

### China to start fingerprinting foreign visitors

BEIJING (AP) — Millions of foreigners visiting China each year will now have their fingerprints collected. The country's Ministry of Public Security said in a statement that it will begin taking the fingerprints of visitors as they enter and exit the country. The requirement will apply to most people between the ages of 14 and 70. The policy will go into effect starting in Shenzhen, the southern Chinese city bordering Hong Kong. Chinese authorities counted more than 76 million entries and exits by foreigners last year. The visitors were primarily from South Korea, Japan, the United States, and Russia. The ministry said the new requirement is "an important measure to strengthen entry and exit management" that matches policies in other countries. U.S. Customs and Border Protection has fingerprinted most foreign visitors since 2004.

### Palm oil workers killed orangutan for meat

JAKARTA, Indonesia (AP) — An Indonesian lawmaker says palm oil plantation workers killed and ate a critically endangered orangutan on the island of Borneo and police should investigate. Daniel Johan said the workers shot the great ape after it ventured onto a plantation in a remote area of Central Kalimantan province, probably looking for crops to eat. "It's a blatant offense against Indonesia's conservation laws," said Johan. "Police have to investigate." Johan said a witness provided him photos of the butchered primate. Last July, the International Union for Conservation of Nature classified Borneo's orangutans as critically endangered. The animals are often killed for their meat but punishment is rare. The forest habitat of the apes has shrunk dramatically to make way for plantations.

### Vietnam allows betting on international soccer matches

HANOI, Vietnam (AP) — Vietnamese gamblers will soon be allowed to place bets on international soccer competitions under a pilot project. Under the decree signed by Prime Minister Nguyen Xuan Phuc that will take effect by the end of March, Vietnamese older than 21 years of age will be allowed to place bets of up to \$44 per day, with a minimum bet of 44 cents. The government will allow only one company to do this business during the five-year trial period and the company must have an investment capital of at least 1 trillion dong (\$44 million). After the five-year period, the government will decide whether to continue the arrangement. The decree also allows betting on local horse and dog races. In January, the government issued a decree allowing local people into casinos, which had been open only to foreigners. Vietnam has long banned most types of gambling, but Vietnamese are passionate about soccer and bets on European soccer games are very common. There are no official figures on how much money is placed on illegal soccer bets, but police nationwide have busted multiple illegal soccer betting rings in recent years.

### China's first large homemade passenger jet to fly in 2017

BEIJING (AP) — After years of delays, China's first large homemade passenger jetliner will take to the air for its maiden flight in the first half of this year, according to state media. State-owned aircraft maker Commercial Aircraft Corp. of China Ltd., or Comac, based in Shanghai, has nearly completed work on the 175-passenger C919, the ruling Communist Party newspaper *People's Daily* reported. The C919 was originally due to fly in 2015, but has been beset by delays blamed on manufacturing problems. It is now scheduled to enter service in 2019, aimed at competing with the Airbus A320 and Boeing 737, along with the Russian Irkut MC-21. Airbus and Boeing say the market for new aircraft will be worth more than \$5 trillion over the next 20 years. Industry experts say China faces a tough slog capturing a significant share of that market, even with government support. Comac says it has 517 orders for the C919. The C919 is part of China's efforts to develop a homegrown aviation industry in one of the world's biggest and fastest-growing air travel markets. China currently relies heavily on foreign-made aircraft. Last June, the ARJ21-700, China's first homemade regional jet, made its debut flight carrying 70 passengers. The jet is one of a series of initiatives launched by the party to transform China from the world's low-cost factory into a creator of profitable technology in aviation, clean energy, and other fields. The ARJ21, also made by Comac, is a rival to aircraft made by Bombardier Inc. of Canada and Brazil's Embraer SA.

### Cambodian PM bans Taiwan flag, cites 'One-China' policy

PHNOM PENH, Cambodia (AP) — Cambodia's prime minister says raising Taiwan's flag is banned because Cambodia follows the "One-China" policy promoted by Beijing. Hun Sen, in a speech to the Cambodian-Chinese Association posted on Facebook, said he welcomes investment from Taiwanese businesspeople, but that respecting Chinese sovereignty means acknowledging Taiwan is a province of China. He said in his remarks that Taiwan's flag should not be raised on its national day. Hun Sen, who has led his country for three decades, said this has always been his policy. He has in the past rebuffed Taiwanese efforts to open an official representative office in Cambodia, and reaffirmed that position in his speech. He also told his audience that Cambodia holds the same policy toward Tibet, recognizing China's sovereignty against claims for independence of what China calls the Tibet Autonomous Region. China is impoverished Cambodia's key ally and economic partner. It has provided millions of dollars in aid and investment over the past decade, granted tariff-free status on hundreds of trade items, and written off debt. In return, Cambodia supports China in international forums, including in Beijing's ongoing territorial disputes with other Southeast Asian countries in the South China Sea.



