

China says no more foreign street names like “Manhattan”

BEIJING (AP) — China says it will clamp down on foreign-sounding and “bizarre” names after too many streets and developments called “Manhattan” or “Venice” have popped up amid decades of frenzied building. Civil-affairs minister Li Liguo said in a televised speech that the government will change over-the-top or imported names and encourage real-estate developers and city planners to seek inspiration instead from China’s rich cultural heritage. “Some cities have multiple ‘Manhattan’ or ‘Venice’ roads,” Li said. “It’s not only an inconvenience to travellers, but also erodes a sense of home.” It’s common in Chinese cities to encounter words like “elite” or “chateau” in the names of shopping malls or housing compounds. In Beijing, there’s a “Central Park” condominium compound while another upscale project goes by “Yuppie International Condos.”

Japan regulators OK costly ice wall at Fukushima plant

TOKYO — Japanese regulators have approved the use of a giant refrigeration system to create an unprecedented underground frozen barrier around buildings at the wrecked Fukushima nuclear plant in an attempt to contain leaking radioactive water. The Nuclear Regulation Authority said the structure, which was completed in February, can now be activated. The plant’s operator, Tokyo Electric Power Co., said its plan to turn on the ice wall starts with the portion near the sea to prevent more contaminated water from escaping into the Pacific Ocean. The system is being started up in phases to allow close monitoring and adjustment. Nearly 800,000 tons of radioactive water that is already stored in 1,000 industrial tanks at the plant hamper the decontamination and decommissioning of the nuclear facility, which was damaged by a massive earthquake and tsunami in 2011. The success of the ice wall is believed to be key to resolving the plant’s water woes.

South Korea registers first case of Zika virus

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — South Korea has reported the country’s first case of the Zika virus, a mosquito-borne disease that has been linked to birth defects and other health issues. A 43-year-old man who recently returned from Brazil was diagnosed with the virus after suffering fever, muscle pain, and rash, according to a statement from the state-run Centers for Disease Control & Prevention. The tropical disease, which has become epidemic in Latin America and the Caribbean, usually causes a mild illness. But the World Health Organization in February declared the explosive spread of Zika in the Americas to be a global emergency, due to its link to the spike in the number of babies born with abnormally small heads and the rise in a rare neurological syndrome that can cause paralysis and death. The virus has so far triggered outbreaks in more than 40 countries.

Fire at prison kills five inmates in western Indonesia

JAKARTA, Indonesia (AP) — A fire started by rioting prisoners at a penitentiary in western Indonesia has killed five inmates, police said. The fire at Malabero prison in Bengkulu on Sumatra Island began after officers of the anti-narcotics agency entered the facility and took away a drug kingpin, said regional police chief Brig. Gen. M. Ghufro. He said the inmates were believed to be acting in solidarity with the kingpin, who was allegedly controlling the business from inside the prison. Five inmates were killed in the fire, one was treated, and 252 others were moved to Bentiring, another prison in the same town. Indonesia, which has extremely strict drug laws and often executes smugglers, has been intensifying raids as the number of users jumped from 4.2 million to nearly 6 million last year. More than 130 people are on death row, mostly for drug crimes. About a third of them are foreigners.

Bird stops roller coaster, leaves riders hanging upside down

BEIJING (AP) — Roller-coaster riders at one of Beijing’s major amusement parks were left hanging upside down for almost 20 minutes when a bird stood on one of the ride’s safety sensors. The Happy Valley Amusement Park in the Chinese capital said it took 18 minutes to bring the 26 riders to safety during the incident. The roller coaster was back in operation later in the day. The park said in a statement that a bird landed on the sensor and in doing so activated an emergency procedure, immediately stopping the roller coaster as it travelled upward. Ironically, the Happy Valley park describes the ride on its website as “the feeling of flying like a bird.”

Japanese fleet returns with quota of 333 whales

TOKYO (AP) — Japan’s whaling fleet returned with 333 whales it caught in its first Antarctic harvest since an international court ruling stopped its hunt two years ago. The Fisheries Agency said that Japanese whalers in the four-ship fleet killed 333 minke whales, filling its catch quota, during the four-month expedition in the Antarctic. The International Court of Justice in 2014 ruled that Japan’s Antarctic whaling program was not scientific as Tokyo had claimed and must stop. Japan last year conducted only non-lethal research into whaling, but it says killing whales is essential to obtain data on their maturing ages. Scientific research is exempt from a 1986 international ban on commercial whaling. Opponents of Japan’s Antarctic hunt say it’s a cover for commercial whaling, since the surplus is sold. The catch quota under the new research program is about one-third of what Japan used to kill. Its actual catch has fallen in recent years in part because of declining domestic demand for whale meat. The government has spent large amounts of tax money to sustain the whaling operations.



