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Thai authorities seize 600 smuggled deadly cobras



BANGKOK (AP) — Thai authorities last month seized a pickup truck full of deadly cobras at a checkpoint in the country's central region. They believe the snakes came from Malaysia and were destined for a third country for use in traditional medicine or human consumption.

Thai Customs chief Benja Louicharoen said officials found 600 cobras worth about 500,000 baht (\$16,500) in mesh bags inside plastic baskets in the truck.

Officials arrested the Thai driver after the suspicious vehicle was stopped 130 miles south of Bangkok.

Benja said the man confessed that he was delivering the snakes to northeast Thailand where they were to be smuggled over the border into Laos.

Thailand is a major transit country for illegal wildlife trafficking in Asia.

Pictured is one of 600 cobras seized by the Thai Customs Department on display at a press conference in Bangkok. (AP Photo/Sakchai Lalit)



Early risers catch Tokyo tuna auction

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'Gangnam Style' most watched on YouTube

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Developers build road around home in China

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Photo/Michael Durham

Rose-Tu gives birth to 300-pound baby girl

The Oregon Zoo has a new Asian elephant. Eighteen-year-old Rose-Tu, the mother of four-year-old Samudra, gave birth to a 300-pound female calf on Friday, November 30 at 2:17am after more than 30 hours of labor concluded her more than 21-month-long gestation period.

Rose-Tu became pregnant in late February 2011 by Tusko, the 40-year-old bull who also sired Samudra. Throughout her pregnancy, zoo keepers monitored Rose-Tu's health and led her

through exercises to facilitate a healthy birth.

Following the birth, animal-care staff took the calf aside to clean it and perform a quick veterinary checkup. Within a day, the calf had already met her big brother — they touched trunks — and Rose-Tu and the new baby are reportedly doing really well.

"The calf is beautiful, healthy, tall, and very vigorous," said Kim Smith, the zoo's director. "As soon as she hit the ground —

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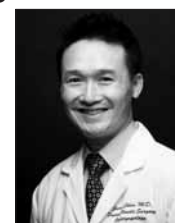
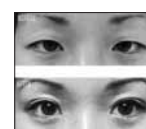


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South Korean actor Lee Min-ho welcomed in Manila

MANILA, The Philippines (AP) — South Korean actor Lee Min-ho, who shot to fame in Asia for his role in the 2009 hit television drama “Boys Over Flowers,” has received a rousing welcome from Filipino fans in Manila. His arrival was a top Twitter trend in the country. GMA News dubbed him “Lee Min Hot” and showed a video of the heartthrob being mobbed by shrieking fans at Manila’s airport. The 25-year-old actor is an endorser of a local clothing brand. Organizers say he met with fans and toured malls during his four-day visit. Lee is best known for his role as a rich student who falls in love with a poor schoolmate in “Boys Over Flowers.” The Philippines’ ABS-CBN network says it will soon air Lee’s latest drama, “Faith.”

Vietnam won’t stamp controversial China passports

HANOI, Vietnam (AP) — Vietnamese authorities are refusing to stamp Chinese passports featuring a map that includes disputed islands in the South China Sea as a Chinese territory. They are instead issuing visas on a separate piece of paper. The head of the border guard command in the northern province of Quang Ninh bordering China said border guards have been instructed to issue stapled visas to Chinese people with such passports. There is concern among Vietnamese authorities that by stamping visas in such passports the government would be indirectly recognizing Beijing’s claims to the disputed territory. The Philippines has also protested the map on the Chinese passports, which incorporates most of the South China Sea as its territory. India rejected the map’s depiction of its northern border with China and Taiwan protested against the map’s maritime borders. India further retaliated by issuing Chinese citizens visas embossed with New Delhi’s own maps.

Pope tells new cardinals not to be lured by power

VATICAN CITY (AP) — Pope Benedict XVI has told his six new cardinals to resist the allure of power and instead be like Jesus and focus their work on spreading the Christian faith. Benedict celebrated a mass in St. Peter’s Basilica with the cardinals he formally elevated last month. The six hail from the Philippines, India, Colombia, Lebanon, Nigeria, and the U.S. — a broad geographic mix that helps even out the Europe-heavy College of Cardinals who will elect the 85-year-old Benedict’s successor. In his homily, Benedict told his new collaborators that Jesus had no political ambitions. He said: “To be like Jesus, then, means not letting ourselves be allured by the worldly logic of power, but bringing into the world the light of truth and god’s love.”

South Korean man sentenced for retweeting North posts

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — A South Korean man has received a suspended 10-month prison term for retweeting North Korean propaganda posts. The Suwon District Court cited the National Security Law in its ruling against Park Jeong-geun. The law prohibits praising and glorifying North Korea. Park could have received seven years in prison. The court says it suspended the prison term partly because Park promised not to repeat his act. It says Twitter’s widespread influence over society is the reason Park’s actions threatened national security. The 24-year-old Park retweeted dozens of posts from North Korea’s Twitter account last year. He reportedly denies that he meant to praise Pyongyang and says he was only trying to lampoon North Korea.

China, World Bank set up knowledge hub

BEIJING (AP) — The World Bank and China are setting up a knowledge hub to share information about Beijing’s success with poverty alleviation. The project aims to come up with new strategies to solve problems of rapid development, such as urban transportation. The hub will help experts around the globe communicate and learn from each other to find the best outcomes, World Bank president Jim Yong Kim said at a signing ceremony. Kim said that as China tackles these challenges, it is producing a “body of knowledge that can benefit many other countries.” China has worked closely with the World Bank and claims to have raised 600 million people out of poverty over the past three decades. It now faces the challenge of managing an urban population that is expected to grow by 350 million over the next 20 years.

Philippine police arrest American, seize drugs

MANILA, The Philippines (AP) — Philippine police have arrested a 32-year-old American for alleged possession of \$1.2 million worth of illegal drugs. Senior Supt. Prudencio Tom Banas said police found 22 pounds of methamphetamine and a small amount of cocaine when they raided the man’s apartment and car in the Makati financial district. Supt. Leonard Suan of the raiding team said the Los Angeles native is charged with illegal drug possession, which is punishable by life imprisonment and fines. Suan said the American has been working as a disc jockey and is suspected of supplying drugs in ritzy bars and at parties.

