

# Asia Pacific Times



## WORLD NEWS

### PAKISTAN PRESIDENT SUFFERS MINOR HEART ATTACK

ISLAMABAD - Pakistan's embattled President Asif Ali Zardari will remain in hospital in Dubai until further notice after suffering a minor heart attack and undergoing an operation, officials said on Wednesday.

The unpopular 56-year-old head of state flew to the United Arab Emirates on Tuesday after falling ill in the midst of a major scandal over alleged attempts by a close aide to seek US help to limit the power of Pakistan's military.

His illness sparked media reports that he is contemplating resignation, but loyalists have ruled out any question that he may step down and the president has defied many critics in already holding onto power for three years.

### AFGHAN BLAST VICTIMS BURIED

KABUL - Afghans were on Wednesday burying 59 people killed in unprecedented bombings against Shiite Muslims as officials blamed Pakistani militants, accusing them of trying to whip up Iraq-style sectarian violence.

Investigators are poring over who was behind the coordinated attacks in the Afghan capital Kabul and northern city of Mazar-i-Sharif that the Taliban, the main faction leading a 10-year insurgency, have denied carrying out.

### RUSSIA BRACES FOR NEW RALLIES

MOSCOW - Russia's opposition on Wednesday promised new rallies contesting the results of elections won by Vladimir Putin's party, despite the arrests of hundreds in a police crackdown on a Moscow protest.

Riot police in helmets roughly dragged over 550 protestors into detention vans on Tuesday evening in central Moscow, in the second protest in as many days organised via the Internet to protest Sunday's parliamentary polls.

"Police detained 569 people for an attempt to hold the unsanctioned rally," a law enforcement source told the ITAR-TASS news agency.

## China, US hold military talks

BEIJING - Chinese and US defence officials opened military talks in Beijing on Wednesday after ties were strained by American arms sales to Taiwan and a planned US troop deployment in Australia.

The talks, led by US undersecretary of defence for policy Michele Flournoy and her Chinese counterpart Ma Xiaotian, come a day after China's President Hu Jintao urged the navy to prepare for military combat.

They are the first ministry-level talks between the two nations since September, when Washington announced a \$5.85 billion upgrade to Taiwan's fleet of F-16 fighter jets, angering Beijing, which considers the island a breakaway province.

China's official Xinhua news agency said military relations between the two powers, the situations in the Korean Peninsula and the South China Sea and the sale of US arms to Taiwan would be on the agenda.

Several Asian nations have competing claims over parts of the South China Sea, a strategically vital area believed to encompass huge oil and gas reserves, while China claims

it all.

One-third of global seaborne trade passes through the maritime area and Vietnam and the Philippines have accused Chinese forces of increasing aggression there, ratcheting up tensions in the region.

On Tuesday, Hu said in a speech to China's Central Military Commission that the navy needed to "make extended preparations for military combat in order to make greater contributions to safeguard national security and world peace."

Opening the one-day annual meeting, Ma said the talks showed that "both countries are being sincere about maintaining military exchanges".

"Hopefully both sides will make the best of this opportunity to expand common ground, keep risks under control and avoid misjudgment," he added, according to Xinhua.

Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao last month warned against interference by "external forces" in regional territorial disputes including those in the South China Sea.

### Australia refuses to protect Japan whale hunters

SYDNEY - Australia said on Wednesday it had rejected a call from Japan to provide more security for its whaling fleet in Antarctic waters, the site of violent clashes with animal rights activists in previous years.

The Japanese fleet left port on Tuesday on the country's annual hunt and activists with the militant Sea Shepherd Conservation Society, who plan to harass the whalers, said they were preparing to join them within days.

But Environment Minister Tony Burke said Canberra had no plans to send a navy or Customs vessel to monitor events in the remote Southern Ocean, despite a Japanese call for action at an International Whaling Commission meeting.

"What Japan was asking of us was to provide a higher level of protection for their vessels simply because they are involved in whaling. There is no way that we could countenance something like that," Burke told the ABC.

### Fugitive Thai 'Red Shirt' leader surrenders

BANGKOK - A militant leader of Thailand's "Red Shirt" protest movement surrendered to authorities on Wednesday on terrorism charges over his role in opposition rallies last year, after almost 20 months on the run.

