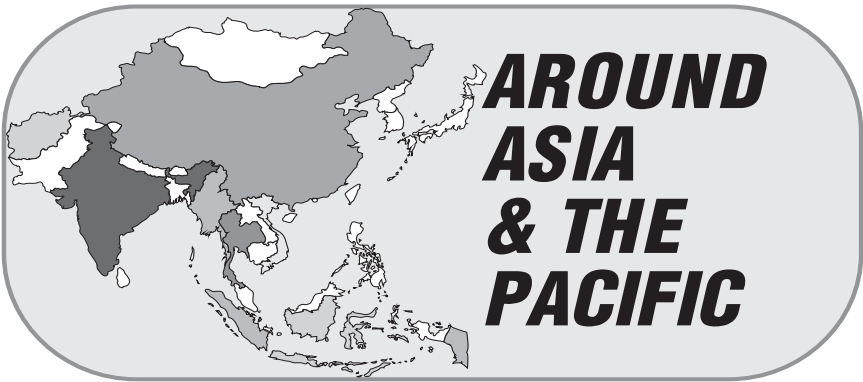




Indian official suspended after draining reservoir to retrieve phone he dropped while taking a selfie

NEW DELHI (AP) — A government official in India was suspended from his job after he ordered a water reservoir to be drained so he could retrieve his smartphone, which he had dropped while taking a selfie. Food inspector Rajesh Vishwas dropped his Samsung smartphone in Kherkatta dam in the central Indian state of Chhattisgarh last month, *The Times of India* newspaper reported. Vishwas first asked local divers to jump into the reservoir to find the device, claiming it contained sensitive government data. But after initial efforts to retrieve his smartphone failed, he asked for the reservoir to be emptied using diesel pumps. Over the next three days, more than 2 million liters of water were pumped out of the reservoir, which is enough to irrigate at least 1,500 acres of land during India’s scorching summer, local media reported. In videos that went viral on social media, Vishwas is seen sitting under a red umbrella as diesel pumps drained water from the reservoir. Vishwas told local media the water in the reservoir was unusable for irrigation and that he had received permission from a senior official to drain it. The smartphone was eventually retrieved but wouldn’t even start because it was waterlogged. Authorities later suspended Vishwas after he was widely criticized for wasting water resources. India is one of the most water-stressed countries and extreme temperatures have led to severe water scarcity, causing crop losses, forest fires, and cuts to power.

Fire destroys nearly century-old neoclassical landmark

MANILA, The Philippines (AP) — A massive fire tore through Manila’s historic post office building in May, slightly injuring seven people and razing the nearly 100-year-old landmark in the Philippine capital, according to police and postal officials. The fire started before midnight in the basement of the neoclassical, five-story building and was brought under control by morning more than seven hours after it began, firefighters said. An investigation was underway to determine the cause of the fire and what was damaged, officials said, adding seven people, mostly firefighters, sustained minor injuries or were overwhelmed by thick smoke. The Manila Central Post Office was one of the capital’s busiest office buildings but was closed when the fire started. The building was the country’s main mail-sorting and distribution hub and was the central office for the Philippine Postal Corporation. The building, recognized as a national landmark, was built in 1926 with high columns in the traditional neoclassical style. It was severely damaged during World War II and was rebuilt in 1946. It has been used as a backdrop for many Philippine movies and stands near a plaza named after national hero Andres Bonifacio, which has been the site of protests by left-wing and nationalist activists over a range of political and social issues. It is located along the Pasig River on a main intersection of the capital’s key roads. Postal service in the Philippines began during the Spanish colonial period with horse-riding mail couriers.

Newspaper Ming Pao to stop publishing political cartoon

HONG KONG (AP) — A Hong Kong newspaper will stop publishing works by the city’s most prominent political cartoonist after his drawings drew government complaints, in another example of hushed speech and media voices after a Beijing-led crackdown. Chinese-language newspaper *Ming Pao* did not elaborate on why it would stop publishing Wong Kei-kwan’s works. “*Ming Pao* would like to express gratitude to Zunzi for witnessing how times have changed with us over the last four decades,” its editorial department said, referring to Wong by his pen name. His comic drawings caricatured Hong Kong society’s frustrations since before the then-British colony was returned to Chinese rule in 1997. Wong did not respond to a request for comment by The Associated Press and the newspaper did not expand on its announcement that it would stop publishing the cartoons. It’s unclear whether the government played a role in the decision, and the government departments that complained about Wong’s drawings had not responded to requests for comment. After Beijing imposed a national security law following massive pro-democracy protests in 2019, the city’s art and media communities have learned to be wary of crossing vaguely defined red lines in producing art and other content that might be perceived as challenging Communist Party control. Authorities have also increasingly used a colonial-era sedition law to target critical voices. Multiple cartoons drawn by Wong have been criticized in recent months by different government units, including the security bureau. Most recently, the Home and Youth Affairs Bureau slammed his work for “smearing” the government’s role of appointing local committee members who will choose candidates in district council elections later this year.

