



Korean Air Lines exec resigns over nut dispute

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — A top executive of Korean Air Lines has resigned amid mounting public criticism that she delayed a plane over how she was served macadamia nuts. Company officials said chairman Cho Yang-ho has accepted the resignation of Cho Hyun-ah, his eldest daughter and an executive vice president. The junior Cho was under public fire following media revelations that a recent Korean Air Lines flight from New York to South Korea returned to the gate because she ordered a senior crew member off the plane. Cho was angered that she was served bagged macadamia nuts instead of nuts on a plate. The airline apologized for inconveniencing passengers, but also said it was “natural” for Cho to fault the crew’s ignorance of procedures.

19 candidates in race for Sri Lankan presidency

COLOMBO, Sri Lanka (AP) — Sri Lankan President Mahinda Rajapaksa and his former health minister were among 19 people who handed in their nominations for the island’s presidential election next month. The papers from the 19 were handed in to elections commissioner Mahinda Deshapriya. Rajapaksa called the election to seek an unprecedented third term, two years before his second term ends. His former health minister and party No. 2, Maithripala Sirisena, has become his main challenger and he is now being backed by the main opposition United National Party. The election is scheduled for January 8. Deshapriya rejected objections raised against the candidacies of both Rajapaksa and Sirisena, saying their applications were within the rules. But the commissioner expressed concern over election violence that has broken out, and advised candidates and supporters to respect election laws. He urged media outlets and government officials to act impartially and said his office will monitor media reporting. Several opposition supporters and their homes have been attacked since Sirisena defected from Rajapaksa and announced his candidacy.

Japanese space explorer to blow crater in asteroid

TOKYO (AP) — A Japanese space explorer was launched December 3 on a six-year roundtrip journey to blow a crater in a remote asteroid and collect samples from inside in hopes of gathering clues to the origin of earth. The explorer is expected to reach the asteroid in 2018 and spend about 18 months studying it before returning in 2020. Hayabusa2, a rectangular unit with two sets of solar panels sticking out of its sides, was launched from Tanegashima Space Center in southern Japan. The main unit measures 3.2 x 5.2 x 4.6 feet and weighs about 1,300 pounds. The research includes shooting a projectile into the asteroid to blast open a crater so the explorer can collect rock samples from inside. Asteroids can provide evidence not available on earth about the birth of the solar system and its evolution. Japan’s space agency said Hayabusa2 will explore the origin of seawater and how the planet was formed.

India plans five-fold increase in clean energy

(AP) — India says it is taking bold steps against climate change with plans for a five-fold increase in renewable energy capacity. However, environment minister Prakash Javadekar said the country won’t act to curb carbon emissions because it first must pursue economic growth to eradicate poverty. Javadekar made the comments before heading to the U.N. climate talks in Lima, Peru. India has doubled its coal tax to 100 rupees per ton and will use the estimated \$9.4 million generated for projects that would boost the country’s solar power capacity to 100 gigawatts (GW) by 2020. Javadekar called it a “huge increase” from today’s 20 GW capacity, referring to it as “a real game changer.”

Beijing bans smoking in public spaces

BEIJING (AP) — Beijing has adopted a smoking ban in all indoor public spaces, including workplaces and public transport. The official Xinhua News Agency reported that the ban will go into effect in the capital city of 21 million people on June 1 and carry a fine of up to 200 yuan (\$32.50). The Standing Committee of Beijing Municipal People’s Congress passed the draft regulation. China is home to the most smokers of any country, with 300 million smoking and 740 million exposed to secondhand smoke every year. Xinhua reported the number of smokers in Beijing alone exceeds 400,000 people. The new regulations also ban outdoor tobacco advertisements as well as on TV and in films and newspapers.

