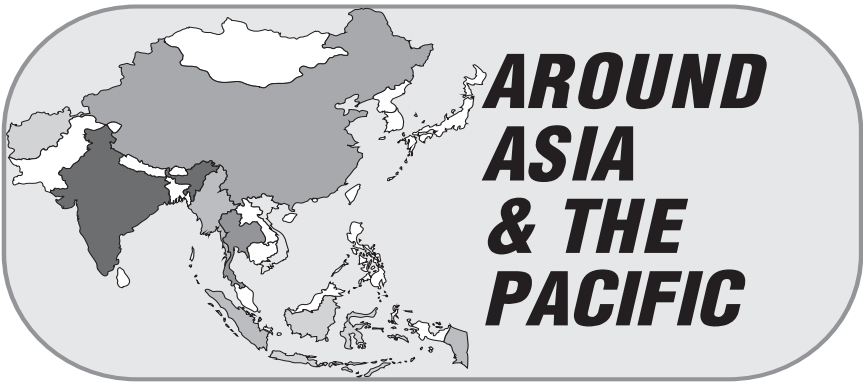




Cat filter goof leaves Pakistanis scratching their whiskers

PESHAWAR, Pakistan (AP) — It was a mistake that had some people in Pakistan scratching their whiskers. A regional minister was giving a briefing that was livestreamed on social media when viewers noticed the officials had unexpected feline features. The cat filter, a social-media feature applying drawn images onto people’s faces, was on. Social media was quick to pounce on the image. In a statement posted on Twitter, the ruling party’s social-media team wrote it had determined “human error” by a hardworking volunteer caused the mistake. The team said the cat filter was removed “within a few minutes.” The team says actions have been taken to prevent “such an incident” in the future.

Japan royal duties need review as members decline

TOKYO (AP) — Japanese Emperor Naruhito’s younger brother says the royal family can perform only so much because its membership is declining. Crown Prince Fumihito, better known as Prince Akishino, is now next in line to the Chrysanthemum Throne after his father, Akihito, abdicated at the end of April and his brother Naruhito succeeded him in May. The family faces a declining membership, with Akihito and his wife now retired and their three grand-daughters expected to lose royal status when they each marry a commoner, under the current Imperial House Law. Akishino told reporters ahead of his trip to Finland and Poland to mark Japan’s diplomatic centennial that scaling down imperial duties is inevitable and needs broad public discussion. Naruhito’s 17-year-old daughter, Aiko, and Akishino’s daughters Mako and Kako are not in line because they are female. The imperial family has 13 women, including six who could marry and lose their royal status in coming years. Akishino said he believes royal duties could be shared equally regardless of gender, but declined to comment on whether female emperors should be allowed.

Tasty deals: Apps help find unsold food and reduce waste

BERLIN (AP) — Growing numbers of people are using technology such as phone apps to reduce food waste and the carbon emissions it creates. Some build online communities to share food before throwing it away. Others team up with supermarkets to create applications that alert consumers when groceries are about to expire and are marked down. In Germany, phone apps are becoming popular to find discounted, unsold food from restaurants. While it’s unclear how big an impact such efforts have in ultimately reducing emissions, they reflect how environmental concerns are growing and shaping the behavior of consumers and businesses.

China suspends imports from Canadian pork company

BEIJING (AP) — China will halt imports from a Canadian company after food safety issues were detected in one batch of pork, the Xinhua state news agency reported, a move likely to fuel speculation that China is retaliating against Canada for arresting a Chinese tech executive. After Canada arrested Huawei chief financial officer Meng Wanzhou in December at the request of the U.S., China has arrested two Canadians, suspended the permits of two other Canadian pork importers, and halted all new purchases of Canadian canola seeds. Xinhua said customs authorities in the eastern city of Nanjing found traces of ractopamine, a feed additive banned in many countries, in pork products from Frigo Royal. It said China will suspend imports from Frigo Royal and also stop accepting health certificates issued by the company’s veterinary officer. According to Xinhua, China’s Customs Administration will also increase the number of inspections for ractopamine in Canadian pork imports. Ractopamine is known as a “muscle drug” that accelerates pigs’ growth. While it is banned in China, Russia, and EU countries, it has been approved for use in the U.S. and Canada. The Canadian Food Inspection Agency’s website shows Frigo Royal — also known as Expedi-Go Transit — on a list of federally registered meat businesses and their licensed operators.

