



**Miyazaki says his new film is about a caterpillar, his first CG**

KOGANEI, Japan (AP) — The master of animation, Hayao Miyazaki, has revealed that his new short film is about a tiny, hairy caterpillar and will be his first fully computer-generated film. In a rare public appearance at his office in Tokyo's western suburbs, Miyazaki told foreign journalists that the new film is for screening at the Ghibli Museum and is planned for completion in about three years. Miyazaki said he wants to focus on the basics of life over millions of years instead of short spans of history. Miyazaki, one of animation's most admired and successful directors and co-founder of Studio Ghibli, won an Oscar in 2003 for his masterful, disturbing critique of modern industrialism in *Spirited Away*. He announced his retirement from feature-length films in 2013.

**Rights group condemns bill on interfaith marriage**

YANGON, Myanmar (AP) — An international human-rights group has accused Myanmar's parliament of playing with fire by passing a bill regulating the right of women from the country's Buddhist majority to marry men from outside their religion. Phil Robertson of New-York-based Human Rights Watch said the bill was related to a campaign by extremist Buddhist groups that have incited anti-Muslim hatred. Religious tensions have led to deadly violence, especially against Rohingya Muslims in western Myanmar, who have felt compelled to flee abroad. The bill passed is one of four known as the Protection of Race and Religion Laws, which have been criticized as discriminatory by rights groups. It mandates that Buddhist women register their intent to marry outside their faith, and that they can be stopped if there are objections.

**Beijing government to move part of functions to suburb**

BEIJING (AP) — Beijing's city government says it is going to move part of its administrative functions out of the city center as part of a plan to better link the Chinese capital with surrounding areas. The municipal government's Communist Party committee also agreed to stick to its target to limit Beijing's population to 23 million, according to the government's information office microblog. Its population was 21.5 million at the end of 2014. The "subsidiary administrative center" will be in Tongzhou, a district in Beijing's eastern suburbs about a 40 minute car ride from downtown Beijing without heavy traffic, and will take shape by 2017. The new center is part of a plan to integrate Beijing with neighboring Hebei, an industrial province from where much of the capital's pollution wafts in, and the port city of Tianjin. Officials want to develop high-quality resources such as hospitals and universities in the whole area, rather than have them concentrated in downtown Beijing. They believe that moving part of the municipal government and its services out of central Beijing to neighboring regions will help ease traffic congestion and population growth.

**Widow of ex-South Korean leader to visit North Korea**

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — The 92-year-old widow of late South Korean President Kim Dae-jung, who was a strong proponent of Korean reconciliation, will visit North Korea early next month, according to ex-aides to Kim. Lee Hee-ho's planned August 5 to 8 trip comes amid continuing animosity between the rival Koreas following the opening of a U.N. office in Seoul tasked with monitoring what activists call the North's widespread abuse of its citizens' rights. Pyongyang, which calls any criticism of its rights record a U.S.-led attempt to topple its authoritarian government, has said the U.N. office is a provocation and warned that Seoul and Washington would face unspecified consequences. A detailed itinerary hasn't been settled, but Lee's trip could help ease tensions if she meets with top North Korean officials such as leader Kim Jong Un. Last year, Kim Jong Un invited Lee to visit after thanking her for sending condolence flowers on the third anniversary of the death of his father, former leader Kim Jong Il. Kim Jong Il and Kim Dae-jung held the first-ever summit between the two Koreas in 2000. Their meeting spawned a flurry of cooperation projects, which have mostly been put on hold since conservatives took power in Seoul in 2008 and mostly ended big aid shipments to North Korea. Kim Dae-jung, who died in 2009 at the age of 85, was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2000 for his reconciliation efforts with Pyongyang. The two Koreas remain in a technical state of war since their three-year war in the early 1950s ended with an armistice, not a peace treaty.