Arisman Pongruangrong, who narrowly avoided capture by police commandos in April 2010 by climbing out of the third-floor window of a Bangkok hotel, turned himself in to the justice ministry's department of special investigation (DSI).

"I acknowledged and denied all the charges and will give more testimony in a written statement," he told reporters.

Arisman is believed to have hidden in neighbouring Cambodia after fleeing the capital in the wake of the bungled attempt to arrest him in connection with mass anti-government protests that turned deadly.

Later on Wednesday a Bangkok court denied his request to be released on bail.

## S.Korea ruling party turmoil as top officials quit

SEOUL - Three top officials of South Korea's ruling Grand National Party resigned on Wednesday, raising turmoil in the organisation to crisis levels ahead of crucial elections next year.

The trio, members of the conservative GNP's seven-strong Supreme Council, said they were stepping down over a lack of reforms despite the party's plunging popularity ahead of presidential and parliamentary polls.

One of them called for the party to be disbanded and reformed under a new name after a top GNP lawmaker's assistant was arrested on charges of mounting a cyber attack on the country's election commission during a key vote last month.

## China arrests 600 in huge child trafficking bust

BEIJING - Chinese police have busted two huge child trafficking rings that spanned 10 provinces, arresting more than 600 suspects and rescuing 178 children, the government said on Wednesday.

Child abductions and trafficking are rife in China, despite repeated police crackdowns - a problem that many experts blame on the nation's strict "one-child" policy and lax regulations on adoption.

The public security ministry said in a statement that police in the southwestern province of Sichuan had chanced on clues that a child trafficking gang was operating there when dealing with a traffic accident in May.

After a long period of evidence-gathering, more than 5,000 police officers from 10 different provinces across China launched a joint offensive on November 30, arresting 608 suspects.

## Malaysia urged to fully probe Alstom allegations

KUALA LUMPUR - Transparency International on Wednesday called for a thorough probe by Malaysian authorities into alleged bribery by French industrial group Alstom, in a scandal involving several countries.

Malaysian media had reported on Tuesday that anti-corruption officials last week "visited" the office of a power firm amid allegations a former official took kickbacks from Alstom related to a power project in the 1990s.

## JAPAN QUAKE CAUSED RARE DOUBLE-WAVE TSUNAMI: NASA

WASHINGTON - The massive earthquake off the coast of Japan in March caused a rare "merging tsunami" in which two waves combined to amplify the destruction after landfall, according to NASA.

For the first time ever, US and European radar satellites captured images of the two wave fronts, confirming the existence of the long-hypothesized process, which forms a "single, double-high wave far out at sea."

"This wave was capable of traveling long distances without losing power. Ocean ridges and undersea mountain chains pushed the waves together along certain directions from the tsunami's origin," NASA said in a statement on its website.

"The discovery helps explain how tsunamis can cross ocean basins to cause massive destruction at some locations while leaving others unscathed," it said, adding that the research could help to improve forecasts.

Several executives at Teknologi Tenaga Perlis Consortium (TTPC) also had been questioned by the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC), the Star newspaper said.

"Transparency International Malaysia calls upon the MACC to leave no stone unturned in the investigations on Alstom's business dealings in Malaysia," a statement by the anti-corruption group said.

## Leader of China prostitution ring executed

BEIJING - The female head of a gang in the southwestern megacity of Chongqing that forced hundreds of women to work as prostitutes - some of whom died or went mad - was executed on Wednesday, state media said.

Wang Ziqi, who ran a gang that operated brothels under the guise of teahouses, beauty salons or hotels, was sentenced to death in August 2010, the China News Service said. Her subsequent appeal failed and she was put to death.

According to previous media reports, Wang ran the gang with her sister Wang Wanning, who fled abroad but was caught and brought back to China in April. Two other sisters were also involved.

## Tokyo 'not doing enough' for Fukushima: Greenpeace

THE HAGUE - Fukushima's residents are being left to their fate and not enough is being done to protect them against radiation nine months after Japan's tsunami, environment group Greenpeace said on Wednesday.

The Dutch-based group lashed Tokyo after a probe by one of its nuclear experts, who called for the evacuation of pregnant women and children from Fukushima city, some 60 kilometres (37 miles) from the Fukushima nuclear plant.

"The inhabitants of Fukushima are being left to their fate," Greenpeace radiation expert Ike Teuling said in a press release, issued from Amsterdam.

