

The Asian Reporter

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Cambodian villagers honor guardian spirits to pray for rain and good fortune



PRAYERS FOR PROSPERITY. Boys representing ghosts participate during a ceremony to invoke rain amid the rice planting season in Pring Ka-ek village, northwest of Phnom Penh, Cambodia. Hundreds of Cambodians honored their village's guardian spirits by holding a colorful centuries-old ceremony to pray for good fortune, rain, and prosperity. The ceremony, which has become increasingly rare in modern times, coincides with the onset of the summer monsoon as farmers prepare for planting rice, a particularly water-intensive crop. Although most Cambodians are Buddhist, the ritual reflects a widespread faith in animism, the belief that spirits can inhabit all types of living and inanimate objects. See story on page 3. (AP Photo/Heng Sinith)



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Toxic runoff from rare earth mines are risking SE Asia's rivers

CHIANG SAEN, Thailand (AP) — A lone finger-length fish was a disappointing start to 75-year-old Sukjai Yana's day. He recast his net from the bow of his long-tail fishing boat, slowly drifting towards the confluence of the Mekong and Kok rivers in northern Thailand. Thailand is bearing the brunt as toxic runoff from rare earth mines in upstream Myanmar and Laos seep into the Mekong Basin, threatening millions who rely on its waters for farms and fisheries. These heavy metal toxins imperil Southeast Asia's globally important, multi-billion-dollar produce industry, the backbone of its developing economies. "The Mekong and Kok Rivers are both a source of food and income, which gives life to the people," said Sayan Khamnueng of the Living Rivers Association. "The river contaminants are the biggest transboundary issue we've ever faced." Thailand's response to the spreading problem has been limited to monitoring levels of heavy metals and educating communities about health risks. That raises concerns for Cambodia and Vietnam, downstream.

A record 274 climbers scale Mount Everest in a single day

KATHMANDU, Nepal (AP) — Hundreds of climbers scaled Mount Everest in a single day, setting a new record with 274 successful ascents, according to officials. The climbers took advantage of the clear weather on Wednesday, May 20, said Rishi Ram Bhandari of the Expedition Operators Association Nepal. It was the highest number of climbers to reach the summit on a single day from the popular route on the southern face of the peak, which is located in Nepal. The peak can be scaled from either the southern side in Nepal or northern face in Tibet. On May 22, 2019, Nepal's side had 223 and the Chinese side had 113 climbers on the summit. Chinese authorities, however, have closed the route this year. Earlier in the week, veteran mountain guide Kami Rita Sherpa scaled the peak for the 32nd time, breaking his own record. His closest competitor, Pasang Dawa Sherpa, scaled the peak for the 31st time. Also, Lakpa Sherpa scaled Everest for the 11th time, topping her own record for the highest number of climbs by a female climber. This year's Everest climbing season began late because of risk from a huge serac hanging over the key route to the summit. There were around 494 climbers and equal number of their Sherpa guides who were expected to attempt to scale the 29,032-foot peak by the end of May, when the climbing season on the peak ends. Thousands of people have climbed the peak since it was first scaled on May 29, 1953, by New Zealander Edmund Hillary and Sherpa guide Tenzing Norgay.

Japan records bigger exports, imports despite oil issues

TOKYO (AP) — Japan's exports soared 14.8% in April from the same month a year earlier, according to Finance Ministry data, showing that its trade remained robust despite worries over supplies of oil and gas due to the war in Iran. Exports were stronger than expected, rising for the eighth straight month as shipments of semiconductors surged nearly 42% by value from the previous year. Booming demand for computer chips and other infrastructure needed to power artificial intelligence has yielded a windfall for many high-tech Asian manufacturers. Imports rose 9.7% from a year earlier. The trade balance shifted to a surplus of 301.9 billion yen (\$1.9 billion) from a deficit in the same month the year before. Japan recorded a surplus of nearly 643 billion yen in March. Higher exports of medical products, paper goods, and electrical machinery also contributed to the stronger export performance in April. Exports to China rose 15.5% and exports to the U.S. rose 9.5%. Imports from China climbed 15% while those from the U.S. jumped 23%, the data show. While overall imports rose, Japan's oil imports fell nearly 50% by value from a year earlier, while imports of liquefied natural gas, or LNG, dropped 20%. Supplies have been crimped by the effective closure of the Strait of Hormuz, the main transport route for exports from the Persian Gulf, due to the war in Iran. Japan imports almost all of its oil, and Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi has sought to offset lower supplies by ordering the release of some national oil reserves. However, shortfalls have pushed prices higher and also impacted the production of oil-related products such as naphtha. The price of Brent crude, trading at \$70 a barrel before the war in Iran, has shot above \$100 and a weakening yen has made imports of oil denominated in dollars still more costly for Japan.

Teen charged over vending machine straw-licking video

KUALA LUMPUR, Malaysia (AP) — A French teen is facing mischief and public nuisance charges in Singapore after posting a video on social media of himself licking a straw from an orange juice vending machine and then putting it back. Didier Gaspard Owen Maximilien, 18, was charged in late April, according to the city-state's largest English-language newspaper, *The Straits Times*. He allegedly committed the offense at a shopping mall in March, and his video spread rapidly when it surfaced, the report said. The teen was granted court permission to travel to Manila May 2-25 for a school trip required for his graduation, *The Straits Times* said. Mischief carries a penalty of up to two years in prison or a fine, or both, while public nuisance is less severe with up to three months in prison or a fine, or both. IJooz, the company operating the juice vending machine, filed a police report, and sanitized the dispenser while replacing all 500 straws in the machine. It said it would upgrade its machines to include measures such as individually packaged straws and straw compartments that unlock only after the transaction is completed. Lawyers for the teen, who is studying in a French business school in Singapore, declined to comment on the case when contacted. Singapore, a small, densely populated city-state, tightly regulates public behavior and cleanliness. This includes restrictions like limits on chewing gum and strong penalties for littering and vandalism.



REMARKABLE RUBY. In this photo provided by the Myanmar Military True News Information Team, Myanmar's newly discovered ruby is displayed at the presidential office in Naypyitaw, Myanmar. Miners in Myanmar discovered a rare ruby of enormous size, considered to be the second-largest by weight ever found in the conflict-battered Southeast Asian nation, according to state media. (Myanmar Military True News Information Team via AP Photo)

A massive 11,000-carat ruby has been unearthed in Myanmar's war-scarred gemstone heartland

BANGKOK (AP) — Miners in Myanmar have discovered a rare ruby of enormous size, considered to be the second-largest by weight ever found in the conflict-battered Southeast Asian nation, according to state media.

The ruby, measuring 11,000 carats (2.2 kilograms, or 4.8 pounds), was unearthed near the town of Mogok, in the upper Mandalay region, the heartland of the lucrative gem-mining industry that has recently experienced intense fighting in the country's wide-ranging civil war.

According to a report from the state-run *Global New Light of Myanmar*, the newly found rough ruby was discovered in mid-April, just after the traditional New Year festival.

While it weighs roughly half the weight of a 21,450-carat (4.29 kilograms, or 9.45 pounds) stone found in 1996, the new discovery is considered more valuable due to its superior color and quality. It is described as having a purplish-red hue with yellowish undertones, a high-quality color grade, moderate transparency, and a highly reflective surface.

Myanmar produces as much as 90% of the world's rubies, primarily from the areas of Mogok and Mong Hsu. Gemstones, both legitimately traded and smuggled, are a major source of revenue for Myanmar. Human rights activists and organizations such as the Britain-based research and lobbying group Global Witness have urged jewelers to stop purchasing gems sourced from Myanmar, as the industry has served as a vital revenue stream for its military governments over several decades.

A new, ostensibly civilian government was

installed this year, but it followed elections described by human rights and opposition groups as a sham. The vote returned to power President Min Aung Hlaing, the army chief who led the most recent military takeover in 2021. He and his cabinet recently examined the giant ruby at his office in the capital, Naypyitaw.

Gemstone mining also serves as a primary source of funding for ethnic armed groups fighting for autonomy, a factor that has helped fuel decades of internal conflict.

The security of these mining regions remains volatile. Mogok was captured in July 2024 by the Ta'ang National Liberation Army, or TNLA, a guerrilla force representing the Palaung ethnic minority. Although the TNLA took over and operated the mines, control was eventually transferred back to Myanmar's army as part of a China-mediated ceasefire agreement concluded late last year.

Starbucks boss apologizes for ad that evoked massacre

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — South Korean retail tycoon Chung Yong-jin issued his second apology in two weeks as Starbucks' local operation faces a backlash over a recent marketing campaign that was widely perceived as mocking victims of a bloody military crackdown on pro-democracy protesters in 1980.

Chung, chairman of Shinsegae Group, which owns a 67.5% stake in Starbucks Korea, bowed three times during a televised statement as he pleaded for forgiveness from the

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July 6, 2026 edition:

Space reservations due: Wednesday, July 1 at 1:00pm

Artwork due: Wednesday, July 1 at 1:00pm

August 3, 2026 edition:

Space reservations due: Wednesday, July 29 at 1:00pm

Artwork due: Thursday, July 30 at 1:00pm

Asian Currency Exchange Rates

Units per U.S. dollar as of 5/29

Bangladesh Taka	122.8
Cambodian Riel	4027.6
China Renminbi	6.7685
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Hong Kong Dollar	7.8353
Indian Rupee	95.027
Indonesian Rupiah	17919
Japanese Yen	159.3
Laos New Kip	21859
Malaysian Ringgit	3.9655
Nepal Rupee	152.05
New Zealand	1.6802
Pakistani Rupee	278.42
Papua N.G. Kina	4.355
Philippine Peso	61.572
Russian Ruble	70.94
Saudi Riyal	3.75
Singapore Dollar	1.2772
South Korean Won	1505.8
Sri Lankan Rupee	329.7
Taiwan Dollar	31.388
Thai Baht	32.585
Vietnam Dong	26283

Revellers pack a Hong Kong island for a bun festival, a century-old tradition

By Chan Long Hei and Alice Fung
The Associated Press

HONG KONG — Hong Kong’s iconic bun festival drew throngs of revellers to the densely populated city’s outlying island, Cheung Chau, to celebrate a century-old tradition that is rooted in prayers for peace and blessings.

Residents and tourists braved the heat to watch children in costumes take part in a parade, called “Piu Sik,” which translates as “floating colors.” Children dressed as legendary deities, historic characters, or local politicians were carried on stands above the crowds, moving through the island’s narrow lanes.

The festival highlight is the “bun-scrambling” competition around midnight, where participants climb a tower covered with plastic buns. They have to collect buns, which carry different scores depending on their locations, within a time limit. The one who earns the highest total score wins. But the participant who gets the greatest number of buns in the time allotted received the “Full Pockets of Lucky Buns” award.

The race was suspended for decades after bun towers collapsed in 1978, injuring dozens of people. The tradition resumed in 2005.

According to Hong Kong’s Intangible Cultural Heritage Office, legends say Cheung Chau was once devastated by a plague and some residents then invited monks and Taoist priests to set up a sacrificial altar near a temple to pray to deities.

They also paraded deity statues along village lanes. After the ritual, the plague ceased and Cheung Chau residents have since been organizing the event, also known as the Cheung Chau Jiao Festival, to dispel disaster and pray for blessings for peace and safety, the office said.



BUN FESTIVAL. “Ping On” buns, top left photo, are prepared for sale for the Bun Festival in Cheung Chau Island in Hong Kong. In the other photos, children participate in the Piu Sik parade at the Bun Festival in Hong Kong. (AP Photos/Chan Long Hei)

The festival has become one of the most popular events for tourists in Hong Kong in recent years. Many people

like to buy steamed buns carrying the Chinese characters for “peace” and “safety” or souvenirs modelled on the buns.

Cambodian villagers honor guardian spirits to pray for rain and good fortune

By Sopheng Cheang
The Associated Press

PHUM BOEUNG, Cambodia — Hundreds of Cambodians honored their village’s guardian spirits by holding a colorful centuries-old ceremony to pray for good fortune, rain, and prosperity.

The “He Neak Ta” ritual has been celebrated annually for several hundred years by the villagers in Phum Boeung, about 15 miles northwest of the capital of Phnom Penh.

The ceremony, which has become increasingly rare in modern times, coincides with the onset of the summer monsoon as farmers prepare for planting rice, a particularly water-intensive crop.

Although most Cambodians are Buddhist, the ritual reflects a widespread faith in animism, the belief that spirits can inhabit all types of living and inanimate objects.

Chamrouen Ratha, a 26-year-old blacksmith, said he was taking the day off from work to join other villagers in honoring the same spirits celebrated by his ancestors.

“The significance of this ceremony is to pray for happiness and prosperity for all the villagers in this area



and the participants who have joined this ceremony,” he said.

Villagers of all ages congregate about 1.2 miles from the local monastery dedicated to their guardian spirit. Young village men paint scenes inspired by local folklore on their faces and bodies, dress as spirits, and don grass skirts. A few wear painted oversized heads atop their costumes.

Many young woman wear traditional silk clothing, with gold-colored necklaces and flowers tucked behind their ears. Some dance elegantly to the beat of handheld drums

CAMBODIAN CEREMONY. A man representing a ghost rides on a horse during a ceremony to invoke rain amid the rice planting season in Pring Ka-ek village, northwest of Phnom Penh, Cambodia. (AP Photo/Heng Sinith)

and small gongs.

The ragtag procession, including some participants travelling on motorbikes and even on horseback, slowly makes its way to the guardian spirit’s shrine.

There, villagers light incense sticks and offer various types of fruit, food, soft drinks, and alcohol while praying for good fortune, adequate rain, prosperity, and the prevention of disease within their community.

The half-day ceremony concludes with the spraying of holy water on the cheerful participants.

“I pray for enough rainfall with abundant rice production ... so that villagers would enjoy their harvest,” said one of the costumed marchers, 30-year-old driver Sim Pov.

Neak Mao, 64, who brought two horses with him, said he has attended the ceremony since he was young.

“This celebration is to ensure that the traditions of our ancestors are not lost, which they have tried to preserve and we continue to do so every year,” he said.

Roblox to require facial scans for children under age 16 in Indonesia due to new social media rules

By Edna Tarigan
The Associated Press

JAKARTA, Indonesia — Roblox, a gaming platform popular with kids, has announced that children under age 16 in Indonesia will be required to undergo facial scans to verify their age to comply with new restrictions on minors’ use of social media and digital platforms in the country.

Nicky Jackson Colaco, Roblox’s vice president and global head of public policy, announced the changes in a press conference in Jakarta, describing them among the strictest that the company has implemented anywhere in the world.

She said the company has introduced tailored, age-based accounts in Indonesia: Roblox Kids for ages 5 to 12 with no chat features and Roblox Select for ages 13 to 15, with chat features limited to parents or approved family and friends.

The rollout involves automatically transitioning the 23 million accounts that identified as belonging to users under 16 by implementing age verification through facial scanning.

“Any user in Indonesia who has not used that tool, who has no facial age estimated, will be automatically placed in a Roblox Kids account and will not have access to chat,” the Roblox executive said.

