



Pakistan wraps up anti-polio drive amid surge in cases

PESHAWAR, Pakistan (AP) — Pakistan wrapped up a five-day vaccination campaign against polio in the former Taliban stronghold of South Waziristan and elsewhere in the country amid a surge in cases, officials said. Vaccinations started July 21, aiming to have about 800,000 children inoculated. Fortunately during the campaign, there were no reports of militant attacks on polio teams or police escorting them, said Aimal Riaz Khan, a spokesman for the polio emergency center in the northwest. Medical workers participating in the drive also urged parents and families to abide by social-distancing regulations to avoid a spike in coronavirus cases. Pakistan is one of three countries in the world where polio — a disabling and life-threatening disease caused by the polio virus — is still endemic. The other two are Afghanistan and Nigeria. The Taliban and other militants in Pakistan often attack polio teams and police escorting them, claiming the anti-polio drive is part of an alleged western conspiracy to sterilize children or collect intelligence. Pakistan had hoped to eliminate polio by 2018, when only 12 cases were reported. But last year saw a surge and so far this year, 108 cases have been registered. Khan said the polio spike came after February, when Pakistan halted anti-polio campaigns amid increasing coronavirus infections. Pakistan has reported more than 270,000 infections, including 5,763 deaths from COVID-19, the illness caused by the new virus.

Uncertainty pushes gold price to record \$1,926 per ounce

BEIJING (AP) — The price of gold surged to a record above \$1,926 per ounce July 27 as investors moved money into an asset seen as a safe haven amid jitters about U.S.-Chinese tension and the recovery from the coronavirus pandemic. Gold rose more than \$30 to \$1,926.20 by early afternoon in Asia. It added 1.5% after breaking its 2011 record high July 24. Prices of gold and silver have jumped as rising infection numbers and job losses in the United States and some other economies fuel concern the recovery from the virus and the worst global downturn since the 1930s might be faltering. Precious metals, along with bonds, often are seen as stores of value when financial markets decline. Forecasters watch their prices as an indicator of how investors see the economic future.

Rights group urges Indonesia to end caning

JAKARTA, Indonesia (AP) — The human-rights group Amnesty International has urged Indonesia to abolish caning after two women were struck about 100 times each as punishment for offering prostitution online. The women were caned publicly in Langsa city after they were found to have violated Shariah law in Indonesia's deeply conservative Aceh province. They were arrested in March along with five alleged sex workers. Amnesty International Indonesia executive director Usman Hamid said caning is "a cruel and inhumane practice that causes both physical and mental trauma. It is a punishment that must never be normalized nor tolerated." Aceh is the only province in Muslim-majority Indonesia that practices Shariah law, a concession made by the central government in 2001 as part of efforts to end a decades-long war for independence. Hundreds of people have been publicly caned since the punishment was introduced in Aceh in 2005. In a statement, Hamid urged the Indonesian government "to repeal all regulations that contradict international law and standards. We are also calling on the government to repeal all regulations which criminalize or otherwise punish sex workers and introduce legal protections from intimidation." Offenses that are punishable by caning include same-sex sexual relations, premarital sex, and other sexual relations outside marriage, consumption of alcohol, gambling, sexual abuse, rape, and accusing a person of adultery without providing four witnesses.

Court approves move of zoo elephant to sanctuary

ISLAMABAD (AP) — A Pakistani court approved the relocation of an elephant to a sprawling animal sanctuary in Cambodia after animal-rights activists launched a campaign saying the pachyderm that spent three decades in the Islamic nation was being mistreated at the capital's small zoo, officials said. The decision was hailed by the World Wide Fund for Nature, which said its representative in Pakistan "has been part of the continuous efforts to address welfare issues regarding Kaavan," the 33-year-old elephant that was given to Pakistan in 1985 by Sri Lanka. The group had proposed that the animal be moved to a 25,000-acre sanctuary in Cambodia, which already houses elephants and has rehabilitated over 80 elephants so far. Mian Aslam Amin, Pakistan's federal minister for climate change, called the ruling by the Islamabad High Court a "sad but correct decision," which he said was made for the benefit of Kaavan, the lone elephant at Islamabad's zoo. He said Kaavan would be relocated, but gave no dates for it. The elephant was well-loved by children and was treated well until recent years when it was chained. Authorities had said that was done for the safety of visitors after observing occasional aggression in the animal's mood.

