



CONFLICTING EVIDENCE. *Democracy party member Howard Lam displays wounds — stapled crosses on his thighs — during a press conference in Hong Kong. The strange case of the pro-democracy activist who claimed mainland Chinese agents stapled his legs as a warning has taken another twist after police arrested Lam on suspicion of providing false information. (AP Photo/Apple Daily)*

Hong Kong activist arrested over allegation of stapled legs

By Kelvin Chan
The Associated Press

HONG KONG — The strange case of a Hong Kong pro-democracy activist who claimed mainland Chinese agents stapled his legs as a warning has taken another twist after police arrested him on suspicion of providing false information.

Howard Lam made waves with his eye-catching allegations, which rekindled fears about Beijing interfering in Hong Kong despite promising it considerable autonomy since the 1997 handover from Britain. But police said his story didn't check out.

"The victim's reports about his activities on that day and the investigation's results do not match," police said in a statement, "At this time, there's no evidence that anyone was illegally detained in Hong Kong."

Lam, 42, had intended to send a signed photo of Argentine soccer star Lionel Messi to Liu Xia, the widow of late Nobel Peace Prize laureate Liu Xiaobo, and posted his plans on Facebook. He said he received a call from an acquaintance on the mainland warning him not to send the photo.

Lam said that unknown Mandarin-speaking men abducted him from a busy street in Cantonese-speaking Hong Kong and rendered him unconscious. He said they beat him and warned him not to follow through on his plan.

He said they also stapled Xs into his thighs because he is Christian. He displayed his wounds to reporters at a news conference, flanked by fellow members of Hong Kong's Democratic Party, before filing a police report and going to a hospital.

Police said they arrested Lam on suspicion of providing false information to mislead police after looking into his allegations, including checking surveillance footage from cameras in the area.

Democratic party chairman Wu Chi-wai said party leaders decided to air Lam's allegations in public instead of going to police right away because they feared for his personal safety.

He said Hong Kong's biggest pro-democracy party would provide a full account after the police concluded their investigation.

"We hope the truth will come to light as soon as possible," Wu told reporters.

Lam's case stirred concerns that Beijing is tightening its hold on Hong Kong, following other recent cases including the secret detention of a group of Hong Kong booksellers and a Chinese-Canadian tycoon whose whereabouts are unknown. In both cases, mainland security agents are suspected of taking them across the border, in violation of Hong Kong's constitution.

By Sopheng Cheang
The Associated Press

PHNOM PENH, Cambodia — The prime minister of Cambodia, a country whose uneasy relationship with the United States has involved war, refugee emigration, and years of on-off political tension, says he does not want his U.S.-born grandchild to have an American passport.

Hun Sen, whose country was the site of one of the 20th century's most terrible genocides, said he is worried his 14-year-old grandchild could be eligible to fight for the U.S. military.

Hun Sen said he was looking for a way for his grandchild, whom he did not name, to give up his or her U.S. citizenship.

"Now I am finding a way to renounce U.S. citizenship from my grandchild because probably the U.S. will make war with some countries and will require my grandchild to be a U.S. soldier," he said in comments posted on Facebook.

The grandchild was born when his or her parents were studying in the United States. Hun Sen, 64, and his wife, Bun Rany, have six children, including one adopted daughter they have disowned. Most, if not all, of them had some

education abroad, including son Hun Manet, who attended the U.S. Military Academy at West Point.

U.S. citizens are not currently compelled to perform military service, although males are required to register for conscription when they turn 18. Hun Sen said he did not want his grandchild to join the U.S. military to fight against other countries.

U.S. citizens must make a formal declaration to renounce their citizenship. It cannot be done by parents or others, nor can any child under 16 because they are not considered mature enough. A minor between 16 and 18 must demonstrate they

By Roshan Sedhai
The Associated Press

KATHMANDU, Nepal — Nepal's parliament has passed a bill toward making women safer by strengthening laws against acid attacks along with the ancient Hindu customs of demanding dowry payments for marriage and exiling women who are menstruating.

The new law goes into effect in August 2018, with violators who force women into exile facing punishments of up to three months in jail or a fine of 3,000 Nepalese rupees, or about \$29.

Many menstruating women are still forced to leave their homes and take shelter in unhygienic or insecure huts or cow sheds until their cycle ends, though the practice — called *Chhaupadi* — was actually outlawed a decade ago. But without any assigned penalties, the custom continued in many parts of the majority Hindu Himalayan country, especially in the western hills.

