



The Horizon Newsletter

November 2020

America Wants Lunar Resources

By: Shrihan Dadi

The President of the United States, Donald J. Trump, signed an executive order in April that proclaimed America's right to extract various resources on the moon. As a result of this, Russia brought up the issue to the United Nations (UN), and the executive order will be discussed at the 75th session of the UN General Assembly. Russia strongly believes that the privatization of the moon's resources by America goes against international law. Later, NASA announced the Artemis Accords, which are a set of standards that dictate lunar exploration. The principles of the Artemis Accords date back to the 1967 Outer Space Treaty, and it is based around the idea of creating "safety zones" to prevent interference and territorial disagreements among neighboring nations.

How Pablo Escobar created a Hippo population in South America

By: Arya Bharti

Pablo Escobar had many valuable assets, including his own zoo with many exotic animals. After Pablo Escobar's death in 1993, the Colombian government took control of all his assets including the animals he owned. Among them were four hippos and unlike the other animals the government decided to keep them and left them in a pond to survive on their own. Now their population has grown exponentially and the government may have an invasive species problem on their hands. Some of the hippos moved into Colombia's main river, the Magdalena and currently it is estimated that they are around 80 to 100 of them in total. Some believe that the hippos are acting as an invasive species, as they pose a danger to local residents since they can be territorial and aggressive. If left unchecked there could be thousands of them within a couple of decades. One solution that the government has taken into effect was to attempt to sterilize them, however capturing a wild hippopotamus is extremely difficult and so far only 3 have been successfully castrated. The international public on the other hand has grown extremely fond of the animals and has voiced their concerns against culling them. Relocating the animals is also extremely difficult, so far only a single juvenile was successfully moved, being transferred to a Colombian zoo.

However scientists and conservationists are questioning if the hippos themselves are changing their environment. Because they are relatively new to their ecosystem, their presence can have dramatic consequences. Hippos are large animals and are a key component to the African landscape but because they provide massive change, they could severely alter the South American ecosystem. Some evidence of how the hippos have changed their environment has recently come in showing that lakes containing Hippos have an altered chemistry and biology than non hippo lakes because the hippos are fertilizing the water with their waste. Because of this, bodies of water with hippos had higher levels of cyanobacteria, commonly referred to as blue-green algae. This can be problematic because the additional nutrients can lead to toxic algal blooms, making it hard for fish and aquatic plants to survive. But some researchers argue that this may be a good thing as it provides more variability in the environment, which can lead to more biodiversity. South America has lost multiple large herbivore species over the last 20,000 years, so the introduction of the hippo might act as a sort of reintroduction of large herbivores, somewhat similar to that of the wolves in Yellowstone National Park. For now, there are no immediate plans to relocate or sterilize all the animals, and the hippos will continue to remain free in what some are calling Hippo Heaven.

War on Terror: Afghanistan

By: Aaryan Kumar

Ever since the United States was attacked in the event known as 9/11, it has found itself involved in numerous conflicts in the Middle East, with the longest and probably the most famous being the War in Afghanistan. After Osama Bin Laden fled to Afghanistan, the Taliban refused to hand him over and the US invaded the country. Ultimately, US Navy SEALs would kill Osama Bin Laden, but the US continued to be bogged down against the Taliban. The war is the longest in US History, surpassing Vietnam. Brutal fighting between the 2 sides has led 2,000 US troops, 65,000 Afghan Troops, and 72,000 Taliban troops to lose their lives. When Donald Trump became president, peace talks commenced which eventually broke down. As early as March 21 of 2020, battles are still being waged in the Afghan Desert for dominance in the desert country. The British Empire fought 3 wars against Afghanistan in a bid to dominate it and ultimately failed. The Soviet Union attempted to do the same thing, fighting against the same insurgents the US is now. The US now has to ask itself, will this turn into the Gulf War, where they enter, win a glorious victory and go home? Or will this be modern Vietnam, where they enter, fight a brutal war for many years, and go home in shame?

iPhone 12 Series: Conservation or Con?

By: Abhiram Dasari

As of October 13th, 2020, Apple officially launched the newest in its line of flagship iPhones: the 12 series. This includes the iPhone 12 Mini, iPhone 12, iPhone 12 Pro, and the iPhone 12 Pro Max. These phones join the already announced iPhone SE, announced earlier this year, for a staggering 5 new iPhones in this year's lineup.

However, along with these phones, Apple may have also just released another new trend. Back in 2016, Apple announced, much to the world's dismay, that it would be taking out the 3.5 millimeter audio jack from all of its phones in the future. Although this was controversial, many other tech companies soon followed suit, and this once nearly unimaginable fantasy has become the industry standard. Much along those same lines, this year, Apple has announced that it will be removing the charging brick from the default phone packaging this year. According to the tech giant, they will not be included in the packaging due to the "ever-growing importance to protect our environment." It is estimated that there are around 2 billion Apple-brand charging bricks in circulation worldwide, and this is not including third-party charging bricks made to use with the Apple suite of products. If everyone were to just reuse their chargers, e-waste could be reduced by almost 300,000 tons, according to official Apple estimates. However, many

think that just like the headphone jack decision, there is a more nefarious side to this decision. The move to take out the headphone jack also coincided with the announcement of the now-popular “AirPods”, a true wireless bluetooth earbud that wouldn’t require a headphone jack. This year, the move to take out the charging brick comes with two convenient coincidences instead of one: the switch of the iPhone to using USB-C for charging, and the introduction of MagSafe technology on the iPhone to make it better adapted to wireless charging with the new AirPower charging mat. Whatever you may think about the removal of the charging brick from the iPhone, it is clear to see that this is the beginning of another new chapter in mobile technology.

Autism Spectrum Disorder

By: Sruthi Anne

Autism spectrum disorder, or more easily known as “ASD” is a complex developmental condition that includes tenacious challenges in social interaction, speech and nonverbal communication, and restricted or repetitive behaviors. The effects of autism spectrum disorder and the criticality of symptoms are different in every person. Although, very common symptoms in patients with ASD are making little to no eye contact, rarely being happy, sleep problems and often not responding to someone. These symptoms are commonly seen during the first three years of life (a very small percentage of people have been diagnosed later in life though). So how does this disorder affect a person’s mental health? A lack of social interaction and understanding makes communication with other peers difficult. People with ASD also often appear to injure or hurt themselves in reaction to specific activities or in an environment.