Former Cubs infielder signs with Japan’s Softbank

FUKUOKA, Japan (AP) — The Softbank Hawks of the Japanese Pacific League say they have signed former Chicago Cubs infielder Bryan LaHair to a two-year, \$4.5-million contract. LeHair, who was named to the National League All-Star team last season, batted .286 with 14 home runs and 30 RBI before the All-Star break but fell to .202 with two home runs and 10 RBI after it. After losing the first base job to top prospect Anthony Rizzo in June, LeHair was a bench player for the remainder of the season. An outstanding run producer in six Triple-A seasons through 2011, LaHair is being looked at as a first baseman and designated hitter for the Hawks, who finished third in the Pacific League following back-to-back pennants in 2010 and 2011.



NEW LEADERSHIP. Hu Jintao, right, and Xi Jinping walk together after the first meeting of the presidium of the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China (CPC) in Beijing, China. Xi is assuming leadership of China at a time when the ruling Communist Party is confronting slower economic growth, a public clamor to end corruption, and demands for change that threaten its hold on power. (AP Photo/Xinhua, Lan Hongguang)

Xi takes China’s helm with many tough challenges

By Charles Hutzler
The Associated Press

BEIJING — Long-anointed successor Xi Jinping assumes the leadership of China at a time when the ruling Communist Party is confronting slower economic growth, a public clamor to end corruption, and demands for change that threaten its hold on power.

The country’s political elite named Xi to the top party post and unexpectedly put him in charge of the military too after a weeklong party congress and months of divisive bargaining.

The appointments give him broad authority, but not the luxury of time. After decades of juggernaut growth, China sits on the cusp of global pre-eminence as the second largest economy and newest power, but it also has urgent domestic troubles that could frustrate its rise.

Problems that have long festered — from the sputtering economy to friction with the U.S. and territorial spats with Japan and other neighbors — have worsened in recent months as the leadership focused on the power transfer. Impatience has grown among entrepreneurs, others in the new middle class, and migrant workers — all wired by social media and conditioned by two decades of rising living standards to expect better government, if not democracy.

All along, police have continued to harass and jail a lengthening list of political foes, dissidents, civil-rights lawyers, and labor activists. A 14-year-old Tibetan recently set himself on fire in western China in the latest of more than 70 self-immolations Tibetans have staged over the past 20 months in desperate

protests against Chinese rule. In his first address to the nation, Xi, a 59-year-old son of a revolutionary hero, acknowledged the lengthy agenda for what should be the first of two five-year terms in office. He promised to deliver better social services while making sure China stands tall in the world and the party continues to rule.

“Our responsibility now is to rally and lead the entire party and the people of all ethnic groups in China in taking over the historic baton and in making continued efforts to achieve the great renewal of the Chinese nation,” a confident Xi said in nationally televised remarks in the Great Hall of the People.

He later said “we are not complacent, and we will never rest on our laurels” in confronting challenges — corruption chief among them.

By his side stood the six other newly appointed members of the Politburo Standing Committee: Li Keqiang, the presumptive premier and chief economic official; vice premier Zhang Dejiang; Shanghai party secretary Yu Zhengsheng; propaganda chief Liu Yunshan; Tianjin party secretary Zhang Gaoli; and vice premier Wang Qishan, once the leadership’s top troubleshooter who will head the party’s internal watchdog panel.

Xi gave no hint of new thinking to address the problems. The lack of specifics and the new leadership heavy with conservative technocrats deflated expectations for change in some quarters.

“We should be expecting more of the same, not some fundamental break from the past,” said Dali Yang of the University of Chicago.

Fundamental for the leadership is to maintain the party’s rule, he said. “They are

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Courting Asia, Obama finds that the world intrudes

By Jim Kuhnhehn and Julie Pace
The Associated Press

PHNOM PENH, Cambodia — For all the attention wrenched elsewhere recently — on new violence in the Middle East, the “fiscal cliff” back home — U.S. President Barack Obama’s speedy trip to Southeast Asia achieved a major goal: It was clearly seen in the region as a validation of Asia’s strategic importance as the U.S. refocuses its foreign policy to counter China’s clout.

It wasn’t easy. Even in a Buddhist monastery in Thailand, Obama could not escape the budget woes waiting for him back home. And his historic visit to Myanmar was all but drowned out by the rocket fire and missile strikes between Israel and Gaza. He went half a world away to promote U.S.-style democracy but couldn’t leave his troubles behind.

Even as Obama traipsed in stocking feet through a temple in the heart of Bangkok, a monk wished him luck negotiating the deficit-reduction challenge awaiting him in Washington. And the bloodshed in the Middle East, exploding as he toured Southeast Asia for three days, illustrated the limits of U.S. foreign policy even as he tried to display its influence and reach.

But he came away from his trip to this corner of the world — a place once defined by a cloistered and shunned nation like Myanmar or by Khmer Rouge “killing fields” or by Chinese power — with at least the hope that the example of U.S. democracy can effect change and strengthen America’s hand.

He made his case clearly during a Bangkok news conference:

“It’s worked for us for over 200 years now, and I think it’s going to work for Thailand and it’s going to work for this entire region,” he said. “And the alternative, I think, is a false hope that, over time, I think erodes and collapses under the weight of people whose aspirations are not being met.”

Establishing a bigger, more influential presence in the Asia-Pacific region has long been an Obama objective, a goal driven by 21st century geopolitical considerations and by the Hawaii-born president’s own self-identity as the first Pacific president.

Just by making the trip — and by making it his first after his re-election — Obama made a point about the importance the U.S. attaches to the region.

He was greeted by large crowds chanting his name in Thailand and in Myanmar, a country less than two years removed from a repressive military dictatorship where such assemblies were long forbidden. The English-language *Myanmar Times* newspaper heralded the arrival of “O-Burma” on its front page, while Thai newspapers praised his apparent interest in the native brand of



Buddhism following his monastery visit.

