

Chinese parents alarmed by miniature crossbow craze

BEIJING (AP) — Powerful mini-crossbows that shoot toothpicks and needles are the new must-have toy for schoolkids across China — and a nightmare for concerned parents and school officials. Several cities, including Shenzhen and Qingdao, have reportedly banned sales of the palm-sized contraptions, which sell for about \$1 and are powerful enough to puncture soda cans, apples, and cardboard, depending on the projectile. The fad appears to have sprung out of the southwest city of Chengdu, but quickly spread to China's east coast and even across the border to Hong Kong. In the Chinese territory of Macau, police issued a warning that using the crossbows might constitute a criminal offense. Although there have not yet been widespread reports of serious injuries, parents across China have raised concerns with schools, with many circulating petitions on social media in support of a nationwide ban. "People getting blinded will become commonplace, must ban!" said one user on the messaging forum hupu.com while another asked: "What was the inventor of this thing thinking?" Taobao and JD.com, China's two most popular e-commerce sites, have responded in recent days by blocking sales. Searches for "crossbow" or "toothpick crossbow" now return empty.

China tightens online video controls, jolting investors

BEIJING (AP) — Three popular Chinese internet services have been ordered to stop streaming video after censors complained it contained improper comments on sensitive issues. The move prompted a sell-off in the U.S.-traded shares of Sina Corp. and its microblog service, Sina Weibo. The announcement adds to efforts by President Xi Jinping's government to tighten media control ahead of a Communist Party congress late this year. Xi is due to be appointed to a second five-year term as party leader. Video streamed by users of Sina Weibo, AcFun, and Phoenix New Media's ifeng.com contained "negative comments" about unspecified sensitive issues, the State Administration of Press, Publication, Radio, Film, and Television said. It ordered them to stop the services. Communist leaders promote internet use for business and education, but try to block access to material deemed subversive or obscene. Beijing has been especially wary of social media since its use by organizers of the Arab Spring protests that spread across the Middle East in 2010 and led to the downfall of the Egyptian and Tunisian governments.

U.S., EU urge China to limit food import control

BEIJING (AP) — Food exporters, including the United States and Europe, are stepping up pressure on China to scale back plans for intensive inspections of imports they say will hamper access to its fast-growing market. Nine nations and the European Union have sent a joint letter to Chinese regulators asking them to suspend a proposed requirement, due to take effect October 1, for each shipment to have an inspection certificate from a foreign government. The dispute adds to complaints Beijing is reducing market access for other goods ranging from medical technology to farm-related biotechnology in violation of its free-trade commitments. The letter says the rules will affect billions of dollars worth of meat, fruit, dairy, and other products as well as thousands of suppliers who look to China as a growing market.

Philippine rebels storm police station, seize assault rifles

MANILA, The Philippines (AP) — Philippine police say communist guerrillas recently stormed a police station in a central province and seized a dozen assault rifles and pistols, two-way radios, cash, jewelry, and a patrol car. Regional police chief superintendent Cesar Hawthorne Binag condemned the attack by about 50 New People's Army guerrillas in Iloilo province's Maasin town, saying criminal complaints would be filed against the gunmen. The rebels claimed responsibility for the 20-minute attack, which they said they carried out without firing a shot, to punish Maasin policemen who were allegedly involved in extortion and have failed to take action to stop the spread of illegal drugs and gambling. The communist rebels staged the attack as troops struggled to end a 27-day siege by Islamic State group-aligned militants in southern Marawi city.

Conservationists find rare cache of crocodile eggs

PHNOM PENH, Cambodia (AP) — Wildlife researchers in Cambodia say they've found a clutch of eggs from one of the world's most endangered crocodiles, raising hopes for its continuing survival in the wild. The New York-based Wildlife Conservation Society said in a statement that its researchers, along with Fisheries Administration employees and local residents, found six eggs of the Siamese Crocodile in Sre Ambel District in the southern province of Koh Kong as they were exploring for tracks, signs, and dung of the reptile. It said it was the first Siamese Crocodile nest recorded in six years of research and protection in the Sre Ambel area. The group says the crocodile, with an estimated global population of around 410, is found only in Cambodia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Thailand, and Vietnam, with the greatest number in Cambodia. The species is listed as critically endangered by the International Union for Conservation of Nature because its numbers are rapidly shrinking. "To avoid any threats, we moved the eggs to a safe place to hatch and track their progress," the statement quoted In Hul, a staff member of the Fisheries Administration, as saying. Such threats, said the statement, "include illegal hunting of adults and hatchlings and collecting of eggs to supply crocodile farms in Cambodia and Thailand, especially during the last two decades." Other threats include the "degradation of habitats, decrease of natural food, low chance of breeding in the wild due to low number of individuals in the wild, and weak law enforcement such as regulations on crocodile farming and trading."



