



HK airport gets green light for \$18B third runway

HONG KONG (AP) — The Hong Kong government has given final approval for a third runway at the Asian financial center’s airport, aiming to meet surging growth in passengers and air cargo. Officials say the project will begin next year and cost 141.5 billion Hong Kong dollars (\$18.2 billion). About 1,600 acres of land will be reclaimed from the sea for the runway and a new passenger building. Construction is expected to be complete by 2023. Hong Kong International Airport expects to reach maximum capacity under its current layout by 2022 at the latest. Strong growth in China has been a key driver of Hong Kong airport traffic. Most of the visitors to the specially administered Chinese region come from mainland China, which is one of the fastest growing air travel markets. For the rest of the world, Hong Kong is also a gateway to China. Last year, the airport handled 63.4 million passengers and 4.4 million metric tons of cargo, both records. The airport predicts the third runway will allow it to handle 102 million passengers and 8.9 million tons of freight per year by 2030. Across Asia, airport operators are scrambling to build new terminals or expand existing ones to keep up with growth in air travel.

Toyota signs on as global Olympic sponsor through 2024

TOKYO (AP) — Toyota Motor Corp. has signed on as a worldwide Olympic sponsor in a long-term deal reportedly worth nearly \$1 billion. The deal runs through the 2024 Olympics. Toyota is the first car company ever signed up by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) for its top-tier TOP sponsorship program. Toyota officials declined to reveal the financial terms of the deal, but Japanese media reported the company will pay \$835 million. IOC president Thomas Bach was in Tokyo to sign the agreement with Toyota president Akio Toyoda. Toyota becomes the third Japanese company to become a worldwide Olympic sponsor after Panasonic and Bridgestone. A total of 12 global companies, including Coca-Cola and McDonald’s, are current TOP sponsors. The chairman of the IOC’s marketing commission is Japanese IOC member Tsunekazu Takeda, who is also head of the Japanese Olympic Committee.

Manny Pacquiao welcomes Tim Tebow to training camp

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Manny Pacquiao last month welcomed a high-profile visitor to his training camp with ties to his native Philippines: Tim Tebow. Pacquiao is preparing for his much-anticipated fight with Floyd Mayweather Jr. on May 2 in Las Vegas. Tebow, the Heisman Trophy-winning former Florida quarterback, posted photos on Instagram of the two together in Pacquiao’s gym in Los Angeles. “Awesome being with my Filipino and Christian brother,” Tebow posted on his Instagram account. Tebow, who is known for being very open about his Christian faith, was born in the Philippines to missionary parents. Pacquiao spokesman Fred Sternburg said Tebow and Pacquiao know each other and embraced when Tebow came to the gym. Promoter Bob Arum was also there and they watched Pacquiao spar seven rounds, Sternburg said.

Everest climbers forced to quit last year to get new permits

KATHMANDU, Nepal (AP) — Nepal has cleared more than 300 mountaineers to climb Mount Everest this year after they had to abandon last year’s efforts when an ice avalanche killed 16 guides in the mountain’s deadliest disaster. The head of Nepal’s tourism department, Tulasi Gautam, said the government extended last year’s permits without charging new fees. He said the extended permits could be used at any time through 2019, and that the climbers can climb individually or join a group. The three-month climbing season for Everest, the world’s tallest mountain, began last month. Nepal also pledged recently to improve weather forecasting, security and rescue efforts, and has cut climbing fees this year to \$11,000 per climber from \$25,000.

Yahoo China office closing in cost-cutting move

BEIJING (AP) — Yahoo is closing its research and development center in China as CEO Marissa Mayer tries to placate shareholders pressuring the internet company to cut costs while it struggles to bring in more revenue. The Beijing operation’s responsibilities will be shifted to other Yahoo Inc. offices, according to a company statement. Yahoo didn’t specify how many people will lose their jobs in China, but pledged to treat all the workers “with respect and fairness.” The closure will mark Yahoo’s exit from China, where the Sunnyvale, California company has been winding down since turning over its operations to Alibaba Group in 2005. That \$1 billion deal gave Yahoo a lucrative stake in Alibaba that is currently worth \$33 billion. Yahoo is preparing to spin off its Alibaba holdings into a separately traded company later this year, removing an asset that deflected attention from the challenges facing Yahoo’s own businesses. Yahoo hired Mayer in July 2012 to engineer a turnaround, but so far she hasn’t been able to boost the company’s revenue even though advertisers have been shifting more of their spending to the internet and mobile devices. Yahoo’s revenue declined by one percent to \$4.6 billion last year.

