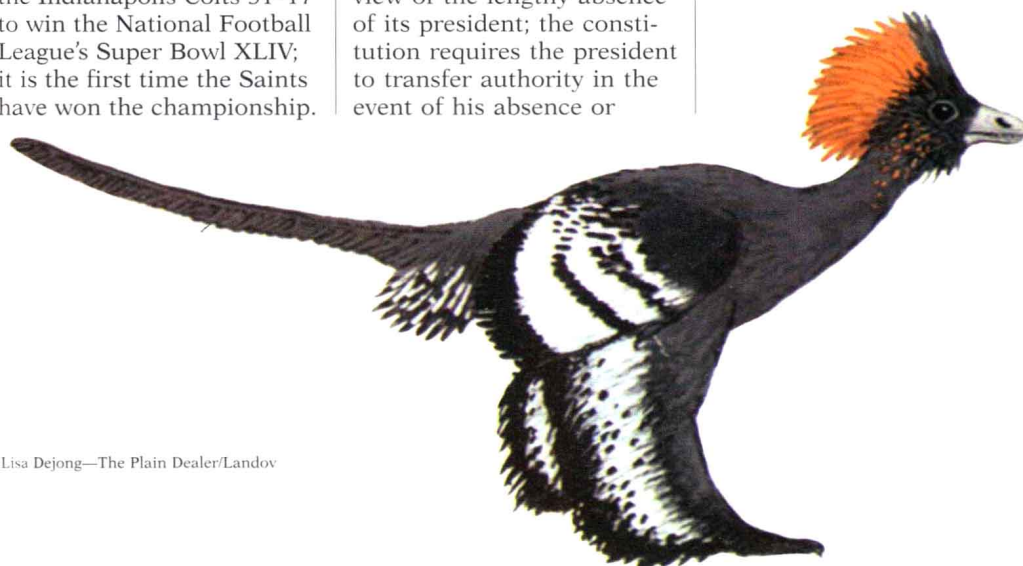
**12** Pres. Laurent Gbagbo of Côte d'Ivoire declares the government dissolved and asks Prime Minister Guillaume Soro to form a new government; Gbagbo also disbands the electoral commission.

The XXI Olympic Winter Games officially open in Vancouver, though the opening ceremony is overshadowed by the accidental death earlier in the day of Georgian athlete Nodar Kumartashvili during a practice run for the luge competition.

Renowned chef Ferran Adrià announces that he will close his storied avant-garde restaurant, elBulli, in Roses, Spain, at the end of 2011.

**13** Afghan, U.S., and British military forces begin a major offensive to take the town and area of Marjah in Afghanistan from the Taliban; Marjah is a Taliban stronghold.

Afghan Pres. Hamid Karzai issues a decree giving the responsibility for appointing members of the Election Complaint Commission to the president; the commission, which documented





irregularities in the 2009 presidential election, previously had membership appointed by the UN.

U Tin U, the deputy leader and cofounder of the National League for Democracy, is freed from house arrest in Myanmar (Burma); he had been under detention since 2003.

The first gold medal of the Vancouver Winter Olympics is awarded to Simon Ammann of Switzerland in the normal hill individual ski jump; a week later Ammann also wins gold in the large hill final.

**14** Palestinian Authority Pres. Mahmoud Abbas suspends his chief of staff, Rafiq Hussein, and appoints a committee to investigate accusations, backed up by videotape, that Hussein attempted to trade political favours for sex.

During an intense battle in the offensive in Marjah, Afg., an American rocket strike misses its target and instead hits a civilian compound; at least 10 civilians are killed.

In Daytona Beach, Fla., the 52nd running of the Daytona 500 NASCAR race is won by Jamie McMurray.

After two and a half years of court battles, American challenger BMW Oracle, owned by Larry Ellison, wins the America's Cup yacht race 2-0 in a head-to-head competition; its yacht, *USA-17*, comes in five minutes ahead of Swiss defender *Alinghi 5* in the final race off the coast of Valencia, Spain.

**15** A police camp in India's West Bengal state is attacked by some 100 Maoist rebels, who kill at least 15

police officers before setting the camp on fire.

Gov. Felix Camacho of the U.S. territory of Guam issues an executive order to government agencies to henceforth in all official communications refer to the island territory as Guahan, which is believed to reflect the island's original name in the Chamorro language.

**16** The council of European Union finance ministers agrees that if Greece has not complied with austerity demands by the meeting of March 16, it will have spending cuts imposed.

The winners of the George Polk Awards for excellence in journalism are announced; they include a new award for videography, which this year honours the anonymous people responsible for recording and disseminating the video of the killing of a woman at a pro-democracy protest in Iran in June 2009.

The *Journal of the American Medical Association* publishes the results of a new genetic and medical study of the mummies buried in the pharaoh Tutankhamen's tomb in Egypt; among the findings are the identification of the mummy of Tutankhamen's father and predecessor as pharaoh, Akhenaton, and evidence that Tutankhamen died from the combination of a degenerative bone disease and malaria.

