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Journal for all the Mariners

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Photo courtesy: TOKOKAI

Japanese Lighthouses Watch over Ships and Seafarers

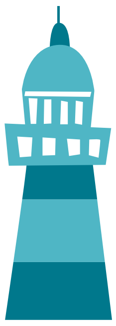
Himesaki Lighthouse

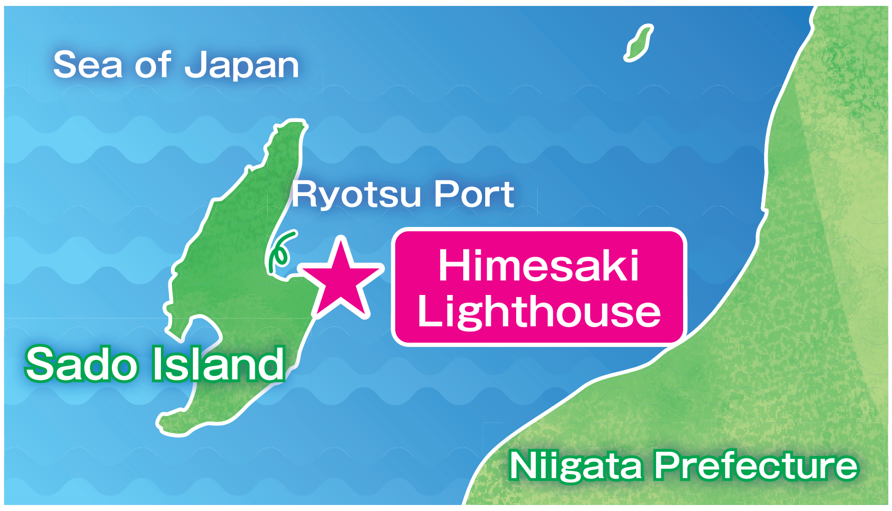
Perched atop the cliffs of Himesaki, this white lighthouse marks the entrance to Ryotsu Port—the gateway to Sado. As the first and most striking landmark visible to incoming ships, it has guided vessels through the Sado Strait since its illumination on December 10, 1895.

Standing for more than 120 years, this is celebrated as the oldest lighthouse in Japan still preserved in its original form. Its historical and cultural importance was internationally recognized in 1997, when it was named one of the world's 100 most notable lighthouses at the International Organization for Marine Aids to Navigation (IALA) International Conference. In 2009, it was further honored as a Modern Industrial Heritage site.