Greenpeace said Teuling conducted an investigation around Fukushima city over the last few days and found the area still "seriously contaminated with radioactivity."

## Palm planters blamed for decline of Borneo monkey

KUALA LUMPUR - Expanding palm-oil plantations in Malaysian Borneo are rapidly eating into the habitat of the rare proboscis monkey and causing its numbers to decline sharply, officials warned on Wednesday.

The reddish-brown primate, which is named for its distinctive large and fleshy nose, is found only on Borneo, a large island divided up between Malaysia, Indonesia and Brunei.

But rapid loss of its native habitat in mangrove swamps and jungles, along with poaching, have caused populations in the Malaysian state of Sabah to drop and now just 6,000 exist in five major populations, a statement by Sabah's wildlife department warned.

The number of monkeys in one major population was declining by 10 per cent per year, it added.

## Thai panel to oversee anti-royal website crackdown

BANGKOK - Thailand has set up a committee to clamp down on websites considered insulting to the monarchy, a minister said on Wednesday, despite international concern over its widely-criticised lese majeste laws.

Deputy Prime Minister Chalem Yubumrung said he would chair the first meeting of the group this week, including representatives from police, the interior ministry and other related agencies.

## ASIAN STOCK INDICES

	WedCl s	PvsCl s
Tokyo Ni kkei 225	8722. 17	8575. 16
Hong Kong HangSeng	19240. 58	18942. 23
Sydney AFJ Ords	4351. 26	4321. 59
Bangkok SET	1046. 73	1030. 77
Jakarta JSX Comp	3793. 24	3752. 67
Kuala L Composite	1482. 99	1480. 92
Manila PSE	4315. 17	4282. 77
Seoul KOSPI	1919. 42	1902. 82
Shanghai Composite	2332. 73	2325. 91
Shenzhen Composite	969. 68	966. 46
Spore Straits T	2782. 55	2749. 24
Taipei Weighted	7033. 00	6956. 28

"If these websites are based abroad and cannot be completely shut down, we will find a way to prevent them from opening here," he said, adding that he would "take this matter seriously", even if his own allies were affected.

Anyone convicted of insulting the king, queen, heir or regent faces up to 15 years in prison on each count, and discussions of the royal family and the matter of succession are consequently extremely sensitive in Thailand.

## Japan returns looted ancient books to South Korea

SEOUL - Japan on Tuesday returned to South Korea more than 1,000 volumes of historical documents it seized during its colonial rule of the peninsula in a gesture aimed at improving prickly relations.

A traditional troupe greeted the arrival of the 1,200 volumes at Incheon airport west of Seoul. After a ceremony attended by South Korean and Japanese officials, the books were to be transported to a state museum in Seoul.

The archives include royal protocols for weddings, funerals, banquets and other events during Korea's Joseon dynasty, which ruled from the 14th century until Japan took over in 1910. Tokyo agreed to return the documents last year in an effort to improve ties.

## Dog poop lottery draws thousands in Taiwan

TAIPEI - An innovative scheme to keep the streets of northern Taiwan clean has seen thousands of citizens dutifully collecting bags of dog poop in the hope of winning \$2,000 in gold.

More than 4,000 residents of New Taipei City, which surrounds the capital, have signed up for the competition since it was launched in early August, and have so far collected 14,000 bags of the stuff.

"The outcome of the campaign beat all our expectations," Lai Lien-chueh, from the city's environmental protection bureau, said on Wednesday.

Those taking part in the scheme were given one lottery ticket for each bag of dog waste they collected, with the top prize in the draw including gold ingots worth around Tw\$60,000 (\$2,000).

## SPORTS NEWS

### Blues football club owner Yeung 'to fight charges'

HONG KONG - Birmingham City owner Carson Yeung intends to fight money laundering charges in Hong Kong, his lawyer said on Wednesday after a pre-trial hearing.

"It's clear. That's our position," lawyer Clive Grossman said outside the court when asked if Yeung intended to plead not guilty.

He said the former hairdresser gave no indication of his plea during Wednesday's largely procedural hearing, which was not open to the public.

No date had been set for the trial, but it was expected to begin later this month. "We've got to check our diaries," Grossman said.

