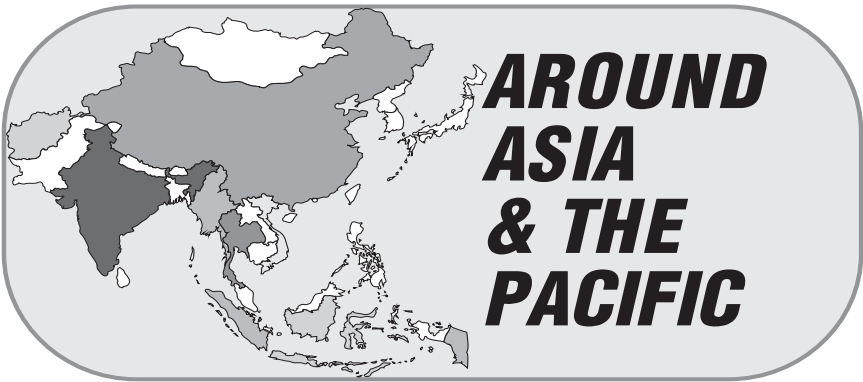




SoftBank’s Son says AI will surpass human intelligence

TOKYO (AP) — Softbank CEO Masayoshi Son says he believes artificial intelligence (AI) will surpass human intelligence within a decade, urging Japanese companies to adopt it or be left behind. Son, speaking at a corporate conference in Tokyo last month, said “artificial general intelligence will surpass the total intelligence of humankind by 10 times in 10 years.” It will affect every industry, from transportation and pharmaceuticals to finance, manufacturing, logistics, and others, and the companies and people that work with AI will be the leaders in the next 10 to 20 years, Son said. Son, who founded SoftBank and is a leading figure in Japan’s business world, has enjoyed both victories and defeats in his array of technology investments. He latched on to the potential of the internet decades ago, and now is seeking to invest in AI-related companies. “I want to be on the side of progress,” he said. “It would be sad to be on the side that gets left behind, like an old, shuttered high street,” he said, and called on Japanese companies to “wake up” to his vision of a future led by AI. “The youth of Japan, let’s wake up.” At the Hiroshima summit in May, Group of Seven leaders agreed to promote reliable AI, and Japan’s government is seeking to be part of international rule-making to achieve reliable use of AI. Prime Minister Fumio Kishida, at a recent science forum in Kyoto, said he acknowledges a big potential for generative AI and hopes it will contribute to an even more convenient society. But he also noted the need to address concerns of disinformation and risks to privacy and copyright. Son said Japan should not repeat its past mistake of falling behind in the internet age, warning against reluctance of some companies due to fear of data leaks and other possible risks. SoftBank recently expanded on the Nasdaq listing of its chip subsidiary Arm Holding Plc, which Son acquired in 2016. Son said the British unit will be key to AI development.

X tests \$1 fee for new users in the Philippines, New Zealand

LONDON (AP) — Elon Musk’s social media platform X has begun charging a \$1 fee to new users in the Philippines and New Zealand, in a test designed to cut down on the spam and fake accounts flourishing on the site formerly known as Twitter. The company said it has started trying out the annual subscription method for new and unverified accounts. The program, dubbed Not a Bot, won’t apply to existing users. It’s not clear why it only applies to New Zealand and the Philippines or why those countries were chosen. “This new test was developed to bolster our already successful efforts to reduce spam, manipulation of our platform, and bot activity, while balancing platform accessibility with the small fee amount,” the X support account tweeted. “It is not a profit driver.” Some experts said charging a fee might not do much to stop fake accounts and could even amplify the problem. If X decides to roll out the \$1 fee worldwide, it could be “disastrous” for the platform, said Kolina Koltai, a researcher at the investigative collective Bellingcat who previously worked at Twitter. “There is nothing to stop a scammer from spending \$100 to buy a hundred new bot accounts. In fact, it may even make the platform more bot filled,” she said. “New users to the platform may not be inclined to pay \$1 and give their credit card information to X.”

Philippine military ordered to stop using AI apps

MANILA, The Philippines (AP) — The Philippine defense chief has ordered all defense personnel and the 163,000-member military to refrain from using digital applications that harness artificial intelligence (AI) to generate personal portraits, saying they could pose security risks. Defense Secretary Gilberto Teodoro Jr. issued the order in an October 14 memorandum, as Philippine forces have been working to weaken decades-old communist and Muslim insurgencies and defend territorial interests in the disputed South China Sea. About a week later, the Department of National Defense confirmed the authenticity of the memo, which had been circulating online, but did not provide other details, including what prompted Teodoro to issue the prohibition. Teodoro specifically warned against the use of a digital app that requires users to submit at least 10 pictures of themselves and then harnesses AI to create “a digital person that mimics how a real individual speaks and moves.” Such apps pose “significant privacy and security risks,” he said. “This seemingly harmless and amusing AI-powered application can be maliciously used to create fake profiles that can lead to identity theft, social engineering, phishing attacks, and other malicious activities,” Teodoro said. “There has already been a report of such a case.” Teodoro ordered all defense and military personnel “to refrain from using AI photo generator applications and practice vigilance in sharing information online” and said their actions should adhere to the Philippines Defense Department’s values and policies.

