Spotlight 9	Reading Task 9104

Read the text and mark the statements

True (1), False (2), Not Stated (3).

Thailand Ushers in New Year with The World's Largest Water Fight!

Asian cultures generally celebrate their symbolic New Year with prayers, colourful processions, good food and sometimes even fireworks. The people of Thailand have added one more tradition - having the world's largest water fight!

Celebrated annually from April 13th to 15th, the Songkran Festival marks the beginning of the solar year and is considered to be the most important festival for the 60 million residents of Thailand. It is so significant that until 1888, this was also the beginning of a new calendar year for the country.

Though the dates were originally based on the Astrological calculations they are now fixed - 13th marks the end of the previous year, 14th is a gap day and 15th marks the beginning of the New Year. The water festival began accidently. One of the religious rituals performed during this festival is praying to Lord Buddha and it is followed up with a bathing ceremony for the statue. The blessed water from the bathing is then poured gently onto elders and family members to give them good fortune. Over the years, this gentle pouring has turned into a free-for-all water fight which many believe, was an idea inspired by the Indian festival of Holi.

After the religious ceremonies are completed, groups of residents move around on scooters, trucks and even elephants, carrying water guns and buckets filled with water. Those not fortunate enough or too young to have a mode of transport, simply gather by the roadside with large ice-boxes of water. To make the fights a little more exciting, ice patrols go along the streets, handing out the giant pieces of ice so that the water can be nice and chilled when it hits the bodies! Fortunately, the festival dates coincide with Thailand's hottest months so the cold water is actually welcomed. When it first began, the water fights were held from midday to sunset on April 13th. Now, they sometimes extend out to all days and all times! So, if you happen to be in Thailand during these dates next year, be sure to watch out, for nobody is safe from getting wet at this wild festival!

True (1), False (2), Not Stated (3).

1. A new calendar year and Asian solar year coincide.
2. The symbolic Asian year begins in summer.
3. The celebration of the solar year is accompanied by religious ceremonies.
4. Astrology used to play an important role in marking the beginning of the year.
5. Astrology helped to introduce the water festival.
6. The water ceremony is very old and of religious origin.
7. The water festival means bathing all the statues by ordinary people.
8. People pour icy water on passers-by and they should stay still for a moment as if they turned into statues.

LIVEWORKSHEETS