The reception was more muted in neighboring Cambodia, a staunch ally of China that pointedly displayed a sign at the presidential palace welcoming Chinese premier Wen Jiabao but nothing for Obama. Still, there was a message for Asia in Obama’s mere presence. The president was attending an annual summit of Southeast Asian leaders in Phnom Penh, yet another indication of U.S. intentions to play a bigger role in the region.

The trip marked the first time a U.S. president had visited Myanmar and Cambodia.

For decades, Myanmar, despite its alluring pagodas and verdant countryside, was an international outcast with a repressive military junta accused of gross human-rights abuses. But last year it began to shift toward democracy, and Obama went there to welcome the change and encourage more.

His motorcade sped to the lakeside home of opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi, the Nobel Peace Prize winner who spent the better part of 20 years under house arrest. He embraced her and praised her as an “icon of democracy.”

Obama’s aides hoped that image would dominate back in the United States, but news events and coverage didn’t go quite as planned. Hostilities in Israel and Gaza overshadowed the president’s trip. He spent every day monitoring developments. The evening of November 19, he was on the phone until 2:30 from Phnom Penh, calling Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu once and Egyptian President Mohammed Morsi twice.

By morning, he had dispatched Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton, who had been travelling with him in Southeast Asia, to the Mideast to engage directly in Jerusalem and Cairo. And he called Morsi again from Air Force One on the way home.

Efforts to break a stalemate with

Congress over a deficit-reduction package also dogged him, even as congressional and White House staffs worked to frame details that Obama and legislative leaders could begin negotiating.

After the monk surprised him by wishing him well on the fiscal cliff at the Wat Pho monastery, Obama still could not escape it, facing a question about it during his Thailand press conference. No problem, the Americans said.

“We believe the United States can walk and chew gum at the same time,” deputy national security adviser Ben Rhodes said in Phnom Penh. The shift of resources and attention to Asia will occur with or without diversions, he said. “We’ll continue to move forward with our pivot even as we manage the inevitable crises and challenges that will come up in other regions.”

Indeed, after spending months mired in a biting presidential campaign, Obama

COURTING ASIA. U.S. President Barack Obama’s speedy trip to Southeast Asia achieved a major goal: It was clearly seen in the region as a validation of Asia’s strategic importance as the U.S. refocuses its foreign policy to counter China’s clout. Pictured is Obama standing hand in hand with Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) leaders for a photo during the ASEAN-U.S. leaders’ meeting at the Peace Palace in Phnom Penh, Cambodia. They are, from left, Philippine President Benigno Aquino III, Singapore Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong, Thailand Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra, Vietnamese Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung, Obama, Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen, Brunei’s Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah, Indonesian President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, Laos Prime Minister Thongsing Thammavong, Malaysian Prime Minister Najib Razak, and Myanmar President Thein Sein. (AP Photo/Carolyn Kaster)

appeared to revel in being back on the world stage.

The trip was poignant, too. It marked his last overseas tour alongside Clinton, his former rival turned partner. Clinton has long said she plans to leave the administration ahead of Obama’s second term, or shortly after it is under way.

Obama and Clinton flew across Southeast Asia together on Air Force One and walked down the plane’s front steps together in Myanmar and Cambodia.

He singled her out at Suu Kyi’s home. “I could not be more grateful, not only for your service, Hillary, but also for the powerful message that you and Aung San Suu Kyi send about the importance of women — and men — everywhere embracing and promoting democratic values and human rights,” Obama said.

Aides said the two reminisced aboard the presidential plane flying back from Myanmar to Cambodia.

Clinton herself said travelling with Obama one last time was “bittersweet, nostalgic, all the things you would expect.”

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Early risers catch tuna auction at Tokyo market

By Fritz Faerber
The Associated Press

TOKYO — Any fisherman knows that catching the big one often requires waking up very early. The same is true for seafood lovers angling to see the famous tuna auction at the Tsukiji fish market in Tokyo.

As the biggest seafood market in the world, the Tokyo Metropolitan Central Wholesale Market is a top sight for tourists visiting Japan. But if you want to catch the rapid-fire auction where giant tuna sell for hundreds to hundreds of thousands of dollars, you need to get to the market at about 4:00am.

It's possible to visit solo without a guide, but hiring one will add to the experience, as English is rare at the market and novice eyes will miss much of the action. I booked a tour in advance with the Institute for Japanese Culture Experience & Education; not cheap at 21,000 yen or about \$262 for one person (9,000 yen or \$112 for each additional person), but it included an onsite sushi breakfast.

By 4:30am, dozens of haggard tourists have lined up outside the information office at the main entrance to the market next to Kachidoki bashi bridge. Market officials then let everyone in to don bright yellow vests and watch a brief video warning them to remain in the marked-off viewing area, out of the path of the small erratic and dangerous electric vehicles called turret trucks that silently zip around the market and can run down unwary visitors.

During the roughly 40-minute wait inside the center, guide Atsuko Yoshimura rattled off some of the impressive statistics of the market. More than 500,000 tons of seafood pass through each year, 20 swimming pools worth of water goes into the ice that vendors use each day, 42,000 people work at Tsukiji, and the overall market is 32 football fields in size.

She also demonstrated the hand gestures used by wholesalers to signal the price they want to pay for the fish. This helped me understand later as we watched an auctioneer sell a type of tuna called bigeye in seconds for several hundred dollars each.

At 5:25am, market officials hustled us through the bustling market, with giant trucks delivering and picking up supplies, the turret trucks careening wildly about in the dark, and swarms of busy workers moving their products.

The market also auctions shellfish, blowfish, and fresh, unfrozen tuna. But the frozen tuna auction is the only one open to tourists. Visits are tightly controlled, apparently due to complaints in the past about interference from unruly visitors.

In a large warehouse, hundreds of whole tunas frozen rock-solid to about minus-80° Fahrenheit (about minus-60° Celsius) lie on the concrete, sorted by type of fish.



Labels on the side of the fish carry seller information, weight of fish, and where it was caught. They come from all over the world, including from fishermen working out of Cape Town, Sydney, Tahiti, and Boston.

We watched as buyers carefully inspected the fish, shining a flashlight at the meat exposed by a flap sliced into the side of the fish near the tail. Buyers inspect the fat content and quality of the meat to decide on the value of the fish.

