



Pope to new cardinals: Just say no

VATICAN CITY (AP) — Pope Francis is warning his new cardinals to keep the partying to a minimum — and keep their egos in check — when they are formally elevated at a Vatican ceremony this month. In a letter written to the 20 new “princes of the church” published in the Vatican newspaper *L’Osservatore Romano*, Francis warned the cardinals to avoid the type of ostentatious festivities that “stun worse than grappa on an empty stomach.” Traditionally, new cardinals are feted with lavish parties, often funded by well-meaning parishioners, following the ceremony where they receive their red hats. Some of the new cardinals hail from places that have never before had a “prince of the church,” including Cape Verde, Myanmar, and Tonga. Others come from the developing world, including Thailand, Panama, and Mozambique.

Malaysia to issue interim report on Flight 370 on March 7

KUALA LUMPUR, Malaysia (AP) — Malaysia’s civil aviation department will release an interim report on the disappearance of Malaysia Airlines Flight 370 on March 7, a day before the flight’s one-year anniversary. Deputy transport minister Aziz Kaprawi says the report won’t have any conclusion on what happened to the plane because the search is ongoing. Aziz said the report will focus on investigations into the search for the plane, which is believed to have crashed in the remote southern Indian Ocean. The plane disappeared while flying from Kuala Lumpur to Beijing with 239 people on board. The Australian coordinators of the search say the current phase could take another year and there is still no guarantee of success. No debris has ever been found.

15 officials in Tibet punished for helping Dalai Lama

BEIJING (AP) — A Chinese Communist Party agency says investigators have found that 15 officials in Tibet joined underground Tibetan independence organizations, provided intelligence to the Dalai Lama and his supporters, or participated in activities harmful to China’s security. The publicizing of party officials supporting Tibetan separatism is highly unusual and suggests continuing unrest in the Himalayan region, which has prompted a heavy security presence since a wave of rioting and protests against Chinese rule in 2008. A statement from the Communist Party Disciplinary Commission of Tibet, on its website, says that the wrongdoing was uncovered last year during an investigation and that the 15 officials received unspecified punishment. The commission did not specify the groups the party members joined, intelligence they provided, or give any other details.

Japan selling talking robots that won’t try to make sense

TOKYO (AP) — The scientist behind a new talking robot in Japan says people should stop expecting robots to understand them, and instead try to chime in with robotic conversations. Hiroshi Ishiguro’s 11-inch tall button-eyed Sota, which stands for “social talker,” is programmed to mainly talk with a fellow robot, and won’t be trying too hard to understand human speech — the major, and often frustrating, drawback of companion robots. Sota, shown to reporters at a Tokyo museum, goes on sale in July at under 100,000 yen (\$850) each. Robot maker Vstone simplified Ishiguro’s research for the mass-produced Sota. It expects to sell 3,000 of them in the first year.

Phony Chinese bank cheated depositors out of \$32 million

BEIJING (AP) — Chinese police have arrested five people in connection with a phony bank that used bogus offices and tellers to bilk depositors out of \$32 million. More than 200 customers were caught up in the scam based in the eastern city of Nanjing, according to a statement on the local police’s microblog. Most were business owners from the surrounding province of Jiangsu attracted by promises of high interest rates on deposits, the statement said. Police said the scammers filled their offices with all the accoutrements of a real state-owned bank, including uniformed staff. The scam’s mastermind, identified by his surname Liu, and four assistants, were in custody, including one woman who had fled to the gambling enclave of Macau with the depositors’ funds, the statement said. The scam was uncovered after an investor who had deposited \$2 million complained to police when he was unable to collect interest or withdraw his funds. Low rates of return in the formal financial sector have prompted many Chinese to turn to unregulated or illegal investment schemes, often resulting in massive losses and the arrests of the ringleaders. The police statement quoted Liu as saying he knew the scheme was illegal, but had planned to invest and lend the depositors’ funds in order to pay the high rates of interest promised. However, he said much of the money was never recovered.

