

★ NORTH KOREA FIRES TWO MISSILES ★ IRAN CALLS US HORMUZ REPLY INADEQUATE ★ NOBEL ECONOMICS TO HALL AND WOODFORD ★ WASEDA WIN IZUMO ★ FIGHTERS ADVANCE ★

North Korea Fires Two Ballistic Missiles Into the Sea of Japan, One Flying More Than 900 Kilometres, Possibly on an Irregular Path

Both are thought to have fallen outside Japan's exclusive economic zone and no damage is reported; Tokyo protests as the year's count reaches 11 launches and at least 18 missiles, against four launches in all of last year

By Aiko Tanaka | Senior Japan Correspondent



A missile rises from a coastal launch site over the sea at dusk, in a file image. North Korea fired at least two ballistic missiles towards the Sea of Japan on Monday morning, one of which flew more than 910 kilometres; both are thought to have fallen outside Japan's exclusive economic zone, and no damage was reported. (File photo: WPM Productions)

North Korea fired at least two ballistic missiles towards the Sea of Japan on Monday morning, one of which flew more than 910 kilometres, the Defence Ministry said, in the country's second launch in little more than a week.

Both missiles are estimated to have come down near the North's east coast or in the Sea of Japan, outside Japan's exclusive economic zone. The ministry said it had received no reports of damage to ships or aircraft.

The first missile was launched from inland North Korea at about 9:19 a.m. and flew about 220 kilometres, reaching a maximum altitude of about 20 kilometres, according to the ministry. The second followed at about 9:36 a.m. It climbed to about 70 kilometres and travelled more than 910 kilometres.

Japan, the United States and South Korea are analysing the flights together, including the possibility that the second missile followed an irregular trajectory, the ministry said. State Minister of Defence Takashi Koyari told a news conference in Tokyo that the missiles may have flown on irregular paths.

Seoul's account

South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff said they had detected launches from the Pyongyang area at about 9:20 a.m. They described several ballistic missiles of different types and said that one type was assessed to have flown more than 900 kilometres. Seoul and Washington were examining the missiles' exact specifications, they said, and the South Korean military had stepped up its surveillance against further launches.

South Korea's National Security Office held an emergency meeting to review the military's readiness, and the presidential office called the launches a breach of United Nations Security Council resolutions that did nothing to support stability on the Korean peninsula.

The United States military's Indo-Pacific Command said that North Korea had launched two missiles and that they posed no immediate threat to American personnel or territory, or to its allies.

Tokyo protests

Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi instructed officials to gather and analyse information, to tell the public promptly what they learned, to confirm the safety of aircraft and ships, and to prepare for any contingency.

Mr Koyari said the launches, together with the North's repeated missile activity before them, were part of a series of actions that threatened the peace and security of Japan, the region and the wider international community. The government lodged a strong protest and condemned the launches as violations of Security Council resolutions. Japan has no diplomatic relations with Pyongyang and delivers such protests through its embassy in Beijing.

The Japan Coast Guard told vessels to watch for further information, not to approach any fallen objects and to report anything they found.

Eleven launches this year

Monday's launch was the 11th this year on which the Defence Ministry has announced a North Korean ballistic missile, and brings the number of missiles fired in 2026 to at least 18. In all of last year the ministry counted four launches and at least five missiles.

The previous launch, on October 3, was of an intermediate-range ballistic missile. Kim Yo Jong, the sister of the North Korean leader, Kim Jong Un, said afterwards that it had used artificial intelligence technology, which she did not describe, and was capable of changing its flight path at low altitude.

Days later South Korea said it had tested a hypersonic glide vehicle of its own design, its first. A Joint Chiefs of Staff official told reporters on Monday that the North's launch was probably meant as a show of opposition to that test.

A mine in the DMZ

The launches come at a tense moment between the two Koreas. Three South Korean soldiers were injured by a landmine in the southern part of the Demilitarised Zone, and an investigation by Seoul and the United Nations Command concluded last week that North Korea had planted the mines. Pyongyang denies it.

Kim Yo Jong has called South Korea's demands for an apology despicable and rejected Seoul's offer of medical equipment, saying the South must show the North "utmost respect" if it wants better relations.

President Donald Trump's recent overtures to Mr Kim, including the suggestion that he might meet him this year, have also raised concern in Seoul that it could be sidelined in any talks on the North's nuclear weapons.

What it means for Japan

None of Monday's missiles came near Japanese territory. But the pattern matters more to Japan than any single flight. A missile that can change course at low altitude is harder to track and to intercept, and two launches in ten days have now raised that possibility. Missiles on such flatter, shifting paths spend less of their flight high enough to be followed easily by the radars on which Japan's defences depend.

The launches also fall in the middle of a busy political week in Tokyo. The House of Representatives Budget Committee begins two days of questioning of the prime minister and all her ministers this morning, and the government is revising its national security documents, a process in

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MIDDLE EAST

Iran Says Washington's Reply to Its Seven Conditions Falls Short as Houthi Missiles Keep Riyadh's Airport Shut

Tehran's security chief says the Strait of Hormuz will not reopen on the old terms; the toll from Saturday's strike in the Saudi capital rises to 13 and airlines extend their cancellations

By Jonathan Mercer | Senior Editor, International Desk

Iran said on Sunday that the United States had accepted some of the seven conditions it has set for reopening the Strait of Hormuz but that Washington's reply was inadequate, deepening the stalemate over the waterway through which most of Japan's oil once passed.

Mohsen Rezaei, secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council, said the American answer, delivered through Qatari intermediaries, left points unresolved and that Washington must clarify them. Iranian diplomacy had changed, he said, and there would be no return to the previous situation.

"The Gulf cannot be secure without Iran's management of the Strait of Hormuz," he told Iranian state media, according to The National, an Abu Dhabi newspaper.

Seven conditions

Iran sent its conditions about two weeks ago, offering to reopen the strait and restore normal passage within seven days if they were met. Their full text has not been published. Iran has also proposed managing the waterway jointly with Oman, an idea the United States has rejected, insisting that ships are entitled to free passage under international law.

The strait has been effectively closed since the United States and Israel attacked Iran at the end of February. The United States responded with a naval blockade of Iranian ports, which it reimposed in July after a short-lived memorandum to end the war collapsed. On October 4 the speaker of Iran's parliament, Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf, said the strait would not reopen until the conditions were met.

The British military's maritime trade agency reported an encounter between a tanker and military forces in the Gulf of Oman, hours after American forces struck a vessel that was trying to breach the blockade, according to Iran International.

Riyadh

On the other side of the Arabian peninsula, King Khalid International Airport in Riyadh remained closed after a weekend of Houthi attacks. An Indian national injured in Saturday's missile strike on the airport's domestic terminals died on Sunday, bringing the number of dead to 13, according to reports from the region. More than 300 people were injured.

On Sunday a projectile struck Terminal 4 and started a fire, the coalition that Saudi Arabia leads in Yemen said, and air defences intercepted a cruise missile near the airport. The civil aviation authority later said that King Fahd International Airport in Dammam, in the east, had also been hit. It gave no details of casualties or damage.

The Houthis have warned airlines and travellers to stay away from Saudi airports and airspace, except those serving Mecca and Medina, saying they are exposed to targeting. Flydubai has cancelled its Riyadh flights until Wednesday and Etihad has extended cancellations on some routes to the kingdom. Schools in the Saudi capital have switched to remote teaching for a week.

Condemnation

Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Pakistan and Turkey condemned the attacks in a joint statement, and the coalition has promised to "respond decisively". The

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WEATHER — TOKYO

25°C

Low 18°C · Cloudy

Sapporo

20°

Osaka

28°

Fukuoka

29°

Naha

30°

Rain spreads into western Japan from mid-afternoon; Fukuoka, Matsue, Hiroshima and Kochi rainy by tonight. Sunny turning cloudy elsewhere; 30°C in Naha. Koguma weakens far out in the Pacific. Full weather, Page 13.

TODAY IN BRIEF

- North Korea: two ballistic missiles fall outside Japan's EEZ; one flew more than 910 km, perhaps on an irregular path.
- Gulf: Iran calls Washington's reply to its seven conditions inadequate; Riyadh's airport stays shut.
- Nobel: Robert Hall and Michael Woodford win the economics prize for the foundations of stabilisation policy.
- Diet: Takaichi and all her ministers face the Budget Committee from 9 a.m.; the food tax and Yana top the list.
- Kyushu: the Shinkansen is suspended from the first train after a pantograph fault; services expected from midday.
- Sport: Waseda win Izumo in a course record; Nippon-Ham beat Seibu to reach the final stage.

THE LAUNCH

- Two missiles, 9:19 and 9:36 a.m.
- About 220 km and 910+ km.
- Both outside Japan's EEZ.
- 11th launch this year.

TODAY

- Budget Committee, 9 a.m.
- Wholesale prices, 8:50 a.m.
- CEATEC opens at Makuhari.
- Tokyo cloudy, 25.

MARKETS	
Dow (Mon)	51,850.55 ▲ 195.60
S&P 500 (Mon)	7,807.24 ▼ 4.30
Nasdaq (Mon)	27,245.90 ▼ 120.27
Nikkei 225 (Fri)	69,030.92 ▼ 11.19
WTI crude	\$93.22 ▲ 1.37
Yen	about 158 per \$
BOJ policy rate	1.25%

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THE WEEK

- Wed. 14: final stages begin.
- Wed.: Germany v Japan, 0:45.
- Thu. 15: TSMC results.
- Sat. 24: Japan Series.

KOGUMA

- 975 hPa at 6 a.m. Tuesday.
- Extratropical by early Thursday.

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which the threat from North Korea is a central assumption.

The Defence Ministry said it would continue to

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Iran Says Washington's Reply to Its Seven Conditions Falls Short as Houthi Missiles Keep Riyadh's Airport Shut

Continued from Page 1

United Nations envoy for Yemen, Hans Grundberg, called the strikes a grave escalation.

Oil prices rose on Monday. The November contract for West Texas Intermediate crude gained \$1.37 to \$93.22 a barrel in New York, as traders weighed the risks in the Gulf and doubts about the energy ceasefire in Ukraine announced by President Donald Trump.

For Japan, which buys more than 90 per cent of its crude oil from the Middle East, the two crises are one problem. The closure of Hormuz cut the main route for that oil. The attacks on Saudi Arabia strike at its largest supplier, a kingdom that can also send crude by pipeline to its Red Sea coast, away from the strait.

INTERNATIONAL

Eleven Launches in Ten Months: North Korea's Missile Year So Far, and How It Compares

By Kenta Sakamoto | Data & Visualization

Monday's launch was the 11th this year on which Japan's Defence Ministry has announced a North Korean ballistic missile. By the ministry's count, at least 18 missiles have been fired in 2026.

The ministry lists the launches on its website. This year they fell on January 4 and January 27, March 14, April 8 and April 19, August 6, August 12 and August 20, September 20, October 3 and October 12.

A long pause

The record shows a gap of more than three months between April 19 and August 6, followed by a burst of three launches in August and four since the middle of September.

The launch on September 20 was typical of the series. At least one missile was fired north-east from near the North's east coast at about 5:54 p.m., reached a maximum altitude of about 70 kilometres and flew about 590 kilometres before falling outside Japan's exclusive economic zone, Defence Minister Shinjiro Koizumi told reporters that evening.

At that point, he said, the year's count stood at nine launches and at least 15 missiles. The October 3 launch, of an intermediate-range missile, and Monday's two missiles bring it to 11 and at least 18.

Against last year

In all of 2025 the ministry counted four launches and at least five missiles. This year's total is therefore well over double last year's, in both launches and missiles, with more than two months still to go.

It remains far below the pace of 2022, when the North fired dozens of ballistic missiles, more than in any year before, including one that flew over northern Japan in October of that year and set off warnings in Hokkaido and Aomori.

What the numbers do not show

A count of launches says little about the weapons themselves. The North has used recent tests to try missiles of different ranges and, by its own account, new guidance. Kim Yo Jong said the October 3 missile used artificial intelligence technology and could change its flight path at low altitude, a claim that has not been independently confirmed.

Monday's second missile, which flew more than 910 kilometres and may have followed an irregular trajectory, is being analysed by Japan, the United States and South Korea together.

For Japan, the significant figure is not the total but the direction of travel: more launches, more varied missiles, and more of them designed, the North says, to be hard to follow.

analyse the flights with the United States and South Korea and to keep up its surveillance.

INTERNATIONAL

What an 'Irregular Trajectory' Means, and Why a Missile That Changes Course Worries Japan's Defence Planners

By Maya Suzuki | Science & Innovation Desk

When Japan's Defence Ministry says a North Korean missile may have flown an irregular trajectory, it is describing a flight that did not follow the simple arc of a ballistic missile.

A conventional ballistic missile is powered only for the first part of its flight. After its engine burns out it coasts, rising and falling along a predictable curve, like a thrown stone. Once radar has fixed its path, the point where it will come down can be calculated.

Pulling up

An irregular trajectory breaks that pattern. A missile may fly lower and flatter than usual, then manoeuvre within the atmosphere, for instance by pulling up as it descends or changing direction in its final phase.

North Korea has claimed this ability for several of its short-range missiles in recent years. The intermediate-range missile it fired on October 3 was, Kim Yo Jong said, able to change its flight path at low altitude.

Why it matters

Japan's missile defence was designed above all against high ballistic arcs. Its upper tier is made up of Aegis destroyers carrying interceptors meant to destroy missiles in space. Its lower tier is the Patriot system, which defends particular areas against missiles in the last seconds of their descent.

A missile that stays low, inside the atmosphere, and changes course can complicate both tiers. It is harder for radar to follow, its final destination is harder to predict, and the time available to decide on an interception is shorter.

What Japan is doing

This is one reason the government has been buying longer-range missiles of its own, building up its capacity to counter-strike, and developing interceptors designed for faster and more manoeuvrable threats, in cooperation with the United States.

Monday's second missile reached about 70 kilometres at its highest point, low for a flight of more than 910 kilometres. The ministry has not said that it manoeuvred. It has said only that the possibility is being examined, and analysis of such flights can take days.

What is not in doubt is that the North wants its neighbours to believe its missiles can do so. Each test that supports the claim, and each that is announced as doing so, adds to the pressure on the defences of Japan and South Korea.

The ministry's language on Monday, that the trajectory may have been irregular, is the standard wording it uses while that analysis goes on.

INTERNATIONAL

Monday's Launch in Figures

By the Data Desk

MISSILES: At least two, by Japan's count. South Korea spoke of several, of different types.

FIRST LAUNCH: About 9:19 a.m., from inland North Korea. About 220 km flown; maximum altitude about 20 km.

SECOND LAUNCH: About 9:36 a.m. More than 910 km flown; maximum altitude about 70 km. A possibly irregular trajectory is being analysed.

SEOUL'S ACCOUNT: Launches detected from the Pyongyang area at about 9:20 a.m.; one type flew more than 900 km.

WHERE THEY FELL: Near the North's east coast or in the Sea of Japan, outside Japan's exclusive

economic zone.

DAMAGE: None reported to ships or aircraft.

FIRST NOTICES: 9:23 a.m. and 9:41 a.m. Fall estimated: 9:29 a.m. and 9:51 a.m.

THIS YEAR: 11 launches; at least 18 missiles.

LAST YEAR: Four launches; at least five missiles.

PREVIOUS LAUNCH: October 3, an intermediate-range missile.

J-ALERT: Not issued; no missile threatened Japanese territory.

PROTEST: Lodged by Japan through its embassy in Beijing.

ANALYSIS: Japan, the United States and South Korea are examining the flights together.

INTERNATIONAL

Inside or Outside the EEZ: What Japan's Exclusive Economic Zone Is, and Why It Matters Where a Missile Falls

By the International Desk

Whenever North Korea fires a missile, the first question the Defence Ministry answers is where it came down, and in particular whether it fell inside Japan's exclusive economic zone. On Monday both missiles fell outside it.

What the zone is

Under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, a coastal state has an exclusive economic zone extending up to 200 nautical miles, about 370 kilometres, from its coast. Within it the state has sovereign rights over fishing, oil and gas and other resources, though ships of all nations may pass through.

The zone is not territory. Japan's territorial waters extend only 12 nautical miles from its coasts. But the exclusive economic zone is where Japanese fishing boats work, and where a missile could strike a ship or an aircraft.

A large zone

Because Japan is made up of thousands of islands spread over a long arc, its exclusive economic zone is among the largest in the world. Together with its territorial waters it covers about 4.47 million square kilometres, roughly 12 times the country's land area.

In the Sea of Japan the zone is limited by the presence of other coastlines, and its boundaries with South Korea and Russia are not all agreed. Missiles fired eastwards by North Korea from its coast or from inland can reach it within a few minutes.

Past landings

Several North Korean missiles have fallen inside Japan's zone. Intercontinental ballistic missiles fired on lofted trajectories came down within it in 2017, and in November 2022 and February 2023 missiles fell inside the zone west of Oshima-Oshima, an island off Hokkaido.

Each time, the government protested with particular force, because a missile falling there without warning could hit a fishing boat or a ship.

The Defence Ministry tracks launches with ground-based radars and with the radars of Aegis destroyers on patrol in the Sea of Japan, and shares what it learns with the United States and South Korea.

Why the phrase matters

For the public, the question of the zone is a quick guide to the danger posed by a launch. A missile that falls well outside it, as both did on Monday, posed no direct threat to Japanese ships. One that falls inside it brings North Korea's tests into waters where Japanese people work.

For fishing communities on the Sea of Japan coast, the answer matters directly. Squid boats and other fishing vessels work those waters through the autumn, and the coast guard's navigational warnings after each launch tell them to stay clear of any debris.

MIDDLE EAST

The Strait of Hormuz Since February: A Timeline

By the International Desk

FEBRUARY 28: The United States and Israel strike Iran. Iran closes the Strait of Hormuz to foreign shipping.

MARCH 16: Japan begins releasing oil from its

reserves, about 50 days' worth, after Prime Minister Takaichi announces a release of 80 million barrels.

MARCH 20: Japan is among 22 countries that sign a statement of readiness to help secure safe passage through the strait.

APRIL 8: A two-week ceasefire mediated by Pakistan takes effect; the strait remains largely closed.

APRIL 12 AND 13: Talks in Islamabad end without agreement. The United States announces a naval blockade of Iranian ports, which begins the next day.

MAY: Japan begins releasing a further 20 days' worth of reserves.

JUNE 17: President Trump and President Masoud Pezeshkian sign the Islamabad Memorandum to end the war.

JULY 7: Mr Trump declares the memorandum over after renewed strikes. On July 12 Iran's Revolutionary Guards declare the strait closed, and within days the United States reinstates its blockade.

AUGUST 17: The memorandum's 60-day negotiating period expires.

OCTOBER 4: Iran's parliamentary speaker says the strait will not reopen until the United States meets seven conditions.

OCTOBER 11: Iran says Washington has accepted some conditions but calls its reply inadequate.

INTERNATIONAL

A Missile Race on the Peninsula: The North's 'AI' Missile of October 3 and the South's First Hypersonic Glide Vehicle

By the International Desk

South Korea's military said on Monday that the North's launch was probably a show of opposition to the South's first test of a hypersonic missile. The two tests, ten days apart, show how quickly the competition between the Koreas is moving.

October 3

On October 3 North Korea test-fired an intermediate-range ballistic missile. Kim Yo Jong, the sister of the leader, Kim Jong Un, said it had used artificial intelligence technology, without explaining what kind, and was capable of changing its flight orbit at a low altitude.

Independent analysts have not been able to verify the claim. But the language was chosen to tell South Korea, Japan and the United States that the North's missiles are becoming harder to track and intercept.

Seoul replies

Days later the South announced that it had tested a hypersonic glide vehicle of its own design. The presidential office said the weapon offered "a new deterrence capability capable of striking key targets within the Korean Peninsula's operational environment".

A hypersonic glide vehicle is carried up by a rocket and released to glide towards its target at more than five times the speed of sound, manoeuvring as it goes. Its speed and its ability to change course make it hard to intercept.

The logic of the race

Each side presents its weapons as a deterrent and the other side's as a threat. The South's government argues that it must be able to hold the North's leadership and missile forces at risk; the North cites the South's new weapons and its exercises with the United States as justification for its own.

Monday's launch, of at least two missiles, one flying more than 900 kilometres, fits that pattern of reply and counter-reply.

Where Japan stands

Japan is not a party to the arms race between the Koreas, but it lives within range of it. North Korean missiles that fly over or into the Sea of Japan pass close to Japanese fishing grounds and shipping lanes.

Japan's own response has been to strengthen its defences and its cooperation with Seoul and Washington, sharing warning data on North Korean missiles in real time. Monday's flights were analysed by the three countries together, as the Defence Ministry and South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff both said.

NOBEL PRIZE



The Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences announces the 2026 Prize in Economic Sciences in Stockholm on Monday: Robert E. Hall of Stanford University, born in 1943, and Michael Woodford of Columbia University, born in 1955, honoured "for microeconomic foundations of macroeconomic stabilisation". (File photo: WPM Productions)

NOBEL PRIZE

Robert Hall and Michael Woodford, Who Gave Central Banks Their Models, Win the Nobel Prize in Economics

The Stanford and Columbia economists are honoured for building the theory of economic stabilisation on the decisions of households and firms; the committee says the world is now better equipped for shocks such as energy crises

By Yuki Saito | Economics & Finance Correspondent

Two American economists whose work underlies the models that central banks and governments use to steer their economies through booms and slumps, Robert E. Hall of Stanford University and Michael Woodford of Columbia University, were awarded the Nobel Prize in Economic Sciences on Monday.

The Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences honoured them "for microeconomic foundations of macroeconomic stabilisation". They will share the prize of 12 million Swedish kronor equally. It was the last of this year's Nobel announcements.

When the old models broke

Their work grew out of a failure. In the 1970s, as oil crises sent inflation and unemployment up together, the Keynesian models then used to decide when and how to fight recessions stopped working. They had been built on statistical relationships between figures such as inflation, output and consumption, and those relationships broke down when circumstances changed.

Mr Hall and Mr Woodford helped build their replacements. Instead of relying on past correlations, they grounded their models in how households and businesses actually decide what to spend, save, charge and produce, and in how those decisions add up across the whole economy.

John Hassler, chairman of the committee that selects the economics laureates, said their work had given a "stable theoretical foundation" to models "now used by central banks and governments around the world". With those models, he said, "we are better equipped to deal with shocks in the economy", such as energy crises or sudden changes in household consumption.

The academy said the laureates had shown how well-timed fiscal and monetary measures can reduce the economy's peaks and troughs.