The age verification tool requires players to take a video selfie that will be used to estimate their age. Jackson Colaco said the data would be immediately deleted. “We don’t keep anything,” she said.

The number of Roblox users in Indonesia has reached approximately 45 million, with about 23 million of them being children, said Communication and Digital Affairs minister Meutya Hafid.

Roblox was the only gaming platform classified as high-risk by the Indonesian government, and its access restrictions for children differ from those of other social media platforms.

In addition to account categories and interactions based on age, the interactive gaming platform will also categorize the types of games played by age. The government regulations have prompted Roblox to limit usage time in the hope of reducing

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Everest record-holder Kami Rita Sherpa urges limit on climbers as crowds swell on the peak

By Binaj Gurubacharya
The Associated Press

KATHMANDU, Nepal — A renowned Mount Everest guide who scaled the peak a record 32nd time is urging authorities to limit climbers on the summit.

The number of climbers making the ascent on the 29,032-foot peak from the Nepalese side is higher this season because China closed the route from Tibet. Everest can be scaled from either the southern side in Nepal or the northern side in China.

On the 20th of May, 274 climbers reached the summit, the highest number on a single day from the Nepal side. A total of 494 climbers were issued permits by Nepal's mountaineering authorities and an equal number of Sherpa guides were accompanying them.

"It was very crowded this year compared to last year," Kami Rita Sherpa told reporters at Kathmandu airport after flying back from the mountain. "There is a need for authorities to control this number."

Climbers only get a few windows of good weather to make their attempt on the summit. A large number of people waiting on a fixed rope line they are all clipped into increases the risks of a traffic jam and exposes the climbers to increased hours of harsh weather.

Kami Rita's closest competitor, Pasang



PEAK PUSH. Snow covers tents, left photo, during a period of inclement weather at Everest Base Camp in Nepal on Saturday, May 9, 2026. In the right photo, mountaineers participate in a training session at Khumbu Icefall while preparing for their ascent to the summit of Mount Everest, Nepal. A renowned Mount Everest guide, Kami Rita Sherpa, who recently scaled the peak a record 32nd time, is urging authorities to limit climbers on the summit. (AP Photos/Pasang Rinzee Sherpa)



Dawa Sherpa, scaled the peak for the 31st time on Friday, May 22, which was his second successful ascent that week.

Kami Rita, 56, first climbed Everest in 1994, and has been making the trip nearly every year since. He is one of many Sherpa guides whose expertise and skills are vital to the safety and success of foreign climbers aspiring to stand on top of the mountain each year.

His father was among the first Sherpa guides. In addition to Everest, Kami Rita has climbed other peaks that are among the world's highest, including K2, Cho Oyu, Manaslu, and Lhotse.

the public."

Jeon Sangjin, a senior Shinsegae Group executive, said the company has yet to find conclusive evidence that Starbucks Korea marketing employees intended to mock the pro-democracy movement, an accusation the employees have denied.

However, he said some employees refused management requests to hand over their smartphones during a weeklong internal review. Jeon said the company would look at results from the police inquiry and any employee found to have intended to ridicule protesters would be fired.

The anger over the campaign has triggered public calls for boycotts, amplified by government officials, including Interior and Safety Minister Yoon Ho-jung, who said Starbucks products will no longer be used at government events and lamented the chain's "anti-historical behavior."

President Lee Jae Myung said on X last month that the campaign displayed "inhumane and disgraceful behavior by cheap profiteers who deny the values of the South Korean community, basic human rights, and democracy."

The crackdown in Gwangju came months after General Chun Doo-hwan seized power in a coup in late 1979. Government records show about 200 people died in Gwangju, but activists say the true death toll was much higher. Chun's government also imprisoned tens of thousands, saying it was rooting out social evils.

Public anger over Chun's dictatorship led to massive nationwide protests in 1987, forcing him to accept a constitutional revision introducing direct presidential elections, which is widely seen as the start of South Korea's transition to democracy.

banning children younger than 16 from accessing digital platforms that could expose them to addiction, pornography, online scams, and cyberbullying.

Seven of the eight platforms classified as high-risk — including YouTube, TikTok, Facebook, Instagram, Threads, X, Bigo Live — have committed to restricting

Lettuce introduce you to the live frog found in this grocery store salad bag

MELBOURNE, Australia (AP) — When Australian farmer Rhys Smoker announced he'd found a live frog in a bag of lettuce, his housemates didn't believe him.

Smoker had been preparing a steak and salad dinner for the three people who share his house in Esperance in Western Australia state when he spotted the frog among the leaves inside the sealed plastic bag he'd bought from a supermarket, housemate Laura Jones said.

"He's like, 'Oh Bro, there's a frog in the lettuce.' And we're like, 'No, you're taking the mick, like that's not real,'" Jones told The AP. Taking the mick is a slang term for attempting to fool someone.

Smoker brought the bag into the lounge room to show Jones and her partner Billy Le Pine.

"Obviously there's a little frog hiding out and, yeah, we all had a little laugh about it," Jones said.

Le Pine said they named the frog Greg before releasing it at a pond near the house.

"We thought we'd give him a wee send off tune as we played Crazy Frog for him," Le Pine told Australian Broadcasting Corp. Crazy Frog is a Swedish CGI-animated character and Eurodance musician.

Smoker and his partner Lilli Ashby had bought the lettuce at a Woolworths supermarket in Esperance the same day Greg was discovered.

Five years ago, a shopper confronted a 10-foot-long nonvenomous diamond py-



SALAD STOWAWAY. In this photo taken from video provided by Laura Jones, Billy Le Pine, Rhys Smoker, and Lilli Ashby, a frog sits inside a salad bag in Esperance, Australia. After his housemates did not believe there was a live frog in a bag of lettuce, Smoker brought the bag into the lounge room to show them. (Photo/Laura Jones, Billy Le Pine, Rhys Smoker, and Lilli Ashby via AP)

thon on a shelf of a Woolworths supermarket in Sydney. Also in 2021, a shopper discovered a venomous pale-headed snake wrapped in plastic with lettuce in an ALDI Sydney supermarket.

Woolworths said the frog in the salad was an isolated incident and there had been no other similar cases reported. "Our teams are investigating this with our suppliers as a priority," a Woolworths statement said.

Woolworths apologized to the household and provided a replacement bag of lettuce.

Rescuers save 5 of 7 people trapped in a flooded cave in Laos

By Jintamas Saksornchai
The Associated Press

BANGKOK — Rescue workers in Laos on Saturday night said they had safely evacuated four villagers trapped in a flooded cave for 10 days, the day after another one was successfully extracted. Two men remain missing.

Lao and Thai rescue groups posted about the successful operation on social media, along with photos of the men lying on stretchers and wearing oxygen masks while being wrapped in foil blankets.

The villagers had reportedly entered the cave last month to look for valuable minerals before being trapped by flash

children's access to their services.

In addition to restricting access based on age, Indonesia is urging social media companies and digital platforms to report the number of accounts that have been suspended as part of the implementation of government regulations restricting access for children.

flooding that blocked their way out. One other villager escaped in time and alerted the authorities to the seven left behind.

Lao organization Rescue Volunteer for People said on its Facebook page that the water level inside the cave receded low enough for them to leave with divers who had gone in to deliver food and water. They said they will continue their search for the two who remain missing.

A video posted online by a Thai rescuer at the scene, Chakkit Taengtang, showed the men being assisted one by one out of the cave's entrance, bodies covered in mud. After they got out, some collapsed on the ground and were hugged by a group of rescuers who cried in joy.

The first of the trapped group was safely evacuated on Friday, May 29. According to rescuers, that operation took about 30 minutes. Videos showed the moment he emerged from the water alongside a diver, catching his breath before struggling to crawl through a narrow, flooded passage

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Starbucks boss apologizes for ad that evoked massacre

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families of democracy activists killed by the country's former military dictatorship and from the broader public.

The coffee chain sparked public outrage when it attempted to promote a large size tumbler it calls a "tank" by declaring May 18 to be "Tank Day."

That's the anniversary of a democratic uprising in the southern city of Gwangju that was brutally suppressed by troops, tanks, and helicopters, killing or injuring hundreds.

The campaign compounded outrage by using the slogan "Thwack it on the table!," which many read as a reference to a notorious 1987 police statement that attempted to cover up the torture death of student activist Park Jong-chol.

Police claimed that Park died suddenly after investigators "hit the desk with a thwack."

The promotion was met with immediate outrage and within hours Shinsegae cancelled it and fired the chief executive of Starbucks Korea. Police also opened an investigation based on complaints by families of people killed at Gwangju.

"I take it very seriously the fact that many people felt deep pain and anger because of Starbucks Korea's inappropriate marketing campaign," Chung said.

He also asked people not to take out their frustration on staff at Starbucks shops, saying the responsibility lies with management. There were no immediate reports of major incidents at stores.

Chung issued his first apology on May 19, saying in a statement that the campaign caused "deep pain to the victims and bereaved families of the May 18 Democratization Movement as well as to

Roblox to require facial scans for children under age 16 in Indonesia due to new social media

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children's addiction to the platform.

"To address concerns about addiction, screen time limits are now in place. Parents can set specific times or hours for their children to play games," Hafid said.

Indonesia began implementing a new government regulation at the end of March

Camera shows Sumatra orangutan using a canopy bridge to cross a road in Indonesia

By **Niniek Karmini and Fadlan Syam**
The Associated Press

JAKARTA, Indonesia — A Sumatran orangutan has been filmed for the first time using a human-made canopy bridge to cross a public road on the Indonesian island of Sumatra, according to conservationists.

Rapid development has been shrinking the jungle habitat of the critically endangered species, and fatal conflicts with people have been increasing.

The fleeting scene, captured by a motion-sensitive camera, showed a young Sumatran orangutan pause at the forest's edge, grip a rope with deliberate care, and step out into open air. Halfway across, it stopped, casting a glance down at the road below. Moments later, it crossed.

Conservationists said that it marks the first documented case of an Sumatra orangutan using an artificial canopy bridge to cross a public road that had divided its habitat.

"This was the moment we had been waiting for," Erwin Alamsyah Siregar, executive director of Indonesian conservation group Tangguh Hutan Khatulistiwa, or TaHuKah, told The Associated Press. "We are very grateful that the canopy here provides benefits for orangutan conservation efforts."

He said that the bridge spans the Lagan-Pagindar road in Pakpak Bharat district, a vital corridor connecting remote villages to schools, healthcare, and government services. But the road also cuts directly through prime orangutan habitat, splitting an estimated 350 orangutans into two isolated forest areas: the Siranggas Wildlife Reserve and the Sikulaping Protection Forest.

When the road was upgraded in 2024, the gap in the forest canopy widened, eliminating natural crossings for tree-dwelling wildlife.

"Development was necessary for people," Siregar said. "But without intervention, it would have left orangutans trapped on either side."

TaHuKah, working with the Sumatran Orangutan Society, or SOS, and local and national government agencies, proposed a simple



SAFE SWINGING. Orangutans in North Sumatra's Gunung Leuser National Park, top photo, are seen near Bukit Lawang, Indonesia in this February 20, 2023 file photo. In the undated photo on the right provided by Sumatran Orangutan Society/TaHuKah, a Sumatran orangutan crosses a canopy bridge that stretches over a road in Pakpak Bharat, North Sumatra, Indonesia.



solution: rope bridges suspended between trees, allowing arboreal animals to cross above traffic.

Five canopy bridges were installed each with a camera trap, carefully positioned after surveys of orangutan nests, forest cover, and animal movement. The structures were designed to support the orangutan's weight — no small feat for the world's largest tree-dwelling mammal.

The program is closely monitored, with camera traps on every bridge and regular patrols to prevent forest encroachment. Conservationists hope more orangutans will follow the first pioneer.

They waited two years for the first orangutan to cross the bridge. Before the accomplishment, only smaller animals used it. Camera traps recorded squirrels, langur monkeys, and macaques, followed by gibbons — a promising sign.

The orangutan's approach was slower, building nests near the bridge, lingering at its edges and testing the ropes over time.

"They observe," Siregar said. "They don't rush. They watch, they try, they retreat. Only when they're certain it's safe do they move."

Then, one day, he crossed fully — a first not just for Sumatra, but for the

species globally on a public road, conservationists say.

Similar bridges have been used by orangutans elsewhere, but usually over rivers or on private industrial forest road. Conservationists say public roads — noisy, busy, and unpredictable — pose a far greater challenge.

For orangutans, the stakes are high. Isolation leads to inbreeding, genetic weakening, and eventual population collapse. Restoring connectivity gives them a chance to survive.

Once widespread across southern Asia, the animal now only survives on the islands of Sumatra and Borneo. Fewer than 14,000 Sumatran orangutans remain in the wild, alongside just 800 Tapanuli orangutans and about 104,700 Bornean orangutans, according to conservation groups

"These bridges allow orangutans to move, to mix, to maintain healthy populations," Siregar said. "It reduces the risk of extinction."

Some Japanese snack packages are turning black-and-white as Iran war depletes ink supply

By **Yuri Kageyama**
AP Business Writer

TOKYO — The packaging on some snacks in Japan is turning a somber black-and-white, as the war in Iran disrupts the supply of an ingredient used in colored ink.

Tokyo-based Calbee Inc., which makes potato chips and cereal, said what's inside remains the same. Calbee's popular snacks are available in Japan's ubiquitous convenience stores and shipped to the United States, China, and Australia.

"This measure is intended to help maintain a stable supply of products," it said in a statement.

The change on 14 products in its lineup started May 25, limiting ink colors to just two, the company said, noting it was necessary to respond flexibly to changing geopolitical conditions.

How long the change might last remains unclear, according to Calbee, founded in 1949. The Calbee group employs more than 5,000 people.

The move is the latest as companies grapple with spiking prices and shortages of oil and other products caused by the war in the Middle East and the closure of the Strait of Hormuz.

Japan, which relies almost entirely on imports for its oil, has so far ridden out the worries relatively calmly, as



DISAPPEARING INK. Potato chip packages by Calbee Inc. are seen at a convenience store in Tokyo. The packaging on some snacks in Japan is turning a somber black-and-white, as the war in Iran disrupts the supply of an ingredient used in colored ink. (AP Photo/Eugene Hoshiko)

the government has worked to allay such fears by noting the nation's oil reserves.

But it's still facing a squeeze on naphtha, an oil-derived product that's used in items like plastics and ink.

There's no mistaking the stark change in the chip's packaging.

Calbee's lightly salted chips, known as "usu shio," originally came in a bright-orange bag with an image of yellow chips and a potato-man mascot wearing a hat.

Continued on page 17

Emi Jean Sakamoto Sanderson



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MY TURN

■ **Dmae Lo Roberts**



Music memories

I was sitting in my dentist's chair getting a digital scan for my new crown the other day. I have spent a lot of days in the dentist's office the last couple years. Bad teeth equal implants, unfortunately. Instead of popping a denture-like cast filled with plaster to make a mold of your teeth, it's become more boring. They now scan your teeth by moving a plastic marker-size tube inside your mouth.

