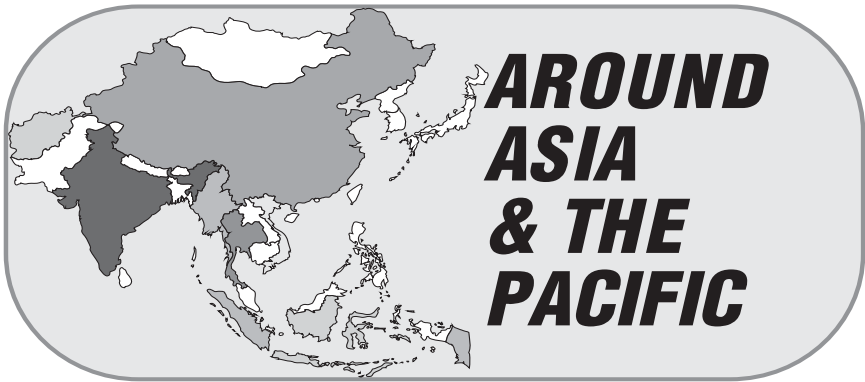




Taiwan plans to cull up to 120,000 green iguanas

PINGTUNG, Taiwan — Taiwan plans to cull up to 120,000 green iguanas, with supporters urging humane methods to bring down the animal’s population, which is wreaking havoc on the island’s agricultural sector. Around 200,000 of the reptiles are believed to be in the island’s southern and central areas, which are heavily dependent on farming, according to Chiu Kuo-hao of the Forestry and Nature Conservation Agency. Specially recruited hunting teams killed about 70,000 iguanas last year, with bounties of up to \$15 each. Local governments have asked the public to help identify iguana nests and they recommend fishing spears as the most humane means of killing the animals. “A lot of people bought them as cute little pets, not realizing how big and long-lived they would become, so they set them free in the wild, where they’ve really taken to the Taiwanese environment,” said Lee Chi-ya of the agricultural department in the southern county of Pingtung. “That’s allowed them to reproduce at a considerable rate, necessitating us to cull them and restore the balance of nature.” Green iguanas have no natural predators in Taiwan and have moved into areas that can be difficult to access, mostly forests and the edges of towns. Males can grow to about 6 feet long, weigh 11 pounds, and live up to 20 years, while females can lay up to 80 eggs at a time. Mainly native to Central America and the Caribbean, they are not aggressive despite possessing sharp tails and jaws and razor-like teeth. The reptiles subsist on a diet of mostly fruit, leaves, and plants, with the occasional small animal thrown in. Though popular as pets, they are difficult to keep healthy in captivity and many die within a year. Hsu Wei-chieh, secretary general of the Reptile Conservation Association of Taiwan, said his group wants to teach farmers how to stay safe, protect their property, and treat the iguanas in a humane manner. “We’re here to help see that this project is carried out smoothly,” said Hsu. Tsai Po-wen, a vegetable farmer in Pingtung, said the training was paying off. “We used to attack them, but it wasn’t any use. Now we’re learning more effective, safer methods,” Tsai said.

Nissan plans job and production cuts in the U.S.

TOKYO (AP) — Nissan is slashing production at its U.S. plants and offering buyouts to factory workers there as part of the Japanese automaker’s urgent efforts to return to profitability. The move is part of Nissan Motor Corp.’s plans, announced two months ago, to slash 9,000 jobs globally, including in China, after it racked up a quarterly loss due to sinking sales and ballooning inventory. At Nissan’s plant in Smyrna, Tennessee, one production line will maintain two shifts, while the other line will consolidate to one shift, the company said. The Smyrna plant makes Murano, Pathfinder, and Rogue sport-utility vehicles and the Infiniti QX60 luxury model. In the Canton plant in Mississippi, which makes the Altima sedan and Frontier pickup, Nissan is reducing the speed on one line and consolidating another. In the Decherd plant in Tennessee, which makes engines, shift adjustments will be more gradual. Some will be maintained while others will be reduced by one shift, it said. When it announced its recovery plan in November, Nissan didn’t give details on where the job cuts might come. The workforce reduction of 9,000 people amounts to about 6% of its more than 133,000 global employees. The company also plans to slash its global production capacity by 20%. Nissan, based in the port city of Yokohama, said the latest offers count toward its overall job reduction plans, and are designed to make its operations more efficient and flexible. Separately, Nissan and Japanese rival Honda Motor Co. are working to form a joint holding company to integrate their businesses, planned for 2026. Nissan and Honda announced in March they will work together on electric vehicles. In August, they said that partnership was being broadened. They plan to have a “definitive agreement” by June. Nissan is set to release its October-December financial results on February 13. Nissan stocks jumped 2% in Tokyo trading after the reports about the U.S. plans surfaced.

