



### Ship collision exposes Southeast Asian territorial spat

KUALA LUMPUR, Malaysia (AP) — The collision between the *USS John S. McCain* and an oil tanker has exposed a long-simmering dispute between Singapore and Malaysia over which country should control a 197-foot-wide outcropping at the edge of the South China Sea. Malaysia and Singapore both say the accident happened in their territorial waters because of the competing claims to Pedra Branca. Barely an island, the rocks are home to utilitarian structures, including a communications tower meant to reinforce Singapore's claim, and lapped by waters often fouled by mini oil slicks in one of the world's busiest shipping lanes. Despite being devoid of charms, the islet is a major political and economic prize for both countries, each claiming to coordinate the search-and-rescue effort for 10 missing U.S. Navy sailors.

### China accuses luxury e-retailer of smuggling

BEIJING (AP) — Chinese news reports say the founder of an online luxury retailer has been charged with smuggling goods into China by having travellers pretend they were personal belongings. The news reports said Ji Wenhong of xiu.com was extradited from Indonesia to face charges of smuggling goods worth a total of \$65.5 million into China while failing to report their true value. The reports said Ji was accused of buying designer clothing from Europe and the United States and shipping them to Hong Kong. They said the company then arranged for travellers to carry them to the mainland in their baggage.

### Cambodian newspaper faces closure over tax demand

PHNOM PENH, Cambodia (AP) — One of Cambodia's two English-language daily newspapers says it will continue to publish in the face of a reported deadline by tax officials to pay more than \$6 million in taxes or get shut down. The Ministry of Economy and Finance told the newspaper it owed the government back taxes and interest dating back 10 years. The letter was part of a crackdown on delinquent taxpayers that prominently targeted media and civic organizations critical of the government. The September 4 deadline was reported by Fresh News, a website close to the government, quoting Taxation Department director Kong Vibol. The newspaper denies owing the tax. It reported that its general manager, Douglas Steele, vowed to keep publishing until being actually stopped by authorities.

### Vietnam sentences four to death for transporting heroin

HANOI, Vietnam (AP) — A court in Hanoi has sentenced four men to death for transporting heroin. The state-run *Capital Police* newspaper said ring leader Tran Thanh Dong, 26, and three ring members were convicted at the one-day trial of transporting more than 44 pounds of heroin from late 2015 until the ring was busted in April last year. Vietnam has some of the world's toughest drug laws. Possessing, trafficking, or transporting as little as 100 grams (3.5 ounces) of heroin or 20 kilograms (44 pounds) of opium is punishable by death. The number of executions by lethal injection is a state secret in Vietnam, but many of the death sentences issued in the country are related to drugs.

### Philippine leader feasts on chicken to allay bird flu scare

MANILA, The Philippines (AP) — Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte ate grilled chicken, duck, and eggs with other officials to help allay fears caused by the country's first large outbreak of avian flu. Accompanied by his health and agriculture secretaries and other officials, Duterte travelled to northern Pampanga province and feasted with his bare hands on the poultry, spread on banana leaves in a traditional feast in front of journalists and TV cameras. "If it's really your time, it doesn't matter what you eat," Duterte told the audience in jest. Authorities killed more than 600,000 chickens, ducks, quails, pigeons, and game fowl at the height of the outbreak on poultry farms in Pampanga and Nueva Ecija provinces, causing a drop in prices and consumption along with misery for farm owners and workers. Duterte also announced financial aid and loans to help affected businesses and workers recover and he thanked more than 300 soldiers and policemen who helped contain the outbreak.

### Vietnam tries dozens of bankers for graft, mismanagement

HANOI, Vietnam (AP) — Nearly 50 bankers are on trial in Vietnam for alleged graft and mismanagement causing \$69 million in losses to a joint stock bank. The case is part of communist authorities' efforts to tackle corruption. Among those accused are Ocean Bank's former chairman Ha Van Tham and general manager Nguyen Xuan Son, who are accused of embezzling \$2.2 million and abuse of power in appropriating another \$8.8 million. At the time, the bank was 20 percent owned by state oil-and-gas giant PetroVietnam, where Son had previously served as chairman. Another 44 senior Ocean Bank executives are accused of abuse of power or economic mismanagement and five executives from different companies are also named in the case. The losses led to the bank being taken over by the State Bank of Vietnam.

