



**Special throne for Japan's next emperor arrives in Tokyo**

TOKYO (AP) — The special imperial throne to be used for the coronation of Japan's new emperor arrived in Tokyo from an ancient imperial palace in Kyoto more than a year ahead of time. Crown Prince Naruhito will become Japan's next emperor on May 1 of next year, the day after his 84-year-old father, Emperor Akihito, abdicates. The Takamikura throne will be used at a ceremony in October 2019, when Naruhito formally announces his succession. The 21-foot-high canopied and decorated structure was last used by Akihito in 1990 and has since been stashed away at the Kyoto palace. The huge structure was taken apart for shipment to Tokyo, where it will be repaired, fine-tuned, and reassembled. The 58-year-old Naruhito will be the 126th emperor of one of the world's oldest monarchies, and he will be Japan's first emperor born after World War II. The current structure was built for his great-grandfather Taisho's coronation in 1915 and was also used for his grandfather Hirohito, who was revered as the god of Shinto until the end of World War II, which Japan fought in his name.

**Malaysia urged to ban child marriages**

KUALA LUMPUR, Malaysia (AP) — Malaysia's government has come under renewed pressure to outlaw child marriages after another case of a child bride surfaced in a poor rural state, the second in weeks. A 15-year-old teenager became the second wife of a 44-year-old Muslim man in northeast Kelantan state, the *New Straits Times* newspaper reported. It said the union was approved by the Islamic Shariah court in July after her parents consented due to poverty. The latest case occurred in the same month that a Kelantan rubber trader married an 11-year-old girl as his third wife, but only became public recently. Muslim girls under the minimum legal marriage age of 16 can wed with the consent of the Shariah court and their parents. Muslim men can marry up to four wives. The case has sparked renewed outrage among rights groups. UNICEF in a statement slammed the latest child marriage as "unacceptable" and urged Malaysia to bring legislative change to ban the practice.

**In a first, HK bans pro-independence political party**

HONG KONG (AP) — Authorities in Hong Kong have taken an unprecedented step against separatist voices by banning a political party that advocates independence for the southern Chinese territory on national security grounds. John Lee, the territory's secretary for security, announced that the Hong Kong National Party was prohibited from operation. Lee's announcement did not provide further details, but Hong Kong's security bureau had previously said in a letter to the National Party's leader, 27-year-old Andy Chan, that the party should be dissolved "in the interests of national security or public safety, public order, or the protection of the rights and freedoms of others." Chan had no immediate comment. That letter had cited a national security law that has not been invoked since 1997. The ban is likely to raise further questions about Beijing's growing influence in the former British colony, which was promised semi-autonomy as part of the 1997 handover. Chinese President Xi Jinping and other officials have warned separatist activity would not be tolerated. The perception that Beijing is reneging on its promise of semi-autonomy and eroding Hong Kong's free elections and freedom of speech is helping fuel a rising generation of young activists calling for greater autonomy, if not outright independence.

**Seven die of suspected drug overdoses at music festival**

HANOI, Vietnam (AP) — Seven people died last month of suspected drug overdoses during a music festival in Vietnam. The *Capital Police* newspaper said several other people were also in comas after overdosing at the festival. The music festival was held in a water park near Hanoi's city center and attended by thousands of people. The state-run media outlet said all the victims tested positive but it didn't identify which drug or drugs were involved. It said police had seized suspected drug substances at the scene. Government data say Vietnam has 220,000 drug addicts with police records and some 1,600 overdose deaths annually. Methamphetamine and heroin are the most common drugs used and overdosed, with meth use rising in recent years.

**Japan digital currency exchange hacked, \$60 million lost**

TOKYO (AP) — Hackers have stolen 6.7 billion yen (\$60 million) worth of cryptocurrencies from a Japanese digital currency exchange, according to the operators. Tech Bureau Corp. said a server for its Zaif exchange was hacked for two hours in September, and some digital currencies were unlawfully relayed from what's called a "hot wallet," or where virtual coins are stored at such exchanges. The exchange was taken offline until details of the damage could be confirmed, and efforts were underway to get it repaired, Tech Bureau said. Japan has been bullish on virtual money and has set up a system requiring exchanges to be licensed to help protect consumers. The system is also meant to make Japan a global leader in the technology. Bitcoin has been a legal form of payment in Japan since April 2017, and a handful of major retailers here already accept bitcoin payments, but the recurrence of cryptocurrency heists shows problems persist. Earlier this year, the Tokyo-based exchange Coincheck reported a 58 billion yen (\$547 million) loss of a cryptocurrency called NEM from suspected criminal hacking. The cryptocurrencies stolen in the Tech Bureau hack included Bitcoin and Monacoin. Of the stolen money, 2.2 billion yen (\$20 million) belonged to the company, and the rest were customers' assets, according to Tech Bureau.