Japan slaps new sanctions on ban evaders

TOKYO (AP) — Japan’s cabinet last month approved additional sanctions against Russia over its war on Ukraine, including freezing the assets of dozens of individuals and groups and banning exports to dozens of organizations in Russia and several other countries that have allegedly helped it evade sanctions. Chief cabinet secretary Yoshimasa Hayashi said the approval of the additional sanctions shows Japan’s commitment to efforts by the Group of Seven leading industrialized nations to strengthen sanctions against Russia for its invasion of Ukraine. Japan has imposed several previous rounds of sanctions, and the latest step comes after Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba reaffirmed the country’s policy at an online G7 summit in mid-December following Russia’s increased cooperation with North Korea and the use of third countries in evading sanctions. “It is Japan’s contribution as part of the international effort toward achieving global peace and resolving the problems surrounding Ukraine because of the Russian invasion,” Hayashi said. According to a joint statement by Japan’s foreign, trade, and finance ministries, 11 individuals, 29 organizations, and three banks from Russia, as well as a North Korean trading company executive and a Georgian bank that allegedly helped evade sanctions, were added to an asset freeze list. The cabinet approved total export bans on 22 Russian organizations, including ones related to the military, as well as technology and machinery makers. Export restrictions will also be applied to 31 non-Russian groups the government says helped Russia to divert restricted goods and evade sanctions — 11 based in Hong Kong, seven in mainland China, eight in Turkey, two in Kyrgyzstan, and one each in Thailand, the UAE, and Kazakhstan. It also approved a list of 335 items that cannot be exported to Russia. That list includes construction vehicle engines and components, motorized bicycles, communication and acoustic devices, and mechanical tools and valves, according to the trade and industry ministry.



JAPANESE ICON. Ichiro Suzuki of the Seattle Mariners hits a solo home run during the sixth inning of a Major League Baseball (MLB) game against the Los Angeles Angels in Anaheim, California, in this May 31, 2009 file photo. Ichiro has been elected to MLB’s Hall of Fame, the first Japanese player to receive the honor. (AP Photo/Mark J. Terrill, File)

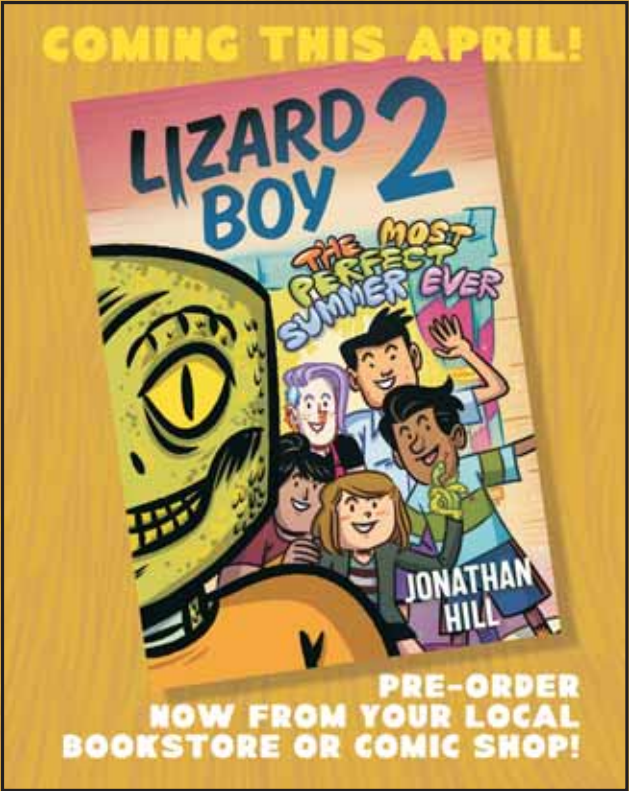
Ichiro has his Hall of Fame moment. For Japan, he’s more than just a baseball star.

