

'Living Hell' On Isolated 'Slave Islands'

SINUUI ISLAND, South Korea (AP) — He ran the first chance he got. The sun beat down on the shallow, sea-fed fields where Kim Seong-baek was forced to work without pay, day after 18-hour day mining the big salt crystals that blossomed in the mud around him. Half-blind and in rags, Kim grabbed another slave, and the two disabled men headed for the coast.

Far from the glittering steel-and-glass capital of Seoul, they were now hunted men on this remote island where the enslavement of disabled salt farm workers is an open secret. "It was a living hell," Kim said in a recent series of interviews with The Associated Press whose details are corroborated by court records and by lawyers, police and government officials.

Lost, they wandered past asphalt-black salt fields sparkling with a patina of thin white crust. They could feel the islanders inspecting them. Everyone knew who belonged and who didn't.

Egypt Grants Journalists A Retrial

CAIRO (AP) — An Egyptian appeals court on Thursday ordered the retrial of three Al-Jazeera English journalists held for over a year on terror-related charges, a ruling that their lawyers hoped was a step toward resolving a case that brought a storm of international criticism on Egypt's government.

The three will remain behind bars at least until the retrial begins. But their lawyers expressed cautious optimism that a quick retrial will lead to their eventual exoneration. Thursday's ruling by the Court of Cassation, rights advocates said, exposed the highly politicized nature of their initial conviction and heavy sentences of up to 10 years in prison in a trial that they dismissed as a sham with no evidence.

The journalists, Canadian-Egyptian Mohammed Fahmy, Australian Peter Greeste and Egyptian Bahar Mohammed, have argued they were targeted because of the Egyptian government's political fight with Qatar, the Gulf nation that finances the Al-Jazeera news network. The two countries have been at odds over Qatar's support of the Muslim Brotherhood, which Egyptian authorities have cracked down on ferociously since the July 2013 military ouster of Islamist President Mohammed Morsi.

Hopes have been raised that Egypt's government now intends to free the men because of a recent public reconciliation between Egypt and Qatar.

A retrial would give a way out of the case for Egypt's President Abdel-Fattah el-Sissi, who in the past has largely turned aside calls for him to pardon the three by insisting he will not interfere in the judiciary. A retrial would also allow Cairo to continue to use the case as a bargaining chip with Qatar.

If Not Hillary, Who For Dems In 2016?

WASHINGTON (AP) — In Washington, in Iowa, in New Hampshire, really in any place that's already talking about the 2016 campaign for president, just about everyone expects Hillary Rodham Clinton to run for president.

But is it possible that Clinton might not give a White House campaign another try?

The former first lady, New York senator and U.S. secretary of state has paid speeches lined up into 2015, including one scheduled in the middle of March. She often speaks of her affinity for her work at the Clinton Foundation and joy over becoming a grandmother for the first time.

Clinton also recognizes — with plenty of personal experience — the downsides of a presidential campaign. "We say, 'OK, get ready, put your armor on, run that gauntlet, see who survives at the end,'" Clinton said in a speech last year in San Francisco. "And whoever is standing up still, that's the winner."

To be sure, such musings are overshadowed by evidence that Clinton will run again. She has largely left the potential 2016 field frozen in place, locking down financial donors, endorsements and connections around the country and in the early states like Iowa and New Hampshire.

Adriatic Ferry Fire Victim Numbers Vary

BRINDISI, Italy (AP) — Greece and Italy have issued widely different figures for how many people are still not accounted for in the ferry fire that killed at least 11 people in the Adriatic Sea.

The numbers ranged from as many as 98, according to Italian prosecutor Giuseppe Volpe, to 18, according to the Greek Merchant Marine Ministry. Greece says Italy's list is full of duplications and misspellings but the discrepancy could not be immediately explained since the prosecutor's office was closed for the New Year holiday.

A tug began towing the fire-ravaged ferry across wind-whipped seas to Italy on Thursday afternoon. Giuseppe Barretta, owner of the tug boat company, told The Associated Press the operation started near the coast of Albania, where the Norman Atlantic ferry had been stranded after Sunday's pre-dawn fire, and estimated it could take 15 hours, depending on weather.

Earlier, the Italian Coast Guard said waves in the region were as high as 5 meters (16 1/2 feet) and winds were blowing at more than 40 knots (46 mph).

Once the ferry arrives in the Italian port of Brindisi, Italian authorities will inspect it, searching for any other possible bodies.

MH370 Families View Crash With Envy

BEIJING (AP) — Images of bodies and wreckage floating in Indonesian waters gave relatives of those lost aboard AirAsia Flight 8501 anguish and grief, but they also provided the answers that other families have sought in vain for nearly 10 months.

Those with loved ones aboard Malaysia Airlines Flight 370 can only imagine what has happened to them, and can only hope to one day know for sure.

"We have been living in anxiety, fear and hate, and our lives have been utterly messed up, but we as ordinary people are unable to do anything," said Dai Shuqin, whose sister was on the missing plane with her husband, daughter, son-in-law and grandchild.