**HIGH-FLYING HOPES.** Atsushi Taguchi, a "drone grapher," as specialists in drone video are called, who teaches at Tokyo film school Digital Hollywood, speaks during an interview with The Associated Press in Tokyo. Taguchi acknowledges that flying cars will not become a reality for years, but test flights in limited areas, such as an airport, will likely be carried out sooner. (AP Photo/Eugene Hoshiko)

**Will flying cars take off? Japan's government hopes so**

By Yuri Kageyama  
AP Business Writer

TOKYO — Electric drones booked through smartphones pick people up from office rooftops, shortening travel time by hours, reducing the need for parking and clearing smog from the air.

This vision of the future is driving the Japanese government's "flying car" project. Major carrier All Nippon Airways, electronics company NEC Corp., and more than a dozen other companies and academic experts hope to have a road map ready by year's end.

"This is such a totally new sector Japan has a good chance for not falling behind," said Fumiaki Ebihara, the government official in charge of the project.

Nobody believes people are going to be zipping around in flying cars any time soon. Many hurdles remain, such as battery life, the need for regulations, and, of course, safety concerns. But dozens of similar projects are popping up around the world. The prototypes so far are less like traditional cars and more like drones big enough to hold people.

A flying car is defined as an aircraft that's electric, or hybrid electric, with driverless capabilities, that can land and takeoff vertically.

They are often called EVTol, which stands for "electric vertical takeoff and landing" aircraft.

The flying car concepts promise to be better than helicopters, which are expensive to maintain, noisy to fly, and require trained pilots, Ebihara and other proponents say.

"You may think of *Back to the Future*,

*Gundam*, or *Doraemon*, Ebihara said, referring to vehicles of flight in a Hollywood film and in Japanese cartoons featuring robots. "Up to now, it was just a dream, but with innovations in motors and batteries, it's time for it to become real."

Google, drone company Ehang, and car manufacturers Geely in China and Volkswagen AG of Germany have invested in flying car technology.

Nissan Motor Co. and Honda Motor Co. said they had nothing to say about flying cars, but Toyota Motor Corp. recently invested \$500 million in working with Uber on self-driving technology for the ride-hailing service. Toyota group companies have also invested 42.5 million yen (\$375,000) in a Japanese startup, Cartivator, that is working on a flying car.

The hope is to fly up and light the torch at the 2020 Tokyo Olympics, but it's unclear it will meet that goal: At a demonstration last year, the device crashed after it rose to slightly higher than eye level. A video of a more recent demonstration suggests it's now flying more stably, though it's being tested indoors, unmanned and chained so it won't fly away.

There are plenty of skeptics.

Elon Musk, chief executive of electric car maker Tesla Inc., says even toy drones are noisy and blow a lot of air, which means anything that would be "1,000 times heavier" isn't practical.

"If you want a flying car, just put wheels on a helicopter," he said in a recent interview with podcast host and comedian Joe Rogan on YouTube. "Your neighbors are not going to be

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**Asian Currency Exchange Rates**  
Units per U.S. dollar as of 9/28

Bangladesh Taka	78.32
Cambodian Riel	4071.5
China Renminbi	6.868
Fijian Dollar	2.069
Hong Kong Dollar	7.8258
Indian Rupee	72.539
Indonesian Rupiah	14792
Iranian Rial	42023
Japanese Yen	113.44
Laos New Kip	8519.2
Malaysian Ringgit	4.1049
Nepal Rupee	116.62
Pakistani Rupee	122.22
Papua N.G. Kina	3.3337
Philippine Peso	53.889
Russian Ruble	65.431
Saudi Riyal	3.7217
Singapore Dollar	1.3651
South Korean Won	1109.4
Sri Lankan Rupee	169.15
Taiwan Dollar	30.264
Thai Baht	32.287
Vietnam Dong	23536