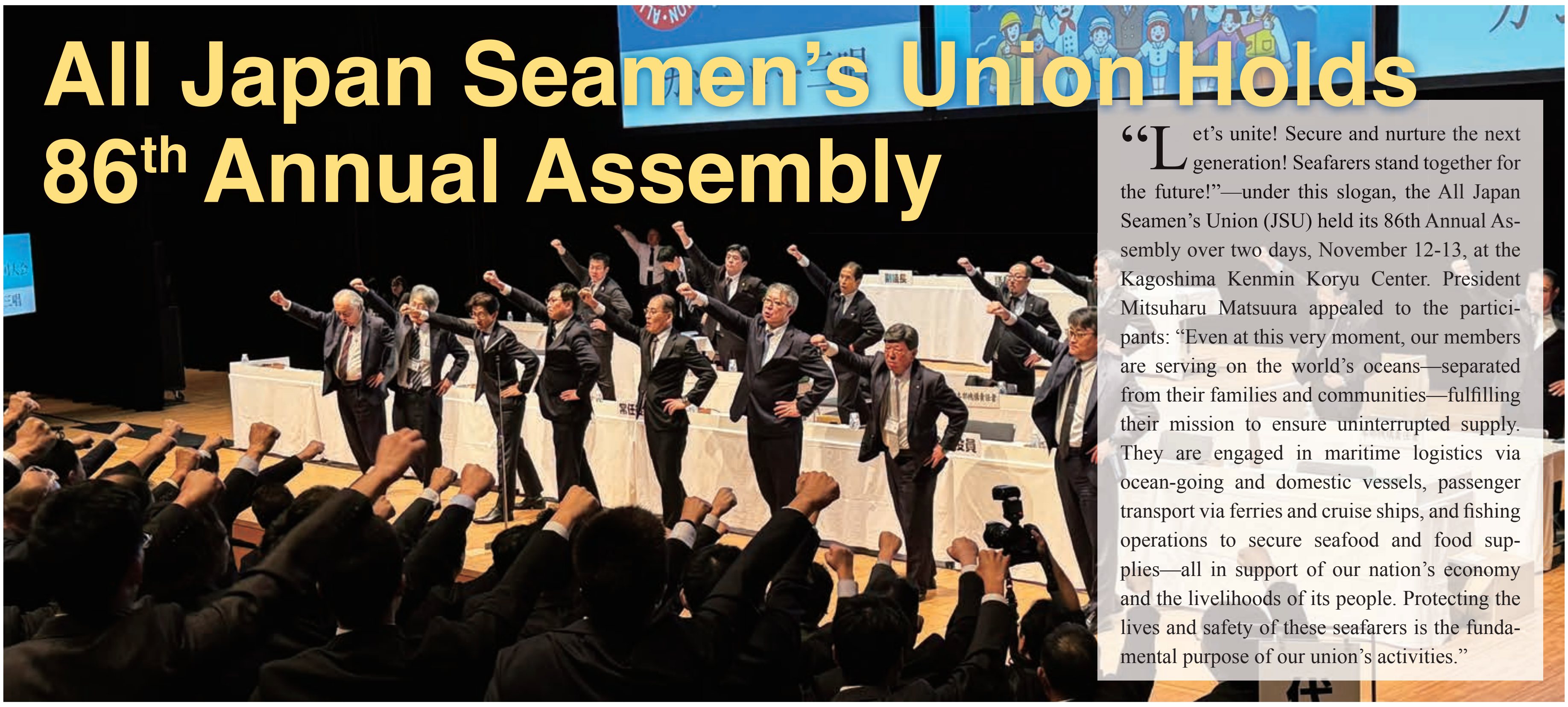
The lighthouse's 1994 renovation posed considerable challenges due to the absence of original blueprints and construction records, requiring the project to move forward amid uncertainty. Preserving the original interior finishes and structural elements demanded exceptional care and expertise. Specialists with deep historical knowledge were brought in to reinforce deteriorated components using advanced technologies, ensuring the structure's durability against future natural disasters. Today, the lighthouse continues to shine, standing as a lasting cultural landmark with a notable history.

Location: Himesaki, Sado-shi, Niigata Prefecture
Start of operation: December 10, 1895
Structure: Steel
Height: 12m
Illumination: Fl W 6s
(white light flashing every 6 seconds)
Range: 18.0 nautical miles (about 33 km)





All Japan Seamen's Union Holds 86th Annual Assembly



"Let's unite! Secure and nurture the next generation! Seafarers stand together for the future!"—under this slogan, the All Japan Seamen's Union (JSU) held its 86th Annual Assembly over two days, November 12-13, at the Kagoshima Kenmin Koryu Center. President Mitsuharu Matsuura appealed to the participants: "Even at this very moment, our members are serving on the world's oceans—separated from their families and communities—fulfilling their mission to ensure uninterrupted supply. They are engaged in maritime logistics via ocean-going and domestic vessels, passenger transport via ferries and cruise ships, and fishing operations to secure seafood and food supplies—all in support of our nation's economy and the livelihoods of its people. Protecting the lives and safety of these seafarers is the fundamental purpose of our union's activities."

3 Major Shipping Companies Announce Interim Results; Post Decline in Both Revenue and Profit

Japan's three major shipping companies have announced their interim consolidated financial results for the period ending September 2025 (April 1 to September 30, 2025), and both revenue and profit for all three companies declined year-on-year. Falling container freight rates weighed on performance, prompting all three companies to make downward revisions in their net profit forecasts for the fiscal year ending in March 2026.

Consolidated Financial Results for 3 Major Companies for 2nd Quarter Ending March 31, 2026

(Figures are rounded down to the nearest million yen. Percentage figures are changes from the previous year.)