The consumer and the random walk

Mr Hall, 83, was born in Palo Alto, California, studied at the University of California, Berkeley, and took his doctorate at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology under Robert Solow, himself a Nobel laureate. He is a professor of economics at Stanford and a senior fellow at its Hoover Institution.

His best-known paper, published in 1978, argued that if people plan their spending sensibly over their lifetimes, their consumption should change only when news arrives about their future income, so that from one period to the next it moves in what statisticians call a random walk. The idea transformed research on consumer behaviour, even as later studies found spending more predictable than he had claimed.

He has also worked on why unemployment persists after recessions and why wages adjust slowly. Since 1978 he has chaired the committee of the National Bureau of Economic Research that dates the beginnings and ends of American recessions, and with Alvin Rabushka he designed the flat tax that bears their names.

Interest and prices

Mr Woodford, born in 1955, studied at the University of Chicago, took a law degree at Yale and a doctorate at MIT, and taught at Chicago and Princeton before returning in 2004 to Columbia, where he is the John Bates Clark Professor of Political Economy.

His book Interest and Prices, published in 2003, whose title echoes a work of 1898 by the Swedish economist Knut Wicksell, set out how models of the whole economy built up from individual decisions could be used to analyse monetary policy, and gave a theoretical basis for inflation targeting. With Julio Rotemberg he had earlier developed one of the first

New Keynesian models, in which prices adjust only slowly.

He is also closely associated with forward guidance, the practice of telling markets how interest rates are likely to move in future, which became one of central banks' main tools after the 2008 financial crisis, when rates could go no lower.

The Japanese connection

Japan has a particular place in that story. The Bank of Japan's pledge in 1999 to keep its policy rate at zero until deflationary concerns were dispelled is often cited as an early example of forward guidance, and Japan's long struggle with deflation provided the case on which Mr Woodford and Gauti Eggertsson built an influential 2003 analysis of policy when interest rates reach zero.

The Bank of Japan, which has raised its policy rate to 1.25 per cent, still sets out its expectations for future policy as part of its regular communications, a practice those debates helped to shape.

No Japanese economist has won the prize. Nobuhiro Kiyotaki of Princeton University, who studies how financial crises spread, had been named as a strong candidate in Japanese reports before the announcement.

Last year's prize went to Joel Mokyr, Philippe Aghion and Peter Howitt for work on how innovation drives economic growth. The prizes will be presented in Stockholm on December 10, the anniversary of Alfred Nobel's death.

the dials in those models.

The trouble was that the relationships were not laws of nature. They reflected how people had behaved under the policies of the time. When policy changed, so did behaviour.

The critique

In 1976 the American economist Robert Lucas made the point that has become known as the Lucas critique: a model built on past correlations cannot be trusted to predict the effects of a new policy, because people will respond to the new policy itself. He received the Nobel prize in 1995.

The 1970s seemed to prove him right. Governments that tried to buy lower unemployment with higher inflation found that people came to expect the inflation, and they ended up with both.

Building from below

The answer was to build models from the bottom up: households that plan their spending over time, firms that set prices and decide how many workers to hire, all reacting to what they expect policy to be. Such models are harder to build, but their behaviour does not fall apart when policy changes.

Mr Hall and Mr Woodford were among those who made the approach practical. Mr Woodford, in particular, added a crucial ingredient: prices that

adjust only slowly, which gives monetary policy real power over output in the short run.

Their limits

The models have their critics. Before 2008 many of them paid too little attention to banks and financial markets, and the crisis exposed the gap. Much work since has tried to add finance, and to relax the assumption that households are perfectly rational.

Mr Woodford himself has spent recent years on that second question, studying how limited attention shapes decisions. The Nobel committee's view is that the foundations, whatever has been built on them since, were the indispensable step.

NOBEL PRIZE

Forward Guidance, From Tokyo to Washington: How Central Banks Learned to Steer With Words

By the Markets Desk

Forward guidance is the practice of a central bank telling the public how it expects interest rates to move. It is one of the ideas most closely associated with Michael Woodford, and Japan was one of the places where it was first tried.

Why words matter

Borrowing costs for companies and households depend less on today's short-term interest rate than on what people expect rates to be over the coming years. A central bank that can shape those expectations can influence long-term rates, and so spending, even if it does not move its policy rate at all.

That matters most when the policy rate is already at zero and cannot be cut further. Then, the argument goes, the central bank's most powerful tool is a credible promise to keep rates low for longer than people would otherwise expect.

Tokyo, 1999

In April 1999 the governor of the Bank of Japan, Masaru Hayami, said the bank would keep its policy rate at zero until deflationary concerns were dispelled. Economists have often described the pledge as an early example of forward guidance.

Japan's experience of deflation and zero interest rates also shaped the theory. In 2003 Mr Woodford and Gauti Eggertsson published an analysis of the best policy at the zero bound that drew heavily on Japan's predicament.

Washington, 2008

After the financial crisis of 2008 the Federal Reserve cut its rate to near zero and said it would stay low for some time, then for an extended period, and in 2011 at least until the middle of 2013. Other central banks followed with their own versions.

In 2012 Mr Woodford presented a paper at the Federal Reserve's annual conference at Jackson Hole, Wyoming, arguing that central banks at the zero bound should commit more clearly to their future policy. It was widely read by policymakers.

Tokyo again

The Bank of Japan returned to the idea in 2013, when it promised to achieve 2 per cent inflation at the earliest possible time, and in 2016, when it pledged to keep expanding the money supply until inflation exceeded 2 per cent and stayed above it in a stable manner.

Today, with inflation above target and the policy rate raised to 1.25 per cent, the bank's guidance points the other way, towards higher rates, but the principle is the same: what a central bank says about tomorrow can matter as much as what it does today.

NOBEL PRIZE

The Random Walk of Consumption: Robert Hall's Famous Paper, and What Japan's Tax Rises Showed About It

By the Economics Desk

In 1978 Robert Hall published a paper in the Journal of Political Economy that changed the way economists think about consumer spending.

The argument

He started from the idea, developed by Milton Friedman and Franco Modigliani, that people try to smooth their spending over their lives, basing it on what they expect to earn in total rather than on what they earn this month.

If people form their expectations rationally, Mr Hall

NOBEL PRIZE

reasoned, everything they know about their future income is already reflected in what they spend today. Their spending should therefore change only when something unexpected happens. Changes in consumption should be unpredictable, a random walk.

The test

The implication was testable, and it was startling: past changes in income should not help predict future changes in spending. Mr Hall found that, in American data, they largely did not.

Later studies found that spending responds more to predictable changes in income than the theory allows. A common explanation is that many households cannot borrow against future earnings, so they spend more when their pay actually rises. But the framework Mr Hall set out became the standard way of studying the question.

Japan's natural experiments

Japan has provided some vivid illustrations of people spending on the basis of what they expect. Before the consumption tax rose to 8 per cent in April 2014, and again before it rose to 10 per cent in October 2019, households brought forward purchases, particularly of cars, appliances and other durable goods, and spending fell after the increases.

Shoppers were responding not to a change in their income but to a change in future prices that had been announced long in advance, which is exactly the kind of planning the theory describes.

The tax cut ahead

The government plans to cut the consumption tax on food from 8 per cent to 1 per cent for two years from April 2027. Economists will be watching how households respond to a cut that has been announced well before it takes effect, and to its scheduled end.

Mr Hall's insight, that what people expect shapes what they spend, is the starting point for that analysis.

NOBEL PRIZE

The Flat Tax: Robert Hall's Other Famous Idea, and Why It Travelled to Eastern Europe

By the Economics Desk

Outside economics departments, Robert Hall may be best known for a proposal that has nothing to do with central banks: the flat tax he designed with Alvin Rabushka, a political scientist at the Hoover Institution.

The design

Their plan, set out in the early 1980s and later in a book called The Flat Tax, would replace the American income tax with a single rate, applied both to wages above a generous personal allowance and to the cash flow of businesses.

Income from savings, such as interest and dividends, would not be taxed again in the hands of individuals, because it would already have been taxed at the business level. The tax return, its authors argued, could fit on a postcard.

The case for it

Its supporters argued that a single rate and a broad base would remove most of the deductions and loopholes that complicate the tax system, encourage saving and investment, and reduce the cost of compliance.

Because of the personal allowance, the poorest households would pay nothing, so the tax would still take a larger share of income from those who earn more.

The case against

Critics replied that a single rate would shift the burden of taxation from the rich towards the middle class, and that exempting income from capital would favour those who own it.

Where it went

The United States never adopted it, though it has surfaced repeatedly in American presidential campaigns. Its influence was greater in the former communist countries of Eastern Europe, several of which adopted flat taxes on personal income after 1990, among them Estonia in 1994 and Russia in 2001. Mr Hall and Mr Rabushka advised governments considering the idea.

Japan's system

Japan's income tax is progressive, with national rates rising in steps from 5 per cent to 45 per cent, plus a

flat local inhabitant tax. Proposals for a flat tax have never made serious headway, and the debate in Tokyo this autumn is about a different tax altogether, the consumption tax on food.

NOBEL PRIZE

Who Decides When a Recession Begins? The Committee Robert Hall Has Chaired Since 1978, and Japan's Equivalent

By the Economics Desk

In the United States, the official dates of recessions are set not by the government but by a small committee of academic economists at the National Bureau of Economic Research, a private research organisation. Robert Hall has chaired it since 1978.

The definition

The committee defines a recession as a significant decline in economic activity that is spread across the economy and lasts more than a few months. It does not use the popular rule of two consecutive quarters of falling output.

Instead it looks at a range of monthly measures, among them employment, real personal income and industrial production, and decides when the economy reached a peak and when it touched bottom.

Always late

Its judgments come well after the fact. It typically waits months, sometimes more than a year, to be sure that a turning point has been passed, because the data are revised and an apparent downturn can turn out to be a pause.

The recession caused by the coronavirus pandemic, which the committee dated from February to April 2020, was the shortest in its records, lasting two months.

A respected referee

The committee's independence is part of its authority. Its dates are accepted by both parties in Washington, by the financial markets and by researchers, and its patience has generally protected it from controversy.

Japan's referee

Japan has a counterpart. A committee of experts convened by the Cabinet Office's Economic and Social Research Institute examines the coincident indicators and decides the peaks and troughs of the business cycle.

Like the American committee, it acts with a lag, often confirming a turning point a year or more after it occurred. Its dates define the economic expansions and contractions that Japanese economists number and compare.

For Mr Hall, the role has been a long public service alongside his research. The Nobel committee's citation concerns his scholarship, but the dates his committee sets are among the most quoted numbers in American economics.

NOBEL PRIZE

A Prize Founded by a Central Bank: How the Economics Award Joined the Nobels in 1969

By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

The economics prize is the youngest of the Nobels, and strictly speaking it is not a Nobel prize at all.

Not in the will

Alfred Nobel's will of 1895 created five prizes: physics, chemistry, physiology or medicine, literature and peace. Economics was not among them.

In 1968 Sweden's central bank, the Sveriges Riksbank, established a prize in economic sciences in Nobel's memory to mark its 300th anniversary. Its formal name, the Sveriges Riksbank Prize in Economic Sciences in Memory of Alfred Nobel, records that origin.

The first laureates

It was first awarded in 1969, to Ragnar Frisch of Norway and Jan Tinbergen of the Netherlands, pioneers of the mathematical and statistical modelling of economies, the kind of modelling whose foundations this year's laureates were honoured for rebuilding.

How it works

The prize is administered by the Nobel Foundation and chosen by the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences, the body that also awards the physics and chemistry prizes, on the recommendation of a

committee of economists. It is presented with the others on December 10, the anniversary of Nobel's death.

The prize money is the same as for the other prizes. The Nobel Foundation raised it in September to 12 million kronor for each prize, from 11 million.

Who wins

Most laureates have been American or have worked at American universities, as this year's two do. Only three women have received it: Elinor Ostrom in 2009, Esther Duflo in 2019 and Claudia Goldin in 2023.

The debate

Some critics, among them members of Nobel's family, have objected to the prize being associated with Nobel's name. Its defenders reply that it has honoured work of lasting importance and that economics, like the natural sciences, has made real progress.

Monday's announcement closed this year's Nobel season, which began a week earlier with the prize for physiology or medicine.

NOBEL PRIZE

Japan Has 31 Nobel Laureates but None in Economics; Kiyotaki's Name Is Heard Again

By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

Japan counts 31 Nobel laureates, including Kenso Soai, who shared this year's chemistry prize. None has won the prize in economics.

The candidate

Before Monday's announcement, Japanese reports named Nobuhiro Kiyotaki, a professor at Princeton University, as a strong candidate, as they have in several recent years.

Mr Kiyotaki is best known for work with the British economist John Moore on credit cycles, published in 1997. They showed how a fall in the value of assets such as land, which firms use as collateral, reduces how much they can borrow, which reduces investment and pushes asset prices down further.

The mechanism helps explain how a modest shock can turn into a deep and lasting slump, and it has been widely applied to Japan's experience after its asset bubble burst in the early 1990s and to the global financial crisis of 2008.

Other names

The same reports mentioned others thought to be in contention, among them Ariel Pakes of Harvard, Colin Camerer of the California Institute of Technology, David Autor of MIT and John List of the University of Chicago. One view was that after a run of prizes in macroeconomics, this year's would go to microeconomics. It did not.

Why no Japanese laureate?

Japanese economists have contributed to the field for decades, and some of the most cited worked largely in the United States. Hirofumi Uzawa, who died in 2014 and whose growth models were influential in the 1960s, was often described as the Japanese economist who came closest.

Part of the explanation lies in the prize's pattern. Economics laureates tend to be honoured decades after their key work, and overwhelmingly for research done at American universities.

This year's link

This year's prize nonetheless has a Japanese thread. The policy debates it honours, on how central banks should act when interest rates are at zero and prices are falling, were shaped to an unusual degree by Japan's experience in the 1990s and 2000s, which economists around the world studied as a warning.

Japan's wait for an economics laureate goes on. Its chemists, at least, had a good week.

NOBEL PRIZE

The 2026 Nobel Prizes: The Full List

By the International Desk

PHYSIOLOGY OR MEDICINE (October 5): Karl Deisseroth of Stanford University, United States; Peter Hegemann of the Humboldt University of Berlin and Georg Nagel of the University of Würzburg, Germany. For optogenetics, the control of nerve cells with light.

PHYSICS (October 6): Francis Halzen of the University of Wisconsin-Madison, United States. For

the detection of high-energy neutrinos from space with the IceCube observatory at the South Pole.

CHEMISTRY (October 7): Henri Kagan of the Université Paris-Sud, France, and Kenso Soai of Tokyo University of Science, Japan. For the discovery of non-linear effects and autocatalysis in asymmetric organic synthesis.

LITERATURE (October 8): Anne Carson, the Canadian poet, essayist and translator.

PEACE (October 9): Navi Pillay, the South African jurist and former United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

ECONOMIC SCIENCES (October 12): Robert E. Hall of Stanford University and Michael Woodford of Columbia University, United States. For microeconomic foundations of macroeconomic stabilisation.

LAUREATES: 10 individuals in six prizes.

JAPAN: Kenso Soai, the country's 31st laureate and its tenth in chemistry.

PRIZE MONEY: 12 million kronor for each prize.

CEREMONIES: December 10, in Stockholm and, for the peace prize, in Oslo.

INTERNATIONAL

Four Minutes to the First Notice: How the Government Responds When North Korea Fires a Missile

By the Politics Desk

By the time most people in Japan heard about Monday's missiles, the government's response was well under way. The sequence is practised and is largely the same each time.

The first notice

The Defence Ministry posted its first flash notice, that North Korea had launched what might be a ballistic missile, at 9:23 a.m., about four minutes after the first launch. Six minutes later, at 9:29 a.m., it reported that the object was estimated to have already fallen.

The second launch brought a second pair of notices, at 9:41 a.m. and 9:51 a.m. Fuller details, including the distances and altitudes, came later in the morning.

The prime minister's instructions

The prime minister issues three standing instructions: gather and analyse information and tell the public promptly; make every effort to confirm the safety of aircraft and ships; and prepare for any contingency. Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi gave them again on Monday.

J-Alert

The national warning system, J-Alert, which sends messages to mobile phones and sounds sirens, is used only when a missile may fall on Japanese territory or its waters, or fly over the country. Monday's missiles did neither, so no alert was issued.

At sea

The Japan Coast Guard issues navigational warnings telling ships to watch for information, keep away from any debris and report what they find. Fishing boats in the Sea of Japan receive the same messages.

The protest

Japan has no diplomatic relations with North Korea, so its protests go through the two countries' embassies in Beijing. The wording is usually the same: a strong protest, a condemnation, and a reminder that the launches violate United Nations Security Council resolutions.

The allies

Japan, South Korea and the United States share missile warning data in real time, and their analysis of Monday's flights was carried out jointly.

The routine is a sign of how often it has had to be used. Monday's was the 11th such response this year.

INTERNATIONAL

A Landmine, a Demand for an Apology and a Rejected Gift: The Week That Soured Relations Between the Two Koreas

By the International Desk

Monday's launch followed a quarrel between the two Koreas over a landmine that injured three South Korean soldiers in the Demilitarised Zone.

INTERNATIONAL

The blast

The mine exploded in the part of the zone controlled by the South. A joint investigation by South Korea and the United Nations Command, which oversees the armistice that ended the fighting in 1953, concluded last week that North Korea had planted the mines more than a year ago.

Pyongyang denies responsibility. Seoul has demanded an apology.

The reply

Kim Yo Jong, the leader's sister, who often speaks for the North on relations with the South, called the demands for an apology despicable. She also rejected an offer from Seoul of medical equipment.

Last Thursday she said the South must show "utmost respect" if it wanted to restore ties.

A technical state of war

The Korean War ended in an armistice, not a peace treaty, and the two Koreas remain technically at war. The Demilitarised Zone, about four kilometres wide, runs across the peninsula and is among the most heavily mined places in the world.

Incidents there have often set off crises. A landmine blast in 2015 that maimed two South Korean soldiers led to an exchange of artillery fire and days of tension before the two sides reached an agreement.

Incidents there have often set off crises. A landmine blast in 2015 that maimed two South Korean soldiers led to an exchange of artillery fire and days of tension before the two sides reached an agreement.

Washington's role

The quarrel comes as President Donald Trump has signalled interest in meeting Kim Jong Un again, raising concern in Seoul that it could be left out of any negotiations on the North's nuclear weapons.

For now the North's message, through Ms Kim's statements and Monday's missiles, is that it is in no hurry to ease tension with the South.

MIDDLE EAST

What Is Known About Iran's Seven Conditions for Reopening the Strait of Hormuz

By Jonathan Mercer | Senior Editor, International Desk

Iran's seven conditions for reopening the Strait of Hormuz have become the centre of the dispute between Tehran and Washington, though their full text has not been made public.

What has been said

Iran sent the conditions to the United States about two weeks ago, according to Mohsen Rezaei, secretary of its Supreme National Security Council. Iran International, a London-based broadcaster, reported that Iran had presented the proposal at the United Nations General Assembly in late September, offering to reopen the strait and restore normal passage within seven days if the conditions were met.

On October 4 the speaker of the Iranian parliament, Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf, said the strait would not reopen until the United States met the conditions, which he linked to the agreement reached in June. The era of dragging out diplomacy, he said, was over.

On Sunday Mr Rezaei said Washington had accepted some of the conditions, which he did not name, but that its reply was inadequate.

Joint management

One element has been made public. Iran has proposed managing the strait jointly with Oman, whose territory forms its southern shore. The United States has rejected the idea and says ships should have free passage under international law.

Mr Rezaei said Iran could gain economic benefits from the strait. Iran's deputy foreign minister, Kazem Gharibabadi, has called it an Iranian waterway that Iran would use against its adversaries.

The law of the sea

Under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, ships enjoy a right of transit passage through straits used for international navigation, which coastal states may not suspend. Iran has signed but not ratified the convention, and argues that the right does not bind it.

Why it matters to Japan

Before the war, the strait carried about a fifth of the world's oil, including most of the crude bound for Japan. Any arrangement that let Iran decide which ships may pass, or charge them for doing so, would put a lever over Japan's energy supply in Tehran's hands.

That is why Tokyo, like Washington, has insisted on freedom of navigation, and why the details of the

seven conditions, when they emerge, will be read closely in Japan.

MIDDLE EAST

Reserves, New Routes and a Telephone Call to Tehran: How Japan Has Kept Its Oil Flowing Since the Strait Closed

By Yuki Saito | Economics & Finance Correspondent

Japan entered the crisis in the Gulf more exposed than almost any other large economy. It buys more than 90 per cent of its crude oil from the Middle East, and before the war most of it passed through the Strait of Hormuz.

The reserves

Its first line of defence was its stockpile. At the start of the crisis Japan held oil reserves equivalent to 254 days of domestic consumption, among the largest in the world relative to demand, held by the state, by refiners and by the producing countries that store crude in Japan.

On March 16 the government began releasing about 50 days' worth, after Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi announced a release of 80 million barrels. It acted before the International Energy Agency announced a coordinated release by its members of 400 million barrels, the largest in the agency's history.

In April Ms Takaichi announced a further 20 days' worth, to be released from May. The government, she said, would take every possible measure to keep supplies of crude oil stable.

Other routes

The second line of defence was to buy oil that did not need to pass through the strait. Ms Takaichi said in April that by May more than half of Japan's oil imports would come by routes avoiding Hormuz. Refiners have bought more crude from the United States and looked for supplies from the Caspian region, according to reports.

Diplomacy

In May an oil tanker managed by Eneos, with four Japanese crew members aboard, passed through the strait, the second Japan-related tanker to do so since the disruption began, according to Reuters. Ms Takaichi said she had contacted President Masoud Pezeshkian of Iran directly to help secure its passage.

Officials said at the time that dozens of Japan-related ships remained stranded in Gulf waters.

The cost

The measures have kept fuel in Japan's tanks, but not cheaply. A weak yen and dear oil have pushed up import costs: the yen-based import price index was 24.8 per cent higher in August than a year earlier, according to the Bank of Japan, and the costs are passing through to companies and households.

With Iran now saying the strait will not reopen on the old terms, the question for Japan is how long the reserves and the alternative routes can carry the load.

MIDDLE EAST

The Gulf in Figures: Strikes, Closures and What Japan Has Drawn From Its Reserves

By the Data Desk

RIYADH: 13 dead in Saturday's missile strike on King Khalid International Airport, after an injured Indian national died on Sunday; more than 300 injured.

SUNDAY: A projectile hit Terminal 4 and started a fire; a cruise missile was intercepted near the airport; Dammam's King Fahd airport was also hit.

AIRLINES: Flydubai has cancelled Riyadh flights until Wednesday; Etihad has extended cancellations on some Saudi routes.

SCHOOLS: Riyadh's schools have switched to remote teaching for a week.

