

Japanese television cancels BTS show over band member's A-bomb shirt

By Yuri Kageyama
The Associated Press

TOKYO — A Japanese broadcaster cancelled a live TV appearance of the Korean band BTS after a photo went viral of a band member wearing a t-shirt showing an atomic bombing juxtaposed with the celebration of Korea's liberation from Japan after World War II.

Japanese social media was filled with chatter over the photo of Jimin wearing the shirt with an image of a mushroom cloud with the English words "patriotism" and "Korea."

TV Asahi said it had talked with the band's recording company to try to learn why he wore the t-shirt. The broadcaster's statement also apologized to viewers who had looked forward to the band's appearance.

Company spokesman Shinya Matsuki declined further comment.

Universal Music said it will continue to support BTS but confirmed their appearance on the live music show "Music Station" was



BTS BANNED. South Korean K-Pop Boys Band BTS attend the Third Korean studio album showcase in Seoul, South Korea, in this June 20, 2018 file photo. A Japanese broadcaster cancelled a live TV appearance of the band after a photo went viral of a band member wearing a t-shirt showing an atomic bombing juxtaposed with the celebration of Korea's liberation from Japan after World War II. (Photo/Lee Young-ho/Sipa USA/Sipa via AP Images, File)

cancelled.

South Korean K-pop and movie stars are extremely popular in Japan, sometimes in stark contrast to the controversy and hostility that can mark other aspects of the two nation's ties due to Japan's occupation of the Korean Peninsula in the early 20th century until the end of World War II.

Some Japanese fans of the band expressed disgust on Twitter that their show was cancelled over a t-shirt.

The seven-member BTS has collaborated with Japanese-American DJ and musical artist Steve Aoki and has reached No. 1 on the Billboard chart.

Imelda Marcos convicted of graft, court orders her arrest

By Jim Gomez
The Associated Press

MANILA, The Philippines — A Philippine court has found former first lady Imelda Marcos guilty of graft and ordered her arrest in a rare conviction among many corruption cases that she plans to appeal to avoid jail and losing her seat in congress.

The special anti-graft Sandiganbayan court sentenced Marcos, 89, to serve six to 11 years in prison for each of the seven counts of violating an anti-corruption law when she illegally funnelled about \$200 million to Swiss foundations in the 1970s as Metropolitan Manila governor.

Neither Marcos nor anyone representing her attended the court hearing.

Marcos said in a statement that the decision was being studied by one of her lawyers who notified the Marcos family that he intends to appeal the decision. Anti-Marcos activists and human-rights victims welcomed the conviction as long overdue.

The court disqualified Marcos from holding public office, but she can remain a member of the powerful House of Representatives while appealing the decision. Her congressional term will end next year but she has registered to run to replace her daughter as governor of northern Ilocos Norte province.

"I was jumping up and down in joy in disbelief," said former Commission on Human Rights chairwoman Loretta Ann Rosales, who was among many activists locked up after Imelda's husband, former President Ferdinand Marcos, declared martial law in the Philippines in 1972.

Rosales said the decision was a huge setback to efforts by the Marcos family to revise history by denying many of the atrocities under the dictatorship, and urged Filipinos to fight all threats against democracy and civil liberties.

Former senator Aquilino Pimentel Jr., who was also jailed during the Marcos dictatorship, said it was up to voters in next year's May 13 local elections, where Marcos is a candidate, if they want "somebody who has a bad name representing them, that's your call."

Imelda Marcos' husband was ousted by an army-backed "people power" revolt in 1986. He died in self-exile in Hawai'i in 1989 but his widow and children returned to the Philippines. Most have been elected to public offices in an impressive political comeback.

Government prosecutor Ryan Quilala told reporters that Marcos and her husband opened and managed Swiss foundations in violation of the Philippine Constitution, using aliases in a bid to hide stolen funds. The Marcoses have been accused of plundering the government's coffers amid crushing poverty. They have denied any wrongdoing and have successfully fought many other corruption cases.

Imelda Marcos was also acquitted in three other cases, which were filed in 1991 and took nearly three decades of trial by several judges and prosecutors. She was once convicted of a graft case in 1993, but the Supreme Court later cleared her of any wrongdoing.

President Rodrigo Duterte, an ally of the Marcoses, said last year the Marcos family had indicated a willingness to return a still-unspecified amount of money and "a few gold bars" to help ease budget deficits. He indicated the family



GUILTY OF GRAFT. Former Philippine First Lady Imelda Marcos arrives at an anti-graft court Sandiganbayan to explain her side for not attending her recent promulgation of the graft charges against her, in suburban Quezon city, northeast of Manila, the Philippines. A Philippine court has found Marcos guilty of graft and ordered her arrest in a rare conviction among many corruption cases that she is likely to appeal to avoid jail and losing her seat in congress. (AP Photo/Maria S. Tan)

still denied that the assets had been stolen as alleged by political opponents.

