



### Female ref officiates first Asian Champions League match

PATHUM THANI, Thailand (AP) — The first female referee to officiate an Asian Champions League game saw Melbourne City defeat Jeonnam Dragons of South Korea 2-1. Yoshimi Yamashita and assistant referees Makoto Bozono and Naomi Teshirogi — all of Japan — comprised the first all-female trio to officiate an Asian Champions League match, having been appointed by the Asian Football Confederation (AFC). “Their selection reinforces the AFC’s commitment to strengthen and develop the women’s game at all levels as well as in ensuring the AFC’s women match officials continue to receive the highest standards of quality education and expert guidance to scale the biggest stages in world football,” the confederation said in a statement. Lee Kyu-hyuk scored for Jeonnam after 16 minutes to cancel out Carl Jenkinson’s early opener at Pathum Thani Stadium just north of Bangkok. Andrew Nabbout scored what turned out to be the winning goal for the Australian team just six minutes later.

### China promotes coal in setback for efforts to cut emissions

BEIJING (AP) — China is promoting coal-fired power as the ruling Communist Party tries to revive a sluggish economy, prompting warnings Beijing is setting back efforts to cut climate-changing carbon emissions from the biggest global source. Official plans call for boosting coal production capacity by 300 million tons this year, according to news reports. That is equal to 7% of last year’s output of 4.1 billion tons, which was an increase of 5.7% over 2020. China is one of the biggest investors in wind and solar, but jittery leaders called for more coal-fired power after economic growth plunged last year and shortages caused blackouts and factory shutdowns.

### 3 critically endangered Sumatran tigers lost to animal traps

BANDA ACEH, Indonesia (AP) — Three critically endangered Sumatran tigers were found dead after being caught in traps on Indonesia’s Sumatra island in the latest setback for a species whose numbers are estimated to have dwindled to about 400, according to authorities. A female and a male tiger were found dead with leg injuries caused by a snare trap near a palm oil plantation in the East Aceh district of Aceh province, local police chief Hendra Sukmana said. The body of another female tiger was found hours later about 550 yards away with a snare still embedded in her almost-severed neck and legs, he said.

### China sending up next space station crew in June

BEIJING (AP) — China will launch three more astronauts to its newest space station in June after the latest crew returned following a six-month stay in orbit, according to an official. The crew of Shenzhou 14 will spend six months on the Tiangong to add two modules to the station, Hao Chun, director of the China Manned Space Engineering Office, told a news conference. China’s ambitious space program launched its first astronaut into orbit in 2003, landed robot rovers on the moon in 2013, and on Mars last year. Officials have discussed a possible crewed mission to the moon. The core module of the Tiangong, or Heavenly Palace, was launched in April 2021. Plans call for completing construction this year. The Wentian module will be launched in July and the Mengtian module in October, Hao said. The crew of Shenzhou 13 landed in the Gobi desert in the northern region of Inner Mongolia in April. During the mission, astronaut Wang Yaping carried out the first spacewalk by a Chinese woman. Wang, commander Zhai Zhigang, and crewmate Ye Guangfu also beamed back physics lessons for high school students. China was the third nation to launch an astronaut into space on its own after the former Soviet Union and the United States. Tiangong is China’s third space station following predecessors launched in 2011 and 2016. The government announced in 2020 that China’s first reusable spacecraft had landed following a test flight but no photos or details have been released. China is excluded from the International Space Station due to U.S. unease that its space program is run by the ruling Communist Party’s military wing, the People’s Liberation Army.

### South Korea’s top court overturns convictions of gay soldiers

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — South Korea’s Supreme Court has thrown out a military court ruling that convicted two gay soldiers for having sex outside their military facilities, saying it stretched the reading of the country’s widely criticized military sodomy law. The court’s decision to send the case back to the High Court for Armed Forces was welcomed by human rights advocates, who have long protested the country’s 1962 Military Criminal Act’s Article 92-6, which prohibits same-sex conduct among soldiers in the country’s predominantly male military. The article prescribes a maximum prison term of two years for “anal intercourse” and “any other indecent acts” between military personnel. Following the Supreme Court’s full panel deliberation of its 13 justices, chief justice Kim Myeong-su said they concluded the provisions should not be applied to consensual sex between male service members that takes place outside military facilities during off-duty hours. “The specific ideas of what constitutes as indecency has changed accordingly with the changes in time and society,” Kim said in a decision that was broadcast online. “The view that sexual activity between people of the same sex is a source of sexual humiliation and disgust for objective regular people and goes against decent moral sense can hardly be accepted as a universal and proper moral standard for our times.” The court later said in a press release that the decision was meaningful as a “declaration that consensual same-sex sexual activity (among military service members) could no longer be considered as punishable in itself.” The two defendants — an army lieutenant and sergeant from different units — were charged by military prosecutors in 2017 for having sex during off-duty hours at a residence outside their bases in 2016.