**OLYMPIC COUNTDOWN.** South Korean Byun Chun-sa, a 2006 Turin Winter Olympics gold medalist in short track speed skating, left, and Byun Jong-moon, a 1996 Harbin Winter Asian Games gold medalist, right, wear torch runners' uniforms while holding the 2018 Pyeongchang Games torch during an unveiling ceremony for the Pyeongchang Winter Olympics at the Gangneung Hockey Centre in Gangneung, South Korea. The opening ceremony for the 2018 Pyeongchang Olympic Winter Games will be held February 9, 2018. (AP Photo/Lee Jin-man)

## Yuna Kim reveals Olympic torch in countdown to 2018 Games

By Kim Tong-Hyung  
The Associated Press

GANNEUNG, South Korea — The one-year countdown to the Pyeongchang Games began with Yuna Kim revealing the Olympic torch and organizers opening online ticket reservations.

South Korean Prime Minister Hwang Kyo-ahn and an International Olympic Committee (IOC) delegation led by Gunilla Lindberg, who heads the IOC's coordination commission for the games, also attended the ceremony in Gangneung, which will host the ice sports events next year.

"I am convinced that the Pyeongchang Olympics will be a success," Hwang said in a speech at the ceremony. "I believe in the great strength of our people who have successfully hosted international events like the 1988 Olympics and 2002 World Cup."

Kim, a figure skating gold medalist who is perhaps the country's most popular sports personality even in retirement, carried the white-and-gold Olympic torch onto a stage built over ice as a group of pop singers sang "We Are The Champions," highlighting an event that also included a video message from IOC president Thomas Bach.

"It is my great pleasure to invite the national Olympic committees of the world and their athletes to participate in the Olympic Winter Games Pyeongchang 2018," Bach said in the message.

Hwang has served as the country's acting head of state since December, when President Park Geun-hye's powers were suspended after lawmakers voted to impeach her over a corruption scandal. He told organizers that the government is ready to invest "every reliable

resource" to build buzz for the games and ensure the safety of athletes and spectators.

With preparations entering the last phases, the participation of North Korea and Russia have emerged as major issues ahead of next year's games.

Relations between the two Koreas have worsened since North Korea conducted two nuclear tests and a string of rocket launches last year as it continues to expand its nuclear weapons and missile programs.

Russian athletes have been caught up in a scandal following allegations of state-sponsored doping around the time of the 2014 Sochi Olympics.

Lee Hee-beom, Pyeongchang's organizing head, expressed hopes to see athletes from both countries at the games.

"Every country and every athlete who loves peace has a right and obligation to participate in the Olympics," Lee said. "North Korea is no exception. We are making preparations for the possibility that North Korea participates in the games."

The Pyeongchang Games will mark the second time the Olympics have been staged in South Korea, which also hosted the 1988 Games in Seoul.

This time, organizers have had to overcome delays, local conflicts regarding venue construction, and difficulties attracting domestic sponsorships before putting preparations on track.


Construction workers are putting the finishing touches on the 12 competition venues in Pyeongchang and nearby Gangneung, including six new facilities that organizers say are about 96 percent complete on average.

The athletes and media villages, an

*Continued on page 4*



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Units per U.S. dollar as of 2/17	
Bangladesh Taka	80.09
Cambodian Riel	4005.5
China Renminbi	6.8665
Fijian Dollar	2.051
Hong Kong Dollar	7.7612
Indian Rupee	67.02
Indonesian Rupiah	13333
Iranian Rial	32420
Japanese Yen	112.84
Laos New Kip	8200.0
Malaysian Ringgit	4.453
Nepal Rupee	107.22
Pakistani Rupee	104.75
Papua N.G. Kina	3.175
Philippine Peso	50.046
Russian Ruble	58.291
Saudi Riyal	3.7503
Singapore Dollar	1.4185
South Korean Won	1152.5
Sri Lankan Rupee	151.14
Taiwan Dollar	30.782
Thai Baht	35.005
Vietnam Dong	22614