What happened to MH370, which took off on March 8 from Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, en route to Beijing, remains a mystery. The jetliner disappeared after veering off course and flying for hours with its communications systems disabled. It is thought to have crashed about 1,800 kilometers (1,100 miles) off Australia's west coast, but no trace of the aircraft or the 239 people aboard — most of whom were Chinese — has been found despite an exhaustive and continuing search.

On hearing the news that the AirAsia plane had lost contact on Sunday morning, MH370 relatives said they immediately sympathized with the families who were in the same position they were on March 8. "I can feel the coldness they are feeling now," said Jiang Hui, whose mother was on MH370.

LGBT Activists Face Challenges In 2015

NEW YORK (AP) — Even as same-sex marriage edges closer to becoming legal nationwide, gay rights advocates face other challenges in 2015 that may not bring quick victories.

In Congress, for example, liberal Democrats plan to introduce civil rights bills in the House and Senate that would outlaw a broad range of discrimination against lesbians, gays, bisexuals and transgender people. However, Republicans will control both chambers in the new Congress, and there is no sign that GOP leaders will help the bills advance.

Absent such a federal law, activists will seek to pass more nondiscrimination laws at the state and local levels, but some efforts are meeting resistance. A conservative-led coalition in Houston is trying to overturn a gay rights ordinance approved by the city council in May, while a similar ordinance passed in August by the city council in Fayetteville, Arkansas, was repealed by voters on Dec. 10.

The Fayetteville vote was close — the repeal side got 52 percent of the votes — and the issue is expected to resurface.

"Both sides have reason to continue on," said Mayor Lionel Jordan, who supported the ordinance.

New Year's Stampede Leaves 36 Dead, 47 Injured In Shanghai

BY DIDI TANG
Associated Press

SHANGHAI — Grieving relatives identified the bodies of loved ones a day after a stampede during New Year's celebrations along Shanghai's historic waterfront area killed 36 people. Some families lashed out at authorities, accusing them of being unresponsive to their plight and failing to prevent the disaster.

The chaos began about a half-hour before what was supposed to be a joyful celebration of the start of 2015. In the end, dozens were dead and 47 people were hospitalized, including 13 who were seriously injured, according to the Shanghai government. Some of the victims had suffocated, said Xia Shujie, vice president of Shanghai No. 1 People's Hospital.

Seven of the injured had left hospitals by Thursday afternoon.

The stampede's cause was still under investigation. It happened at Chen Yi Square in Shanghai's old riverfront Bund area, famed for its art deco buildings from the 1920s and 1930s. Throngs of people often jam the area during major events.

A day after the tragedy, some criticized the government, blaming it for failing to keep order at the city's most popular site and for miscommunications with victims' relatives.

"We were told my sister was still being rescued the minute before we were taken to the morgue, where she had been lying dead — clearly for a while," said Cai Jinjin, whose cousin Qi Xiaoyan was among the dead. "There she was, cold and all by herself."

Other victims' relatives complained that authorities failed to notify them of

the deadly stampede and had been unresponsive to their requests for information. In one case, relatives of 24-year-old victim Pan Haiqin said they were alarmed after Pan's employer reported a no-show at work on Thursday, and after traveling hours to Shanghai, got no answers from authorities before they finally were able to confirm Pan's death.

At one of the hospitals where the injured were being treated, relatives tried to push past guards, who used a bench to hold them back. Police later allowed family members into the hospital.

A grieving mother dragged a low-ranking municipal official out from a government compound, demanding answers.

Police at one hospital brought out photos of unidentified dead victims, causing dozens of waiting relatives to crowd around. Not everyone could see, and young women who looked at the photos broke into tears when they recognized someone.

A saleswoman in her 20s, who declined to give her name, said she had been celebrating with three friends. "I heard people screaming, someone fell, people shouted 'don't rush,'" she said. "There were so many people and I couldn't stand properly." She added that she still could not contact one of her friends.

The official Xinhua News Agency quoted a woman with the surname Yin who was caught with her 12-year-old son in the middle of crowds of people pushing to go up and down steps leading from the square.

"Then people started to fall down, row by row," Yin said. When her son was finally brought to safety, he had shoe prints over his clothes, "his fore-

head was bruised, he had two deep creased scars on his neck, and his mouth and nose were bleeding," she said.

One Taiwanese was among the dead, and two Taiwanese and one Malaysian were among the injured, the Shanghai government information office said.

On Thursday morning, dozens of police officers were in the area and tourists continued to wander by the square, a small patch of grass dominated by a statue of Chen Yi, the city's first Communist mayor.

Steps lead down from the square to a road across from several buildings.

"We were down the stairs and wanted to move up and those who were upstairs wanted to move down, so we were pushed down by the people coming from upstairs," an injured man told Shanghai TV. "All those trying to move up fell down on the stairs."

Xinhua quoted witness Wu Tao as saying some people had scrambled for coupons that looked like dollar bills bearing the name of a bar that were being thrown out of a third-floor window. But police dismissed speculation that the coupons had triggered the stampede, saying they were thrown after the tragedy.