HORMUZ: Effectively closed since the end of February; the American blockade of Iranian ports has been in force again since July.

IRAN'S TERMS: Seven conditions, not published in full; a proposal for joint management of the strait with Oman.

OIL: West Texas Intermediate, \$93.22 a barrel on Monday, up \$1.37.

JAPAN'S DEPENDENCE: More than 90 per cent of crude imports from the Middle East.

JAPAN'S RESERVES: Equivalent to 254 days of

consumption at the start of the crisis; about 50 days' worth released from March 16 and a further 20 days' worth from May.

IMPORT PRICES: Up 24.8 per cent in yen terms in August, year on year, according to the Bank of Japan.

POLITICS

China, Russia and North Korea Join in Criticism of Japan Over the UN Charter's 'Enemy State' Clauses; Tokyo Steps Up Its Rebuttal

By Aiko Tanaka | Senior Japan Correspondent

China, Russia and North Korea have coordinated their criticism of Japan over the so-called enemy state clauses of the United Nations Charter, and the government has heightened its vigilance and strengthened its messaging abroad in response, the Yomiuri Shimbun reported.

The clauses, written in 1945, refer to the countries that fought the Allies in the Second World War. Japan regards them as obsolete and has called for their deletion. Its three neighbours have instead held them up as a warning to Tokyo.

Takaichi at the UN

Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi raised the issue in her first address to the UN General Assembly last month. The charter was drafted 81 years ago, she said, and the clauses "must be deleted".

"In the 70 years since we became a U.N. Member State, Japan has consistently contributed to the peace and prosperity" of the world, she said. Japan joined the United Nations in December 1956.

Her address followed a brief meeting with President Donald Trump on the sidelines of the gathering, at which the two discussed economic security, including reducing reliance on Chinese supply chains. Japan and China exchanged sharp words over the clauses later in the General Assembly's general debate.

Beijing's reading

The dispute began last November, after Ms Takaichi told the Diet that a conflict over Taiwan could constitute a survival-threatening situation for Japan, the legal condition under which it may exercise collective self-defence. China's embassy in Tokyo responded by citing Article 53 of the charter, which allows regional enforcement action against a former enemy state that renews an aggressive policy without the authorisation of the Security Council.

Beijing's response to the remark went well beyond the charter. China urged its citizens to avoid travelling to Japan, halted imports of Japanese seafood again, and its consul general in Osaka posted a message, later deleted, that Tokyo condemned as a threat against the prime minister.

China argues that the clauses still permit action against Japan. Russia has used them to argue that Japan has no claim to the islands off Hokkaido that Japan calls the Northern Territories and Russia the southern Kurils, and it has increased its military exercises near Japan while criticising the country's defence build-up, at times invoking its wartime past.

Tokyo's answer

The Foreign Ministry says the clauses are dead letters. The General Assembly declared them obsolete in 1995, and in 2005 the world's leaders resolved to delete the references to enemy states. Japan has been one of the largest contributors to the UN's budget for decades.

The difficulty is that removing them requires an amendment to the charter, which needs the approval of all five permanent members of the Security Council, among them China and Russia. Neither has shown any willingness to give it.

Why now

The three countries' criticism has grown as Japan raises its defence spending and builds up its forces on its south-western islands, and as relations with Beijing have worsened. China has restricted Japanese companies' access to rare-earth magnets and cut tourist flights, and Russia has increased its military exercises near Japan.

Japan's own position is that the articles are no longer applied in practice, and that deleting them would merely bring the charter's text into line with reality.

For the government, the clauses are less a legal threat than a propaganda one: a way for its neighbours to cast a democracy that has not fought a war in 81 years as an unrepentant aggressor. The response

reported by the Yomiuri, more explanation abroad, reflects a judgment that the argument has to be won with third countries, since it cannot be won in the Security Council.

POLITICS

The Enemy State Clauses: From San Francisco to Today

By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

JUNE 1945: The United Nations Charter is signed in San Francisco, with references to enemy states in Articles 53, 77 and 107.

DECEMBER 1956: Japan joins the United Nations.

1995: The General Assembly declares the clauses obsolete and states its intention to amend the charter.

2005: The World Summit resolves to delete the references to enemy states.

NOVEMBER 2025: After Prime Minister Takaichi's remarks on Taiwan, China's embassy in Tokyo cites Article 53.

SEPTEMBER 2026: Ms Takaichi tells the General Assembly that the clauses must be deleted; Japan and China exchange sharp words in the general debate.

OCTOBER 2026: The Yomiuri Shimbun reports that China, Russia and North Korea are coordinating their criticism and that Tokyo is strengthening its messaging abroad.

THE OBSTACLE: An amendment needs the ratification of two-thirds of members, including all five permanent members of the Security Council.

THE VETO HOLDERS: The United States, Britain, France, China and Russia.

OTHER FORMER ENEMY STATES: Germany, Italy, Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania and Finland, all now UN members.

THE ARTICLES TODAY: Still in the text, though no longer applied in the UN's practice.

JAPAN'S CASE: Nearly 70 years of membership and decades as one of the UN's largest contributors.

POLITICS

The Week Ahead: Budget Committee Questions, the Final Stages of the Climax Series and the IMF in Bangkok

By the Politics Desk

TUESDAY, OCT. 13: House of Representatives Budget Committee, basic questioning with the prime minister and all ministers, from 9 a.m. Bank of Japan corporate goods price index for September, 8:50 a.m. The IMF's World Economic Outlook, published in Bangkok. Prudential Life's suspension of new sales begins. CEATEC opens at Makuhari Messe, to Friday. Pope Leo XIV enters hospital for surgery.

WEDNESDAY, OCT. 14: Budget Committee basic questioning, second day. Climax Series final stages begin: Hanshin v DeNA at Koshien and SoftBank v Nippon-Ham in Fukuoka. The IMF's Fiscal Monitor. ASML results. Nada no Kenka Matsuri, Himeji, to Thursday.

EARLY WEDNESDAY, JAPAN TIME: Women's football, Germany v Japan in Bremen, 12:45 a.m.

THURSDAY, OCT. 15: TSMC results. Kannamesai at Ise Jingu, to Saturday.

FRIDAY, OCT. 16: CEATEC closes. IMF and World Bank plenary in Bangkok.

WEEKEND, OCT. 17 AND 18: Kawagoe Festival.

SATURDAY, OCT. 24: Japan Series begins.

SUNDAY, OCT. 25: Niigata mayoral election.

OCT. 29 AND 30: Bank of Japan policy meeting.

IN THE GULF: Iran's next move after calling Washington's reply on Hormuz inadequate, and Saudi Arabia's promised response to the Houthis.

ON THE PENINSULA: Further North Korean launches; the analysis of Monday's second missile.

IN BANGKOK: The IMF and World Bank annual meetings continue until Sunday.

IN THE DIET: The House of Councillors is expected to follow with its own questioning of the government.

AT MAKUHARI: CEATEC and the Japan Mobility Show Bizweek, Tuesday to Friday.

IN ROME: Pope Leo XIV enters the Gemelli hospital on Tuesday for an operation on his lung.

POLITICS



Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi at the rostrum of the House of Representatives, in a file image. She and all her ministers face two days of basic questioning in the lower house Budget Committee from Tuesday morning, with the cut in the consumption tax on food and the agriculture minister's remarks expected to dominate. (Photo: WPM Productions)

POLITICS

Takaichi and Her Whole Cabinet Face Two Days of Questions in the Budget Committee, With the Food Tax Cut and Yana at the Top of the List

The televised 'basic questioning' opens at 9 a.m.; the opposition wants to know how a two-year cut in the tax on food will be paid for, and whether the agriculture minister can stay

By Michael Hayes | Deputy Editor, Politics & Policy

Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi and every member of her cabinet take their seats in the House of Representatives Budget Committee this morning for two days of questioning that will test her government's central promise and the survival of a minister she has refused to dismiss.

The ruling and opposition parties agreed last week to hold the committee's basic questioning on Tuesday and Wednesday, with the prime minister and all ministers required to attend. The sessions begin at 9 a.m. and are broadcast live.

It is the first time the second reshuffled Takaichi cabinet has faced the committee, where ministers answer questions one at a time and evasions are harder to sustain than in the set-piece speeches of the opening days of the extraordinary session.

The food tax

The opposition's first target is the bill to cut the consumption tax on food from 8 per cent to 1 per cent for two years from April 2027, which the cabinet sent to the Diet on Friday. Ms Takaichi has said the cut would save households about 36,000 yen a person a year and that the lower rate would basically be reflected in shop prices.

She has also said that it will not be financed by issuing deficit-covering bonds, and that the design of its funding will be decided after deliberation. Opposition parties have pressed her for a figure. Removing the tax on food entirely would cost about five trillion yen a year, by the Finance Ministry's earlier estimates, and a cut to 1 per cent would cost most of that.

They also want to know what happens when the two years end. Nikkei has reported that the government intends to move afterwards to income-linked benefits paid once a year from fiscal 2030.

The local share

Of the 8 per cent rate on food, 6.24 points are national tax and 1.76 points go to prefectures and municipalities. Local governments have asked for the revenue they lose to be made up from other sources, and how that will be done is likely to come up in questions from members who represent rural districts.

The minister

The second target is the agriculture minister, Kazuo Yana, whose recorded remarks at a party gathering in May, saying that road budgets for two municipalities

whose mayors had not supported him had been cut drastically, have dominated the session's first week.

Mr Yana has withdrawn the remarks and apologised, and denies influencing any budget. He has acknowledged making an inquiry about road budgets to the land ministry in February but says he did not lobby. Ms Takaichi has twice told him to stay in his post and repay the public with his work.

Six opposition parties in the House of Councillors have agreed to demand his resignation, and pressure has been building within the Liberal Democratic Party. On Monday the party's policy chief, Takayuki Kobayashi, said it was important for politicians to take responsibility for their words and actions and to explain them, and asked Mr Yana to continue explaining himself.

Beyond the two

The questioning will range wider. Members are expected to raise prices, which are still rising faster than the Bank of Japan's target, and the war in the Gulf, which has kept oil dear. North Korea's launch of two ballistic missiles on Monday morning and the revision of the national security documents are also likely subjects.

The committee's format gives the opposition its best chance of the session to put the prime minister on the spot before a national television audience. Each party's time is allotted largely according to its size, and the largest opposition parties are expected to spend much of theirs on the tax and on Mr Yana.

What to watch

Ms Takaichi has kept to a consistent line on the funding, that it will be designed after deliberation. Whether she gives any more ground in two days of direct questioning, and whether Mr Yana can answer for himself without new damage, will shape the rest of the session.

The ruling parties want the tax bill enacted before the session ends. The questioning that begins this morning is the start of the opposition's effort to make that as costly as possible.

Words for the eve of the committee

The comments, from one of the party's four most senior officers, came on the eve of the Budget Committee sessions in which Mr Yana will face direct questioning over his remarks about road budgets.

They were in line with what Mr Kobayashi said last week, when he expressed the hope that the minister would explain himself carefully to the public and then carry out his duties. He has not called for Mr Yana to resign.

Masaji Matsuyama, who leads the party's members in the House of Councillors, has called the remarks extremely inappropriate but declined to say whether the minister should go, saying it was not for him to

comment.

Over the weekend the former prime minister Shigeru Ishiba called the remarks highly questionable, and Jiji Press reported voices in the party saying that resignation was unavoidable.

The prime minister's position

Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi has twice said that Mr Yana should stay. Under the constitution only she can dismiss him, and she has so far shown no sign of doing so.

Her reluctance has a logic. Dismissing a minister in the first weeks of a session hands the opposition a victory and invites questions about her judgment in appointing him. Keeping him risks days of questioning that crowd out her own agenda, beginning with the food tax cut.

The minister's position

Mr Yana has withdrawn the remarks, apologised and denied ever influencing a road budget. He has said he made an inquiry to the land ministry in February but did not lobby, and he has told reporters that he does not remember what he asked.

Liberal Democrats in his home prefecture of Tochigi called his situation severe at a meeting in Utsunomiya on Saturday, and several asked him to fulfil his duty to explain.

The test

The party's leaders have now settled on a common line: the minister must explain. The Budget Committee's two days of basic questioning, beginning this morning, give him the chance to do so in front of television cameras, and will show whether explanation is enough.

POLITICS

How the Budget Committee Works, and Why Its 'Basic Questioning' Draws the Biggest Audience of the Diet Year

By the Politics Desk

THE COMMITTEE: The House of Representatives Budget Committee has 50 members, drawn from the parties in proportion to their strength. The House of Councillors has its own, with 45 members.

ITS REACH: Although it exists to examine budgets, the committee may question ministers on almost any subject, which makes it the main arena for scrutiny of the government.

BASIC QUESTIONING: Sessions at which the prime minister and every minister must attend, broadcast live by NHK. This week's run on Tuesday and Wednesday.

THE FORMAT: One question, one answer. A member puts a question to a named minister, who must reply from the rostrum. Officials may answer technical points.

THE CLOCK: Each party's time is allotted largely by size. In the House of Representatives the ministers' answers count against the questioner's time; in the House of Councillors only the questions do.

GENERAL QUESTIONING: Later sessions in which the prime minister need not attend and ministers answer on their own fields.

INTENSIVE DELIBERATION: Sessions on a single subject, often demanded by the opposition when a scandal breaks.

THE PANELS: Members often bring large boards with charts and quotations, held up for the cameras.

THIS SESSION: The first test in committee for the second reshuffled Takaichi cabinet, with the food tax cut and the agriculture minister's remarks expected to dominate.

WHY IT MATTERS: Ministers who stumble here have often not survived. A poor performance is replayed on the evening news.

POLITICS

Articles 53, 77 and 107: What the Charter's Enemy State Clauses Say, and Why They Are Still There

By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

The United Nations Charter was signed in San Francisco in June 1945, while the war against Japan was still being fought. Three of its articles reflect that moment.

Who is an enemy state

Article 53 defines an enemy state as any state which, during the Second World War, was an enemy of any signatory of the charter. That covered Japan and Germany and their allies, among them Italy, Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania and Finland.

Article 53

Article 53 says that regional arrangements may not take enforcement action without the authorisation of the Security Council, but makes an exception for measures against any enemy state directed against the renewal of aggressive policy by such a state.

Article 77

Article 77 lists territories that might be placed under the UN's trusteeship system, among them territories detached from enemy states as a result of the war.

Article 107

Article 107 says that nothing in the charter invalidates or precludes action taken or authorised as a result of the war by the governments responsible for such action, in relation to any state that was an enemy during it.

Declared obsolete

All the former enemy states have long since joined the UN, Japan in 1956. In 1995 the General Assembly adopted a resolution recognising that the clauses had become obsolete and expressing its intention to begin the procedure to amend the charter.

In 2005 the World Summit, the largest gathering of heads of state and government in the UN's history to that date, resolved in its outcome document to delete the references to enemy states in Articles 53, 77 and 107.

Why they remain

Under Article 108, an amendment comes into force only when adopted by two-thirds of the General Assembly and ratified by two-thirds of the UN's members, including all five permanent members of the Security Council.

Rather than reopen the charter for a single change, which could invite demands for others, including reform of the Security Council itself, members have left the text alone. So the clauses survive on paper, declared obsolete by the organisation whose founding document still contains them.

POLITICS

Government Considers Counting Spending on Railways as Defence-Related as It Revises the Security Documents

By the Politics Desk

The government is considering including railways in the infrastructure spending it counts as defence-related, as part of its revision of the three national security documents, Kyodo News reported.

The move would widen the range of spending that counts towards the government's targets for defence and related expenditure, which it has been raising under pressure from the United States and in response to China and North Korea.

Ports and airports first

The government already counts some public infrastructure as defence-related. Under the framework adopted in 2022, spending on ports and airports that the Self-Defence Forces and the coast guard can use in an emergency is included alongside the defence budget proper, together with coast guard spending, research with defence applications, cyber security and some international cooperation.

Adding railways would bring lines that could carry troops, vehicles and supplies, or evacuate residents, into the same category.

Why railways

Moving forces and equipment over long distances within Japan, for example from Hokkaido to Kyushu, has become a larger part of defence planning as the government shifts its emphasis to the south-west. Rail freight is one way to do it, and the Ground Self-Defence Force has carried out exercises moving equipment by train.

Railways also matter for civil defence. The government has drawn up plans to evacuate residents of islands near Taiwan in an emergency, and transport links on the main islands would carry evacuees onwards.

POLITICS

The wider debate

The question of what counts is not only domestic. The members of NATO agreed last year to aim to spend 5 per cent of their national income on defence and related items by 2035, including spending on infrastructure and resilience, and the American government has urged its Asian allies to raise their own spending.

Critics in Japan say that counting infrastructure risks inflating the figures without adding to the country's ability to defend itself. Supporters reply that modern defence depends on the transport and communications that move forces and supplies.

The ruling parties have recommended revising the security documents this year. The details of what will be included are expected to be settled with the revision.

POLITICS

What Counts as Defence Spending? The 2 Per Cent Goal, the 'Related' Items and the Five Per Cent Question

By Kenta Sakamoto | Data & Visualization

For decades Japan kept its defence budget at around 1 per cent of gross domestic product. The documents adopted in December 2022 changed that.

The 2022 plan

The government decided to spend about 43 trillion yen on defence over the five years to fiscal 2027 and to raise defence spending, together with related spending, to 2 per cent of GDP by fiscal 2027.

The second part of that goal is the one that matters for the railway debate. The 2 per cent includes not only the Defence Ministry's budget but also spending elsewhere in government that supports national security.

The related items

The related items fall into several categories: the coast guard; research and development with defence uses; public infrastructure, such as ports and airports that the forces can use; cyber security; and international cooperation that strengthens security, such as the Official Security Assistance programme, which supplies equipment to the armed forces of like-minded countries.

Ahead of schedule

Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi brought the timetable forward. In her first policy speech, in October last year, she said Japan would reach the 2 per cent level in fiscal 2025, two years early.

The next step

The revision of the security documents now under way is expected to set a new direction for spending beyond 2027. The ruling parties have called for a substantial increase and for preparation for new ways of fighting, including drones and cyber warfare.

The NATO comparison

At their summit in The Hague in June last year, NATO's members agreed to raise defence and security-related spending to 5 per cent of GDP by 2035: 3.5 per cent for core defence and up to 1.5 per cent for items such as infrastructure, civil preparedness and resilience.

The American government has pointed to that target in urging Japan and other allies to spend more. Counting railways would move Japan's accounting a little closer to NATO's broader definition.

The test

Whatever the definitions, the question that matters is whether the money buys capability. Including more items makes the headline figure larger. Whether it makes Japan safer depends on what the money is spent on.

POLITICS

Politics in Brief: The Communists Turn Away From Opposition Unity, the Security Documents and the Session's Calendar

By the Politics Desk

The Japanese Communist Party is to abandon its policy of cooperating with other opposition parties in national elections and concentrate on building up its own strength, Kyodo News reported. Its chair, Tomoko Tamura, set out the change in a draft resolution for the party congress in January, presented to a meeting of the central committee in

Tokyo on Monday.

The draft sets a target of 4.5 million votes, and a share of at least 7.5 per cent, in the proportional representation section of the next House of Representatives election. Ms Tamura said the party would confront the Takaichi government head-on, pointing to what she called a new configuration of parties.

Missiles and the Diet

North Korea's launch of two ballistic missiles on Monday morning came on a public holiday, with the Diet not sitting. The launch is expected to come up in this week's Budget Committee sessions, alongside the revision of the national security documents.

The security documents

The government is revising the National Security Strategy, the National Defence Strategy and the Defence Buildup Programme, which were adopted in December 2022. Among the questions under consideration, Kyodo News reported, is whether to count spending on railways as defence-related.

The UN Charter

The Foreign Ministry is stepping up its explanation abroad of Japan's position on the enemy state clauses of the UN Charter, after China, Russia and North Korea coordinated their criticism of Japan, the Yomiuri Shimbun reported.

The agriculture minister

Kazuo Yana, the agriculture minister, faces questions in the Budget Committee this week over his remarks about road budgets. The Liberal Democrats' policy chief, Takayuki Kobayashi, asked him on Monday to continue explaining himself to the public.

The food tax

The bill to cut the consumption tax on food to 1 per cent for two years from April 2027 is before the Diet. The ruling parties want it enacted during the current extraordinary session, which opened on October 5.

Komeito

Komeito, now in opposition, is questioning the government under its new leader, Mitsunari Okamoto, who led his party's questions in the first round of party leaders' questions last week.

Local elections

The Niigata mayoral election, with three candidates expected, is on October 25. The unified local elections follow next spring.

INTERNATIONAL

Zelenskyy Says Russia Struck Energy Sites Despite Trump's 'Energy Ceasefire' and Warns Kyiv Will Respond; the Kremlin Says Talks Go On

By the International Desk

President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said on Monday that Russia had struck several Ukrainian energy facilities despite President Donald Trump's announcement of an energy ceasefire, and warned that Ukraine would respond if Moscow did not respect it.

"If Russia does not agree to an energy ceasefire, we will respond," he told the Warsaw Security Forum by video link. Ukraine had been "horribly surprised" by the strikes, he said, and he urged the United States to make sure that Russia kept to the truce.

The strikes

A power plant in Kharkiv was hit despite the announced truce, and gas production facilities of the state energy company Naftogaz in the Kharkiv region were attacked overnight into Monday. The attack caused a fire and damaged critical equipment, the company's acting chief executive, Sergii Fedorenko, said.

A truce announced from afar

Mr Trump announced on Sunday that Russia and Ukraine had agreed to stop attacking each other's energy facilities. Mr Zelenskyy said at first that it was the first he had heard of it. On Sunday he said Ukraine was ready to halt its attacks on Russian oil refineries if Moscow stopped attacking Ukraine's energy system.

Moscow's reply

The Kremlin's spokesman, Dmitry Peskov, said contacts with the United States on an energy ceasefire were continuing. "As soon as we have something to say on this topic, we will certainly inform you," he said, declining to confirm that any agreement had

been reached.

He rejected Mr Zelenskyy's proposal for a 60-day truce to allow elections to be held. "We want long-term peace and are prepared to do everything possible to achieve it," he said.

The foreign minister, Sergei Lavrov, was blunter. Mr Zelenskyy was eager to seize on any initiative that offered a break, he said, but had not earned one, and Russia would not be taken in by promises again.

Europe's view

European leaders were sceptical. President Emmanuel Macron of France said he had seen no Russian energy ceasefire in the previous 48 hours. Poland's prime minister, Donald Tusk, said Russia was not interested in a ceasefire and that he would urge his European partners to tighten sanctions.

On Monday the European Union added almost 1,600 names to its sanctions list of people and organisations linked to Russia's military industry. Kaja Kallas, the EU's foreign policy chief, called it "the single largest expansion" of the list since the war began.