The most highly prized are the bluefin tuna, which can weigh well over 600 pounds. Those giant fish filled one side of the large warehouse, while smaller bigeye and yellowfin filled the other.

"We Japanese people love bluefin tuna. It contains more fat than other tuna," said Yoshimura. She waved over a fish wholesaler and he showed off what looked like a motorcycle license plate attached to a worn baseball cap. Each buyer wears a tag, which enables the auctioneer to keep track of sales.

Asked if the sight of so many tuna made him hungry, the buyer, Shiro Kamoshita, chuckled.

"I love eating the tuna, but it is business. I save the best for my clients," he said, as Yoshimura interpreted.



FAMOUS AUCTION. Whole tunas are inspected at the Tsukiji fish market in Tokyo (left photo). Tsukiji is the biggest fish market in the world, and tourists willing to line up well before dawn can view the rapid-fire auctions where the giant fish are sold. Pictured above are fish on display at the market. (AP Photos/Fritz Faerber)

Quickly, the auction got under way, with a brown-capped man ringing a bell and climbing on a step stool near the bigeye tuna. Tourists craned their necks to watch and quickly snapped photos. One tourist using a camera with flash was quickly taken to task.

It only takes seconds for each fish to sell, as buyers flash hand signals to show the price they will pay. Within minutes, the bigeye were sold and buyers were daubing paint on the sides of their purchases. As gaffe-wielding workers hauled the frozen fish away, market officials herded the first group of tourists out and the second group headed in to see the bluefin auction.

After the tuna auction, tourists often catch a sushi breakfast at tiny restaurants on the market grounds. A key to picking the right spot is eyeing the number of patrons wearing black rubber knee-high boots. If the market workers frequent an establishment, it has to be good. The restaurants line narrow streets, and it's possible to walk in the alleyways behind the restaurants and watch the food prepared in the kitchens, which are open to the alley.

At 9:00am, the intermediate wholesalers market opens to visitors. It is a riot of colors and action, with workers filleting giant tuna with long sword-like knives, others using band saws to cut up the rock-solid frozen fish, sellers arranging amazingly precise displays of every type of sea life (both live and dead) imaginable, and throngs of buyers and workers moving seafood through the market.

And, incredibly, the air is fresh, with little smell of fish. It's an indication of just how quickly the fish move through.

Chances are any visitor to Japan will eat a huge variety of seafood during the stay. A visit to Tsukiji lets tourists see the incredible logistics that deliver that food to the plate.

Obama's Myanmar speech layered with popular appeal

By Erika Kinetz
The Associated Press

YANGON, Myanmar — U.S. President Barack Obama spoke to hundreds of students, officials, and former generals in long-closed Myanmar about freedom and the importance of finding strength in diversity. But for some, the more significant message came from what he did, not what he said.

Instead of travelling to the isolated capital, Naypyitaw, Obama became the first foreign leader to meet with President Thein Sein in Yangon, Myanmar's largest city and cultural heart.

While the government says the location was chosen for logistical reasons, many cheered Obama's decision to give a speech at the University of Yangon, a place brimming with opposition history and personal memories for many in the audience, rather than sequester himself with top leaders in the empty, soulless capital built by the former military junta in 2006.

"The arrangement was made for mutual convenience," said Zaw Htay, the director of the president's office. "Due to time constraints on the part of President Obama and also because Obama wanted to deliver a speech at Yangon University, it was agreed by both sides to have a meeting in Yangon."

The diverse 1,500-member audience — students, activists, lawmakers, former



generals, and members of ethnic minority groups — mingled for several hours, listening to jazz music, while waiting for Obama to arrive. Everyone, including the former generals and parliamentarians, had to walk through the same security gauntlet. There was no VIP line, which surprised some in this hierarchical society.

"We couldn't even think of that two or three months ago," said Rebecca Htin, an ethnic Karen. "The message is clear. We are moving more toward democracy.

That's encouraging for me."

"There's no separation because of Mr. Obama," said Nge Nge Aye Maung, the chairwoman of the Association of Myanmar Disabled Women Affairs. "There's no ranking. We are all together. We are all human beings. That's human rights."

Obama drew applause twice during the 30-minute speech, first when he said reform will not succeed without national reconciliation — Myanmar has been struggling for decades to resolve a plethora

HISTORIC SPEECH. U.S. President Barack Obama waves after delivering a speech at the University of Yangon's convocation hall in Yangon, Myanmar. In a historic trip to a long-shunned land, Obama showered praise and promises of more U.S. help to Myanmar if the Asian nation keeps building its new democracy. "Our goal is to sustain the momentum," he declared with pride as the first U.S. president to visit the country. (AP Photo/Gemunu Amarasinghe)

of armed insurgencies — and again when he stressed the role citizens must play in a democracy.

"That's the thing that's been denied," said Thant Myint-U, an author and presidential adviser. "There hasn't been a sense of citizenship for the whole lifetime of the majority of people in that room."

He said the most important impact of Obama's visit was not the boost it gives to reformers within the government, but the inspiration it offers people who must meet Myanmar's top-down transformation with grassroots energy if the country's transition is to succeed.

"It is much more about emboldening ordinary people to be willing to do their part in seeing through these changes," he said.

But there were still signs of the old days. Plainclothes government security personnel videotaped guests as they walked to the university's Convocation Hall to hear Obama talk about freedom.

Associated Press writer Aye Aye Win contributed to this report.



KA TALK. Kakao Talk founder and chairman Brian Kim speaks during a press conference in Seoul, South Korea. Kakao Talk, a popular mobile messenger in South Korea, will launch an online music and electronic book shop next year as it continues to grow beyond its original mission to provide a simple messaging service. (AP Photo/Ahn Young-joon)

Kakao Talk unveils digital content shop

By **Youkyung Lee**
AP Technology Writer

SEOUL, South Korea — Kakao Talk, a popular mobile messenger in South Korea, will launch an online music and electronic book shop next year as it continues to grow beyond its original mission to provide a simple messaging service.

