



Samsung commits to using only renewable energy by 2020

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — Samsung Electronics, the world's biggest smartphone maker, has pledged to convert its operations in the United States, Europe, and China to using only solar and other renewable energy by 2020. With its announcement, the tech giant joins Apple and other Silicon Valley companies in making such a commitment, but it faces bigger challenges due to its vast factory network, while other companies use outside contractors for manufacturing. Samsung, also a major producer of computer chips, said its plans include installing 420,000 square feet of solar panels this year at its headquarters in Suwon, South Korea. South Korea received six percent of its energy from renewable sources, relying on coal and nuclear power for the rest.

"Dead" husband returns after police send wrong body

TOKYO (AP) — A Japanese wife has told police that the body she thought was her missing husband belonged to a stranger after her spouse turned up alive a year later. Tokyo police acknowledged that the body found in a river in eastern Tokyo in June 2017 was of another man reported missing at around the same time. Police apologized for the mix-up and said the remains would be returned to the correct family. Police initially believed the body was of a man in his early 40s reported missing by his family three days earlier and handed it over to them after positive identification by the wife and two relatives. The body was then cremated by the family. The family notified police that the man came home alive in May. The body, of another missing man in his late 30s, might have been misidentified because both men were about the same height and age, Tokyo's metropolitan police said. Bodies that are deemed unrelated to crime are usually returned to the families after visual inspections and without additional tests. The metropolitan police said they regretted the mistake and promised to take preventive measures.

U.S. broadcaster loses Myanmar outlet over use of name

BANGKOK (AP) — A U.S. government-affiliated broadcaster is losing its local partner in Myanmar after refusing demands that it stop using the term "Rohingya" to describe an embattled Muslim minority. Radio Free Asia (RFA) spokesman Rohit Mahajan said June 11 was the last day the DVB Media Group's network would carry its television broadcasts. He said RFA told Myanmar authorities that it was unwilling to bow to their pressure to use a term other than Rohingya. About 700,000 Rohingyas have fled to neighboring Bangladesh since the government launched a violent counterinsurgency campaign last August in western Myanmar, where most live. Many people in Myanmar call the Rohingyas "Bengali" to reflect their contention that they are illegal migrants from Bangladesh rather than natives.

Nearly half of Afghan children are not in school

KABUL, Afghanistan (AP) — Nearly half of Afghanistan's children are not attending school because of war, poverty, and other factors, a new report shows. The study, released by the Education Ministry and the U.N. children's agency, said that 3.7 million, or 44 percent, of all school-age children are not attending school. It marks the first time since the U.S.-led invasion of Afghanistan in 2001 that the rate of attendance has declined, following years of steady gains in education for boys as well as girls, who were banned from attending school under the Taliban. The survey says girls account for 60 percent of those being denied an education. The Taliban have seized several districts across the country in recent years, as the U.S.-backed government has struggled to combat the insurgency. A long-running financial crisis, exacerbated by widespread corruption, has further hindered government efforts to expand access to education. Widespread poverty forces many families to push their daughters into early marriages, often with much older men. The legal age for marriage in Afghanistan is 18, but the law is poorly enforced, particularly in conservative, rural areas. Educating girls is still frowned upon in much of the conservative Muslim country and is banned in the steadily expanding areas controlled by the Taliban.

South surveying war-split kin for planned Korean reunions

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — South Korea says it is surveying South Koreans who would be willing to meet their war-separated relatives in North Korea for temporary reunions planned between the rivals as reconciliatory steps. Seoul's Unification Ministry said the surveys — conducted through home visits, phone calls, and letters — will continue through August 10. South Korea lobbied hard for the recent summit between U.S. President Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un. Seoul says improved inter-Korean relations are important because Pyongyang wouldn't be willing to give up its nuclear weapons unless it feels its security has been assured.