		Revenue		Operating profit		Ordinary profit		Profit attributable to owners of parent	
	Unit	¥ million	%	¥ million	%	¥ million	%	¥ million	%
NYK Group	2nd quarter ending March 31, 2026	1,182,101	-10.2	68,046	-41.2	126,833	-56.1	102,252	-61.5
	2nd quarter ending March 31, 2025	1,316,816	12.7	115,628	17	289,239	81.6	265,892	134.5
MOL	2nd quarter ending March 31, 2026	869,772	-3.4	71,823	-19.6	114,607	-54.3	116,209	-53.3
	2nd quarter ending March 31, 2025	900,628	14	89,379	81.3	250,922	62.4	248,591	64.9
"K" Line	2nd quarter ending March 31, 2026	500,565	-7	42,955	-29.7	59,669	-68.1	68,632	-62.5
	2nd quarter ending March 31, 2025	538,015	17.9	61,140	38.3	187,325	126.8	183,218	201.3

NYK

Consolidated revenues amounted to ¥1,182.1 billion, operating profit amounted to ¥68.0 billion, recurring profit amounted to ¥126.8 billion, and profit attributable to owners of parent amounted to ¥102.2 billion. Equity in earnings of unconsolidated subsidiaries and affiliates of ¥62.6 billion in non-operating income was recorded. Within this amount, equity in earnings of affiliates from Ocean Network Express Pte. Ltd. (ONE), our equity-method affiliate, was ¥20.3 billion.

In the liner trade segment, after the tariff policies of the U.S. and China led to a temporary rise during Q1, the market declined due to an increase in shipping capacity following the delivery of new vessels. Freight rates in H1 declined compared to the same period of the previous year, which had seen an upward trend.

For ocean freight in the logistics segment, despite a year-on-year increase in handling volumes, profit declined year-on-year due to lowering freight rates, inflationary pressures, and other such factors.

In the automotive segment, the number of units transported remained at the same level year-on-year. However, profit decreased year-on-year due to lower revenues resulting from the yen's appreciation against the U.S. dollar, as well as higher costs, including cargo handling costs, due to inflation.

In the dry bulk segment, although market conditions for each vessel type improved in Q2, they fell year-on-year during H1. The year-on-year appreciation of the yen and lower profitability in certain vessel types affected market levels.

In the energy segment, VLCC market conditions improved year-on-year due to an increase in cargo demand and other factors, after showing unstable movements in Q1 due to the impact of the conflict on the Middle East. In the VLGC segment, tariff policies of the U.S. and China, as well as other factors, affected changes in trade patterns, which caused the tight supply and demand conditions. As a result, market conditions improved year-on-year. The results for the LNG carrier segment remained steady, supported by medium-to long-term contracts. One-off profits for the offshore segment were recorded due to the start of operations of a new floating production, storage, and offloading (FPSO) unit.

Amid growing uncertainty in the business environment, including economic trends affected by tariff policies and the impact of port entry tax implementation in the U.S. and China, the full-year revenues forecast for FY2025 has been revised downward by ¥30 billion from the previous forecast, with recurring profit projected at ¥210 billion.

MOL

We recorded revenue of ¥869.7 billion, operating profit of ¥71.8 billion, ordinary profit of ¥114.6 billion and profit attributable to owners of parent of ¥116.2 billion.

In the dry bulk business, the Capesize bulker segment saw steady shipments of iron ore from Western Australia and Brazil. For Panamax and smaller vessels, although the market rates for wood chip carriers serving the paper industry remained sluggish due to stagnant domestic demand in China, shipments of minor bulk cargoes such as South American grain, cement, and salt remained firm. In the open hatch vessel business, despite sluggish pulp demand from China, project cargo demand, and the confirmation of lower depreciation expenses following the consolidation of Gearbulk Holding AG as a subsidiary resulted in an increase in profit compared to the previous forecast.

In the energy business, spot market rates for crude oil tankers surged due to geopolitical factors and limited deliveries of newbuilding vessels. Stable earnings from long-term contracts also contributed, resulting in solid profit. Market rates for product tankers temporarily surged due to heightened tensions in the Middle East but slightly softened as shipments of petroleum products decreased amid China's sluggish economy. For chemical tankers, shipping demand weakened, and market rates softened due to economic stagnation in China and Europe.