The shop named “Kakao Page” will provide publishing tools for artists, writers, musicians, and other creative types to sell and market their songs, music videos, and electronic books to Kakao Talk users, which number 66 million, according

to CEO Sirgoo Lee.

Kakao Inc. has built on the success of its mobile messaging service, which was launched in March 2010, to expand into online games, advertising, and other forms of electronic commerce. The company has lost money since being founded in late 2006, but expects to make a profit this year.

The company plans to take a 20 percent cut from Kakao Page sales after giving 30 percent to application store operators like Google or Apple and 50 percent to the content creator.

When launched next year, Kakao Page

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‘Gangnam Style’ most-watched YouTube video ever

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — South Korean rapper PSY’s “Gangnam Style” has become YouTube’s most-viewed video of all time.

YouTube said in a posting on its Trends blog that “Gangnam Style” had been viewed 805 million times as of November 24, surpassing Justin Bieber’s “Baby,” with 803 million views.

The blog said the “velocity of popularity for PSY’s outlandish video is unprecedented.”

PSY’s video featuring his horse-riding dance was posted on YouTube in July, while “Baby” was uploaded in February 2010.

PSY’s video has become a global sensation, with people around the world mimicking his “Gangnam Style”



GLOBAL SENSATION. South Korean rapper PSY, who sings the popular “Gangnam Style,” performs during a concert in front of Seoul City Hall in Seoul, South Korea. “Gangnam Style” has become YouTube’s most-viewed video of all time. (AP Photo/Lee Jin-man, File)

dance. In their October meeting, U.N. secretary-general Ban Ki-moon, a South Korean, joked that he had to relinquish his

title as “the most famous Korean,” and tried a few of PSY’s dance moves. *Editor’s note: At presstime, PSY’s video had 855 million views.*

Developers build road around home in China

By **Didi Tang**
The Associated Press

BEIJING — In an eastern Chinese city, a five-story row house with ragged edges rises incongruously from a huge circle in the middle of a new main road, with freshly laid black pavement swerving around it.

This is the home of the duck farmer who said “no.”

Luo Baogen and his wife are the lone holdouts from a neighborhood of once-connected homes that was demolished to make way for the main thoroughfare heading to a newly built railway station on the outskirts of the city of Wenling in Zhejiang province.



LONE HOLDOUT. People stand near a house sitting in the middle of a new main road on the outskirts of Wenling city in east China’s Zhejiang province. Duck farmer Luo Baogen and his wife are the lone holdouts from a neighborhood of once-connected homes that was demolished to make way for the main thoroughfare heading to a newly built railway station. (AP Photo/File)

Dramatic images of Luo’s home have circulated widely online in China, becoming the latest symbol of resistance in the frequent, countrywide standoffs between homeowners and local officials accused of offering too little compensation to vacate neighborhoods for major redevelopment projects.

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MY TURN

■ Marie Lo



A new political presence

In post-election analysis, politicians and pundits repeatedly cite the changing demographics of the United States as a key factor in the re-election of President Barack Obama. In addition to receiving 93 percent of the African-American vote, President Obama received 71 percent of the Hispanic vote. However, what is less often noted is that, according to exit polls, 73 percent of Asian Pacific Americans (APA) also voted for him.

Coverage in the media about APA voters, however, tends to perpetuate the stereotype of the model minority. Further, it only sees Asian Americans in terms of economic status. A recent *New York Times* opinion piece by David Brooks is illustrative of this example. In the article, Brooks criticizes the Republican party's characterization of Obama supporters as takers who feel entitled to government handouts by noting that Asian-American voters, similar to Hispanic voters, are hardworking Americans.

"Let's just look at one segment, Asian Americans," Brooks writes. "Many of these people are leading the lives Republicans celebrate. They are, disproportionately, entrepreneurial, industrious, and family oriented. Yet, on [Election Day], Asian Americans rejected the Republican Party by 3 to 1. They don't relate to the Republican equation that more government = less work."

While the point Brooks is making aims to challenge the distinction between the makers and the takers that many Republicans describe as the divide between Republican and Democrat supporters respectively, the "exemplary status" of Asian Americans does not always account for why Asian Americans have been entrepreneurial, industrious, and family oriented.

Taken out of context, the descriptions reinforce the stereotype of a homogenous "Asian culture" and circumvent an equally important analysis of how the effects of anti-immigrant policies and discriminatory employment practices both past and present have, for example, led Asian Americans to open their own businesses.

The narrative that celebrates Asian-American success often points to the high per-household income of Asian Americans in relation to other groups, including whites. But these statistics of median household income do not take into

consideration the average number of members in a household.

According to the Asian American Justice Center, the average household size for Asian Americans is 3.1 and for Pacific Islanders it is 3.4, in comparison to 2.6 for the general population. And in the households with three or more workers, the percentage is 17 percent while the general population is 12 percent.

This is one of the examples in which the focus on household income of Asian Pacific Americans can be potentially misleading. A more accurate figure would be to look at per capita income, which measures the income that an individual takes in. The per capita income of many APAs is below the national average.

That said, it is not just the entrepreneurial spirit or the belief in government programs that explain APA support for Democrats. Rather, it is the way in which people of color have been collectively cast as entitled, un-American, and government free-loaders.

The fact that the president is still being asked for proof of his birth certificate to verify his American citizenship reinforces the idea that to be American is to be white. It is not because of a stubborn clinging to a politics of grievances that explains the broad coalition of people of color who supported President Obama.

Rather, it is a recognition that the policies of exclusion and racism persist and that to be a person of color is to be under suspicion of not being "American" enough. What Brooks misses in his comparison of Hispanics and Asian Americans is how anti-immigration laws and barriers today were built on the enforcement of Asian exclusion in the past.

As one of the fastest growing groups in the U.S., Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders are also becoming an increasing presence on the political scene. In the same election that granted President Obama a second term, a record number of APAs were also voted into congress. Joining Mike Honda (D-California) will be Mark Takano (D-California), Ami Bera (D-California), Mazie Hirono (D-Hawaii), Grace Meng (D-New York), and Tammy Duckworth (D-Illinois). The demographics of the country are changing, but how we talk about this country has yet to catch up with these new realities.

