



## Chinese journalist, lawyer win Magsaysay awards

MANILA, The Philippines (AP) — A Chinese investigative journalist whose work has led to the ouster of corrupt officials and a Chinese environmental lawyer are among this year's six recipients of the Ramon Magsaysay Awards, often regarded as Asia's version of the Nobel Prize. Hu Shuli was recognized as editor-in-chief of the Beijing-based, multi-platform Ciaxin Media Group that has exposed corporate fraud and government corruption, including the sale-for-adoption of children who were seized by family planning officials in Hunan province, the Ramon Magsaysay Award Foundation in the Philippines announced. Hu's "unrelenting commitment to truthful, relevant, and unassailable journalism" has defied China's restrictive media environment, the foundation said. Wang Canfa is the other Chinese award recipient. He founded the Center for Legal Assistance to Pollution Victims, which has offered free legal services to thousands of people and provided environmental law training to lawyers and others. Among other awardees were Indonesian anthropologist Saur Marlina Manurung, who put up a "Jungle School" program for children of Indonesia's Orang Rimba, or forest people; and Filipino teacher Randy Halasan, for serving the indigenous Matigsalug tribe. In addition, Omara Khan Masoudi of Afghanistan was honored for his courage in protecting Afghan cultural heritage, and the Citizen Foundation, a nonprofit organization in Pakistan founded by six business leaders, was recognized for building 1,000 schools over hundreds of cities and towns in the country with the world's second-highest number of children who are out of school. The awards are named after a popular Philippine president who died in a 1957 plane crash.

## China tightens control over mobile internet

BEIJING (AP) — In the cat-and-mouse game of free flow and control of information, China has made its move against the latest information-sharing technology. China's Internet Network Information Office announced new rules on public accounts for instant messaging services, which say that only established media companies and news portals can release and repost political and social news. According to a South Korean official who asked not to be named because he was not authorized to speak on the matter, China also has informed South Korea that it has blocked Kakao Talk and Line, two mobile messaging services popular among Asian smartphone users, on the grounds that they were used to exchange terrorism-related information. The moves were widely expected following Beijing's crackdown on microblogging services after their popularity caught authorities by surprise.

## Myanmar reports largest heroin seizure of year

YANGON, Myanmar (AP) — A Myanmar drug squad seized more than 300 pounds of heroin in a town near the Thai border in the country's largest confiscation this year, according to state media. The state-owned *Kyemone* newspaper reported that the anti-drug squad seized 404 heroin blocks worth \$2.3 million from a car and arrested two suspects in the Shan state border town of Tachileik. In addition to the 311 pounds of heroin, officers also found assault rifles, ammunition, hand grenades, and 31,000 Thai baht (\$970) in the vehicle, which was travelling from a Shan village to the Thai border. The newspaper said both the driver and passenger will face drug charges. Myanmar is the world's second-largest producer of opium, the main ingredient of heroin, after Afghanistan, accounting for about 25 percent of global poppy production. According to an opium poppy survey by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, opium poppy cultivation in Myanmar increased from 107,700 acres in 2010-2011 to 142,800 acres in 2012-2013. In 1999, Myanmar declared that it would be opium poppy-free by the year 2014, but the deadline has been extended by five years as the impoverished nation struggles to stem its narcotics problem.

## Strong undersea earthquake hits Indonesia

JAKARTA, Indonesia (AP) — A strong, shallow earthquake shook the seas off eastern Indonesia this month, but it did not cause major damage. The U.S. Geological Survey said the magnitude-6.1 quake occurred at a depth of 6.2 miles and was centered 244 miles south of Ambon, the capital of Maluku province. Indonesia's Meteorology and Geophysics Agency official, Tri Handayani, said the quake was felt in many parts of the province and some parts of Dili, the capital of neighboring East Timor, but there was no danger of a tsunami. She said the earthquake did not cause any major damage and there were no immediate reports of injuries. The world's largest archipelago, Indonesia is prone to earthquakes due to its location on the Pacific "Ring of Fire," an arc of volcanoes and fault lines in the Pacific Basin. In 2004, a monster temblor off Aceh shores triggered a tsunami that killed 230,000 people in a dozen countries. Most of the deaths were in Aceh.

