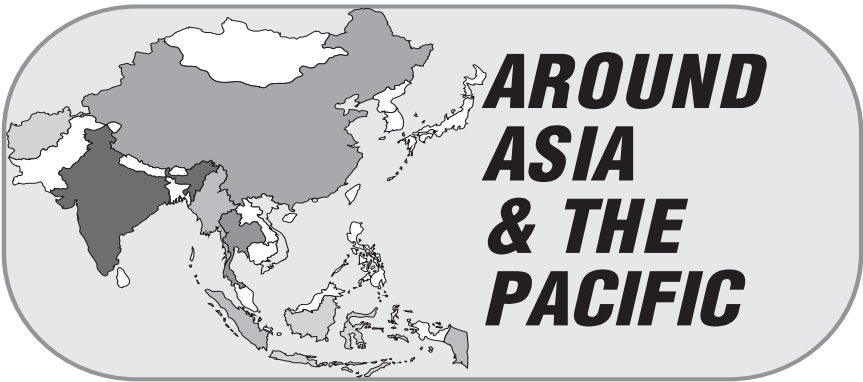




Food of the future? EU nations put mealworms on the menu

BRUSSELS (AP) — Dried yellow mealworms could soon be hitting supermarket shelves and restaurants across Europe. The European Union’s (EU) 27 nations gave the green light last month to a proposal to put the *Tenebrio molitor* beetle’s larvae on the market as a “novel food.” The move came after the EU’s food safety agency published a scientific opinion this year that concluded worms were safe to eat. Researchers said the worms, either eaten whole or in powdered form, are a protein-rich snack or an ingredient for other foods. Allergic reactions may occur for people with pre-existing allergies to crustaceans and dust mites, the commission said. Insects as food represent a very small market but EU officials said breeding them for food could have environmental benefits. The U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization calls insects “a healthy and highly nutritious food source with a high content of fat, protein, vitamins, fibers, and minerals.” Following the approval by EU states, an EU regulation authorizing dried yellow mealworms as a food will be adopted in the coming weeks.



Xi congratulates Chinese astronauts aboard space station

BEIJING (AP) — Chinese President Xi Jinping spoke with three astronauts who are making the country’s space station their home for the next three months, called their mission an important milestone in China’s space industry. The crew consisting of former air force pilots Nie Haisheng, Liu Boming, and Tang Hongbo arrived at the Tianhe space station in June. Throughout their stay, they will carry out science experiments and maintenance, space walks, and prepare the station for receiving two additional modules next year. Nie, Liu, and Tang are carrying out China’s longest crewed space mission by far. Three more crewed missions to the station are being planned. The main section of the Tianhe, or Heavenly Harmony, station was launched into orbit on April 29. Cargo spacecraft sent up in May carried fuel, food, and equipment to the station in preparation for the crewed mission. The space agency plans a total of 11 launches through the end of next year to deliver two laboratory modules to expand the 70-ton station, along with supplies and crew members. The current mission is the third of the 11 launches.

Boy dies after being repeatedly slammed in judo class

TAIPEI, Taiwan (AP) — A seven-year-old Taiwanese boy died after being repeatedly slammed by his coach and others at a judo class. The boy, identified only by his surname, Huang, was taken off life support in late June after being in a coma since the April 21 incident. The coach, identified in reports by his surname, Ho, has been indicted on charges of causing bodily injury and using children to commit a crime. Ho reportedly ordered other students to throw Huang to the mat, then began to do so himself, even after the boy vomited and pleaded for the abuse to stop. He eventually became unresponsive and was taken to a hospital but never recovered consciousness. The official Central News Agency (CNA) said Ho had no coaching license and had been offering classes in the central Taiwanese city of Fengyuan for free. He has said the throws were part of normal training, even though Huang was a new student and hadn’t yet acquired the skills to protect himself, CNA said. The decision to take him off life support came after doctors were unable to stop Huang’s blood pressure and heart rate from declining, the agency said. Ho is free on bail while the investigation continues. Martial arts are popular in Taiwan, which has found international success in several forms, especially taekwondo.

HK banning passenger flights from U.K. to curb virus

HONG KONG (AP) — Hong Kong’s government said it was banning all passenger flights from the U.K. effective July 1 as it seeks to curb the spread of new variants of the coronavirus. It said in a statement that the U.K. has been classified as “extremely high risk.” Under the classification, people who have stayed in the U.K. for more than two hours will be restricted from boarding passenger flights to Hong Kong. The statement said the flight ban was issued because of the “recent rebound of the epidemic situation in the U.K. and the widespread delta variant virus strain there.”

