

Have you been enjoying your ski classes? The weather has been very hit and miss¹. I love skiing when the weather is sunny, but it isn't so much fun when the weather is bad. I remember going to Furano once and it was so cold. I was sitting on the ski lift and I couldn't feel my hands and feet. They were completely numb². I had to stop and go to the cafeteria for some butter miso ramen. Butter miso ramen saved my life. The food at Onze is pretty good. I remember the ankakesoba being very good, but someone told me the price had gone up. I won't be able to go skiing this winter with you, but I will definitely take my daughter one day.



15 differences

Last week:

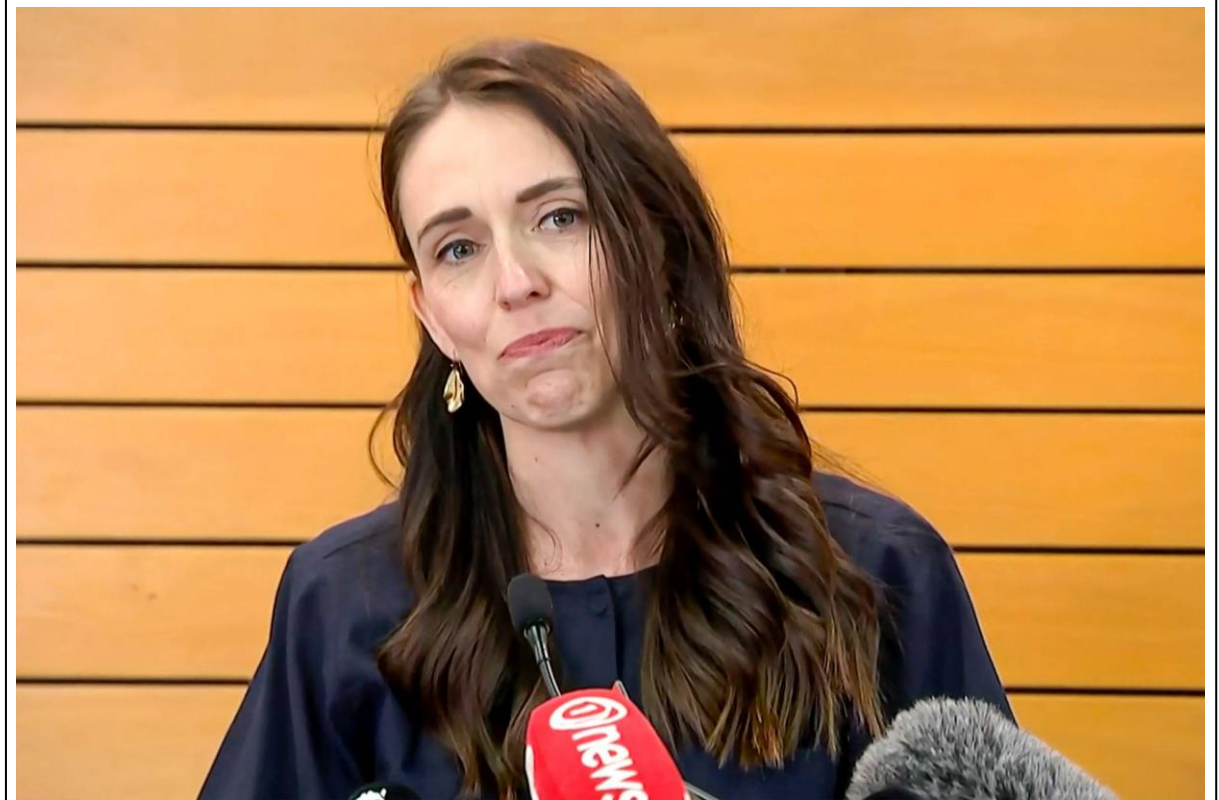


Something interesting: New Zealand

1. The name New Zealand comes from Abel Tasman, the first European to reach the island. He named it after Zeeland in Holland. The Maori name for New Zealand is Aotearoa, which means "land of the long white cloud".
2. There are three official languages³: English, Maori, and sign language⁴.
3. It was the last island to be inhabited⁵ by people. The Maori arrived 800 years ago.
4. New Zealand was the first country to give women the vote⁶ in 1893. Japan was 1947.
5. There are more sheep than people. There are 10 sheep for every person.
6. The people are called "kiwis" because of the national bird.