Opinions expressed in this newspaper are those of the authors and not necessarily those of this publication.

To make a donation to help those affected by Hurricane Sandy, visit <www.redcross.org/hurricane-sandy>.

TALKING STORY IN ASIAN AMERICA

■ Polo



Far East Portlanders

Good lessons from bad history

Remember, the Far East? Forget for a moment that all those exotic Orientals animating their mysterious cities are actually west of here. Ten jumbo jet hours due west, with two warm meals and two Hollywood blockbusters in between. Daily nonstop PDX flights daily will get you there. Each of them west-bound.

Does anyone recall the inscrutable Far East? Those distant shopping adventures and spiritual possibilities even more novel than the Middle East's elegant minarets and noisy sooks? The farther east last century's western sailors went, the more their prejudices filled in their sketchy maps. Unkind ones.

Of course, our shared narratives have shifted some since Amsterdam merchants, London bankers, and Vatican scholars projected theirs on the rest of us. Perspectives adding understanding of our energetic planet are now broadcast as deliberately from Dubai and Tokyo as they are from New York and Atlanta. The Old Far East has less and less meaning these days, as no places and no peoples are really that far away. Not anymore.

The city's eastern edge

Pretty soon, east Portland will seem less foreign too.

By east Portland, I'm not talking about two to 50 tidy blocks east of swollen River Willamette — those cozy neighborhoods from which two kinds of rail, your choice of four-tired cars or six-tired busses, and any number of leafy bike boulevards, will get you to work on time every Monday morning.

By eastside, I'm not thinking about festive Hawthorne or Division or Sellwood — residential districts rich with Thai and Mexican menus, Tibetan shops and Mother India's yoga studios. Several fragrant coffee shops per block.

I mean Far East Portland. Those chaotic city blocks carved by four-lane, 45-mph arterials where our elders and wheel-

chained relatives need to go another quarter mile east or south before crossing one of those crazy streets. Those edgy neighborhoods where Portlanders who serve our inner-eastside's shoppers, diners, and sippers can afford to raise their families. Those ambitious households that must either endure long-long TriMet rides or pay for painfully expensive gasoline to get to work. To get to school. To stores and banks.

There's a Starbucks on the corner of S.E. 121st Avenue and Division Street. Next to an abandoned Albertsons.

To tell you the truth, I worry whether our present-day downtown policy planners and business developers are as distant from Portland's far east neighborhoods as last century's Euro-centrist leaders were, when western power and money were migrating east. The distant Far East.

Willy nilly natives

The thing about faraway places, odd peoples, and their unfamiliar ways, is that none of that is strange if you're already living there. Moreover, newcomers not respecting different adaptations and determined to force outsider ways on those already settled, will cause both groups great grief. Check any high school history text. Or ask any Chinese, Vietnamese, or Indonesian nationalist. Ask him or her at any noodle, tea, or coffee shop on either side of our deep blue Pacific. Downtown or east end.

If Asian history seems too remote for relevance to Portland life, substitute that with our Pacific Northwest's native nations experience.

Family life along rivers Willamette and Columbia was pretty upscale when Lewis & Clark stopped by in the spring of 1805. Business was bigger, politics were more complex, and social life was much more diverse than all that in St. Louis, the kickoff city for President Jefferson's Corps of Discovery.

It's hard to say why Lt. Clark complains



so incessantly to his diary about his soaked socks, or why he didn't simply knock on a Camas family's door and after properly introducing himself, look longingly at their family room fire. Hospitality is universal.

We read a lot about Capt. Lewis' upset tummy, but never about him politely asking any of the many Klickitat aunties he must've noticed at market, and inquiring what she does for her kids' belly aches. Women everywhere know about this stuff.

And it's not only about personal matters. Near River Columbia's confluence with the sea, there's a big rusty iron tub where the Corps of Discovery boiled salt out of seawater. It's an American heritage site, as if locals hadn't thought of that yet. As if the guys couldn't have borrowed a Clatsop neighbor's salt shaker. Up high in Salem's capitol rotunda, there's a mural memorializing the first white women shipped here. As if.

Across the street, Willamette University still insists theirs is the first institute of higher learning west of the Mississippi. Watching vacationing families and field-tripping students visit these kinds of local history lessons has to make you worry whether our kids are concluding that 140 boring centuries passed without seasoning, without dating, without Indian boys and girls doing homework.

You and your money are welcome, but

Last month, downtown's Dill Pickle Club packed a yellow school bus for a rainy day trip to River City's eastern edge. "East Portland Peripheries Tour," their promo video said. "Welcome East Portland Tourists," David Douglas High School ESL teacher Ann Downing's earnest students' big banner read.

"Welcome to Fubonn," Michael Liu, manager of Oregon's largest Asian mall and host of immigrant Portland's busiest weekend draw, every week of every year, said as his guests shook Oregon rain out of their pant cuffs and umbrella folds.

"Welcome to IRCO (the Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization)," Djimet Dogo smiled in that open-hearted,

"Welcome East Portland Tourists," David Douglas High School ESL teacher Ann Downing's earnest students' big banner read.

wide-armed way only Africans can. "For 35 years, a nationally-recognized model of newcomer resettlement."

And they meant it. All of it. All of them. East-enders are serious about their kids' educations. As serious as west-siders are, as serious as Native-American dads and moms have always been. Jennifer Liu led her guests up and down aisle after aisle of greens and meats, sauces and snacks. Explaining the unfamiliar. Assuring a kinder generation that spices for what's bland and fixes for what hurts are readily available in amazing variety. Djimet explained wave after wave, as natural as Seaside breakers, of refugees resettling their families in Oregon's fertile soil. Some of them from the Far East, some from Eastern Europe, some from East Africa, some from the Middle East.

Some families black, some brown, some white, and all of them welcome to his big house.

So you have to hope, and so we have to expect, that our city's political and business leaders will have learned from last era's awful lessons. The east need not be so far east. And faraway folks need not be deemed so alien.

We're getting better. Inside my reeling generation, a week of pitching in an iron Hong Kong steamer's been replaced by a day strapped six-abreast into a jumbo Boeing. Inside these same decades, inventive and industrial awe has shifted, west to east.

