

Philippine court convicts nine Chinese of poaching

MANILA, The Philippines (AP) — A Philippine court has convicted nine Chinese fishermen of poaching and taking hundreds of endangered giant sea turtles from a disputed shoal in the South China Sea. The fishermen were fined nearly \$103,000 each, but imposed no jail term. They were arrested in May at Half Moon Shoal and their boat and catch of 555 endangered sea turtles were seized. The arrests sparked another spat between the Asian neighbors in the increasingly volatile South China Sea. Judge Ambrosio de Luna of the regional trial court in western Palawan province found them guilty of violating the country's fisheries code, ordering them to pay a fine of \$100,000 each for poaching in Philippine waters plus \$2,666 each for taking wildlife.

Elderly South Korean man gets 20 years in jail for arson

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — An elderly dementia patient in South Korea has been sentenced to 20 years in prison for setting a fire at a hospital for the elderly in southern South Korea in May that killed 22 people. The 81-year-old man was convicted of arson and manslaughter, according to Gwangju District Court spokesman Han Ji-hyeong. The man denied responsibility for the fire, but the court gave weight to security camera footage and the testimonies of hospital employees to establish that he set the fire in a hospital room, Han said. The incident raised concerns about lax fire regulations because it happened when the country was undergoing soul searching over public safety following April's ferry sinking that killed more than 300 people. After investigating the fire, police concluded that the death toll rose because the hospital did not have sprinklers and did not have enough employees on night duty at the time of the incident. The South Korean government in August announced tightened safety rules for senior facilities, requiring hospitals to install sprinklers within the next three years and strengthen personnel on night duty and on weekends and holidays.

Smuggled medicine floods Afghan market

KABUL, Afghanistan (AP) — A new report says half of all medicine available on the Afghan market has either been smuggled into the country or made under sub-standard conditions in neighboring Pakistan. The Independent Joint Anti-Corruption Monitoring and Evaluation Committee said in a recent report that up to 300 companies in Pakistan are producing poor quality drugs exclusively for Afghanistan because their products do not meet Pakistani government standards. The report says that since there is no Afghan government regulation of pharmaceuticals, the medicine can be sold in Afghanistan. Afghanistan's pharmaceuticals market is worth up to \$800 million a year. But the quality of drugs available in the country is so poor that many Afghan people are forced to travel abroad for medical treatment.

U.S. to open Peace Corps program in Myanmar

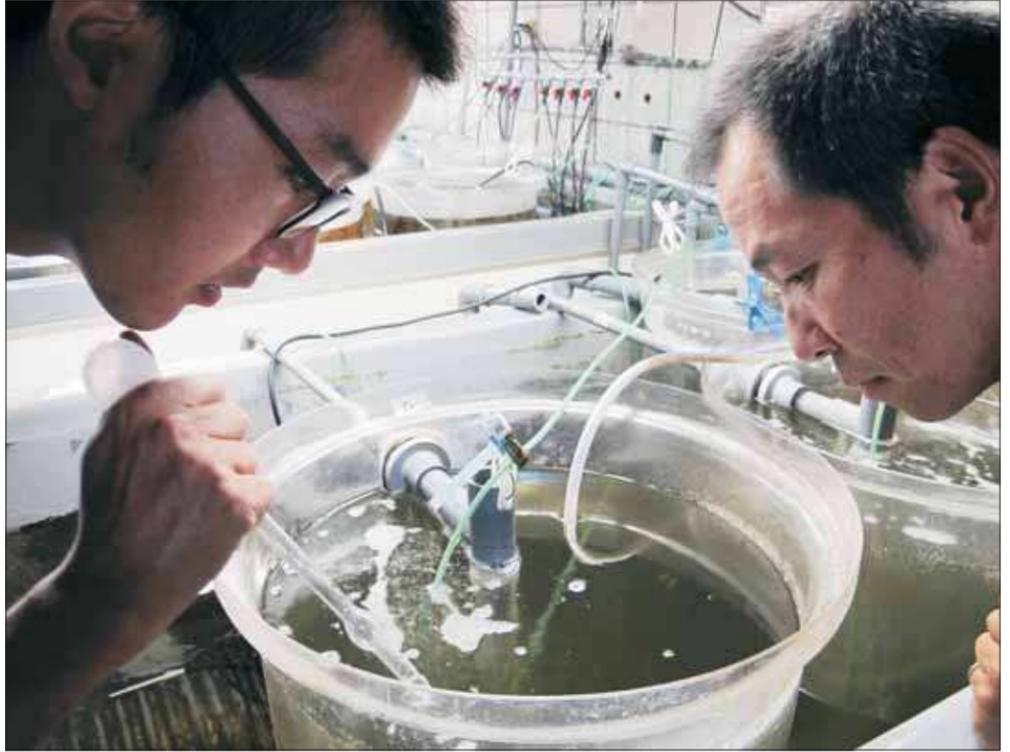
NAYPYITAW, Myanmar (AP) — The United States will start sending Peace Corps volunteers for the first time next year to Myanmar. The White House says the first volunteers will arrive in late 2015. They'll train for three months in Myanmar's language, culture, and technical needs. Then they'll volunteer at sites in Myanmar, also known as Burma, for two years. Deputy national security adviser Ben Rhodes says Myanmar's government formally invited the Peace Corps to open a program last year. He says the Peace Corps is ideally suited to help the country as it transitions to democracy and works to promote economic prosperity. Rhodes says the program also shows the U.S. commitment to Myanmar and its people.

