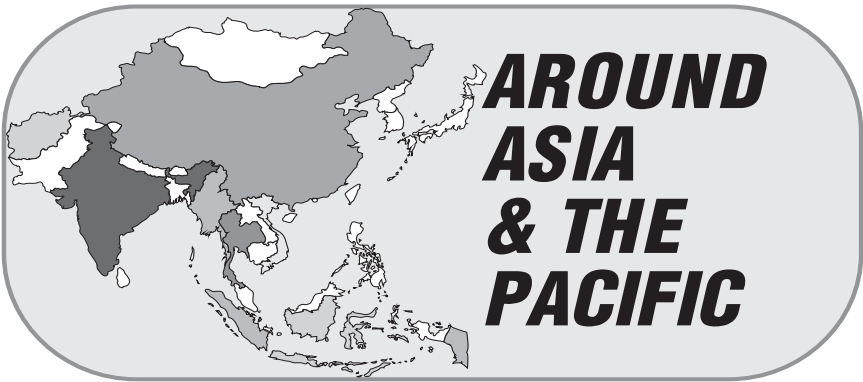




Fierce storm topples tree at Angkor temple complex

PHNOM PENH, Cambodia (AP) — One person was killed and three others injured at Cambodia’s famed centuries-old Angkor temple complex when a large tree was blown down onto their vehicle during a fierce rainstorm, according to the government. The accident occurred at the southern gate to Angkor Thom, which is near the more famous Angkor Wat temple and part of the same archaeological complex in the northwestern province of Siem Reap, about 200 miles from the capital of Phnom Penh. The site is Cambodia’s most popular tourist attraction and in the first half of this year attracted more than half a million international tourists, according to Cambodia’s Tourism Ministry. The tree fell on a tuk-tuk — a kind of motorized three-wheeled vehicle popular in South and Southeast Asia — killing the driver instantly and injuring its three passengers, one critically, according to a statement issued by the Siem Reap Provincial Administration. Several statues on the balustrade of what is called Tonle Oum Gate were also damaged by the tree, the statement said. The Apsara National Authority, the government agency that oversees the archaeological park, posted photos on its official Facebook page showing the fallen tree in front of the temple entrance. The agency later announced that the tree was removed and the entrance again accessible to visitors. The Angkor site sprawls across some 155 square miles, containing the ruins of capitals of various Cambodian empires from the 9th to the 15th centuries. Scholars consider it to be one of the most important archaeological sites in Southeast Asia.

China’s calls for cooperation with Italy, evoking “Silk Road”

BEIJING (AP) — Chinese President Xi Jinping called for further cooperation with Italy at a meeting with Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni, saying the two countries were the ends of the historical Silk Road trade route. Meloni pulled Italy out of China’s Belt and Road Initiative — whose name refers to the ancient overland trade route — in December, but last month signed an agreement that provides a new path for the countries to cooperate on trade and other issues. Meloni was on a state visit, her first trip to China as prime minister. The Belt and Road Initiative, one of Xi’s signature policies, aims to build power and transportation infrastructure around the world in order to stimulate global trade while also deepening China’s ties with other nations. “China and Italy are located at opposite ends of the ancient Silk Road,” Xi told Meloni, “and the long-standing friendly exchanges between the two countries have made important contributions to the exchange and mutual learning of Eastern and Western civilizations, as well as human development and progress ... If countries are inter-connected, they will advance; if they are closed to each other, they will retreat.”

Nepal’s new prime minister takes oath of office

KATHMANDU, Nepal (AP) — Nepal’s newly appointed prime minister has taken the oath of office at a ceremony in Kathmandu. Khadga Prasad Oli, the leader of Nepal’s largest communist party, was named prime minister following the collapse of a previous coalition government. Oli, 72, will be leading a coalition government made up of his Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist Leninist) and the Nepali Congress party, the two largest parties. This is his fourth time serving as prime minister of the Himalayan nation. Two deputy prime ministers and 19 ministers appointed by him also took the oath of office. He is expected to further expand the cabinet, including members from coalition partner parties. The last government headed by Pushpa Kamal Dahal collapsed in July after Oli’s party, which had been part of the coalition, withdrew its support to join the new partnership. Oli’s biggest challenge as prime minister will be balancing Nepal’s relationship with its giant neighbors India and China, as both seek to wield influence over the small nation. Landlocked Nepal is surrounded by India on three sides and imports all of its oil and most supplies from India. It also shares a border with China. Oli was born in a village in east Nepal and has been involved in politics since he was young.