Singapore probes drones at airport that disrupted 63 flights

SINGAPORE (AP) — Drones buzzing around Singapore’s Changi Airport caused 63 flights to be delayed or diverted within a week, triggering an investigation and raising questions about the motives of the offenders. The Civil Aviation Authority of Singapore said 18 flights at the airport were delayed and seven were diverted the night before “due to bad weather and unauthorized drone activities.” It had earlier confirmed that drones were seen flying near the airport. That caused the intermittent closure of a runway, delaying 37 flights and diverting one arriving plane to Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Shortly after news broke of the drone activity at the airport, Singapore’s defense ministry posted a photograph of a soldier pointing a jammer gun at a “rogue drone” on Facebook. While the photo wasn’t taken at Changi, it hinted at the anti-drone technologies that may be used to track down offenders. Drones are largely controlled by operators via a radio control link, on a frequency that’s similar to Wi-Fi. A jammer gun temporarily disables the connection. Some observers said the incursions, which happened on two occasions and less than a week from each other, could signal the involvement of more sophisticated groups. Unauthorized drone activity is dangerous around airports because of the risk of collision with planes that are taking off and landing. Drones cannot be flown within 3.1 miles of airports or military bases in Singapore without a permit. The offense carries a penalty of up to a year in jail and a fine of 20,000 Singapore dollars. Changi Airport is among the world’s busiest. It handled a record 65.6 million passengers last year, but its executives have named rising fuel prices and trade tensions as challenges going forward.



INTERNATIONAL YOGA DAY. Indians perform yoga to mark International Yoga Day in New Delhi, India, on June 21, 2019. Yoga enthusiasts across the world took part in mass yoga events to mark International Yoga Day. (AP Photo/Altar Qadri)

India uses yoga diplomacy to assert rising global influence

By Emily Schmall
The Associated Press

NEW DELHI — If China has panda diplomacy, India has yoga. Prime Minister Narendra Modi successfully lobbied the United Nations to designate June 21 as International Yoga Day in his first year in power in 2014.

Since then, just as China under President Xi Jinping has given countries pandas for their zoos in a show of goodwill, Modi has used one of India’s most popular exports to assert his nation’s rising place in the world.

At the fifth annual International Yoga Day, Modi practiced various yoga *asanas* alongside an estimated 40,000 people in India’s eastern state of Jharkhand as members of his cabinet and foreign envoys rolled out their yoga mats in cities around the world.

“Let our motto be yoga for peace, harmony, and progress,” Modi said before joining the hourlong practice.

Most of India’s 191 embassies and consulates worldwide organized yoga sessions to commemorate the day, according to the foreign ministry.

The ministry shared photos of yoga flash mobs on the streets of Kiev, colorful yoga mats around Brussels’ Triumphal Arch, sun salutations under the Washington Monument, hundreds in seated prayer pose at Moscow’s Tagansky Park, and more than 500 people in identical transparent ponchos and black pants in front of the Yellow Crane Tower in rainy Wuhan, China.

At an event for diplomats in New Delhi featuring India’s foreign minister, Subrahman-yam Jaishankar, Israel’s ambassador Ron

Malka said Modi’s use of yoga as a tool of diplomacy is “working quite well” to strengthen ties between the two countries.

Walter Lindner, the German ambassador to India, described Modi’s yoga bid at the U.N. a “clever move.”

“Yoga is a product which you can sell everywhere in the world,” Lindner said, adding that 4 million people were participating in International Yoga Day events in Germany.

Modi has also used yoga to bolster his image at home.

Modi and his Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party won a resounding victory in India’s recently concluded weekslong general elections by promoting a “New India” that pairs rapid economic growth with the trappings of the country’s ancient roots.

After the final day of polling, Modi, who casts himself as a Hindu ascetic who closely follows the religion’s strictures on vegetarianism and yoga, retreated to a Himalayan mountain cave to meditate — with a camera crew in tow.

Modi last year released a two-minute video showing him practicing yoga on his lawn at the prime minister’s residence. Some online commentators used the opportunity to compare Modi with India’s first prime minister, Jawaharlal Nehru.

Many shared pictures of Nehru doing a headstand, an advanced yoga posture. Of the benefits, Nehru wrote in his autobiography, “The slightly comic position increased my good humor and made me a little more tolerant of life’s vagaries.”

Associated Press writer Mariya Amrayeva contributed to this report.

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Sri Lankan Rupee	176.46
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