



Pakistani woman from Hindu minority to become lawmaker

KARACHI, Pakistan (AP) — The first woman from Pakistan’s tiny minority Hindu community is poised to become a lawmaker after the country’s opposition party nominated her for the upcoming senate elections, officials say. According to Nasir Shah, the spokesman in the provincial government of Sindh province, the opposition Pakistan People’s Party asked its lawmakers to vote for Krishna Kumari in the March 3 elections for the upper house of parliament. Kumari will be the first female Hindu lawmaker in Pakistan since 1947, when Pakistan gained independence from Britain, he said. Pakistani parties usually nominate wealthy or influential people for the senate, but Kumari was overjoyed with the news. Because her family was so poor, she said she never dared dream of becoming a lawmaker. Kumari said she faced a “slave-like situation” during her childhood in the remote village of Nagarparkar in Sindh province, where she worked on the farm of a feudal landlord who was abusive to his workers. After winning a seat in the senate, she will be sitting next to many of today’s powerful landowners in Pakistan. Despite the family’s poverty, her parents encouraged her education and she earned a university degree. Kumari has worked as a social worker and also for a Pakistani charity seeking to create awareness among people about the importance of education and the struggle to achieve basic human rights, guaranteed under Pakistan’s constitution but often trampled upon by landowners and tribal chieftains.

Mercedes in China apologizes for quoting Dalai Lama

BEIJING (AP) — Mercedes-Benz has apologized in China for quoting the Dalai Lama, the Tibetan spiritual leader who is reviled by Beijing, in a social-media post, reflecting foreign companies’ heightened sensitivity to the Communist government’s possible reaction to their activities worldwide. The quote appeared on Instagram, access to which is blocked by China’s internet filters. Chinese web surfers copied it onto domestic social media. In a statement, Mercedes-Benz apologized for “wrong information” that “hurt the feelings of Chinese people.” A spokeswoman for Mercedes’ parent company, Daimler AG, said it acted at its own initiative and had not heard from Chinese authorities. In January, Beijing ordered Marriott, Zara, and other companies to apologize for calling Taiwan and Hong Kong countries on websites or promotional material.

Indonesian woman dies in new maid abuse case

KUALA LUMPUR, Malaysia (AP) — An Indonesian maid who allegedly suffered injuries on her body and was forced to sleep outside on a porch with a family’s dog has died in Malaysia, prompting calls by activists and lawmakers for better laws to safeguard migrant workers. Lawmaker Steven Sim said his office received information from concerned neighbors about the possible abuse of 21-year-old Adelina Lisao and went to investigate, but her employer refused to cooperate. He said Lisao was rescued by police but died in a hospital. A picture of Lisao sleeping on a torn mat outside the house was published in local media, which said she had injuries on her head and body. Police have detained two siblings on suspicion of murder pending autopsy results.

China to pick 5,000 movie theaters for propaganda

BEIJING (AP) — China plans to select 5,000 movie theaters to screen propaganda films and will boost their box offices with group sales, discounted tickets, and other financial backing. China’s film regulator said in a notice posted on the internet that the policy is intended to promote specific movies at special times to create a “people’s theater front,” a throwback to language used during the era of Mao Zedong. China, the world’s second-biggest film market, saw movie ticket sales rise 13.5 percent last year to more than \$8.6 billion. China-made movies accounted for 54 percent of ticket sales, with the baldly nationalistic action thriller *Wolf Warrior 2* topping the box office. The ruling Communist Party is anxious to promote more productions with patriotic themes and exercises broad control over scripts and shooting permits.

Japanese Princess Mako’s wedding postponed until 2020

TOKYO (AP) — Japan’s imperial palace has announced that Princess Mako’s wedding will be postponed because of insufficient preparations, Japanese media reported, triggering speculation that the decision was related to criticism in tabloids of her fiancé’s family background. Mako and her college classmate, Kei Komuro, a commoner, announced their engagement last September. Mako is Emperor Akihito’s oldest grandchild. The Imperial Household Agency announced that the wedding, planned for November, will be delayed for two years, citing a lack of time for preparation, according to public broadcaster NHK and other media. A ceremony formalizing their engagement, planned for early March, was also postponed. No new dates were given. The surprise announcement left many people puzzled. Agency official Takaharu Kachi told reporters that the decision was not related to tabloid magazine reports about disputes between Komuro’s mother and her former partner over money she borrowed to cover her son’s tuition and never paid back, the reports said. Mako said in a statement published by Japanese media, including the *Mainichi* newspaper, that the couple decided to postpone their wedding until 2020, a year after the emperor’s abdication next year. The 84-year-old Akihito is to abdicate on April 30, 2019, with Crown Prince Naruhito taking the Chrysanthemum Throne the next day. Mako said the couple wishes to think about marriage more deeply and concretely and give more time to prepare for their marriage and life together afterward. She said Akihito and his wife, Empress Michiko, expressed respect for their decision when she reported it to them.