In the FPSO business, profit increased compared to the previous forecast due to stable earnings secured from existing long-term charter contracts and efficient operations. In the LNG/ethane carrier business, in addition to stable earnings from long-term charter contracts, we rescheduled dry-docking for some vessels and posted one-time non-operating income related to refinancing. We secured profit in the gas infrastructure business through stable operation of existing projects.

In the product transport segment, profit for ONE in the containership business decreased compared to the previous forecast due to the decline in spot freight rates from mid-June onwards caused by pressure from newbuilding vessels, even though spot freight rates for North America temporarily rose following the provisional agreement to reduce tariffs between the U.S. and China in May. In the car carrier segment, in addition to firm demand for transport of completed cars, operational efficiency improved due to the easing of port congestion in Australia and the Middle East, resulting in higher profit compared to the previous forecast.

The domestic terminal business remained firm. In the logistics business, shipments to the U.S. decreased due to the impact of U.S. tariff policies.

While the energy business and the vehicle transport business are performing steadily, a downturn is expected in the containership business and wellbeing & lifestyle business, and the full-year forecast has been revised downward compared to the previous forecast.

'K' Line

Operating revenues totaled ¥500.5 billion; operating income: ¥42.9 billion; ordinary income: ¥59.6 billion; and profit attributable to owners of the parent: ¥68.6 billion. Additionally, ¥19.6 billion was recorded as equity in earnings of affiliates. The Company recorded ¥19.6 billion of equity in earnings of unconsolidated subsidiaries and affiliates for the first half of this fiscal year and Ocean Network Express Pte. Ltd. (ONE) accounted for ¥16.3 billion of this amount.

In the dry bulk business, market rates in the Cape-size sector temporarily softened due to accidents and labor disputes at some loading ports but stayed firm overall, thanks to the continued steady cargo movement of iron ore and bauxite and the increase in coal shipments from July 2025. In the medium-small vessel sector, despite the steady movement of minor bulk cargoes, such as grain and steel products, market rates temporarily declined due to the sluggish movement of coal shipments. However, market rates started to recover in July 2025, along with the increase in grain shipments from South America and rising coal shipments. Under these circumstances, the group focused on managing its market exposure appropriately, reducing operating costs, and improving vessel operation efficiency. The overall Dry Bulk Segment recorded a year-on-year decrease both in revenue and profit.

LNG carriers, LPG carriers, thermal coal carriers, VLCCs, drillships, and FPSOs, among others, secured stable profits backed by medium- to long-term contracts. While revenue decreased year-on-year due to exchange rate impacts and other factors, profit increased as a result of the absence of onetime losses, etc., recognized in the same period last year.

In the car carrier business, the impact of U.S. tariff policy has been limited. Supported by solid demand in countries around the world, the number of vehicles transported slightly increased compared to the same period last year. However, profit decreased due to exchange rate impacts, increased operating costs, etc.

In the containership business, transport volume remained at the same level as the previous fiscal year, including pre-tariff rush order demand. However, freight rates decreased year-on-year due to the delivery of new vessels, among other factors, resulting in a decline in profit.

The full-year forecast for fiscal 2025 has been revised downward by ¥10 billion from the previous forecast, with net income/loss attributable to owners of parent projected at ¥105 billion.

NYK Promotes Maritime Talent Development Through International Exchange Program for Japanese and Filipino Students

From October 26 to November 1, NYK hosted an international maritime exchange program in Japan, bringing together students from the NYK-TDG Maritime Academy (NTMA) in the Philippines and Japanese students from maritime schools across the country. Now in its seventh year since its debut in 2015, the program aims to foster international perspectives and build cross-cultural networks among future seafarers from Japan and the Philippines. This initiative represents the second phase of a broader exchange effort, following the dispatch of two groups of Japanese maritime students to NTMA—the first of which took place in August. In this second phase, eight NTMA students visited Japan.

The visiting students participated in shipboard training and sports exchanges at Tokyo University of Marine Science and Technology and Yuge College of the National Institute of Technology. The visiting students also joined a discussion session at the NYK head office with Filipino seafarers currently working in land-based assignments. In addition, they toured Shin Kurushima Toyohashi Shipbuilding Co., Ltd., the Tatsumi Office of Japan Radio Co., Ltd., the moored *Hikawa Maru* museum ship, and other facilities. These visits enriched their understanding of Japan's maritime industry and cultural heritage. One of the NTMA students remarked, "We learned a great deal about Japan's maritime industry, culture, and values." A Japanese student commented, "Exchanging ideas with NTMA students boosted my motivation for future studies."