He faces five counts of "dealing with property known or believed to represent proceeds of an indictable offence". He was arrested and charged in June, but the exact nature of the allegations remain unclear.

### Okada eyes China club

TOKYO - Japan's former coach Takeshi Okada, who took the Blue Samurai to the knockout stages of the 2010 World Cup, is in final talks to join China's Hangzhou Greentown FC, a report said on Wednesday.

"I get inspired by the challenge," Okada told reporters as he arrived in Shanghai late on Tuesday, according to the Nikkan Sports tabloid.

"China is a country that will play a key role in many areas of the world. I want to see it for myself."

Okada, 55, became a national hero in Japan after his team reached the last 16 of the World Cup for the first time on foreign soil in South Africa, beating Cameroon and Denmark in the group stage before going out to Paraguay.

Okada, who also coached Japan during their World Cup debut in 1998, when they lost all three group matches, said last year he might accept a club post, but would never again become a national coach.

### Lee Dong-Gook wins K-League MVP award

SEOUL - Striker Lee Dong-Gook, whose goals helped fire Jeonbuk Hyundai Motors to the South Korean league title, has won the K-League Most Valuable Player award for the second time in three years.

### INDONESIA'S DANCING COP FIRED AFTER YOUTUBE FAME

JAKARTA - The Indonesian policeman who shot to fame in April by lip-synching and grooving to an Indian Bollywood hit in a YouTube video has been sacked and forced to hand in his badge.

Norman Kamaru, 26, captured the hearts of Bollywood film fans world over when he was discovered online in his police uniform mouthing the words and dancing to the song "Chaiyya Chaiyya".

After the video went viral, the national police held Kamaru up as a friendly-faced mascot for their much-loathed institution, but after the star skipped 85 days of work to pursue a singing career, police finally sacked him.

"He may think that his new career is much better than being a policeman, but he's mistaken," National Police spokesman Saud Usman Nasution said on Wednesday.

The 32-year-old, whose side were also runners-up in the Asian Champions League, scooped 86 of 115 media votes on Tuesday with FC Seoul forward Dejan Damjanovic a distant second on 14 votes.

Lee was also the MVP in 2009. He and Shin Tae-Yong are the only players to have won the award more than once. Lee netted 16 goals to finish second in the scoring charts.

"I am very pleased and thankful for this big award," Lee told Yonhap news agency. "I think this prize is for the rest of my team. We've shed so much sweat together all year to try to win the league championship."

### Japan's Kameda defends WBA bantamweight title

OSAKA - Japan's Koki Kameda knocked out Mexican challenger Mario Macias in the fourth round to defend his World Boxing Association bantamweight title on Wednesday.

The knockout came two minutes four seconds into the stanza when Kameda fired four punches to the stomach to send Macias onto the floor for the third time in the bout.

"I feel I was able to hit powerful punches. I'm in good form today. It's because this is my home town," said Kameda, who floored Macias with a left hook in the first and third rounds.

"I think this was the best fight I fought in the bantam class. Now I'm going to support my brother, who will challenge the WBA super flyweight champion Tepparith Kokietygym of Thailand."

## WEATHER

Wednesday, December 7, 2011	
Min	Max
Bangkok	22 32
Beijing	-3 4
Hanoi	18 20
Hong Kong	21 24
Jakarta	25 32
Kuala Lumpur	24 32
Manila	25 32
Seoul	2 7
Taipei	22 28
Tokyo	6 12

## ASIAN MARKETS RISE

**HONG KONG** - Markets rose in Asia on Wednesday on hopes that a meeting of European leaders will finally lead to a plan that will bring an end to the crippling eurozone debt crisis.

Tokyo closed 1.71 per cent, or 147.01 points, stronger at 8,722.17, Sydney rose 0.72 per cent, adding 30.5 points to end at 4,292.5, and Seoul climbed 0.87 per cent, or 16.60 points, to 1,919.42.

Hong Kong gained 1.58 per cent, or 298.35 points, closing at 19,240.58 and Shanghai was 0.29 per cent, or 6.82 points, higher at 2,332.73.

The advances come after Tuesday's downbeat performance following ratings agency Standard & Poor's decision to put the eurozone on negative credit watch, citing leaders' inability to agree a solution.

"Intel Labs will collaborate with the Industrial Technology Research Institute (ITRI) on research programmes expected to shape the future of information technology," Intel said in a statement.

