



Indonesia nabs suspected smugglers of leopard, lion cubs

PEKANBARU, Indonesia (AP) — Indonesian police have arrested two men suspected of being part of a ring that poaches and trades in endangered animals and seized from them several lion and leopard cubs and dozens of turtles. One of the suspects, identified only as Yatno, was arrested in Pekanbaru, the capital of Riau province, after picking up suspicious boxes from a speedboat at a port in Dumai district, said Andri Sudarmadi, Riau police's chief detective. Police found several boxes containing four lion cubs, a leopard cub, and 58 turtles in his van. The turtles and the leopard cub are listed as critically endangered by the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, or CITES, while the lion cubs are listed as endangered. Yatno's arrest led police to capture another suspect who was planning to sell the smuggled wildlife to a trader on Java island, Sudarmadi said at a news conference. The second suspect was identified only by his initials, IS. Sudarmadi said the two men were allegedly part of an international trafficking syndicate and that they bought the haul from a smuggler in Malaysia. They told police each cub is valued at \$32,000 on the black market, while the turtles fetch \$1,200 apiece, Sudarmadi said. The two suspects, if found guilty, face up to five years in jail and \$7,000 in fines for attempting to smuggle wildlife.

Guam judge rejects effort to nullify cockfighting ban

HAGATNA, Guam (AP) — A judge in the U.S. territory of Guam has ruled against a local businessman's attempt to continue cockfighting despite a new American law banning it. U.S. District Court of Guam magistrate judge Joaquin Manibusan Jr. denied Sefrey Linsangan's motion for a preliminary injunction against the new prohibition, the *Pacific Daily News* reported. Linsangan, described in court papers as a business owner involved in "gamefowl raising and competition" for 40 years, argued the ban was unconstitutional. "It is not only part of his culture, custom, and tradition but also a hobby, pastime, exercise, and sport," the lawsuit said. President Donald Trump last year signed a law banning all animal fighting in U.S. territories. The law took effect in mid-December. Prior to the law, cockfighting had been illegal in the 50 states but not U.S. territories. The judge wrote that Linsangan failed to show how the federal ban deprives him of "life, liberty, or property without due process of law." He said Linsangan didn't show that enacting the cockfighting ban discriminated against him or any person on account of his race, language, or religion. Manibusan said the law applies uniformly throughout the 50 states and territories. He said he sympathized with the argument that the people of Guam have been disenfranchised because the territory's residents aren't allowed to vote for president, nor are they allowed to elect voting members of congress. "The remedy for such disenfranchisement lies within the political, not judicial, process," he wrote. Governor Wanda Vázquez of Puerto Rico, another U.S. territory, signed a bill authorizing cockfighting in defiance of the federal ban. The measure says it is legal for Puerto Rico to host cockfights as long as people don't export or import cocks or any goods or services related to cockfighting.

Seniors join Indian citizenship law protests

GAUHATI, India (AP) — Senior citizens in India's northeastern Assam state have protested against a new citizenship law passed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government that excludes Muslims. About 1,500 senior citizens held a protest in the state capital, Gauhati. Protests in the state against the law have spread across the country, claiming at least 23 lives. "Until our last drop of blood, we will not allow them to implement it," said Gajendra Nath Pathak, 81, who joined the senior citizens' protest. Bina Bora, 70, said she couldn't sit at home while other people were protesting the law. "Why is the government forcefully implementing such a law, which will destroy unity," she asked. The new Citizenship Amendment Act allows Hindus, Christians, and other religious minorities who are in India illegally to become citizens if they can show they were persecuted because of their religion in Muslim-majority Bangladesh, Pakistan, and Afghanistan. It does not apply to Muslims. Thousands of people have protested in Assam recently, setting up blockades and disrupting traffic and business. At least five people were killed in the state when police fired to quell the demonstrations. Assam was the site of an earlier government program to create an official list of citizens to weed out foreigners living in the state illegally. About 2 million people were excluded from the list, about half Hindu and half Muslim, and have been asked to prove their citizenship or else be considered foreign. Opposition parties say the Citizenship Amendment Act could provide a fast track to naturalization for many of the Hindus left off Assam's citizenship list, while explicitly leaving out Muslims.