NYK remains firmly committed to collaborating with educational and research institutions in Japan and abroad to support the development of young people who represent the future of the maritime industry.

Shipboard training at Yuge College of the National Institute of Technology

MOL Presents Long-service Awards, Hosts Family Day for Filipino Seafarers

Scene of Family day

The MOL Group seafarer manning company Magsaysay MOL Marine, Inc. (MMM) held a long-service awards presentation ceremony on November 7 for Filipino seafarers who work for MMM in Manila and hosted a Family Day event on the following day. MOL Executive Vice President Toshinobu Shinoda and executives from several MOL Group ship management companies attended both the awards presentation and Family Day.

Awards and recognition went to seafarers with 15 years of service aboard MOL-operated vessels, and a total of 87 award recipients and their families attended. Executive Vice President Shinoda congratulated the award recipients and said that the MOL Group's growth and social contributions rely on seafarers' dedication and leadership. He also expressed his hope that they continue to walk this path along with the group. One award recipient stated that this recognition reflects not only individual effort but also MOL's values and teamwork and commitment to overcoming challenges with colleagues and contributing to the company's further development.

Family Day in 2025, held on November 8 with 2,911 seafarers and family members, was the largest ever held in Manila. One family member commented that the family gathering has become a meaningful tradition for them and an event where they truly feel part of the MOL Family.

The MOL Group regularly holds these events in the Philippines and in other countries that are home to seafarers to show its gratitude for the significant contributions of seafarers who work far away from their families, and their families as well. The goal is to recruit and develop highly skilled seafarers who support safe operations.

MOL Becomes Gold Donor of the Philippine Maritime Heritage Museum

Representatives from MOL and Museo del Galeón in front of the museum's centerpiece-an explorable, full-scale representation of the 17th-century Galeón Espíritu Santo.

MOL recently announced its support for the Museo Del Galeón, the Philippines' first immersive maritime museum, located in Pasay City, Manila. As a gold donor, MOL reaffirms its commitment to celebrating the country's rich maritime heritage and its vital role in global trade.

At a ceremonial signing held November 7, MOL Executive Vice President and Executive Officer Shinoda formalized the company's donation and received a token of appreciation from the museum. Slated to open in 2026, Museo del Galeón will highlight the Philippines' pivotal role in maritime history-from precolonial seafaring traditions and the Manila-Acapulco galleon trade to the global impact of today's Filipino seafarers.

Spanning 9,000 square meters and anchored by an interactive full-scale representation of a 17th-century galleon, the museum will feature hands-on, cutting-edge exhibits that honor the nation's enduring connection to the sea.

"The Philippines plays an undeniably significant role in global trade," Shinoda said. "At MOL, Filipino seafarers make up approximately 60% of our crew for our operating vessels. MOL remains deeply committed to strengthening our partnership with Philippine society."

MOL Joins Global Event Promoting Advancement of Women in the Maritime Industry

Women seafarers and cadets from MOL group at Maritime SheEO Conference 2025

MOL participated as a Gold Partner sponsor—playing a key role, including delivering a keynote address—in the Maritime SheEO Conference 2025, an international event promoting women's career advancement in the maritime industry, held in Mumbai over three days starting October 28. The conference brought together over 500 participants from 70 companies around the world. The MOL Group was represented by 20 participants, including women seafarers from its in-house manning company.

Representing MOL, Captain Animesh Hore, General Manager of the Global Maritime Resources Division, and Captain Naomi Matsushita, the first female captain to serve on a vessel for a Japanese intermodal shipping group, took the stage to deliver heartfelt messages celebrating the contributions and achievements of women in the shipping industry.

MOL has set a goal to increase the proportion of women cadets to 35% by 2035, actively promoting women's participation in the maritime sector. In addition, the company has introduced the "OceanCare" well-being support program offering mental health services. which also includes tailored support for women seafarers. MOL will continue to strengthen its DE&I efforts, striving to build an organization where all seafarers can thrive.

