



**McRATIONED.** An order of small fries is seen at a McDonald's restaurant in Tokyo. McDonald's began rationing its fries December 17. It said prolonged labor negotiations with port workers on the U.S. west coast have made it difficult to meet demand despite an emergency airlift of 1,000 tons of spuds and an extra shipment from the U.S. east coast by sea. (AP Photo/Eugene Hoshiko)

## McDonald's in Japan limits orders of fries

By Elaine Kurtenbach  
AP Business Writer

**T**OKYO — Only small fries with that? McDonald's in Japan is limiting the serving size of fries as stocks run short due to labor disruptions on the U.S. west coast.

McDonald's began rationing its fries December 17. It said prolonged labor negotiations with port workers on the west coast have made it difficult to meet demand despite an emergency airlift of 1,000 tons of processed spuds and an extra shipment from the U.S. east coast by sea.

Frozen french fries — ready for the deep fryer — are a leading U.S. export. The spuds are partially cooked and cut before shipping.

Japanese consume more than 300,000 tons of french fries a year, mostly at fast-food restaurants, and largely sourced

from imports of frozen, processed potatoes from America, according to U.S. figures. December shipments were expected to be just more than half the normal level, Japanese newspapers reported.

But demand is rising as convenience stores are increasingly also selling fries.

McDonald's has 3,100 outlets in Japan. It cut prices for set meals to compensate for including only small fries.

Customers recently expressed disappointment as they left a downtown Tokyo McDonald's outlet.

"The kids like the bigger sizes, like 'M' and 'L,' so it's a shame," said businessman Kenichi Kuniki, 45.

Japan's locally grown potatoes are mostly eaten fresh, rather than as fries, and production has been declining for years. But Japan enforces strict limits on where and how fresh potatoes are imported.

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**TERRIBLE TRAGEDY.** Indonesian children hold candles to pray for the victims of AirAsia Flight 8501 in Surabaya, Indonesia. Bad weather has hindered efforts to recover victims and has sent wreckage drifting far from the crash site as grieving relatives pray for strength to endure their losses. (AP Photo/Firdia Lisnawati)

## AirAsia's CEO in spotlight after Flight 8501 accident

By Eileen Ng  
The Associated Press

**K**UALA LUMPUR, Malaysia — His airline empire began, Tony Fernandes likes to say, with the purchase of a bankrupt company for less than a dollar. Now, after years of growth that made him the king of Asian budget travel, the flamboyant Malaysian businessman is facing the horror of the crash of an AirAsia jet with 162 people on board.

Fernandes, who built AirAsia's regional network on cheap fares, a love of the spotlight, and occasionally provocative advertising — "There's a new girl in town. She's twice the fun and half the price." — was clearly exhausted by the time he met reporters at the airport in Surabaya, Indonesia, where the missing flight had taken off.

"We are very devastated by what has happened. It is unbelievable," he said. In an earlier tweet to his employees, Fernandes said, "This is my worst nightmare."

Fernandes pioneered regional low-cost air travel by launching AirAsia in January 2002, growing it from two planes to more than 180 by breaking the dominance of national airlines and making flying affordable for the millions of Asians entering the middle class. Today, he has

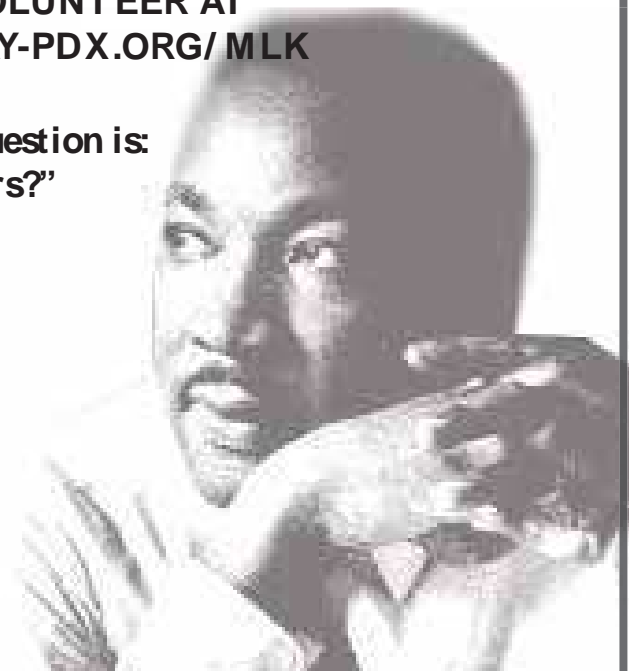
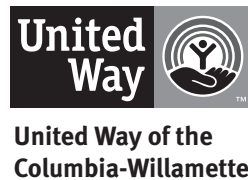
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"What are you doing for others?"

-Martin Luther King Jr.



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The Year of the Sheep begins February 19, 2015!

The Asian Reporter's Lunar New Year special issue will be published on Monday, February 16, 2015.  
The submission deadline for this issue's Events Calendar is Monday, February 2, 2015.