As usual, the Muzak (or more likely Pandora or Spotify) was set to a playlist of nostalgic tunes. This time it was '80s New Wave. That's really some of my favorite music because it's the era of my coming of age. There was also the launch of MTV and wild music videos that for the first time gave us images of musicians playing and dancing to their own music or the music being interpreted by young indie filmmakers with surreal plots and costumes.

The song playing through the ceiling speakers of the dental office was "Sultans of Swing" by Dire Straits. While lying there having my mouth scanned, I was transported back to 1980 when I was on the Magic Bus (it really wasn't) — a Greyhound-sized bus filled with young backpackers like me.

We were taking a three-day trip with minimal stops from London to Athens, Greece, via two ferry trips across the English Channel and another ferry from Brindisi in Italy to Corfu in Greece then to Athens, the birthplace of ancient democracy and lots of ruins like the Parthenon on the Acropolis. I was travelling on \$20 a day with my *Hitch-hikers Guide to Europe* book. Yes, that's right ... \$20 a day.

Nobody on the bus knew each other. We only stopped for meals and bathroom breaks, and to get on and off ferries. One night, when we were crossing the Alps, "Sultans of Swing" was playing on the crappy speakers. I couldn't sleep (those mountains were colossal!), but I liked the song, so I called out in a timid voice to anyone who was awake, "What's this music?"

A male voice answered back, annoyed, like it was a stupid question. "It's Dire Straits, love," he called back in a Cockney dialect. He was right to be pondering why this Yank had never heard of this band. The song was released in 1978 after all. But way back then, it took a year or two for music from Europe to make its way to America. Record

companies actually shipped albums by boat to get radio station airplay. No internet back then; nothing was instant.

I broke out of my reverie and told the dental assistant about the song and the memories it brought back. She was very polite in the way you know people are, just humoring you, with no real connection to your story in their eyes.

I know that look. I see that look more and more the older I get. It's similar to the look I had as a kid when my Depression-era grandparents talked about having one pair of shoes all year and walking in the snow barefoot or making clothes from potato sacks.

I'm sure my eyes also glossed over when I looked at my Oklahoman grandparents — one of whom also talked about crossing the Ozarks in a wagon when they were children. Just like this dental assistant or anyone her age does when I talk about the 1980s — or worse, the 1970s!

Moments like these make me question if I should talk to younger people about past experiences, of which there are so many. We are a complex hard drive of lived experiences that sometimes feel like they go on forever. I have memories starting back as far as when I was two years old. One hopes people would be interested in them. Sometimes they are. But it feels like quite often, they are not.

As the dental assistant re-inserted the tube device to continue the scan, I pondered these things. What else is there to do while at the dentist confined to a chair with Muzak playing? Then the song changed to "Hungry Like the Wolf," another '80s song. But this one wasn't a happy memory.

I became aware of this Duran Duran song when I lived in Eugene during the trial of Diane Downs. I thought of telling the dental assistant that this was Diane Downs' favorite song and she tapped her feet to it during her trial for murdering her ... I stopped myself. I decided not to go there; I figured it would not go over well if I said anything.

Instead, I listened to more '80s music and delved into so many memories. I silently hoped for something more cheery to come on, though, like a song by Cyndi Lauper or The Go-Go's.

Sometimes you don't have to share *all* your memories.

Opinions expressed in this newspaper are those of the authors and not necessarily those of this publication.

An online version of this issue is available at www.asianreporter.com.

Judge refuses to block Trump order to limit mail voting. There's no immediate effect on the midterms.

By Nicholas Riccardi
The Associated Press

A federal judge has declined to halt President Donald Trump's executive order creating a federal voter list and limiting mail voting, clearing the way for potential sweeping changes in how American elections are run shortly before this year's midterm elections.

U.S. District Judge Carl Nichols, a Trump appointee in Washington, has rejected the request by Democrats and civil rights groups that had argued Trump's order would likely be found unconstitutional because the states and congress, not the president, have the power to set election rules. Nichols agreed with the Republican Trump administration's contention that it was too early to block the order because it has yet to be implemented.

Nichols' ruling leaves the door open for further challenges when the Trump administration moves to implement the president's directive. A separate lawsuit seeking to block the executive order is underway in Boston. No matter how rapidly the administration acts, no voting changes are expected during primary elections, which continue this month.

"The Court recognizes that the Postal Service may ultimately issue a final rule that directly affects Plaintiffs or their members, or that the government may develop State Citizenship Lists that omit specific individuals due to particularized flaws," Nichols wrote. "Plaintiffs may, of course, renew their motions if and when those future actions occur. Until then, however, Plaintiffs cannot show that preliminary injunctive relief is warranted."

The Trump administration has yet to formally issue



lists of eligible voters, and those who filed the initial request for a temporary halt said they'd be back if the administration moves in that direction.

"We are ready to resume the fight if and when the administration takes those next steps," said Juan Proaño, chief executive officer of the League of United Latin American Citizens, one of the organizations that sought the stay from Nichols.

Trump issued the order in March after a bill he

SECOND EXECUTIVE ORDER. An Official Ballot Drop Box is seen at the Matt Dishman Community Center in north Portland. Since his 2020 presidential election loss to Democrat Joe Biden, Trump has groundlessly claimed mail voting is rife with fraud and has launched a federal investigation into that year's vote, even though repeated audits and investigations, including ones run by Republicans, found it was free of widespread fraud. Voters in Oregon have had the ability to vote by mail since 1987. (AP Photo)

supported to overhaul voting stalled in congress. The order would have had the federal government create a list of eligible voters and then direct the U.S. Postal Service to deliver mail ballots only to those on the list. Election officials argued it was ripe for abuse and could cause chaos, and the postal union has objected to the idea of mail carriers policing ballots.

Since his 2020 presidential election loss to Democrat Joe Biden, Trump has groundlessly claimed mail voting is rife with fraud and has launched a federal investigation into that year's vote, even though repeated audits and investigations, including ones run by Republicans, found it was free of widespread fraud. Trump also has said he wants to "take over" election administration in Democratic areas.

Democrats and civil rights groups argued it was urgent that Nichols issue a restraining order in the midst of the primary season and with states already gearing up for the fall midterm elections.

This was Trump's second executive order seeking to overhaul elections and voting. His initial election executive order, issued just months after he took office in his second term, has been blocked by multiple federal judges. That order sought to require documentary proof of citizenship to register to vote, among other changes.

Stop AAPI Hate launches a nonprofit to mobilize voters before midterms

By Terry Tang
The Associated Press

Stop AAPI Hate, the organization that rose to national prominence for its meticulous reports on anti-Asian hate at the height of the pandemic, is channeling its resources into an initiative to rock the vote.

The new nonprofit, Stop AAPI Hate Action, will be a political and advocacy arm dedicated to getting more Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders registered to vote — and to mobilize current voters, ensuring they make it to the polls. The initiative was sparked in part by President Donald Trump's pressure — and moves by Republican lawmakers — to redraw voting maps and strip parts of the Voting Rights Act.

The organization has announced that this initiative will build on Stop AAPI Hate's name recognition and reputation for elevating conversations about racism, discrimination, and allyship. It's a major step for the group, which has also done policy work and advocacy over the past six years, Manjusha Kulkarni, the organization's co-founder, exclusively told The Associated Press.

"Those pieces — alongside what we're seeing from our community in terms of data — really motivated and inspired us to make this move," Kulkarni said. "Because we see how our communities are being harmed and exactly what needs to be done to address the harm, and prevent it in the future."

Stop AAPI Hate Action will be established as a social welfare organization that can get involved in political campaigns.

Trump's immigration policies fuel more anti-Asian racism since COVID-19

A majority of Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders believe President Donald Trump has done more harm than good on immigration and border security in his second term, according to an AAPI Data/AP-NORC poll.

Stop AAPI Hate's annual report — released in May, AAPI Heritage Month — found roughly half of AAPI adults said they or someone they personally know were negatively impacted by immigration policies or anti-immigrant attitudes in 2025. Last year, Trump signed an order restricting H-1B visa holders — thousands of whom come from Asian countries — and added a \$100,000 annual fee for highly skilled foreign workers.

Plus, Chinese nationals face a plethora of anti-China laws in various states.

Navia Gutta, 28, was rattled by an encounter last summer at a Chipotle restaurant in Atlanta, where a woman approached her and a friend, calling the two — who are Indian American — "murderers" and "rapists." It escalated and she threatened to call U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement to deport them "back" to India, which the woman called a "dirty country." Both of them

were born in the U.S.

"Our hands were shaking and we full-on cried in the car," Gutta said. "It made me realize that I grew up still very privileged, and I felt like I lived in a bubble up until then, because nothing like that had ever happened to me."

She later shared the experience with Stop AAPI Hate, and after talking at great length with a staff member was emboldened to volunteer with the group.

"It made me realize I would love to be a part of this solution," Gutta said. "I would love to educate people. I would look at these issues and continue educating myself further because I think politics can be really scary."

Reaching AAPI voters in red states, too

Stop AAPI Hate Action is ready to dive head first into the November midterms. That does not mean blindly advocating for all Democratic candidates, Kulkarni said. The group's main goal is to support candidates who share core values on immigration policies and civil rights.

"It is really, at its core, about harnessing the pain felt at an individual level and turning it into a collective power," Kulkarni said. "This really has been an existential threat to our community."

The nonprofit is also not trying to compete or duplicate other AAPI-focused civic engagement organizations. The group is looking beyond blue states and swing states. A

primary goal is to flip red districts with a significant presence of Asian American voters and turn them blue. There are areas in Republican-run states "that deserve to be reached out to," said Andy Wong, Stop AAPI Hate Action managing director of advocacy.

"The ones in Iowa and Nebraska and Alaska and other places where there are competitive purple districts — many of them with GOP incumbents," Wong said. "We are going to reach voters in those places," by enlisting phone bank volunteers who speak Korean, Vietnamese, Cantonese, and Mandarin.

That effort starts in July, and they plan to focus on reaching people who only turn out to vote in big general elections. To help build rapport, they also plan to match volunteers with voters of the same ethnicity.

Building longevity as a voting bloc

This new political entity is not a one-and-done operation, Stop AAPI Hate staffers say. The Asian American and Pacific Islander community is one of the fastest growing populations in the U.S., which means with each election year, there's potential for new voters.

But the political parties have overlooked this fact, and failed to invest in voter outreach and other civic engagement, Kulkarni said. "We've really been an after-

Continued on page 13

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Postal Service union launches ad campaign promoting mail voting as Trump assails the method

By Susan Haigh
The Associated Press

A major U.S. Postal Service (USPS) union launched a national TV ad campaign in April promoting voting by mail, stepping into a politically charged debate as skepticism about mail-in ballots has been raised by President Donald Trump and others.

The 30-second message features a variety of voters, among them a busy farmer and a flight attendant, explaining why they cast their ballots by mail. Sponsored by the 200,000-member American Postal Workers Union, the advertising campaign first began airing in Ohio, where Union Army soldiers during the Civil War cast the first mail ballots in 1864 before moving to other states.

The ad ends with the message: "Vote by mail — keep it, protect it, expand it." It comes two weeks after Trump signed an executive order seeking to create a nationwide list of verified eligible voters and subsequently bar postal workers from sending absentee ballots to those who are not on each state's approved list.

The order was met swiftly with lawsuits and opposition from postal workers. The National Rural Letter Carriers' Association said USPS is "not equipped or authorized to decide who is or is not entitled to vote" and pushing it into such a role "risks politicizing one of the nation's most trusted public institutions." The union also said it threatens confidence in the mail and in elections.



Jonathan Smith, president of American Postal Workers, said his union's TV ad was produced before Trump's executive order was issued, not in response to it. An executive order on elections that Trump signed last year also targeted mail ballots by seeking to require they be returned by Election Day, even though more than a dozen states allow a grace period.

Smith said the union wants to encourage people to continue voting by mail. But he expressed concern about the potential ramifications of requiring postal workers to determine who should receive an absentee ballot and who should not.

"It is our position that it is not the job of the postal workers to verify voter eligibility," he said. "It is our job to move mail from one destination to the next. He

added: "We do not want to be politicized."

Trump's latest election executive order is already facing lawsuits by various groups, including Democrats in Washington who argue that the Constitution empowers states and congress, not the president, to set election rules.

Trump, who as recently as last month voted by mail, has publicly bashed mail voting. Mail voting has existed for more than a century and had steadily been increasing in popularity in both Democratic- and Republican-led states until 2020, when Trump started to target the method, levying baseless claims of mass fraud. It has now become less popular among Republicans.

A report by the Brookings Institution

SAFE & EFFICIENT. A tray of mail-in ballots is seen at King County Elections headquarters on Election Day in Renton, Washington, in this November 5, 2024 file photo. A major U.S. Postal Service union launched a national TV ad campaign in April promoting voting by mail, stepping into a politically charged debate as skepticism about mail-in ballots has been raised by President Donald Trump and others. The union's TV ad campaign, which is intended as a direct message to voters, says, "Our message is to America: Vote by mail is efficient, it's safe, and it's successful. Period." (AP Photo/Lindsey Wasson, File)

published in 2025 found that cases of mail voting fraud occurred in only a tiny fraction of total mail ballots cast — about four cases out of every 10 million mail ballots.

A White House spokeswoman, Abigail Jackson, responded to the ad campaign by saying Trump "will do everything in his power to defend the safety and security of American elections and to ensure that only American citizens are voting in them."

Voting by noncitizens also is rare and, when caught, is punishable as a potential felony and with the possibility of deportation.

The Postal Service did not return a request for comment.

The union's TV ad campaign is intended to be a direct message to voters, not the president, Smith said.

"Our message is to America: Vote by mail is efficient, it's safe, and it's successful. Period," he said. "This is educating the American people that you can use vote by mail and you can be guaranteed that your voice will be heard and your vote will be counted."

Bessent confirms limited steps toward a \$250 bill featuring Donald Trump

By Bill Barrow
The Associated Press

Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent said that his department has prepared the design for a \$250 bill featuring President Donald Trump, anticipating the passage of stalled legislation in congress to put the president on a new denomination of legal tender.

Bessent said at the White House that authorizing the new currency will be up to lawmakers on Capitol Hill, but that "we've created the bill" because "we have to be prepared."

The secretary downplayed the idea that the administration is pushing the matter, despite Trump's penchant

for infusing his name and likeness across the nation's capital and into the observances of the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence. Yet he also insisted there is nothing inappropriate about Trump's visage being part of the seminal national celebration.

"The president doesn't do it; the House and the Senate have to do it," Bessent said at the White House, referring to legislation introduced by representative Joe Wilson (R-S.C.) that would direct the Treasury Department's Bureau of Engraving and Printing to put Trump's face on the new bill to mark the 250th anniversary of the nation's founding.

A Treasury Department spokeswoman said the agency has carried out "appropriate planning and due diligence" to implement a potential congressional mandate "to produce a \$250 commemorative note which will appropriately recognize the 250th anniversary of our great nation." The spokeswoman did not mention Trump.

If passed and signed into law by Trump, Wilson's bill would mark an extraordinary recognition for a sitting U.S. leader and comes as Trump has sought to place himself at the center of this year's seminal Independence Day commemorations. The department's preparation for the languishing legislation suggests some enthusiasm for the idea on the part of the Trump administration.