Ferdinand Marcos had placed the Philippines under martial rule a year before his term was to expire. He padlocked congress, ordered the arrest of political rivals and left-wing activists, and ruled by decree. His family is said to have amassed an estimated \$5 billion to \$10 billion while he was in power.

A Hawai'i court found Marcos liable for human-rights violations and awarded \$2 billion from his estate to compensate more than 9,000 Filipinos who filed a lawsuit against him for torture, incarceration, extrajudicial killings, and disappearances.

Duterte has acknowledged that Imee Marcos, the couple's daughter and a provincial governor, backed his presidential candidacy.



POWER PROBLEMS. A man rides his electric bike as the Tower of the Juche Idea is silhouetted against the sunrise in Pyongyang, North Korea. Twenty-plus years after North Korean leader Kim Jong Il almost bargained nuclear weapons away for a pair of nuclear reactors, his son, Kim Jong Un, still has a nation plagued by chronic blackouts. (AP Photo/Dita Alangkara)

Running on Empty? Kim Jong Un's struggle to fuel his economy

By Eric Talmadge
The Associated Press

PYONGYANG, North Korea — Twenty-plus years after North Korean leader Kim Jong Il almost bargained nuclear weapons away for a pair of nuclear reactors, his son, Kim Jong Un, still has a nation plagued by chronic blackouts.

That is the North's Achilles heel as Kim turns his attention from developing its nuclear weapons arsenal to building its economy.

If stalled nuclear talks with Washington ever get back on track, helping Kim solve his country's chronic energy deficit could be one of the biggest carrots President Trump has to offer.

Years of intensive sanctions have severely impacted North Korea's supply of fossil fuels from the outside world. They also have spurred the country to cobble together a smorgasbord of energy resources, some of them off the grid and some of them flat-out illegal.

Palau to ban sunscreen as it tries to save its coral reefs

By Nick Perry
The Associated Press

WELLINGTON, New Zealand — In an attempt to protect the coral reefs that divers so admire they have dubbed them the underwater Serengeti, the Pacific nation of Palau will soon ban many types of sunscreen.

President Tommy Remengesau Jr. signed legislation that bans "reef-toxic" sunscreen from 2020. Banned sunscreens will be confiscated from tourists who carry them into the country, and merchants selling the banned products will be fined up to \$1,000.

Remengesau said in a statement that the penalties find the right balance between "educating tourists and scaring them away."

The law defines reef-toxic sunscreen as containing any one of 10 chemicals, including oxybenzone, and states that other chemicals may also be banned.

The legislation also requires tour operators to start providing customers with reusable cups, straws, and food containers.

Remengesau said a big impetus for the ban was a 2017 report which found that sunscreen products were widespread in Palau's famed Jellyfish Lake, which was closed for more than a year due to declining jellyfish numbers before being recently reopened.

The president noted legislative findings that "plastic waste, chemical pollution, resource overconsumption, and climate change all continue to threaten the health of our pristine paradise."

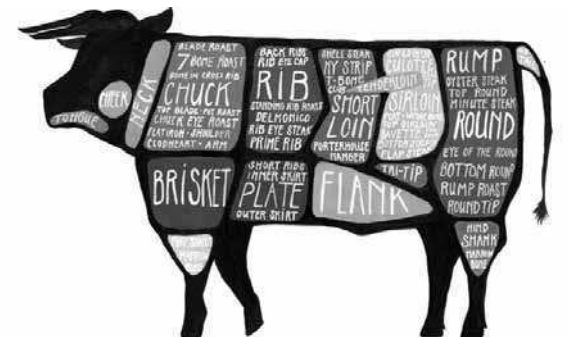
Palau's ban comes after Hawai'i in July banned the sale of sunscreen containing the chemicals oxybenzone and octinoxate after 2021 in an attempt to protect its reefs. In Hawai'i, however, tourists will still be able to bring the banned sunscreen with them into the state or buy it there if they have a doctor's prescription.

Scientists have found that some chemicals in sunscreen can be toxic to coral reefs, which are a vital part of the ocean ecosystem as well as a popular draw for tourists. But some critics say there aren't enough independent scientific studies on the issue while others worry that people will suffer from too much sun exposure if they stop using the products.

Some manufacturers, meanwhile, have already started selling "reef-friendly" sunscreen.

Palau, located east of the Philippines and north of Indonesia, is home to 21,000 people and has an economy that relies on tourism and fishing. It has a compact of free association with the U.S.

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