



First climbers in two years reach summit of Mount Everest

KATHMANDU, Nepal (AP) — Nine Nepalese guides reached the top of Mount Everest, becoming the first climbers in two years to conquer the world's highest mountain after two successive natural disasters. Nepal Mountaineering Department official Gyanendra Shrestha, who is at the base camp, said the group reached the 29,035-foot summit earlier this month. The Nepalese Sherpa guides are hired by expeditions to carry equipment and fix ropes on the icy and rocky slopes for use by foreign climbers. Nearly 300 foreign climbers and their guides are attempting to reach the summit from Nepal this year. Many are expected to succeed as favorable weather is in the forecast. May is the most popular month to climb, coming between the harsh winter and dangerous monsoon season. Nepal is hoping for a safe 2016 season on Everest, after an avalanche triggered by a powerful earthquake killed 19 climbers and injured 61 others at base camp last year. In 2014, 16 Sherpa guides were killed by an avalanche above the base camp. The two disasters largely emptied the peak. Last year's climbing season was scrubbed and nearly all of the climbers in 2014 abandoned their attempts after the avalanche. The only team who reached the summit that year from the Nepal side was a Chinese woman and her five Sherpa guides.

Man loses in China's first transgender labor dispute

BEIJING (AP) — A Chinese transgender man says he is disappointed but will continue to fight for equality after a labor arbitration panel rejected his complaint that he was fired unfairly, in China's first transgender job discrimination case. The man, who uses the name Mr. C to protect his parents from discrimination, said the panel in the southwestern province of Guizhou granted his demand for about \$62 in wages owed but did not rule that his dismissal was unfair. Mr. C was hired for a sales job with a local health services center but was let go after the probation period ended. Mr. C believed he was dismissed because he lives as a man even though he was born a woman.

North Korea expels BBC journalist, complains of coverage

PYONGYANG, North Korea (AP) — North Korea has expelled a BBC journalist for allegedly "insulting the dignity" of the authoritarian country, which invited scores of foreign media for its ongoing ruling party congress. O Ryong Il, secretary-general of the North's National Peace Committee, said news coverage by the BBC's Rupert Wingfield-Hayes distorted facts and "spoke ill of the system and the leadership of the country." He said Wingfield-Hayes wrote an apology, was expelled, and would never be admitted into the country again. The BBC says Wingfield-Hayes was detained along with producer Maria Byrne and cameraman Matthew Goddard, and that all have been taken to the Pyongyang airport. It said they were in North Korea before the congress and had accompanied a group of Nobel laureates on a trip.

Gang rape, murder of Indonesian girl sparks call for reform

JAKARTA, Indonesia (AP) — The rape and murder of a teenage girl by 14 men has reignited calls in Indonesia for a sexual-violence law that is languishing in parliament to be enacted. The attack on the girl in Bengkulu province in western Indonesia occurred April 2 and went largely unnoticed at a national level until social-media users began highlighting its brutality. Activists from the Alliance for Community Care of Victims of Sexual Violence called on the government to urgently pass the Elimination of Sexual Violence Act. Half of the suspects are younger than 18 years old and the maximum sentence they can receive because of Indonesia's child protection law is 10 years. A local police chief in Bengkulu, Eka Chandra, said trials have begun for the seven minors and prosecutors are seeking 10-year sentences. Local media reported the girl was dragged into a forest by one of the perpetrators on her way home from school. She was found three days later. Arist Merdeka Sirait, chairman of the National Commission for Child Protection, said the adult suspects could receive the death penalty if there is evidence the girl's murder was premeditated. Two of the men are still at large.

