



Hi Bixby: Galaxy S8 voice assistant speaks English

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — Samsung Electronics says its Bixby voice assistant for smartphones will start speaking English, but only in two countries: South Korea and the U.S. The South Korean tech giant said users of Galaxy S8 smartphones can speak in American English to their phones to turn on the flashlight, to take a selfie, or to make the phone search the pictures from a summer vacation and create an album. The service, comparable to Apple's Siri or Google Assistant, was previously available only in Korean. Samsung said its virtual assistant can be activated by saying "Hi Bixby" to the phone or by clicking the button on the side of S8 phones.

No plans to remove "comfort women" statues in Hong Kong

HONG KONG (AP) — Hong Kong's government says police have no plans to remove a pair of statues depicting World War II Japanese army sex slaves known as "comfort women" that were installed in front of Japan's Consulate in the Chinese territory. Activist Tsang Kin-shing says the statues are a reminder to Japan of its culpability in forcing women recruited or captured from Japan, the Korean peninsula, and elsewhere to serve in frontline brothels. Reached by phone, a government spokesman said Hong Kong's police have said the statues would not be removed. Many Chinese nationalists say Japan has never repented for its brutal invasion of China and accompanying atrocities, including forcing women into sexual slavery.

Xi says China will never permit any loss of territory

BEIJING (AP) — Chinese President Xi Jinping has issued a tough line on national sovereignty amid multiple disputes with his country's neighbors, saying China will never permit any loss of territory. Xi's declaration came during a nearly one-hour speech in Beijing marking the 90th anniversary of the founding of the People's Liberation Army. China is engaged in a border standoff with India, disputes over islands with Japan and in the South China Sea, and has vowed to conquer self-governing Taiwan by force. Xi said the Chinese people treasure peace but will not permit any national territory to be separated by anyone under any circumstances. The speech followed a parade during which Xi declared the military has the "confidence and capability" to ensure China's sovereignty, security, and national interests.

Robot finds likely melted fuel heap inside Fukushima plant

TOKYO (AP) — An underwater robot has captured images of massive deposits believed to be melted nuclear fuel covering the floor of a damaged reactor at Japan's crippled Fukushima nuclear plant. Plant operator Tokyo Electric Power Co. said solidified lava-like rocks are heaped up from the bottom inside of a main structure called the pedestal that sits underneath the core inside the primary containment vessel of Fukushima's Unit 3 reactor. Experts believe the melted fuel fell to the chamber's bottom and is now submerged by radioactive water. The robot spotted suspected debris of melted fuel for the first time since the 2011 earthquake and tsunami destroyed the plant. Locating the fuel in each of the three wrecked reactors is crucial for the plant's decommissioning.

Malaysia bans "Despacito" on state radio, TV due to lyrics

KUALA LUMPUR, Malaysia (AP) — Malaysia has banned "Despacito" on state radio and television, though it might be hard to slow the song's record-breaking popularity. The ban applies only to government-run radio and TV outlets, not to music streaming services or global entertainment providers such as YouTube. Communications minister Salleh Said Keruak said the song was reviewed and banned because of a public complaint that the lyrics are obscene. Salleh urged private radio stations to censor the song themselves out of sensitivity to local culture. The Spanish-language song — its title means "slowly" — was released by Puerto Rican artists Luis Fonsi and Daddy Yankee in January. The original and a remix featuring Justin Bieber are the most streamed tracks of all time with more than 4.6 billion plays.

Samsung to recover rare metals & more in Galaxy Note 7s

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — Samsung Electronics says it will recover gold and other metals in the recalled Galaxy Note 7 and retrieve components from the fire-prone phones to reduce waste. The South Korean company said in a statement it will likely retrieve 157 tons of gold, silver, cobalt, copper, and other metals from millions of smartphones that were recalled and discontinued last year after they were found prone to overheating. It didn't say how it would use the retrieved metals. The phones' display modules, memory chips, camera models, and other components would be separated from the Note 7 for sales or recycling, it added. In another effort to reduce waste, Samsung has also begun selling 400,000 units of Galaxy Note FE phones in South Korea made from unused parts of recalled Note 7 smartphones.