LEAPIN’ LION. A lion dance troupe from Malaysia competes in the 11th International Lion Dance Competition in Singapore. The competition is usually held during the leadup to the Lunar New Year celebration in Singapore. Lion dance is a tradition in Chinese culture and some other Asian countries in which performers from a lion dance troupe mimic a lion’s movements while dressed in a lion costume. It is believed to bring good fortune. Performers from Vietnam, Singapore, Myanmar, Indonesia, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Malaysia gathered in Singapore to compete against one another and were judged on skill, grace, and musicality, among other things. (AP Photo/Wong Maye-E)

Lion dance in Singapore featured before Lunar New Year

SINGAPORE (AP) — Performers from Southeast Asia took part in an international lion dance competition in Singapore ahead of the Lunar New Year, the most important holiday in the Chinese calendar.

The traditional dance includes performers dressed in a lion costume mimicking the animal’s movements. It is believed to bring good fortune.

The participants at the 11th International Lion Dance Competition travelled from Vietnam, Singapore, Myanmar, Indonesia, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Malaysia. They were

judged on skill, grace, and musicality, among other things.

This year’s winner was a team from Vietnam.

“Lion dancing is a fading tradition as we are seeing less interest among the younger generation, which is more interested in spending time on their electronic devices indoors,” said Joseph Low, the head judge and member of the Singapore Wushu Dragon and Lion Dance Federation.

The Lunar New Year — the Year of the Dog — began February 16.

Skulls in the mail: Indonesia foils artifact smuggling

BALI, Indonesia (AP) — Customs officials on the Indonesian tourist island of Bali say they’ve foiled an attempt to mail 24 elaborately decorated human skulls to the Netherlands.

The Customs Department said that cartons containing the skulls were intercepted on two separate dates in January. The skulls are believed to be culturally significant artifacts from other parts of Indonesia.

They were labelled as manufactured from synthetic materials but found to be human after an examination by experts from the Balinese Cultural Heritage Conservation Center.

Customs official Ni Aniek said the skulls are probably from Papua, a Melanesian region that makes up easternmost Indonesia, and Kalimantan on the island of Borneo, home to indigenous Dayak peoples.



SMUGGLED SKULLS. An Indonesian customs officer displays skulls sent from a post office during a press conference in Bali, Indonesia. Customs officials on the Indonesian tourist island say they foiled an attempt to mail 24 elaborately decorated human skulls to the Netherlands. (AP Photo/Firdia Lisnawati)

No one has been arrested. The department said the cultural heritage center will decide what to do with the skulls.

GRASS-FED BEEF FOR SALE

Call (503) 980-5900 for details

GRASS-FED & GRASS-FINISHED BEEF
Farm-raised in Newberg, Oregon

Beef available as:

Quarter cow Half cow Whole cow

*Beef is processed by a Portland butcher.
Pickup available March at N.E. Sandy Blvd. location.*

Asian Currency Exchange Rates

Units per U.S. dollar as of 2/16

Bangladesh Taka	82.984
Cambodian Riel	3999.3
China Renminbi	6.3494
Fijian Dollar	2.0085
Hong Kong Dollar	7.8209
Indian Rupee	64.215
Indonesian Rupiah	13524
Iranian Rial	37075
Japanese Yen	106.21
Laos New Kip	8296.7
Malaysian Ringgit	3.8944
Nepal Rupee	102.69
Pakistani Rupee	110.75
Papua N.G. Kina	3.1955
Philippine Peso	52.223
Russian Ruble	56.416
Saudi Riyal	3.7505
Singapore Dollar	1.3112
South Korean Won	1063.1
Sri Lankan Rupee	155.22
Taiwan Dollar	28.98
Thai Baht	31.309
Vietnam Dong	22800