

Drug crackdown in the Philippines faces court challenge

MANILA, The Philippines (AP) — A survivor of an alleged Philippine police raid that killed four other drug suspects has asked the Supreme Court to stop such operations and help him obtain police records to prove his innocence in a test case against the president’s bloody crackdown. Lawyer Romel Bagares says his client, Efren Morillo, a survivor of the August police raid in Payatas village in metropolitan Manila, and other petitioners also asked the court to order police to stop threatening witnesses. Bagares says four policemen shot Morillo and four other men whom they accused of being drug pushers. Morillo survived and denied police allegations that he and his friends were drug dealers and that they fought back during the raid.

Defector says his two sons were a reason to flee

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — The highest-level North Korean diplomat ever to defect to South Korea says he decided to flee because he didn’t want to see his children living “miserable” lives. Thae Yong Ho, a former minister at the North’s embassy in London, said his two sons were one of the main reasons why he came to South Korea last year. Thae says his sons complained about being made fun of by their classmates in London because of the nature of their homeland. Thae subsequently told them the truth about the North and concluded his sons would have “miserable” lives when they returned home later because they came to know the truth of the North. His disappointment with leader Kim Jong Un was another reason given to defect.

Vietnam to allow locals in casinos under test project

HANOI, Vietnam (AP) — Vietnamese gamblers will soon be allowed into local casinos because of a three-year pilot project. Under a decree signed by Prime Minister Nguyen Xuan Phuc that takes effect in mid-March, Vietnamese over 21 years of age with a monthly income of at least 10 million dong (\$440) will be allowed in casinos. After three years, the government will decide whether to continue the arrangement. There are about a dozen casinos in Vietnam, but only foreigners are allowed entry. The latest decree only includes entertainment and hotel complexes with investment of at least \$2 billion. Vietnam has long banned most types of gambling, but bets on European soccer championships or World Cups are common.

India’s low-cost airline to buy up to 205 new Boeing planes

NEW DELHI (AP) — India’s low-cost airline SpiceJet plans to buy up to 205 next-generation Boeing planes worth \$22 billion in a major deal to expand its domestic and international operations. A joint statement by the two companies said the planes booked at the end of 2016 include 100 new Boeing 737 MAX 8s, 42 MAXs, 13 additional 737 MAXs, as well as purchase rights for 50 additional planes. SpiceJet is India’s fourth-largest airline by number of passengers carried with a market share of 12.9 percent. It flies more than 300 daily flights to 41 Indian and international destinations. Ray Conner, a top Boeing official, said the economics of the 737 MAXs would allow SpiceJet to profitably open new markets and expand connectively within India and beyond. India’s booming economy and growing middle class have helped make it the world’s fastest-growing air travel market. The number of passengers grew 20 percent last year and airlines are announcing flights to new destinations in the country almost every week. The number of domestic air passengers is expected to jump from the current 70 million to 300 million by 2022, and to 500 million by 2027.

Indo narcotics chief blames pilots on drugs for crashes

JAKARTA, Indonesia (AP) — The head of Indonesia’s narcotics agency says most of the country’s airline accidents have involved pilots on drugs, including a Lion Air jet that slammed into the sea four years ago while trying to land on Bali. Budi Waseso made the comments at a ceremony inaugurating Bali’s traditional village security guards as anti-drug volunteers. “Almost all air accidents in Indonesia, whether it was just a skid or whatever, the pilots are indicated to be positive for drugs,” he told reporters. He said the Lion Air pilot hallucinated that the sea was the runway. The comments came after a video circulated online showing an apparently intoxicated pilot in the cockpit of a passenger plane. News reports said two other pilots recently tested positive for drugs.

Lawyer for Myanmar ruling party assassinated at airport

YANGON, Myanmar (AP) — A legal adviser for the National League for Democracy (NLD) was assassinated at an airport in Myanmar (also known as Burma) after returning from a trip overseas, according to the government. Ko Ni was the Supreme Court advocate for the NLD and a longstanding adviser to the country’s leader, Aung San Suu Kyi. The unidentified gunman made a close shot to the head while Ko Ni walked out of the arrival gate at Yangon’s airport, the Ministry of Information said in a video posted on state-run MRTV. A friend of Ko Ni who witnessed the shooting said the suspected assassin also shot a taxi driver known as Nay Win who tried to stop him from fleeing. The taxi driver’s condition was not clear. The Ministry of Information identified the suspect as Kyi Linn from Mandalay. The motive was not known. Kyee Myint, a former chairman of the Myanmar Lawyer Network who has a close relationship with Ko Ni, also confirmed his death. “It is a big loss for us that Ko Ni, our beloved friend, has been killed. He is the face of the democracy in our country and this is a big loss for us,” Kyee Myint said. Ko Ni was a Burmese Muslim and as a practicing lawyer had handled more than 900 criminal cases and more than 1,400 civil cases. In 1995, he established the Laurel Law Firm with two other advocates.



