



STRETCHING CELEBRATION. Indian Sadhus, or Hindu holy men, perform yoga to mark International Yoga Day at Kamakhya temple in Gauhati, India. Millions of yoga enthusiasts across India took part in mass yoga sessions celebrating the third International Yoga Day, which falls annually on June 21. (AP Photo/Anupam Nath)

International Yoga Day marked by millions in India, where it began

LUCKNOW, India (AP) — Indians in mass crowds across the country were bent and twisted and posed in celebration of International Yoga Day, in the place where it began.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi joined 50,000 students and other residents in the northern city of Lucknow for a mass yoga session last month. Similar yoga displays were organized in villages, towns, and cities across India.

The United Nations proclaimed the date in 2014 and it's being marked around the world.

The practice began in ancient India. Modi has described yoga as free health insurance and exhorted people to make it a part of their daily lives.



COMPETING FOR CUSTOMERS. GrabBike drivers and Xe Om (or motorbike taxi) drivers are seen waiting for customers outside a major hospital in Hanoi, Vietnam. Vietnam's motorbike taxis are seeing business dry up as customers increasingly opt for ride-hailing services such as Uber and Grab. (AP Photo/Tran Van Minh)

Ride-hailing services transform Vietnam's transport culture

By Tran Van Minh
The Associated Press

HANOI, Vietnam — Nguyen Kim Lan used to make a decent living shuttling customers around town on his Honda motorbike. But his clientele has dwindled as young and tech-savvy Vietnamese increasingly use ride-hailing apps like Uber and Grab to summon cheaper, safer motorbike taxis.

The expansion of the ride-hailing services across Southeast Asia is shaking up traditional motorcycle taxi services that are a key source of informal work for people like Lan. In some cases, the Xe Om (or motorbike taxi) drivers are venting their anger in attacks on the new competitors.

Lan is just frustrated. He says his income has fallen to just 20 percent to 30 percent of what it used to be.

“Nowadays, my frequent customers have all booked Grab and Uber, so they don't come here anymore,” said Lan, 62, as he waited for customers at an intersection in downtown Hanoi.

“Before, office workers would come here after work. Now they just sit in their offices and get picked up at the door,” he said.

As elsewhere in the region, motorbikes are Vietnam's main form of transportation, especially in the capital of Hanoi and the southern commercial hub of Ho Chi Minh City. They can maneuver through crowded, narrow city streets more easily than cars and are less expensive to buy and run.

Having invaded the conventional taxi market, ride-hailing apps such as Uber and Malaysia-based Grab are now elbowing aside the Xe Om with their UberMoto and GrabBike services.

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Japan marks 75 years of Vatican ties with *noh* theater show

ROME (AP) — Japan marked the 75th anniversary of diplomatic ties with the Holy See with a performance of ancient traditional *noh* theater in Rome.

At the performance in Rome at the Palazzo della Cancelleria, a Renaissance architectural masterpiece housing Vatican tribunals, visitors were shown how to wear a *noh* theater mask.

Japan's ambassador to the Vatican, Yoshio Matthew Nakamura, says *noh* theater absorbs cultural elements from various countries and civilizations.

Japan has been a strong admirer of Vatican artistic treasures. Decades ago, Japanese television sponsored the restoration of the Sistine Chapel ceiling, which was frescoed by Michelangelo.

Presenting his diplomatic creden-



DIPLOMACY & DRAMA. Japanese actor Kazufusa Hoshio, impersonating Okina, performs as part of a traditional *noh* theater presentation during celebrations for the 75th anniversary of the diplomatic relations between the Vatican and Japan, in Rome's Palazzo della Cancelleria. (AP Photo/Gregorio Borgia)

tials last year to Pope Francis, periphery,” an area where Francis Nakamura gave him binoculars “to says the church must pay more see the lives of people in the attention.

It's a girl: Japan zoo's star panda baby gets a checkup

By Yuri Kageyama
AP Business Writer

TOKYO — The baby panda who has become an overnight celebrity in Japan is a girl.

Tokyo's Ueno Zoo said the panda, born June 12, was ruled a female by examining experts in late June.

It's difficult to determine the gender of a panda newborn. The zoo had also been careful not to separate the baby from her mother, and the two short periods they took her away were not enough to determine the sex.

The still-nameless cub has been doing well, drinking mother ShinShin's milk.

Giant panda cubs gradually get black markings on their ears, eyes, and paws, and the spots were starting to show. The zoo released a photo that showed a pinkish mouse-like creature with some dark spots on its body. Earlier video showed the mother gently cradling the cub and apparently giving it breastmilk.

The nearly seven-inch panda won't be in public view for months, probably about half a year, according to the zoo. But the zoo is already drawing crowds in the nation that has an acute weakness for *kawaii*, or cute, things.

And Japanese media have been feeding practically daily reports on the little panda as well as footage of children getting excited at the zoo.



KAWAII CUB. A giant panda cub is seen at the Ueno Zoo in Tokyo at 10 days old, in this June 22, 2017 file photo. The zoo said the panda, born on June 12, was ruled a female by examining experts. The still-nameless cub has been doing well, drinking mother ShinShin's milk. Panda cubs gradually get black markings on their ears, eyes, and paws; just shy of two weeks old, the spots were starting to show. (Tokyo Zoological Park Society via AP, File)

The public is being solicited to give her a name, although details are still sketchy.

In 2012, the last cub born at the zoo, also ShinShin's, survived only six days.

Kansai University professor Katsuhiko Miyamoto estimates Tokyo's economy will receive a 26.7 billion yen (\$240 million) lift from the baby, including panda-related goods, zoo admission fees, and other spending over the next year.

The zoo said the mother was also doing well, eating bamboo and drinking water. The zoo will continue to monitor both of them 24 hours per day, although their conditions appear

stable, it said.

The fact the baby has survived more than 10 days is a good sign, although it remains fragile for the first few months, according to experts.

The first panda to be born in captivity in Japan was in 1985, at Ueno Zoo, and it lived only 43 hours.

About 420 giant pandas live in captivity, mostly in their native China, while about 1,860 live in the wild. China for decades has gifted friendly nations with its unofficial national mascot in what is known as “panda diplomacy.” The country more recently has loaned pandas to zoos on commercial terms.

Making Ivanka Trump shoes: Long hours, low pay, and abuse

By Erika Kinetz
The Associated Press

GANZHOU, China — Workers at a Chinese factory used by Ivanka Trump and other fashion brands tell The Associated Press of overtime that stretches past midnight, steep production quotas, and crude verbal abuse. The low point, however, was when a manager hit a worker on the head with a high heel, drawing blood.

Three workers spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity, for fear of retribution or arrest.

In May, three men investigating conditions at the Huajian Group factory in Ganzhou were detained, accused of illegally using secret recording devices to steal commercial secrets. They had been looking into labor violations for China Labor Watch, a New York nonprofit that has been investigating Ivanka Trump's Chinese suppliers for more than a year.

The brand said it takes the allegations “very seriously.”

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