Building collapse in South Korea injures 8 people

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — A building being demolished in southern South Korea collapsed in early June, sending debris falling on nearby vehicles and seriously injuring eight people, officials said. Concrete from the collapsed building in the southern city of Gwangju fell on a bus and two passenger vehicles, the National Fire Agency said. Emergency officers dispatched to the site rescued eight people, all seriously injured, it said in a statement. It didn’t say whether the eight people were inside the bus, the passenger vehicles, or the collapsed building. It wasn’t immediately known whether anyone was in the building when it collapsed. A video from the scene showed dozens of rescue workers equipped with stretchers and crowbars searching for survivors while excavators hacked at a huge mountain of crumbled concrete and bent steel beams that spilled over a motorway.



TOUGH TIMES. A transgender Kashmiri, Khushi Mir, right, helps her mother in the kitchen set up in the corner of a rented room on the outskirts of Srinagar in India-controlled Kashmir. Until the pandemic, singing and dancing at weddings used to earn Mir enough income to take care of her family. Mir has now set up a charity, along with four friends, to distribute food kits to members of the transgender community who are unable to afford living expenses. (AP Photo/Dar Yasin)

Virus left transgender Kashmiris “on our own”

By Dar Yasin
The Associated Press

S RINAGAR, India — Singing and dancing at weddings used to earn Khushi Mir enough income to take care of her family. Until the pandemic.

Lockdowns to curb the coronavirus in India-controlled Kashmir cancelled weddings and musical evenings. Bills for Mir’s rented accommodation mounted.

Unable to pay, 19-year-old Mir took a job as a construction worker for 15 days. It paid \$9.60 a day but left Mir’s hands bruised and skin peeling. “I had no other option,” Mir said. “I needed to provide for my family.”

Mir is transgender — belonging to a marginalized community in India-controlled Kashmir whose members are often only able to find work as matchmakers or wedding entertainment.

Prolonged coronavirus lockdowns, preceded by a strict security lockdown in the region in 2019 when India scrapped Kashmir’s semi-autonomous status, left many in the transgender community with no work at all.

Left without livelihoods, some stepped up to help each other.

Mir and four others made a volunteer group to distribute food. So far, they have provided ration kits for nearly 220 people, many of them makeup artists, singers, and matchmakers who have lost their livelihoods during the pandemic.

Life has not been easy for many of Kashmir’s transgender people. Most are ostracized by families and bullied in society. They face domestic abuse and end up running away from families at an early age. Some lack housing,

education, and other basic resources.

They are a tiny minority in a region that has been fraught with violence and political instability and has known little but conflict since 1947, when British rule of the subcontinent ended and Kashmir was divided between the newly created India and Pakistan.

Living in the shadows of conflict, coupled with the recent crisis of the pandemic, pushed the community further to the margins.

“We have been ignored by everyone,” said Chandini Shaikh, a matchmaker and singer who lost her job during the pandemic. “We have been left on our own.”

33 COVID patients die amid oxygen outage in Indonesia

YOGYAKARTA, Indonesia (AP) — Dozens of coronavirus patients died after a public hospital on Indonesia’s main island of Java ran out of liquid oxygen amid a nationwide surge in COVID-19 cases, according to a hospital official.

At least 33 patients with severe coronavirus infections died after the central supply of liquid medical oxygen ran out at Dr. Sardjito General Hospital in Yogyakarta city due to delays from suppliers, said hospital spokesman Banu Hermawan.

The oxygen shortage in the city’s largest hospital was due to an increase in patients arriving in deteriorating condition, Hermawan said. Hermawan said the hospital did switch to oxygen cylinders, including 100 cylinders donated by the Yogyakarta regional police. Indonesia is battling an explosion of COVID-19 cases that has strained its healthcare system.

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Units per U.S. dollar as of 7/02	
Bangladesh Taka	84.34
Cambodian Riel	4,064.2
China Renminbi	6.469
Fijian Dollar	2.0542
Hong Kong Dollar	7.767
Indian Rupee	74.512
Indonesian Rupiah	14491
Iranian Rial	42025
Japanese Yen	111.27
Laos New Kip	9463.3
Malaysian Ringgit	4.1620
Nepal Rupee	119.81
Pakistani Rupee	156.89
Papua N.G. Kina	3.509
Philippine Peso	49.35
Russian Ruble	73.292
Saudi Riyal	3.7504
Singapore Dollar	1.3483
South Korean Won	1133.4
Sri Lankan Rupee	199.03
Taiwan Dollar	27.957
Thai Baht	32.12
Vietnam Dong	23045