Jacinda Ardern to Step Down

Last week, Jacinda Ardern, the prime minister⁷ of New Zealand, announced that she would step down on February 7th. She says that she doesn't have enough left in the tank to be able to do the job properly. We usually use "don't have enough left in the tank" to mean not enough energy. She became prime minister in 2017 and she has led New Zealand through a few difficult times. She was in charge during the Covid pandemic and she was responsible⁸ for New Zealand's zero Covid policy. Jacinda Ardern was famous not just for being the prime minister of New Zealand, but also because she became prime minister when she was 37 years old. When she resigns⁹, there will be one fewer female head of government in the world, unfortunately. At the end of 2022, out of the 193 Member States of the United Nations, only 28 were led by women. There are four people who are the likely candidates¹⁰ to replace Ardern, and only one of them is a woman, so it is probable that the number of female world leaders will drop. Hopefully, more will be done to make it easier for women to become the leaders of countries. I wonder when Japan and America will have their first female leaders.



- 1.hit and miss 良い時もあれば悪い時もある
- 2.numb しびれる
- 3.official language 公用語
- 4.sign language 手話
- 5.inhabit 住む
- 6.the vote 選挙に投票ができること
- 7.prime minister 総理大臣
- 8.responsible for~の責任
- 9.resign やめる
- 10.candidate 候補者



World record

I was watching the principal¹ in a meeting the other day. He has a very nice beard. I wonder if he would like to try to beat this week's world record. It is, "the most toothpicks in a beard". The world record holder is Jeff Langum from America. He managed to stick 3,157 toothpicks² in his beard. It took him three and a half hours, so the principal is going to have to be patient³ with this record attempt. I think we could give each student five toothpicks and have them stick them in the principal's beard starting with the first grade. It might be difficult though because Jeff Langum's beard reaches almost to his belly button⁴. Maybe I should grow a beard. If you can all wait ten years, I could grow a beard that long.



If you don't like the road you are walking on, start paving⁵ another one. – Earl Nightingale

A capital city – Thimphu

Let's look at Thimphu, the capital city of Bhutan. Thimphu became the capital city of Bhutan in 1955. The capital city before that was called Punakha. Bhutan had a civil war⁶ in 1886 and Ugyen Wangchuk became the first king of Bhutan. His son, the second king, started to reform Bhutan, but kept it isolated⁶ from the outside world. The 3rd king is known as the "father of modern Bhutan". He modernized and reformed⁷ Bhutan, opening it up to the world. He also moved the capital city to Thimphu. The 4th king of Bhutan continued the reforming work and introduced the idea of Gross National Happiness⁸. The current king is the 5th king. Thimphu is located in the Himalayas and is 2,500 meters above sea level. The population of the city is 80,000 people, which is about 10% of the population of Bhutan. The city of Thimphu is slowly growing, but the majority of⁹ the buildings have been built in the traditional style. The city has supermarkets but they don't sell fresh produce. People can only buy fresh fruit, vegetables, and meat at morning markets on Saturdays and Sundays. Before 1955, there were no schools in Bhutan. People were educated in monasteries¹⁰. These days, there are schools, but education is not compulsory. Bhutan is open and anybody can visit, but you must have a guide to do so. You cannot travel on your own.



1.principal 校長先生 2.toothpick つまようじ 3.patient 我慢する 4.belly button おへそ 5.pave 道を作る 6.civil war 国民戦争 7.reform 改革 8.Gross National Happiness 国民総幸福量 9.the majority of 大半の～ 10.monastery 仏教の僧院