



## South Korea weighs listing churches as “high risk”

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — South Korea is considering including religious facilities on the same list with nightclubs, hostess bars, and karaoke rooms as “high risk” venues for the spread of COVID-19 following a slew of transmissions tied to church gatherings. South Korean Prime Minister Chung Sye-kyun said during a recent virus meeting that more than 40% of the country’s newly confirmed infections late in June were traced back to places of worship. He pleaded with people to refrain from religious gatherings and criticized churches and other facilities for failing to implement proper preventive measures, such as requiring followers to wear masks and sit apart during services. “If religious facilities continue to be an environment for infections by failing to implement anti-virus measures, it will be inevitable for the government to designate (them) as high-risk facilities and enforce strong restrictions,” Chung said. High-risk facilities are advised to close or otherwise must enforce anti-virus measures, including distancing, temperature checks, keeping customer lists, and requiring employees and visitors to wear masks. They are also required to register visitors with smartphone QR codes so they could be easily located when needed.

## 100s of unpaid soccer players seek help from FIFA fund

ZURICH (AP) — A \$16 million Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) fund to pay soccer players whose clubs disbanded leaving wages unpaid has had 441 applications. FIFA said 89% of cases, more than 390 players, involved European clubs and the other 11% were spread worldwide. The fund was launched in February with the global group of players’ unions, FIFPro, which warned that some clubs closed down to avoid paying wages then re-started as a new operation. FIFA and FIFPro said the money could be “an important safety net” though it was unable to cover all salaries owed. FIFA set aside \$5 million for retrospective claims dating from July 2015 to the end of June. A further \$11 million is allocated for the next three years.

## India bans dozens of Chinese apps, citing security reasons

NEW DELHI (AP) — India has banned 59 apps with Chinese links, saying their activities endanger the country’s sovereignty, defense, and security. India’s decision came as its troops are involved in a tense standoff with Chinese soldiers in eastern Ladakh in the Himalayas that started in May. India lost 20 soldiers in a June 15 clash. The banned apps include TikTok, UC Browser WeChat, and Bigo Live, as well as e-commerce platforms Club Factory and Shein, that are used in mobile and non-mobile devices connected to the internet, according to a government statement. It said there have been mounting concerns about data security and safeguarding the privacy of 1.3 billion Indians. The government said such concerns also pose a threat to sovereignty and security of the country. “The Ministry of Information Technology has received many complaints from various sources including several reports about misuse of some mobile apps available on Android and iOS platforms for stealing and surreptitiously transmitting users’ data in an unauthorized manner to servers which have locations outside India,” the statement said. The compilation of these data, its mining and profiling by elements hostile to national security, and the defense of India was “a matter of very deep and immediate concern which requires emergency measures,” the statement said.

## Indonesia cancels hajj pilgrimage due to coronavirus

JAKARTA, Indonesia (AP) — Indonesia’s government decided not to participate in this year’s hajj pilgrimage because of the coronavirus outbreak, an official confirmed in early June. Indonesia, the world’s most populous Muslim nation, normally sends the largest contingent to the pilgrimage to Islam’s holiest cities, Mecca and Medina in Saudi Arabia. It was expected to send 221,000 pilgrims this year. Razi said pilgrimages held during past disease outbreaks resulted in tragedies in which tens of thousands of people became victims. “In 1814 for example, when the Thau outbreak occurred, also in 1837 and 1858 there was an epidemic outbreak, cholera outbreak in 1892, and during the meningitis outbreak in 1987,” he said. Indonesia has more than 63,000 coronavirus cases, including more than 3,100 deaths.

## Workers killed in pharmaceutical plant gas leak

HYDERABAD, India (AP) — At least two workers were killed and four others sickened by a gas that leaked from a pharmaceutical plant in an Indian industrial city where another fatal gas leak occurred about two months ago. “The fire brigade immediately reached the scene and plugged the leak,” police commissioner Rajeev Kumar Meena said of the incident that occurred around 2:00am at the Sainor Life Sciences pharmaceutical plant in Visakhapatnam in India’s Andhra Pradesh state. The injured workers were hospitalized and in stable condition, authorities said. Benzimidazole, a chemical compound found in many antifungal and antiparasitic drugs that contains cancer-causing benzene, was released in a gas form, Meena said. An investigation was ordered to establish the cause of the leak. In May, another industrial accident in the same city killed 12 people, and about 1,000 others were hospitalized due to exposure from the gas in the community around a plastics factory. Styrene gas leaked from the LG Polymers’ plant in Visakhapatnam as workers restarted the plant after a six-week coronavirus lockdown ended. The latest incident is likely to add more grist to local public demand for closure or shifting of hazardous industries outside city limits.



