Which do you think was the most important news story last week?
Which story do you think is going to dominate the news this week?

Before listening, try to complete the first headline using the initial letters to help you. Then listen and check your ideas.

Four British nationals who j_____________ IS in Syria are to face United Nations sanctions at Britain’s request. The four, two men and two women, will be b_____________ from travelling anywhere in the world and their assets are being f___________.

Our correspondent Carol Walker reports from New York. The l__________, approved by the UN, includes Sally-Anne Jones from Chatham in Kent who left her two young sons to travel to Syria with her husband. And Aqsa Mahmood, a f______________ Glasgow University student, who is believed to have r______________ other women to the IS cause. A government official said the prime minister believed the s___________ were a powerful tool sending a clear deterrent message to those thinking of going to join IS e_______________. It’s the first time for 10 years that Britain has requested UN sanctions against its own c_____________ and it’s considering whether to add more names in future. The government is also to spend an extra £10 million to set up a new unit based in London to try to counter extremist p_________________ around the world.

What message do you think the sanctions send?

Before listening to the next story, add vowels to the consonants in brackets to make words for the gaps. Then listen and check your ideas.

Royal Dutch Shell is ________________ (bndng) its multi-billion pound plan to drill for oil in the Arctic. The company said an ________________ (xplrtry) well off the coast of Alaska found oil and gas but not in sufficient ________________ (qntts). Here’s our business editor Kamal Ahmed. After years of battles with the US government and ________________ (nvrmntl) groups Shell has admitted it is disappointed after pulling out of its most ________________ (cntrvrs) exploration project. Two weeks ago the Shell chief executive Ben van Beurden told the BBC that although there was no ________________ (grnt) that drilling would go ahead the Arctic still had the potential to be a major source of fossil ___________ (fls). Now poor results from Shell’s main exploration well in the Chukchi Sea off Alaska have meant the project has been abandoned. The cost to Shell of pulling out of Alaska will be £2.6 billion. Shell had to buy the original ________________ (lnc) for drilling and has also hired expensive contractors to work in what are considered to be some of the toughest environmental ________________ (cndtns) in the world. Although Shell had recently received the go-ahead from the US government for the exploration, green groups said that all companies should leave Alaskan ____________ (wtrs) because of the difficulties associated with any clean-up should there be an ________________ (ccdnt).
Surgeons in London have used stem cells from a human embryo to try to cure blindness in a patient. A 60-year-old woman with age-related macular degeneration underwent the procedure at Moorfields Eye Hospital. Here’s our medical correspondent Fergus Walsh. If it succeeds the trial at Moorfields could be of huge significance for patients with age-related macular degeneration, AMD, the most common cause of sight loss in the UK. The cells being used were originally derived from a donated early embryo smaller than a pinhead, these were turned into specialised eye cells which AMD die leading to the loss of central vision. Injecting this sheet of cells into the retina the aim is to regenerate the macular to halt sight loss and in some cases even reverse it. If it works it could help patients with both the wet and dry forms of AMD. Ten patients with the condition will receive the cell treatment. By the end of the year the team at Moorfields should have initial results showing whether any vision has been restored.

The authorities in Switzerland say they have placed a ban on the sale of new Volkswagen vehicles with diesel engines potentially designed to manipulate emissions tests. The move comes as VW’s new chief executive, Matthias Muller, gets to work vowing to win back the trust of the public. He was appointed at the end of a week which has seen the value of the company plummet by a third after it emerged that VW had deliberately manipulated emissions tests to achieve more favourable results. Here’s our business correspondent Joe Lynam. Although Switzerland is not a large market for VW cars, its cultural and geographic proximity to Germany will make this ban especially problematic for the company. The Swiss Federal Roads Office said it was banning the sale of diesel cars in the slightly older Euro 5 category of engines. A hundred and eighty thousand Volkswagen group cars, which also includes Audi, Skoda and Seat, could have already been sold in Switzerland fitted with the software designed to manipulate emissions tests. Dealing with national regulators such as the Swiss and the Americans will be one of the first issues for VW’s new chief executive Matthias Muller. He promised the 80 million VW drivers worldwide that their trust would be restored. Earlier the German government confirmed that 2.8 million cars had been fitted with defeat devices in Germany out of a possible 11 million worldwide. The US Environmental Protection Agency which originally raised the issue said that it would be testing further Volkswagen models before moving on to other brands.

