

### Sushi in Pyongyang: Japanese chef opens rare restaurant

PYONGYANG, North Korea (AP) — A Japanese chef famous for working for North Korea's late leader Kim Jong Il has returned to Pyongyang to open a sushi restaurant. According to Canadian consultant Michael Spavor, who met Kenji Fujimoto last year, the restaurant — a rarity in the North Korean capital — is a hit with foreign diplomats, U.N. workers, and business people. It's uncommon to find a Japanese business openly operating in North Korea because of strained relations between the two countries. But Fujimoto is a special case. After Kim's death in 2011, he met with his son, the new leader Kim Jong Un, and the restaurant opened early this year. Prices are high by Pyongyang standards, starting at \$50 for a sushi set, and running to more than \$100.

### China cutting 500,000 heavy industry jobs

BEIJING (AP) — China's labor minister says Beijing will cut another 500,000 jobs this year from steel, coal, and other heavy industries to reduce excess production capacity that's flooding markets and depressing global prices. Yin Weimin said the government will provide support for the laid-off workers to transfer to other jobs, start their own companies, or retire. China is in the midst of a multi-year effort to shrink bloated industries including steel, coal, aluminum, cement, and glass in which production exceeds demand. Some companies are trying to export their surplus output, prompting complaints by the United States, Europe, and other trading partners that they're threatening thousands of jobs. At a news conference, Yin said the government provided similar aid last year to 726,000 workers whose jobs in coal and steel were eliminated.

### Families aim to raise \$50 million to search for Flight 370

KUALA LUMPUR, Malaysia (AP) — The families of those onboard missing Malaysia Airlines Flight 370 launched an effort to raise at least \$50 million to fund a private search while also marking the third anniversary of the plane's disappearance. The nearly three-year search in the southern Indian Ocean was suspended January 17 with no trace of the plane, which disappeared March 8, 2014 while flying from Kuala Lumpur to Beijing with 239 people on board. Jacquita Gomes, whose husband was a flight attendant on the plane, said families have no choice but to take matters into their own hands. She said Flight 370 "should not go down in history books as a mystery." Transport minister Liow Tiong Lai said a final report on the plane's disappearance will be released this year.

### Philippine police face first lawsuit over drug killings

MANILA, The Philippines (AP) — Relatives of a father and son who were killed last year by Philippine policemen in an anti-drug raid have filed murder complaints against eight officers in what lawyers said will be the first of many lawsuits against enforcers of the president's bloody crackdown. Lawyer Maria Kristina Conti said the murder complaints filed by Mary Ann Domingo against the policemen are the start of a campaign to help families of poor victims of alleged extrajudicial killings under President Rodrigo Duterte's crackdown fight back through the courts. Domingo's husband and son were gunned down in their house in what police say was a gunbattle with drug suspects, but Conti said was a rubout.

### Indonesia says cruise ship must pay for coral damage

JAKARTA, Indonesia (AP) — Indonesia's government says a British-owned cruise ship must pay compensation for the destruction of coral reefs in a popular tourist area known for its extensive marine biodiversity. The 4,200-ton cruise ship *M.V. Caledonian Sky* ran aground in the waters of Raja Ampat in West Papua province, causing extensive damage to the coral reefs. Vice president Jusuf Kalla said the ship must pay for the damage it caused. Brahmantya Satyamurti Poerwadi, a senior official at the Ministry of Maritime and Fisheries, said the government will soon file lawsuits against the ship and its captain, Keith Michael Taylor. He added that the ship, which is now in the Philippines, could be summoned for an investigation. Poerwadi said the ship violated both the 2004 Law on Fisheries and the 2009 Law on Environment Protection. Each law carries jail terms of up to three years for negligence that leads to destruction. The ministry described the damage to the reefs as irreparable. A preliminary investigation found that about 17,200 square feet of coral in the heart of the islands was destroyed. Poerwadi said a team was investigating the full extent of the destruction. Raja Ampat is an archipelago with more than 1,500 small islands, cays, and shoals and is known as a center of marine biodiversity.

### Restive Chinese region offers reward to recruit more police

BEIJING (AP) — Authorities in China's western region of Xinjiang are offering high salaries and other benefits to recruit police in the restive area, which has seen bloody attacks blamed on separatists. A notice on the website of the government of Kashgar city in Xinjiang said 3,000 male officers are being offered monthly salaries beginning at 5,000 yuan (\$724), well above the regional average. The recruitment drive is the latest step to ramp up security in the area, where members of the native Uighur (WEE-gur) ethnic group have been blamed for deadly attacks on government targets and migrants from other parts of China. In a recent reported incident, eight people were killed, including three knife-wielding assailants, in Pishan county in southern Xinjiang. Like in Kashgar, Uighurs form the majority in Pishan.



