

## briefly

### YEMEN Police officers killed in attack

A security official says several policemen were killed or wounded after police loyal to Yemen's ousted president Ali Abdullah Saleh stormed the Interior Ministry in the capital Sanaa, setting off clashes with troops guarding the building.

The official said the attack followed a demonstration outside the ministry by policemen loyal to Saleh. The demonstrators accused the current government of corruption.

### NEW ZEALAND Driller admits lapses in safety

An Australian drilling company has pleaded guilty to three health-and-safety violations for its involvement in a 2010 coal mine disaster in New Zealand that killed 29 miners.

VLI Drilling pleaded guilty on Tuesday in a New Zealand court to charges that it failed to keep its workers safe at the Pike River coal mine. The company faces a maximum fine of 750,000 New Zealand dollars (\$607,000).

### IRELAND Author Maeve Binchy dies at 72

Bestselling Irish author Maeve Binchy, one of Ireland's most popular writers who sold more than 40 million books worldwide, has died in Dublin after a brief illness, Irish media and national leaders said. She was 72 years old.

She was best known for her depictions of human relationships and their crises, mainly in the small towns of Ireland but also in London.

### NORWAY US embassy evacuated

Norwegian police found a suspicious package under a car parked at the US embassy building in Oslo on Tuesday and cordoned off a large part of the city's downtown area as a precaution.

Dozens of police officers evacuated the underground rail station near the embassy and sealed off a large perimeter near the embassy.

REUTERS—AFP—AP



## INDIAN BLACKOUT ENTERS SECOND DAY

PHOTO BY TSERING TOPGYAL / ASSOCIATED PRESS

Locals walk past an electric generator at a market in New Delhi on Tuesday. A massive power failure hit India for the second day running on Tuesday as three regional power grids collapsed, blacking out more than half the country in a crisis affecting more than 600 million people. Hundreds of miners were trapped underground in the eastern state of West Bengal when the lifts failed and metro services were stopped temporarily in the capital.

## Clinton to boost ties with Africa

By ANDREW QUINN  
in Washington  
Reuters

US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton departs this week on a trip that will take her both to Africa's newest nation, South Sudan, and on a visit to the continent's elder statesman, 94-year-old anti-apartheid icon Nelson Mandela.

While Clinton's public focus will be on Africa's democratic achievements and economic potential, the trip also underscores US security ties in the face of an array of growing threats — from Islamist extremists to narcotics cartels.

"The security threats are becoming much more visible

and in some ways dangerous than they were before," said Jennifer Cooke, the head of the Africa program at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington. "There are big global issues on the table, and the US does not have the kind of finances available to mount splashy new economic initiatives in Africa."

Clinton's trip — potentially her last as America's top diplomat — begins on Tuesday in Senegal, and continues on to South Sudan, where she will be the most senior US official to visit since the country declared independence in July 2011.

Further stops include Uganda, Kenya, Malawi and South Africa, the State

Department said.

Clinton is expected to highlight US programs on development, education and HIV/AIDS — long the backbone of US engagement with Africa — as well as US economic interest in a continent whose rich resources and enviable growth rates have drawn other countries.

She will also likely emphasize projects for women and girls, one of her central themes in a job she says she will leave in January even if President Barack Obama is elected to a second term.

But Clinton's visit is also part of a US push to broaden security partnerships with key countries such as Uganda and

Kenya — ties that are growing fast despite sometimes serious US concerns over democratic governance.

Obama laid out his policy for Africa in a speech in Ghana in 2009, saying the US stood ready to help African nations as they work to improve governance, fight corruption and resolve regional conflicts.

His speech led to widespread hopes on the continent that the first US president with African roots would follow through with new policies to help achieve those goals.

But his administration has not launched major new initiatives such as the Clinton-era trade pact that granted tax breaks to African goods.

## UN staff visit DPRK to see flood damage

By AGENCIES  
in Anju, the DPRK and Seoul

UN staff visited storm-pounded counties in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on Tuesday, after two days of heavy rain submerged buildings, cut off power, flooded rice paddies and forced people and their livestock to climb onto rooftops for safety.

The rain on Sunday and Monday followed downpours earlier this month that killed nearly 90 people and left more than 60,000 homeless, officials said. The floods also come on the heels of a severe drought, fueling renewed food worries about a country that has problems in feeding its people.

Two-thirds of the DPRK's 24 million people face chronic food shortages, a UN report said last month, while asking donors for \$198 million in humanitarian aid for the country. Republic of Korea's analyst Kwon Tae-jin said the recent flooding, coming so soon after the dry spell, was likely to worsen the DPRK's food problems.

Pyongyang-based United Nations staff have sent two teams, which were visiting hard-hit South Pyongan prov-

ince in the west of the country and another for Kangwon province in the east, to "see what help if any the UN country team can provide", Christopher de Bono, UNICEF's chief of communications for East Asia and the Pacific, said on Tuesday. He had no other details.

The flooding represents a challenge for Kim Jong-un, new leader of a country which has grappled with severe food shortages since a famine in the 1990s, AFP said.

