



China begins operating world's largest radio telescope

BEIJING (AP) — China has begun operating the world's largest radio telescope to help search for extraterrestrial life. The project, along with the recent launch of China's second space station, demonstrates the country's rising astronomical ambitions and its pursuit of international scientific prestige. The official Xinhua News Agency said hundreds of astronomers and enthusiasts attended the launch of the Five-hundred-meter Aperture Spherical Telescope, or FAST. Researchers quoted by state media said FAST would search for gravitational waves, detect radio emissions from stars and galaxies, and listen for signs of intelligent extraterrestrial life. The telescope, measuring 500 meters in diameter, is nestled in a lush green karst landscape in southern Guizhou province. Construction took five years and cost \$180 million. Its size surpasses that of the 300-meter Arecibo Observatory in Puerto Rico.

Indonesia detains ship with cargo of unregistered fertilizer

BALI, Indonesia (AP) — Indonesian authorities say they have detained a ship carrying an unregistered cargo of nearly 30 tons of fertilizer that may have been intended for use in making illegal fishing bombs. Explosives are sometimes used to stun fish so they can be easily gathered. Officials said the ship was intercepted off the tourist island of Bali. It was headed for Selayar, an island off the southern coast of Sulawesi. The director of the police economic crimes unit, Agus Setya, said there have been three similar cases since April in which police suspected fertilizer was to be used for making fishing explosives. Local media reported last year that two women were killed in an explosion at a housing complex in South Sulawesi where police said fishing bombs were being made.

Cambodian court gives two Chinese life in prison for drugs

PHNOM PENH, Cambodia (AP) — A Cambodian court has sentenced two Chinese citizens to life in prison after finding them guilty of producing and trafficking heroin and methamphetamine in one of the country's biggest drug cases. The Phnom Penh municipal court found Deng Yuan Ping, 53, and Ly Yong, 42, guilty of smuggling 120 pounds of the illicit drugs worth an estimated \$3 million from Laos in June last year. The drugs were believed destined for both Cambodia and other countries. Two Cambodian men involved in the case also received life sentences, one in absentia as police are still seeking him. A report earlier this year from the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime described Cambodia as an increasingly important hub for smuggling heroin and methamphetamine as well as chemicals used in their manufacture. At the time of the arrests, police said most of the drugs were intended for Taiwan after being diluted in Phnom Penh to increase their bulk and therefore their value. Ly and Deng were described as familiar with drug-making processes. The drugs seized were 84 pounds of crystal methamphetamine, 35 pounds of methamphetamine tablets, and 12 ounces of heroin.

Snake wrapped around armrest halts 'bullet' train

TOKYO (AP) — A passenger recently spotted a snake curled around the armrest of another passenger's seat on a Japanese Shinkansen "bullet" train, forcing the train to make an unscheduled stop. No one was injured in the incident. The train's operator, JR Tokai, or Central Japan Railway Co., said the passenger sitting in the reserved seat was unaware the snake was wrapped around his armrest for about 50 minutes until the person behind him saw it and notified a conductor. Experts suspected the snake may have been brought onto the train accidentally in someone's luggage or with maintenance equipment. The footlong snake, initially thought to be a small type of python, was later identified as a rat snake after police consulted with a local zoo, according to Japanese media. Railway spokesman Atsuo Utano said the train crew made an announcement asking if anyone had lost a pet snake and informing passengers of an unscheduled stop, but nobody came forward. The super-express train made a stop at Hamamatsu station about 25 minutes later. Railway police removed the snake and the train departed in about one minute, Utano said. He said the train arrived in Hiroshima, its destination, on time. The snake incident was not the first on the high-speed "bullet" train line. Five years ago, a train crew spotted a snake on an unoccupied seat, according to the railway.

Seoul says North Korean soldier crossed border to defect

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — South Korea's military has said a North Korean soldier crossed the border between the rivals to defect. South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff said military officials were investigating the North Korean soldier, who defected across the central-east portion of the military demarcation line, which is inside the 2.5-mile-wide Demilitarized Zone that separates the countries. The military provided no other details. The Koreans have shared the world's most heavily fortified border since the end of the 1950-1953 Korean War. The conflict ended with an armistice, not a peace treaty, leaving the Korean Peninsula in a technical state of war. Despite the heavy military presence at the border, North Korean soldiers occasionally find room to sneak into the South. Another North Korean soldier defected in June last year after crossing the military demarcation line. In 2012, a North Korean soldier managed to walk south of barbed-wire fences without being caught by guards, which led to criticism on how South Korean soldiers were guarding the border. More than 29,000 North Koreans have defected to capitalist South Korea since the end of the Korean War, according to Seoul's government. Most of them reached South Korea after travelling to China.



