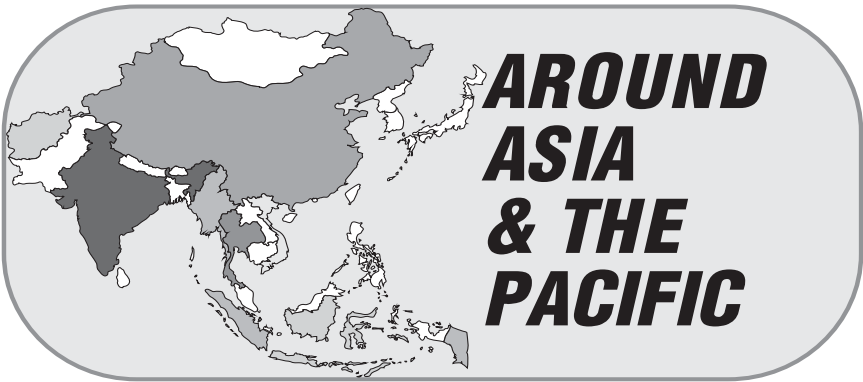




Coin toss settles rare Philippine election tie

MANILA, The Philippines (AP) — Philippine election officials settled a rare tie in a mayoral race by tossing a coin. They proclaimed Sue Cudilla the new mayor of the town of Araceli in western Palawan province after she won a best-of-three coin flip by picking tails. Both Cudilla, a former mayor, and her rival, incumbent Noel Beronio, received 3,495 votes in the election. They agreed to the classic tie-breaker, which officials said is acceptable, although local rules specify the drawing of lots. Elections commissioner Luie Tito Guia said a coin toss was also used to settle another freak mayoral tie in 2016. “I’m praying very hard that the will expressed by the people will always be accepted,” Guia said by telephone. More than 43,500 candidates vied for about 18,000 congressional and local posts, including 81 governors, 1,634 mayors, and more than 13,500 city and town councillors in 81 provinces in the May 13 elections in the Philippines, one of Asia’s most rambunctious democracies.

U.S. sanctions on Iran felt in Iraqi Shiite tourist shops

BAGHDAD (AP) — Shop owners in Baghdad’s Shiite holy neighborhood of Kadhimiya are feeling the pain of U.S. sanctions on Iran. They have seen their sales drop over the past year as Iranians lose their purchasing power since U.S. President Donald Trump withdrew from the 2015 nuclear agreement between Iran and world powers. Iranians make up the bulk of millions of Shiites from around the world who come to Iraq every year to visit its many Shiite shrines and holy places, including the holy cities of Najaf and Karbala in southern Iraq and the central city of Samarra, home to the revered golden-domed al-Askari shrine. They bring large amounts of money into the country, where tourism is the second biggest source of income for state coffers after oil exports.

Amnesty Int’l charges Myanmar military with new abuses

BANGKOK (AP) — The human-rights group Amnesty International says Myanmar’s military, accused of massive human-rights violations against the Muslim Rohingya minority less than two years ago, is committing war crimes and other atrocities as it engages in new military operations in the western state of Rakhine. It says in a report that the army has killed and injured civilians in indiscriminate attacks since January 2019 as it battles the Arakan Army, a well-trained guerrilla force from the Buddhist ethnic group seeking autonomy for Rakhine. It accuses the military of carrying out “extrajudicial executions, arbitrary arrests, torture, and other ill-treatment, and enforced disappearances.” Amnesty International says the Arakan rebels also have committed abuses against civilians, including kidnappings, though on a lesser scale.

Pakistani police arrest Hindu vet on charges of blasphemy

KARACHI, Pakistan (AP) — Pakistani police say they have arrested a veterinarian from the country’s tiny minority Hindu community on charges of desecrating Islam’s holy book in southern Sindh province. Local police chief Zahid Leghari said Ramesh Kumar was arrested the day before on blasphemy charges, after a cleric in the district of Mirpur Kash accused him of desecrating pages of the Quran, the Muslim holy book. He says an angry mob damaged three Hindu shops but the situation later calmed down. Police also registered a case against those behind the rioting. Under Pakistan’s blasphemy laws, anyone accused of insulting Islam can be sentenced to death. Domestic and international human-rights groups say these laws are often misused to settle personal scores and target minorities.