Chinese province orders religion out of school

BEIJING (AP) — A heavily Muslim Chinese province has demanded strict adherence to a ban on religion in schools after a video was circulated online in which a kindergartener recited verses from the Quran. The government in the northwestern province of Gansu reiterated the officially atheistic communist government's rules forbidding the presence of religion in public schools at all levels, saying it was protecting children. "This video has drawn a gasp from the public, as many people are infuriated," said the statement. "The Education Department of Gansu province strongly condemns the act that harms the mental health of the youth, and demands education agencies of all levels to stop it resolutely and strictly bans religion from campuses." In the video, the unidentified girl is seen wearing a black Muslim head covering and sitting in a classroom with dozens of other students — apparently all in Muslim attire. There is no indication when and where the video was taken, but the provincial government statement said it was taken in the predominantly Muslim prefecture of Linxia. The government did not identify the kindergarten or if anyone from the school was punished. China also enforces tight restrictions on religious participation by young people outside of school, particularly in its culturally distinct western regions where Islam and Tibetan Buddhism are widely practiced. The government is especially wary of what it sees as the use of religion to promote a non-Chinese cultural identity or independence for Tibet and the northwestern region of Xinjiang.



CATTLE CATWALK. A pair of bulls wait for their turn to walk the ramp during a bovine beauty pageant in Rohtak, India. Hundreds of cows and bulls walked the ramp in the bovine beauty pageant, which aims to promote domestic cattle breeds and raise awareness about animal health. (AP Photo/Altat Qadri)

These beasts are beauties: India holds bovine beauty pageant

By Rishabh R. Jain
The Associated Press

ROHTAK, India — Even beasts can be beautiful. Hundreds of cows and bulls walked the ramp in a north Indian town in a bovine beauty pageant aimed at promoting domestic cattle breeds and raising awareness about animal health.

As farmers led their animals, the panel of experts judged the beasts for their size and overall looks, the length of their horns, and, for the cows, their milk-yielding capacities.

The judges selected 18 winners in various categories, choosing the healthiest and best-looking cows and bulls from more than 630 animals in the contest, which was held in the farming town of Rohtak in Haryana state.

On the ramp, the bovines displayed their individuality. Some sashayed with casual grace, while others dug in their heels and had to be pulled and prodded by their owners to walk for the judges.

The winners, representing three different breeds, carried home prizes and a winner's sash.

China's Xi congratulates North Korea's Kim on new title

BEIJING (AP) — Chinese President Xi Jinping has extended his congratulations to North Korean leader Kim Jong Un on his new title of chairman of the ruling Workers' Party of Korea.

China's official Xinhua News Agency said Xi, also head of China's ruling Communist Party, expressed hope that Kim's leadership would bring "new accomplishments in the cause of building socialism."

Despite a fraying of ties in recent years, Xi

called the traditional friendship between the once-close communist neighbors a "shared treasure."

He said China stood ready to work for further improvements in bilateral relations and to make "positive contributions to safeguarding peace, stability, and development in the region."

Kim has yet to visit China, despite its status as the North's key source of economic and diplomatic support.

The farmers led their prize cows with pride at the sprawling grounds of the International Institute of Veterinary Education and Research.

"I have brought my best cow for the show and she has won a prize," Randhir Singh, a farmer from nearby Dwarka village, said as he pointed to a red ribbon tied around the head of his well-groomed cow, which won first place in its category. "I wanted my cow to win and she has done me proud."

Prem Singh, the Haryana official in charge of animal husbandry, said only indigenous breeds were allowed to take part in the contest because the state government was trying to popularize local breeds of cows.

Farmers from all 21 districts of Haryana participated in the cattle show and pageant, the official said.

In recent years, India has emerged as one of the world's largest producers of milk, although yields from Indian cows are low compared to those in Europe or America. The government is trying to improve milk yields of domestic cows by offering better veterinary support and counselling to cattle farmers.

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Units per U.S. dollar as of 5/14

Bangladesh Taka	78.375
Cambodian Riel	4055.0
China Renminbi	6.532
Fijian Dollar	2.0956
Hong Kong Dollar	7.764
Indian Rupee	66.774
Indonesian Rupiah	13325
Iranian Rial	30304
Japanese Yen	108.63
Laos New Kip	8107.0
Malaysian Ringgit	4.031
Nepal Rupee	106.83
Pakistani Rupee	104.65
Papua N.G. Kina	3.1646
Philippine Peso	46.59
Russian Ruble	65.453
Saudi Riyal	3.7501
Singapore Dollar	1.3722
South Korean Won	1171.5
Sri Lankan Rupee	146.15
Taiwan Dollar	32.606
Thai Baht	35.455
Vietnam Dong	22358