And while east Portlanders may have to be patient, as patient as those long days and endless nights between sending and receiving Pacific seaports, for our city's infrastructural investments to move east, investments making possible our westside's generous parks and lively business blocks and quiet evening walks — we have to hope that when these changes arrive, they come with sincere respect for all those folks already living and loving here.

Indeed, east- and west-siders, Portlanders all alike, have to expect none of the carelessness and the cruelty that so defined earlier expansions east.

Kakao Talk unveils digital content shop

Continued from page 5

will be available only in South Korea where roughly half of its users are based, Lee said.

Kakao has been trying to increase its overseas Kakao Talk users by partnering with companies in other markets. Last month, Kakao sold a 50 percent stake in Kakao Japan to Yahoo! Japan, hoping to achieve more growth in Asia's second-largest economy where rival Line messenger by NHN Japan has been expanding rapidly.

In the U.S., it hopes to partner with internet giants such as Google and Facebook to reach U.S. smartphone users, its founder and chairman Brian Kim said.

"We are looking for partners in the U.S.," he said. "Google would be nice and Facebook will be nice as well."

Kim, a respected entrepreneur in South Korea, was formerly a CEO of South Korean internet giant NHN Corp.

Others suggest a partnership with a game publisher or a mobile carrier could boost Kakao's overseas ambitions.

"The key for Kakao will be to find a company with a large existing user base and strong brand awareness in the U.S. market. Such a partner is most likely to come from the digital game industry or among the country's mobile network operators," said Mark Ranson, an analyst at research firm Ovum.

In South Korea, where "Ka Talk" has entered the local lexicon to describe a mobile chat, Kakao operates a popular photo-sharing tool akin to Instagram and a mobile commerce shop to send digital coupons to friends.

Its biggest move so far was opening a mobile game store in July.

Kakao Talk helped three mobile games gather more than 10 million users in about one month.

Rose-Tu gives birth to 300-pound baby girl

Continued from page one

before she was even out of the amniotic sac — she was wiggling. And she's vocalizing loudly. The first time we heard her, the sound was so deep and loud that we thought it was Shine (another female in the herd). She's definitely got a great set of pipes, and it looks like she's going to be a real pistol."

It may be a while before the new calf is ready for visitors, according to elephant curator Bob Lee.

"Rose should allow the calf to nurse regularly, sleep, play, and generally act like a calf without trying to stop it and control its movements," said Lee. "Then we'll determine whether she's calm and comfortable with staff around."

The public will be informed as soon as the calf is allowed to have visitors.


In the meantime, the newest member of the zoo's elephant herd will be named with the help of an online vote by members of the community.

When sibling Samudra "Sam" was born in 2008,

elephant enthusiasts chose between Samudra — the Hindi word meaning "lord of the ocean" — the Chinese name Bao, the Vietnamese name Duc, the Hindi name Amul, and Hugo-Tu, which was a name option honoring mother Rose-Tu and maternal grandfather Hugo.


The list of five potential names for the new female calf will be posted online soon.

To learn more about Rose-Tu's nearly two-year pregnancy and view video of mom and her newborn, <www.oregonzoo.org>.




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Equal Housing Opportunity 

Oh, Yoko! Ono's fashion line gropes for Lennon

NEW YORK (AP) — You remember that Beatles classic “I Wanna Hold Your Hand”? Turns out Yoko Ono had other things in mind.

Ono's new menswear collection inspired by John Lennon includes pants with large handprints on the crotch, tank tops with nipple cutouts, and even a flashing LED bra.

The collection of menswear for Opening Ceremony is based on a series of drawings she sketched as a gift for Lennon for their wedding day in 1969. Ono said the illustrations were designs for clothing and accessories to celebrate Lennon's “hot bod.”

Also in the collection are a “butt hoodie” with an outline drawing suggesting its name, pants with cutouts at the behind, a jock strap with an LED light, and a transparent chest plaque with bells and a leather neck strap.

“I was inspired to create ‘Fashions for Men,’ amazed at how my man was



looking so great. I felt it was a pity if we could not make clothes emphasizing his very sexy bod,” Ono said in a statement. “So, I made this

LINE FOR LENNON. Pictured is a transparent chest plaque with bells and a leather neck strap, part of “Fashions for Men: 1969-2002,” Yoko Ono's new menswear collection. (AP Photo/Courtesy Opening Ceremony)

whole series with love for his hot bod, and gave it to him as a wedding present.”

Opening Ceremony hosted a book signing at its SoHo store for Ono for a book that contained the illustrations, and that led to the collaboration to bring them to life. The limited-edition capsule collection, “Fashions for Men: 1969-2002,” launched last month.

“As huge, longtime fans of Yoko's art, we have great respect for her artistic vision, aesthetics, and intellect,” said Humberto Leon, co-founder and creative director of Opening Ceremony.

Prices run from \$25 for a poster to \$200 for a jock strap or \$750 for boots with an incense holder or open toes.

Xi takes China's helm with many tough challenges

Continued from page 2

not interested in introducing China's Gorbachev” — the Soviet leader whose reforms hastened the end of the Soviet Union — Yang said.

Many of the challenges Xi confronts are legacies of his predecessor, Hu Jintao. In addition to relinquishing his role as party chief, having reached the two-term maximum, Hu also stepped down from the party commission that oversees the military. The move is a break from the past in which exiting party leaders kept hold of the military portfolio for several years.

During Hu's 10 years in office, policies to open up China to trade and foreign investment begun by his predecessors gathered momentum, turning China into a manufacturing powerhouse and drawing tens of millions of rural migrants into cities. Easy credit fuelled a building boom, the Beijing Olympics, and the world's longest high-speed rail network. At the same time, Hu relied on an ever-larger security apparatus to suppress protests, even as demonstrations continued to rise.

“More and more citizens are beginning to awaken to their rights and they are constantly asking for political reform,” said rights activist Hu Jia, who has previously been jailed for campaigning for AIDS patients and orphans. “The Communist Party does not have legitimacy. It is a party of dictatorship that uses violence to obtain political power. What we need now is for this country's people to have the right to choose who they are governed by.”