Philippine police arrest nearly 500 in alleged online fraud

MANILA, The Philippines (AP) — Philippine police say they have arrested nearly 500 people, including eight Israeli nationals, who they say are involved in an online financial fraud that victimized people overseas in such countries as Australia and South Africa. In one of the Philippines' biggest anti-cybercrime busts in years, police chief Oscar Albayalde said 474 Filipino employees and the Israelis were taken into custody following the raid on three buildings in Clark Freeport, a former U.S. Air Force base north of Manila, where the alleged online fraud was committed. Police chief superintendent Marni Marcos said the suspects lured victims into investing in foreign stocks in a flourishing London-based company then took their money through an online app after obtaining their bank account and credit card details.



SOOTHING SOAK. This undated photo provided by Stephanie Crohin shows traditional baths and murals at Kasuga onsen, or hot spring bath, in Matsuzaka, Mie prefecture, Japan. Japan is proud of its bathing traditions. For many westerners, though, the fact that these traditions involve being naked with strangers is awkward at best, even though men and women bathe separately. (Stephanie Crohin via AP)

Bathe naked with strangers? Welcome to a Japanese bathhouse

By Linda Lombardi
The Associated Press

TOKYO — Japan is proud of its bathing traditions. For many westerners, though, the fact that these traditions involve being naked with strangers is awkward at best, even though men and women bathe separately.

On my first trip, I tried to wriggle out of a friend's offer to take me to an *onsen*, or hot springs resort. I suggested a different town that had an attraction I wanted to see, and thought I was off the hook.

I should have done my research better: That town was famous for its onsen as well.

It turned out for the best, though, because I've become a fan. Nothing is more relaxing after a tiring day of sightseeing than a long soak, and you can reassure yourself that you're experiencing authentic culture at the same time.

Two terms are basic when talking about Japanese baths: *onsen* and *sento*. An *onsen* has natural hot spring water. A *sento*, usually translated as public bath, typically uses regular water, traditionally heated by burning wood. Tall chimneys for the smoke are one visual symbol of the city *sento*.

The distinction is noted because various spring waters are supposed to have different health benefits. *Onsen* are commonly found at hotels and resorts outside the city, but there are about 45 *sento* in Tokyo, for example, that do have natural spring water.

For the outsider, though, the facilities will look much the same and more important, so are the traditions and etiquette.

Stephanie Crohin is author of a book in

Japanese about *sento*. For the past three years, she has been the official volunteer ambassador for the Tokyo Sento Association. She has visited more than 700 *sento* across Japan and her book and Instagram feed reveal the beauty of their interiors, where photography is usually prohibited, including many traditional painted murals and immaculate tilework.

She reassures first-timers that with everyone else acting like it's normal, you will quickly get comfortable. "For some people it is a big challenge to be naked in front of others, but genders are separate, and everybody just doesn't look and doesn't care," she says. "It is the ideal place to forget about complexes!"

Although you won't have much trouble finding a *sento* in a city like Tokyo, their numbers are in fact declining. Last year, she says, 40 *sento* closed in Tokyo. Fifty years ago, there were around 2,700 *sento* in the city, but now there are around 560, with 2,500 across the country.

One reason *sento* are closing is that many of their customers are elderly. Now that every home has its own bath, younger people often never cultivated the habit. Some *sento* are trying new strategies to attract customers, including presenting exhibits and events such as concerts and developing English information to attract tourists.

Another innovation: "super *sento*," more like day spas with additional facilities and entertainment. One in Tokyo, Oedo Onsen Monogatari, is basically a hot bath theme park with a re-created Edo period townscape.

These may be an easy way in for the first-timer, but if you want to experience authentic

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Hong Kong Dollar	7.8493
Indian Rupee	68.017
Indonesian Rupiah	13930
Iranian Rial	42345
Japanese Yen	110.66
Laos New Kip	8398.5
Malaysian Ringgit	3.9858
Nepal Rupee	108.85
Pakistani Rupee	119.53
Papua N.G. Kina	3.1749
Philippine Peso	53.338
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Saudi Riyal	3.7501
Singapore Dollar	1.351
South Korean Won	1097.8
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Taiwan Dollar	30.011
Thai Baht	32.667
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