



Malaysia cloud-seeding, schools closed, due to haze

KUALA LUMPUR, Malaysia (AP) — A layer of heavy haze forced Malaysian authorities to shut schools in four states, including Kuala Lumpur, with officials using cloud-seeding operations to try to induce rain to help clear the air. The thick, dirty white haze blanketed many parts of Malaysia, with 34 out of 52 air quality stations recording unhealthy air levels. Meteorological department official Maznorizan Mohamad said two cloud-seeding planes took off in Kuala Lumpur and surrounding areas, as well as in Kuching in Sarawak state on Borneo island. The haze affects the region every year, and is largely caused by slashing and burning forests to clear land for agriculture in Indonesia.

Nintendo names new president after Iwata death

TOKYO (AP) — Nintendo named a long-serving executive as president following the death in July of Satoru Iwata. Nintendo said the board decided to appoint Tatsumi Kimishima, 65, as president to strengthen management of the video-game maker. In addition, a new title of “Creative Fellow” was announced for star game designer and senior managing director Shigeru Miyamoto. Nintendo said the title was meant to convey his role in providing advice and guidance. Another senior executive, Genyo Takeda, was given the title “Technology Fellow.” The company said the new titles were part of a “large-scale revision” of Nintendo’s organizational structure. Kimishima was a managing director of the company in charge of corporate analysis, general affairs, and human-resources divisions. He has been at Nintendo since 2000, when he was appointed director of its Pokémon characters business. Iwata, president from 2002, was a highly visible spokesman for Nintendo, and many in the game industry mourned the 55-year-old’s death, which followed a long illness. Earlier this year, Nintendo did an about-face and announced it would go into games for mobile devices, a move it had scoffed for years.

North Korea to launch satellites to mark party anniversary

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — North Korea says it will launch satellites aboard long-range rockets to mark the 70th anniversary of its ruling party’s founding in October. A National Aerospace Development Administration director says the world will “clearly see a series of satellites soaring into the sky at times and locations determined” by the Workers’ Party. The unidentified official’s comments were carried by Pyongyang’s Korean Central News Agency. The official said North Korea is pushing forward on a final development phase for a new earth observation satellite for weather forecasts. The launches, if made, are certain to rekindle animosities on the Korean Peninsula. South Korea, the U.S., and other neighboring countries view past launches as disguised tests of the North’s long-range missile technology.

Spilled wine causes traffic accident that kills 12 in China

BEIJING (AP) — A slick of rice wine that spilled from a truck caused a traffic accident that killed 12 people in central China, according to authorities. A bus following the truck overturned on the slippery road, and another freight truck then crashed into the bus shortly after midnight, said the Xinxian county government in Henan province. Nine people were killed at the scene and three more died at the hospital, the Xinxian government said on its website. Nineteen other people were hospitalized, including two people with serious injuries. Police detained the drivers of the bus and the truck carrying the rice wine. The accident took place at Xinyang, Henan, on the Daqing-Guangzhou expressway.

Netflix plans expansion to four more Asian markets

HONG KONG (AP) — Netflix says it’s planning to enter four more Asian markets next year as the internet video-streaming service steps up its international expansion. People in South Korea, Singapore, Hong Kong, and Taiwan will be able to watch the company’s films and television shows on internet-connected devices starting in early 2016, it said in a statement. The announcement happened a month after the Los Gatos, California-based company announced plans to expand into Japan. It already operates in Australia and New Zealand. Netflix has ambitions to make its service available throughout the world and has already been selling its services in more than 50 other countries outside the U.S. The company is borrowing \$1 billion to help finance its global expansion, which it plans to complete by the end of next year. However, it may have to forge partnerships to enter some countries such as China, where there is stiff competition from state-owned broadcasters and media companies as well as big, private internet firms.

Indonesia chooses medium-speed train plan

JAKARTA, Indonesia (AP) — Indonesia has dropped its plan to build a high-speed train line and is shifting instead to more economical medium-speed technology, according to a cabinet minister. Coordinating minister of economy Darmin Nasution said high-speed service is not suitable for the relatively short distance of 150 kilometers (93 miles) between Jakarta and Bandung, West Java’s provincial capital. “The president’s decision is that we don’t need a high-speed railway. A medium speed of 200 to 250 kilometers per hour is enough,” Nasution said. President Joko “Jokowi” Widodo, who took office last October, has ambitious plans for improving Indonesia’s infrastructure which he says will boost manufacturing and create hundreds of thousands of new jobs. Nasution said a medium-speed rail system would take only 11 minutes more than a high-speed system to make the trip, while its construction cost would be about 40 percent cheaper.