While exiled in isolation, some women face bitter cold or attacks by wild animals. Unclean conditions can also cause infections.

"People will be discouraged to follow this discriminatory custom due to fear of punishment" now that the new bill is passed, said lawmaker Krishna Bhakta Pokhrel, from the committee that drafted the bill.

But a female parliamentarian from the far-western district of Doti, where menstrual exile is still practiced, said



CHHAUPADI PENALIZED. *In this September 20, 2012 file photo, a Nepalese woman lashes herself with the leaves of an Aghada herb as part of a ritual in the Bagmati River during Rishi Panchami, a day when Hindu women perform rituals to wash away sins committed during menstruation, a period considered impure, in Kathmandu, Nepal. Nepal's parliament has passed a bill that goes into effect in August 2018. Violators who force women into exile face punishment of up to three months in jail or a fine of 3,000 Nepalese rupees, or about \$29. Many menstruating women are still forced to leave their homes and take shelter in unhygienic or insecure huts or cow sheds until their cycle ends, because of the practice — called Chhaupadi — which was actually outlawed a decade ago. (AP Photo/Niranjan Shrestha, File)*

passing the legislation alone would not be enough, and the government should also invest in educating women on good hygiene.

"Fear of punishment will not stop people from following this custom who think women are impure during menstruation," Gauri Kumari Oli told The AP. "The government and non-governmental agencies should start to do more to raise awareness."

She herself was made to observe the custom, albeit not so strictly, she said.

"Like it happens elsewhere in Nepal, I was asked not to enter inside the temple or the kitchen," she said. "But I never had to go to sleep in [the] shed."

The legislation was part of an ongoing effort to improve the country's laws, and also criminalizes other deep-rooted customs that harm women, including slavery, acid attacks, and the dowry system, by which a woman's family must secure her marriage prospects by paying the groom and his family.

New hope for endangered eels, Japanese summer delicacy

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mainly in the flashy Ginza shopping and dining district.

The choice eels are often served in different styles to the traditional *kabayaki* eels, which are grilled in a coating of dark soy sauce marinade. Restaurants that specialize in *kabayaki*, often handed down generation to generation, may offer both wild and farmed eels — with supply depending on what is available that day at the market.

At Hashimoto, a Michelin one-star *kabayaki* restaurant in Tokyo that first opened in 1835, the eels are all farm-raised the conventional way on the southern island of Kyushu, after being caught as glass eels.

Like farmed salmon, farmed eels raised from wild-caught glass eels tend to be fattier. "They have a flavor that is preferred by most customers," says Shinji Hashimoto, the sixth-generation owner.

Hashimoto says his *kabayaki* sauce is "light," to allow the eel's flavor to come through.

"The Tokyo palette has traditionally disliked sweet flavors," he says.

To manage with fewer catches and higher prices, Hashimoto tries to get two servings out of larger eels.

After cleaning and slicing them open, the cooks skewer them to ensure they will stay together while cooking. They are grilled directly over hot charcoal, then steamed to soften the flesh. Afterward they are coated in a sauce of soy sauce boiled with sweet rice wine, or *mirin*, and then returned to the grill and basted three times before being served as *unajyu*, steaming hot over rice in a neat lacquer



FARMING FUTURE. *Shinji Hashimoto, the owner of a Michelin one-star unagi restaurant, prepares live unagi for dinner service. The restaurant first opened in 1835 and is now in its sixth generation. The restaurant uses only farmed eel, which tend to be larger and fattier than wild eel. The endangered Japanese summer delicacy may get a new lease on life with commercial farming. (AP Photo/Sherry Zheng)*

box. The busiest days tend to be the Day of the Ox on the lunar calendar, the first of which in 2017 was July 25. Hashimoto served about 150 customers that day.

"Even if the price rose to 10,000 yen (about \$90) for one box of *unajyu*, Japanese people would still eat it once a year," Tsukamoto said. "Why do Japanese people like *unagi*? Because we like soy sauce. The salty-sweet sauce, made from a mixture of soy sauce and *mirin*, is brushed on, is singed and grilled on the eel over charcoal — and that smell makes it irresistible."

are doing so willingly and with full understanding of the consequences.

Hun Sen has an uneasy relationship with the United States, whom he feels supports his political opponents. Washington criticizes his record on human rights but tries to keep an even-keeled relationship to offset the strong influence China has in Cambodia.

Hun Sen is a fan of President Donald Trump, and even voiced his support for him before last year's U.S. election, saying that as a businessman, Trump would want peace and could be friends with Russian

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