**Fatal fire on Japan's airtight bullet train exposes lapses**

TOKYO (AP) — A fatal fire on Japan's bullet train, started by a man who self-immolated, has revealed blind spots in a system renowned for its speed, punctuality, and safety record. Riding the Shinkansen feels like being in an airplane: at 186 miles per hour, it goes so fast in an out of tunnels that it must be airtight. Windows cannot be opened, and doors open only when the train fully stops, which takes several minutes. Yet, in a country with strict gun control and low crime rate, security is lax — no identification or baggage checks required. This month, Haruo Hayashizaki, a 71-year-old retiree, poured a flammable liquid over himself and lit it while riding a bullet train heading to Osaka from Tokyo. He died on the spot, and smoke filled the coach, choking a female passenger to death. It was the first fire in the train's 50-year history. Experts say it is a wake-up call for something more disastrous, potentially a terrorist attack, and it's time to step up risk management ahead of the G-7 summit in Japan next year and the 2020 Tokyo Olympics. While Japan strives to keep its bullet trains in perfect condition, reducing the risk of fire, arson on the train was not anticipated.



**CYBORG STAFF.** A cloak robot, left, moves a box containing a suitcase left by a hotel employee at the cloak window during a demonstration for the media at the new robot hotel, aptly called Henn na Hotel, or the Weird Hotel, in Sasebo, southwestern Japan. Staying at Henn na Hotel starts at 9,000 yen (\$80), a bargain for Japan, where a stay in one of the nicer hotels can easily cost two or three times that much. Japan is a world leader in robotics technology, and the government is trumpeting robotics as a pillar of its growth strategy. Robots have long been used here in manufacturing, but interest is also high in exploring the potential of robots in human interaction, including helping care for the elderly. (AP Photo/Shizuo Kambayashi)

**Robots do check-in and check-out at cost-cutting hotel in Japan**

*Continued from page one*

Why a simple coin locker won't do isn't the point.

"I wanted to highlight innovation," Sawada told reporters. "I also wanted to do something about hotel prices going up."

Staying at Henn na Hotel starts at 9,000 yen (\$80), a bargain for Japan, where a stay in one of the nicer hotels can easily cost two or three times that much.

The concierge is a doll-like hairless robot with voice recognition that prattles breakfast and event information. It cannot call a cab or do other errands.

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Robotics is also key in the decommissioning of the three reactors in Fukushima, northern Japan, which went into meltdowns in 2011, in the worst nuclear catastrophe since Chernobyl.

One area where Henn na Hotel still relies on human beings is security.

The place is dotted with security cameras, and real people are watching everything

through a monitor to make sure guests stay safe and no one makes off with one of the expensive robots.

"And they still can't make beds," said Sawada, who has also engineered the rise of a popular affordable Japanese travel agency.

He has big ambitions for his robot hotel concept and wants to open another one soon in Japan, and later abroad. He is also eager to add other languages, such as Chinese and Korean, to the vocabulary of the robots.

A block-shaped robot that was scuttling around in the lobby had been brought in to do room service, delivering beverages and simple snacks. But it wasn't ready to do that yet.

Outdoors, Sawada also demonstrated a drone that flew in to deliver a few small jars filled with snacks. He said he wanted to eventually have drones perform in shows for guests.

In the hotel's rooms, a lamp-size robot in the shape of a fat pink tulip called Tuly answers simple questions like, "What time is it?" and "What is the weather tomorrow?"

You can also tell it to turn the room lights on or off. There are no switches on the walls.

Sawada is keeping the hotel half-filled for the first few weeks to make sure nothing goes wrong.

He also cancelled at the last minute the overnight stay planned for media. The robots simply weren't ready.

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China Renminbi	6.2095
Fijian Dollar	2.1229
Hong Kong Dollar	7.7505
Indian Rupee	63.474
Indonesian Rupiah	13353
Iranian Rial	29160
Japanese Yen	124.11
Laos New Kip	8135.5
Malaysian Ringgit	3.7967
Nepal Rupee	101.63
Pakistani Rupee	101.83
Papua N.G. Kina	2.7662
Philippine Peso	45.24
Russian Ruble	56.988
Saudi Riyal	3.7502
Singapore Dollar	1.3675
South Korean Won	1147.5
Sri Lankan Rupee	133.88
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