**CULTURAL CITY.** This January 24, 2017 photo shows one of the exquisite carvings that adorn the palace of Queen Sein Don in Mawlamyine, which depicts one of 45 consorts of Mindon, the next-to-last king of Myanmar (formerly known as Burma). For decades, foreigners were banned from the Mawlamyine area due to an insurgency. Tourists are still few compared to an influx to other areas of the country following the end of military rule in 2011 and the electoral victory of pro-democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi last year. (Denis D. Gray via AP)

## Myanmar's ex-colonial capital captivates with faded glory

*Continued from page one*

stupa in proper Buddhist fashion.

Despite the intrusions of modern technology and being Myanmar's fourth largest city, Mawlamyine (as Moulmein is now officially spelled) still maintains an air of distance from the world's mainstays, in part because of its geography. It's a long, 186-mile road journey from the country's international gateway of Yangon, the other options being a rickety train ride or sporadic flights.

For decades, foreigners were banned from the area due to an insurgency. Tourists are still few compared to an influx to other areas of Myanmar (formerly known as Burma) that followed the end of military rule in 2011 and the electoral victory of pro-democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi last year.

Our party recently took the most scenic route to Mawlamyine: by car from Yangon to Hpa-An, the pleasant capital of Myanmar's Karen State, and from there by hired boat down the Salween, one of the world's longest, still free-flowing rivers. Before it empties into the sea, the Salween enhances Mawlamyine's charm, flowing past its Strand Road where families stroll to view the sunset across the broad stream.

Mawlamyine wasn't always a byway. After the first Anglo-Burmese war, the British made it their capital between 1826 and 1852, building government offices, churches, and a massive prison. They started business enterprises and the country's first newspaper.

Many of these relics of the British Raj remain along with mosques, Hindu temples, and even a slice of Americana, reflecting Mawlamyine's great diversity.

One of the earliest American missionaries to foreign lands, the legendary Adoniram

Judson, built the town's First Baptist Church in 1827, going on to write an English-Burmese dictionary and translate the Bible into Burmese during his nearly 40 years in the country. Nearby stands the St. Mathew's Anglican church, erected in 1887 and still in use, although like many of the city's heritage buildings in a state of picturesque decay: Vegetation sprouts from peeling brick walls and the tower clock is perpetually set at 6:54pm.

Given Mawlamyine's numerous Buddhist temples, one can succumb to pagoda fatigue. But aside from "Kipling's," said to date back to 875 and enshrine a hair of the Lord Buddha, the Yadarbon Myint Monastery is a must although rarely visited. The monastery's small palace contains some of Myanmar's most exquisite carvings, commissioned by Queen Sein Don, one of 45 consorts of the Mindon, the penultimate king of Myanmar.

The queen came after Mandalay was seized by the British in 1885, bringing with her craftsmen from the royal capital. What they created has special value since Mandalay's royal palace and most of its artistic treasures were destroyed in World War II.

While Mawlamyine's Buddhist shrines will surely be preserved, the colonial heritage along with the city's unique character is imperiled. Dr. Tin Soe, a longtime resident, says the fledgling local government lacks expertise, the still powerful military has sold public land to line its pockets, and the public sees little value in old buildings. "The government has not time, no budget, and no brains," he says.

But a glimmer of hope comes from Yangon, where the Yangon Heritage Trust is spearheading a generally successful campaign to save the city's magnificent colonial architecture from the bulldozer and decay.




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Asian Currency Exchange Rates	
Units per U.S. dollar as of 3/17	
Bangladesh Taka	80.105
Cambodian Riel	3955.7
China Renminbi	6.9034
Fijian Dollar	2.062
Hong Kong Dollar	7.762
Indian Rupee	65.475
Indonesian Rupiah	13345
Iranian Rial	32415
Japanese Yen	112.7
Laos New Kip	8208.8
Malaysian Ringgit	4.4355
Nepal Rupee	107.48
Pakistani Rupee	104.84
Papua N.G. Kina	3.167
Philippine Peso	50.174
Russian Ruble	57.182
Saudi Riyal	3.7502
Singapore Dollar	1.402
South Korean Won	1130.1
Sri Lankan Rupee	152.32
Taiwan Dollar	30.626
Thai Baht	34.837
Vietnam Dong	22659