**MOBILE THEATER.** Musicians perform for the Awahan travelling theater at Xetali village, east of Gauhati, India, on April 6, 2022. Travelling theater groups in India’s northeastern state of Assam are reviving the local art and culture scene after the COVID-19 pandemic forced a pause in their performances for a year and a half. The mobile theaters are among the most popular forms of local entertainment. (AP Photo/Anupam Nath)

## Pandemic-hit theater back in India’s northeast

By Anupam Nath  
The Associated Press

**G**AUHATI, India — Travelling theater groups in India’s northeastern state of Assam are reviving the local art and culture scene after the COVID-19 pandemic forced a pause in their performances for a year and a half.

Seven roving theater companies are back on stage playing before crowds in villages, towns, and cities across the state. The mobile theaters are among the most popular forms of local entertainment.

“The public response has been very good. They love live performances. We have no competition from television and the digital boom,” said Prastuti Parashar, a top Assamese actress who owns the Awahan Theater group.

Before the coronavirus hit the region, about 50 theater groups, each involving 120 to 150 people, performed throughout the state. They would start in September, coinciding with major Hindu festivals like Durga Puja and Diwali, and continue until April.

The Awahan Theater is among the groups that resumed performances and ended its season last month with the advent of the traditional new year.

Drama is an integral part of Indian culture and the mobile theater groups don’t restrict themselves to mythological and social themes. They have in the past covered classic Greek tragedies, Shakespearean tales, and historical subjects like the sinking of the Titanic, Lady Diana, and Osama bin Laden’s attack on the World Trade Center in 2001.

The groups travel with directors, actors, dancers, singers, technicians, drivers, and

cooks, in addition to all the stage infrastructure to perform three shows in one place before moving on to the next makeshift venue — like a circus show. The performances feature many of the state’s top actors, including Bhabesh Baruah, Tapan Das, Mridul Bhuyan, and Pranjana Dutta.

During the pandemic-related pause in live theater, some artists and musicians tried their luck in television or digital content, two industries that have depressed the market for movies in Assam.

### U.S. drone company Zipline starts delivering medicine in Japan

By Yuri Kageyama  
AP Business Writer

**T**OKYO — Zipline, an American company that specializes in using autonomously flying drones to deliver medical supplies, has taken off in Japan.

They started flying last month across the tiny Goto Islands off the western coast of Kyushu in southwestern Japan delivering to pharmacies and hospitals.

Other parts of Japan may follow, including urban areas, although the biggest needs tend to be in isolated rural areas.

Zipline, founded six years ago, already is in service in the U.S., where it has partnered with Walmart Inc. to deliver other products at the retail chain as well as drugs. It is also delivering medical goods in Ghana and Rwanda.

Its takeoff in Japan is in partnership with Toyota Tsusho, a group company of Japan’s top automaker Toyota Motor Corp.

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## Asian Currency Exchange Rates

Units per U.S. dollar as of 4/29

|                   |        |
|-------------------|--------|
| Bangladesh Taka   | 86.36  |
| Cambodian Riel    | 4047.7 |
| China Renminbi    | 6.6075 |
| Fijian Dollar     | 2.1358 |
| Hong Kong Dollar  | 7.8468 |
| Indian Rupee      | 76.498 |
| Indonesian Rupiah | 14511  |
| Iranian Rial      | 42298  |
| Japanese Yen      | 129.78 |
| Laos New Kip      | 12015  |
| Malaysian Ringgit | 4.352  |
| Nepal Rupee       | 122.5  |
| Pakistani Rupee   | 185.32 |
| Papua N.G. Kina   | 3.51   |
| Philippine Peso   | 52.359 |
| Russian Ruble     | 68.002 |
| Saudi Riyal       | 3.7507 |
| Singapore Dollar  | 1.3817 |
| South Korean Won  | 1260.5 |
| Sri Lankan Rupee  | 349.57 |
| Taiwan Dollar     | 29.419 |
| Thai Baht         | 34.26  |
| Vietnam Dong      | 22917  |