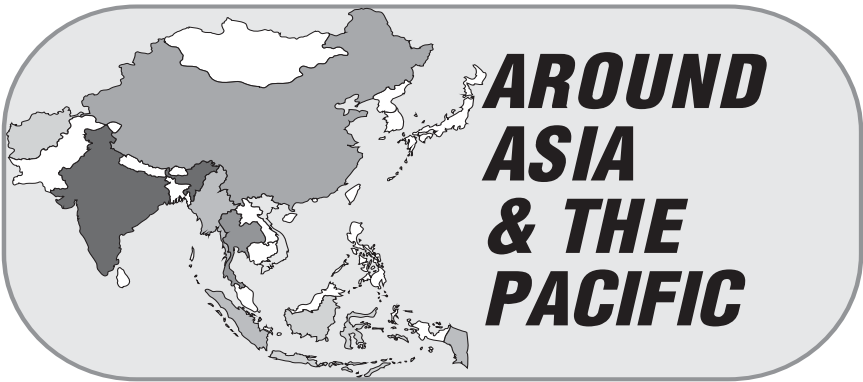




South Korea aims to cut carbon emissions by 40% in 2030

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — South Korea has set a new goal for fighting climate change over the next decade, saying it will aim to cut its greenhouse-gas emissions to 40% below 2018 levels by 2030. The country had faced criticism that its initial plan for a 26.3% reduction was too modest. In promising stronger contributions to curb global warming ahead of a U.N. climate summit in Scotland, South Korean President Moon Jae-in said the new target represents the “most enthusiastic” objective the country could possibly set under current circumstances. South Korea aims to be carbon neutral by 2050. “Compared to advanced economies, which had already reached peak emissions in the 1990s or 2000s and were give a longer period of time to reduce their emissions, we have to reduce our greenhouse-gas emissions at a much faster pace, as we reached peak emission only in 2018, so the new goal is a very challenging target,” Moon said in a meeting of a presidential committee on climate goals. The country aims to cut emissions from electricity generation and heating by 44.4% below 2018 levels in 2030 by reducing the country’s reliance on coal-fired plants and expanding renewable energy sources. It is also seeking to reduce the industrial use of fossil fuel and accelerate a transition toward electric and hydrogen-powered vehicles.

Vietnam starts vaccinating kids in effort to reopen schools

HANOI, Vietnam (AP) — Vietnam has started vaccinating children as part of an effort to reopen schools after more than half a year of closures due to COVID-19. About 1,500 teenagers between 16 and 17 years old in Ho Chi Minh City in southern Vietnam were among the first to receive jabs before the inoculation program is rolled out nationwide this month, the health ministry said on its website. During the first phase, Vietnam has only approved the Pfizer vaccine for children. Parents or guardians must sign a consent form for their children to be vaccinated, the report said. “Vaccination safety for children is the top priority,” health minister Nguyen Thanh Long said during a meeting ahead of the launch. Last month, the ministry approved vaccinations for children between 12 and 17 years old, with older teens in more populated cities receiving priority for the first doses. There are about 14 million Vietnamese children in that age range. According to the report, children will be vaccinated at their schools and those who do not attend school will be vaccinated at pediatric hospitals. Vietnam closed schools and education institutions in May when an outbreak fuelled by the delta variant spread across the country. No date has been set for reopening schools, but the government is aiming for early 2022.

Seoul police arrest 4 over cameras hidden in entire motel

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — South Korean police have arrested four people for allegedly installing hidden cameras in the rooms of an entire motel and attempting to extort money from the hundreds of guests who were filmed. The suspects filmed for months and tried to blackmail some guests with threats to release their videos but their extortion attempts failed to obtain any money, said Seo Sang-hyeok, an official from the cybercrime unit of Seoul Metropolitan Police. Seo didn’t provide details on how the suspects installed the cameras at the motel in Yangpyeong, near the capital of Seoul. A local newspaper reported the suspects bribed a motel employee to install tiny cameras on the monitors of computers in each room while he cleaned them. South Korea has struggled in recent years to deal with perpetrators who install tiny cameras in motels, bathrooms, and other spaces to film sexual footage or nudity and release the footage through illegal websites. Thousands of women marched in Seoul in 2018 calling for stronger government action to fight the spread of images taken by hidden cameras, which they said has women living in constant anxiety and distress. The National Police Agency recently told Justice Party lawmaker Jang Hye-young that police have investigated nearly 30,000 cases of crime related to hidden cameras over the past five years.