Trump ally pushed to expedite the new currency

The agency's explanation follows a *Washington Post* report stating that U.S. Treasurer Brandon Beach, a Trump appointee, has been pushing the Bureau of Engraving and Printing (BEP) to expedite the process for a new currency note. The paper also reported that the former BEP chief, Patricia Solimene, was reassigned after pushing back.

The Treasury spokesperson declined to comment on Solimene's current status but confirmed that Michael Brown, a top Beach aide, became acting director of engraving and printing on May 18.

Wilson's legislation, which so far has languished in congress, is intended to create an exception to existing law that bars any living person from appearing on U.S. currency; the bill would allow current and former presidents to be featured.

Bessent confirmed the measure is designed for one person. "Donald J. Trump," he said emphatically, repeating the full name that the president himself often uses in the third person.

According to *The Washington Post* report, Beach last fall provided the Bureau of Engraving and Printing with the design for the new bill. It featured Trump's portrait — the same one that adorns banners hanging on some

federal buildings in Washington — and a 250th anniversary logo. Trump's signature also was included, a design element that would differ from other paper money.

British artist Iain Alexander told the *Post* he designed the bill and said he'd discussed it with the president. Alexander did not respond to an AP request for comment.

The newspaper also reported that Solimene resisted pressure from Beach and Brown and stressed to them the lengthy legal and procedural process required to issue new currency. Solimene was reassigned against her will, the *Post* reported, paving the way for Brown to oversee the bureau.

Trump has aggressively spread his name and likeness

A new currency note would be the latest example of Trump expanding his personal brand in his official capacity since returning to the White House in 2025.

Beach and Bessent already streamlined approval of a commemorative 250th anniversary coin featuring Trump. The Treasury Department has asserted that those special coins fall outside the prohibition on living presidents appearing on money. In 1926, the nation's 150th anniversary, then-President Calvin Coolidge appeared on a commemorative half-dollar coin that was official legal tender.

The Trump administration has had banners featuring his portrait hung on the Department of Justice and other federal buildings. And his slate of appointees to the Kennedy Center governing board added his name to the national performing arts facility that congress originally designated as a memorial to assassinated President John F. Kennedy. That renaming was challenged in court.

A federal judge ruled in late May that President Donald Trump's name was illegally added to the Kennedy Center and blocked the administration from closing the cultural and arts venue for major renovations. U.S. District Judge Christopher Cooper in Washington, D.C., also concluded that the board "overstepped its statutory bounds" by unilaterally adding Trump's name to the center. Congress gave the Kennedy Center its name, and only Congress can change it, he said. The judge ordered the defendants to remove Trump's name from the institution's façade and any "official materials," such as digital or physical signs, within two weeks.

Bessent noted that unless Wilson's exception passes, current law sets just two conditions for him to consider on currency: that "In God We Trust" in some place and that only deceased individuals be depicted, with their names described below their portraits.

"It's all up to Capitol Hill," Bessent said. "We will stick to the law."

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7				4	5			
	6	3						5
		4			3	8	2	
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		5				6		
6			3		7	5		
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8						2	6	
			5	1				7

Difficulty level: Easy #74563

Instructions: Fill in the grid so that the digits 1 through 9 appear one time each in every row, column, and 3x3 box.

Solution to last issue's puzzle

Puzzle #18692 (Hard)

All solutions available at <www.sudoku.com>.

7	3	1	4	2	6	8	5	9
6	8	5	7	9	3	4	1	2
4	2	9	8	5	1	7	6	3
2	9	7	3	1	4	5	8	6
8	6	3	9	7	5	2	4	1
1	5	4	2	6	8	3	9	7
9	4	6	5	3	7	1	2	8
3	1	8	6	4	2	9	7	5
5	7	2	1	8	9	6	3	4

The balikbayan box: The way Filipino Americans have sent love all the way back home

By Terry Tang
The Associated Press

PHOENIX — Beginning in the 1970s, just about every Filipino household in America was either hauling balikbayan boxes in person or mailing them to relatives back in the Philippines.

These care packages that held goodies from the U.S. were seen as an expression of support during hard economic times — as well as one of pure love.

“Balik” and “bayan,” Tagalog for “return” and “homeland,” respectively, was what President Ferdinand Marcos Sr. called the tourism initiatives he established in 1973. After declaring martial law a year earlier, he wanted to compel Filipino immigrants to come back and visit and further “legitimize his new dictatorial regime,” says Adrian De Leon, an assistant professor of history at New York University and author of *Balikbayan: A Revenant History of the Filipino Homeland*.

The balikbayan program proved “incredibly profitable” for the government as middle-class Filipino Americans came and spent capital.

“The dollar stretches way more,” De Leon says. “Bulk buying becomes a way through which overseas Filipinos are incentivized to maintain an economic connection to their homeland so that the government can take cuts from it and use it for like everything.”

The practice of shipping balikbayan boxes grew from there. Initially, canned meat like Spam was a staple of these boxes. Over time, small luxuries like skin-care products, clothes, and candy became



FILLED WITH LOVE. Sergio Alcubilla stands with a balikbayan box he packed in Honolulu, Hawai'i. Beginning in the 1970s, just about every Filipino household in America was either hauling balikbayan boxes in person or mailing them to relatives back in the Philippines. These care packages that held goodies from the U.S. were seen as an expression of support during hard economic times — as well as one of pure love. (AP Photo/Jennifer Sinco Kelleher)

Filipinos at home.”

Sending balikbayan boxes has thrived as its own industry. There are a handful of shipping companies in the U.S. that market door-to-door delivery to the Philippines. Filipino immigrants visiting the country get quicker entry at Manila's Ninoy Aquino International Airport through a designated “balikbayan lane.”

Jamming as many gifts as possible into a balikbayan box remains culturally ingrained in the Filipino diaspora. Filipino American comedian Rex Navarrete has typically made it a stand-up bit, advising: “One thing you should never pack in a balikbayan box is air.”

This story is part of a recurring series, “American Objects,” marking the 250th anniversary of the United States.

sought after, too. Then American entertainment like music cassettes and movies on Betamax were tossed in.

“What might have been letters being

Separate and unequal: The “Whites Only” sign was a visible reminder of American racism

By Aaron Morrison
The Associated Press

“No dogs, no Negros, no Mexicans.” “Colored served in rear.” “For whites only.”

It's the type of signage that hung from the doors and windows of establishments across much of the American South for many years.

The words, like screaming headlines from Page One of a broadsheet newspaper, were the most visible, daily reminder of

sent back home, now with the balikbayan box, you're sending back American pop culture,” De Leon says. “Filipinos are doing the work of American soft power for

the subordinate status of Black people who lived life alongside and yet separate from people who, regardless of class, were considered white.

After the Civil War, and upon the collapse of Reconstruction, the Jim Crow system of public etiquette and laws regulated the free movement of both Black and white people for generations until the Civil Rights Movement began chipping away at legalized racial discrimination.

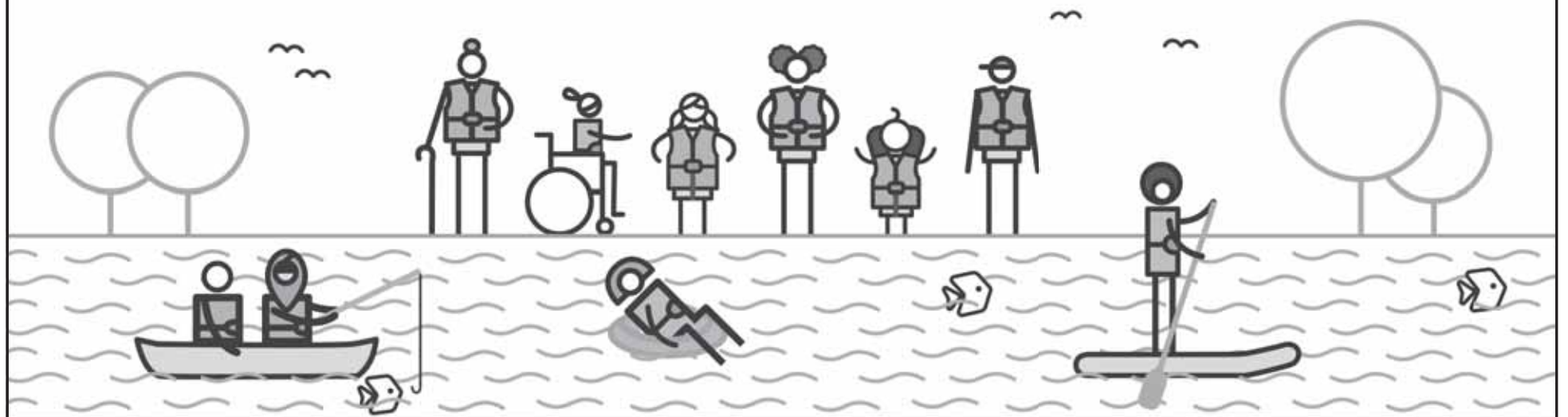
The Jim Crow system was undergirded by beliefs that formerly enslaved Black people and their descendants were inferior to white people in fundamental ways, including intelligence, morality, and behavior. Allowing white and Black people to coexist as equals, the system's supporters believed, might encourage interracial sexual relations and spur the rise of an abominable race that would destroy the

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“Out of many, one,” says a U.S. national motto. What does that push for unity mean today?

By **Deepti Hajela**
The Associated Press

NEW YORK — The aspirations cut a wide swath through American history since 1776 — from the “All men are created equal” of the Declaration of Independence and the “We the people” of the Constitution, to the “indivisible, with liberty and justice for all” of the Pledge of Allegiance.

One can find it in the country’s name — the UNITED States of America — and in the sentiment of the motto written in Latin on its coins and one-dollar bills: E Pluribus Unum, or “out of many, one.”

The effort has been optimistic and unrealistic, successful and a failure, enduring as an American ideal during moments when citizens struggled — and struggle today — to practice it.

How has the notion of unity in American society evolved in 250 years and more? What does it mean — and what doesn’t it mean, particularly in fraught and troubled moments? “It’s a question,” says one scholar, “that every society has to answer.”

I. The beginnings of these “United” States

From the milestone moment of the nation’s beginning, the founders emphasized that unity would be a vital component of the new country, where government would be based not on a king and monarchy as in Europe but instead, as the Declaration says, “on the consent of the governed.”

“It is of infinite moment that you should properly estimate the immense value of your national union to your collective and individual happiness; that you should cherish a cordial, habitual, and immovable



attachment to it ... indignantly frowning upon the first dawning of every attempt to alienate any portion of our country from the rest,” George Washington said as he stepped down from two terms as the first American president.

At the start of the experiment, the fabric of a nation first stitched together from 13 original colonies, defining what unity meant was far from settled.

Even as the founders spoke of high-minded ideals, they put limits on who they allowed to take part, who had rights and freedom and who didn’t. All these years later, determining the meaning of unity can still be a challenge. Do we interpret that Latin motto to mean a blending of different perspectives to create a country that is greater than the sum of its parts, or does it mean there can only be one, that unity requires sameness?

Either way, here’s the thing about aspirations, as anyone who’s ever quit on a

New Year’s resolution can tell you: They don’t turn into reality without effort and commitment, or come out of just a sole moment, no matter how singular.

Our individual lives are built not just from the milestones but from the everyday in between. How could the life of a nation be any different?

II. Aspiration vs. reality

Even as unity has stood among the ideals, the on-the-ground experience of life in America for the last 2½ centuries has reflected the reality that in this created nation, there’s never been just ONE America, where everyone lived in the same way or had the same access to power and prosperity.

It wasn’t there at the country’s inception. And in the moment the U.S. is living now, it certainly isn’t here either.

“I think the United State has had a more volatile history in terms of how it deals with questions of inclusion and exclusion, how it draws the line and polices the line of who’s in and who’s out,” says Daniel Immerwahr, a professor of history at Northwestern University.

“It’s a question that every society has to answer ... who’s on the inside, who’s on the outside,” he says. “I would say that what’s interesting about the United States in this regard is how changeable and nonobvious some of the answers to those questions are.”

Sometimes the differences have been straightforward — like geography (rural



OUT OF MANY, ONE. The Latin phrase “E Pluribus Unum” is seen on a one dollar coin, right photo, in Portland, Maine. The E Pluribus Unum effort has been optimistic and unrealistic, successful and a failure, enduring as an American ideal during moments when citizens struggled — and struggle today — to practice it. In the left photo, the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., head of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, speaks to thousands during his “I Have a Dream” speech in front of the Lincoln Memorial for the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom, on August 28, 1963, in Washington.

vs. urban, plains vs. mountains) and climate (heat vs. snow, wildfires vs. flooding). Sometimes they were, and remain, cultural — people from different countries of origin, newcomers vs. generations deep, speaking different languages, following different denominations of Christianity or other religions entirely. And of course, the differences have been economic; rich and poor have always lived differently.

But sometimes, the differences have been travesties — like enslaved Africans and their American-born descendants, forced to live under the lash as they worked in the fields and elsewhere for the benefit of white owners. Even after slavery was outlawed, they were subject to discrimination and worse under racism that was legalized in systemic ways into the 20th century and that echoes still.

The Indigenous tribes whose populations were decimated by death and disease as the American experiment moved westward and newly arrived settlers hankered after their tribal lands, and whose cultures were stripped from generations as the U.S. government tried to force “unity” through brutal efforts at assimilation.

Communities of people barred from possibility because of gender, sexual

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Separate and unequal: The “Whites Only” sign was a visible reminder of American racism

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racial purity of the nation’s superior white populace.

Spatial segregation first was culturally accepted, then enforced violently or through threat of re-enslavement via incarceration. After the 1896 Supreme Court decision *Plessy v. Ferguson* established the “separate but equal” doctrine, Jim Crow segregation signs were more statutory than strongly worded warnings.

Ritualized humiliation became constitutional subjugation. Railway cars, busses, water fountains, restrooms, hotels, lunch counters, and swimming pools were among a long list of the public facilities segregated by signage. Black people were forced to use substandard facilities. Schools, churches, and cemeteries had long been racially divided. By design, it kept many Black men away from white women and stripped Black people of their dignity, sense of citizenship, and social and political belonging.

The Civil Rights Act of 1964 ended legalized racial separatism, although many in the American South resisted desegregation after signs were pulled down and placed into museums. Steven Reich, a history professor and author of an encyclopedia on the Jim Crow era, says one



AMERICAN RACISM. A sign indicates the white entrance at the Montpelier Train Depot segregation exhibit in Orange, Virginia, in this January 27, 2016 file photo. After the Civil War, and upon the collapse of Reconstruction, the Jim Crow system of public etiquette and laws regulated the free movement of both Black and white people for generations until the Civil Rights Movement began chipping away at legalized racial discrimination. (AP Photo/Steve Helber, File)

lasting impact of legalized segregation remains evident in the modern American workforce.

Segregation divided the working class and compelled white workers to identify more with their employers than with their Black co-workers, Reich says. That continues to stifle opportunities for Black and white workers to organize and work together on common issues, including diversity and inclusion.

This story is part of a recurring series, “American Objects,” marking the 250th anniversary of the United States.