## McCain says it's time to ease arms sales ban on Vietnam

HANOI, Vietnam (AP) — U.S. senator John McCain says it's time for the United States to ease restrictions on arms sales to Vietnam, citing progress the communist country has made on human rights. McCain told reporters in Hanoi that he hopes the easing could begin as early as next month. The sales would be limited to arms with defensive capabilities. The Republican and Vietnam War veteran said the easing of arms sales restrictions has nothing to do with the recent Chinese placement of an oil rig in a disputed part of the South China Sea. Closer military ties between Vietnam and the United States could anger China, which has been more assertive on its territorial claims in the South China Sea.



**PANDA-MONIUM.** Triplet panda cubs rest in an incubator at the Chimelong Safari Park in Guangzhou in south China's Guangdong province. China announced the birth of extremely rare panda triplets in a further success for the country's artificial breeding program. The three cubs were born July 29 in the southern city of Guangzhou, but breeders delayed an announcement until they were sure all three would survive, according to the official China News Service. (AP Photo)

# China announces birth of rare panda triplets

BEIJING (AP) — China has announced the birth of extremely rare panda triplets in a further success for the country's artificial breeding program.

The three cubs were born July 29 in the southern city of Guangzhou, but breeders delayed an announcement until they were sure all three would survive, the official China News Service said.

The mother, Ju Xiao, and the three as-yet-unnamed cubs are healthy, the news agency said. Photos showed the three sleeping and standing in their incubator, their bodies pink and mostly hairless. Ju Xiao was impregnated in March with sperm from a panda living at a Guangzhou zoo.

Ju Xiao was under round-the-clock care for the final weeks of her pregnancy, according to the report. The triplets were born within four

hours of each other and weigh between eight ounces and 12 ounces.

The report said the triplets were only the fourth set known to have been born in the world through artificial breeding programs, but it wasn't clear how many had survived from such births.

China has devoted major resources to increasing the numbers of the country's unofficial national mascot and regularly announces the birth of pandas born at zoos and at the Wolong breeding center in the southwestern province of Sichuan, where most wild pandas are found.

There are about 1,600 giant pandas in the wild, where they are critically endangered due to loss of habitat and low birth rates. More than 300 live in captivity, mostly in China's breeding programs.

## Korean Air to halt flights to Kenya

By Youkyung Lee  
AP Business Writer

SEOUL, South Korea — Korean Air Lines Co. will suspend flights to Kenya in what it said is a measure to prevent the spread of Ebola.

The South Korean flag carrier will stop operating flights between Incheon and Nairobi from August 20, it said in a statement.

No Ebola cases have been reported in Kenya or other parts of East Africa, but the South Korean airline has a history of taking risk

minimization measures before other airlines.

Ebola has killed more than 1,000 people and sickened nearly 2,000 in its current West African outbreak that has hit Guinea, Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Nigeria.

Korean Air flies to Nairobi, which is the main gateway for East Africa, three times a week. It did not say when it would resume its service.

The carrier's statement said the suspension of flights would help prevent the spread of the Ebola virus.



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## Asian Currency Exchange Rates

Units per U.S. dollar as of 8/16

Bangladesh Taka	77.44
Cambodian Riel	4051.0
China Renminbi	6.1471
Fijian Dollar	1.8491
Hong Kong Dollar	7.7505
Indian Rupee	60.77
Indonesian Rupiah	11678
Iranian Rial	25985
Japanese Yen	102.68
Laos New Kip	8059.1
Malaysian Ringgit	3.1538
Nepal Rupee	97.067
Pakistani Rupee	99.949
Papua N.G. Kina	2.4597
Philippine Peso	43.675
Russian Ruble	36.038
Saudi Riyal	3.7505
Singapore Dollar	1.2444
South Korean Won	1016.6
Sri Lankan Rupee	130.17
Taiwan Dollar	29.994
Thai Baht	31.878
Vietnam Dong	21200