Bangladesh man gets death penalty for war crimes

DHAKA, Bangladesh (AP) — A special tribunal in Bangladesh has sentenced a collaborator of the Pakistani army to death for his role in killings during the country's 1971 independence war. Mobarak Hossain, a former commander of a collaborators' group, was given the death penalty after being convicted of killing 33 civilians in the eastern Bangladeshi district of Brahmanbaria. He was also separately sentenced to life in prison on a charge of abducting and killing a man during the war. In 1971, Hossain was a member of Bangladesh's largest Islamist party, Jamaat-e-Islami, which openly campaigned against the creation of Bangladesh, then the eastern wing of Pakistan. Bangladesh blames Pakistani soldiers and local collaborators for the deaths of 3 million people during the nine-month independence war against Pakistan.

Two endangered elephants found dead in Indonesia

JAMBI, Indonesia (AP) — Two endangered Sumatran elephants have been found dead in western Indonesia and authorities believe they were killed by poachers. Krismanko Padang, head of the nongovernment group Indonesia Elephant Conservation Forum, said carcasses of the two male elephants were discovered near a palm oil plantation in the Tebo district of Jambi province on Sumatra island. Their skulls were found without tusks, Krismanko said. He added that police who were investigating discovered some bullet shells near the scene. He urged the police to thoroughly investigate to find the perpetrators or their masterminds. He quoted villagers as saying a group of about 30 elephants had been wandering around the region in recent weeks. In September, three elephants were found poisoned in Aceh in northern Sumatra. Fewer than 3,000 Sumatran elephants are left in the wild. Environmentalists say they could be extinct within three decades unless they are protected.



HOLY MACKEREL! Scientist Goro Yamazaki, right, looks on as his colleague, Ryosuke Yazawa, collects mackerel fry to be used as surrogates to produce tuna at a lab of the Tokyo University of Marine Science and Technology in Tateyama, southeast of Tokyo. The researchers are fine-tuning a technology to use mackerel surrogates to spawn the bluefin, a process they hope will enable fisheries to raise the huge, torpedo-shaped fish more quickly and at a lower cost than conventional aquaculture. The aim: to relieve pressure on wild fish stocks while preserving vital genetic diversity. (AP Photo/Elaine Kurtenbach)

Surrogate sushi: Japan biotech for bluefin tuna

By Elaine Kurtenbach
AP Business Writer

TATEYAMA, Japan — Of all the overfished fish in the seas, luscious, fatty bluefin tuna are among the most threatened. Marine scientist Goro Yamazaki, who is known in the seaside community of Tateyama as “Young Mr. Fish,” is working to ensure the species survives.

Yamazaki is fine-tuning a technology to use mackerel surrogates to spawn the bluefin, a process he hopes will enable fisheries to raise the huge, torpedo-shaped fish more quickly and at a lower cost than conventional aquaculture. The aim: to relieve pressure on wild fish stocks while preserving vital genetic diversity.

Yamazaki, 48, grew up south of Tokyo in the ancient Buddhist capital of Kamakura, fishing and swimming at nearby beaches. His inspiration hit 15 years ago while he was out at sea during graduate studies at the Tokyo University of Marine Science and Technology, and a school of bluefin tuna streaked by.

“They swam just under the boat, and they were shining metallic blue. A beautiful animal,” Yamazaki said. “Before that, tuna was just an ingredient in sushi or sashimi, but that experience changed bluefin tuna into a wild animal to me.”

An animal, that like so many other species, is endangered due to soaring consumption and

aggressive modern harvesting methods that have transformed the bluefin, also known as *honmaguro* and *kuromaguro*, from a delicacy into a commonly available, if pricey, option at any sushi bar.

Experts in charge of managing Atlantic bluefin met recently in Italy and raised the quota for catches of Atlantic bluefin tuna by 20 percent over three years. Stocks have recovered somewhat after a severe decline over the past two decades as fishermen harvested more to meet soaring demand, especially in Japan.

But virtually in tandem with that, the International Union for Conservation of Nature put Pacific bluefin tuna on its “Red List,” designating it as a species threatened by extinction.

About a quarter of all tuna are consumed by the Japanese, according to the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization. They gobble up most — between 60 percent and 80 percent — of all bluefin. Rosy, fatty *chu-toro* from the upper part of bluefin bellies, is especially prized for sushi and sashimi.

Out at his seaside lab in Tateyama, on the far northern rim of Tokyo Bay, Yamazaki and other researchers are hoping their latest attempt to get mackerel to spawn bluefin will prove a success. An earlier attempt failed due to what he thinks was a problem with the water temperature.

Yamazaki's technique involves extracting

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Hong Kong Dollar	7.7540
Indian Rupee	62.032
Indonesian Rupiah	12206
Iranian Rial	26683
Japanese Yen	118.63
Laos New Kip	8056.9
Malaysian Ringgit	3.3832
Nepal Rupee	98.85
Pakistani Rupee	101.86
Papua N.G. Kina	2.5638
Philippine Peso	44.913
Russian Ruble	49.467
Saudi Riyal	3.753
Singapore Dollar	1.3044
South Korean Won	1108.1
Sri Lankan Rupee	131.15
Taiwan Dollar	30.957
Thai Baht	32.85
Vietnam Dong	21398