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Dang Van Phuoc, AP combat photographer who lost an eye in the Vietnam War, dies at 91

By Gillian Flaccus and Hannah Schoenbaum
The Associated Press

IRVINE, Calif. — Former Associated Press photographer Dang Van Phuoc, who was wounded multiple times during the Vietnam War and returned to capture the action even after losing an eye in an explosion, has died. He was 91 years old.

Phuoc died in Southern California after collapsing suddenly, his nephew, Van Nguyen, said.

Phuoc was hired in 1965 by AP's former photo chief, Horst Faas, to replace another local hire who had been killed on assignment. He quickly gained a reputation among other journalists and the U.S. and South Vietnamese troops for his uncanny ability to find the thick of the action.

Phuoc was born in a Vietnamese village near Quang Ngai, south of Da Nang, in 1935 and was the youngest of many siblings. When he was about 10, his father was killed by local members of the Viet Cong insurgency. A few years later, his mother died, leaving him homeless.

"He was a really very extraordinary man who grew up from very bad treatment when he was a boy," Nguyen said.

As a young man, Phuoc volunteered to help carry equipment at a Saigon film studio where Nguyen's mother worked as a cook. It was there that Phuoc first picked up a camera and taught himself photography, his nephew said.

Phuoc, who was dubbed The AP's "secret weapon" by his boss, was known for walking with the "point man" on combat patrols, putting him in position to get excellent photographs — but also exposing him to grave danger.

He was wounded at least five times during his 10 years with The AP in Vietnam, the first time just five months after he was hired. A grenade explosion left him with shrapnel in his chest and leg, but he was back on duty within a few months covering the drawn-out civil war between the Communist forces of North Vietnam and the U.S.-backed South Vietnamese military.

In 1968, he sustained a concussion when he was hit in



AP Photo/AI Chang, File

PROLIFIC PHOTOGRAPHER. Dang Van Phuoc, 22, top left photo, a Vietnamese photographer working with The Associated Press, lies in a bed at the Vietnamese Military Hospital at Can Tho, Vietnam, 80 miles south of Saigon, after he was seriously injured during intense combat, in this March 19, 1969 file photo. Former AP photographer Phuoc, who was wounded multiple times during the Vietnam War and returned to capture the action even after losing an eye in an explosion, has died. Two images taken by Phuoc include: a Vietnamese woman and three children, top right photo, wading through a swamp after government troops fired into their hamlet less than 150 miles southeast of Saigon, on August 30, 1966, and a wounded soldier, bottom right photo, being carried during fighting on Highway 13, north of Saigon, on October 14, 1972.

the head by a rocket while covering street fighting in Saigon. That same year, Phuoc risked sniper fire to carry a wounded U.S. soldier to safety and received a commendation from the Ninth U.S. Army Infantry Division for saving the man's life.

Phuoc lost his right eye in a grenade explosion in 1969 while on patrol with a Ranger battalion south of Da Nang, along Vietnam's central coast. He learned to shoot with one eye and returned to work.

In a 2011 interview for AP's archives, Phuoc described the difficulty of working with one eye when he had to look through the camera while also watching for silent hand



AP Photo/Dang Van Phuoc, File



AP Photo/Dang Van Phuoc, File

gestures from the soldiers with whom he was patrolling.

His colleague in AP's Saigon bureau, Huynh Cong "Nick" Ut, described Phuoc as fearless and resourceful in the field. Behind the scenes, he was a giving man and loyal friend who treated Ut like a brother.

"Everyone loved him so much," Ut said. "When I heard, I cried, 'My brother, he's gone.'"

Despite his reputation for shooting action, the photos that touched Phuoc were those that evoked the plight of civilians caught in the crossfire. In the 2011 interview, he

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"Out of many, one," says a U.S. national motto. What does that push for unity mean today?

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orientation, or other characteristics.

There have also been persistent efforts across eras to create a country where the opportunities available to some — say, voting, economic growth, or access to education — would be made available to all. That came gradually through protest movements, legal action, and callbacks to those same American founding ideals and aspirations of unity and equality.

"It provided a language for the groups that were challenging these exclusions to draw on ... invoking the ideals of the Revolution and the Declaration and saying, 'Look, this is what the nation is supposed to be about,'" says Eileen Cheng, a professor of history at Sarah Lawrence College. "They could challenge the system and yet claim that they were being the true Americans."

III. What could "unity" even look like?

One of the things about ideals, though, is that they can be somewhat abstract.

What does it mean for a country to be "united?" Does unity mean uniform? Is it, to borrow a reference from one of satirist Terry Pratchett's books, that people are on the same side, or can they be on "different sides that happen to

be side by side." Is unity overall even a good thing in the context of a raucous democracy?

A look around the globe and through the history books shows there's no single answer. There have been countries with a single official language, others that have recognized multiple languages, and some, like the United States, that for generations have never officially designated any. At times, countries have chosen official religions. Nations have different standards and processes for naturalizing new citizens.

"There are always tensions between the unity and the separateness," said Paul Wachtel, a psychology professor at the City College of New York. "There's no society that is just one or just the other ... what's really most essential is that we learn how to negotiate those tensions."

The United States experienced that firsthand in its infancy. The Constitution we live under is the second attempt at a framework for government. The first, the Articles of Confederation, kept the federal government weaker and the individual states stronger. It quickly became clear that having such a weak central government — i.e., less unity — wasn't effective for the new country, leading to the Constitution.

For some countries, like many in Europe, those negotiations have taken place under the weight of centuries of history and geography, and other established backdrops like the existing form of government, which impacted the direction they decided to go. The U.S., from the founders' perspective, was a new entity.

"What it is to be of the United States is to adhere to a set of principles rather than to have a certain kind of lineage," Immerwahr says. "Sometimes that makes the United States remarkably open, and then sometimes that gets the leaders of the United States in all kinds of weird contradictions as they try to explain why they're doing some forms of inclusion and not others."

The United States has a decidedly mixed history when it comes to dealing with those tensions. Things have fluctuated.

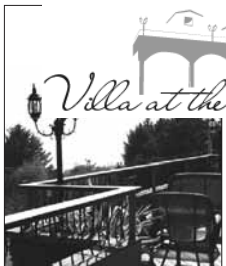
Take migration, for example. There have been eras when the influx of people coming to these shores was seemingly a never-ending stream, but also times when much of the world was barred. In politics, the idea that there would be different factions represented by different parties was loathed by some, even as it became embedded in the political culture. Groups that were once looked down on are later brought into the fold, and vice versa.

"What have we learned over the last 250 years is that things change," says Cindy Kam, professor of political science at Vanderbilt University. "We are inclined to be social animals, but what those groups are is culturally constructed. So political elites, social elites, cultural elites, they do that work in identifying what the groups are, who is part of 'us' and who is a part of the 'other.'"

By no means is it settled; if anything, the demographic, technological, economic, and other changes of the last several decades are making discussions about unity more relevant than ever. In recent years, Americans have lived in a country where polarization is rampant, and serious — sometimes dire — questions abound over what the future holds. That's probably more in line with the country's beginnings than people realize.

"This polarization, people talk about it like it's a new thing. But I think it's really a return back to the way that we were at the beginning of the country," Cheng says. "It's not like this kind of linear development where we're growing more and more accepting of difference. I think it's up and down."

This story is part of a recurring series, "American Objects," marking the 250th anniversary of the United States.



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What tastes like a Korean pancake and is purple all over? An Oreo inspired by K-pop group BTS.

By **Dee-Ann Durbin**
AP Business Writer

Oreo is teaming up with K-pop supergroup BTS for a bit of marketing dynamite that capitalizes on consumers' growing interest in global flavors.

Mondelez, Oreo's parent company, said BTS-themed Oreos will go on sale June 1 online and June 8 in stores. The cookies, which feature purple wafers in a nod to the band's signature color, will be sold in more than 80 markets around the world, making the partnership the brand's biggest to date.

The band also designed 13 embossments for the wafers, including the names of the seven members and an outline of the light sticks fans hold at BTS concerts.

The white-and-tan crème center of the sandwich cookies was formulated to taste like hotteok, a warm, brown sugar-stuffed pancake that's a popular Korean street food.

"For Oreo to be the first snacking brand we've collaborated with globally is a huge honor. We ate them as kids, we eat them in the studio, and now Oreo is helping us share a taste of home with the world," BTS said in a statement.

BTS Oreos will be sold for a limited time. Chicago-based Mondelez wouldn't say how many packages it's making.

Martin Renaud, Mondelez' chief marketing and sales officer, said the BTS cookies strike a balance of staying true to Korean culture and food while remaining consistent with Oreo's brand and flavoring.

"You want to be authentic, you want to be differentiated and live an experience. But when you are Oreo, you need to be pleasing a large group of people," Renaud told The Associated Press. "You cannot come up with something that will be liked only by 20% of the population because it would alienate some of our customers."



Renaud said Oreo spent around two years developing the BTS cookie, eventually narrowing the possible flavors to three before settling on hotteok.

"I think Korean food is an incredible cuisine. I'm French, maybe I should not say that, but I believe it," Renaud joked.

BTS Oreos arrive at a time when consumers are increasingly eager to sample new and authentic global cuisines and flavors. Datassential, a food and beverage consulting company, said U.S. restaurants featuring global flavors — Asian and South American, specifically — have been gaining market share since 2019. In Europe, West African restaurants are growing in popularity, the company said.

Social media is spurring the international taste trend. There are more than 11,700 TikTok videos under the hashtag "hotteok," for example. Seeking out global foods or learning to make them is a low-risk and low-cost way to enjoy other cultures, said Russell Zwanka, the director of the food marketing program at Western Michigan University.

BTS TREAT. The new Oreo and BTS collaboration cookies are seen in New York. Oreo is teaming up with K-pop supergroup BTS for a bit of marketing dynamite that capitalizes on consumers' growing interest in global flavors. (AP Photo/Sydney Schaefer)

"You can experience the world without spending \$2,000 on a ticket," Zwanka said.

Delivery services and specialty grocery stores like the Asian supermarket chain H Mart have also made it easier for consumers to sample international foods, he said.

"People have a much more proactive stance on trying to find flavors they can attribute to certain regions of the world," Zwanka said. "I think that's beautiful. It's the way the world should be."

In recent years, Oreo has partnered with Coca-Cola, singer and actress Selena Gomez, and the K-pop girl band Blackpink, among others. The brand also offers limited-time flavors in specific markets, like cherry sakura in Japan and red bean paste in China.

BTS is also no stranger to food collaborations. The band partnered with McDonald's in 2021 for a global meal promotion in 50 countries. BTS also worked with the Korean food companies Paldo and Hy to develop Arih, a line of noodles and drinks sold at Walmart.

Renaud said partnerships and playful, interesting flavors help Oreo expand its appeal beyond families.

"We want to be making sure we also keep our older children and Gen Zs and keep the brand up to date," he said.

Renaud said Oreo is already working on its next collaborations, which may or may not be as big as the BTS partnership.

"We're not obsessed to be more, more, more, more, markets. I think if we can, yes, let's go for it," he said. "But the key point is we need to be really resonating with the local culture."

Stop AAPI Hate launches a nonprofit to mobilize voters before midterms

Continued from page 7

thought. We're 24 million people."

Stop AAPI Hate sees the next few years not just as an opportunity to win over voters but also to increase AAPI power as

an entire voting bloc. Kulkarni says some data indicates Latino, Black, and Asian Americans who moved somewhat to the right during the 2024 election are edging back to the left.

"Where you see that especially is the South Asian or Indian American community specifically. You've seen that in some of the other (Asian American communities)," she said. "How do we harness that?"

The group needs to build an infrastructure to get people involved not just when there's a major election, Wong

said. They also hope to empower Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders who are already doing the work to become leaders in their patches.

"They're putting in the phone calls. They're showing up at public hearings, delivering comments," Wong said. "It's about building long-term civic and political power."

Dang Van Phuoc, AP combat photographer who lost an eye in the Vietnam War, dies at 91

Continued from page 12

compared himself to a "small grain of sand" who used his pictures to bring their stories to the world.

When Saigon fell in 1975, Phuoc fled with his family with little more than the clothes on their back and a bottle of milk. His family was rescued from a refugee camp in Guam with the help of AP reporter Linda Deutsch, who was covering the tent city, and flown to Camp Pendleton.

Phuoc then returned to Asia and worked briefly for The AP in Hong Kong before leaving the company and settling permanently in Southern California with his family.

He went on to become a professional

portrait photographer in Orange County, which is home to Little Saigon, the largest single community of South Vietnamese refugees in the world.

His great-nephew, Kim Nguyen, looked back at the portraits Phuoc shot of him as a baby and reminisced about bringing his own son to see Phuoc's work on display at a museum in Vietnam.

In California, Phuoc was a founding member of The Artistic Photography Association and trained young photographers. He also was a civilian volunteer for the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department and in 1994 was named the county's volunteer of the year.

Schoenbaum reported from Salt Lake City.

Rescuers save 5 of 7 people trapped in a flooded cave

Continued from page 4

and rising unsteadily to his feet.

Five of them were found alive on Wednesday, May 27. They were identified by their first names as Khamla, Mued, Ee, Ing, and Laen.

Rescue teams from Laos and neighboring Thailand were joined by Japanese and Malaysian colleagues. Indonesian, French, and Australian specialists also reportedly arrived at the site in a rugged area in the central province of Xaisomboun, about 75 miles north of the capital, Vientiane.

Several of them had taken part in the complicated 2018 cave rescue in northern Thailand of 12 schoolboys and their soccer coach.

At press time, rescuers were also preparing to search for the two villagers who remain missing.

Kengkaj Bongkawong, head of the Thai rescue group Metta Tham Rescue Kalasin, said Friday that the team plans to explore an area deeper inside the cave, about 20 to



RESCUE EFFORTS. This image released by Metta Tham Rescue Kalasin shows rescue workers gathering in a flooded cave in Xaisomboun province, Laos, on May 29, 2026. Over the weekend, rescue workers in Laos said they had safely evacuated four villagers trapped in a flooded cave for 10 days, the day after another one was successfully extracted. The villagers had reportedly entered the cave to look for valuable minerals before being trapped by flash flooding. (Metta Tham Rescue Kalasin via AP)

25 yards beyond where the survivors were found. However, he cautioned that the section is heavily flooded.

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Events calendar

“Ten Thousand Things”

Currently on view, 10am-5pm (Wed-Sun), Wing Luke Museum of the Asian Pacific American Experience (719 S King St, Seattle). View “Ten Thousand Things,” an exploration of the objects that shape our identities, histories, and cultural narratives curated by podcast host and former civic poet Shin Yu Pai. Museum visitors are able to explore objects highlighted in the podcast alongside newly collected artifacts and stories from local communities. Featured artists include Pai, Anida Yoeu Al, Etsuko Ichikawa, Susie Kozawa, Serena Chopra, Tomo Nakayama, Stewart Wong, Paul Miyahara, and many others. For info, or to purchase tickets, call (206) 623-5124 or visit <www.wingluke.org>.