A pause that failed before

It would not be the first such arrangement. In March last year, after a telephone call with Mr Trump, President Vladimir Putin agreed to a 30-day pause in strikes on energy infrastructure. Both sides accused each other of violating it, and it lapsed without being renewed.

Ukraine's power system has been a target since the first winter of the war, and Russian strikes have repeatedly cut electricity and heating to millions of people. Ukraine, for its part, has struck Russian refineries and fuel depots far from the front.

Elections

Mr Zelenskyy's proposal of a 60-day truce was intended to allow elections to be held in Ukraine, where martial law has suspended them since the invasion of February 2022. The Kremlin, which disputes his legitimacy, has rejected the idea.

The diesel question

The announcement of the truce followed Mr Trump's temporary easing, late last week, of American sanctions on Russian diesel, a step that European governments and Kyiv criticised as emboldening President Vladimir Putin.

Why it matters to Japan

Both sides have attacked each other's energy infrastructure for months. A real halt would ease some pressure on fuel markets already strained by the war in the Gulf, where Japan buys most of its oil. So far, Monday's events suggest the truce exists mainly in the announcement.

INTERNATIONAL

Nearly 1,600 New Names: How the EU's Sanctions List Works, and Why Japan Follows a Similar Path

By the International Desk

The European Union's decision on Monday to add almost 1,600 people and organisations linked to Russia's military industry to its sanctions list was, in the words of its foreign policy chief, Kaja Kallas, the single largest expansion of the list since Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022.

Two kinds of measure

The EU's sanctions on Russia take two broad forms. Sectoral measures restrict whole areas of trade, such as bans on importing Russian oil by sea, on exporting technology that could be used by the military, and on transactions with certain Russian banks.

Listings target named people and organisations. Their assets in the EU are frozen, Europeans may not make funds available to them, and individuals are banned from travelling to the EU.

Why lists grow

Russia has adapted to sanctions by routing purchases through third countries and setting up new companies to replace those already listed. Each round of listings tries to close the gaps by naming the suppliers, intermediaries and front companies that keep its arms factories supplied.

Monday's additions focused on Russia's military-industrial complex. The EU must agree such measures unanimously among its 27 members, which has sometimes slowed them.

The ceasefire question

The timing was pointed. The listings came a day after President Donald Trump announced an energy ceasefire between Russia and Ukraine that European leaders said they had not seen take effect, and days after Washington temporarily eased its own sanctions on Russian diesel.

Japan's sanctions

Japan has imposed its own sanctions on Russia since 2022, in coordination with the other members of the Group of Seven: asset freezes on individuals and organisations, bans on exporting goods with military uses, and restrictions on Russian banks. It has added names in successive rounds, as the EU has.

Japan also joined the Group of Seven's cap on the price of Russian oil in December 2022, while securing an exception for crude from the Sakhalin-2 project in Russia's Far East, in which Japanese companies hold stakes and which supplies a share of Japan's liquefied natural gas, a reminder of the energy dependence that complicates every country's sanctions.

The effect of sanctions on Russia's war effort is disputed, but the EU's message on Monday was clear: Europe, at least, is tightening rather than easing.

INTERNATIONAL

Pope Leo Enters Rome's Gemelli Hospital Today for Surgery to Remove a Lung Nodule; Audiences Cancelled Until October 20

By the International Desk

Pope Leo XIV will be admitted to Rome's Gemelli hospital on Tuesday for an operation to remove a nodule from his lung, the Vatican said on Monday.

The pope disclosed the nodule himself at his Sunday noon prayer, saying doctors had found it at a very early stage and that he was following their advice to have it removed.

The schedule

All of the pope's audiences have been cancelled until October 20. A Mass he was to have celebrated on Wednesday, closing a week-long conference on ministering to families, will be celebrated by someone else. The Vatican has not given the date of the operation and has predicted about a week of recovery in hospital.

No particular trigger

The Vatican press office denied reports in the Italian media that an inflammation had prompted the examination that found the nodule. It said the check-up had been routine and that no particular issue had led to the tests.

Cardinal Gérald Lacroix of Quebec said the pope would need to be in hospital for a few days and praised his openness. The pope had asked for prayers and had been very transparent, the cardinal said.

The prognosis

A lung nodule may be benign or malignant. Oncologists not involved in the pope's care told the Associated Press that if it proves to be cancerous, removing it at an early stage gives an excellent prognosis, and surgery alone may be enough.

A first for the papacy

It is the first medical event of the 17-month papacy of Leo, the first pope born in the United States, who was elected in May last year after the death of Pope Francis. Leo, who is 71, was born Robert Prevost in Chicago and spent much of his career as a missionary and bishop in Peru.

His announcement on Sunday was unusual in its openness. Popes have traditionally disclosed little about their health, and his predecessor's long illness early last year was followed by the public mainly through brief Vatican bulletins.

The Gemelli has a suite kept for popes on its tenth floor. Pope Francis spent five weeks there with double pneumonia early last year, and Pope John Paul II was treated there many times.

The journey ahead

The pope is due to visit Uruguay, Argentina and Peru from November 6 to 17. He said on Sunday that he still planned to go. While he is in hospital, he remains pope, and officials handle the day-to-day business of the Vatican.

INTERNATIONAL



Navi Pillay, the South African jurist and former judge of the International Criminal Court who was awarded this year's Nobel Peace Prize, in an image supplied for this edition. She visited the court in The Hague and met its president, Tomoko Akane, Kyodo News reported.

INTERNATIONAL

Pillay Visits the International Criminal Court Days After Her Nobel Prize and Meets Its Japanese President, Tomoko Akane

The peace laureate, a former judge of the court, encourages staff who she says feel under threat after Washington's latest sanctions, which she calls 'unheard of, unacceptable'

By Rachel Kim | Washington-Tokyo Liaison

Navi Pillay, the South African jurist awarded this year's Nobel Peace Prize, visited the International Criminal Court in The Hague, where she once sat as a judge, and met its president, Tomoko Akane, Kyodo News reported. The Asahi Shimbun said she encouraged the court's staff.

The visit came days after the United States announced new sanctions against the court, hours after the Norwegian Nobel Committee named Ms Pillay as the winner on Friday.

'Unheard of, unacceptable'

Ms Pillay has been outspoken about the sanctions. Speaking by video link from Nuremberg to an event at the Nobel Peace Center in Oslo on Saturday, she said there was "so much tension and anxiety" about the continued existence of international courts, above all the ICC.

"There are hundreds of staff who feel they are under threat," she said. The sanctions were "unheard of, unacceptable", she added, and targeted judges "just for the judicial orders they issue".

In an interview with the German broadcaster ARD she called it a sad day when a country that is not even a member of the court imposes such sanctions unilaterally. She said she believed in the court and considered its work a success despite the interference, and praised the dedication of its staff.

Washington's measures

Announcing the new measures on Friday, Secretary of State Marco Rubio said the United States would ban transactions with what he called a "rogue court". The court rejected the sanctions as an attack on international law and warned that "history will judge this moment". Member states and the United Nations condemned them.

The United States is not a party to the Rome Statute

INTERNATIONAL

Why Washington Is Sanctioning a Court It Never Joined, and What the Sanctions Do

By the International Desk

The International Criminal Court, which opened in 2002 under the Rome Statute of 1998, tries individuals for genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes and the crime of aggression when national courts cannot or will not.

More than 120 countries are members. The United States, China, Russia, India and Israel are not.

The quarrel

American administrations of both parties have objected to the court's claims of jurisdiction over citizens of countries that have not joined it. The current dispute centres on investigations touching the United States and Israel, including the court's arrest warrants of November 2024 for Israel's prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, and his former defence minister, Yoav Gallant, over the war in Gaza.

The measures

In February 2025 President Donald Trump signed an executive order authorising sanctions against people

that created the court, and the Trump administration has previously sanctioned its chief prosecutor and several of its judges.

The court's Japanese president

Ms Akane, a former Japanese public prosecutor, has been a judge of the court since 2018 and its president since March 2024, the first Japanese to hold the post. She welcomed Ms Pillay's prize on Friday.

She has herself become a target. Russia placed her on a wanted list in 2023, after a chamber on which she sat issued a warrant for the arrest of President Vladimir Putin, and last week Moscow demanded that she be handed over, Jiji Press reported.

Japan joined the court in 2007 and has long been among its largest financial contributors, which gives Tokyo a direct stake in its survival.

A career in international justice

Ms Pillay, 85, was the first woman who was not white to serve on the High Court in South Africa. She went on to be a judge and then president of the international tribunal for Rwanda, where she sat in the case that first recognised rape as a means of committing genocide, and was a judge of the ICC from 2003 to 2008.

From 2008 to 2014 she was the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, and she later chaired the UN commission of inquiry on the occupied Palestinian territory and Israel.

The chairman of the Norwegian Nobel Committee has called for an end to attacks on the rule of law. Ms Pillay's visit to The Hague made the same point in person, to the people who work at the court.

involved in the court's investigations of the United States and its allies. The administration then sanctioned the chief prosecutor and, over the following months, several judges and deputy prosecutors.

Those named are barred from entering the United States and their assets under American jurisdiction are frozen. Because American banks and companies, and many foreign ones with American business, avoid dealing with sanctioned people, the effect reaches far beyond the United States: staff have reported difficulty with bank accounts, payments and everyday services.

Friday's step

The measures announced on Friday go further, targeting the court itself. Secretary of State Marco Rubio said Washington would ban transactions with what he called a rogue court. The full scope of the new measures, and how they will affect the court's dealings with suppliers and banks, has yet to become clear.

The response

Member states and the United Nations condemned the new measures quickly. The court says it will continue its work.

Japan's position

Japan joined the court in 2007 and is among its largest funders. Tokyo values both the court and its alliance with the United States. With a Japanese judge at the court's head, the tension between those two commitments is becoming harder to ignore.

INTERNATIONAL

Tomoko Akane: The Japanese Prosecutor Who Leads the International Criminal Court

By the Data Desk

POST: President of the International Criminal Court since March 2024; the first Japanese to hold the office.

JUDGE: Elected to the court's bench, taking office in 2018.

CAREER: A Japanese public prosecutor before going to The Hague, with experience in international legal cooperation.

THE PUTIN WARRANT: Sat on the pre-trial chamber that in March 2023 issued a warrant for the arrest of the Russian president over the deportation of Ukrainian children.

RUSSIA'S RESPONSE: Placed on a Russian wanted list in 2023; Moscow demanded her handover last week, Jiji Press reported.

THE SANCTIONS: Has defended the court's independence as Washington has sanctioned its officials.

THIS WEEK: Welcomed Navi Pillay's Nobel Peace Prize; met Ms Pillay at the court, Kyodo News reported.

JAPAN AND THE COURT: Japan joined in 2007 and is among the court's largest financial contributors.

THE COURT: Seated in The Hague; 18 judges elected by the member states for nine-year terms.

THE PRESIDENCY: The president and two vice-presidents are elected by the judges for three-year terms.

INTERNATIONAL

The Energy Truce in Two Days: An Announcement, a Denial and Fresh Strikes

By the International Desk

SUNDAY: President Trump announces an energy ceasefire between Russia and Ukraine.

SUNDAY: President Zelenskyy says it is the first he has heard of it.

SUNDAY: Kyiv offers to stop striking Russian refineries if Moscow spares its energy system.

OVERNIGHT: Naftogaz gas sites in the Kharkiv region are hit and catch fire.

MONDAY: A Kharkiv power plant is struck.

MONDAY: Mr Zelenskyy warns that Ukraine will respond.

MONDAY: The Kremlin says contacts continue; no agreement is confirmed.

MONDAY: President Macron says he has seen no Russian energy ceasefire.

MONDAY: The EU adds almost 1,600 names to its Russia sanctions list.

PRECEDENT: A 30-day energy pause in March last year collapsed.

ECONOMY

Wholesale Prices for September Are Due This Morning After August's 7.6 Per Cent Rise, Driven by Dear Fuel and a Weak Yen

By the Markets Desk

The Bank of Japan publishes its corporate goods price index for September at 8:50 a.m. on Tuesday, the first reading of how the prices companies charge one another moved last month.

August's reading

In August the index was 7.6 per cent higher than a year earlier, a little slower than the revised 7.7 per cent rise in July but above the median forecast of economists polled by Reuters, which was 7.4 per cent. From July to August, prices fell 0.2 per cent.

Import prices measured in yen were 24.8 per cent higher than a year earlier in August, down from a revised 29.3 per cent in July.

The causes

Two forces have been pushing the index up: the price of fuel, driven higher by the war in the Gulf and the closure of the Strait of Hormuz, and a weak yen, which raises the cost of everything Japan imports.

Both continued in September. The yen traded at around 158 to the dollar, and oil remained dear. Economists will be watching whether the slowdown in the annual rate from July to August continues, or whether the cost of energy and imported materials pushes it up again.

Three indices

The bank publishes three main indices: one for goods traded within Japan, which provides the headline figure, one for exports and one for imports. The export and import indices are calculated both in yen and in the currencies in which contracts are written, which allows economists to separate the effect of the exchange rate from changes in world prices.

Economists will look closely at petroleum and coal products, chemicals and food, the categories most affected by the cost of energy and imported materials.

Why it matters

Wholesale prices are a leading indicator for consumer prices. When companies pay more for materials and energy, they try to pass the costs on, and households feel them months later in the price of food, electricity and everyday goods.

Food makers raised the prices of more than 3,000 items in October alone, according to Teikoku Databank, bringing this year's total to more than 20,000.

The Bank of Japan

The central bank raised its policy rate to 1 per cent in June, the highest in three decades, and to 1.25 per cent in September. Its governor, Kazuo Ueda, has said the bank watches wholesale inflation to judge how companies' costs are passing through to consumer prices.

The bank's next policy meeting is on October 29 and 30, when it will also publish new forecasts for growth and prices. A strong reading on Tuesday would add to the case for a further increase, though the bank has moved cautiously, waiting for evidence that wages are keeping pace.

The households' view

For households the wholesale figures are a warning of what is to come at the till. Price rises for food, which households cannot easily do without, weigh most heavily on families with lower incomes, who spend a larger share of what they earn on it.

The government's view

The figures will also feed the political debate. The government's plan to cut the consumption tax on food from 8 per cent to 1 per cent from April 2027 is meant to ease the burden of rising prices. Its critics argue that the cut will do little if costs keep climbing at the wholesale level.

ECONOMY

Prices and Rates at a Glance

By the Markets Desk

CORPORATE GOODS PRICES, AUGUST: Up 7.6 per cent on a year earlier; the median forecast was 7.4 per cent.

JULY, REVISED: Up 7.7 per cent.

MONTH ON MONTH, AUGUST: Down 0.2 per cent.

IMPORT PRICES IN YEN, AUGUST: Up 24.8 per cent on a year earlier, after a revised 29.3 per cent in July.

SEPTEMBER'S FIGURES: Due at 8:50 a.m. on Tuesday.

FOOD PRICE RISES: More than 3,000 items in October and more than 20,000 this year, according to Teikoku Databank.

BANK OF JAPAN POLICY RATE: 1.25 per cent, raised in September after an increase to 1 per cent in June.

NEXT POLICY MEETING: October 29 and 30, with new forecasts for growth and prices.

THE YEN: About 158 to the dollar late last week.

TEN-YEAR GOVERNMENT BOND YIELD: Above 3 per cent.

ECONOMY



The Tokyo Stock Exchange at Kabutocho. The market reopens on Tuesday after the Sports Day holiday; in New York on Monday the Dow rose 195.60 points while the Nasdaq fell 120.27, led lower by memory-chip shares. (Photo: TG2 (CC))

ECONOMY

Tokyo Reopens After the Holiday to Falling Memory-Chip Shares in New York, Dearer Oil and Missiles Over the Sea of Japan

The Dow gained 196 points on Monday as investors moved into defensive shares while the Nasdaq slipped; wholesale prices for September and the IMF's new forecasts arrive this morning

By Yuki Saito | Economics & Finance Correspondent

The Tokyo stock market reopens on Tuesday after the Sports Day holiday to a mixed lead from Wall Street, where technology shares fell and investors moved into steadier companies, and to a weekend and holiday crowded with news from the Gulf, Ukraine and the Korean peninsula.

In New York on Monday the Dow Jones Industrial Average rose 195.60 points, or 0.38 per cent, to 51,850.55. The broader S&P 500 slipped 4.30 points to 7,807.24, and the Nasdaq Composite, heavy with technology shares, fell 120.27 points, or 0.44 per cent, to 27,245.90.

Memory chips fall

Makers of memory chips and other companies tied to artificial intelligence led the decline. Sandisk fell more than 6 per cent on concern about competition in memory, Lumentum Holdings lost almost 10 per cent, and Marvell Technology and Semtech also fell, on renewed doubts about valuations.

The fall matters in Tokyo, where shares in chip-related companies have driven much of this year's rise and much of its volatility. Monday's moves in New York suggest the pressure on that group will continue at the open.

Investors moved instead into value and defensive sectors, lifting the Dow. Salesforce rose after an analyst upgraded the stock, and Meta Platforms gained after it launched a new artificial intelligence model.

Oil

Oil rose. The November contract for West Texas Intermediate crude gained \$1.37, or about 1.5 per cent, to \$93.22 a barrel, as traders questioned whether the energy ceasefire between Russia and Ukraine announced by President Donald Trump on Sunday would hold, and weighed the continuing risks in the Gulf.

Iran said on Sunday that Washington's reply to its conditions for reopening the Strait of Hormuz was inadequate, and Houthi attacks kept Riyadh's main airport closed. Higher oil prices raise costs for Japanese companies and households and feed into the trade balance.

ECONOMY

Markets at a Glance: Monday in New York, Friday in Tokyo

By the Markets Desk

DOW JONES INDUSTRIAL AVERAGE (Mon.): 51,850.55, up 195.60, or 0.38 per cent.

S&P 500 (Mon.): 7,807.24, down 4.30, or 0.06 per cent.

NASDAQ COMPOSITE (Mon.): 27,245.90, down 120.27, or 0.44 per cent.

BIGGEST MOVES: Sandisk down more than 6 per cent; Lumentum down almost 10 per cent; Semtech down 10.15 per cent; Marvell down 3.42 per cent.

OIL: West Texas Intermediate, November, \$93.22 a barrel, up \$1.37.

NIKKEI 225 (Fri.): 69,030.92, down 11.19; a third straight fall.

run until Sunday.

It is the first time Thailand has hosted the meetings since 1991. They are being held at the Queen Sirikit National Convention Center.

The forecasts

The IMF publishes its World Economic Outlook on Tuesday morning, Bangkok time, with its new forecasts for growth and inflation in Japan and around the world. Its Global Financial Stability Report follows the same day and its Fiscal Monitor, on government finances, on Wednesday.

The forecasts come at a difficult moment, with energy prices pushed up by the war in the Gulf, the war in Ukraine continuing and trade disrupted by tariffs.

Japan's place

For Japan, the IMF's view of its public finances is likely to attract the most attention. The Fund has repeatedly urged Tokyo to set out a credible plan to reduce its debt, which is the largest among advanced economies relative to the size of the economy.

The government's plan to cut the consumption tax on food, and the yield on ten-year government bonds above 3 per cent, are likely to be part of that discussion, as is the Bank of Japan's gradual raising of interest rates.

The programme

The IMF's managing director, Kristalina Georgieva, holds her main news conference on Wednesday. The meetings' plenary session is on Friday, when she is also due to appear in a conversation with Kevin Warsh, the chairman of the Federal Reserve.

Among the other subjects on the agenda are artificial intelligence and jobs, financing for small businesses, and the use of private capital for development. The World Bank, led by its president, Ajay Banga, held a session on Monday on small-scale AI and employment.

Behind closed doors

The formal sessions are accompanied by meetings of the IMF's steering committee of ministers and by many private meetings, where much of the real business is done.

Thailand is using the occasion to look back on its own path since 1991, which included the Asian financial crisis that began with the collapse of its currency in 1997 and the IMF programme that followed, a period still remembered in the region.

ECONOMY

The World Economic Outlook: What the IMF's Forecasts Are, How They Are Made and Why Governments Watch Them

By the Economics Desk

The International Monetary Fund publishes its World Economic Outlook twice a year, in April and in October, at the spring and annual meetings, with shorter updates in January and July.

What it contains

The report sets out the Fund's forecasts for growth, inflation, unemployment and trade balances for its 191 member countries, along with chapters analysing particular questions. This year one of them examines how corporate tax policies spill over from one country to another.

How it is made

The forecasts are prepared by the Fund's economists in Washington, drawing on the work of the teams that monitor each member country and on regular consultations with governments. They rest on stated assumptions, for instance about oil prices and interest rates, which are set out in the report.

Why it matters

The IMF's numbers are not necessarily more accurate than those of private forecasters, but they are a common reference point. Governments, central banks and investors compare their own expectations with them, and a downgrade for a country is often reported as a verdict on its policies.

Japan's figures

Japan's government publishes its own forecasts, usually more optimistic than the IMF's. Differences between the two often prompt questions in the Diet, where opposition members use the Fund's figures to challenge the government's economic claims.

Risks

The most widely read part of the report is often its assessment of risks. In recent years these have included inflation, high debt, trade disputes and war. This year the energy shock from the Gulf is likely to feature prominently.

Timing

The October report is released at the start of the annual meetings, which this year are in Bangkok. Its forecasts shape the discussions among finance ministers that follow, and the communique issued at the end of the meetings.

The report is published in English and summarised in other languages, including Japanese, on the Fund's website.

ECONOMY

Japan at the IMF: The Fund's Second-Largest Shareholder, and Why Its Voice in Bangkok Matters

By the Economics Desk

Japan is the second-largest shareholder in the International Monetary Fund after the United States, which gives it one of the strongest voices in the institution meeting in Bangkok this week.

Quotas and votes

Each member's quota, its subscription to the Fund, determines how much it contributes, how much it may borrow and how many votes it holds. Japan's quota reflects the size of its economy and its long role as one of the world's largest creditors.

A seat at the table

Japan has its own executive director on the Fund's board in Washington, and a Japanese official traditionally serves as one of the Fund's deputy managing directors. At the Asian Development Bank in Manila, Japan has supplied every president since the bank's founding in 1966.

The 1997 lesson

Japan's relationship with the Fund in Asia has not always been smooth. During the Asian financial crisis that began in Thailand in 1997, Tokyo proposed an Asian Monetary Fund to help the region's economies, an idea opposed by the United States and the IMF at the time.

The crisis led instead to the Chiang Mai Initiative, a network of currency swap arrangements among East Asian countries launched in 2000, which Japan helped to build and which has since been expanded.

