



People observe a moment of silence facing the sea at 2:46 pm, the time when the earthquake struck off Japan's coast in 2011

Japan marks quake and tsunami anniversary

Services have been held in Japan to mark the devastating earthquake and tsunami that struck two years ago

Ceremonies took place in the three worst-hit prefectures and a minute's silence was observed at 14:46 (05:46 GMT), when the quake hit. More than 18,000 people were left dead or missing in the disaster, which also caused the Fukushima nuclear crisis. Since then, most of Japan's nuclear reactors have remained off, amid impassioned debate over nuclear energy.

Thousands of people marched in Tokyo urging an end to the use of nuclear power. Japan's 50 nuclear reactors were shut down for checks after the earthquake and only two have since been turned on again. But

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, who was elected in December, has indicated he wants to restart the reactors after safety checks to meet pressing power needs.

About 160,000 people had to be evacuated from the area around the nuclear plant, where meltdowns occurred at three reactors after tsunami waters knocked out cooling systems. It remains unclear if they will ever be able to return. Tens of thousands of people also remain displaced further north, after entire communities were washed away or felled. The government has channelled billions of dollars into reconstruction, but has been

criticised for slow progress.

"Japan will never experience a true spring if spring does not come to north-eastern Japan. I promise never to forget the weight of each day and promise to speed up the reconstruction of the region," he said. Both he and the Imperial couple, Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko, attended a memorial service in Tokyo, where they observed the silence. According to an official tally, 15,881 people died in the disaster and 2,668 others remain unaccounted for.

The 9.0 earthquake that struck two years ago appears to have severely damaged the foundations of the

plant — creating large cracks in the underground walls that are supposed to keep the plant water tight.

Ground and seawater is now leaking through the cracks in to the basements around the reactors. The water rapidly becomes highly contaminated and cannot be pumped out into the sea. Instead Tepco is building huge 1,000 tonne water tanks to store the contaminated water.

The Fukushima sight is now dotted with hundreds of them. But the water leakage is so severe that they are having to add a new tank every two to three days. Within two years they will have run out of room.

Gloom hangs over Geneva car show

As the Geneva Motor Show opened, industry leaders warned that demand for cars in Europe will stay weak for years as governments drive through austerity measures

Sales have fallen further in recent months and with no signs of recovery, executives from the likes of Ford, Fiat, Daimler, GM and Renault were downbeat, saying they are concentrating on growth areas. Renault's Chief Executive Carlos Ghosn said, "So number one is: go where the growth is taking place and contribute to this growth. Number two is that you have to be in a resistance mode in Europe."

Fiat's Sergio Marchionne, asked about prospects for a European market recovery, said, "I don't see any glimmer of hope this year." "The sustained nature of the European market slump is becoming pretty clear, and nobody now expects a return to (pre-crisis) levels on any visible horizon," said Guillaume Faury, strategy chief at France's PSA Peugeot Citroen.

New car sales in the 27-member European Union dropped 8.2 percent to a 17-year low in 2012 as consumer incomes were squeezed by rising prices, subdued wages and austerity measures. Hopes of a recovery this year have so far proved misplaced. New car registrations in Germany, previously a bastion of stability, slumped more than 10 percent in February, while those in France and Italy fell by around 12 percent and 17 percent, respectively.

Frozen Android phones give up data secrets

Freezing an Android phone can help reveal its confidential contents, German security researchers have found

The team froze phones for an hour as a way to get around the encryption system that protects the data on a phone by scrambling it. Google introduced the data scrambling system with the version of Android known as Ice Cream Sandwich. The attack allowed the researchers to get at contact lists, browsing histories and photos. Android's data scrambling system was good for end users but a 'nightmare' for law enforcement and forensics workers.

The team discovered that quickly connecting and disconnecting the battery of a frozen phone forced the handset into a vulnerable mode. This loophole let them start it up with some custom-built software rather than its onboard Android operating system. The researchers dubbed their custom code Frost — Forensic Recovery of Scrambled Telephones. The Frost software helped them copy data on a phone that could then be analysed on a separate computer. A chilled phone also helped their hacking project.



Customers shop at a supermarket in Shanghai

China inflation rate hits ten month high

China's inflation rate hit a 10-month high in February, as Lunar New Year festivities drove up food prices

Consumer prices rose 3.2 percent from a year earlier, with food prices up by 6 percent. Inflation has been a hot political issue in China. There have been concerns that if consumer prices rise too much, it may prompt Beijing to tighten monetary policies, which in turn may hurt China's growth. However, analysts said the latest data was unlikely to prompt any such moves. They argued that the price growth was

driven mainly by the Lunar New Year celebrations, which are traditionally associated with an increase in consumer spending.

After years of experiencing a blistering pace of growth, China has seen its economic expansion slow in recent times. In 2012, the country grew at a pace of 7.8 percent, its weakest performance in 13 years. Prompted by slowing growth, China has taken various steps over the past months to spur a fresh wave of economic growth. It cut interest rates twice last year, to bring down the cost of borrowing for consumers and businesses.

Van Dyck painting 'found online'

A previously unknown painting by 17th century master Van Dyck has been identified after being spotted online

The portrait was previously thought to have been a copy and was in storage at the Bowes Museum in County Durham. But it was photographed for a project to put all of the UK's oil paintings on the BBC Your Paintings website, where it was seen by an art historian. Dr. Brown, Director of the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford, told that it was 'a substantial discovery'. "It's quite clear that this is a late English period Van Dyck," he said. "I don't think there's any doubt about that. This absolutely is Van Dyck at his best."

Anthony Van Dyck, one of the finest portrait painters of the 17th century, was born in Antwerp and became court artist for King Charles I in London in 1632. The portrait depicts Olivia Boteler Porter, lady-in-waiting to Charles I's wife Henrietta Maria. The painting, which was not thought to be important and in a bad condition, was covered in layers of dirt and varnish and was not on display at the Bowes Museum.



The portrait of Olivia Boteler

But it was photographed as part of the Public Catalogue Foundation's mission to document every oil painting in public ownership and added to the BBC's Your Paintings website, where it was spotted by art historian and dealer Dr. Bendor Grosvenor. "Although as part of our national heritage values are irrelevant, for insurance purposes it should now be valued at anything up to £1m," Dr. Grosvenor said. "Had it appeared at auction as a copy, and in its dirty state, it would probably only have been estimated at about £3,000-5,000."