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**Today's Headlines:**

**Obama's final State of the Union address**

**Counting Africa's elephants from the sky**

**Australia celebrates Elvis**

**Transcript:**

President Obama has set out the vision he hopes will define his legacy in his final State of the Union address. He **vowed** to continue targeting terrorist networks, accelerate the switch from fossil fuels and also launch a new drive to cure cancer. He called for Congress to be less **partisan** in order to make real progress.

The elephant population in Africa is continuing to decline despite an international ban on the trade of ivory tusks. Counting the remaining animals is certainly a difficult task – they roam through vast areas, across 20 countries but that is the **bold ambition** of the great elephant **census**. It's a continent-wide initiative started by the co-founder of Microsoft, Paul Allen, to keep an account of Africa's elephants and to do it from the sky.

Thousands of Elvis Presley fans descended on a town in Australia over the weekend for an annual outback festival dedicated to the **iconic** US singer. The celebrations in Parkes coincided with what would have been Elvis's 81<sup>st</sup> birthday. The festival was first held in 1993 and includes lookalike competitions, an Elvis-themed gospel service and large street parades as well.

**Words and phrases and definitions:**

**vowed**

promised (to do something)

**partisan**

supporting the political views of just one party

**bold ambition**

big or difficult aim, requiring lots of effort

**census**

official count and collection of information about a population

**iconic**

famous person or object which is thought to represent an idea or style from a particular time

Watch the video online: <http://bbc.in/1OqBC18>

**Exercise:**

Use one of the words or phrases from Lingohack to complete each of these sentences. Note that you may have to change the form of a word or phrase to complete the sentence correctly.

**vowed / partisan / bold ambition / census / iconic**

1. The latest \_\_\_\_\_ shows that there are more people living in London than ever before.
2. Staff at the factory weren't convinced by the manager's \_\_\_\_\_ to improve working conditions and improve wages.
3. One of the world's most \_\_\_\_\_ railway locomotives, the Flying Scotsman, has taken its first public test run after ten years of repairs and rebuilding work.
4. Some people thought John's \_\_\_\_\_ to row across the Pacific Ocean in one month as completely mad.
5. The prime minister thought \_\_\_\_\_ differences got in the way of real progress.

**Answers:**

1. The latest **census** shows that there are more people living in London than ever before.
2. Staff at the factory weren't convinced by the manager's **vow** to improve working conditions and improve wages.
3. One of the world's most **iconic** railway locomotives, the Flying Scotsman, has taken its first public test run after ten years of repairs and rebuilding work.
4. Some people thought John's **bold ambition** to row across the Pacific Ocean in one month as completely mad.
5. The prime minister thought **partisan** differences got in the way of real progress.