Chief among the problems Xi and his team will have to tackle is the economy. Though Hu pledged more balanced development, inequality has risen and housing costs have

soared. Over the past year, the economy has flagged, dragged down by anemic demand in Europe and the U.S. for Chinese products and an overhang from excessive lending for factories and infrastructure.

With state banks preferring to lend to state-run companies or not at all, private entrepreneurs have had to turn to unofficial money-lenders.

“The bank just asked me to wait,” said Deng Mingxin, who runs a zipper factory with 10 employees in Jiangsu province. “Maybe it's because I didn't offer enough ‘red envelopes’” — a reference to bribes.

The World Bank warns that without quick action, growth that fell to a three-year low of 7.4 percent in the latest quarter may fall to 5 percent by 2015 — a low rate for generating the employment and funding the social programs Beijing holds as key to keeping a lid on unrest. Analysts and Beijing's own advisers have said it needs to overhaul its strategy and nurture consumer spending and services to meet its pledge of doubling incomes by 2020.

“China will need a very different economy in the next decade,” said Citigroup economist Minghao Shen.

In foreign policy, the U.S. and other partners are looking for reassurance that China's policy remains one of peaceful integration into the world community. Tensions have flared in recent months between China, Japan, and the Philippines over contested islets in the East and South China Seas. Mistrust has also grown with the U.S. as it diverts more military and diplomatic resources to Asia in what Chinese leaders see as containment.

Fresh in office, Xi can ill-afford to bow to foreigners, crossing a nationalistic public and a military

that may still be uncertain about his leadership.

“The leaders can't look like they are being soft on the U.S. or foreign policy because they will lose power in terms of people,” said Robert Lawrence Kuhn, a business consultant and author of the book *How China's Leaders Think*. Kuhn expects more tough rhetoric than action in the months ahead, but expects Xi's leadership to develop a more nuanced foreign policy as it consolidates its authority at home.

Of all the knotty long-term challenges, few threaten to derail China's march to a more prosperous society more than its rapidly aging society. Baby boomers whose labor manned the factories and construction sites are starting to retire. Meanwhile, fewer Chinese are entering the workforce after a generation of family planning limits and higher incomes led to smaller families.

If left unchecked, the trend will further stress already pressed social security funds.

Scrapping the rule that limits many families to one child would help in the long run, and is being urged by experts. But the leadership for years has delayed change, in part because it sees smaller families and fewer births as having helped raise incomes overall.

“China has wasted some time and opportunities partly because its growth over the last 10 years was so spectacular,” said Wang Feng, director of the Brookings-Tsinghua Center for Public Policy and an expert on China's demographics. “Now it no longer has that luxury.”

Associated Press writers Didi Tang, Gillian Wong, Alexa Olesen, Joe McDonald, and Louise Watt and researchers Flora Ji and Zhao Liang contributed to this report.



SATIRICAL SITE. The online version of China's Communist Party newspaper last month hailed a report by *The Onion* naming North Korean dictator Kim Jong Un as the “Sexiest Man Alive” — apparently unaware it was satire. Pictured is a screen grab of *The Onion*'s website featuring Kim.

China's party paper falls for *Onion* joke about Kim

BEIJING (AP) — The online version of China's Communist Party newspaper last month hailed a report by *The Onion* naming North Korean dictator Kim Jong Un as the “Sexiest Man Alive” — apparently unaware it was satire.

The *People's Daily* ran a 55-page photo spread on its website in a tribute to the round-faced leader, under the headline “North Korea's top leader named *The Onion*'s Sexiest Man Alive for 2012.”

Quoting *The Onion*'s spoof report, the Chinese newspaper wrote, “With his devastatingly handsome, round face, his boyish charm, and his strong, sturdy frame, this Pyongyang-bred heartthrob is every woman's dream come true.”

“Blessed with an air of power that masks an unmistakable cute, cuddly side, Kim made this newspaper's editorial board swoon with his impeccable fashion sense, chic short hairstyle, and, of course, that famous smile,” the *People's Daily* cited *The Onion* as saying.

The photos the *People's Daily* selected include Kim on horseback squinting into the light and Kim waving toward a military parade. In other photos, he is wearing sunglasses and smiling, or touring a facility with his wife.

An online editor for the *People's Daily* said the photo spread was taken offline.

“We have realized it is satirical,” said the editor, who works on the site's South Korea channel, one of the three channels where it was posted. He refused to give his name. When asked whether editors knew the *Onion* piece was satirical when the *People's Daily* item was first posted, he declined to clarify, but added that they picked up the news after first seeing it on China's state-run *Guangming Daily* website.

He said he'd hoped the incident wouldn't draw too much attention.

The chief editor for the *People's Daily* English channel, where the story also ran, declined to comment. “I can't say anything yet,” said the woman who would only give her surname Wang.

While the *People's Daily* item was still up, *The Onion* updated the story to post a link and add a postscript: “For more coverage on *The Onion*'s Sexiest Man Alive 2012, Kim Jong-Un, please visit our friends at the *People's Daily* in China, a proud Communist subsidiary of *The Onion*, Inc.”

“Exemplary reportage, comrades,” *The Onion* wrote.

It is not the first time a state-run Chinese newspaper has fallen for a fictional report by the just-for-laughs *The Onion*.

In 2002, the *Beijing Evening News*, one of the capital city's biggest tabloids at the time, published as news the fictional account that the U.S. Congress wanted a new building and that it might leave Washington. *The Onion* article was a spoof of the way sports teams threaten to leave cities in order to get new stadiums.

Two months ago, Iran's semi-official Fars news agency reprinted a story from *The Onion* about a supposed survey showing that most rural white Americans would rather vote for Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad than President Barack Obama. It included a quote from a fictional West Virginia resident saying he'd rather go to a baseball game with Ahmadinejad because “he takes national defense seriously.”



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The Year of the Snake
begins February 10, 2013.

The Asian Reporter's Lunar New Year special issue will be published on Monday, February 4, 2013. Display advertising space reservations for this issue are due Monday, January 21, 2013 at 5:00pm.