MARKET MODERNIZATION. Prospective buyers inspect the quality of frozen tuna fish in the early morning before the first auction of the year at Tsukiji fish market in Tokyo, in this January 5, 2017 file photo. The huge, and hugely popular, Tsukiji fish market won't be destroyed, but will be closed for up to five years while it is modernized and turned into a "food theme park," according to Tokyo's governor. (AP Photo/Eugene Hoshiko, File)

Famous Tsukiji fish market will be remade, not destroyed

By Yuri Kageyama
AP Business Writer

TOKYO — Tokyo's huge, and hugely popular, Tsukiji fish market won't be destroyed, but will be closed for up to five years while it is modernized and turned into a "food theme park," the capital's governor has said.

The market will move to a state-of-the-art 600 billion yen (\$6 billion) facility in Toyosu on the eastern outskirts of Tokyo while Tsukiji is rebuilt. After that, Tokyo will have two wholesale fish markets, governor Yuriko Koike said.

Koike had halted the planned move to Toyosu last August, just months before the new market's scheduled opening, after food safety concerns were raised. Toxins have been found in soil and groundwater at Toyosu, which was previously the site of a gas plant.

The initial plan was to sell the bayside Tsukiji property after the move, possibly for a shopping mall or casino.

But Koike said she is opposed to such a one-time cash gain for the capital. Tsukiji is a valuable brand and landmark, she said at a news conference.

"Our country has always valued tradition," she said.

Koike declined to give an exact timeline, stressing she was just announcing a basic plan that still requires approval by the city legislature.

Toyosu will also need to be cleaned to ensure

its water systems and soil meet safety standards. The city faces a challenge in calming public fears about the toxins at Toyosu, which have drawn widespread media coverage.

The massive new complex, loaded with huge refrigeration units, will be expensive just to maintain.

Meanwhile, Tsukiji, famous the world over for its tuna auctions and quaint sushi joints, has hobbled along and is still busy with tourists.

Koike said she wants to turn Tsukiji into a "food theme park," rebuilding its antiquated buildings and adding the latest earthquake-resistant technology. Japan is among the most quake-prone nations in the world.

She believes Toyosu's high-tech distribution systems and its proximity to airports will help make it a bustling market that can co-exist with Tsukiji.

Some were skeptical.

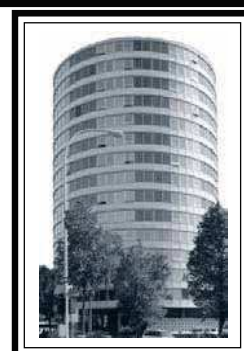
Hiroyuki Doko, proprietor of Doko Shoten, a wholesale seafood store in Tsukiji, questioned whether businesses will be able to make the same profit in Koike's theme-park plan.

But Yu Takahashi, manager of a sushi restaurant in Tsukiji, said he welcomes the decision to keep Tsukiji.

"This is where all the fish from Japan, the best fish, come together in one place. The decision will be a good thing for Japan and Tokyo," he said.

AP Journalist Kaori Hitomi contributed to this report.

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Units per U.S. dollar as of 6/30

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Hong Kong Dollar	7.8072
Indian Rupee	64.581
Indonesian Rupiah	13348
Iranian Rial	32441
Japanese Yen	112.39
Laos New Kip	8238.9
Malaysian Ringgit	4.2928
Nepal Rupee	103.42
Pakistani Rupee	104.83
Papua N.G. Kina	3.1813
Philippine Peso	50.47
Russian Ruble	58.872
Saudi Riyal	3.7502
Singapore Dollar	1.3762
South Korean Won	1144.1
Sri Lankan Rupee	153.36
Taiwan Dollar	30.429
Thai Baht	33.933
Vietnam Dong	22767