DYSTOPIAN FUTURE. In this undated scene from the Hong Kong movie *Ten Years*, a schoolgirl who is a member of a Red Guard-like neighborhood patrol group prepares to throw an egg at a shop. Made on a shoestring budget, *Ten Years* became a surprise hit with Hong Kong audiences for its dystopian view of the former British colony’s future under Beijing’s rule. (Andy Wong/*Ten Years* via AP)

Film’s dark vision of future Hong Kong unsettles Beijing

By Kelvin Chan
The Associated Press

HONG KONG — It’s the Hong Kong movie Beijing doesn’t want you to see.

Made on a shoestring budget, *Ten Years* became a surprise hit with local audiences for its dystopian view of the former British colony’s future under Beijing’s rule.

The filmmakers imagine a Hong Kong in which protesters set themselves on fire, political assassinations are used to scare the population into supporting repressive laws, and children are enlisted as neighborhood political watchdogs reminiscent of Mao’s Red Guards.

The film, an anthology of five short stories, each by a different director, has provoked widespread discussion and raised the ire of Beijing, with China’s Communist Party newspaper *Global Times* denouncing the film as “absurd.”

It was a hit at the box office, earning more than 6 million Hong Kong dollars (\$770,000), or more than 10 times its budget. But it abruptly disappeared from cinemas in January after an eight-week run, leading many to wonder whether pressure from Beijing was responsible.

Now the only way to see it is at private screenings at universities and community centers, where it’s often followed by a panel discussion with the filmmakers. It screened at about 30 Hong Kong venues on April 1.

Ten Years depicts Hong Kong a decade from now, more than halfway through a promised 50-year period in which civil liberties such as

freedom of speech will remain intact as the city transitions from British to Chinese rule.

Executive producer Andrew Choi said the project began two years ago, before pro-democracy street protests over Beijing’s plans to restrict elections gripped the city for more than two months.

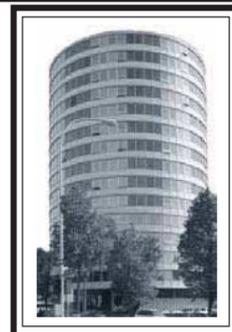
“We wanted to do a movie about Hong Kong. Unfortunately, Hong Kong became very political in every way. So our topic has to involve the current situation in Hong Kong,” Choi said after one recent screening of *Ten Years* organized by local pro-democracy politicians. “I think the movie kind of hit some of the feelings for most of the Hong Kong people.”

The film comes at a time of increasing anxiety about Beijing’s influence. Such fears were highlighted by the disappearances of five men linked to a publisher specializing in juicy but hastily written titles about Chinese elite politics and by a violent clash in February between protesters and police who had cracked down on vendors selling fishballs, a holiday delicacy.

In *Dialect*, a taxi driver struggles with a Mandarin proficiency requirement, reflecting nervousness among Cantonese-speaking residents about the influx of mainlanders. Another segment has a woman who sets herself on fire in support of independence for Hong Kong — a cause that might have been unimaginable a few years ago but now is advocated by a number of radical groups. The movie’s final story, *Local Egg*, revolves around Chinese censorship in the form of schoolkids

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|-------------------|--------|
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| Fijian Dollar | 2.0623 |
| Hong Kong Dollar | 7.7543 |
| Indian Rupee | 66.248 |
| Indonesian Rupiah | 13167 |
| Iranian Rial | 30252 |
| Japanese Yen | 111.69 |
| Laos New Kip | 8116.5 |
| Malaysian Ringgit | 3.8905 |
| Nepal Rupee | 106.0 |
| Pakistani Rupee | 104.72 |
| Papua N.G. Kina | 3.1008 |
| Philippine Peso | 46.022 |
| Russian Ruble | 67.683 |
| Saudi Riyal | 3.7509 |
| Singapore Dollar | 1.3508 |
| South Korean Won | 1154.0 |
| Sri Lankan Rupee | 146.19 |
| Taiwan Dollar | 32.255 |
| Thai Baht | 35.165 |
| Vietnam Dong | 22294 |