Skyrocketing power bills draw protests in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (AP) — Protests over skyrocketing power bills shut down a major road into Pakistan’s capital as some 3,000 supporters of a major Islamist party held a sit-in despite pouring monsoon rains. In Pakistan’s southwest, meanwhile, thousands protested against police violence, an internet shutdown, and highway closures. Protesters demanding that the government withdraw taxes on electricity to offset price hikes occupied a road in the garrison city of Rawalpindi as police prevented them from heading to the capital of Islamabad. Hoisting the white, blue, and green flags of the Islamist Jamaat-e-Islami party, the protesters chanted: “This cruel increase in electricity bills is not acceptable.” The government has met with protest leaders, but given no indication that it is considering accepting their demands. The government raised power prices 26% during the last fiscal year, which ended June 30, before tacking on another 20% increase on July 13. Officials say the increases were needed to meet conditions set by the International Monetary Fund for a \$7 billion loan deal made in July. The government also added a confusing bevy of taxes on top of the base price, adding up to a bill that has more than doubled for some Pakistanis. “This month I paid 22,000 rupees (\$80) for my electricity bill, while in May I only paid 10,000 rupees (\$36),” said Asma Humayon, who teaches at a private school in the city of Lahore and says half his salary goes to the energy bill. Pakistani economist Ashfaque Hasan said another factor in costly power is a deal the government made in the 1990s to buy power from private companies at high prices. Hundreds of thousands of Pakistanis have started using solar panels in recent years to avoid heavy electricity bills and power outages, but not everyone can afford the systems.



MAN OF MANY ROLES. Japanese Kabuki actor Danjuro Ichikawa speaks during an interview in Tokyo about his latest show, Hoshiawase Jusandan. Danjuro is a virtuoso in switching roles. In his latest production, he plays 13 parts, including a beautiful princess, a sushi chef, a brave samurai, and a fox who impersonates that samurai to get close to the court dancer, Lady Shizuka. (AP Photo/Eugene Hoshiko)

On stage, one of Japan’s biggest Kabuki stars changes roles in an instant. Offstage, it took decades.

By Yuri Kageyama
The Associated Press

TOKYO — Onstage, Danjuro Ichikawa, one of the biggest stars of Japan’s Kabuki theater, is a virtuoso in switching roles. In his latest production, he plays 13 parts, including a princess, a sushi chef, and a fox. He hobbles offstage as a feeble old man, then dashes back on moments later as a fierce warrior. He gets in a few sword fights, dies tragically more than once, and takes flight on wires.

Offstage, he’s wondering if it’s time for the often rigid role of a Kabuki star to change. The 13th man to bear the name Danjuro Ichikawa — which has been passed down between generations of Kabuki stars for over 300 years — he’s a household name in Japan, showing up in ads, movies, and TV shows. Kabuki, an all-male theatrical tradition that combines music, dance, and acrobatics, remains popular, but Danjuro grants that it can be out of step with modern tastes. Audiences accustomed to TikTok videos and streaming don’t always have the patience for four-hour performances in archaic formal Japanese. Social distancing restrictions during the pandemic hit theaters hard, and audiences are still coming back. Danjuro made efforts to update Kabuki in *Hoshiawase Jusandan*, which ended at the Kabukiza Theater in Tokyo on July 24, by trimming longer scenes and modernizing some dialogue.

“Traditional culture might be hard to follow

and get tiresome, but I hope people had fun. The action moves quickly because I’m one person playing 13 roles,” Danjuro told The Associated Press. Dapper and tanned, Danjuro, 46, can be disarmingly playful for a famous artist. Amid discussions of the future of live performance, he gamely posed for photos, striking the kind of pose you’d see on the romantic lead of a manga comic book. The all-male theatrical style can be intensely conservative, preserving many of its traditions nearly unchanged from the Edo court.

Today’s Danjuro took on the name in 2022, after going through earlier names he and all the previous Danjuros have gone through: Shinnosuke, and then Ebizo. Training starts at childhood. When he was 20, about to go on stage for the first time as the monk Benkei — a role his father, grandfather, and all the Danjuros before him had made famous — the pressure was so intense he ran away and spent the night sleeping in the park. He did get back in time for the show. Today’s Danjuro inherited the name from his father, Danjuro XII, who died in 2013 at age 66 of leukemia.

The death cost him both a beloved parent and a teacher he desperately needed. At 35, he was still a novice by Kabuki standards, an artform in which beautiful maidens are often played by octogenarian masters. He had to turn to uncles and veterans from other families to learn the craft, defying criticism from peers and even family who said only a

Continued on page 8

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Fijian Dollar	2.254
Hong Kong Dollar	7.8075
Indian Rupee	83.798
Indonesian Rupiah	16019
Iranian Rial	42003
Japanese Yen	146.55
Laos New Kip	22219
Malaysian Ringgit	4.4975
Nepal Rupee	134.14
Pakistani Rupee	278.63
Papua N.G. Kina	3.928
Philippine Peso	57.941
Russian Ruble	85.543
Saudi Riyal	3.7539
Singapore Dollar	1.3267
South Korean Won	1358.4
Sri Lankan Rupee	301.76
Taiwan Dollar	32.6
Thai Baht	35.3
Vietnam Dong	25218