



Rover begins making tracks on “dark” side of the moon

BEIJING (AP) — The Chinese rover on the “dark” side of the moon is making its tracks on the soft lunar surface. The Jade Rabbit 2 rover drove off its lander’s ramp and onto the soft, snow-like surface about 12 hours after a Chinese spacecraft made the first-ever landing on the moon’s far side. A photo posted online by China’s space agency showed tracks the rover left as it headed away from the spacecraft. Exploring the cosmos from the far side of the moon could eventually help scientists learn more about the early days of the solar system and even the birth of the universe’s first stars. The far side can’t be seen from Earth and is popularly called the “dark side” because it is relatively unknown, not because it lacks sunlight. Three nations — the United States, the former Soviet Union, and more recently China — have sent spacecraft to the near side of the moon, but the latest landing is the first on the far side. That side has been observed many times from lunar orbit, but never up close. The mission highlights China’s growing ambitions to rival the U.S., Russia, and Europe in space, and more broadly, to cement its position as a regional and global power. The Jade Rabbit 2 rover has six wheels that all have power, so it can continue to operate even if one wheel fails. It can climb a 20° hill or an obstacle up to eight inches tall. Its maximum speed is 220 yards per hour. “The surface is soft and it is similar that you are walking on the snow,” Shen Zhenrong, the rover designer from the China Aerospace Science and Technology Corporation, said on CCTV.

Personal info of 997 North Korean defectors stolen

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — South Korea says it is responding to a hacking attack that stole the names and addresses of nearly 1,000 North Korean defectors who resettled in the South. A regional office of the Hana resettlement center said it has been notifying affected defectors after discovering one of its computers was breached sometime around November. South Korea’s Unification Ministry said the names, home addresses, and birthdays of 997 defectors living in the country’s southeast region were stolen. Police are investigating the hacking attack but have yet to identify the source. The ministry said it has found no further signs of hacking attacks or data breaches after investigating Hana’s offices around the country. Hana runs 25 offices nationwide to provide assistance to North Korean defectors who resettled in the South. About 30,000 North Koreans have fled to South Korea, mostly travelling via China, since the end of the 1950-1953 Korean War. South Korea in past years has accused North Korea of cyberattacks on South Korean business and government websites, but the North denies responsibility.

Small bombs hit popular Thai beach, damage statue

SONGKHLA, Thailand (AP) — Police in Thailand are investigating two small bombs, one of which damaged an iconic statue on a popular beach in the country’s south. Police in Songkhla province say they’re looking into whether the bombs were related to a Muslim separatist insurgency that has wracked nearby provinces since 2004, taking almost 7,000 lives. The Golden Mermaid statue, which is an unofficial symbol of the province, was damaged by one bomb. The other bomb was about 300 yards away, near the beach’s Cat and Mouse sculpture. The insurgency has mostly affected the three southernmost provinces of Pattani, Yala, and Narathiwat, which have Muslim majorities in predominantly Buddhist Thailand. Songkhla, with a substantial Muslim population, has generally been spared the violence though the provincial capital of Hat Yai has suffered several bombings.

South Korea fines BMW \$9.9 million over engine fires

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — South Korea says it will fine BMW 11.2 billion won (\$9.9 million) and file a criminal complaint against the company with state prosecutors over an allegedly botched response to dozens of engine fires reported in the country. South Korea’s Transport Ministry said its investigation panel after a five-month review concluded that the German automaker deliberately tried to cover up technical problems and moved too slowly to recall vehicles after about 40 of its cars caught fire last year. BMW recalled some 172,000 vehicles in July and October over the fires it has blamed on a faulty exhaust gas component. The company said there had been no reports of injuries linked to the fires.

Cambodia inaugurates biggest hydropower dam

PHNOM PENH, Cambodia (AP) — Cambodia’s largest hydropower project officially began producing electricity as the country tries to increase its energy capacity to reduce energy imports and help jump-start industrial expansion. Prime Minister Hun Sen inaugurated the 400-megawatt Lower Sesan II hydro-power dam in the northeastern province of Stung Treng. The project, constructed on a build-operate-transfer basis, will boost the country’s production of electricity by 20 percent, according to the Ministry of Mines and Energy. It was built over four years at a cost of nearly \$800 million and is a joint venture of China’s Hydrolancang International Energy, which has a 51-percent stake, Cambodia’s Royal Group with 39 percent, and Vietnam’s EVN International with 10 percent. The dam is expected to bring in almost \$30 million in tax revenue yearly. Ownership will be handed over to the government after 40 years. Opponents say the dam will damage the biodiversity of two tributaries of the Mekong River and devastate the livelihoods and homes of thousands of people. As many as 100,000 people could lose the ability to catch fish. The dam is the seventh commercial-scale hydropower dam in Cambodia, bringing hydropower production to 1,328 megawatts. Hydropower supplies 45 percent of Cambodia’s electricity consumption.