Nepal detains 122 Chinese on suspicion of financial crimes

KATHMANDU, Nepal (AP) — Police in Nepal have detained 122 Chinese nationals who are suspected of being involved in financial crimes. Police official Shailesh Thapa said the suspects were detained in Kathmandu, Nepal's capital. Details of the cases were not released because the investigation was still open, but the suspects are likely to be presented before a judge to determine how long they can be held for investigation. Among them were 116 men and eight women. They were held at different detention centers in Kathmandu. Police were also investigating if they had violated immigration laws by overstaying their visas. "As far as I know, these citizens are suspected of engaging in cross-border online fraud activities, and the cases are currently under investigation," said Chinese foreign ministry spokesman Geng Shuang. "It is an important operation carried out by the police of China and Nepal. China is willing to strengthen cooperation with Nepal in various fields, including law enforcement, to jointly combat cross-border crimes and promote friendly exchanges between the two countries."



SOLAR SHOW. Students hold special filters to view a solar eclipse at Santiratwithayalai School in Bangkok, Thailand, on December 26, 2019. People along a swath of southern Asia recently gazed at the sky in marvel of a "ring of fire" solar eclipse. (AP Photo/Sakchai Lalit)

Thousands in Asia marvel at "ring of fire" solar eclipse

BANDA ACEH, Indonesia (AP) — People along a swath of southern Asia gazed at the sky in marvel of a "ring of fire" solar eclipse.

The so-called annular eclipse, in which a thin outer ring of the sun is still visible, could be seen along a path stretching from India and Pakistan to Thailand and Indonesia.

Authorities in Indonesia provided telescopes and hundreds of special glasses to protect viewers' eyes. Thousands of people gazed at the sky and cheered and clapped as the sun transformed into a dark orb for more than two minutes, briefly plunging the sky into darkness. Hundreds of others prayed at nearby mosques.

"How amazing to see the 'ring of fire' when

Pakistan study blames HIV outbreak in kids on bad healthcare

By Kathy Gannon
The Associated Press

ISLAMABAD — A group of Pakistani doctors blames a recent outbreak of HIV among children in a southern city on poor healthcare practices such as using dirty needles and contaminated blood, according to a statement.

The doctors are also urging Pakistan's government to do more to understand how the virus went from high-risk groups such as drug users and sex workers to the general population. They also warned that there isn't enough medication in the city of Ratodero, in southern Sindh province, where 591 children need medical treatment.

The outbreak is extremely worrying, said the doctors, calling it "one of the worst" in Pakistan. They studied medical data of 31,239



AP Photo/Rifka Majid

the sun disappeared slowly," said Firman Syahrizal, a resident of Sinabang in Indonesia's Banda Aceh province who witnessed the eclipse with his family.

The previous annular solar eclipse in February 2017 was also visible over a slice of Indonesia.

people in Ratodero, where the HIV outbreak took place and who agreed to the study.

Out of that group, 930 were positive for HIV, with 604 of them being younger than five years of age and 763 younger than 16 years, according to the study published by the international *Lancet Infectious Disease Journal*.

By the end of July when the study was being completed, only one in three children had started antiretroviral treatment "due to an inadequate supply of drugs and a lack of trained staff," the statement said.

The study said 50 of the children examined are showing signs of "severe immunodeficiency" but did not specify if they have full-blown AIDS.

"The results, which are the first scientific report on the outbreak, appear to confirm observations ... that HIV was mostly trans-

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Fijian Dollar	2.1106
Hong Kong Dollar	7.7776
Indian Rupee	71.761
Indonesian Rupiah	13916
Iranian Rial	42029
Japanese Yen	107.92
Laos New Kip	8904.9
Malaysian Ringgit	4.1005
Nepal Rupee	115.4
Pakistani Rupee	154.42
Papua N.G. Kina	3.381
Philippine Peso	51.1
Russian Ruble	61.935
Saudi Riyal	3.7515
Singapore Dollar	1.3484
South Korean Won	1165.2
Sri Lankan Rupee	181.4
Taiwan Dollar	30.032
Thai Baht	30.18
Vietnam Dong	23224