Trump meets families of Japanese abducted by N. Korea

TOKYO (AP) — Families of Japanese who were abducted by North Korea in the 1970s and 1980s thanked President Donald Trump for his sympathy and for meeting with them while visiting Japan. Trump, on a four-day state visit, appeared to listen intently to the accounts of relatives of their ordeals. Shigeo Iizuka, whose sister was abducted in the 1970s, asked Trump for his cooperation with Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe to get North Korea to return the victims. Sakie Yokota, whose daughter was abducted in 1977, said Trump gave the families hope for a breakthrough. Many elderly relatives say they’re running out of time to see their loved ones. Trump said he supports Abe’s intent to meet with North Korea’s leader to resolve the issue.

Knife-wielding man attacks schoolgirls in Japan, kills two

KAWASAKI, Japan (AP) — A man carrying a knife in each hand and screaming “I will kill you!” attacked a group of schoolgirls near a school bus parked at a bus stop just outside Tokyo, killing two people and injuring at least 17 before killing himself, officials said. Most of the victims were students at a Catholic elementary school who were lined up at the bus stop near Noborito Park in the city of Kawasaki when the man began slashing them with knives. Officials said police captured the attacker but he died at a hospital from a self-inflicted cut to his neck. Witnesses described a hellish scene: children and adults falling to the ground, some with their shirts soaked with blood, dozens of children running and screaming for help, and school bags and books scattered on the ground. Police identified the attacker as a 51-year-old resident of Kawasaki. Although Japan has one of the lowest crime rates in the world, it has had a series of high-profile killings, including in 2016 when a former employee at a home for the disabled allegedly killed 19 people and injured more than 20 others. Also in 2016, a man stabbed four people at a library in northeastern Japan, allegedly for mishandling his questions; no one was killed. In 2008, seven people were killed by a man who slammed a truck into a crowd of people in central Tokyo’s Akihabara electronics district and then stabbed passersby.



ENABLING OPPORTUNITIES. *Apa Sherpa feeds pigeons in Boudhanath Stupa in Kathmandu, Nepal, in this May 9, 2019 photo. Apa Sherpa has stood on top of the world more times than all but one other person. Now he wants to make sure no one feels compelled to follow in his footsteps. (AP Photo/Niranjana Shrestha)*

Famed Sherpa climber helps Nepal kids reach greater heights

By Binaj Gurubacharya
The Associated Press

KATHMANDU, Nepal — Apa Sherpa has stood on top of the world more times than all but one other person. Now he wants to make sure no one feels compelled to follow in his footsteps.

As a boy growing up in Nepal, Sherpa dreamed of becoming a doctor, but poverty and lack of education steered him to a far more dangerous path: Working as a guide on Mount Everest, carrying climbing equipment and helping foreign mountaineers scale the world’s tallest peak.

Now retired in the U.S., Sherpa returns every year to his roots in the foothills of the Himalayas to provide financial assistance to village schools and try to show children from the Sherpa minority group that they have options in life.

“Sherpas take big risks in the mountains to earn a living for their families because they are unable to take up any other jobs,” the 59-year-old said. “My main goal is to ensure children in the future don’t have to take up climbing like we did.”

Sherpa tribespeople were mostly yak herders and traders living deep within the Himalayas until Nepal opened its borders to foreigners in the 1950s. As adventurers began arriving to conquer the country’s famous peaks, the Sherpas with their mountain experience found themselves in demand as guides and porters.

To this day they are an indispensable part of Nepal’s climbing industry, which brings in \$300 million to the country each year. But advocates say Nepal’s estimated 350,000 Sherpa remain marginalized, with many

living in remote, impoverished villages connected to the rest of the country only by footpaths and small airstrips. Access to schooling beyond the primary level is rare.

The Apa Sherpa Foundation, set up in 2012, has been seeking to change that, paying teacher salaries in several villages to ensure schools remain open and providing hot lunches, computers, books, pens, and warm clothes to motivate children to attend classes.

“Most people in the area have now realized the value of educating their children and they do their best to send their children to school,” Sherpa said. “But many schools face difficulties, so we try and help them whatever way possible.”

When Sherpa was growing up, the school in his village, Thame, offered education only up to the second grade. He continued his studies in another village for two more years, walking the mountain trails for six hours each day, but had to drop out when his father died and he had to take on the responsibility of feeding his family.

By the age of 12 he was working on climbing expeditions. At age 30, he summited Everest for the first time. He repeated the feat almost every year after, going on to become one of Everest’s greatest guides and earning the nickname “Super Sherpa.”

When he retired in 2011, he jointly held the record for having climbed the 29,035-foot peak 21 times with fellow Sherpa Phurba Tashi. Another Sherpa, Kami Rita, now holds the record alone, having reached the summit 24 times, two of them this season.

“Everyone said 21 was a good number,” Sherpa noted of the timing for his retirement, which fulfilled a longstanding promise to his

Continued on page 15



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