BLACK GOLD. A worker sorts through peppers by hand in Kampot, Cambodia. Lauded by celebrity chefs and exorbitantly priced, Cambodia’s Kampot pepper is enjoying a renaissance, aided by special recognition and protection from the European Union in 2016. (AP Photo/Denis Gray)

Cambodia’s “perfect pepper” conquering world’s taste buds

By Denis D. Gray
The Associated Press

KAMPOT, Cambodia — A nearby sea, flanking mountains, and quartz-rich soil: It’s the perfect spot on earth, devotees say, to yield a product they describe in that rapturous vocabulary usually reserved for fine wines: “aristocratic, virile, almost aphrodisiacal,” with subtle notes of caramel, gingerbread, and mild tobacco.

Celebrity chefs from Paris to Los Angeles swear by Kampot pepper, a southwestern Cambodian spice with a tragic past that is now reclaiming its global pre-eminence. It is also proving to be “black gold” for some of its once-impoverished farmers, thanks in part to Kampot pepper last year being awarded a Protected Geographical Indication by the European Union (EU). This identifies unique products — like Stilton cheese, Champagne or Darjeeling tea — as originating in a very specific region.

So far Kampot pepper production is a mere dusting — just 70 tons last year. Vietnam, the world’s top pepper producer, churned out some 145,000 tons of the spice. But more plantations are springing up while Kampot quality is rated as high as ever and hitherto slack markets, like the United States, are getting hooked on the spice. A New York chef has even concocted a Kampot pepper ice cream while Michelin three-starred French chef Olivier Roellinger rhapsodizes about its “olfactory richness” and broad spectrum of flavors.

The spice’s EU designation “has permitted a renaissance of pepper in Kampot. ... This not only recognizes the singularity of this pepper but helps protect it from imitations,” said Nathalie Chaboche, a Frenchwoman who with

her Belgian husband, Guy Porre, owns La Plantation, where pepper plants entwine 20,000 posts on a rolling green landscape fronted by the Gulf of Thailand.

The couple, who started the enterprise four years ago after lucrative careers in the computer industry, aim to boost production from 6 tons last year to 50 tons in 2018. They intend to grow without weakening quality control or endangering Kampot’s status as a “premier cru,” a French term for wine and other produce signifying impeccable quality — and hefty price.

Kampot red pepper was recently selling in Germany for as much as 378 euro per kilogram (\$185 per pound), compared to an average import price of about \$8 for one pound in Europe for Vietnamese pepper. The farm gate price for the three pepper varieties — red, white, and black — averages around \$10 per pound.


Believed to have originated in southern India, pepper became a widely traded item across Asia and Europe. Pepper farming in Cambodia was first recorded by a Chinese traveller in the 13th century, and energized centuries later by French colonialists. By the early 1900s, annual production peaked at 8,000 tons.

War disrupted the industry and after their 1975 victory, the murderous Khmer Rouge turned farmers into slave laborers. Deeming the “king of spice” too decadent for their ultra-revolution, the regime left plantations to decay.

A Japanese aid worker, Hironobu Kurata, pioneered a revival in the mid-1990s, but the scars of the Khmer Rouge era took long to heal. As late as 2000, only 2 tons were grown annually, but now about 450 farms produce

Continued on page 13

Albina Community Bank



“The best way to help represent the bank is to be involved with the community. Give me a call to learn more!”

~ Charlie Te ~
(503) 285-2296 • cte@albinabank.com

St. Johns Office • 8040 N. Lombard
MLK Office • 2002 NE MLK Jr. Blvd.
www.albinabank.com

Asian Currency Exchange Rates

Units per U.S. dollar as of 2/03

Bangladesh Taka	79.54
Cambodian Riel	4036.0
China Renminbi	6.8672
Fijian Dollar	2.0488
Hong Kong Dollar	7.7576
Indian Rupee	67.316
Indonesian Rupiah	13343
Iranian Rial	32403
Japanese Yen	112.61
Laos New Kip	8190.0
Malaysian Ringgit	4.428
Nepal Rupee	107.69
Pakistani Rupee	104.77
Papua N.G. Kina	3.2773
Philippine Peso	49.802
Russian Ruble	59.003
Saudi Riyal	3.7504
Singapore Dollar	1.4099
South Korean Won	1135.7
Sri Lankan Rupee	150.45
Taiwan Dollar	31.02
Thai Baht	35.033
Vietnam Dong	22814

Black Pearl Acupuncture

Acupuncture and Herbal Medicine are great for:

- Acute/Chronic Pain (i.e. neck, back, sciatica & shoulder)
- Treating & Preventing the flu and colds
- Stress Relief
- Headaches/Migraines



Sita Symonette
Licensed Acupuncturist
seasymonettea@gmail.com

www.blackpearlacupuncture.com

Call to schedule an appointment: (503) 308-9363
505 N.W. Ninth Ave., Portland, OR 97209