

January



1 The conflict in Syria escalates throughout the year into a full-scale civil war that has claimed over 30,000 lives



13 The Italian cruise ship **Costa Concordia** capsizes off the coast of Tuscany, with the loss of 32 lives



31 Japan imposes a 40-year cap on the life of nuclear reactors following the Fukushima disaster

February



12 Demonstrations in Greece turn violent as parliament approves harsh new austerity measures

21 Russian punk band **Pussy Riot** performs anti-Putin songs in a Moscow cathedral. Jail sentences later attract international criticism



26 Silent movie **The Artist** triumphs at the Oscars, winning five awards including best picture, best director and best actor

March

4 **Vladimir Putin** regains the presidency in Russia, after four years as prime minister

10 A U.S. soldier kills 17 Afghan civilians, including nine children, after going on a door-to-door rampage

22 A gunman who killed seven people, including four at a Jewish school in Toulouse, dies in a shootout with French police after a 32-hour siege



April



1 **Aung San Suu Kyi's** party wins a landslide victory in by-elections in Burma, filling 43 of 45 vacant seats in parliament

10 High-flyer **Bo Xilai** is ousted from China's ruling Politburo, engulfed by scandal involving his wife, a police chief, and the murder of a British businessman



15 Commemorations worldwide mark the centenary of the sinking of the **Titanic**, which hit an iceberg on her maiden voyage with the loss of over 1,500 lives

2012: Year in review

May

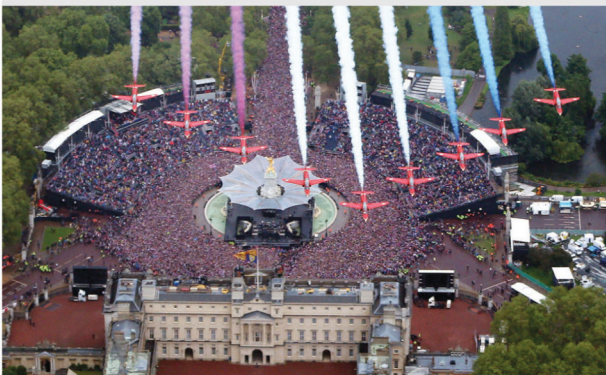
6 **Fran  ois Hollande** is elected President of France, the first Socialist president since 1995



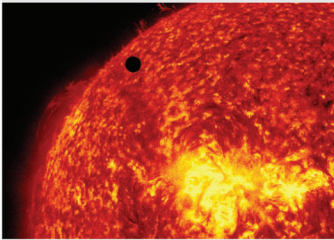
15 Former News International CEO **Rebekah Brooks** is charged with conspiracy to pervert the course of justice over Britain's tabloid phone hacking scandal

17 **Facebook** becomes a public company, valued at \$104 billion, but share prices soon fall away

June



3 **Queen Elizabeth II** celebrates her Diamond Jubilee, marking 60 years on the throne

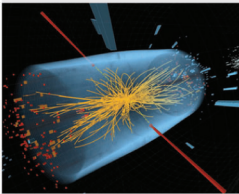


5 Stargazers view the transit of Venus across the face of the sun, an event that will not happen again until 2117



24 Muslim Brotherhood candidate **Mohamed Morsi** wins Egypt's first democratic presidential election, the first Islamist elected leader of an Arab state

July

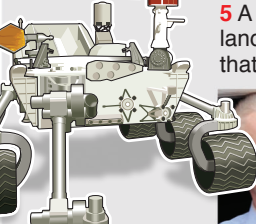


4 Scientists announce the discovery of a subatomic particle thought to be the **Higgs boson**, the elusive last key to understanding why we have life and diversity in the universe



27 The **Olympic Games** open in London with a spectacular ceremony witnessed by 80,000 people in the stadium and one billion worldwide

August



5 A rover spacecraft, **Curiosity**, lands on Mars to search for evidence that conditions were once fit for life

16 Ecuador grants political asylum to WikiLeaks founder **Julian Assange**, holed up in its London embassy to avoid extradition to Sweden on sex charges

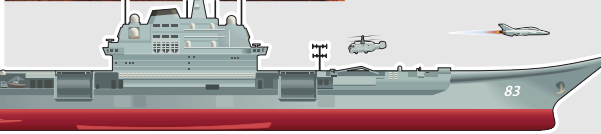
24 Cyclist **Lance Armstrong** is stripped of his seven Tour de France titles after he was found guilty of masterminding an elaborate doping conspiracy



September



11 America's ambassador to Libya and three other officials die in an attack on the U.S. consulate in Benghazi. The killings coincide with the 11th anniversary of the 9/11 attacks



25 China's first aircraft carrier officially enters service

October



9 Pakistani schoolgirl **Malala Yousafzai**, 15, is shot by the Taliban for campaigning for girls' rights to education



14 Austrian skydiver **Felix Baumgartner** jumps from a balloon 39km high and makes the world's highest freefall, travelling faster than the speed of sound

29 **Superstorm Sandy** smashes into the north-eastern U.S., killing 120 people. Damage is estimated at up to \$50bn

November



6 **Barack Obama** is re-elected for a second term as President of the United States



14 Israel launches airstrikes on Gaza in response to increased rocket attacks on Israeli targets

15 **Xi Jinping** is named as China's new leader

December

12 North Korea successfully launches a rocket, putting a satellite into orbit



14 U.S. gun laws are back in the spotlight after 20 children and six adults are shot dead at a school in Connecticut



31 The U.S. faces a "fiscal cliff" that could tip the country back into recession, with worldwide repercussions