Francis Markus, a spokesman for the International Federation of Red Cross East Asia, said in Beijing that his fact-finding teams in the DPRK are reporting that drinking water, food and shelter are all critically needed.

"Drinking water is a critical issue with the water systems having been taken out of action, and there's obviously a danger of water-borne diseases if things are not done to improve the situation," he said.

On Sunday and Monday, rain hit the capital, Pyongyang, and other regions, with western coastal areas reporting heavy damage.

AP—AFP



KCNA VIA AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

This picture taken by the DPRK's official Korean Central News Agency on Monday shows submerged houses in Anju city in South Pyongan province, caused by a typhoon and heavy rains.

## The Legend of Wuliangye (II)

# Forerunner to Wuliangye, a favorite of poets

Tianzhu Hill, which sits a short distance from a northern suburb of Yibin city, is a famous site in Chinese folklore. According to legend, a huge rock at the foot of the hill was cut in two by a mysterious heavenly force. And from this gap flowed a pristine stream of clear water.

During the Northern Song Dynasty (960-1127), a renowned poet and calligrapher settled here after being removed from an official post. His idyllic life seemed to help him forget the disgrace of expulsion, and he gave himself over to the pleasures of the exotic place, drinking liquor, composing poems and lecturing.

Gradually, more and more intellectuals began to know this place as the residence of a Taoist scholar. They admired him and his carefree lifestyle because they

were likeminded and usually weary of worldly life or sick of climbing the rungs of officialdom. Over time, more and more of them began to converge there, and they diverted water from the stream to create a pond, which they named Liu Bei Chi, meaning "Flowing Cup Pond" in English.

One day, Huang Tingjian called together all his fellow scholars who lived around the hill. They sat at the waterside of the pond under thick foliage and tall bamboo, composing poems, drinking liquor, pondering and freely sharing their thoughts with one another in an imitation of the refined recreational activities depicted in the *Orchid Pavilion Preface*, one of the master works by famous calligrapher Wang Xizhi. One of the main activities was putting liquor vessels in the water and letting them float in the pond. If a vessel happened to stop and spin in front of the one sitting there, he must drink the liquor in the vessel and present an impromptu poem immediately.

Once the liquor vessels started floating in the pond, people began to think up poems. Some stroked their hair and pondered while some lowered their head in deep thought

and others gazed thoughtfully over the distant hills.

Suddenly, a vessel stopped in front of Huang Tingjian. It was his turn. He poured the liquor into a cup, savored it for a little while, and began his poem. As his poetic presentation unfolded, some were clicking their tongues, the eyes of others lit up and quite a few were nodding approvingly. At heart, they were all in agreement with Huang Tingjian's poetic assessment of the taste of the liquor: clear but not thin; rich but not strong, mellow but not cloying, and zesty without burning the tongue.

The liquor in the vessels was the famous Yaozixuequ, which was produced in a private distillery owned by a family with the surname Yao in Yibin. It was brewed using corn, rice, sorghum, glutinous rice and buckwheat.

According to historical records, Yibin's liquor industry went through a great phase of development during the Song Dynasty (960-1279). During this period, there was an increase in the number of varieties available as well as the scale of production and consumption compared to the Han (206BC-220) and Tang (618-907) dynasties.

Huang Tingjian toured Yibin and savored his stay there, drinking copious amounts of the mellow liquor Yaozixuequ, the predecessor of Wuliangye. He completely abandoned his vow to never drink alcohol again, which he had successfully kept for many years. He praised the liquor with many poems eulogizing the quality of the liquor.

Huang especially liked the water used in the Yaozixuequ. The source was Anle Spring, which flowed from the underground stream near an ancient pagoda in a suburb of Yibin, which was called Yongzhou at that time. The spring's origin could be found in Karst apertures and

crevices of Jurassic mudstone and from under the ancient riverbed of the Minjiang River.

The praises and poetic evaluation expressed in Huang Tingjian's poems have become precious historical records and materials recounting the history of Wuliangye. They truthfully depict the delicate liquor from the perspective of appearance, taste and many other factors. They also coincide with the numerous appraisals of contemporary liquor experts: lingering fragrance, unique mellowness, and a full-bodied aroma that is beautifully balanced.

Today, stone calligraphy inscriptions can still be seen on the rock faces near the Flowing Cup Pond. Some old ones are even covered by the new ones. There are 98 pieces of engraved calligraphy, poems and inscriptions made during the Song, Yuan (1271-1368), Ming (1368-1644) and Qing (1644-1911) dynasties as well as later times.

When one takes a stroll along the winding pool, set in a secluded ecological environment, the scene of more than 900 years ago seems to be just in front of you: Liquor vessels drift down the winding pond. Now and then, a light breeze quickens the pace of the floating liquor vessels, giving passers-by a whiff of the intoxicating fragrance of their contents.

Sometimes a vessel stops, slowly spins and will not go further. This is often followed by a sudden stir and laughter, and then the sound of drinking and distinctive aroma of the Chinese liquor. Typically, these sounds are also accompanied by an effusive poem echoing loudly in the valley and refusing to fade away for a millennium.