Kishida says Fukushima wastewater release must happen

TOKYO (AP) — Japan’s new prime minister said the planned mass disposal of wastewater stored at the tsunami-wrecked Fukushima nuclear plant cannot be delayed, despite concerns from local residents. Speaking at his first visit to the facility since taking office, Fumio Kishida said his government would work to reassure residents nearby the plant about the technical safety of the wastewater disposal project. The Fukushima Daiichi plant suffered a triple meltdown in 2011 following a massive earthquake and tsunami. Kishida’s brief tour of the facility by its operator, Tokyo Electric Power Company Holdings, focused on the ongoing decommissioning of the plant and the massive amount of treated but still radioactive water stored there. “I felt strongly that the water issue is a crucial one that should not be pushed back,” Kishida told reporters after the tour. The government and TEPCO announced plans in April to start releasing the water into the Pacific Ocean in the spring of 2023 over the span of decades. The plan has been fiercely opposed by fishermen, residents, and Japan’s neighbors, including China and South Korea. Contaminated cooling water has continued to leak from the damaged reactors since the disaster. The water has been pumped up from basements and stored in about 1,000 tanks which the operator says will reach their capacity late next year. Japanese officials say disposal of the water is essential for the plant cleanup, and that its release into the ocean is the most realistic option. Kishida said the government will do its utmost to address concerns the water disposal will hurt local fishing and other industries. Japan has requested assistance by the International Atomic Energy Agency to ensure the discharge meets global safety standards, including treating the wastewater so its radioactivity levels are below legal limits.



RESTFUL RIDE. *Passengers sleep on the upper deck of a double-decker bus in Hong Kong, on October 16, 2021. Travel-starved, sleep-deprived residents might find a new Hong Kong bus tour to be a snooze. The 47-mile, five-hour ride on a double-decker bus around the territory is meant to appeal to people who are easily lulled asleep by long rides.* (AP Photo/Kin Cheung)

For sleepy Hong Kong residents, five-hour bus tour is a snooze

By Alice Fung and Matthew Cheng
The Associated Press

HONG KONG — Travel-starved, sleep-deprived residents might find a new Hong Kong bus tour to be a snooze.

The 47-mile, five-hour ride on a regular double-decker bus around the territory is meant to appeal to people who are easily lulled asleep by long rides. It was inspired by the tendency of tired commuters to fall asleep on public transit.

“When we were brainstorming new tours, I saw a social-media post from my friend saying that he was so stressed out by his work, he couldn’t sleep at night,” said Kenneth Kong, the marketing and business development manager of ulu travel, the organizer of the bus tours.

“But when he was travelling on the bus, he was able to sleep well. His post inspired us to create this tour that lets passengers just sleep on the bus.”

Tickets cost between \$13 to \$51 per person, depending on whether they choose seats on the upper or lower deck. A goodie bag for passengers includes an eye-mask and ear plugs for better sleep.

The first “Sleeping Bus Tour” in October sold out entirely. Some passengers came prepared, bringing their own blankets and changing their shoes to slippers, while others brought travel pillows.

“I have been suffering from insomnia so I am here to try and get some sleep,” said 25-year-old Anson Kong, one of the passengers on the first bus tour.

He said the tour was a good idea and “more interesting” than he expected.

On the first tour, the bus stopped so

passengers could take photos at scenic spots on the city’s Lantau Island. One stop was the aircraft maintenance area near Hong Kong’s airport, where passengers can snag selfies with aircraft in the background.

Another passenger, Marco Yung, said he joined the tour because he usually falls asleep on long-distance bus journeys, saying it was a “great opportunity” to get some sleep.

The tendency to fall sleep on public transport is a type of conditioning, according to Dr. Shirley Li, the principal investigator of the Sleep Research Clinic and Laboratory at the University of Hong Kong.

“People in Hong Kong don’t have enough time to sleep,” Li said. “That’s why we have to kind of use other times to sleep, which is our daily commute, especially when we are travelling on public transport.”

“For some people, they may tend to associate public transport with their sleep. And that’s why they found it easier to fall asleep on the bus,” she said.

Japan’s Princess Mako marries commoner, loses royal status

TOKYO (AP) — Japanese Princess Mako quietly married a commoner last month without traditional wedding celebrations and said their marriage — delayed three years and called unfit by some — “was a necessary choice to live while cherishing our hearts.”

The marriage to Kei Komuro cost Mako her royal status and she has taken her husband’s surname — the first time she has had a family name. Most Japanese women must abandon their own family names upon marriage due to a law requiring only one surname per married

Continued on page 4

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Indian Rupee	74.951
Indonesian Rupiah	14221
Iranian Rial	42025
Japanese Yen	114.01
Laos New Kip	10176
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Nepal Rupee	120.39
Pakistani Rupee	170.55
Papua N.G. Kina	3.515
Philippine Peso	50.505
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Taiwan Dollar	27.83
Thai Baht	33.34
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