“Boundless: Stories of Asian Art”

Currently on view, 10am-5pm (Wed-Sun), Seattle Asian Art Museum (1400 E Prospect St, in Volunteer Park, Seattle). View “Boundless: Stories of Asian Art,” a display highlighting themes central to arts and societies of Asia, such as worship and celebration, visual arts and literature, and clothing and identity. The museum’s south galleries feature art inspired by spiritual life and the north galleries show art inspired by material life. For info, or to purchase tickets, call (206) 654-3210 or visit <www.seattleartmuseum.org>.

“Oregon’s Nikkei:

An American Story of Resilience”

Currently on view, 10am-4pm (Wed-Sat), 11am-4pm (Sun), Japanese American Museum of Oregon at the Naito Center (411 NW Flanders St, Portland). View “Oregon’s Nikkei: An American Story of Resilience,” an exhibit that highlights the discrimination, resilience, and identity of the Japanese American community in Oregon. The display begins in rural Oregon and the streets of Portland’s Japantown where Japanese immigrants embraced American ideals. What they built was abruptly taken away during World War II when people of Japanese descent were imprisoned in American internment camps. From early immigration through current day, the exhibit explores the Japanese American experience and includes the rebuilding of communities and the ongoing fight for justice. For info, or to purchase tickets, call (503) 224-1458 or visit <www.jamo.org>.

A Tale of Portland’s Historic Chinatowns”

Currently on view, 11am-3pm (Thu-Sun), Portland Chinatown Museum (127 NW Third Ave, Portland). View “Beyond the Gate: A Tale of Portland’s Historic Chinatowns,” a display of rare objects such as Chinese opera costumes, theatrical sets, bilingual text, audio-visual media, and more that tell a sprawling transnational story of contact and trade between China and the west, focusing on Portland’s Old Chinatown (1850-1905) and New Chinatown (1905-1950). For info, or to purchase tickets, call (503) 224-0008 or visit <www.portlandchinatownmuseum.org>.

“New Years All Year Round”

Currently on view, 10am-5pm (Wed-Sun), Wing Luke Museum of the Asian Pacific American Experience (719 S King St, Seattle). View “New Years All Year Round,” a fun, family-friendly exhibit that looks at the origins of New Year traditions, colors, cuisine, and more, including lion dances, drums, and firecrackers. The display features new works from artist Nina Vichayapai, new community-submitted stories, and a refresh honoring the Year of the Fire Horse. For info, or to purchase tickets, call (206) 623-5124 or visit <www.wingluke.org>.

“Be Water, My Friend:

The Teachings of Bruce Lee”

Currently on view, 10am-5pm (Wed-Sun), Wing Luke Museum of the Asian Pacific American Experience (719 S King St, Seattle). View “Be Water, My Friend: The Teachings of Bruce Lee,” an interactive exhibit that invites viewers to step into the mind, body, and spirit of Bruce Lee to see how his unquenchable pursuit of knowledge informed his philosophy and life. The display follows Bruce’s path, beginning with his revelations on water, through the wealth of knowledge found in his 2,800-book personal library, to his philosophy of self-understanding and self-expression. For info, or to purchase tickets, call (206) 623-5124 or visit <www.wingluke.org>.

“Rivers, Roses, and Rip City:

The Remarkable History of Portland”

Currently on view, 10am-5pm (Mon-Sat), noon-5pm (Sun), Oregon Historical Society Museum (1200 SW Park Ave, Portland). View “Rivers, Roses, and Rip City: The Remarkable History of Portland,” an interactive installation that allows visitors to learn about the city’s distinctive landscape, the communities that contribute to the vibrant and dynamic identity of Portland, and the history of activism that has transformed its spaces. The display includes 500 objects, images, and archival materials from the museum and research library collections. For info, call (503) 222-1741 or visit <www.ohs.org>.

Kristina Wong, #FoodBankInfluencer

Through June 7, Portland Center Stage at The Armory, Main Stage (128 NW 11th Ave, Portland). Attend *Kristina Wong, #FoodBankInfluencer*, a karaoke rom-com musical about emergency food systems. The hilariously irreverent examination of food insecurity, government assistance, and grassroots solutions to global issues is presented by Portland Center Stage and Boom Arts. For info, showtimes, or to purchase tickets, call (503) 445-3700 or visit <www.pcs.org>.

“Minidoka on Our Minds”

Through June 14, 10am-4pm (Wed-Sat), 11am-4pm (Sun), Japanese American Museum of Oregon at the Naito Center (411 NW Flanders St, Portland). View “Minidoka on Our Minds,” an exhibit celebrating 25 years of preservation of the Minidoka National Historic Site, where many Nikkei from Oregon and Washington were forcibly incarcerated during World War II. The display features artwork by survivors, descendants, and



#FoodBankInfluencer. Kristina Wong, #FoodBankInfluencer is featured at *The Armory* in northwest Portland through June 7. The karaoke rom-com musical provides a hilarious examination of food insecurity, government assistance, and grassroots solutions to global issues. (Photo/ Jingzi Zhao, courtesy of Portland Center Stage)

Japanese American youth that highlight the park’s history and its importance as a site of memory. For info, or to purchase tickets, call (503) 224-1458 or visit <www.jamo.org>.

“Enduring Impressions: Contemporary Woodblock Prints”

Through June 15, 10am-5:30pm (Wed-Mon), Portland Japanese Garden (611 SW Kingston Ave, Portland). View “Enduring Impressions: Contemporary Woodblock Prints,” an exhibit featuring the art of mokuhan, a Japanese style of woodblock printmaking that uses wood, water-based pigments, and paper made from plant fibers. The display reveals how the centuries-old tradition is experiencing a contemporary revival as artists around the world use the quiet power and unique characteristics of woodblock printmaking to create captivating works of art. For info, or to purchase tickets, call (503) 223-1321 or visit <www.japanesegarden.com>.

“Threading Together:

AANHPI Traditional Attire Exhibit”

Through June 21, 10am-6:30pm (daily), Lan Su Chinese Garden (239 NW Everett St, Portland). Attend “Threading Together,” an exhibit of traditional clothing and attire, this year featuring garments from Thailand, Polynesia, China, Japan, Korea, India, Cambodia, and the Philippines. Clothing is a powerful expression of culture, reflecting history, identity, and tradition through form, color, and pattern. For info, or to purchase tickets, call (503) 228-8131 or visit <www.lansugarden.org>.

GLEAN Artists-in-Residency Exhibition

Through June 21, noon-5pm (Sat-Sun); June 2, 5:30-7pm (artist panel discussion); Custom Blocks (1325 SE 10th Ave, Portland). View works by Hyun Jung Jung, Lalo Perez, and others at the GLEAN Artists-in-Residency Exhibition. The display, which is free and open to the public, showcases the work of local artists who spent months going through heaping trash piles at the Metro Central transfer station to gather materials — and inspiration — for their collections. To schedule a viewing appointment, e-mail <leslie@gleanportland.com>. For info, visit <www.gleanportland.com>.

Umico Niwa

Through July 3, 11am-5pm (Wed-Sat), ILY2 Portland (925 NW Flanders St, Portland). Attend an exhibit by Japan-born artist Umico Niwa at ILY2 Portland. For info, e-mail <info@ily2online.com> or visit <www.ily2online.com>.

Charlene Liu: “Scallion”

Through July 31, 10am-7pm (Thu), 10am-5pm (Fri-Sun), Henry Art Gallery (15th Ave NE & NE 41st St, Seattle). View “Scallion,” a mural presentation by Charlene Liu located in the Sculpture Court at the Henry Art Gallery. The work builds on her ongoing engagement with food as a means to locate culture and heritage amidst diaspora. Rendered in a fluid, multi-layered, visual language, the landscape offers a portal to reflect on how culinary traditions build belonging in place and playfully celebrates the importance of shared food experiences. For info, call (206) 543-2280 or visit <www.henryart.org>.

“Pacific Islanders: Navigators of the Sea”

Through July 31, 10am-5pm (Tue-Fri), World Beat Gallery (390 Liberty St SE, Second Floor, Salem, Ore.). View “Pacific Islanders: Navigators of the Sea,” an exhibit about the art, dance, music, and settlement of people in the Pacific Islands. The display includes weavings, fabric arts, carvings, and cultural artifacts, and a large portion of the gallery focuses on some of the dances of the Pacific Islands, such as Samoa, Tahiti, Aotearoa (New Zealand), Hawai’i, Tonga, Fiji, and the Marshall Islands. For info, call (503) 581-2004 or visit <www.salemmulticultural.org>.

“Finding Home: The Chinese American West”

Through Sep 5, 2027, 10am-5pm (Wed & Fri-Sun), 10am-8pm (Thu), Tacoma Art Museum (1701 Pacific Ave, Tacoma, Wash.). View “Finding Home: The Chinese American West,” an exhibit by artists Monyee Chau, Zhi Lin, and Mian Situ about the history of racism and violence against the Chinese in America — specifically Tacoma’s exclusionary past — in addition to the artists’ views of Chinese immigrants finding a sense of home and hope and persevering despite hardship. The display explores the spiritual, the mythical, and the laborious path of these seekers of the American dream in a counter-narrative to the conventional picture of America’s history. The featured artworks were created

in the 21st century, though they imagine the time of 1785 (when the first Chinese immigrants arrived) to 1912 (the end of the American frontier period). For info, or to purchase tickets, call (253) 272-4258 or visit <www.tacomartmuseum.org>.

“Bonsai United”

Through Dec 2027, 10am-4pm (Tue-Sun), Pacific Bonsai Museum (2515 S 336th St, Federal Way, Wash.). View “Bonsai United,” a comparative exhibit exploring a remarkable human phenomenon — across continents, climates, and cultures, people dedicate their lives to cultivating miniature trees. By placing regional approaches side-by-side, the display reveals how a shared practice — care, observation, and creating meaning through living form — manifests differently depending on local landscape, native flora, cultural practices, and the passage of time. “Bonsai United” features perspectives from 15 traditions. For info, or to purchase tickets, call (253) 353-7345 or visit <www.pacificbonsaimuseum.org>.

Mamma Mia!

June 2-7, Keller Auditorium (222 SW Clay St, Portland). Watch *Mamma Mia!*, a musical that tells a tale of love, friendship, and identity through the timeless hits of ABBA. The production, which is presented by Broadway in Portland and is recommended for attendees age 6 and above, runs 2 hours, 30 minutes with one intermission. The show contains theatrical fog, haze, and strobe/flashlight lights. For info, showtimes, or to purchase tickets, call (503) 248-4335, or visit <www.portland5.com> or <www.broadwayinportland.com>.

“Oregon Connections: Community Organizing”

June 4, noon-1pm, Virtual. Attend “Oregon Connections: Community Organizing,” a free virtual conversation with Kimberly Jensen, Carmen Thompson, and Diane Hess. For info, or to register (required), call (503) 222-1741 or visit <<https://orhs.ejoinme.org/OregonConnections>>.

Fleet Week

June 4-7, 10am-4pm, Tom McCall Waterfront Park (SW Naito Parkway between the Burnside & Hawthorne Bridges, Portland). Attend Fleet Week at the Portland Rose Festival. Since 1907, visiting ships from the U.S. Navy, U.S. Coast Guard, and Royal Canadian Navy have made their way to Portland’s waterfront during the festival. All visitors arriving for public tours are required to present a federally approved government-issued photo identification and pass through an airport-style security screening checkpoint prior to boarding. All tours must be completed by 4:00pm, so early arrival is recommended. For info, or to read about the rules about boarding and viewing ships, call (503) 227-2681 or visit <www.rosefestival.org>.

“Rose City Exhibition”

June 4-25, 10am-4pm (Mon-Fri), Oregon Art Center (2185 SW Park Place, Portland). View the “Rose City Exhibition,” a vibrant celebration of Portland, its rich traditions, and its iconic flower — the rose. Artists are showcasing their unique works that capture the beauty, resilience, and spirit of the Rose City. The display is open to the public. For info, call (503) 228-0706 or visit <www.oregonartcenter.org>.

Rose Festival Queen’s Coronation

June 5, 11am-noon, Oregon Square, Gazebo (800 NE Eighth Ave, Portland). Watch Anisha Dhoot representing Metro West (Westview High School), Jee Jee Chontso of Franklin High School, Anika Rigby of Lincoln High School, Adora Tran of Benson Polytechnic High School, and other princesses compete for the coveted tiara of the Portland Rose Festival Queen. The following evening, the newly crowned monarch and her court ride in the Grand Floral Starlight Parade. The coronation is a public event with standing room only. For info, call (503) 227-2681 or visit <www.rosefestival.org>.

Rose Festival CityFair

June 5-7, 4-10pm (Fri), noon-10pm (Sat), noon-9pm (Sun), Tom McCall Waterfront Park (SW Naito Parkway between the Burnside & Hawthorne Bridges, Portland). Portland Rose

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For timely information about upcoming events, visit <www.facebook.com/TheAsianReporter>.

Events calendar

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Festival CityFair waterfront activities are in full swing. Fair-goers will find interactive exhibits, entertainment stages, clowns, carnival rides, fair foods, games, and more. For info, or to purchase tickets, call (503) 227-2681 or visit <www.rosefestival.org>.

“Pink Martini All-Stars”

June 5-7, 7:30pm (Fri-Sun), 2pm (Sun), Patricia Reser Center for the Arts (12625 SW Crescent St, Beaverton, Ore.). Watch Thomas Lauderdale’s globe-trotting “little orchestra” in a new way at “Pink Martini All-Stars.” The performance features three of the band’s favorite singers and long-time collaborators mixing old favorites and new treats with the band’s unique brand of catchy classic pop, big band sound, and Hollywood glamour. For info, or to purchase tickets, call (971) 501-7722 or visit <www.thereser.org>.

“Portal”

June 6, 5-8pm, Oregon Contemporary (8371 N Interstate Ave, Portland). Join Oregon Contemporary for its First Saturday celebration of the 2026 Biennial. Biennial artist Joe Kye, alongside botanical artist Theresa Bear, invite the community to take part in “Portal,” a shared ritual centered on honoring our ancestors, at 6:00pm. Kye draws from traditional Korean music, language, and cultural practices to explore memory, migration, and the experience of immigrant life in the Pacific Northwest. Blending live music, storytelling, letter-writing, and collaborative art-making, the séance-inspired gathering encourages participants to reflect on their relationships with those who came before us and imagine conversations unfolding across generations. For info, or to reserve space for the 6:00pm performance (seating is limited), e-mail <info@oregoncontemporary.org> or visit <www.oregoncontemporary.org>.

Grand Floral Starlight Parade

June 6, 6:30-10:30pm, Downtown Portland. Watch the 2026 Grand Floral Starlight Parade, a reimagined Rose Festival parade bringing together the pageantry of the Grand Floral Parade and the energy of the Starlight Parade. The parade will unfold in two phases, with the Grand Floral portion kicking off at 6:30pm and featuring its iconic floral-covered floats, marching bands, equestrian units, dignitaries, dance groups, and community groups. As darkness falls around 8:30pm, the Starlight portion begins, showcasing illuminated floats, lighting effects, and nighttime spectacle. The parade leaves SW Naito Parkway near CityFair, turns west onto SW Salmon Street, then turns onto SW Fourth Avenue heading north to Burnside for one block before going south on SW Broadway. The 2026 Grand Floral Starlight Parade will be broadcast live on KATU (channel 2). For info, or to obtain a map of the parade route and a list of all parade entries, call (503) 227-2681 or visit <www.rosefestival.org>.