The \$15-million project will focus on "super-fast, but extremely energy-efficient memory technologies" for lightweight laptops, tablets and smartphones, it said. Intel, ITRI and Taiwan's economic ministry each will spend \$5 million on the five-year project.

## Cambodia opens mega-dam

**PHNOM PENH** - Energy-starved Cambodia on Wednesday opened the country's largest hydropower dam to date, a multi-million dollar Chinese-funded project that has attracted criticism from environmental groups.

Prime Minister Hun Sen said the start of operations of the 194-megawatt hydroelectric dam, which cost more than \$280 million, in southern Kampot province was a "historic event" in the development of the nation.

He brushed aside the concerns of local and foreign activists, saying the environmental impact of the dam had been "well studied" and it would help bring down electricity prices in areas including the capital Phnom Penh.

"There is no development that will not impact on the environment," he said in a speech broadcast on national radio, urging "extreme environmentalists" to "look at the whole forest rather than each single tree".

*Headland Media produces the market-leading Headland SatNews service, incorporating the News On-Board and HotelNewspapers brands. The service covers 30 countries in more than 12 languages and is delivered daily by e-mail or via satellite. Tel: +44 151 236 4124 (UK) and +1 954 492 2292 (US) E-mail: news@headlandmedia.com Website: www.headlandmedia.com*

## Japan forex reserves hit new record high

**TOKYO** - Japan said on Wednesday its foreign exchange reserves hit a record high \$1.3 trillion in November after authorities intervened in currency markets to stem the yen's rise.

The level was \$94.88 billion higher than in October, the finance ministry said, and surpassed a previous record of \$1.22 trillion set in August.

The reserves are composed mainly of foreign-currency denominated securities and bank deposits along with gold and other assets, according to ministry data.

The country's forex reserves, the second-biggest in the world after China, expanded following Japan's intervention in currency markets on October 31, after the yen hit a fresh post-war high of 75.32 against the dollar.

## China VP tells US: stop 'politicising economic issues'

**BEIJING** - China's vice president urged the United States to "curb its tendency of politicising economic issues", state media said on Wednesday, after a recent step-up in US criticism of Beijing's trade practices.

Ties between Beijing and Washington have been strained after US lawmakers on both sides of the political aisle, under pressure to spur jobs growth as they enter an election year, heap blame on Chinese policies for their economic woes.

"I hope the United States will... curb its tendency towards protectionism and of politicising economic issues," Chinese Vice President Xi Jinping told former US treasury secretary Henry Paulson during a Tuesday meeting in Beijing.

Xi, who is widely touted to take over from President Hu Jintao in 2013, added it was "vital" for China and the United States to strengthen economic and trade ties in the face of a global downturn, the state Xinhua news agency said.

## Japanese government backs Tokyo 2020 Olympic bid

**TOKYO** - Japan's parliament has passed a resolution supporting Tokyo's bid to host the 2020 Summer Olympics.

The resolution passed Wednesday by the Upper House followed a similar vote on Tuesday in the Lower House, giving Tokyo's second consecutive bid for the Olympics the government's full support.

Tokyo lost its bid to host the 2016 Olympics to Rio de Janeiro. The city is up against Doha, Qatar; Istanbul, Turkey; Madrid and Rome for the chance to host the 2020 games.

The International Olympic Committee will select the winning city in September 2013.

## FINANCIAL NEWS

## China to target emerging countries as exports slip

**BEIJING** - China will seek to boost exports to emerging economies next year in the face of "severe challenges" caused by downturns in Europe and the United States, a senior official said on Wednesday.

To cushion the impact on exports - a major engine of growth - Beijing will target developing countries that are growing strongly, said Wang Shouwen, director of the commerce ministry's foreign trade department.

"Next year I think that we will face severe challenges in our exports and imports," Wang told reporters at the release of a white paper on foreign trade marking the 10th anniversary of China joining the World Trade Organization.

"However, some developing and emerging economies are enjoying sound economic performances so we will attach more importance to exports to these countries."

## Intel, Taiwan in chip tie-up

**TAIPEI** - US chip giant Intel has joined hands with a top Taiwan research institute to develop a new generation of memory chips for use in lighter, energy-saving smartphones and tablets, officials said Wednesday.