Sri Lankan president’s brother dies in axe attack

COLOMBO, Sri Lanka (AP) — Sri Lankan President Maithripala Sirisena’s youngest brother died two days after he was attacked with an axe in what authorities say was a personal dispute. According to a government statement, 42-year-old Priyantha Sirisena died at a private hospital in Colombo. He was airlifted from his hometown of Polonnaruwa in North-Central province following the attack. The attacker surrendered to police. The statement did not say what the dispute was about. Sirisena was in China on a four-day official visit when the attack took place.



COUNTING ON CUTENESS. Shoppers wait for doors to open at the Line Friends flagship shop in Seoul, South Korea. Mickey Mouse, Hello Kitty: Move over. And make way for laidback Brown bear and his irrepressible girlfriend Cony the bunny. Once just digital stickers that users of mobile messaging app Line send to each other like emoticons, the bear, the bunny, and their seven friends will soon be unleashed through stores, virtual reality, and possibly an animated film. (AP Photo/Lee Jin-man)

Big in Asia, Line app hopes cute factor will win worldwide

By Youkyung Lee
AP Technology Writer

SEOUL, South Korea — Mickey Mouse, Hello Kitty: Move over. And make way for laidback Brown bear and his irrepressible girlfriend Cony the bunny.

Once just digital stickers that users of mobile messaging app Line send to each other like emoticons, the bear, the bunny, and their seven friends will soon be unleashed through stores, virtual reality, and possibly an animated film.

For smartphone users in Asia, where most of Line’s 181 million monthly users are located, the characters are as familiar as old school icons such as Hello Kitty and Disney’s animated stars. They are not well known in America or Europe, but owner Line Corp. hopes to change that.

It plans to open 100 stores selling Brown dolls and other cute “Line Friends” paraphernalia worldwide over the next three years. It has already opened two stores in Seoul and its first Shanghai and New York stores open this year.

Though partly an accidental strategy, the company says the bricks-and-mortar presence will draw more users to the app and help replicate its rapid Asian success in other regions. It will also give the company a backdoor into China, where Line is blocked along with other foreign messaging apps and social media sites.

“We never intended to do a character business,” Yoon Sunmin, who oversees Line’s character business, said in an interview that was the first time the company outlined its merchandizing plans in detail. “It exploded by

accident,” he said, drinking coffee from a paper cup emblazoned with the dazed face of Brown.

Visitors to the newly opened flagship shop in Seoul’s trendy Gangnam district screamed with delight when they saw an outsized Brown bear greeting them near the entrance of the three-story store. Locals and tourists from Vietnam, China, and Hong Kong queued to take a picture with Brown and other human-size cutout Line characters, as if they were pop stars.

Evelyn Tan, a 27-year-old from northwestern China, and her friend Keira Yi, 23, from Beijing, said they don’t use Line in China but came to look at Brown and other cute dolls.

“I have some friends from Taiwan and they use Line,” said Tan. “The stickers. They are so cute.”

Larger and more expressive than emoticons, the stickers have been a draw card for Line, whose users are mostly in Japan, Thailand, Indonesia, India, and Spain. They also set Line apart from the bare bones interface of rival WhatsApp, which was bought by Facebook for about \$22 billion. Line is worth about \$18 billion based on revenue from monthly users, according to Marcello Ahn, a fund manager at Quad Investment Management.

The popularity of the Brown and Cony stickers has also shaped a new trend in mobile communication.

Instead of typing messages, many users simply tapped a sticker showing a coy-looking Brown sitting on a toilet or eating a bowl of ramen. Users began to associate themselves with certain characters and the lineup now includes a bespectacled middle-aged man named Boss, and James, a blond narcissist.

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Vancouver Housing Authority
NOTICE OF WAITING LIST CLOSURE FOR ALL SENIOR AND DESIGNATION SPECIFIC HOUSING UNITS

Notice is hereby given that the waiting list for Arbor Ridge, Azalea Place, Cherry Park, Columbia House, Crown Villa, Forest Ridge, Fort Vancouver, Highland Park, St. Helens Manor and Walnut Grove of the Housing Authority of the City of Vancouver have been closed until further notice. Due to the excessive wait, new applications will not be accepted.

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Asian Currency Exchange Rates

Units per U.S. dollar as of 4/04

Bangladesh Taka	77.805
Cambodian Riel	4014.9
China Renminbi	6.1944
Fijian Dollar	2.0704
Hong Kong Dollar	7.7523
Indian Rupee	62.498
Indonesian Rupiah	13020
Iranian Rial	27993
Japanese Yen	118.97
Laos New Kip	8105.5
Malaysian Ringgit	3.6692
Nepal Rupee	99.455
Pakistani Rupee	101.89
Papua N.G. Kina	2.642
Philippine Peso	44.445
Russian Ruble	56.671
Saudi Riyal	3.7513
Singapore Dollar	1.3505
South Korean Won	1093.0
Sri Lankan Rupee	133.25
Taiwan Dollar	30.97
Thai Baht	32.407
Vietnam Dong	21585