'K' Line University 2025 Held

"K" Line organized "K" Line University 2025 (KLU 2025) at its head office in Tokyo to instill the "K" Line Group's management policy and create a sense of unity among the members of the "K" Line Group.

"K" Line University, which was temporarily suspended due to the COVID-19 pandemic, resumed in 2023. It has been held annually for three consecutive years since then. KLU 2025 took place over four days from Monday, October 20 to Thursday, October 23, and 21 members from "K" Line's overseas bases and group companies in 15 countries and regions took part in the event.

For the "K" Line Group, the acceptance of diverse values is a source of competitiveness in the development of global business. On the subject of leadership, KLU 2025 featured explanations of the business strategy by management executives, a guided tour of the ship simulator at the "K" Line Training Center, workshops with participants, including head office staff, and other programs. By participating in a range of exchanges of views, the participants engaged in face-to-face communication designed to develop their embrace of diverse values and sense of unity (diversity and inclusion).

Captain Jima's Fun Pilot Diary

Capt. Masujima

㉘ Whew, Today Was Nerve-Wracking!

200604-1299-LNG-YO-OUTSIDE THE PORT-YO-E1

I've got a story I really want to share with you all, folks. I usually tell my wife back at our family home in Tokyo about the day's events, and this time, I'll write down exactly what I told her.

"Hello~, it's me~"

"I know it's Nagoya Masujima-san calling—the phone says so~. So, how did the restricted-class dangerous goods vessel dock today? (You know, that big hazardous cargo ship only pilots with over six years of experience can handle.)"

"Ah, thanks to you, everything went smoothly. My partner today was my junior, K-kun. We were docking an LNG carrier at Yokkaichi E1."

"It was a brand-new vessel, fresh out of the shipyard, with a friendly Indian captain. The Indian officers and Filipino crew did a great job too. Docking usually takes about three hours, but at minimum, two and a half, but we wrapped it up in just two hours and 15minutes."

"That must've been exhausting."

"So, you know—when it was all over, I told K-kun, 'When everything's going well, like today, it all flows smoothly. But when things go wrong, trouble tends to pile up. You always have to stay alert on a ship, huh?'"

"Yeah. You've been through your share of hardships too, haven't you?"

"So, you know what? I actually ran into that same problem again today! After finishing work safely and leaving the bridge, I was casually walking down the gangway... when suddenly, with a deep thud of the wire swinging sideways, the whole thing jolted up and down by about 50 centimeters!!"

"Startled, K-kun and I instinctively grabbed the handrail so we wouldn't fall into the sea. The wire suspending the gangway had sagged sideways quite a bit. If we'd been walking near that wire—just a few meters away—and it had hit our face or hands, we could've been seriously injured!!"

I've faced hardship more than a few times—and somehow managed to survive. Way back when I was a Third Officer, I was inspecting the hold after unloading iron ore. I was climbing a vertical ladder from the hold floor up to the deck, about 20 meters above. Just seven or eight meters from the top, several rungs suddenly broke. I had to climb the rest of the way using only my hands. Then, the hatch cover closed, plunging the hold into total darkness. My flashlight got caught on one of the broken rungs, snapping my belt and sending me tumbling toward the hold floor. In that literal pitch blackness, I summoned every ounce of courage I had to climb that flimsy vertical ladder all the way to the top.

For several minutes, I felt like I was barely alive. There were other incidents too—someday, I'd like to write about them under the title *"The Story of How Jima Nearly Died."* Anyway, ships are made of steel, and a single slip or fall can easily lead to serious injury.

There's a saying: *"The famous tree-climber warns his disciple, just a few meters from the ground, to be careful not to slip."* I couldn't relax until I got home either.

On an identical LNG carrier, the wire suspending the gangway suddenly slackened, causing it to drop by about 50 centimeters.

Just one more vessel's length forward—350 meters—and we'll be docked. A smart approach, nearly parallel.

Brain Teaser Let's find out!

Who's out of Your League?