POACHING PREVENTION. A mahout guides a forest department elephant while demolishing a house in Bandardubi village, on the periphery of the Kaziranga National Park in northeastern Assam state, India. Authorities ordered the demolition of about 300 houses in three villages to evict people living on the periphery of the rhino sanctuary to stop rampant poaching of the rare animal, a top police official said. Two people were killed and several others were injured when villagers clashed with police while protesting the demolition of their homes. (AP Photo/Anupam Nath)

Two killed while protesting evictions near Indian rhino park

By Anupam Nath
The Associated Press

BANDARDUBI, India — Two people were killed and several others were injured when police tried to stop protests against the demolition of homes near an Indian rhino sanctuary, police said.

Authorities had ordered the demolition of about 300 houses in three villages to evict people living on the periphery of Kaziranga National Park in northeastern India to stop rampant poaching of the rare rhinos, said Mukesh Aggarwal, a top police official.

The villagers pelted the police with stones, injuring around 10 policemen, and security forces responded by firing rubber bullets and tear gas to disperse the protesting villagers, said Mukesh Sahay, police chief in Assam state. Two people were killed in the skirmish that followed, Sahay said.

The bodies of two protesters have been sent for an autopsy, police said.

Around 40 people who were injured in the clashes were hospitalized, he said.

Park and district authorities used bull-

dozers and domesticated elephants, guided by mahouts, to pull down the thatched houses.

Community leaders and conservation groups have long demanded that the boundary areas of the park be cleared of human habitation. Local residents say many of the villagers have illegally settled in the area. Some of the settlers face charges of aiding and abetting poachers to kill rhinos inside Kaziranga.

"Fourteen rhinos were killed by poachers in Kaziranga this year. Last year, 17 rhinos were victims of poaching," said Subhasis Das, a forest official at the park, which has the largest number of rhinos in the world.

All five of the world's rhino species are under constant threat from poachers seeking their horns to sell on the black market. Demand is high in countries such as China and Vietnam, where people mistakenly believe consuming rhino horns can increase male potency.

Kaziranga is hailed by wildlife activists as a conservation success. The reserve had 75 rhinos in 1905. In 1966, the number of rhinos in Kaziranga was put at 366. According to a 2015 estimate, the number has risen to 2,401.

Uber starts food delivery in Japan after ride-share stumbles

By Yuri Kageyama
AP Business Writer

TOKYO — Uber, which has struggled to win Japan over to its ride-sharing service, is hoping to fare better with takeout deliveries.

UberEats has opened, initially just in central Tokyo, ranging from simple dishes costing just hundreds of yen to Michelin-star dining at the equivalent of hundreds of dollars.

Delivery is free at first, although fees are expected to be added at a later date.

Consumers download a software application in iOS, Android, or a desktop version to choose food off menus from 150 restaurants.

Drivers hired by UberEats are tapped online, pick up food at restaurants, and make deliveries, ensuring food arrives relatively hot and fresh. The global average for deliveries is about a half hour.

Japan is the eighth nation, and Tokyo the 34th city, for UberEats, already available in San Francisco, Dubai, Singapore, and Paris.

Ride-sharing has stumbled in Japan partly

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Fijian Dollar	2.0537
Hong Kong Dollar	7.7564
Indian Rupee	66.611
Indonesian Rupiah	13042
Iranian Rial	31500
Japanese Yen	101.35
Laos New Kip	8122.0
Malaysian Ringgit	4.1385
Nepal Rupee	106.53
Pakistani Rupee	104.45
Papua N.G. Kina	3.169
Philippine Peso	48.467
Russian Ruble	62.879
Saudi Riyal	3.7537
Singapore Dollar	1.3631
South Korean Won	1102.1
Sri Lankan Rupee	146.67
Taiwan Dollar	31.355
Thai Baht	34.59
Vietnam Dong	22451