This week

The meetings in Bangkok return the Fund's annual gathering to the country where that crisis began, nearly three decades later. Japan's finance minister and the governor of the Bank of Japan normally attend the annual meetings, and Japanese officials will be watching the Fund's views on the yen, Japan's public debt and the Bank of Japan's interest rate policy.

The Fund's view of Japan

The IMF has repeatedly urged Japan to set out a credible plan for its public finances while the central bank raises rates gradually. How it treats the government's plan to cut the consumption tax on food will be read closely in Tokyo.

BUSINESS

Prudential Life's Suspension of New Sales Begins Today and Runs to the End of January; Existing Policies Are Unaffected

By the Business Desk

Prudential Life Insurance Japan's suspension of solicitation and new contracts, ordered by the Financial Services Agency, takes effect on Tuesday and runs until January 31.

The order followed the discovery that former employees had defrauded customers of more than 6 billion yen in total, according to reports.

The findings

The agency found 30 cases of violations of the Insurance Business Act involving large or numerous contracts that switched customers from one policy to another, and about 4,000 cases in which sales staff had failed to confirm what customers actually wanted, according to reports.

It said a pay system linked to sales performance and the concentration of authority in sales staff had

BUSINESS

created a breeding ground for misconduct, and that past management had put sales first.

The group

A group company, Gibraltar Life, received a similar suspension, from which sales through agencies are excluded. Both insurers are controlled by Prudential Holding of Japan, which received a business improvement order.

For customers

Existing policies are not affected. Coverage, claims, benefit payments, changes to contracts and cancellations continue as before. Customers who are unsure about their policies can contact the company or the agency's consultation services.

What comes next

The companies must submit improvement plans by November 30 and report on their progress every three months.

The Yomiuri Shimbun has reported that Prudential plans to resume part of its sales from February, after the suspension ends, but that a full return could take up to a year and a half.

The model in question

Prudential sells through its own Life Planner sales force, paid largely on commission, rather than through banks or agencies. The model was long regarded in the industry as a success. The agency's findings suggest that its incentives also created the conditions for abuse, and other insurers that pay on similar lines are likely to review their own practices.

BUSINESS

Business in Brief: Omron Buys an American Maker of Industrial Computers, Deals Hit a Record and the Car Industry Joins CEATEC

By the Business Desk

Omron has agreed to acquire OnLogic, an American maker of industrial computers, in a deal worth about 100 billion yen, the Nihon Keizai Shimbun reported. The Kyoto company, which makes sensors, controllers and robots for factories as well as health devices, wants to build what it calls a platform for physical AI.

OnLogic, based in Vermont, makes rugged computers designed to run in factories and other harsh environments, where they increasingly process data and run AI at the point where it is collected. Omron's aim is to combine them with its own equipment on the factory floor.

Deals at a record

The number of mergers and acquisitions involving Japanese companies from January to September was the highest on record, and the value of acquisitions of Japanese companies by foreign buyers had already exceeded last year's total, the Nikkei reported. A weak yen has made Japanese assets cheaper for foreign buyers, and companies have been under pressure from shareholders to reorganise.

The mobility show

The Japan Mobility Show Bizweek, organised by the Japan Automobile Manufacturers Association, opens alongside CEATEC at Makuhari Messe in Chiba, the second time the two events have been held together. Visitors can move freely between them.

Chips

The chip industry's results this week, from ASML on Wednesday and TSMC on Thursday, will be watched closely in Tokyo, where makers of chipmaking equipment and materials account for a large share of the market's value.

Prudential

Prudential Life Insurance Japan's suspension of new sales begins on Tuesday and runs until January 31.

The yen

The yen traded at about 158 to the dollar late last week. A weaker yen raises the profits that exporters report in yen but increases the cost of imported energy and food.

Oil

West Texas Intermediate crude rose \$1.37 to \$93.22 a barrel in New York on Monday, keeping fuel costs high for Japanese companies.

ELSEWHERE IN TODAY'S PAPER

Waseda's Izumo record, Page 16.

Fighters reach final stage, Page 16.

TECHNOLOGY

CEATEC Opens at Makuhari Messe With 821 Exhibitors and 'Physical AI' at Its Centre, Alongside the Mobility Show's Business Week

The organisers call 2026 the first year of AI that acts in the real world; 338 companies and organisations are exhibiting for the first time, and more than 110,000 visitors are expected over four days

By Ethan Cole | Technology & Science Editor

CEATEC, Japan's largest exhibition of digital technology, opens on Tuesday at Makuhari Messe in Chiba with 821 companies and organisations taking part and artificial intelligence that works in the physical world as its leading theme.

The four-day show, which runs until Friday, is organised by the Japan Electronics and Information Technology Industries Association, known as JEITA. The organisers expect more than 110,000 registered visitors.

Transformation

This year's theme is Transformation, with the subtitle: companies, industries and society change. JEITA's executive producer for the show told a news conference last week that if 2025 was called the first year of generative AI, 2026 was being called the first year of physical AI. The organisers wanted visitors to feel AI that had become familiar and was being put to use in society, he said.

The show highlights four areas: physical AI, meaning AI that perceives and acts in the real world through robots, vehicles and machines; prediction and simulation using AI; the infrastructure that supports the use of AI; and the sensing devices on which physical AI depends.

Its centrepiece, an area called X Park, takes its name from the theme.

Who is there

Of the 821 exhibitors, 338 are taking part for the first time. Startups, universities and research institutions account for 246, and 194 have come from 31 countries and regions outside Japan.

Hitachi and Mitsubishi Electric are among the large companies showing physical AI for factories and infrastructure, and Fujitsu has built its stand with the film studio Toho around a simulation of Godzilla coming ashore, as a way of rehearsing evacuations from natural disasters.

The organisers' own pavilions include one devoted to the ocean, with digital models of conditions under water, and a new pavilion on space.

The awards

JEITA announced the winners of the CEATEC Awards before the opening. The three ministerial prizes went to Mitsubishi Electric's group for an AI technology that separates voices and machine sounds in noisy recordings, to TDK for an ultra-thin mirror for smart glasses that project images onto the retina, and to Hitachi for a suite of AI services meant to make social infrastructure safer and more efficient.

A new category of excellence awards went to Sharp, Murata Manufacturing and Taiyo Yuden, the last for a service that uses an odour sensor in testing for cancer.

The motor show next door

For the second time in two years, CEATEC is being held together with the business week of the Japan Mobility Show, organised by the Japan Automobile Manufacturers Association. Visitors can move freely between the two.

A representative of the mobility show said that the last joint event had created contacts with companies, technologies and people that the car industry would not have met on its own, and that the organisers hoped for new collaborations again.

Why it matters

CEATEC began in 2000 as a showcase for consumer electronics. Its shift towards AI, infrastructure and industrial systems mirrors the shift in the Japanese electronics industry itself, which now earns more from components, factory equipment and services than from the televisions and audio products that once defined it.

Physical AI plays to Japan's strengths in robots, sensors and precision machinery. Whether its companies can combine those strengths with AI software quickly enough to compete with American

and Chinese rivals is the question hanging over the halls at Makuhari this week.

The show is open from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily.

TECHNOLOGY

The CEATEC Awards 2026: The Winners

By the Technology Desk

MINISTER OF INTERNAL AFFAIRS AND COMMUNICATIONS AWARD: Mitsubishi Electric group, for task-general sound source separation, an AI technology that separates human voices and machine sounds in audio recorded in the field, making each easier to hear.

WHY IT WON: The organisers see it as a foundation for AI that understands the real world through sound.

MINISTER OF ECONOMY, TRADE AND INDUSTRY AWARD: TDK, for a metaoptics mirror 150 nanometres thick that can be embedded in a spectacle lens, for smart glasses that draw images directly on the retina.

WHY IT WON: Expected to advance smart glasses and help create a market for the next generation of interfaces.

DIGITAL MINISTER AWARD: Hitachi, for HMAX by Hitachi, a suite of AI services that begins with predictive maintenance of individual equipment and aims to optimise whole systems.

WHY IT WON: Seen as a way to make social infrastructure safer and more resilient.

EXCELLENCE AWARDS (new this year): Sharp, for a laundry system that circulates water and needs no drain; Murata Manufacturing with Melt Interface, for an industrial virtual-reality glove; Taiyo Yuden, for a cancer-detection service using an odour sensor.

ANNOUNCED: October 6, by JEITA, the organiser.

THE SHOW: Makuhari Messe, Chiba, October 13 to 16, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

EXHIBITORS: 821, of which 338 are new.

TECHNOLOGY

What 'Physical AI' Means, and Why Japan's Robot and Sensor Makers Think It Is Their Moment

By Maya Suzuki | Science & Innovation Desk

Generative AI, the technology behind chatbots and image generators, works with words, pictures and code. Physical AI is the term the industry has adopted for AI that works in the material world: robots that pick up objects they have never seen, vehicles that drive themselves, machines that inspect a factory or a bridge and decide what to do.

A harder problem

Acting in the physical world is harder than producing text. A robot must perceive its surroundings through cameras and sensors, predict how objects will move and respond, and act safely in real time, with little room for the errors a chatbot can make without harm.

The approach that has gained ground is to train AI on vast numbers of simulated situations, in detailed digital copies of factories, warehouses and streets, before letting it act in the real one. American chip companies have promoted the term heavily over the past two years.

Japan's hand

Japan has long been strong in the hardware that physical AI needs. Its companies are among the world's leading makers of industrial robots, factory automation systems and precision components, and of the image sensors and electronic parts that let machines see and feel.

What it has lacked is the AI software, much of which has been developed in the United States and China. CEATEC's organisers and exhibitors are betting that combining the two can give Japanese companies a stronger position than they have had in software alone.

Why it is needed

Japan's shrinking workforce adds urgency. Factories, construction sites, care homes and logistics depots are short of workers, and machines that can handle varied tasks without detailed programming could fill some of the gaps.

The examples at Makuhari

Mitsubishi Electric is showing AI for factories that run largely without people, using its Serendie data platform to let machines make judgments and act on

them, according to the motoring and technology site Response. Fujitsu's simulation of a Godzilla landing in Kawasaki uses a digital copy of a city to test how people would evacuate.

The caution

Physical AI raises questions that chatbots do not: who is responsible when an autonomous machine causes an accident, how its decisions can be checked, and how to keep it secure from attack. Those questions are as much a part of the transformation in CEATEC's theme as the technology itself.

TECHNOLOGY

Godzilla Comes Ashore at Kawasaki, in a Digital Rehearsal: Fujitsu and Toho Use the Monster to Test Disaster Evacuations

By Maya Suzuki | Science & Innovation Desk

Visitors to Fujitsu's stand at CEATEC this week can watch Godzilla land in Tokyo Bay and head for Kawasaki Station, and see how a city might get its people out of the way.

The simulation, developed with Toho, the studio that created the monster in 1954, uses what Fujitsu calls a social digital twin: a virtual copy of a district that models how people, vehicles and events behave, so that measures for responding to a disaster can be tried out before they are needed.

The scenario

In the scenario, set during a festival around Kawasaki Station, Godzilla comes ashore in Tokyo Bay and reaches the area about 60 minutes later. The simulation shows how crowds respond to evacuation guidance and where congestion builds.

Godzilla stands in for a natural disaster, Fujitsu says, such as an earthquake or a tsunami, which also gives a city only minutes or an hour to move large numbers of people.

Becoming the monster

A second exhibit, called Godzilla in Motion, uses AI that recognises the positions of a person's limbs to let visitors take the monster's part, with their movements turned into Godzilla's on screen in real time.

The stand's theme is Challenge uncertainty, master resilience. It is in Hall 6.

Beyond the monster

Fujitsu is also taking part in two pavilions organised by JEITA. In one, a digital twin of the ocean uses observation data from seas and rivers to model conditions under water; in the other, AI on board satellites works with ground stations at sea to deliver observations quickly to the people who need them.

Why a monster

Godzilla was born out of fear of the atomic bomb and of nuclear testing, and has destroyed Tokyo on screen many times. Using it to rehearse evacuations is a way of making an abstract exercise vivid for the public and for the officials who must plan for real disasters.

Digital twins of cities are being developed by governments and companies around the world for planning traffic, managing energy and preparing for emergencies. Japan's frequent earthquakes and typhoons give it more reason than most to use them.

TECHNOLOGY

Drawing on the Eye: How Retinal-Projection Smart Glasses Work, and Why TDK's Prize-Winning Mirror Matters

By Ethan Cole | Technology & Science Editor

Smart glasses that show information in the wearer's field of view have been promised for more than a decade. TDK's award at CEATEC, for a mirror that could make one kind of them smaller and lighter, is a reminder of how much depends on tiny optical parts.

Two approaches

Most smart glasses display images on a small screen and use optics to make them appear to float in front of the wearer. Retinal projection works differently. A low-power laser scans an image directly onto the retina, so that the image stays in focus wherever the eye is looking and regardless of the wearer's eyesight.

The mirror

The difficulty is getting the light from the laser into the eye without bulky optics. TDK's metaoptics mirror, 150 nanometres thick, can be embedded directly in a spectacle lens, according to the

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organisers, steering the beam towards the pupil through structures far smaller than the wavelength of light.

Metaoptics, also called metasurfaces, use patterns of tiny structures to bend and focus light, replacing the curved surfaces of conventional lenses and mirrors with something nearly flat.

Why it matters

The barrier to everyday smart glasses has been as much about weight, size and appearance as about software. Glasses that look like ordinary spectacles and can be worn all day have proved hard to build. Thinner optics are one route to that goal.

The organisers said they expected the technology to help form the market for next-generation interfaces, as companies around the world race to find the device that might follow the smartphone.

Uses

Retinal projection has also been explored as an aid for people with low vision, since it can deliver an image to the retina without relying on the eye's own focusing.

Japan's suppliers

TDK, which began in 1935 as a maker of ferrite, a magnetic material, is one of many Japanese companies that supply the components inside other firms' devices. If smart glasses do become a mass market, the parts inside them are likely to come in large part from suppliers like these.

TECHNOLOGY

The Week in Technology

By the Technology Desk

CEATEC: Makuhari Messe, Chiba, Tuesday to Friday, with the Japan Mobility Show Bizweek alongside.

CHIP RESULTS: ASML, the Dutch maker of chipmaking machines, on Wednesday; TSMC on Thursday.

NEW YORK: Memory-chip shares fell on Monday; Sandisk lost more than 6 per cent on concern about competition.

META: Shares rose on Monday after the company launched a new AI model.

THE IMF: Artificial intelligence and jobs, and AI and cyber risks, are on the agenda of the annual meetings in Bangkok.

DATA CENTRES: The race to build capacity for AI continues, with power supply the main constraint in Japan.

PHYSICAL AI: The organisers of CEATEC call 2026 its first year.

AWARDS: Mitsubishi Electric, TDK and Hitachi won this year's ministerial prizes at CEATEC.

GODZILLA: Fujitsu and Toho stage a digital rehearsal of an evacuation at Kawasaki Station.

ANAESTHESIA DAY: October 13 marks Hanaoka Seishu's operation under general anaesthesia in 1804.

TECHNOLOGY

October 13, 1884: The Meridian Conference Votes for Greenwich, and the World Begins to Keep One Time

By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

On October 13, 1884, delegates to the International Meridian Conference in Washington voted to adopt the meridian passing through the Royal Observatory at Greenwich, near London, as the prime meridian, the line of zero longitude from which the world's longitudes would be measured.

A world of local times

Until then every town kept its own time, set by the sun, and nations used different prime meridians for their maps and charts, among them Paris, Cadiz and Washington. The spread of railways and the telegraph made the confusion costly. A train timetable that crossed several towns had to deal with several local times.

The conference

The conference, called at the invitation of President Chester Arthur, opened on October 1 with delegates from 25 countries. Japan was among them, represented by Kikuchi Dairoku, a mathematician who had studied at Cambridge and later became president of the Imperial University in Tokyo.

The resolution on Greenwich passed by 22 votes to one. San Domingo, now the Dominican Republic, voted against; France and Brazil abstained. France went on using the Paris meridian for its maps for decades.

Why Greenwich

The choice reflected practice. Most of the world's shipping already used charts based on Greenwich, the legacy of Britain's maritime power and of the observatory's centuries of astronomical work.

The conference also proposed a universal day, beginning at midnight at Greenwich, the basis of what became Greenwich Mean Time as an international reference.

Japan's time

Japan acted quickly. In 1886 an imperial ordinance set the country's standard time by the meridian of 135 degrees east, exactly nine hours ahead of Greenwich, with effect from the start of 1888. The meridian passes through the city of Akashi in Hyogo Prefecture, which calls itself the city of the meridian and built a planetarium tower on the line.

In the machines

The decision of 1884 lives on in every computer and telephone. Coordinated Universal Time, the successor to Greenwich Mean Time, is the reference from which time zones are calculated, and from which the clocks of networks, satellites and financial markets are synchronised.

The line itself has moved slightly. The zero of longitude used by satellite navigation systems lies about 100 metres east of the brass strip at Greenwich that tourists stand astride, because of the way modern measurements define the Earth's shape.

Every clock in Japan still runs nine hours ahead of a line chosen in Washington 142 years ago today.

TECHNOLOGY

October 13, 1804: Hanaoka Seishu Operates Under General Anaesthesia, Four Decades Before the West, and Japan Marks Anaesthesia Day

By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

On the 13th day of the tenth month of 1804, by the calendar then in use, a country doctor in the province of Kii, now Wakayama Prefecture, removed a breast tumour from a patient who had been put to sleep with a herbal compound of his own devising.

The doctor was Hanaoka Seishu. The operation is recognised as the first recorded surgery under general anaesthesia anywhere in the world, more than 40 years before the American dentist William Morton's demonstration of ether in Boston in 1846.

Tsusensan

Hanaoka's anaesthetic, which he called tsusensan, was a mixture of medicinal plants whose chief ingredient was a species of datura, known in Japan as chosen-asagao. Its exact recipe was passed only to his disciples and was not recorded in full.

He had spent years developing it, combining Chinese herbal medicine with the Dutch surgery that reached Japan through the trading post at Nagasaki.

The cost to his family

According to the accounts that have come down to us, his mother and his wife volunteered to test the compound. His mother died and his wife lost her sight. The story became the basis of Sawako Ariyoshi's novel The Doctor's Wife, written in the 1960s, which made Hanaoka's name familiar to generations of Japanese readers.

The operation

His patient was a woman with advanced breast cancer. The operation succeeded, though her illness was too far advanced for her to live long afterwards. Hanaoka went on to perform many more operations under anaesthesia and trained hundreds of pupils who came from across Japan to his school.

Why it stayed local

His achievement remained almost unknown outside Japan for more than a century. The country's isolation under the shoguns limited the exchange of medical knowledge, and the method depended on a compound whose recipe was kept secret.

Anaesthesia Day

Japan marks October 13 as Anaesthesia Day in his honour, and his home district in Wakayama

Prefecture preserves the site of his house and school as a memorial park.

Modern anaesthesia uses drugs that are far safer and more precisely controlled than tsusensan. But the idea that a patient could sleep through major surgery, which Hanaoka proved in a farmhouse in Kii, is the foundation of every operation performed today.

The people who keep patients alive through surgery, Japan's anaesthetists, use the day to explain their work, which is still little understood by many of the patients who depend on it.

TECHNOLOGY

October 13, 1911: The Kaishiki No. 1, the First Successful Aeroplane Designed and Built in Japan, Flies at Tokorozawa

By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

On October 13, 1911, an army officer named Tokugawa Yoshitoshi took off from the new airfield at Tokorozawa, in Saitama Prefecture, in an aeroplane he had designed himself. The Kaishiki No. 1 became the first aeroplane designed and built in Japan to fly successfully.

The first flights

Less than a year earlier, on December 19, 1910, Captain Tokugawa and another officer, Hino Kumazo, had made the first powered flights in Japan at the Yoyogi parade ground in Tokyo, in aeroplanes imported from Europe, a French Farman and a German Grade.

The army then opened an airfield at Tokorozawa, Japan's first, in 1911, and set out to build its own machines.

The machine

The Kaishiki No. 1 was a biplane, broadly modelled on the Farman, with a seven-cylinder Gnome rotary engine of 50 horsepower driving two-bladed propellers. Its name means roughly the association-type No. 1, after the army's research association for military balloons and aircraft, which built it.

It could reach about 72 kilometres an hour and stay in the air for up to three hours, according to later accounts.

Its place

It was a modest machine even by the standards of 1911. But it marked the moment when Japan moved from importing aeroplanes to making them, the first step towards an aviation industry that would within three decades build some of the most advanced aircraft in the world.

Tokorozawa today

The site of the airfield is now Tokorozawa Aviation Memorial Park. A replica of the Kaishiki No. 1 is displayed at the Tokorozawa Aviation Museum, near where it first flew.

The pilot

Tokugawa Yoshitoshi, a member of a branch of the family of the former shoguns, became one of the founders of Japanese military aviation and rose to the rank of lieutenant general. He is remembered as the man who made the country's first powered flight.

Japanese aviation fell silent after 1945, when the occupation banned aircraft production. It revived in the 1950s, and Japanese companies today make large parts of the airliners flown around the world.

A country that now builds the wings and fuselages of passenger jets began 115 years ago today with a biplane of wood and fabric.

TECHNOLOGY

October 13, 1915: Arthur Burks Is Born; He Helped Design ENIAC and Co-Wrote a Founding Document of the Computer Age

By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

Arthur Burks, who was born on October 13, 1915, in Duluth, Minnesota, was trained as a philosopher. He became one of the designers of the first general-purpose electronic computer.

ENIAC

In 1943 Burks joined the team at the Moore School of Electrical Engineering at the University of Pennsylvania that was building the Electronic Numerical Integrator and Computer, ENIAC, for the United States Army, which needed faster ways to

calculate artillery firing tables.

He worked on the design of its arithmetic units and other circuits. ENIAC, completed in 1945 and unveiled in 1946, used about 18,000 vacuum tubes and filled a large room.

The Preliminary Discussion

In 1946 Burks wrote, with Herman Goldstine and John von Neumann at the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, the Preliminary Discussion of the Logical Design of an Electronic Computing Instrument.

The paper set out the design of a computer that stores its program in the same memory as its data, the architecture used by nearly every computer since. It was widely circulated, and engineers around the world used it as a blueprint.

Michigan

Burks spent most of his career at the University of Michigan, where he founded the Logic of Computers Group and helped to establish one of the first university programmes in computer science.

He was interested above all in what machines could teach us about thought and life. He edited and completed von Neumann's work on self-reproducing automata, published in 1966, and studied cellular automata and the philosophy of science.