ALBINO ORANG. Alba, an albino orangutan, is released by a conservationist of the Borneo Orangutan Survival foundation inside Bukit Baka Bukit Raya National Park in Central Kalimantan, Indonesia. The world’s only known albino orangutan climbed trees, foraged for food, and began building a nest after being released into the remote Borneo jungle more than a year after conservation officials found her starving and dehydrated in an Indonesian village. (AP Photo/Andi Jatmiko)

Alba the albino orangutan returned to jungle in Indonesia

By Andi Jatmiko
The Associated Press

BUKIT BAKA BUKIT RAYA, Indonesia — The world’s only known albino orangutan climbed trees, foraged for food, and began building a nest after being released into a remote Borneo jungle more than a year after conservation officials found her starving and dehydrated in an Indonesian village.

The Borneo Orangutan Survival foundation says the great ape, called Alba after thousands worldwide responded to an appeal for a name, has tripled in weight since being rescued in April last year. Her name means “white” in Latin and “dawn” in Spanish.

Alba and another rehabilitated orangutan, Kika, were released inside Bukit Baka Bukit Raya National Park after a more than 24-hour journey from their rehabilitation center by vehicle, boat, and hiking.

The foundation originally planned to create a 12-acre “forest island” for Alba rather than a release into truly natural habitat because of health issues related to her albinism including poor sight and hearing and the possibility of skin cancer.

But the government’s Natural Resources Conservation Agency and other agencies decided it was appropriate to release Alba into the wild because of her strong physical condition and intrinsically wild behavior.

She will be electronically tracked and regularly monitored by a medical team.

“Alba has no inferiority complex as we imagined before. She is very confident compared to other orangutans,” said veterinarian Agus Fathoni.

“I think the real threat actually comes from humans. What we’re worried about is poaching where this very special condition makes her a target,” he told The Associated Press.

Patrols of Alba’s new home by national park and conservation agency staff will aim to deter poachers, though they admit the number of personnel is limited.

“We don’t have enough to cover all the area of the national park, but we’re confident of covering all the patrol lines that we have set,” said national park official Wirasadi Nursubhi.

Orangutans, reddish-brown primates known for their gentle temperament and intelligence, are critically endangered and only found in the wild on the Indonesian island of Sumatra and on Borneo, which is divided among Indonesia, Malaysia, and Brunei.

The International Union for Conservation of Nature, which declared Borneo’s orangutans critically endangered in 2016, says their numbers have dropped by nearly two-thirds since the early 1970s as plantation agriculture destroyed and fragmented their forest habitat.

The Sumatran orangutan is a separate species and has been critically endangered since 2008.

Alba, approximately five years old, was given final medical tests and anesthetized for the journey to Bukit Baka Bukit Raya.

Workers shouted “Alba’s going home” as her cage was lifted onto a truck at the Nyaru Menteng Rehabilitation Center in Central Kalimantan province on Borneo.

“It’s true this is a big gamble but we hope that with our collaboration we will win the big bet we have made today” said the orangutan foundation’s chief executive, Jamartin Sihite, after releasing Alba from her cage.

Affordable Quality Retirement Living

for Seniors 62 years and older

Alberta Simmons Plaza

6611 NE Martin Luther King Blvd

Portland, Oregon 97211

503-240-4198

• One-Bedroom Apartments with Full Sized Kitchens and Living Areas

• Planned Activities, Laundry Facility, Conference & Meeting Room, Elevator and Library

• Conveniently Located to Shopping, Restaurants, Pharmacy and Medical Offices

Asian Currency Exchange Rates	
Units per U.S. dollar as of 01/04	
Bangladesh Taka	81.227
Cambodian Riel	3987.7
China Renminbi	6.8665
Fijian Dollar	2.252
Hong Kong Dollar	7.8341
Indian Rupee	69.63
Indonesian Rupiah	14234
Iranian Rial	42023
Japanese Yen	108.32
Laos New Kip	8560.8
Malaysian Ringgit	4.1104
Nepal Rupee	111.83
Pakistani Rupee	138.71
Papua N.G. Kina	3.3601
Philippine Peso	52.378
Russian Ruble	67.472
Saudi Riyal	3.7398
Singapore Dollar	1.3612
South Korean Won	1118.3
Sri Lankan Rupee	182.75
Taiwan Dollar	30.684
Thai Baht	32.051
Vietnam Dong	23121