



Nut rage executive to avoid jail time

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — Local media reports say the former Korean Air executive whose onboard “nut rage” tantrum delayed a flight in 2014 will avoid jail as South Korea’s top court upheld her suspended prison term. Yonhap news agency said South Korea’s Supreme Court made the ruling on Cho Hyun-ah, who is the daughter of the company’s chairman. The court couldn’t immediately confirm the report, but previously said the ruling would be final and could not be appealed. Cho achieved notoriety after she had an onboard tantrum after a first-class flight attendant served her nuts in a bag instead of on a dish. Cho was the head of the airline’s cabin service at the time. The plane was forced to return to the gate at New York’s John F. Kennedy Airport.

Toyota planning 10 purely electric vehicles by 2020s

TOKYO (AP) — Toyota plans to offer more than 10 purely electric vehicle (EV) models in its lineup by the early 2020s, marking the Japanese automaker’s commitment to that growing technology sector. Toyota Motor Corp. now offers no purely electric vehicles, although it leads in hybrid models, which switch between an electric motor and a gas engine. Executive vice president Shigeki Terashi said Toyota’s EVs will be first offered in China, a nation that’s encouraging electric vehicles with subsidies and other policies, and is expected to drive massive growth in that technology. Terashi says Toyota’s EVs will also later be offered in Japan, India, the U.S., and Europe. The company says that by about 2025, every model it sells will have some kind of “electrified” version, such as hybrid, electric, or fuel cell.

Nest of endangered giant softshell turtle found

PHNOM PENH, Cambodia (AP) — Conservationists have found a nest of the endangered Asian giant softshell turtle on a sandbar along the Mekong River in northeastern Cambodia, while 115 new species of various other animal and plant life were discovered in the greater Mekong region by scientists. The New York-based Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) said the nest of Asian giant softshell turtles was found on the Mekong between Kratie and Stung Treng provinces by conservationists from Cambodia’s fisheries administration, WCS, and local communities. It said it was the first spotting of such a nest so far this season. WCS said the area is the only remaining location in Cambodia where the huge turtles still breed.

North Korea to retaliate over WannaCry ransomware

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — North Korea says a U.S. accusation that it was behind a major ransomware attack was a “grave political provocation” and vowed to retaliate. Homeland security adviser Tom Bossert wrote in a *Wall Street Journal* op-ed that North Korea will be held accountable for May’s WannaCry ransomware attack that infected hundreds of thousands of computers worldwide and crippled parts of Britain’s National Health Service. In remarks carried by state media, the North’s Foreign Ministry repeated it had nothing to do with the attack. It said it will never tolerate such “reckless” U.S. claims but didn’t say how it would respond. It’s not unusual for Pyongyang to issue harsh rhetoric against Washington and Seoul. The warning came amid heightened animosities following the North’s test launch of its most powerful missile. South Korea and U.S. officials have accused North Korea of launching a slew of cyberattacks in recent years. Among them is a U.S. accusation that it hacked Sony Pictures Entertainment over the movie *The Interview*, a satirical film about a plot to assassinate North Korean leader Kim Jong Un. The North denies those accusations.

Popular South Korean band member dies

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — The lead singer of popular South Korean boy band SHINee has died, police said, in a possible suicide. Kim Jong-hyun, better known by the stage name Jonghyun, was found unconscious at a residence hotel in Seoul and was later pronounced dead at a nearby hospital, Seoul police said. Police said Kim’s sister told them the singer sent her text messages such as “Final farewell” and “I’ve had difficulties” before his death. The Yonhap news agency said authorities found burned coal briquettes, which produce carbon monoxide, in a frying pan in Kim’s hotel room. Kim debuted in 2008 as the main singer of SHINee then cultivated a career as both a group member and a solo singer-song writer. His last public appearance was at a solo concert titled “Inspired” on December 9 and 10 in Seoul, and he was scheduled to hold concerts with SHINee members in Tokyo and Osaka in February, Yonhap said. South Korea has one of the highest suicide rates among developed countries. A string of high-profile figures, including a former president and business executives, have killed themselves in recent years.