Japanese paper regrets use of term ‘sex slaves’

TOKYO (AP) — Japan’s biggest newspaper apologized in print for using the term “sex slaves” in its English-language edition to describe Asian women forced into Japanese military-run brothels during World War II. The conservative *Yomiuri* said in articles in English and Japanese that it was inappropriate to have used the phrase and others implying the women were coerced to provide sex. The newspaper identified 85 articles with “sex slaves” or similar expressions between 1992 and 2013. Right-wing activists have a long-running campaign against the term, maintaining the women weren’t forced. A government investigation in the early 1990s concluded that many of the “comfort women,” as they are officially known, “were recruited against their own will” and “lived in misery at comfort stations under a coercive atmosphere.” But the investigation found no proof in official documents, and conservatives have used that to argue their case. The efforts to deny coercion have soured relations with South Korea, where some of the women came from.



SOMBER CEREMONY. Members of student groups and activists of social organizations participate in a candlelight vigil to express solidarity with survivors of the Bhopal gas tragedy on the eve of its 30th anniversary in Bangalore, India. On December 3, 1984, thousands of people died after a cloud of methyl isocyanate gas escaped from a pesticide plant operated by a Union Carbide subsidiary in Bhopal in central India. (AP Photo/Aijaz Rahi)

Indians mark anniversary of Bhopal disaster

By Rishi Lekhi
The Associated Press

BHOPAL, India — Indians this month marked the 30th anniversary of the Bhopal gas leak tragedy with protests demanding harsher punishments for those responsible and more compensation for the victims of the world’s worst industrial disaster.

On the morning of December 3, 1984, a pesticide plant run by Union Carbide leaked about 40 tons of deadly methyl isocyanate gas into the air of Bhopal, quickly killing about 4,000 people. Lingering effects of the poison raised the death toll to about 15,000 over the next few years, according to government estimates.

In all, at least 500,000 people were affected, the Indian government says. Thirty years later, activists say thousands of children are

born with brain damage, missing palates, and twisted limbs because of their parents’ exposure to contaminated gas or water.

The disaster remains an open wound in India, where many consider Union Carbide’s \$470 million settlement with the Indian government an insult.

Ram Pyari, a Bhopal victim, said the tragedy haunts his life.

“Everything was destroyed,” he said during an evening vigil. “And my sons and my daughter-in-law died, my leg was amputated. I have to drag myself. These killers did not heed anything. Why are they not brought to court? Why are they not hanged?”

Union Carbide is now a wholly owned subsidiary of the Dow Chemical Co. Dow says it has no liability because it bought the company responsible for the plant more than a decade after the cases had been settled.

There can be only one: North Korean leader’s name banned

By Hyung-jin Kim
The Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea — In North Korea, there can be only one Kim Jong Un.

Pyeongyang is forbidding its people from using the same name as the young absolute leader, according to a South Korean official.

The measure appears meant to bolster a personality cult surrounding Kim, who took over after the death of his dictator father, Kim Jong Il, in late 2011. Seoul officials have said Pyongyang also banned the use of the names of Kim Jong Il and the country’s founder, Kim Il Sung.

The South Korean official said Kim Jong Il in early 2011 ordered citizens with the same

name as his son to get new names and demanded that authorities reject birth registrations of newborn babies with the name.

The official requested anonymity because he wasn’t authorized to speak publicly. He refused to disclose how the information was obtained.

Kim Jong Un made his international debut in late 2010 when he was awarded a slew of top political jobs. His father, who reportedly suffered a stroke in 2008, was seen as moving fast to hand over power so his family could rule for a third generation.

Kim Jong Il inherited power in 1994 when his father, Kim Il Sung, died.

North Korea enforces strict, state-organized public reverence of the Kim family, which

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Indian Rupee	62.295
Indonesian Rupiah	12467
Iranian Rial	26683
Japanese Yen	118.75
Laos New Kip	8083.9
Malaysian Ringgit	3.4955
Nepal Rupee	99.651
Pakistani Rupee	100.51
Papua N.G. Kina	2.5707
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Sri Lankan Rupee	131.17
Taiwan Dollar	31.314
Thai Baht	32.829
Vietnam Dong	21388