Two workers at Fukushima nuclear power plant hospitalized

TOKYO (AP) — Two workers at the tsunami-wrecked Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant were hospitalized after accidentally getting sprayed with liquid laced with radioactive materials, according to officials. The incident occurred when a group of workers was cleaning the piping at the Advanced Liquid Processing System, ALPS, a wastewater filtering facility that is key to the treatment of the radioactive wastewater that accumulates on the plant and its ongoing discharge into the sea. Four workers were cleaning the piping when a drainage hose suddenly came off. They were splashed with the tainted liquid waste, which was not the wastewater running inside the system. All four were wearing full face masks, and test results showed none of them had ingested radioactive particles. None have shown any health issues, according to plant operator Tokyo Electric Power Company Holdings (TEPCO).



TOURIST GATEWAY. Tourists wait in line to climb up Angkor Wat temple outside Siem Reap, Cambodia, in this December 31, 2017 file photo. Commercial operations have begun at Cambodia’s newest and biggest airport, designed to serve as an upgraded gateway to the country’s major tourist attraction — the centuries-old Angkor Wat temple complex in the northwestern province of Siem Reap. (AP Photo/Heng Sinith, File)

Cambodia opens new airport to serve Angkor Wat, boost tourism

By **Sopheng Cheang**
The Associated Press

PHNOM PENH, Cambodia — Commercial operations have begun at Cambodia’s newest and biggest airport, designed to serve as an upgraded gateway to the country’s major tourist attraction — the centuries-old Angkor Wat temple complex in the northwestern province of Siem Reap.

A Bangkok Airways flight from Thailand was the first to land, with 16 additional flights scheduled on the first day of operations at the Siem Reap-Angkor International Airport.

The airport, which was built at a cost of about \$1.1 billion on 1,730 acres of land about 25 miles east of Angkor Wat, boasts a 11,810-foot-long runway. Construction began in 2020 to replace the old airport, about 3.1 miles from the temple site, which is being retired in part because of fear that vibrations from frequent flights were damaging the temples’ foundations.

The new airport can handle 7 million passengers a year, with plans to augment it to

handle 12 million passengers annually from 2040. It was constructed under a 55-year build-operate-transfer (BOT) program between Cambodia and China.

According to the Ministry of Tourism, Cambodia received some 3.5 million international tourists in the first eight months of 2023, while for the whole of 2019 — the last year before the coronavirus pandemic — it received some 6.6 million foreign visitors. Tourism is considered one of the main pillars supporting Cambodia’s economy.

Deputy Prime Minister Vongsey Vissoth, who headed the ceremony marking the start of operations, said the new airport will be officially inaugurated on November 16 by Prime Minister Hun Manet and top Chinese officials.

Another Chinese-funded airport is being constructed at a cost of \$1.5 billion to serve the capital of Phnom Penh. The new Phnom Penh international airport, formally known as the Techo International Airport, is set on 6,425 acres and scheduled for completion in 2024.

Hong Kong court upholds a ruling in favor of equal inheritance rights for same-sex couples

By **Kanis Leung**
The Associated Press

HONG KONG — A Hong Kong court has upheld a ruling that favored the granting of equal inheritance rights to same-sex couples, in the latest victory for the city’s LGBTQ+ community.

The decision by the Court of Appeal rejected the government’s motion against the ruling that said the differential treatment facing same-sex married couples under two inheritance laws in the city constitutes unlawful

discrimination. Justice of Appeal Thomas Au wrote that it is “an unacceptably harsh burden” on Hong Kong same-sex couples married overseas given the denial of entitlements under the laws.

“The differential treatment based on sexual orientation is apparent,” his colleague, Justice of Appeal Peter Cheung, wrote in his judgement.

Currently, Hong Kong only recognizes same-sex marriage for certain purposes such

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Units per U.S. dollar as of 11/03	
Bangladesh Taka	110.5
Cambodian Riel	4130.2
China Renminbi	7.304
Fijian Dollar	2.2247
Hong Kong Dollar	7.8252
Indian Rupee	83.162
Indonesian Rupiah	15636
Iranian Rial	42002
Japanese Yen	149.4
Laos New Kip	20806
Malaysian Ringgit	4.726
Nepal Rupee	133.1
Pakistani Rupee	283.22
Papua N.G. Kina	3.775
Philippine Peso	56.07
Russian Ruble	92.065
Saudi Riyal	3.7508
Singapore Dollar	1.3547
South Korean Won	1307.2
Sri Lankan Rupee	328.8
Taiwan Dollar	32.145
Thai Baht	35.49
Vietnam Dong	24525