Conservation group says Japan aiding in illegal ivory trade

TOKYO (AP) — A conservation group says Japan’s lax controls over its domestic stock of ivory are encouraging illegal exports to other countries and undermining efforts to end trafficking in elephant tusks. A recently released report compiled with support of the World Wildlife Fund says researchers found antique dealers are buying a large number of elephant tusks that are not registered as required by law. It said hundreds of ivory items are sold each year by e-commerce sites, often to visitors from other Asian countries such as China. The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, or CITES, bans international trade in ivory in principle to protect endangered African elephants. It has called for closing domestic ivory markets in all member states.



PRECOCIOUS PANDA. Female giant panda cub Xiang Xiang eats bamboo during a press preview at the Ueno Zoo in Tokyo. The six-month-old baby panda made a special appearance before Tokyo’s governor, a group of local schoolchildren, and the media a day ahead of the official public debut. Xiang Xiang means fragrance in Chinese. (Yoshikazu Tsuno/Pool Photo via AP)

Tokyo baby panda melts hearts of fans in debut

TOKYO (AP) — Tokyo’s new baby panda debuted formally last month, immediately melting the hearts of hundreds of lucky fans who managed to obtain zoo tickets, many wearing panda-themed clothes.

Xiang Xiang, which means fragrance in Chinese, was born in June at Tokyo’s Ueno Zoo to its resident panda. The zoo and its neighborhood have celebrated the female panda’s healthy growth, especially after the death of a days-old baby five years ago.

“Kawaii (cute)!” screamed many visitors, their voices filling the panda house during the two-and-a-half hour viewing session, as Xiang Xiang crawled on the ground, followed its mother Shin Shin, climbed a tree, and played

with bamboo branches. The visitors held up smartphones trying to capture every antic of the slow-moving baby panda during their less than 10 minutes of viewing time.

Many visitors decorated themselves or their children with panda motifs on hats, scarves, and even shoes and jackets, or wore black-and-white jackets. In and outside the zoo, panda goods of all kinds were on sale, including cookies, sweet buns, bread, and stuffed panda dolls. Some shopkeepers wore panda costumes.

Only 2,000 people were allowed into the panda house, with tickets distributed through a lottery. Zoo officials said Xiang Xiang’s public appearances will be limited for the time being to minimize stress.

Rohingya refugees have only memories, saved on cellphones

KUTUPALONG, Bangladesh (AP) — For many Rohingya now living in refugee camps in Bangladesh, all that remains of their old lives in Myanmar are memories captured in photos and videos on their cellphones.

Since late August, more than 630,000 Rohingya Muslims have fled to Bangladesh to escape attacks by Myanmar security forces. Few refugees had a chance to grab many of their belongings when they fled the advancing soldiers. But most took their cellphones.

While so much of what they



ONLY IMAGES REMAIN. Mujibullah, 22, a Rohingya refugee, watches a video, which he shot in Myanmar before crossing into Bangladesh, at Kutupalong refugee camp in Ukhiya, Bangladesh. For many Rohingya living in Bangladesh refugee camps, all that remains of their old lives in Myanmar are memories captured in photos and videos on their cellphones. (AP Photo/A.M. Ahad)

had is now gone — homes, the phones give them a link to cattle, villages, everything — what they lost.

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Units per U.S. dollar as of 12/29

Bangladesh Taka	82.754
Cambodian Riel	4029.1
China Renminbi	6.5068
Fijian Dollar	2.0562
Hong Kong Dollar	7.814
Indian Rupee	63.873
Indonesian Rupiah	13555
Iranian Rial	36093
Japanese Yen	112.69
Laos New Kip	8317.2
Malaysian Ringgit	4.0465
Nepal Rupee	102.12
Pakistani Rupee	110.7
Papua N.G. Kina	3.2464
Philippine Peso	49.85
Russian Ruble	57.689
Saudi Riyal	3.7504
Singapore Dollar	1.336
South Korean Won	1067.4
Sri Lankan Rupee	153.5
Taiwan Dollar	29.733
Thai Baht	32.574
Vietnam Dong	22809