Last week, the English-language Shanghai Daily reported that the annual New Year's Eve countdown on the Bund that normally attracts about 300,000 people had been canceled, apparently because of crowd control issues. The report said a "toned-down" version of the event would be held instead but that it would not be open to the public.

The stampede appeared to be near that area. The city apparently did not expect that so many people would assemble there and was not adequately prepared.

Cold Snap Across West Chills Rose Parade

BY RAQUEL MARIA DILLON
Associated Press

PASADENA, Calif. — Fans who lined the Rose Parade route Thursday bundled in blankets, hats and gloves and sipped steaming cups of coffee and cocoa as the day dawned unusually frigid.

A cold snap that hit the West had temperatures a notch above freezing hours before the start, but not cold enough to break the 1952 record of 32 degrees.

"I dressed in four to five layers," said Paul Josephson, a volunteer who cleaned up after the horses. "The problem with LA is that it's cold in the morning, then hot. So you're going to want to strip out of that down coat after a couple of hours."

Spectators may have shed some layers as the sun lit up the bright floats woven together with roses and carnations and other plant material, but signs of the chill were abundant as marching bands, and color guards danced their way past thousands of spectators and a live TV audience.

The University of Southern California mascot, Tommy Trojan, wore a long coat over his roman armor and gladiator sandals. Members of a high school color guard from Hawaii wiggled their hips in pink skirts and bare shoulders. Florida State University Seminoles dancers looked freezing in



MARCUS YAM/LOS ANGELES TIMES/TNS
Japanese-American World War II veterans on the City of Alhambra float — Go For Broke — during the 126th Rose Parade in Pasadena, Calif., on Thursday.

their tights and leotards. The 126th Rose Parade, around the theme of "Inspiring Stories," featured a riderless horse that represented grand marshal Louis Zamperini, a World War II hero and former Olympian, who died in July. Zamperini is the subject of a best-selling book and the movie "Unbroken," now in theaters.

"He really is the embodiment of inspiring stories, and there was no way we were going to change that," said Richard Chinen, president of the 2015 Tournament of Roses.

Zamperini's son, daughter and other family members rode in a car in his place.

Accompanied by a soundtrack from marching bands

and entertained by different dance routines, spectators enjoyed 39 eye-popping floats decorated with fresh-cut flowers highlighting historic figures, celebrities and popular culture.

Cast members from "The Love Boat" rode on a Princess Cruises float, waving as if the ship were pulling from the dock in the show's opening scenes.

Crowds roared as a giant pink hippopotamus float twitched its ears and belched blue and white balloons from its mouth.

For the first time, the Sikh community entered the parade with a float replica of their 100-year-old place of worship in Stockton, California. The AIDS Healthcare Foundation float honored

doctors and nurses who went to Africa to help Ebola victims.

Police said seven people were arrested early in the parade and accused of attempting to interfere with the floats. Four people involved were protesters and carried signs in remembrance of Ezell Ford, a 25-year-old black man who was fatally shot by a Los Angeles Police Department officer in August, according to KNBC-TV.

Cold temperatures were expected to last to the weekend, with the National Weather Service forecasting freezing temperatures overnight into Friday across Southern California, which wasn't the only place in the West dealing with winter weather.

Crews cleared roads after snow fell on parts of Arizona and New Mexico, and forecasters predicted Colorado would get 8 to 16 inches of snow in some mountain areas. A 90-mile stretch of Interstate 40 in Arizona remained closed Thursday afternoon because of snow and ice, and roads were slick and icy in spots all the way into Oklahoma and western Texas.

American Airlines canceled nearly 300 flights out of Dallas-Fort Worth International Airport due to patchy fog and ice. Temperatures across the region were at least 20 degrees below normal.

Out On The Town

VFW

Post 791 209 Cedar

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Wednesday & Sunday

5-7pm Cooks Choice

Thursday

5-7pm - Domestic Beers \$1.50

5-7pm - Hamburger/ Pizza Burger & Fries \$5.00

Friday

Apple Glazed Porkchop

Serving 5:30-8:00

Saturday Entertainment

No Band

Regular Menu 5:30-8:00

New Years Eve Prime Rib Dinner

No Dance 5:30 - 8:00

Chislic Served Last Wednesday of Month

Don't Miss Our All-You-Can-Eat Broasted Chicken & Pollock Buffet With Salad Bar Every Wednesday 5-9pm

No Chicken Buffet on Wed., Dec. 31st

Closed New Years Day Happy New Year!

Joe's Substation

Rural Lesterville 605-364-7414

Pancake Breakfast

French Toast or Biscuits & Gravy

\$7.00 All You Can Eat

Children 6-10 \$4.00 • Under 5 free

Everyone Welcome!

Sun., Jan 4 • 8AM-12:30PM

VFW Post 791

209 Cedar, Yankton • 665-3562 • Open To Public

Czeckers Sports Bar & Grill

New Year's Eve

\$15 All-You-Can-Eat-Wings

\$15 All-You-Can-Drink (Beer or Well)

407 Walnut • Yankton 605.689.2244