Roundtown Mercedes of Maryscot wins Best in Show at the Westminster Kennel Club's 134th dog show; the Scottish terrier, known as Sadie, becomes the first dog to take the Triple Crown, having previously won at the National Dog Show and the AKC/Eukanuba National Championship.

**17** Russian Pres. Dmitry Medvedev and Sergey V. Bagapsh, president of Georgia's separatist republic of Abkhazia, announce an agreement for a Russian military base to be established in Abkhazia.

A three-judge panel in North Carolina rules that Gregory Taylor was wrongly convicted of a 1991 murder and frees him from prison after hearing the recommendation of the North Carolina Innocence Inquiry Commission; the state, which established the commission in 2006, is the only U.S. state to have such a panel.

**18** A military coup d'état takes place in Niger, and the increasingly unpopular Pres. Mamadou Tandja is taken into military custody; the coup leader is named as Salou Djibo.

At a meeting of militants in a mosque in the Khyber region of Pakistan, a bomb explosion leaves at least 30 people dead.

Yvo de Boer, who leads UN climate change negotiations, announces his resignation as executive secretary of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

The U.K. unexpectedly posts a budget deficit for January, the month in which its tax receipts are usually highest; it is the country's first recorded January deficit.

In Vancouver, American Evan Lysacek wins the Olympic gold medal in men's figure skating.

**19** Officials in the Philippines say that the country is in the grip of a drought that has caused \$61 million

in damage to crops and is threatening electrical power from hydroelectric dams; Filipinos are asked to recycle water within their homes.

Pope Benedict XVI approves sainthood for Sister Mary of the Cross (Mary Helen MacKillop), founder of the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph of the Sacred Heart; she will be Australia's first Roman Catholic saint.

**20** The government of the Netherlands falls over bitter disagreement as to whether Dutch troops should continue to fight as part of the NATO forces in Afghanistan.

Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko of Ukraine withdraws her court challenge to the election of Viktor Yanukovich as president, saying that she does not believe that she would get a fair hearing.

Roslyn M. Brock is announced as the new chairperson of the board of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP); she will replace Julian Bond, who has held the position since 1998.

Short-track speed skater Apolo Anton Ohno becomes the most decorated American Winter Olympian in history with his seventh career medal, a bronze in the men's 1,000-m final; on February 26 he adds an eighth Olympic medal, also bronze, in the men's 5,000-m relay.

The Turkish-German film *Bal (Honey)*, directed by Semih Kaplanoglu, wins the Golden Bear at the Berlin International Film Festival. (Photo right.)

**21** Israel's air force introduces a fleet of Heron TP



drones with wingspans of 26 m (86 ft) that are capable of remaining in the air for a full day and flying as far as the Persian Gulf.

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency administrator Lisa Jackson releases a detailed five-year plan for the restoration of the Great Lakes; the plan sets out specific goals and actions that are to be taken by federal agencies in concert with state, local, and tribal governments.

**22** After opposition leaders refuse to join a proposed new government in Côte d'Ivoire, violent demonstrations take place in Abidjan in which at least two protesters are killed.

Afghan immigrant Najibullah Zazi pleads guilty to three charges of terrorism in New York City, admitting that he had intended to carry out a suicide bombing on the city's subway system.

The publishing company Macmillan introduces DynamicBooks, an electronic textbook that professors can freely modify; the digital books, as edited by the professors, will be available for students to purchase.

**23** Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas condemns an announcement by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of a plan to recognize as an Israeli national heritage site the so-called Cave of the Patriarchs, known to Muslims as the Ibrahimi Mosque, in the West Bank city of Hebron, declaring that the action could lead to war.

Niger's military junta appoints Mahamadou Danda prime minister of a transitional government.

Prime Minister Guillaume Soro announces the formation of a new unity government in Côte d'Ivoire.

Leaders of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) agree to join with Latin American countries to create a new regional grouping provisionally called the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States; details of the proposed new bloc are to be determined at a meeting in July 2011.

The Nelson A. Rockefeller Institute of Government releases a report showing that state tax revenues in the U.S. shrank in the final quarter of 2009, which makes five consecutive quarters of falling state revenues.

**24** A second 24-hour strike against new austerity measures takes place in Greece, and thousands of aggrieved citizens march in Athens.

The U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission issues new rules restricting certain short sales of stocks.

Carmaker General Motors announces that the withdrawal of China's Sichuan Tengzhong Heavy Industrial Machinery Co. from a deal to purchase GM's Hummer division means that the division must be shut down.

British Prime Minister Gordon Brown formally apologizes for a program that between the 1920s and the 1960s sent some 130,000 children, many living in orphanages and institutions, to other Commonwealth countries, often without their families' knowledge.