**COVID CASUALTIES.** A Sri Lankan Telugu man, Timmannage Saman, feeds two infant monkeys outside his home in Nachchikulama, Sri Lanka. Sri Lanka’s Telugu community, whose nomadic lifestyle has increasingly clashed with the modern world, is facing another threat that could hasten its decline: the COVID-19 pandemic. (AP Photo/Eranga Jayawardena)

## Sri Lanka Telugu community fears decline of traditional ways

By Eranga Jayawardena  
The Associated Press

**K**UDAGAMA, Sri Lanka — Sri Lanka’s Telugu community, whose nomadic lifestyle has increasingly clashed with the modern world, is facing another threat that could hasten its decline: the COVID-19 pandemic.

Members of the smallest ethnic community in the country who speak the Telugu language of South Indian origin did not have permanent addresses until 1981, when the government built them villages from where they travelled to make money by staging snake and monkey performances and offering palm readings.

Such shows attract foreign tourists, who

## Father advocates for daughter, others abducted to North Korea dies

By Mari Yamaguchi  
The Associated Press

**T**OKYO — Shigeru Yokota, a Japanese campaigner for the return of his daughter and more than a dozen others who were abducted to North Korea in the 1970s, has died. He was 87 years old.

His family said Yokota died of natural causes in a hospital in Kawasaki, near Tokyo, before he was able to meet his daughter again.

“My husband and I did our best together, but he passed before seeing Megumi again. Now I’m at a loss,” his wife Sakie, 84, said in a statement.

Megumi disappeared in 1977 on her way home from her a junior high school in Niigata on Japan’s northern coast when she was 13. It was the day after she gave her father a comb as

take pictures with pythons and cobras.

“Now we can’t practice our job. Police and public health inspectors have told us not to get out of the village,” said Engatennage Podi Mahattaya, the village headman.

“Even if we get out, people are not attracted to us as they used to be,” he said. “They fear contracting the disease from us. Our movements are completely ceased as people do not allow us to get into their villages.”

These days, the younger generation spurns the old ways. Many young men prefer manual labor to snake charming that typically earns a person 3,000 rupees (about \$16) a day.

The older members of the community say the pause in the traditional livelihoods due to COVID-19 will only accelerate their decline.

a birthday gift, a memento he always carried with him.

A former Central Bank official, Yokota and his wife kept looking for Megumi and found out 20 years later that she had been abducted to North Korea by its agents.

In 1997, Yokota founded a group with other abduction victims’ families and headed it for a decade. The smiling and soft-spoken Yokota became the face of the campaign that eventually gained government backing.

The Yokotas had travelled around Japan carrying their daughter’s photos. An image of an innocent-looking teenager in a school uniform became a rallying cry for their cause.

After years of denial, North Korea in 2002 acknowledged abducting 13 Japanese. Japan maintains that the North abducted at least 17

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## Asian Currency Exchange Rates

Units per U.S. dollar as of 7/03

Bangladesh Taka	84.84
Cambodian Riel	4099.5
China Renminbi	7.066
Fijian Dollar	2.1263
Hong Kong Dollar	7.75
Indian Rupee	74.634
Indonesian Rupiah	14512
Iranian Rial	42025
Japanese Yen	107.52
Laos New Kip	9017.1
Malaysian Ringgit	4.285
Nepal Rupee	120.06
Pakistani Rupee	166.4
Papua N.G. Kina	3.472
Philippine Peso	49.482
Russian Ruble	71.446
Saudi Riyal	3.7502
Singapore Dollar	1.3941
South Korean Won	1199.3
Sri Lankan Rupee	185.94
Taiwan Dollar	29.438
Thai Baht	31.1
Vietnam Dong	23193