By Stephen Wade
AP Sports Writer

TOKYO — Ichiro Suzuki is all about baseball, but he’s much more than that in Japan. Back home, he’s a wellspring of national pride, much like Shohei Ohtani now. His triumphs across the Pacific buoyed the nation as Japan’s economy sputtered through the so-called lost decades of the 1990s and into the 2000s. “He healed the wounds in Japan’s national psyche,” Kiyoteru Tsutsui, professor of sociology at Stanford University, told The Associated Press. He is now the first Japanese player elected to the Baseball Hall of Fame. Ichiro debuted in Major League Baseball in 2001 with the Seattle Mariners, the first Japanese position player to span the Pacific and an instant star. Right-handed pitcher Hideo Nomo preceded him, and Hideki Matsui came just after, both boosting the country’s confidence in a period of national malaise. Tsutsui termed Ichiro a “great cultural export,” akin to Hello Kitty, sushi, manga, and other creations from Japan. “It may not be an exaggeration to say that Ichiro represents Japan’s transition from the faceless economic animal to a producer of global cultural icons,” Tsutsui said. **There was something in Ichiro for every “yakyu” fan** Ichiro started playing baseball at age seven on a Little League team near Nagoya in central Japan. Sure, baseball is baseball, but

the culture around the game — known as “yakyu” (field ball) — is special. He was driven by his father, Nobuyuki Suzuki, and came up through what is often described as a regimented baseball-training system that some link to the martial arts and even samurai history. Ichiro grew to be hip in the majors, which fit the nation’s branding as “Cool Japan.” On the way, he bumped into pressure in Japan to conform, expressed in the saying “deru kugi wa utareru.” Roughly in English: “The nail that sticks up gets hammered down.” “Young people flocked to watch him because they saw his do-it-my-way rebel spirit,” William Kelly, emeritus professor of Japanese studies at Yale University, wrote in an e-mail. “Old fans were drawn to his seriousness of purpose and his force of concentration.” Ichiro developed his unique swing very early, lifting his right leg and almost running to first base before hitting the ball. Repeatedly told in Japan to change it, he declined. His given name Ichiro — “ichi” means “one” in Japanese — started appearing on the back of his jersey in 1994 with the Orix BlueWave. Suzuki is a very common family name, and manager Akira Ohgi wanted to single out Ichiro for attention. “I see Ichiro as an artist, a craftsman,” said Shimpei Miyagawa, an assistant professor at Temple University in Japan. “The point is that Ichiro is someone who stands out in both singular talent and longevity in a game that is ironically played as a team sport.”

Continued on page 4



Asian Currency Exchange Rates	
Units per U.S. dollar as of 1/31	
Bangladesh Taka	121.93
Cambodian Riel	4016.4
China Renminbi	7.1868
Fijian Dollar	2.3216
Hong Kong Dollar	7.7924
Indian Rupee	86.698
Indonesian Rupiah	16387
Iranian Rial	42002
Japanese Yen	155.2
Laos New Kip	21708
Malaysian Ringgit	4.455
Nepal Rupee	138.68
Pakistani Rupee	278.8
Papua N.G. Kina	4.017
Philippine Peso	58.421
Russian Ruble	98.57
Saudi Riyal	3.7508
Singapore Dollar	1.3564
South Korean Won	1457.5
Sri Lankan Rupee	297.9
Taiwan Dollar	32.96
Thai Baht	33.75
Vietnam Dong	25080