Japan nuclear plant worker dies after falling into tank

TOKYO (AP) — A worker at Japan’s wrecked nuclear power plant died after falling into a water storage tank, the latest in a growing number of accidents at the site due to efforts to clean up the mess from the 2011 Fukushima disaster. The operator of the Fukushima Dai-ichi plant said the worker, 55, died of multiple injuries after falling through an opening atop a 33-foot high tank. He was one of three men inspecting the tank. Tokyo Electric Power Co., which operates the plant, says the cause of the accident is under investigation. Currently, the plant’s decades-long decommissioning involves nearly 7,000 workers. The number of injuries between April and November totalled 40 last year, compared to 12 a year earlier, underscoring growing concern about sloppy safety measures.



RE-CREATING THE CRASH. Indonesian National Transportation Safety Committee investigator Ertata Lananggalih holds a model plane as he explains the movement of AirAsia Flight 8501 before it crashed into the Java Sea on December 28, 2014, during a press conference in Jakarta, Indonesia. Indonesian investigators announced that the co-pilot of the crashed AirAsia jet was in control of the plane when he struggled to recover the aircraft as stall warnings sounded. (AP Photo/Dita Alangkara)

Indonesian investigators say crashed jet was flown by co-pilot

By Niniek Karmini
The Associated Press

JAKARTA, Indonesia — Indonesian investigators have announced that the co-pilot of the crashed AirAsia jet was in control when he struggled to recover the aircraft as stall warnings sounded.

The Airbus A320-200 crashed into the Java Sea on December 28, 2014, halfway from Indonesia’s city of Surabaya to Singapore. All 162 people on board were killed.

Chief investigator of the National Transportation Safety Committee Marjono Siswosuwarno said the cockpit voice recording indicated that the co-pilot, French national Remi Emmanuel Pleasel, was flying the plane while Indonesian captain Iriyanto was monitoring.

Iriyanto, who like many Indonesians uses a single name, was a former fighter pilot with more than 20,500 flying hours, while less experienced Pleasel had about 6,000 hours.

Siswosuwarno said the black boxes retrieved from the seabed provided a pretty clear picture of what went wrong in the last moments of AirAsia Flight 8501, as the plane was struggling to recover and stall warnings sounded until the end of the recording.

“However, we are still examining many other things on the issues,” Siswosuwarno told a news conference.

Another investigator, Ertata Lananggalih, said that based on the voice recorder, the captain was monitoring and communicating with air traffic control (ATC) while Pleasel was flying the plane. “But it is normal practices, both pilots can exchange their roles with each

other,” said Lananggalih.

Investigators concluded that the plane was in airworthy condition prior to the crash.

Both flight and cockpit data recorders showed the jet was stabilized cruising at a height of 32,000 feet before the pilot contacted ground control saying they were turning left, and a minute later sought permission to climb to 38,000 feet. The ATC at Jakarta’s Sukarno-Hatta airport asked them to stand by.

Siswosuwarno said the weather satellite images at the time showed a formation of storm clouds reaching up to 44,000 feet. He added that flight data showed the jet was in a dangerously fast climb and stalled before going down slowly into the last position of 24,000 feet high recorded on the radar.

He said investigators were still looking into whether turbulence or updrafts contributed to the plane’s drastic climb as repeated stall warnings were heard clearly on the cockpit recording within four minutes until the end of the recording since the plane reached more than eight degrees of its pitch angle.

Indonesia minister of transportation Ignasius Jonan has said previously that radar data showed the Airbus A320 was climbing at an abnormally high rate, about 6,000 feet a minute before it disappeared.

“In many cases, the engine is not strong enough to fly in this high angle,” Siswosuwarno said.

Indonesian rescuers have retrieved 72 bodies, with the last two found drifting late last month off Sulawesi island. Unconfirmed reports said another body was discovered about 620 miles east of the crash scene.

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Fijian Dollar	2.0387
Hong Kong Dollar	7.7519
Indian Rupee	61.87
Indonesian Rupiah	12672
Iranian Rial	27497
Japanese Yen	117.49
Laos New Kip	8108.5
Malaysian Ringgit	3.6295
Nepal Rupee	99.002
Pakistani Rupee	101.08
Papua N.G. Kina	2.6004
Philippine Peso	44.113
Russian Ruble	69.467
Saudi Riyal	3.7615
Singapore Dollar	1.3542
South Korean Won	1093.7
Sri Lankan Rupee	132.17
Taiwan Dollar	31.526
Thai Baht	32.76
Vietnam Dong	21317