Authorities seize 3 tons of pangolin scales in Ivory Coast

ABIDJAN, Ivory Coast (AP) — Authorities in Ivory Coast say they seized three tons of scales from pangolins, the world's most heavily trafficked mammal. The small armored creatures are commonly eaten in West and Central Africa as bush meat, but they have been brought to the brink of extinction because their scales are popular in Asian traditional medicine. Environmental group EAGLE Ivory Coast said the total value of the seizure is close to \$100,000 and represents the remains of about 4,000 pangolins. The group said eight people were arrested. More than 1 million pangolins have been poached in the past decade worldwide. Ivory Coast has increasingly become a transit hub for wildlife trafficking.



SMASHING STEREOTYPES. South Korea's YouTube star, Park Makrye, 70, serves food at her restaurant in Yongin, South Korea. Park's videos are all about showing off her wrinkles and her elderly life in the raw. Young South Koreans find her so funny and adorable that big companies like Samsung Electronics and Lotte are banking on her popularity. But despite her new life as a celebrity, she still gets up before dawn to run her diner. (AP Photo/Lee Jin-man)

70-year-old with YouTube hit redefining beauty in South Korea

By Youkyung Lee
AP Technology Writer

YONGIN, South Korea — One of South Korea's hottest YouTube stars is a 70-year-old grandmother whose cool, undaunted style and hilarity are a breath of fresh air in a social-media universe that exalts youth and perfect looks.

Park Makrye's videos are all about showing off her wrinkles and her elderly life in the raw. Young South Koreans find her so funny and adorable that big companies like Samsung Electronics and Lotte are banking on her popularity.

Despite her new life as a celebrity, she still gets up before dawn to run her diner.

Serving kimchi while clad in a dotted pink top and short skirt with a kitchen hygiene hat on her head, Park isn't exactly the most stylish beauty icon.

Yet, South Koreans love watching her give make-up tutorials, reunite with an old friend, or try pasta for the first time in her life in her "Grandma's Diary" YouTube videos.

"She's real. She's not fake," said Lee Injae, a 31-year-old living in Seoul. "It's refreshing to see the world through the eyes of a grandmother."

Before YouTube, Park says, her life was "dead like rotten bean sprouts."

"We used to think, 'Since I'm over 70, my life is over,'" Park said in an interview with The Associated Press, sitting in the living room that she turns into her YouTube studio by taping a broad piece of paper on the wall.

"But as I started doing this, I realized life starts at 71 years old," she said, adding an extra year as is the custom in Korea and many other Asian countries.

Park's stardom defies the conventional expectations of the elderly in South Korea, often portrayed in mass media as suffering from poverty or as angry patriots protesting for conservative values. South Korea has the highest elderly poverty rate among developed countries. The country has been struggling to provide better social safety nets or jobs to elderly populations while fewer young generations support their aging parents as they are getting less and less attached to the Confucian traditions of revering the aged.

Encouraged by a granddaughter to start making videos as a way to stave off dementia, Park is living it up. She's posed for a women's monthly magazine spread, hosted a home shopping show for retail giant Lotte, and will be appearing next week as a model in a YouTube commercial for Samsung's TV.

Her fans travel from across the country to eat at her diner where one can get filled up with a rice and vegetable meal for just \$5 in a remote part of Yongin, a city 21 miles south of Seoul with no easy public transport access.

Kim Yura, Park's 27-year-old granddaughter, stopped working as an acting instructor to travel with her grandmother after a doctor told the family she had a high risk of getting Alzheimer's disease like her three elder sisters. Kim took her grandmother to Australia as a treat after more than 40 years of raising children and running a restaurant.

A video of the grandmother-granddaughter duo visiting Cairns, Australia in January shows Park describing her first time diving in the ocean and her sprinting to a swimming pool like a kid. It was a big hit among young South Koreans; less than six months later, Park has about 400,000 followers on YouTube.

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Hong Kong Dollar	7.8195
Indian Rupee	63.583
Indonesian Rupiah	13316
Iranian Rial	32551
Japanese Yen	110.69
Laos New Kip	8292.3
Malaysian Ringgit	4.2782
Nepal Rupee	101.81
Pakistani Rupee	105.32
Papua N.G. Kina	3.1824
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