Portland Rose Festival Dragon Boat Races

June 6-7, 8am-4pm, South Hawthorne Waterfront Park, RiverPlace Marina (1403 S Harbor Way, Portland). Cheer for the paddling teams at the Portland-Kaohsiung Sister City Association Rose Festival Dragon Boat Races. More than 60 local, national, and international teams compete at the event staged from the south end of Waterfront Park. The 500-meter races feature four traditional-style dragon boats from Taiwan. Each boat has a caller, drummer, 20 paddlers, a flag catcher, and a tiller. Races are held throughout the day. Admission to watch the races is free. For info, call (503) 227-2681, e-mail <info@pkscanet.net>, or visit <www.pkscanet.net> or <www.rosefestival.org>.

Sogetsu Ikebana Rose Show

June 6-7, 10am-5pm (Sat) noon-5pm (Sun), Oregon Historical Society Museum (1200 SW Park Ave, Portland). Attend the Sogetsu Ikebana Rose Show at the Oregon Historical Society Museum exploring this year’s Rose Festival theme, “Imagine Magic.” All members of the community are invited to attend the free event at which volunteers from Sogetsu Portland are available to answer questions about the art form. For info, or to purchase tickets, call (503) 222-1741 or visit <www.ohs.org>.

Pagdiriwang Philippine Festival

June 6-7, 11am-7pm, Seattle Center, Armory Food & Event Hall (305 Harrison St, Seattle). Attend the Pagdiriwang Philippine Festival, a celebration of Filipino culture, history, and heritage presented by Seattle Center Festál. The free event observes Philippine independence from colonial rule and the strength of Filipino identity and imagination through art exhibits, performances, and more. For info, call (206) 684-7200, or visit <www.seattlecenter.com> or <www.festalpagdiriwang.com>.

“New to Portland Ride: East Portland”

June 11, 5:30-7:30pm, East Portland Community Center (740 SE 106th Ave, Portland). Are you new to town, or new to cycling in Portland? Join the “New to Portland Ride: East Portland” event, a moderate-paced (8 mph to 10 mph) group bike ride in the Mill Park, Hazelwood, and Centennial neighborhoods. The roughly 8-mile ride, which begins at 6:00pm, is free and open to everyone, and ends at East Portland Community Center. For info, call Claire at (503) 823-8717, e-mail <claire.bach@portlandoregon.gov>, or visit <www.portland.gov>.

“Steep & Paint”

June 12 & 26, July 17 & 31, Aug 14 & 28, and Sep 11 & 25, 2-5pm, Lan Su Chinese Garden (239 NW Everett St, Portland). Attend the “Steep & Paint” series at Lan Su. In partnership with Oregon Botanical Artists (OBA), the immersive afternoon experience invites guests to slow down, look closely, and connect with plants through tea, conversation, and hands-on art-making. Each session weaves together horticulture, tea culture, and botanical art. All materials are included. For info, or to purchase tickets (required), call (503) 228-8131 or visit <www.lansugarden.org>.

WasabiFest

June 13, 1-5pm, The Redd (831 SE Salmon St, Portland). Attend the second annual WasabiFest, an afternoon of bold bites, bright flavors, saké-fuelled fun, and Wally Wasabi. The current schedule includes performances by Takohachi (1:30pm to 2:00pm & 3:10pm to 3:40pm), a chef demo with Jeff Kim (2:00pm to 2:30pm), a presentation by Markus Mead of Oregon Coast Wasabi (2:10pm to 2:25pm), a Wasabi Eating Contest (2:30pm to 3:00pm & 3:45pm to 4:00pm), a chef demo by Kate Koo and Oo-nee Sea Urchin Ranch (2:45pm to 3:15pm), and a Seisuke knife sharpening demo (4:00pm to 4:30pm). For info, call (503) 941-5585, e-mail <hello@wasabifestpdx.com>, or visit <www.wasabifestpdx.com>.

Back to the Future

June 16-21, Keller Auditorium (222 SW Clay St, Portland). Watch *Back to the Future*, the beloved, cinematic classic that is now a Broadway musical. The show features Marty McFly, who finds himself transported back to 1955 in a time machine built by the eccentric scientist Doc Brown. After accidentally changing the course of history, McFly ends up in a race against time to fix the present, escape the past, and send himself back to the future. The musical features favorites such as “The Power of Love,” “Johnny B. Goode,” “Earth Angel,” and “Back in Time.” The production, which is presented by Broadway in Portland and is recommended for attendees age 6 and above, runs 2 hours, 40 minutes with one intermission. The show contains flashing lights, strobe effects, smoke/haze, and pyrotechnics throughout. For info, showtimes, or to purchase tickets, call (503) 248-4335, or visit <www.portland5.com> or <www.broadwayinportland.com>.

AANHPI Leadership Night

June 17, 5-8:30pm, Avenue Portland (631 NE Grand Ave, Portland). Attend AANHPI Leadership Night, an evening of culture, connection, and leadership. The event celebrates AANHPI leaders, changemakers, and community builders who strengthen our region and features a panel discussion, dinner, and the presentation of Philippine American Chamber of Commerce of Oregon (PACCO) scholarships. The theme for the evening is “Rooted in Legacy, Rising in Leadership.” For info, call (503) 862-6853 or e-mail <wecare@pacco.org>. To purchase tickets, visit <www.pacco.org>.

Free open swims at PP&R outdoor pools

June 18-Aug 23; Mon, 6:30-8pm, Creston Pool (4454 SE Powell Blvd, Portland); Tue, 1-3:45pm, Peninsula Pool (700 N Rosa Parks Way, Portland); Tue, 6-8pm, Montavilla Pool (8219 NE Glisan St,



LITTLE ORCHESTRA. Performances of “Pink Martini All-Stars” are scheduled from June 5 to 7 at the Patricia Reser Center for the Arts in Beaverton. (Photo courtesy of Pink Martini)

Portland); Wed, 1-3pm, Grant Pool (2300 NE 33rd Ave, Portland); Wed, 6:30-8pm, Sellwood Pool (7951 SE Seventh Ave, Portland); Thu, 1:30-3:30pm, Pier Pool (9341 N St. Johns Ave, Portland). Attend free open play and swimming at Portland Parks & Recreation outdoor pools. Sessions are open to all and no registration is necessary. Peninsula Outdoor Pool closes on Monday, September 7; all other outdoor pools close August 23. For info, or to verify free swim times, call (503) 823-PLAY (7529) or visit <www.portland.gov/parks/sffa>.

“Echoes of Life”

June 20-21, 7pm (Sat), 2pm (Sun), Patricia Reser Center for the Arts (12625 SW Crescent St, Beaverton, Ore.). Watch “Echoes of Life,” an evening of contrast, beauty, and reflection presented by the Oregon International Ballet Academy. The performance brings together the brilliance of classical ballet and the searching voice of contemporary creation. For info, or to purchase tickets, call (971) 501-7722 or visit <www.thereser.org>.

Free Lunch + Play

June 22-Aug 21, 10am-2pm (Mon-Fri), Portland area parks. Free meals and activities for kids begin June 22 at nearly two dozen Portland Parks & Recreation (PP&R) parks. Free Lunch + Play is a drop-in program held on weekdays from 10:00am to 2:00pm. PP&R staff are on-site serving free lunches and offering games and activities to youth in the community. The program is provided in partnership with Portland Public Schools and the Centennial, David Douglas, and Parkrose school districts. Most sites are open June 22 through August 21. Schedules translated into multiple languages are available online. There are no programs held on July 3. For info, call (503) 823-PLAY (7529) or visit <www.portland.gov>. To view a full schedule of events, visit <www.portland.gov/parks/sffa>.

PP&R summer kick-off event

June 25, 11am-1pm, Parklane Park (SE 155th Ave & Main St, Portland). Celebrate at the kick-off event of the summer Free Lunch + Play program. The event is held at Parklane Park and takes place from 11:00am to 1:00pm, with free lunches served from 11:30am to 1:00pm (or until meals run out). Arts in the Park will be on hand crafting with kids, Rose City Rollers is offering free roller skating for kids (please bring socks), and DJ George will be spinning tunes. Lawn games and other fun activities are available. For info, call (503) 823-PLAY (7529) or visit <www.portland.gov>. To view a full schedule of summer events, visit <www.portland.gov/parks/sffa>.

World Beat Festival

June 26-28; 5-10pm (Fri), 10am-11pm (Sat), 11am-6pm (Sun), Riverfront Park (116 Marion St NE, Salem, Ore.). Enjoy the World Beat Festival, a family- and child-oriented event celebrating the diverse people who make Oregon a wonderful place to live. The festival celebrates the traditions of more than 60 cultures and features music, dance, demonstrations, workshops, a children’s parade (June 27, 9:45am), activities for children, food, crafts, and more. Friday’s “Night at the Beat” event (June 26, 5:00pm to 10:00pm) highlights only main stage events. The 2026 featured cultures are the Pacific Islands. See a related exhibit, “Pacific Islanders: Navigators of the Sea,” on view through July 31 at the World Beat Gallery in Salem. For info, to obtain a complete schedule of performances and booths, or to purchase tickets, call (503) 581-2004 or visit <www.worldbeatfestival.org>.

“Good in the Hood” multicultural festival

June 27-28, noon-9pm, Lillis-Albina Park (N Flint Ave & N Russell St, Portland). Attend the “Good in the Hood” Multicultural Music & Food Festival, featuring an array of musical entertainment, food, activities for families, local vendors, and more. A parade kicking off the festivities begins at 11:00am on Saturday morning. For info, including a full schedule, call (971) 302-6380 or visit <www.goodinthehood.org>.

Portland Timbers 2

June 27, July 26 & Aug 8, 1pm, Providence Park (SW 18th Ave & SW Morrison St, Portland). Watch Portland Timbers 2 (T2), the Timbers’ MLS NEXT Pro affiliate, take on the San Jose Earthquakes II (June 27), the Real Monarchs (July 26), and LAFC 2 (August 8). Attendance to T2 games is free. Tickets (required) are available through SeatGeek. For info, or to reserve tickets, call (503) 553-5555 or visit <www.timbers.com/t2>.

Sunday Parkways: East Portland

June 28, 11am-4pm, Ventura Park, Lincoln Park, Parklane Park, and Verdell Burdine Rutherford Park (Portland). Walk, bike, rollerblade, skateboard, and more around east Portland without motor traffic during a Sunday Parkways event. Entertainment, live music, bike education and repair, activities for both adults and children, vendor marketplaces, and more take place in the parks and along the 4-mile out-and-back route, which has no start or finish. For info, call (503) 823-7599 or visit <www.portland.gov/sunday-parkways/2026>. To receive event updates, text “East” to 1-888-520-0526.

Portland Thorns FC

June 28 & July 5, 4pm, Providence Park (SW 18th Ave & SW Morrison St, Portland). Watch Portland Thorns FC take on the San Diego Wave (June 28) and Racing Louisville (July 5). For info, or to purchase tickets, call (503) 553-5555 or visit <www.thorns.com>.

Tanabata

July 12, 10:30am-2:30pm, Portland Japanese Garden (611 SW Kingston Ave, Portland). Celebrate Tanabata, also known as the Star Festival, when wishes written on strips of paper called tanzaku are hung on bamboo branches in hopes they will come true. The tradition of writing wishes or prayers comes from the Edo period, when children were encouraged to practice their writing and hang it from bamboo for all to see. Tanabata is one of five seasonal festivals celebrated in Japan since the 8th century. Wish writing (10:30am to 2:30pm) takes place in the Yanai Classroom. Musical performances by Takohachi featuring storytelling are scheduled for 10:45am and 11:45am. For info, or to purchase tickets, call (503) 223-1321 or visit <www.japanesegarden.com>.

Bon odori folk dancing practice

July 13-29 (Mon & Wed), 7-9pm, Oregon Buddhist Temple (3720 SE 34th Ave, near Powell Blvd, Portland). Take part in free practice sessions for *bon odori* dancing in preparation for ObonFest 2026 at the Oregon Buddhist Temple. Lessons are open to all ages and no experience is necessary. ObonFest is scheduled for Saturday, August 1 and features *bon odori* dancing, entertainment, performances, displays, youth and children’s activities, food, and more. For info, call (503) 234-9456, e-mail <obon.OregonBuddhistTemple@gmail.com>, or visit <www.oregonbuddhisttemple.com/bon-odori>.

Osaka's latest fashion ensembles feature sequined gold dress, metallic gold jacket

By Andrew Dampf
AP Sports Writer

PARIS — Naomi Osaka's taste for fashion was in the spotlight again in late May at the French Open.

The tennis star walked onto Court Suzanne-Lenglen in a ceremonial black skirt and sleeveless beaded bodice, which she removed to reveal a sequined gold playing dress for her opening match in Paris.

"It's very couture," Osaka said of her dress after the match. "You know the Eiffel Tower at night when it's sparkly. I kind of think I look like that a little bit."

Osaka entered wearing the embellished bodice structured to recall armor, and a long pleated skirt over her playing attire. She then removed the over-garments and went on to beat German opponent Laura Siegemund 6-3, 7-6 (3).

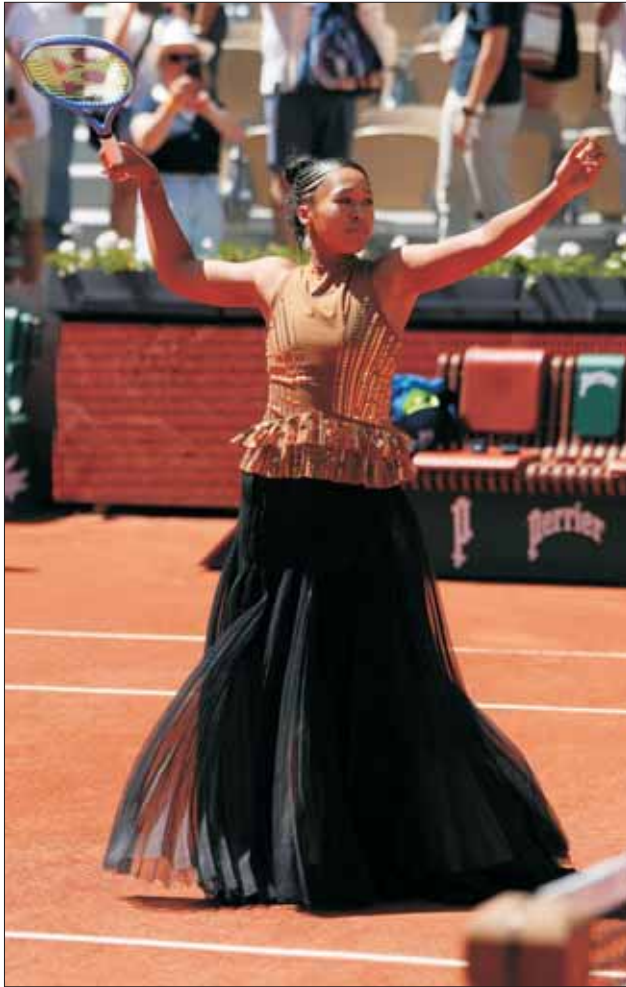
Osaka said the playing dress was designed by Nike while the outer pieces were from Swiss designer Kevin Germanier.