**25** In a ceremony attended by the governor of Helmand province, the flag of Afghanistan is raised over Marjah, symbolizing the reclaiming of the area from the Taliban.

In Vancouver, Kim Yu-Na of South Korea wins the Olympic gold medal in ladies' figure skating with the highest score ever recorded in the event.

The U.S. National Medal of Arts is awarded to, among others, actor and director Clint Eastwood, musician Bob Dylan, architect Maya Lin, soprano Jessye Norman, and composer and conductor John Williams.

The foreign ministers of India and Pakistan meet for informal talks, the first between the countries since the terrorist attack that took

place in Mumbai (Bombay) in November 2008.

**26** Colombia's Constitutional Court strikes down a proposed referendum to ask voters to allow Pres. Álvaro Uribe to run for a third term of office; the constitution limits the president to two consecutive terms.

With the appointment of a new electoral commission, the opposition in Côte d'Ivoire agrees to join the new government.

**27** A magnitude-8.8 earthquake strikes central Chile, causing major damage in the area around Concepción, and is followed by a tsunami, which devastates Talcahuano and Constitución; at least 562 people are killed, and more than a million are left homeless.

A court in Italy declines to suspend a corruption trial against Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi; a bribery charge against his lawyer had earlier been dropped, and Berlusconi is charged in the same crime.

On the island of Basilan in the Philippines, members of the Muslim militant organization Abu Sayyaf attack the town of Tubigan, leaving at least 11 people dead.

**28** Legislative elections in Tajikistan result in a large win for the ruling People's Democratic Party; the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe says the election failed to meet democratic standards.

On the final day of the Winter Olympics in Vancouver, Canada defeats the U.S. 3–2 in overtime to win the gold medal in men's ice hockey.



Christian Charisius—Reuters/Landov



# March

*We have just now enshrined, as soon as I sign this bill,  
the core principle that everybody should have  
some basic security when it comes to their health care.*

U.S. Pres. Barack Obama,  
on signing health care reform into law, March 23

**1** Russian Pres. Dmitry Medvedev visits Paris, where he and French Pres. Nicolas Sarkozy agree to negotiate the sale of four amphibious assault ships from France to Russia.

José Mujica takes office as president of Uruguay.

**2** Guatemala's national police chief and its antinarcotics unit leader are arrested on drug-trafficking charges stemming from a shootout the previous April between rival drug gangs over stolen cocaine.

**3** Ukrainian Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko loses a no-confidence vote in the legislature.

After talks with the European Union commissioner for monetary affairs, Greece announces new austerity measures.

Car bombings at government and campaign offices, followed by a suicide bombing in a hospital emergency room, leave at least 33 people dead in Ba'qubah, Iraq.

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Meeting in Cairo, the foreign ministers of the Arab League endorse a plan for U.S.-mediated indirect peace talks between Israeli and Palestinian officials.

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Leonid V. Tyagachev resigns as head of Russia's Olympic Committee because of Russia's poor showing in the Olympic Winter Games in Vancouver.

**4** U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton announces that U.S. aid to Honduras, which was suspended after the overthrow of its president in 2009, will be resumed.

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Faure Gnassingbé wins reelection as president of Togo.

**5** Youssef Saleh Abbas resigns as prime minister of Chad; he is replaced by Emmanuel Nadingar.

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The U.S. Department of Labor reports that the unemployment rate in February remained steady at

9.7%; the number of jobs lost, 36,000, is lower than was anticipated.

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The American car manufacturer General Motors announces plans to reopen 661 of the more than 1,000 dealerships that it shut down in 2009 as part of its bankruptcy reorganization.

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A study published in the journal *Science* describes new research on Arctic undersea permafrost that has been found to be melting, causing the release of heat-trapping methane gas into the atmosphere.

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Biologists in California's Pinnacles National Monument confirm the presence of the first condor egg laid by wild condors within the park in more than 100 years.

**6** Russia's Federal Security Service reports that militant leader Aleksandr Tikhomirov (nom de guerre Said Buryatsky) was killed in a raid in the republic of Ingushetiya several days previously and that proof had been found that Tikhomirov's organization

was behind several recent attacks, including the bombing of the Nevsky Express train in November 2009.

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American musician Stevie Wonder accepts an award as Commander of Arts and Letters from France; the honour was originally announced in 1981. (Photo right.)

**7** Closely contested, pivotal legislative elections take place in Iraq; it is expected to take weeks to tally the vote.

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Near Jos, Nigeria, attacks on the primarily Christian villages of Dogo na Hauwa, Ratsat, and Zot leave as many as 500 people dead; the attacks appear to be revenge for violence that occurred in January against Muslims.

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At the 82nd Academy Awards presentation, hosted by Steve Martin and Alec Baldwin, Oscars are won by, among others, *The Hurt Locker* (best picture) and its director, Kathryn Bigelow (the first woman to win the award for best director), and