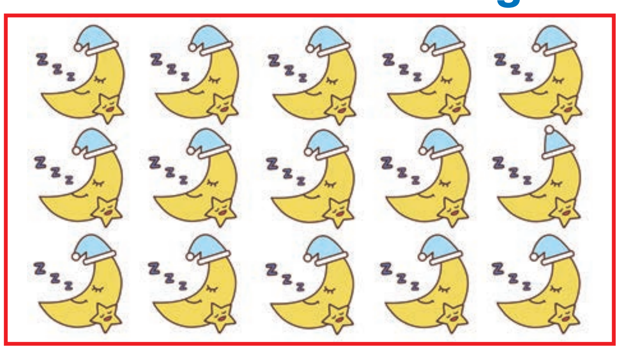


Illustration courtesy: illustAC

December has arrived. The night sky has cleared, and a slender crescent moon reflects the hush of winter. As the air grows cold enough to make your breath visible, the moon hangs quietly above, its delicate curve holding a contemplative, almost mysterious charm.

This month's "Brain Teaser" comes from an illustration of the crescent moon—a young moon, just beginning to regain its faint glow after the new moon. Since ancient times, it has been cherished as a symbol of beginnings and growth—a sign to pray for safe voyages and new departures. In the West as well, it appears in stories and heraldry as a symbol of hope and dreams. On a chilly night, if you happen to glance up at the sky, the crescent moon's gentle light softly conveys the stillness of winter.

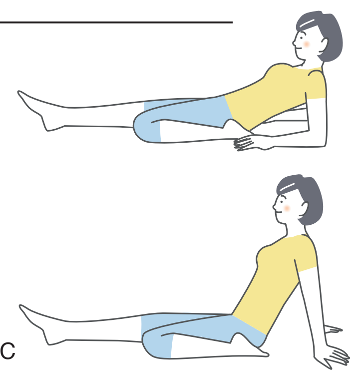
So... if you look closely, you will see that one crescent moon is different from the others. Which one is it? (The answer will be in next month's issue.)

Here is the answer to last month's (November) Brain Teaser.

Only one fox has a pattern on its ear.

Use the Floor For Easy Stretch!

Stretch the Back of Your Thighs and Lower Back for a Refreshing Feeling



(1) Sit on the floor with both legs extended straight in front of you. Place your hands behind you, fingers pointing toward your body, to lightly support yourself.
(2) Bend one knee, bringing the foot inward and placing it beside your thigh. Keep the other leg extended.
(3) Slowly bend your elbows and lean your upper body backward.
(4) Lower your back toward the floor as far as is comfortably possible. Hold for 20–30 seconds, taking deep breaths.
Repeat (1)~(4) on the opposite side.

Illustration courtesy: illustAC

Today's Delicious Dish:

Braised *Buri* (Japanese Yellowtail) with *Daikon* Radish

Cutting *daikon* radish into irregular chunks helps flavors penetrate more easily and gives it a beautifully caramelized color when cooked.

■ Ingredients (4 servings)

500g yellowtail trimmings
1 *daikon* radish
4 slices of ginger
Shredded ginger (as needed)
4 tablespoons soy sauce
4 tablespoons *sake*
4 tablespoons *mirin*
5 cups of water
About 1 teaspoon salt
Boiling water (for blanching the yellowtail) (as needed)

■ How to cook

1. Sprinkle salt over the yellowtail trimmings and let sit for about 10 minutes. Peel the *daikon* radish and cut it into rough chunks.
2. Bring a pot of water to a boil. Add the yellowtail trimmings and boil over high heat until scum rises to the surface. Drain in a colander and rinse under cold water.
3. Return the yellowtail trimmings to the pot. Add fresh water and sliced ginger. Bring to a boil, skim off any remaining scum, then add the *daikon*. Simmer until the *daikon* is tender.
4. Add soy sauce, *sake*, and *mirin*. Once it returns to a boil, reduce the heat to low. Simmer gently for 20–30 minutes, occasionally spooning broth over the ingredients.
5. When the broth has reduced and the *daikon* is well-flavored, turn off the heat. Serve in bowls, garnish with shredded ginger—and enjoy.

Sourse: Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries website (Recipe, perfectly matched for rice)
https://www.maff.go.jp/j/seisan/kakou/mezamasi/recipe/index.html