Do you think drilling for oil in the Arctic should be banned?

Do you see any issues with the medical use of stem cells from human embryos?
1. Four British nationals who joined IS in Syria are to face United Nations sanctions at Britain's request. The four, two men and two women, will be banned from travelling anywhere in the world and their assets are being frozen. Our correspondent Carol Walker reports from New York. The list, approved by the UN, includes Sally-Anne Jones from Chatham in Kent who left her two young sons to travel to Syria with her husband. And Aqsa Mahmood, a former Glasgow University student, who is believed to have recruited other women to the IS cause. A government official said the prime minister believed the sanctions were a powerful tool sending a clear deterrent message to those thinking of going to join IS extremists. It’s the first time for 10 years that Britain has requested UN sanctions against its own citizens and it’s considering whether to add more names in future. The government is also to spend an extra £10 million to set up a new unit based in London to try to counter extremist propaganda around the world.

2. Royal Dutch Shell is abandoning its multi-billion pound plan to drill for oil in the Arctic. The company said an exploratory well off the coast of Alaska found oil and gas but not in sufficient quantities. Here’s our business editor Kamal Ahmed. After years of battles with the US government and environmental groups Shell has admitted it is disappointed after pulling out of its most controversial exploration project. Two weeks ago the Shell chief executive Ben van Beurden told the BBC that although there was no guarantee that drilling would go ahead the Arctic still had the potential to be a major source of fossil fuels. Now poor results from Shell’s main exploration well in the Chukchi Sea off Alaska have meant the project has been abandoned. The cost to Shell of pulling out of Alaska will be £2.6 billion. Shell had to buy the original licence for drilling and has also hired expensive contractors to work in what are considered to be some of the toughest environmental conditions in the world. Although Shell had recently received the go-ahead from the US government for the exploration, green groups said that all companies should leave Alaskan waters because of the difficulties associated with any clean-up should there be an accident.

3. Surgeons in London have used stem cells from a human embryo to try to cure blindness in a patient. A 60-year-old woman with age-related macular degeneration underwent the procedure at Moorfields Eye Hospital. Here’s our medical correspondent Fergus Walsh. If it succeeds the trial at Moorfields could be of huge significance to patients with age-related macular degeneration, AMD, the most common cause of sight loss in the UK. The cells being used were originally derived from a donated early embryo smaller than a pinhead, these were turned in specialised eye cells which in AMD die off leading to the loss of central vision. By injecting this sheet of cells into the retina the aim is to regenerate the macular to halt sight loss and in some cases even reverse it. If it works it could help patients with both the wet and dry forms of AMD. Ten patients with the condition will receive the cell treatment. By the end of the year the team at Moorfields should have initial results from the first patient showing whether any vision has been restored.

4. The authorities in Switzerland say they have placed a ban on the sale of new Volkswagen vehicles with diesel engines potentially designed to fool emissions tests. The move comes as VW’s new chief executive, Matthias Muller, gets to work vowing to win back the trust of the public. He was appointed at the end of a week which has seen the value of the company plummet by a third after it emerged that VW had deliberately manipulated emissions tests to achieve more favourable results. Here’s our business correspondent Joe Lynam. Although Switzerland is not a large market for VW cars, its cultural and geographic proximity to Germany will make this ban especially problematic for the company. The Swiss Federal Roads Office said it was prohibiting the sale of diesel cars in the slightly older Euro 5 category of engines. A hundred and eighty thousand Volkswagen group cars, which also includes Audi, Skoda and Seat brands, could have already been sold in Switzerland fitted with the software designed to manipulate emissions tests. Dealing with national regulators such as the Swiss and the Americans will be one of the first issues facing VW’s new chief executive Matthias Muller. He promised the 80 million VW drivers worldwide that their trust would be restored. Earlier the German government confirmed that 2.8 million cars had been fitted with defeat devices in Germany out of a possible 11 million worldwide. The US Environmental Protection Agency which originally unearthed the issue said that it would be testing further Volkswagen vehicles before moving on to other brands.