MODERN MONKS. Women Buddhist monks walk during morning alms rounds in Nakhon Pathom, Thailand. Thailand’s top Buddhist authority bars women from becoming monks. A rare sight, female monastics, or bhikkhunis, are emerging as a force for reform, not unlike activists in the Christian world seeking gender equality, including ordination of women as priests in the Catholic Church. (AP Photo/Penny Yi Wang)

‘Rebel’ female Buddhist monks challenge Thailand status quo

By Denis D. Gray
The Associated Press

NAKHON PATHOM, Thailand — On a rural road just after daybreak, villagers young and old kneel reverently before a single-file line of ochre-robed women, filling their bowls with rice, curries, fruits, and sweets. In this country, it’s a rare sight.

Thailand’s top Buddhist authority bars women from becoming monks. They can only become white-cloaked nuns, who are routinely treated as domestic servants. Many here believe women are inferior beings who had better perform plenty of good deeds to ensure they will be reborn as men in their future lives.

Yet with the religion beset by lurid scandals, female monastics, or *bhikkhunis*, are emerging as a force for reform, not unlike activists in the Christian world seeking gender equality, including ordination of women as priests in the Catholic Church. They are growing in numbers and appear to be making headway.

Thailand has some 100 bhikkhunis who were ordained in Sri Lanka, where women are allowed to become monks. They and their monasteries are not legally recognized in Thailand, and don’t enjoy state funding and other support that the country’s 200,000 male monks are granted.

Living spartan lives, the women are governed by 311 precepts from celibacy and poverty to archaic ones like having to confess after eating garlic. Their ranks and those of hundreds of aspirants — there are five stages before ordination — include a former Google executive, a Harvard graduate, journalists,

and doctors, as well as village noodle vendors.

“It is our right, our heritage, to lead a fully monastic life. We are on the right side of history,” says Chatsumarn Kabilsingh, an author, former university professor, and the first bhikkhuni in Thailand from the Theravada branch of Buddhism, which is dominant in Southeast Asia and Sri Lanka. Using her religious name of Venerable Dhammananda, she contends that the Buddha 2,500 years ago built the religion as a four-legged stool — monks, nuns, laymen, and laywomen — but “we are now sitting on just three legs.”

The male-dominated religion has been blighted in recent years by crimes and gross violations of vows, just as widespread sex abuse and Vatican financial scandals have damaged the Roman Catholic Church.

Monks in Thailand have been convicted of everything from murder to wildlife trafficking. Sexual depravity is frequently reported. One former abbot, fugitive Wirapol Sukphol, faces charges of drug use, money laundering, fathering a child by an underage woman, and illegally amassing millions of dollars. A photograph shows him seated in a private jet wearing aviator sunglasses.

The Supreme Sangha Council, the religion’s ruling body, is under fire over the mishandling of corruption allegations against prominent abbots, including one of its own members. The allegations include embezzling funds intended for the cremation of an abbot’s predecessor and the investment of \$1.2 million from donations into the stock market.

With Buddhism so intimately tied to Thai identity — more than 90 percent adhere to the

Continued on page 4





Nattaya Wells
Licensed Mortgage Professional, NMLS#484350
OR Cell: 503.705.1886
WA Cell: 360.836.7398
nwells@homeownersfg.com

Home Loan Purchases & Refinances

Homeowners Financial Group USA, LLC | homeownersfg.com | NMLS#484350

You're Invited Party Rentals
Supplies for small gatherings & large special occasions



Tables
Chairs
Linens
China
Satin overlays
Serving items
And more!

Serving Willamette Valley wine country & more
(503) 857-2706 • www.yourinvitedpartyrentals.com

Asian Currency Exchange Rates

Units per U.S. dollar as of 9/18

Bangladesh Taka	77.795
Cambodian Riel	4095.5
China Renminbi	6.3643
Fijian Dollar	2.1692
Hong Kong Dollar	7.75
Indian Rupee	65.674
Indonesian Rupiah	14374
Iranian Rial	29856
Japanese Yen	119.44
Laos New Kip	8137.5
Malaysian Ringgit	4.1965
Nepal Rupee	105.13
Pakistani Rupee	104.38
Papua N.G. Kina	2.8409
Philippine Peso	46.27
Russian Ruble	65.746
Saudi Riyal	3.7503
Singapore Dollar	1.3901
South Korean Won	1162.8
Sri Lankan Rupee	140.55
Taiwan Dollar	32.416
Thai Baht	35.55
Vietnam Dong	22460