### Six die in Vietnam while sawing leftover mortar shell

HANOI, Vietnam (AP) — Six people, including four children in a family, were killed when a Vietnam War-era mortar shell they were sawing for scrap metal exploded. State-run *Tuoi Tre* newspaper said the victims died on the spot following the explosion in the south-central province of Khanh Hoa. The blast also seriously injured the father of one of the victims. The report said the family had collected the mortar shell from a coffee plantation. According to government figures, more than 40,000 people have been killed and some 60,000 others injured by unexploded ordnance since the end of the war in 1975.



**CIVILIAN COMPLACENCY.** People pass by a sign for a bomb shelter before a civil-defense drill in Seoul, South Korea. Once or twice a year, the streets of South Korea's busy capital freeze for several minutes at the sound of a siren, with cars stopping on roads and pedestrians moving into buildings and subway stations, part of a nationwide drill aimed at preparing against a North Korean attack. But critics say the remarkable scenes mask aging policies that are failing to train South Koreans at a time when the threat posed by North Korea's nuclear and missile program is growing. (AP Photo/Ahn Young-joon)

## Civilian drills grow lax among South Koreans used to threats

By Kim Tong-Hyung  
The Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea — Once or twice a year, activity on the streets of South Korea's capital freezes as a wailing siren marks a nationwide drill aimed at preparing against a North Korean attack. Cars stop on roads. Pedestrians move into buildings and subway stations. Government buildings are evacuated.

The scenes during the latest air-raid drill are remarkable for turning parts of this usually bustling city into a ghost town. But a closer look raises questions about whether the exercises are adequately preparing South Koreans while the threat from North Korea's nuclear and missile program grows.

For many, there's no real training, just people standing around in schoolyards or other gathering spots, staring into their smartphones, chatting amiably, or just looking bored or frustrated.

Many schools don't participate in the air-raid drills and those that do often escort children outside. Leaving their buildings would be a good idea during earthquakes, but a terrible decision during attacks.

The country has nearly 19,000 evacuation shelters, mostly built in subway stations and the parking garages of apartments and large buildings. Yet a 2014 government survey found that an overwhelming number of South Koreans did not know which shelters were closest to their homes.

"No, I don't know. I don't think anybody knows," 31-year-old Park Ji-na said shortly after the recent drill.

The 2014 survey, by the National Disaster

Management Research Institute, also found that only 10 percent of the 145 adults polled had CPR experience, and just seven percent owned gas masks.

Most South Koreans have lived their entire lives facing threats from North Korea, and few show great worry.

"Realistically, the people who live in this country aren't thinking much about" the threats, Park said. "They are on the news all the time, but it's not like they are real threats affecting our lives."

National and local governments and even companies organize the exercises. South Korea launched its current civil-defense program in 1975, when the country was still run by a military dictator. Through the 1980s, nationwide evacuation drills were held on the 15th of nearly every month.

In decades past, civil servants wearing yellow armbands whistled people off the streets and teachers ordered school children to crouch under their desks for exercises that lasted 30 minutes. There were even nighttime drills where people were instructed to turn off the lights and televisions in their homes to deter an imaginary attack by North Korean bombers.

The drills became less frequent and more casual after the 1990s amid rising public complaints and a temporary improvement in relations between the rival Koreas. Today, though North Korea's nuclear weapons development and fierce rhetoric have drawn deep international concern, South Koreans are both inured to the threats and distracted by life in a country that is now one of Asia's busiest and most vibrant.

Continued on page 7

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**Asian Currency Exchange Rates**

Units per U.S. dollar as of 9/01

Bangladesh Taka	80.849
Cambodian Riel	4043.5
China Renminbi	6.5584
Fijian Dollar	2.0332
Hong Kong Dollar	7.8249
Indian Rupee	64.029
Indonesian Rupiah	13318
Iranian Rial	33220
Japanese Yen	110.25
Laos New Kip	8309.1
Malaysian Ringgit	4.2709
Nepal Rupee	102.44
Pakistani Rupee	105.2
Papua N.G. Kina	3.2153
Philippine Peso	51.133
Russian Ruble	57.48
Saudi Riyal	3.7503
Singapore Dollar	1.357
South Korean Won	1122.8
Sri Lankan Rupee	152.77
Taiwan Dollar	30.046
Thai Baht	33.151
Vietnam Dong	22527