The inventors' dispute

Burks also played a part in the long dispute over who invented the electronic computer. With his wife, Alice, he wrote a book arguing for the importance of John Atanasoff, whose earlier machine at Iowa State College a federal court found in 1973 had anticipated key ideas used in ENIAC.

He died in 2008, at 92.

Every smartphone in a Japanese commuter's pocket follows, in its essentials, the stored-program design that Burks helped to describe 80 years ago.

TECHNOLOGY

October 13, 1983: Chicago Gets America's First Commercial Mobile Phone Network, Four Years After Tokyo

By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

On October 13, 1983, Ameritech Mobile Communications switched on the first commercial cellular telephone network in the United States, in Chicago.

Bob Barnett, the president of Ameritech, marked the occasion by placing a call to the grandson of Alexander Graham Bell, the inventor of the telephone.

Cells

The network used the Advanced Mobile Phone System, an analogue standard developed by Bell Laboratories. Its central idea was the cell: an area divided into small zones, each with its own transmitter, so that the same radio frequencies could be reused across a city and calls handed from one cell to the next as a caller moved.

The phones

The early phones were heavy and expensive. Motorola's DynaTAC 8000X, the first handheld cellular phone approved for sale in the United States, was nicknamed the brick and cost several thousand dollars. Many early subscribers used phones installed in their cars.

Tokyo was first

Japan had got there earlier. Nippon Telegraph and Telephone Public Corporation, the forerunner of NTT, launched the world's first commercial cellular network in Tokyo in December 1979, initially for car telephones.

Japan went on to lead the world in mobile internet services. NTT Docomo's i-mode, launched in 1999, let millions of Japanese send e-mail and browse websites on their phones years before smartphones spread elsewhere.

From brick to pocket

The networks of the 1980s were the first generation of mobile telephony. Digital networks followed in the 1990s, then mobile data, then the fast broadband of 4G and 5G that carries video and the apps of daily life.

Today Japan has more mobile phone contracts than people, and the smartphone has become the means of paying, travelling, banking and receiving warnings of

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earthquakes and missiles.

The milestone

Ameritech is now part of AT&T. Its call in Chicago 43 years ago is remembered in the United States as the start of the mobile age there.

In Japan, where the age had begun four years earlier, the more surprising number may be how few years separated the brick from the phone that now does almost everything.

TECHNOLOGY

October 13, 1994: Mosaic Netscape 0.9 Is Released, and With It the Cookie That Still Follows Us Around the Web

By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

On October 13, 1994, a young company called Mosaic Communications released the first test version of its web browser, Mosaic Netscape 0.9.

The company had been founded that spring by Marc Andreessen, who as a student had helped write Mosaic, an early graphical browser, at the University of Illinois, and Jim Clark, the founder of Silicon Graphics.

Faster and easier

The new browser was faster than its predecessors and easier to use, and it displayed pages as they loaded rather than making users wait. It was offered free for personal use and spread quickly.

Within weeks the company changed its name to Netscape Communications, after objections from the University of Illinois, and the browser became Netscape Navigator. Within a year it was used by most people who browsed the web.

The cookie

The test version introduced a feature that has shaped the web ever since. A Netscape engineer, Lou Montulli, devised the cookie, a small file that a website stores on the user's computer so that it can recognise the user on a later visit.

Cookies made online shopping baskets and logins possible. They also made it possible to follow users across sites, which became the basis of targeted advertising and of decades of argument about privacy. In Japan, as in Europe, websites now ask visitors for consent to some uses of cookies.

The browser war

Netscape's public offering of shares in August 1995 set off the internet boom. Microsoft responded by building its own browser, Internet Explorer, and bundling it with Windows, which led to an American antitrust case and to Netscape's decline. It was bought by America Online in 1999.

The legacy

Before it faded, Netscape released the code of its browser, which became the basis of the Mozilla project and the Firefox browser. It also introduced JavaScript, the programming language that runs in almost every web page.

In Japan the commercial internet arrived at about the same time, as the country's first internet service providers began to offer connections in the early 1990s.

A version number, 0.9, signalled that the software was unfinished. The web it helped create has never stopped changing since.

TECHNOLOGY

October 13, 1998: The Physics Nobel Goes to Laughlin, Störmer and Tsui for a Quantum Fluid With Fractional Charges

By Maya Suzuki | Science & Innovation Desk

On October 13, 1998, the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences awarded the Nobel Prize in Physics to Robert Laughlin, Horst Störmer and Daniel Tsui for their discovery of a new form of quantum fluid with fractionally charged excitations.

The experiment

In 1982 Mr Tsui and Mr Störmer, working at Bell Laboratories with Arthur Gossard, cooled electrons confined to a thin layer of semiconductor to near absolute zero and placed them in a powerful magnetic field.

They found that the electrical resistance across the sample, the Hall resistance, settled at plateaus corresponding to fractions such as one-third, a result

that the physics of individual electrons could not explain.

The theory

Mr Laughlin explained the result the following year. The electrons, he showed, behaved collectively as a new kind of quantum liquid, whose excitations behaved as if they carried a fraction of an electron's charge.

The background

The discovery built on the integer quantum Hall effect, found in 1980 by the German physicist Klaus von Klitzing, who received the Nobel prize for it in 1985. The plateaus of resistance he observed are so precise that they are now used to define the standard of electrical resistance.

The laureate from Henan

Daniel Tsui was born in 1939 in a village in Henan Province, China, and went to the United States to study. He became a professor at Princeton University. His journey from a farming village to a Nobel prize is often told in China.

Why it matters to technology

The fractional quantum Hall effect showed that electrons in materials can act together in ways that produce entirely new behaviour. That insight underlies research into new electronic materials and into some proposals for quantum computers that would store information in such collective states, making it less vulnerable to errors.

The Japanese link

The layered semiconductor structures in which such two-dimensional electron systems form have a Japanese chapter of their own. In 1979 Takashi Mimura of Fujitsu invented the high-electron-mobility transistor, which uses a similar structure to let electrons move with little resistance; it is now found in satellite receivers and mobile phone base stations.

The quantum effects that once required the most specialised laboratories now underpin the measurement standards that every electronics factory relies on.

TECHNOLOGY

October 13, 2016: Sony Launches PlayStation VR, Bringing Virtual Reality to Millions of Living Rooms

By Ethan Cole | Technology & Science Editor

On October 13, 2016, Sony Interactive Entertainment launched PlayStation VR, a virtual reality headset for its PlayStation 4 games console, in Japan, North America and Europe on the same day.

A cheaper way in

Virtual reality had been promised for decades. Earlier that year two headsets for personal computers had gone on sale, but they required expensive computers to run.

PlayStation VR connected instead to a console that tens of millions of households already owned, which made it the most affordable route into high-quality virtual reality at the time. In Japan it went on sale at 44,980 yen before tax.

How it worked

The headset used a single display, divided between the two eyes, and lights that a camera attached to the console tracked to follow the movements of the player's head. Games put players inside a world that moved as they looked around.

The reception

It sold well by the standards of virtual reality, passing five million units by the start of 2020, according to Sony. But it never became the mass-market product that some had predicted, and many players found the novelty wore off.

The successor

Sony released PlayStation VR2, for its PlayStation 5, in February 2023, with higher-resolution screens and tracking of the player's eyes. The market for virtual reality headsets has remained smaller than that for consoles and smartphones.

The wider field

Virtual and mixed reality have found steadier uses outside games, in training, design, medicine and the kind of industrial applications on show at CEATEC this week, where an industrial virtual-reality glove is among the award winners.

Sony's turn

For Sony, PlayStation VR was part of a broader shift, from the consumer electronics on which it built its name towards games, entertainment and the image sensors used in phones and, increasingly, in machines that need to see.

Ten years on, the headset that was meant to change how people play has become a step along a road whose destination is still unclear.

TECHNOLOGY

On This Day in Technology: October 13

By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

1804: Hanaoka Seishu performs surgery under general anaesthesia in Kii Province, using his herbal compound tsusensan. Japan marks the day as Anaesthesia Day.

1884: The International Meridian Conference in Washington adopts Greenwich as the prime meridian. Japan's delegate is Kikuchi Dairoku.

1911: The Kaishiki No. 1, the first successful aeroplane designed and built in Japan, flies at Tokorozawa with Tokugawa Yoshitoshi at the controls.

1915: Arthur Burks, a designer of ENIAC and co-author of the stored-program computer's founding paper, is born in Duluth, Minnesota.

1983: Ameritech opens the first commercial cellular network in the United States, in Chicago. Tokyo's had opened in 1979.

1994: Mosaic Netscape 0.9 is released, introducing the web cookie.

1998: The Nobel Prize in Physics is awarded to Robert Laughlin, Horst Störmer and Daniel Tsui for the fractional quantum Hall effect.

2016: Sony launches PlayStation VR in Japan, North America and Europe.

TODAY: CEATEC 2026 opens at Makuhari Messe, with physical AI as its theme.

ALSO TODAY: The IMF publishes its World Economic Outlook in Bangkok.

SOCIETY

Rain Moves Into Western Japan From Mid-Afternoon, While Tokyo Stays Cloudy at 25 and Naha Reaches 30

By the Weather Desk

The fine weather of the three-day weekend begins to break up from the west on Tuesday. Today's weather map, for 19 cities, says rain spreads into western Japan from mid-afternoon, and that Fukuoka, Matsue, Hiroshima and Kochi turn rainy by tonight.

Cloud, then rain in the west

All four cities start the day cloudy. Fukuoka has a high of 29 after a low of 22 this morning, Matsue 29 after 16, Hiroshima 27 after 18 and Kochi 27 after 19.

Sun, then cloud

Much of the rest of the country is sunny turning cloudy, from Kagoshima and Osaka to Niigata and Sapporo, the map's outlook says. That pattern covers Sapporo at 20, Aomori and Niigata, Kanazawa, Nagoya, Kyoto and Osaka, Takamatsu and Kagoshima.

Akita is sunny with some cloud at 25. Nagano, inland, is the one city on the map with sunshine all day, at 27.

Tokyo and Sendai

Tokyo and Sendai are cloudy. Tokyo has a high of 25, two degrees lower than on Monday, after a low of 18 this morning; Sendai has a high of 22 after 17.

The warmest and the coolest

Highs reach 28 in Niigata, Nagoya, Kyoto and Osaka, 29 in Matsue, Fukuoka and Kagoshima, and 30 in Naha, the warmest city on the map, which is cloudy with sunny spells. Kushiro, also cloudy with sunny spells, has the coolest high, 18.

Aomori had the coldest morning, 11 degrees, and has the widest range of the day, rising to 25. Naha's low of 25 was the warmest morning. Naha and Sendai have the narrowest range, five degrees.

Niigata's warm day

Niigata, on the Sea of Japan coast, has a high of 28, as warm as Osaka and Nagoya, and the colour of the land on the map shows a band of the warmest

temperatures along that coast and across much of western Japan.

The typhoon

Typhoon No. 29, Koguma, is moving north-east over the open Pacific far east-south-east of Tokyo, so far away that its centre lies just off the edge of the map. It weakens to a severe tropical storm this evening, the map's panel says.

What to carry

An umbrella will be needed in Fukuoka, Matsue, Hiroshima and Kochi by evening. Elsewhere the day is mild to warm for mid-October, though the clouds that move in later in the day in many cities are a sign of the change in the weather moving east.

SOCIETY

Shinjuku, Home to More Private Lodgings Than Anywhere in Japan, Moves to Ban Them in Residential Districts

By Emi Kondo | Society & Local News

Shinjuku Ward in Tokyo, which has more registered minpaku, or private lodgings, than any other municipality in Japan, is moving to ban them in principle in residential districts, including those already operating.

The ward plans to submit an amended ordinance to the regular session of its assembly in February, after inviting public comment, Kyodo News reported when the plan emerged last month. The ward has said that about 2,000 lodgings could be forced to close.

The numbers

The Japan Tourism Agency counted 3,775 registered minpaku in Shinjuku as of July 15. The ward, home to the entertainment district of Kabukicho and to the world's busiest railway station, attracts large numbers of foreign visitors.

The rules

Under the plan, operating private lodgings would in principle be prohibited in residential districts and near schools. Lodgings whose hosts live on the premises and can manage them properly could be allowed.

Existing lodgings would be given a period of grace. According to a summary of the draft rules published this month, the new rules are intended to take effect in June 2027, with existing operators given two years before they apply.

In commercial districts, where lodgings would still be allowed, the maximum number of days a year on which they could operate would be cut from 180 to 120.

Why

Residents have long complained of noise, rubbish left out on the wrong days and strangers coming and going at all hours. The problem is not new. In the 2015 fiscal year, up to December, the ward's public health office received 57 complaints about lodging businesses, 49 of them about suspected private lodgings, against six such complaints in the whole of the previous year, before the national law was passed.

Under that law, which took effect in 2018, registered minpaku may operate for up to 180 nights a year, and local governments may restrict them further by ordinance to protect living conditions. Shinjuku already limits them in residential districts; the new plan would go much further.

In July the Tourism Agency told local governments that ordinances could effectively ban minpaku in areas where lodgings were damaging residential living conditions, citing repeated trouble. Shinjuku is among the first to act on that advice at this scale.

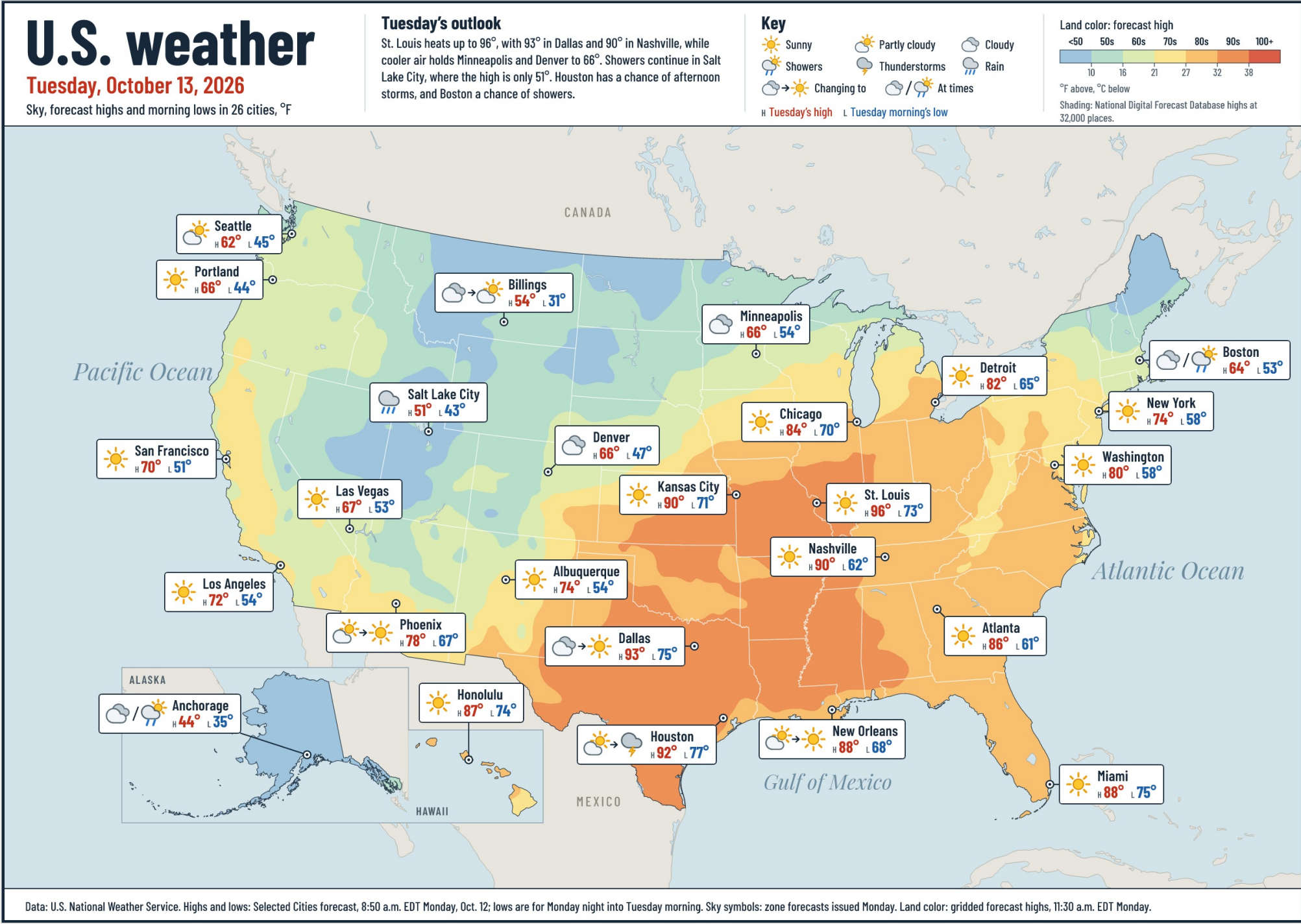
The other side

Operators argue that minpaku provide accommodation at a time when hotels are full and expensive, that many are run responsibly, and that a ban would punish them for the behaviour of a few. Some have invested heavily in properties registered under the law.

What comes next

Other wards and cities with large numbers of tourists are watching. If Shinjuku's ordinance passes, it is likely to become a model for others, and a test of how far local governments can go in restricting a business the national government legalised eight years ago.

WEATHER ABROAD



United States weather for Tuesday, October 13, 2026: the sky, forecast highs and morning lows in degrees Fahrenheit for 26 cities, in the map supplied for this edition. (Data: U.S. National Weather Service selected-cities forecast issued at 8:50 a.m. Eastern time on Monday, zone forecasts issued on Monday and gridded forecast highs issued at 11:30 a.m. Eastern time on Monday)

SOCIETY

United States: St. Louis Heats Up to 96, Dallas 93 and Nashville 90, While Salt Lake City's Showers Hold It to 51

By the Weather Desk

Summer heat lingers across the middle of the United States on Tuesday, according to the map supplied for this page, while cooler air holds Minneapolis and Denver to 66 degrees Fahrenheit and showers continue in Salt Lake City.

The heat

St. Louis is the hottest of the map's 26 cities, with a high of 96 under sunny skies after a low of 73. Dallas reaches 93, cloudy at first and then sunny, and Kansas City and Nashville 90, both sunny.

Houston has a high of 92 after a muggy low of 77, partly cloudy before a chance of afternoon thunderstorms. New Orleans and Miami both reach 88, and Atlanta 86.

The Midwest and the East

Chicago is sunny and 84, and Detroit sunny and 82. Washington reaches 80 and New York 74, both

sunny. Boston is cloudy with a chance of showers and a high of 64.

The West

Salt Lake City has rain, with a high of only 51. Denver is cloudy and 66, and Billings, in Montana, starts the day at 31, the coldest morning on the map, before a high of 54 as cloud gives way to some sun.

Along the Pacific coast, Seattle is partly cloudy and 62, Portland sunny and 66, San Francisco sunny and 70, and Los Angeles sunny and 72. Las Vegas is sunny and 67, Albuquerque 74 and Phoenix 78 after a partly cloudy start.

Alaska and Hawaii

Anchorage is cloudy with showers at times, at 44 after a low of 35. Honolulu is sunny at 87.

In Celsius

St. Louis's 96 degrees is about 36 Celsius, Dallas's 93 about 34 and Salt Lake City's 51 about 11. Billings's morning low of 31 is just below freezing, and Honolulu's high of 87 about 31.

The source

The highs and lows are from the National Weather Service's forecast for selected cities issued at 8:50 a.m. Eastern time on Monday; the lows are for Monday night into Tuesday morning. The sky symbols are from zone forecasts issued on Monday, and the shading of the land shows gridded forecast highs issued at 11:30 a.m. Eastern time on Monday.

SOCIETY

Why the Weather Changes From the West in Autumn, and Why a Fine Weekend So Often Ends in Rain

By the Weather Desk

Tuesday's map shows a familiar autumn pattern: fine weather breaking up first in Kyushu and western Honshu, while the east stays dry until later.

The westerlies

Japan lies under the westerlies, the band of winds that blows from west to east across the middle latitudes. In autumn, as the summer's Pacific high-pressure system retreats to the south, these winds carry weather systems across the country from the Asian continent.

Highs and lows in turn

The systems come in turn. A migratory anticyclone, an area of high pressure that has broken away from the cold air over the continent, brings dry, sunny weather, such as the fine skies of the holiday weekend.

Behind it comes a low or a front, bringing cloud and rain. As the pattern moves east, the rain reaches Kyushu first, then Chugoku and Shikoku, and Kansai, Tokai and Kanto later.

A rhythm of days

The rhythm repeats every few days, which is why Japanese weather forecasters describe autumn weather as changeable, and why the saying that a woman's heart and the autumn sky change easily has

long been part of the language. The older form of the saying spoke of a man's heart.

What the map shows

Today's map reflects the early stage of such a change: cloud and rain in the west, cloud arriving in the afternoon across much of the rest of the country, and sunshine lasting longest in the north and in the mountains of Nagano.

Warm air ahead of the rain

Air drawn up from the south ahead of an approaching low tends to be warm and humid. That helps explain highs of 28 and 29 degrees across much of western Japan and along the Sea of Japan coast, well above what is usual for mid-October.

After the rain

After a low passes, cooler, drier air often follows from the north-west. The cool mornings of late autumn, and eventually the first winter monsoon, arrive the same way.

For now, the pattern means that those planning outdoor events this week would be wise to check the forecast day by day.

SOCIETY

Ten Weeks Before Japan's Checks on Sex Offenders Working With Children Begin, Cram Schools and Clubs Weigh Whether to Join

By Naomi Kato | Culture & Society Editor

A system that will let schools, nurseries and other organisations check whether people working with children have convictions for sex crimes comes into force on December 25, and private operators such as cram schools are deciding whether to seek the certification that allows them to take part.

The system, often called the Japanese version of the DBS after Britain's Disclosure and Barring Service, was created by a law enacted in June 2024.

Who must take part

Schools and childcare facilities, including those run or overseen by municipalities, are required to use it. Private businesses that work with children, such as cram schools, swimming clubs, after-school programmes and talent agencies, may join voluntarily, but must first be certified by the government.

Certified organisations will be able to display a mark showing that they take part, which the government hopes will encourage parents to choose them and others to join.

What it checks

Employers will submit requests through a government system, which will check criminal records held by the Justice Ministry. Under the law, convictions are covered for a fixed number of years after the sentence is completed: 20 years for prison sentences and 10 years for fines.

Employers who learn that a worker has a relevant record must take measures to protect children, such as moving the worker to a role without contact with them.

The barriers

For smaller operators the requirements are demanding. Criminal records must be handled under strict controls, and misuse can bring criminal penalties. Employers also worry about legal disputes, since Japanese labour law makes dismissal difficult without reasonable grounds.