Earlier this year at the Australian Open, Osaka walked on wearing a wide-brim hat, a veil, and holding a white parasol. And at last year's U.S. Open, she had sparkly red roses in her ponytail above her red outfit and even a matching Labubu that she named Billie Jean Bling.

The four-time Grand Slam champion also recently wore a show-stopping outfit at the Met Gala in New York.

So how does Osaka switch her focus from her grand entrances to playing a tennis match minutes later?

"I'm a little used to it now," she said. "The U.S. Open, the roses in my hair, that's when I started to really get into it a lot more. Obviously with Australia, that was a real conversation starter. So I don't really feel like it's too much of a big deal to do that and then play after."



"Athletes are in show business," Osaka added. "Grand Slam walk-ons are the only time that I possibly feel like I'm an entertainer."

COURT BLING. Naomi Osaka of Japan hits a tennis ball during the first round women's singles tennis match at the French Open tennis tournament in Paris on May 26, 2026. Osaka walked onto the court in a ceremonial black skirt and sleeveless beaded bodice, which she removed to reveal a sequined gold playing dress for her opening match. (AP Photo/Aurelien Morissard)

Osaka had other concerns, though.

"I actually got a little worried, because when the sun hits the dress, it reflects a lot. So I was a little scared that the umpire was going to kick me off the court," she said. "So I (had) two back-up normal Nike dresses."

Also last week on Court Philippe-Chatrier, top-ranked Aryna Sabalenka wore two necklaces featuring diamonds during her opening win.

Osaka said she enjoys fashion since "I don't talk a lot, so that way I can talk through my clothes."

She added, "I am a little dramatic when it comes to my fashion sense."

Metallic gold bomber jacket

For her walk-on before a second-round win at the French Open, the tennis star wore a metallic gold bomber jacket over her sequined gold playing dress, offset by an ivory train in a look that mixes sportswear with couture.

"The inspo was, I don't want to say Victorian, but you know the ladies that have the dresses with the poof in the background?" Osaka said. "(It's) so terrible of me to not know the correct term of that."

The term Osaka was looking for is likely bustles, which were padded undergarments used to add fullness to dresses in the mid- to late-19th century.

After the walk-on, Osaka took off the train and jacket and handed the garments to a ball kid to remove them before the match against Donna Vekic on Court Simonne-Mathieu.

AP Fashion Writer Colleen Barry in Milan contributed to this report.

World Cup transit sticker shock hits fans with tickets to matches in some U.S. host cities

By R.J. Rico and Jeff McMurray
The Associated Press

Dubbed the "Sommermärchen," or "Summer Fairy Tale," the 2006 World Cup in Germany was a widely praised showcase for a modern, unified nation that was welcoming to fans from around the globe. Part of that success was the "KombiTicket," which gave fans free access to local public transportation on match days.

Since then, World Cup host countries have invested heavily in getting fans to and from matches, especially in Russia in 2018, where even long-distance trains between host cities were free, and Qatar in 2022, where free metro access helped turn stadium-hopping into part of the tournament experience.

Then came the United States.

Already reeling from astronomical ticket prices, expensive flights, and exorbitant hotel costs, fans have been outraged to discover that getting to some stadiums via rail will come with another hefty bill: \$98 round-trip train fares in New Jersey and \$80 in Massachusetts — trips that normally cost NFL fans \$12.90 and \$20, respectively.

Officials insist they aren't trying to rip off fans, but are instead just trying to cover the costs of security and expanded train service without being a drain on taxpayers. Yet fans see it as just another way that tournament organizers are burdening fans who are already paying huge sums to visit the U.S., a huge, car-centric country where public transit has long been an afterthought in many locales.

Unlike past hosts, some state and local officials have been less willing to swallow the costs, arguing they should be covered by the Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA), the international soccer body that stands to rake in billions of dollars from the event.

Finding a solution from overseas

"Planning for this World Cup has been a nightmare from start to finish," said Scotland-born Rory Phillips-Hunter, a 37-year-old hospitality worker who lives in northern England. "I think it's the most inaccessible one there's ever been."

Mystified by the lack of affordable options to travel 25 miles from Providence, Rhode Island, to Foxborough, Massachusetts, where Scotland's first two matches will take place, Phillips-Hunter and some fellow Tartan Army members decided to figure it out themselves.

At about \$50 per person, the Scots have booked about 20 school buses to take nearly 1,000 members of the plaid-clad fan group to each match. They're even getting a police escort, all for just over half the cost of the \$95 bus fare that local officials are offering — a combined savings of more than \$85,000.

The \$95 bus fare was never going to break the bank,

Phillips-Hunter knows, but he and so many other Scots are already paying huge sums to see their men's team compete in the World Cup for the first time in 28 years. Phillips-Hunter estimates it will take him two years to pay off the credit card debt he's taking on for his six-day trip to the U.S., including the \$1,350 he spent on a ticket for the Scotland-Morocco match.

Beyond anything, Phillips-Hunter is frustrated that a group of Scots from across the ocean were able to organize transportation for so much cheaper than what local officials offered.

"When I look at that difference in cost, that's just profits you're taking from us," he said.

Who should pay?

Not every host city is approaching transportation the same way. Atlanta, Houston, and Seattle have stadiums linked directly to their rail systems, and regular fares will apply. Miami-Dade County officials recently announced they will offer free shuttles to get fans to and from Hard Rock Stadium in Miami Gardens, about 15 miles from downtown Miami. Philadelphia, meanwhile, is offering free rides on the way back from the stadium, thanks to funding from FIFA sponsor Airbnb. And Kansas City, Missouri, is running \$15 shuttles.

The relatively high transit costs for the matches at MetLife Stadium in New Jersey and Gillette Stadium in Massachusetts are partly because they're in the suburbs, and many fans drive to the NFL games they typically host. But parking will be extremely limited during the World Cup due to expanded security perimeters, broadcast needs, and lots being used as VIP areas, forcing far more fans to use public transit.

David Gogishvili is a senior researcher at Switzerland's University of Lausanne and studies how sports organizers put together big events like the World Cup.

He said it is standard practice for organizers like FIFA to pass much of the cost on to host countries. The difference this time is that the U.S. has "stronger and more independent" state and local officials who have been less willing to take on the cost and "bow to the wills of FIFA."

"These costs should be borne by the organization that is earning money out of these events, which is FIFA. It should not always be the host cities that take on all the expenses," Gogishvili said, noting the soccer body's expected \$13 billion revenue from 2023-2026.

New Jersey governor Mikie Sherrill has called on FIFA to cover the transportation costs to matches.

But FIFA pushed back, arguing that no other global event has been asked to absorb such costs and that its initial agreements with host cities called for free transportation for fans to all matches. The agreements were later changed to allow cities to provide transit "at cost."

The reason transit has been so accessible at recent World Cups is that host nations like Russia and Qatar have viewed the tournament as a "public relations exercise," and subsidized transit accordingly, Gogishvili said.

Officials' anxiety over transit costs also comes amid growing concern that the promised World Cup economic boon won't materialize, with hotel room bookings not meeting expectations in most of the 11 U.S. cities hosting the tournament. A 2022 study co-authored by Gogishvili found that nearly every World Cup from 1966 through 2018 ran at a financial deficit.

Yonah Freemark, a researcher at the Washington-based Urban Institute think tank who specializes in transit issues, said World Cup fans from Europe and Asia will encounter less-advanced but costlier transit systems than they're used to back home.

Pointing to the transit pricing tied to matches in New Jersey and Massachusetts, Freemark said officials "are trying to get away with murder." Wait times and transit access, he added, will likely fall well short of what many foreign visitors are used to.

Searching for a way to the stadium

Ynara Correa da Costa, a Brazilian systems analyst who lives outside Sao Paulo, will be attending her seventh World Cup.

Like many, she was stunned when officials initially proposed charging as much as \$150 for train fares from New York City to MetLife Stadium, where Brazil plays its opener against Morocco. The widespread shock led New Jersey officials to lower the price to \$98 after securing additional funding.

But even the lowered price for a short train ride "is just not acceptable," Costa said.

Costa was heartened when the local host committee said it had secured more busses to get to the stadium and slashed the price from \$80 to \$20. But there are only enough bus seats for 18,000 fans to get to the stadium, which holds about 82,500.

That seems far more manageable to Costa. Earlier, she wondered whether she and other cost-conscious fans might have to walk to MetLife Stadium, but that isn't possible.

"We'll go to the match, that I know," Costa said. "But how? Let's see."

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TRADITIONAL THEATER. Kabuki actor Kikunosuke Onoe, center, performs during the opening ceremony of the Osaka Expo, in Osaka, in this April 12, 2025 file photo. One of the fun aspects of Kabuki is the costume and character changes that happen right on stage before the audience, transforming a human character into a demon, for instance, sometimes with the help of stagehands cloaked in anonymous black costuming called "kurogo." (Kyodo News via AP, File)

What's in a name? It's succession, legacy, and celebration in Japan's Kabuki theater.

Continued from page 20

that came after. So I am grateful to be born into the family of such ancestors."

Kabuki training starts in childhood

Terajima was sitting next to his 12-year-old son Kazufumi, who in turn will take on the name he had before, Kikunosuke. It's the name for the younger actor in that family, handed down over generations like the Kikugoro name.

Kikunosuke said he loves being a Kabuki actor, although like a normal kid, he also likes video games and the Japanese rock band Mrs. Green Apple.

It's hard work, he said, which involves running every morning, watching his diet, and going to bed early.

"It's not only hard physically. It's also pretty hard mentally, and I sometime took it out on my parents," he said with a smile, carrying himself with a controlled professional pose way beyond his age.

The name-succession ritual, called "shumei," which began for the father and son last year in various performances throughout Japan, continues through this year.

James R. Brandon, an American who devoted his scholarship to Kabuki, describes it as centered on a type of code, "a theater in which the art of acting is central, and in which playwright and actor cooperate to achieve the unique style of performance found only in Kabuki."

In Japanese tradition, there is always the right way to do something, known as "kata," which turns into the model for the future generation who choose to pursue the art, according to Brandon.

Although some worry about the survival of Kabuki, the new Kikugoro said he believed in Kabuki's "kata," and that nothing needed to change, as the core spirit of the art form remains as relevant as ever.

"By using kata, what we want to truly communicate the most in the tradition of Kabuki is human compassion, that spirit of caring for others," he said.

Snack packages are turning black-and-white as war depletes ink supply

Continued from page 5

The new packaging just has monochrome lettering.

The company, which also makes shrimp chips, or "kappa ebisen," had just announced an ambitious growth strategy in March.

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Sealed proposals are due no later than 2:00pm, June 10, 2026, at BidLocker: <https://bidlocker.us/details/5920>

A voluntary pre-proposal conference for all potential prime contractors is scheduled for May 20, 2026, at 11:00am on Zoom. Interested Proposers and subcontractors are encouraged to attend to obtain information about the RFP requirements.

Zoom Meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86119858460?pwd=G2LBYkAhJWINJpCHZ9KTbV2oQZWXB.1>

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What's in a name? It's succession, legacy, and celebration in Japan's Kabuki theater.

By Yuri Kageyama
The Associated Press

TOKYO — Handing down a name over generations is a central part of the Japanese traditional theater art of Kabuki, and that ceremony gets celebrated at theaters and special events every few years.

Now, the ritual is taking place with the eighth Kikugoro, who is having that honor passed down from his 83-year-old father, the seventh Kikugoro, who in turn got that name from his father.

“Taking on the name is about taking on the spirit and responsibility that’s created and getting passed down over generations by those who came before us,” the younger Kikugoro, Kazuyasu Terajima, told reporters recently.

“The job of the Kabuki actor is to carry on and develop in the present what we have inherited from our predecessors and make sure it gets passed on to those who come after us.”

Another famous family name in Kabuki is Danjuro, whose name succession for the 13th Danjuro happened in 2022.

A Japanese theatrical tradition that's vibrant today

Kabuki, dating to the 1600s, is still very much alive in modern-day Japan. The hit film *Kokuho*, nominated for this year's Oscars in makeup and hairstyling, is one proof of Kabuki's continuing popularity, becoming the biggest grossing live-action movie for the home market in Japanese filmmaking history.

Kabuki showcases gut-wrenching stories about brave samurai who assume a hidden identity to avenge an injustice, or a



beautiful maiden who turns into a serpent, combining live music, dance, and song with stylized acting — with all the roles played by men, wearing colorful costumes and plastered makeup.

The Kabuki actors specializing in women roles are called “onnagata,” while others like Kikugoro play both men and women.

What often strikes westerners about Kabuki is the utter abandonment of any attempt to portray reality, as things might appear on the surface, or how people might behave naturally. The actors strike dramatic poses called “mie” in the middle of their lines to drive home the idea of courage or flight from pursuit. Experts refer that moment to conveying a picture, a

moment often accentuated by the rhythmical clatter of two pieces of wood, which are like claves.

The actors' lines are often delivered in singsong poetry. The live music is an integral part of the play in setting the scene, with thunderous giant drums evoking thunder or, when played more softly, gently falling snow. Tinkling bells might portray floating butterflies.

The backdrop is a revolving spectacular set, such as cherry trees showering pink paper petals. Pieces may have elements of acrobatics, such as an actor playing a fox, dancing with joy, suspended by wires from the ceiling.

One of the fun aspects of Kabuki is the costume and character changes that

KABUKI TRADITIONS. Kabuki actors, from right to left, the seventh Kikugoro Onoe, his son Kikunosuke Onoe, and his grandson, Ushinosuke Onoe, pose for a photo after a press conference in Tokyo, in this May 27, 2024 file photo. Handing down a name over generations is a central part of the Japanese traditional theater art of Kabuki, and that ceremony gets celebrated at theaters and special events every few years. (Kyodo News via AP, File)

happen right on stage before the audience, transforming a human character into a demon, for instance, sometimes with the help of stagehands cloaked in anonymous black costuming called “kurogo.”

Kabuki echoes Shakespearean theater with universal themes

Yet the parallels with Shakespearean theater are stark. One popular play, *The Love Suicides at Sonezaki*, is about young lovers who choose to die together, a Romeo and Juliet of Kabuki.

The parallels are coincidental. Chikamatsu Monzaemon, who wrote the piece for Japan's Bunraku puppet theater, lived during Japan's 18th century isolationist Tokugawa period and is believed to have never read Shakespeare, who had penned the similar love story decades before Chikamatsu.

For the new Kikugoro, the 48-year-old Terajima, it's a role he was born into like his predecessors. He has trained from childhood, but stressed he has no qualms or hesitation about having been destined from birth to be Kikugoro.

“I totally adored and admired my predecessors,” he said at the Foreign Correspondents' Club in Tokyo.

“First of all, I am filled with gratitude to our predecessors who created great works that continue to be loved by generations

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