Pledged fund to support Rohingya is grossly insufficient

DHAKA, Bangladesh (AP) — Bangladesh should not bear the burden of more than 1 million Rohingya refugees alone while the agencies of the United Nations are facing challenges to feed them, an official of the United Nations said last month. Olivier De Schutter, a U.N. special rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights, made the statement after ending a 12-day trip to Bangladesh, where he visited camps sheltering the refugees from Myanmar. He said the response from the international community to support the refugees against the funds needed is “grossly insufficient.” About \$876 million are needed to support the community for a year, but only 17% of that has been pledged to date, he said, calling it “scandalous” at a news conference in Bangladesh’s capital, Dhaka. “Bangladesh should not be left to shoulder the burden of the presence of the refugees on its own. These (U.N.) agencies should be much better supported in their work,” De Schutter said.



70TH ANNIVERSARY. Record-holder veteran Sherpa guide Kami Rita, center, poses for a photo in front of the statues of New Zealander Edmund Hillary, left, and his Sherpa guide Tenzing Norgay, on the 70th anniversary of the first ascent of Mount Everest in Kathmandu, Nepal, on May 29, 2023. The 29,032-foot mountain peak was first scaled by Hillary and Norgay on May 29, 1953. Pictured in the bottom photo is Sanu Sherpa, who has climbed all of the world’s 14 highest peaks twice. (AP Photos/Niranjan Shrestha)

Nepal honors Sherpa guides, climbers to mark 70th anniversary of Mount Everest conquest

By Binaj Gurubacharya
The Associated Press

KATHMANDU, Nepal — Nepal’s government honored record-holding climbers during celebrations of the first ascent of Mount Everest 70 years ago.

The celebrations took place amid a growing concern about temperatures rising, glaciers and snow melting, and weather being harsh and unpredictable on the world’s tallest mountain.

Hundreds of people from the mountaineering community, Sherpa guides, and officials attended a rally in Kathmandu to mark the anniversary. Participants waved celebratory banners and walked in the center of Kathmandu to tunes played by military bands.

Among those honored were Sherpa guides Kami Rita, who climbed Everest twice this season for a record 28 times overall, and Sanu Sherpa, who has climbed all of the world’s 14 highest peaks twice.

Hari Budha Magar, who became the first double above-the-knee amputee to climb Everest, was also honored by the country’s tourism minister, Sushila Sirpali Thakuri.



“May 29 is a day when we all always remember and be proud of when Edmund Hillary and Tenzing (Norgay) Sherpa reached the top of Everest and it is the day the Sherpas became known,” Sanu Sherpa said.

Hillary and his Sherpa guide Tenzing Norgay reached the summit on May 29, 1953. Nepal began celebrating the anniversary as Everest Day after Hillary’s death in 2008.

Since their ascent, thousands of people have scaled the 29,032-foot peak and hundreds have also lost their lives on the unpredictable slopes.

During the 2023 climbing season, hundreds

Continued on page 4

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Artwork due: Thursday, June 29 at 1:00pm

August 7, 2023 edition:
Space reservations due: Wednesday, August 2 at 1:00pm
Artwork due: Thursday, August 3 at 1:00pm

Asian Currency Exchange Rates	
Units per U.S. dollar as of 6/02	
Bangladesh Taka	107.23
Cambodian Riel	4118.4
China Renminbi	7.0799
Fijian Dollar	2.2452
Hong Kong Dollar	7.8369
Indian Rupee	82.329
Indonesian Rupiah	14765
Iranian Rial	42003
Japanese Yen	139.69
Laos New Kip	17913
Malaysian Ringgit	4.575
Nepal Rupee	131.91
Pakistani Rupee	285.5
Papua N.G. Kina	3.539
Philippine Peso	55.939
Russian Ruble	81.27
Saudi Riyal	3.7506
Singapore Dollar	1.3477
South Korean Won	1303.5
Sri Lankan Rupee	290.8
Taiwan Dollar	30.68
Thai Baht	34.66
Vietnam Dong	23480