Reports when the details were drawn up estimated that as many as 230,000 organisations could eventually be covered.

The background

The law followed a series of cases in which teachers, nursery staff and sports coaches who had abused children moved to new jobs with children elsewhere. Parents' groups campaigned for years for checks of the kind used in Britain.

The test

Critics argue that a system covering only convictions will miss many abusers, since most abuse is never prosecuted, and that voluntary participation leaves gaps. Supporters say it is a necessary first step.

How many cram schools and clubs seek certification before December, and how many parents ask whether they have, will be the first measure of whether it works.

SOCIETY



A Kyushu Shinkansen 800 series train in Tsubame service at a station platform. The line was suspended between Hakata and Kagoshima-Chuo from the first train on Tuesday while JR Kyushu inspected its overhead wires after a pantograph fault was found on Monday night. (Photo: Japan Rail)

SOCIETY

The Kyushu Shinkansen Is Suspended Along Its Whole Length From the First Train After a Pantograph Fault; Services Expected From Midday

JR Kyushu is checking the overhead wires between Hakata and Kagoshima-Chuo after a problem was found on a train under inspection on Monday night, less than a month after the line returned to full service following the July earthquake

By Emi Kondo | Society & Local News

The Kyushu Shinkansen was suspended along its entire length, between Hakata and Kagoshima-Chuo, from the first train on Tuesday, JR Kyushu said, after an abnormality was found on the pantograph of a train under inspection on Monday night.

The company said it was inspecting the overhead wires along the line. It expected to resume services between Hakata and Kumamoto at about noon and between Kumamoto and Kagoshima-Chuo at about 2 p.m., NHK reported.

Why the whole line

A pantograph is the frame on a train's roof that presses against the overhead wire to collect electric current. When one is found damaged, the railway must establish whether the damage was caused by a fault in the wire, which could damage other trains, or whether the pantograph itself was at fault and might have damaged the wire as it passed.

Until the wire has been checked along the route the train travelled, running other trains carries a risk of further damage or of a power failure that could strand passengers between stations. JR Kyushu chose to stop the whole line while the checks were carried out.

The morning commute

The suspension affected the morning rush on Tuesday, when the Shinkansen carries commuters and business travellers between Fukuoka, Kumamoto and Kagoshima. Through services to and from Shin-Osaka on the Sanyo Shinkansen were also affected.

Passengers were advised to check JR Kyushu's information before travelling, and to allow for crowding once services resumed.

After the earthquake

The fault comes less than a month after the line returned to full service. The magnitude 7.1

earthquake that struck Kumamoto Prefecture on July 28 left the section between Kumamoto and Shin-Minamata out of action, with damage to sound barriers, rails and overhead lines.

JR Kyushu counted about 600 places of damage to the line's structures, 40 of which directly obstructed trains. Full services resumed on September 18, 52 days after the earthquake.

There was no indication on Tuesday morning that the pantograph fault was connected with the earthquake damage, and JR Kyushu did not say what had caused it.

A line that matters

The Kyushu Shinkansen links Fukuoka, Kumamoto and Kagoshima, three of the island's largest cities, and has become central to its economy and tourism. When it stops, the alternatives are slower trains, buses and flights.

The conventional Kagoshima Main Line between Uto and Yatsushiro, also damaged in the July earthquake, reopened only on Saturday.

Safety first

Japanese railways are known for stopping trains when a fault is suspected rather than running them while it is investigated. The practice causes inconvenience but is the reason the Shinkansen has never had a passenger killed in a derailment or collision since it opened in 1964.

For JR Kyushu, a morning without trains was the price of making sure the line was safe before the first passengers boarded.

it loses contact it can cause arcing, sparks that wear both the strip and the wire, and interruptions in power.

Noise

Pantographs are also a major source of noise at high speed. Japanese engineers have reduced the number on each train and redesigned their shape, replacing the diamond frames of the early Shinkansen with slimmer single-arm designs and shields that smooth the flow of air.

When something goes wrong

A damaged pantograph can snag the wire and pull it down, which can halt trains for hours. A fault in the wire can damage the pantographs of every train that passes under it.

That is why railways treat any abnormality seriously. Finding the cause means inspecting both the pantograph and the wire along the route the train has travelled.

Inspections

Shinkansen trains are inspected regularly at depots, and pantograph strips are replaced as they wear. Some railways also use cameras and sensors along the track and on special inspection trains to monitor

the wires and the pantographs that pass beneath them. Tuesday's suspension in Kyushu began with such an inspection, on Monday night, which found the problem before the day's services began.

SOCIETY

Fifty-Two Days Without Through Trains: How the July Earthquake Cut the Kyushu Shinkansen, and How It Was Restored

By Emi Kondo | Society & Local News

At 4:27 p.m. on July 28 a magnitude 7.1 earthquake struck Kumamoto Prefecture. It registered the maximum intensity of 7 on Japan's seismic scale, and buildings collapsed in Yatsushiro and in the town of Hikawa.

The damage to the line

The Kyushu Shinkansen between Kumamoto and Shin-Minamata was badly damaged. Sound barriers fell between Kumamoto and Shin-Yatsushiro, and rails and overhead lines were damaged along the section.

In an update on August 27, JR Kyushu said it had found about 600 places of damage to the line's civil engineering structures, 40 of which directly obstructed the operation of trains, and that electrical and signalling equipment had also been damaged.

A divided island

While the section was closed, through journeys by Shinkansen between Fukuoka and Kagoshima were impossible. Trains ran on the northern part of the line and, with fewer services, on the southern part, and passengers had to find other ways across the gap.

The freight train

On the conventional Kagoshima Main Line, a stationary freight train overturned at Yatsushiro station when the earthquake struck. It was unoccupied, and the line between Uto and Yatsushiro remained closed until Saturday, when services resumed.

Restoration

JR Kyushu planned to restore the section from the first trains on September 18, describing the date at first as a forecast that aftershocks could change. Full services resumed that day, 52 days after the earthquake.

Comparison with 2016

The line was also damaged in the Kumamoto earthquakes of April 2016, when an out-of-service train derailed near Kumamoto station. On that occasion through services were restored 13 days after the first shock, a comparison that commentators drew this summer as repairs took longer.

Since then

Tuesday's suspension followed the discovery of a pantograph fault during an inspection; JR Kyushu did not link it to the earthquake.

For the people of southern Kyushu, who spent most of the summer without a direct high-speed link to Fukuoka, even a morning's suspension is a reminder of how much depends on the line.

SOCIETY

The Kyushu Shinkansen at a Glance

By the Data Desk

ROUTE: Hakata, in Fukuoka, to Kagoshima-Chuo, by way of Kumamoto.

OPERATOR: JR Kyushu.

OPENED: The southern section, Shin-Yatsushiro to Kagoshima-Chuo, in March 2004; the whole line in March 2011.

THROUGH TRAINS: Mizuho and Sakura services continue to Shin-Osaka on the Sanyo Shinkansen.

STOPPING SERVICES: Tsubame trains call at every station.

TRAINS: The 800 series, designed for the line's opening with interiors using wood and traditional materials, and N700 series sets shared with JR West.

POWER: Overhead wires at 25,000 volts AC, 60 hertz.

TOP SPEED: 260 km/h.

THE QUAKE: Kumamoto to Shin-Minamata closed after the earthquake of July 28; full service restored on September 18.

TUESDAY: Suspended from the first train for inspection of the overhead wires after a pantograph

fault; resumption expected at about noon from Hakata to Kumamoto and about 2 p.m. from Kumamoto to Kagoshima-Chuo.

THE PHOTOGRAPH: An 800 series train in Tsubame service.

SOCIETY

The Minpaku Law: How Japan Legalised Home-Sharing in 2018, and the 180-Day Rule That Limits It

By the Society Desk

Until 2018, renting out a home or a room to paying guests for short stays in Japan generally required a licence under the Inns and Hotels Act, designed for hotels and inns. Many hosts who listed properties on home-sharing websites operated without one.

The 2018 law

The Private Lodging Business Act, which took effect on June 15, 2018, created a legal route. Hosts must notify their prefecture or designated city, follow rules on safety and hygiene, keep a register of guests and respond to complaints from neighbours.

The 180-day cap

The law limits lodgings registered under it to 180 nights a year, to prevent homes from being turned into hotels in all but name. Hosts who do not live on the premises must appoint a registered management company.

Local rules

The law allows local governments to restrict the periods and areas in which minpaku may operate by ordinance, to protect living conditions. Many wards in Tokyo, including Shinjuku, already limit operation in residential districts to certain days of the week or times of year.

Special zones

A separate route exists in national strategic special zones, such as parts of Osaka, where lodgings may operate all year if guests stay a minimum number of nights.

The boom

Registrations grew quickly as foreign visitors returned after the pandemic and the weak yen made Japan cheaper to visit. Large cities have struggled with the effects on neighbourhoods, including illegal operations that never registered at all.

Enforcement

Local governments can inspect lodgings, order improvements and suspend operations, and operating without notification is punishable by fines. But officials say tracing illegal lodgings, which are often advertised through overseas websites and social media, is difficult.

Shinjuku's plan would use the law's provision for local restrictions to go further than any large municipality has gone before.

SOCIETY

Intensity 7: The Top of Japan's Earthquake Scale, Recorded in Kumamoto Again This Summer

By the Society Desk

The earthquake that cut the Kyushu Shinkansen in July registered an intensity of 7 in Kumamoto Prefecture, the highest level on the scale used by the Japan Meteorological Agency.

A different measure

Japan's seismic intensity scale, shindo, measures how strongly the ground shakes at a particular place, not the energy released by the earthquake, which is expressed by its magnitude. One earthquake produces a single magnitude but many intensities, strongest near the source and weaker farther away.

The scale runs from 0 to 7, with levels 5 and 6 each divided into lower and upper, making ten levels in all. Since 1996 it has been measured by instruments rather than estimated from observed damage.

What 7 means

At intensity 7, people cannot move at will, many wooden houses lose their walls or collapse, and even reinforced concrete buildings may be damaged. Large cracks open in the ground and landslides are common.

Rare but recurring

Intensity 7 has been recorded only a handful of times. It was assigned to parts of Kobe in the Great Hanshin earthquake of 1995. It was measured in the Chuetsu

SOCIETY

earthquake in Niigata in 2004, in the Great East Japan Earthquake of 2011, twice in Kumamoto in April 2016, in Hokkaido in 2018 and on the Noto Peninsula on New Year's Day 2024.

July's earthquake, of magnitude 7.1, added another, in Kumamoto Prefecture once again.

What it means for railways

Shinkansen lines are equipped with seismometers that cut power to trains automatically when they detect the first waves of an earthquake, slowing them before the strongest shaking arrives. But the damage to tracks, structures and overhead lines from the strongest shaking can take weeks to repair, as Kyushu found this summer.

Engineers will study the July earthquake, as they studied those of 2016, to improve how lines are built and reinforced.

SOCIETY

Tsubame, the Swallow: The Name on the Kyushu Shinkansen That Once Belonged to Japan's Most Famous Express

By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

The train in the photograph on the Society page carries the name Tsubame, the swallow, on the services that call at every station on the Kyushu Shinkansen. The name has one of the longest histories on Japan's railways.

The express of 1930

Tsubame was first the name of a limited express that began running between Tokyo and Kobe in October 1930. It cut the journey time sharply, to about nine hours, and became a symbol of speed and modernity in pre-war Japan.

The train was famous for its observation car and for its standard of service, and its name, chosen by public suggestion according to railway histories, suited a bird admired for its swiftness.

After the war

The name was revived after the war on the Tokaido line, where the Tsubame and its companion the Hato were the country's premier trains until the opening of the Tokaido Shinkansen in 1964 made them obsolete.

In Kyushu

JR Kyushu adopted the name for its limited expresses between Hakata and Kagoshima in the 1990s, and carried it over to the Kyushu Shinkansen when the southern section opened in 2004.

The 800 series

The 800 series trains built for the line's opening were designed with interiors that use wood, traditional fabrics and Japanese craftsmanship, an approach that has made JR Kyushu's trains distinctive. They now work mainly on Tsubame services.

The swallow as a symbol

In Japan the swallow is a welcome bird, nesting under the eaves of houses and shops in spring and summer, and is often seen as a sign of good fortune. A railway that names its trains after it is borrowing a long tradition of affection.

On Tuesday morning the swallows of the Kyushu Shinkansen were grounded while the line was checked. They were expected to fly again from midday.

SPORTS

Waseda Win the Izumo Ekiden for the First Time in 16 Years, Breaking the Course Record by Nearly Two Minutes With Two Freshmen Among Four Stage Winners

Kokugakuin's bid for a third straight title ends in second place, the Ivy League select team is third, and ten stage records fall on a cool, cloudy morning in Shimane

By Haruto Yamamoto | Sports Reporter

Waseda University won the Izumo All-Japan University Select Ekiden on Monday in a course record of 2 hours 5 minutes 56 seconds, taking the first of the season's three great university relays for the first time in 16 years.

The time was 1 minute 55 seconds faster than the previous record of 2:07:51, set by Komazawa in 2023. Waseda won four of the six stages, two of them through first-year students, and led for most of the second half of the 45.1-kilometre course from Izumo Taisha to the Izumo Dome.

Kokugakuin, the winners for the past two years, finished second in 2:06:54, 58 seconds behind. The Ivy League select team from the United States was third in 2:07:24, its best result, and Juntendo fourth.

A morning start

The race began at 9:10 a.m. in front of the main gate of Izumo Taisha, under cloud, at 21 degrees and with little wind, conditions that favoured fast running. By 11 a.m. the sun had come out and the temperature had risen to 24.5 degrees.

The freshmen strike

Waseda were seventh after the first stage, 16 seconds behind the leader, Komazawa's freshman Suzuki, who won the 8-kilometre stage in 22:42.

On the short second stage, 5.8 kilometres, Waseda's freshman Honda passed six runners to take the lead, winning the stage in 15:42 and handing over two seconds ahead of Chuo, Komazawa and Juntendo.

Nihon University took over on the third stage, where Kipkemei broke the stage record by 40 seconds with 22:56. Waseda's second-year Suzuki also ran inside the old record, with 23:31, to keep his team nine seconds behind.

Then came the second freshman. Niizuma retook the lead on the fourth stage with a stage record of 17:10, ten seconds inside the old mark, and handed over 16 seconds ahead of Nihon.

Records on the fifth

The fifth stage produced five runners inside the old record. Waseda's third-year Shunpei Yamaguchi won it in a stage record of 17:35, one second ahead of the Ivy League team's runner, and stretched the lead over Nihon to 23 seconds.

Kudo brings it home

On the 10.2-kilometre anchor stage, the longest, Waseda's fourth-year Shinsaku Kudo, a marathon runner who has qualified for the national trial race, won the stage in 29:00 and held off the chasing teams. Kokugakuin's anchor moved his team up to second, ahead of the Ivy League team and Juntendo.

Nihon, second for much of the race, slipped to eighth on the last stage.

Ten stage records

Ten runners broke stage records in all, three on the third stage, two on the fourth and five on the fifth, helped by the cool morning conditions.

The favourites

Komazawa finished seventh and Aoyama Gakuin, one of the strongest teams of recent years, 11th, in 2:09:53. Chuo were fifth and Teikyo sixth.

What it means

Waseda, under the head coach Katsuhiko Hanada, a former Olympic distance runner who took charge in 2022, have been working their way back towards the front of the university field. A record-breaking win with freshmen on two winning stages suggests a team whose best may still be ahead of it.

The All-Japan University Ekiden follows in November and the Hakone Ekiden on January 2 and 3. After Monday, Waseda will be among the teams everyone else has to beat.

SPORTS

Nippon-Ham Beat Seibu 4-1 to Reach the Final Stage for the Third Straight Year, as Ito Pitches Through Two Scares and Mannami Hits His First Home Run of the Series

By Oliver Brooks | Sports Desk Editor

The Hokkaido Nippon-Ham Fighters beat the Seibu Lions 4-1 at Belluna Dome in Tokorozawa on Monday to win the Pacific League Climax Series first stage by two games to one and reach the final stage for the third consecutive year.

They will play the league champions, the Fukuoka SoftBank Hawks, at Mizuho PayPay Dome from Wednesday. SoftBank begin the series two wins ahead.

Nomura opens the scoring

Yuki Nomura gave Nippon-Ham the lead in the second inning with a run-scoring hit with one out and runners on first and second, his second day running with a timely hit. Chusei Mannami added a home run, his first of this Climax Series, a blow the Hokkaido Shimbun described as struck with certainty.

Ito holds on

The ace, Hiromi Ito, pitched through two mishaps during the game and stayed on the mound at his own request, earning the win. Asked afterwards about the incidents, he joked that if he had gone to hospital, he would have lost.

Seibu, who had won the first game in ten innings on Saturday, managed a single run.

Shinjo's gamble

The manager, Tsuyoshi Shinjo, changed his batting order for the deciding game and tried several surprise tactics, decisions the Hokkaido Shimbun said had paid off in the biggest game of the season.

Nippon-Ham had won Sunday's game 1-0 to level the series after Seibu's extra-innings victory in the opener. Needing to win the third game, since a tie would have sent Seibu through as the higher-placed team, they did so convincingly.

In Hokkaido

Supporters who gathered at Es Con Field, the team's home in Kitahiroshima, to watch the game celebrated as the final out was made.

The final stage

Yuya Gunji vowed to repay his manager's faith in the final stage, the Hokkaido Shimbun reported. Nippon-Ham must win four games before SoftBank win two more, a steep task against a team that won the league and has had time to rest.

The other final

In the Central League, the Yokohama DeNA BayStars, who swept the Giants in the first stage, play the Hanshin Tigers at Koshien from Wednesday, with Hanshin starting one win ahead.

The winners of the two final stages meet in the Japan Series from October 24.

SPORTS

Brewers Beat the Dodgers 2-1 in the NLCS Opener as Ohtani Walks, Singles and Scores but Los Angeles Strand Runner After Runner

By Rachel Kim | Washington-Tokyo Liaison

The Milwaukee Brewers beat the Los Angeles Dodgers 2-1 in the first game of the National League Championship Series at American Family Field on Sunday night, Monday morning in Japan, with a home run by Brice Turang and a go-ahead single by Luis Lara.

Shohei Ohtani, batting fourth as the designated hitter, reached base twice, on a walk and a single, and scored the Dodgers' only run. But Los Angeles managed only one hit in five chances with runners in scoring position and hit into three double plays.

The run

Ohtani walked to lead off the second inning against Jacob Misorowski and scored on Andy Pages's single to right field. The Dodgers loaded the bases with one out in that inning, but Misorowski, who threw 35 pitches in the inning, escaped when Kike Hernandez hit into a double play.

The Brewers reply

Turang tied the score with a solo home run to the opposite field in the fourth, a 384-foot drive into the Brewers' bullpen off Tarik Skubal. In the fifth Garrett Mitchell walked, Cooper Pratt bunted him to second, and Lara drove him in with a single up the middle on Skubal's first pitch.

The pitchers

Skubal allowed two runs on five hits and struck out seven in five innings, throwing 81 pitches. Misorowski allowed one run on five hits and three walks and struck out five in four and a third innings. Milwaukee's bullpen then held the Dodgers to two hits. DL Hall ended the fifth by getting Freddie Freeman to ground into a double play, Abner Uribe struck out Pages with runners on first and third in the sixth, and Aaron Ashby pitched the seventh and eighth.

The last out

Trevor Megill got two outs in the ninth, then walked Kyle Tucker and Josue De Paula to bring the winning run to the plate. Mookie Betts drove the ball to the warning track, where Mitchell caught it to end the game.

"These are the games we live for," Turang said. The Dodgers' manager, Dave Roberts, said his team "had our chances" but that Milwaukee "made plays". Betts

was blunter: "At some point, we've got to get ours."

Ohtani's October

Ohtani had two hits in 13 at-bats with four strikeouts in the division series, and the Dodgers have struggled to score with runners on base throughout the post-season.

Game 2

Yoshinobu Yamamoto was due to start Game 2 for the Dodgers in Milwaukee on Monday evening, early on Tuesday morning in Japan. The result will be reported in Wednesday's edition.

SPORTS

Nadeshiko Japan Meet Germany, Third in the World Rankings, in Bremen Early on Wednesday After Beating Haiti 5-1

By the Sports Desk

Japan's women's football team, Nadeshiko Japan, play Germany in a friendly at the Weserstadion in Bremen on Tuesday at 5:45 p.m. local time, 12:45 a.m. on Wednesday in Japan.

The match will be broadcast live on NHK's general channel and streamed online.

A test against the best

Germany are third in the FIFA world rankings. Japan's head coach has said he wants to see how far the current team can compete against one of the world's strongest sides, and to use the match to grow towards next year's Women's World Cup.

The Haiti win

Japan beat Haiti 5-1 in their first match of the tour, in Saint-Ouen, near Paris, on Friday evening local time.

The rivalry

Japan and Germany have a history that Japanese supporters remember well. In the quarter-finals of the 2011 Women's World Cup, in Germany, Japan beat the hosts and two-time defending champions 1-0 after extra time, on their way to winning the tournament, the country's only world title in football.

The World Cup

The 2027 Women's World Cup is to be held in Brazil. Japan, champions in 2011 and runners-up in 2015, are among the teams expected to contend.

The squad

Many of Japan's leading players are with clubs in Europe, in England, Germany, Spain and elsewhere, which makes matches against European opponents during international windows easier to arrange.

Kick-off

The match kicks off at 12:45 a.m. on Wednesday, Japan time, and NHK's live coverage begins shortly before.

SPORTS

Scoreboard

By the Sports Desk

PACIFIC LEAGUE CLIMAX SERIES, FIRST STAGE, GAME 3 (Monday, Belluna Dome): Nippon-Ham 4, Seibu 1. Nippon-Ham win the series 2-1.

FINAL STAGES (from Wednesday): SoftBank v Nippon-Ham, Mizuho PayPay Dome; SoftBank lead 2-0 by advantage. Hanshin v DeNA, Koshien; Hanshin lead 1-0 by advantage.

JAPAN SERIES: From October 24.

NLCS GAME 1 (Sunday, Milwaukee): Brewers 2, Dodgers 1. Brewers lead the series 1-0. HR: Turang. Winning run: Lara's single in the fifth.

OHTANI: One hit, one walk, one run.

NLCS GAME 2: Dodgers at Brewers, Monday 5 p.m. Eastern, 6 a.m. Tuesday in Japan. Yamamoto v Henderson.

IZUMO EKIDEN (Monday): 1. Waseda 2:05:56 (course record); 2. Kokugakuin 2:06:54; 3. Ivy League Select 2:07:24.