Brazilian footballer in China faces virus penalty

BEIJING (AP) — Ricardo Goulart, a Brazilian striker who plays for Hebei China Fortune, faces a possible fine after taking photos with fans without a face mask, a state news agency reported. The 29-year-old Goulart, who previously played in Italy, was in the eastern city of Suzhou to prepare for a season opener. In late July, he posed for photos with fans without a mask, the Xinhua News Agency said. "He is expected to be fined and warned about his actions rather than receiving a suspension," Xinhua said. It gave no details of the possible penalty.



EASING RESTRICTIONS. A patron wearing a face mask to protect against the coronavirus holds her hand to a temperature scanner while entering a movie theater in Beijing. Beijing has partially reopened movie theaters as the threat from the coronavirus has receded in the Chinese capital. (AP Photo/Mark Schiefelbein)

Beijing partly reopens movie theaters as virus declines

BEIJING (AP) — Beijing has partially reopened movie theaters as the threat from the coronavirus has receded in the Chinese capital.

Cinemas in parts of the city deemed at low risk of cross-infection began admitting moviegoers under social-distancing rules. Tickets must be booked in advance, attendance is capped at 30% of capacity, and no eating or drinking is allowed during the show.

As with most venues in China, a temperature check and online travel record are required for entry. Cinemas have been closed for around six months but began reopening in major cities throughout the country.

Tickets at Poly International Cinema's branch near Tiananmen Square sold out, with the marquee boasting the comedy *Dolittle* and superhero attraction *Bloodshot*. China's domestic movie industry has also been generating major ticket sales while audiences

have warmed to features from India and other foreign countries.

Movie poster designer Liu Jingyu managed to grab tickets for both Hollywood films shown at the Poly cinema, rekindling his hopes after seeing his earnings dry up over the past half-year.

"For us who make a living on movies and who are movie enthusiasts, without movies, our life is full of pain," Liu said.

Chinese are enthusiastic moviegoers and the country was expected to surpass the U.S. this year as the world's biggest box office before the pandemic hit.

Li Xu, manager of the Poly cinema branch, said he is looking forward to the October National Day holiday when he expected the movie market would return to normal. The weeklong vacation is typically huge for ticket sales, with Chinese cinemas generating a record 5 billion yuan (\$708 million) from September 30 to October 7 last year.

British royals share anguish over Indian rhino park's floods

By Wasbir Hussain and Indrajit Singh
The Associated Press

GAUHATI, India — More than 100 animals, including 10 one-horned rhinoceroses, have died due to massive flooding at the famed Kaziranga game reserve in northeastern India, prompting Britain's Prince William and his wife, Kate Middleton, to express their concern in a letter to park authorities, officials said.

"Since the first week of June, we are having no respite with wave after wave of flood that has wreaked havoc inside the Kaziranga National Park and Tiger Reserve," said Kaziranga's park director, P. Sivakumar.

He said an animal that drowned in a swollen river near the park in late July brought the rhinoceros death toll up to 10.

The Duke and Duchess of Cambridge wrote to Sivakumar expressing their distress about the devastation to Kaziranga National Park and its precious wildlife. The couple had visited the park in April 2016 to learn about conservation and anti-poaching efforts. "The deaths of so many animals, including one-horned rhino, are deeply upsetting," they wrote.

The ongoing monsoon has dumped rain across parts of India, Bangladesh, and Nepal, displacing 9.6 million people, according to the

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Units per U.S. dollar as of 7/31

Bangladesh Taka	84.63
Cambodian Riel	4082.7
China Renminbi	6.9744
Fijian Dollar	2.0838
Hong Kong Dollar	7.7501
Indian Rupee	74.896
Indonesian Rupiah	14666
Iranian Rial	42025
Japanese Yen	105.69
Laos New Kip	9083.4
Malaysian Ringgit	4.237
Nepal Rupee	120.5
Pakistani Rupee	167.08
Papua N.G. Kina	3.48
Philippine Peso	49.085
Russian Ruble	74.305
Saudi Riyal	3.7503
Singapore Dollar	1.3729
South Korean Won	1192.4
Sri Lankan Rupee	185.2
Taiwan Dollar	29.345
Thai Baht	31.23
Vietnam Dong	23214