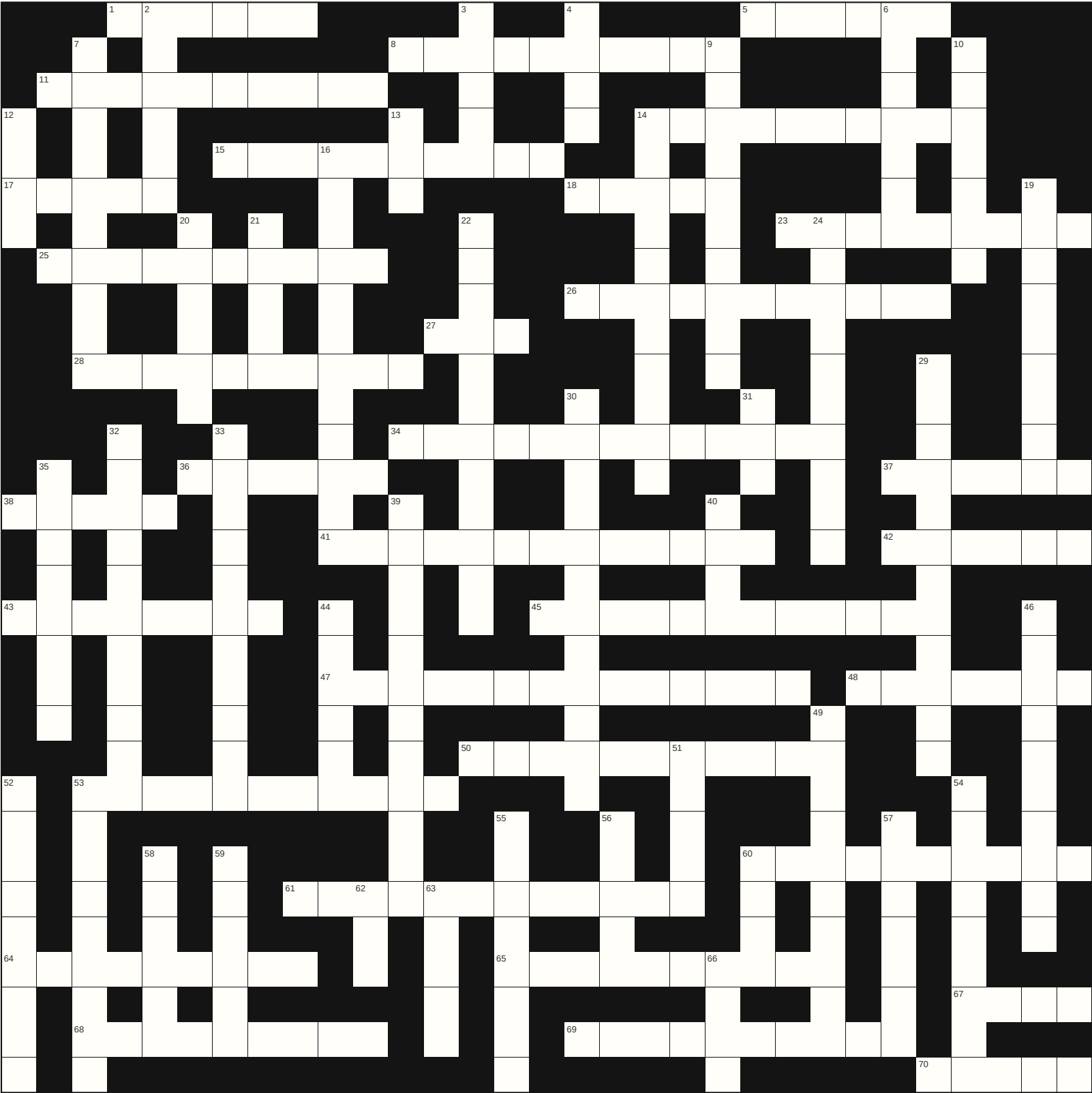
WOMEN'S FOOTBALL: Germany v Japan, friendly, Weserstadion, Bremen, 12:45 a.m. Wednesday, Japan time; live on NHK.

IZUMO STAGE PRIZES: Waseda four (Honda, Niizuma, Yamaguchi, Kudo); Komazawa one (Suzuki); Nihon one (Kipkemei).

COMING UP: All-Japan University Ekiden, November; Hakone Ekiden, January 2 and 3.

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

Today's Professional Puzzle — Constructed by James O'Neill — 73 Words



Solution will appear in tomorrow's edition. Puzzle difficulty: Professional.

SPORTS

Izumo Ekiden: The Results

By the Sports Desk

1. Waseda 2:05:56 (course record; old record 2:07:51, Komazawa, 2023). 2. Kokugakuin 2:06:54. 3. Ivy League Select 2:07:24. 4. Juntendo 2:07:33. 5. Chuo 2:07:36.

6. Teikyo 2:07:41. 7. Komazawa 2:07:45. 8. Nihon 2:08:15. 9. Soka 2:08:31. 10. Josai 2:09:22. 11. Aoyama Gakuin 2:09:53.

STAGE 1 (8.0 km): Suzuki, Komazawa, freshman, 22:42.

STAGE 2 (5.8 km): Honda, Waseda, freshman, 15:42.

STAGE 3 (8.5 km): Kipkemei, Nihon, 22:56 (stage record; old 23:36).

STAGE 4 (6.2 km): Niizuma, Waseda, freshman, 17:10 (stage record; old 17:20).

STAGE 5 (6.4 km): Shunpei Yamaguchi, Waseda, third year, 17:35 (stage record; old 17:43).

STAGE 6 (10.2 km): Shinsaku Kudo, Waseda, fourth year, 29:00.

WASEDA'S TEAM: Yoshikura 22:58 (7th on the stage); Honda 15:42 (1st); Suzuki 23:31 (3rd, inside the old record); Niizuma 17:10 (1st); Yamaguchi 17:35 (1st); Kudo 29:00 (1st).

STAGE RECORDS: Ten in all: three on the third stage, two on the fourth, five on the fifth.

CONDITIONS AT THE START: Cloudy, 21.0 degrees, humidity 78 per cent, a light east-north-easterly breeze.

COURSE: 45.1 km in six stages, from Izumo Taisha to the Izumo Dome.

SPORTS

Izumo, the All-Japan and Hakone: The Three Great University Ekidens, and the Triple Crown Only Five Teams Have Won

By Haruto Yamamoto | Sports Reporter

Monday's race in Shimane opened the university ekiden season, which follows a fixed course through the autumn and winter.

Izumo

The Izumo All-Japan University Select Ekiden, held in October, is the shortest and fastest of the three, six stages and 45.1 kilometres around the city of Izumo.

Its short stages reward speed, and it is the only one of the three to invite a team from abroad, the Ivy League select team from the United States.

The All-Japan

The All-Japan University Ekiden, held in early November, runs eight stages and 106.8 kilometres from Atsuta Jingu in Nagoya to Ise Jingu in Mie Prefecture. It tests depth over longer distances.

Hakone

The Hakone Ekiden, run over two days on January 2 and 3, is the oldest and by far the most famous, 217.1 kilometres in ten stages from Otemachi in central Tokyo to Lake Ashi in the Hakone mountains and back. It is largely limited to universities in the Kanto region, and its New Year broadcasts draw some of the largest television audiences of the year.

Its fifth stage, a climb of more than 800 metres into the mountains, and the sixth, the descent, have made the reputations of many runners. Waseda's Shinsaku Kudo, Monday's anchor, is known for his running on the climb.

The triple crown

Winning all three in a single season is rare. Daito Bunka did it in 1990-91, Juntendo in 2000-01, Waseda in 2010-11, Aoyama Gakuin in 2016-17 and Komazawa in 2022-23.

Waseda's last Izumo title came in that triple-crown season. Monday's win gives them the chance to try again.

Why the sport matters

University ekidens are a central part of Japanese distance running. Many of the country's marathon runners, including Olympians, made their names on the Hakone course, and companies recruit heavily from the leading university teams.

The freshmen

The season is also a showcase for new talent. First-year runners who perform in Izumo are watched closely for the longer stages to come, and Waseda's two freshman stage winners on Monday will be among them.

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- Company that won the economy minister's award at CEATEC (3)
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SPORTS

The Final Stages From Wednesday: SoftBank Two Wins Up Against Nippon-Ham in Fukuoka, Hanshin One Up Against DeNA at Koshien

By the Sports Desk

The Climax Series moves to its final stages on Wednesday, with the two league champions at home against the survivors of the first stages.

The Pacific League

SoftBank, the Pacific League champions, host Nippon-Ham at Mizuho PayPay Dome in Fukuoka. Under this season's rule the champions begin with a two-win advantage, a larger head start than in previous years. Nippon-Ham must therefore win four games before SoftBank win two.

The Central League

Hanshin, the Central League champions, host DeNA at Koshien Stadium in Nishinomiya, with a one-win advantage. Hanshin need three more wins, DeNA four, and the series can last at most six games.

Ties

As in the first stage, tied games count in favour of the higher-placed team. A champion that avoids defeat therefore keeps its advantage.

Rest against rhythm

Champions often go a week or more without a competitive game before the final stage, and some managers worry that their hitters lose their timing. The challengers arrive sharp but tired. Nippon-Ham played a deciding game on Monday and travel to Fukuoka; DeNA, who swept the Giants, have had more rest.

The precedents

DeNA know the road. In 2024, as the third-placed team in the Central League, they won through the Climax Series and went on to win the Japan Series. Nippon-Ham reached the final stage in each of the past two seasons without winning it.

The Japan Series

The winners of the two final stages meet in the Japan Series, which begins on October 24.

Watching

Games are broadcast on television and streamed online. Start times and probable starting pitchers are announced by the league the day before each game.

SPORTS

Yamamoto, 8-1 With a 2.14 Earned Run Average in the Post-Season, Starts Game 2 Against a Brewers Pitcher Who Has Shut the Dodgers Down Twice

By the Sports Desk

Yoshinobu Yamamoto was scheduled to start Game 2 of the National League Championship Series for the Los Angeles Dodgers in Milwaukee at 5 p.m. Eastern time on Monday, 6 a.m. on Tuesday in Japan.

His record

Yamamoto has won eight post-season games and lost one, with an earned run average of 2.14 in 11 appearances. He was the most valuable player of last year's World Series, when he won three games against the Toronto Blue Jays, including Game 7 in relief on no days' rest.

The opponent

The Brewers chose Logan Henderson, making his second career post-season start. He beat the Dodgers twice in the regular season, winning both of his starts against them with an earned run average of 0.75.

The stakes

After losing the opener 2-1, the Dodgers face the prospect of returning to Los Angeles two games down if they lose again. Games 3, 4 and 5 are at Dodger Stadium, with Games 6 and 7, if needed, back in Milwaukee.

The rematch

The teams met in last year's NLCS, when the Dodgers swept the Brewers in four games on their way to a second consecutive World Series title. They are seeking a third in a row, which no National League team has achieved.

Ohtani's bat

The Dodgers need more from their lineup. They scored one run on Sunday despite nine baserunners, and their failures with runners in scoring position have been a theme of their October.

Japanese viewers

With Ohtani, Yamamoto and Roki Sasaki on the roster, the series is followed closely in Japan, where the games are shown live in the morning.

The schedule

The result of Game 2 will be reported in Wednesday's edition. The series then moves to Los Angeles.

SPORTS

SPORTS

The National Sports Festival Returns to Aomori After 49 Years, Under Its New Name and Amid a Debate About Its Future

By the Sports Desk

The National Sports Festival, under way in Aomori Prefecture, is being held there for the second time, 49 years after the prefecture first hosted it in 1977.

The Emperor and Empress attended the opening ceremony on Saturday, October 10, during a two-day visit to the prefecture.

A new name

The festival was known for decades as the National Athletic Meet, or Kokutai. It took its present name, Kokumin Sports Taikai, shortened to Kokusupo, in 2024, when it was held in Saga Prefecture.

How it works

First held in 1946, the festival moves each year from prefecture to prefecture. Athletes compete for their home prefectures in dozens of sports, and the prefecture with the most points overall receives the Emperor's Cup.

The debate

Hosting has become a heavy burden. Prefectures build or renovate venues and pay for the running of the event, and some governors have questioned whether the festival should continue in its present form. In 2024 the governor of Miyagi Prefecture said that abolishing it was one option, prompting a national discussion of reform.

The value

Supporters argue that the festival develops athletes, keeps sport alive in the regions and leaves facilities that communities use for decades.

For Aomori, which last hosted the event almost half a century ago, it is also a chance to show itself to the rest of the country.

CULTURE

Shrines That Collide: Himeji's Nada Fighting Festival Returns on Wednesday and Thursday

By Naomi Kato | Culture & Society Editor

On Wednesday and Thursday the coastal district of Shirahama in Himeji, Hyogo Prefecture, holds the Nada no Kenka Matsuri, one of the most dramatic festivals in Japan.

The fighting

The festival belongs to Matsubara Hachiman Shrine. Its climax is the clash of the mikoshi, the portable shrines carried by teams of men, which are deliberately driven into one another again and again. The harder they collide, the greater the god's pleasure, according to tradition.

The floats

Alongside the mikoshi, ornate yatai, festival floats, from the villages of the parish are carried through the streets and lifted high above the bearers' heads to the rhythm of drums.

Eve and main day

October 14 is the eve, the yoimiyai, and October 15 the main festival day, the honmatsuri, when the mikoshi are carried to a hillside site and the clashing reaches its peak in front of tens of thousands of spectators sitting on the slopes.

Tradition and safety

Fighting festivals, kenka matsuri, are held in several parts of western Japan. Injuries among participants are not unusual, and organisers and the police take measures to protect spectators, who are asked to follow the instructions of stewards.

The season

Autumn is the season of harvest festivals across Japan, when communities give thanks for the year's crops. The Harima region around Himeji is known for festivals with ornate floats carried by bearers rather than pulled on wheels.

Getting there

The festival is reached from Shirahamanomiya station on the Sanyo Electric Railway. Trains are crowded on both days.

This week's other festivals

The Kannamesai rites at Ise Jingu begin on Thursday, and the Kawagoe Festival, with its tall floats, fills the

streets of the old castle town in Saitama Prefecture on Saturday and Sunday.

CULTURE

The Year's First Rice for the Sun Goddess: Ise Jingu's Kannamesai, From Thursday to Saturday

By Naomi Kato | Culture & Society Editor

From Thursday to Saturday, Ise Jingu in Mie Prefecture holds the Kannamesai, the most important of the many rites it performs each year.

The offering

The festival offers the first rice of the year's harvest to Amaterasu Omikami, the sun goddess enshrined at the Inner Shrine, and to the deity of the Outer Shrine, who provides her food. The rites are held first at the Outer Shrine and then at the Inner.

The Emperor's rice

An imperial envoy attends, bringing offerings from the Emperor, who grows rice in a paddy within the grounds of the Imperial Palace in Tokyo. Rice from the Emperor's own harvest is among the offerings.

A festival of renewal

The Kannamesai marks the renewal of the bond between the deities and the people through the harvest. Many of Ise's buildings, tools and costumes are renewed for it each year, and the great renewal of the shrines themselves, the Shikinen Sengu, in which the main buildings are rebuilt every 20 years, is sometimes described as the grandest Kannamesai of all.

The next rebuilding

The next Shikinen Sengu, the 63rd, is planned for 2033, and the preparations, which take years and begin with ceremonies in the forests that supply the timber, are already under way.

For visitors

Many of the Kannamesai rites take place at night and are closed to the public, but visitors can see processions and the offerings of local groups during the daytime, and the shrine's grounds are open as usual.

Rice and the calendar

The rite follows the rhythm of the rice-growing year that shaped Japan's calendar of festivals, from the planting rites of spring to the harvest thanksgivings of autumn, culminating in the Niinamesai in November, when the Emperor himself offers the new rice at the palace.

Japan's rice harvest has been under unusual attention in the past two years, after shortages and high prices led the government to release stockpiled rice. For the shrine, the rite is unchanged.

CULTURE

October 13 Is Sweet Potato Day, Thanks to a Kawagoe Pun, and the Town's Great Float Festival Follows on the Weekend

By Naomi Kato | Culture & Society Editor

October 13 is Sweet Potato Day in Japan, a date chosen in 1987 by a group of enthusiasts in Kawagoe, Saitama Prefecture, the town most associated with the satsumaimo.

The pun

The choice rests on an old sales cry. Roasted sweet potatoes were once advertised as juusan-ri, thirteen ri, meaning tastier than chestnuts. Chestnuts are kuri, which can also be read as nine ri, a ri being an old measure of distance; tastier is yori, which sounds like four ri; and nine and four make thirteen.

Kawagoe, as the story goes, was about 13 ri from Edo, the old name for Tokyo, which made the slogan a boast for the town's potatoes as well.

The potato town

Kawagoe supplied sweet potatoes to Edo in the Edo period, and its old merchant quarter, with its earthen-walled storehouses, now sells sweet-potato sweets, crisps and even sweet-potato beer to visitors.

The season

Roasted sweet potatoes, yaki-imo, sold from carts and shops and now in supermarkets, are a sign of autumn and winter in Japan. Varieties bred to be very sweet and moist when baked have made them more popular in recent years.

The festival

On Saturday and Sunday Kawagoe holds its autumn festival, the Kawagoe Matsuri of Hikawa Shrine, in which tall floats with figures on top are pulled through the streets. When two floats meet, their musicians and dancers face each other in a musical contest.

The festival's float procession is one of the 33 float festivals inscribed together by UNESCO in 2016 as intangible cultural heritage, under the title Yama, Hoko, Yatai, float festivals in Japan.

Getting there

Kawagoe is about half an hour from central Tokyo by train, and the festival draws large crowds. Visitors are advised to arrive early.

Those who go will find the town's sweet potatoes, roasted, candied or baked into cakes, on sale at every turn.

CULTURE

A Thousand Years in a Procession, and Torches in the Mountains: Kyoto's October 22

By Naomi Kato | Culture & Society Editor

Next Thursday, October 22, Kyoto holds two of its best-known festivals on the same day, one in the heart of the city by daylight and one in the northern mountains by night.

The Festival of the Ages

The Jidai Matsuri, the Festival of the Ages, belongs to the Heian Shrine, built in 1895 to mark the 1,100th anniversary of the founding of Heian-kyo, as Kyoto was called when it became the capital in 794.

Its procession of about 2,000 people in costume stretches for some two kilometres and moves backwards through history, from the Meiji Restoration of the 19th century to the Heian period, with figures from samurai and court ladies to merchants and townspeople, all in carefully researched dress.

The procession leaves the old Imperial Palace in the late morning and arrives at the Heian Shrine in the afternoon. The date commemorates the day in 794 on which the Emperor Kanmu is said to have entered the new capital.

The Kurama Fire Festival

That evening, in the village of Kurama in the hills north of the city, the Yuki Shrine holds the Kurama Fire Festival. Residents carry flaming torches, some of them enormous, through the narrow streets, chanting as they go, and the night ends with portable shrines carried down the steps of the shrine.

The festival is said to recall the welcoming of the shrine's deity to Kurama in the tenth century with bonfires and torches. Young men of the village, dressed in traditional costume, carry the largest torches, which can weigh tens of kilograms.

Crowds

Both festivals draw large crowds, and the Kurama festival in particular is held in a small mountain village reached by a single railway line. The organisers have at times limited access to manage the numbers.

The season

With the Jidai Matsuri, Kyoto completes its trio of great festivals, after the Aoi Matsuri in May and the Gion Matsuri in July. Together they mark the city's year as surely as the cherry blossom and the autumn leaves.

CULTURE

October 13 in History

By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

AD 54: The Roman emperor Claudius dies, reportedly poisoned; his stepson Nero succeeds him.

1307: King Philip IV of France orders the arrest of the Knights Templar, on a Friday.

1792: The cornerstone of the White House is laid in Washington.

1804: Hanaoka Seishu operates under general anaesthesia in Kii Province, by the old calendar.

1884: The International Meridian Conference adopts Greenwich as the prime meridian.

1911: The Kaishiki No. 1, the first successful Japanese-designed aeroplane, flies at Tokorozawa.

1925: Margaret Thatcher, Britain's first woman prime minister, is born.

1943: Italy, under its new government, declares war on Germany.

1972: A Uruguayan air force plane carrying a rugby team crashes in the Andes; 16 survivors are rescued after 72 days.

2010: The last of 33 miners trapped underground for 69 days is brought to the surface in Chile.

2016: Sony launches PlayStation VR.

CULTURE

Festivals and Events This Week

By the Culture Desk

TUESDAY, OCT. 13: Sweet Potato Day. Anaesthesia Day. CEATEC opens at Makuhari Messe, to Friday.

OCT. 14 AND 15: Nada no Kenka Matsuri, Matsubara Hachiman Shrine, Himeji.

OCT. 15 TO 17: Kannamesai, Ise Jingu.

OCT. 17 AND 18: Kawagoe Festival, Saitama Prefecture.

OCT. 22: Jidai Matsuri and the Kurama Fire Festival, Kyoto.

OCT. 24: The Japan Series begins.

CLIMAX SERIES: Final stages at Koshien and in Fukuoka from Wednesday.

FOOTBALL: Germany v Japan, women, Bremen, 12:45 a.m. Wednesday, Japan time.

THE SKY: The moon is a waxing crescent this week, low in the south-west after sunset.

IN BANGKOK: The IMF and World Bank annual meetings, to Sunday.

CULTURE

Words of the Week

By the Culture Desk

HENSOKU KIDO: An irregular trajectory. The Defence Ministry's term for a missile flight that departs from a simple ballistic arc, used of North Korea's second missile on Monday.

EEZ-GAI: Outside the exclusive economic zone. The phrase the ministry uses when a missile falls beyond the 200-nautical-mile zone.

KIHONTEKI SHITSUGI: Basic questioning. The Budget Committee sessions at which the prime minister and all ministers must attend, beginning today.

KYU-TEKIKOKU JOKO: The former enemy state clauses of the United Nations Charter.

MINPAKU: Private lodging; a home or room let to short-stay guests.

PANTAGURAFU: The pantograph on a train's roof that collects current from the overhead wire.

TASUKI: The sash passed from runner to runner in an ekiden, the equivalent of a relay baton.

KUKAN-SHO: A stage prize, for the fastest runner on a stage of an ekiden. Waseda won four on Monday.

KANNAMESAI: Ise Jingu's festival offering the year's first rice to the deities.

JUSAN-RI: Thirteen ri; an old punning name for roasted sweet potatoes, tastier than chestnuts.

EDITORIAL & OPINION

Today's Numbers

By Kenta Sakamoto | Data & Visualization

2: Ballistic missiles fired by North Korea on Monday morning, by Japan's count.

910: Kilometres, at least, flown by the second.

18: Missiles, at least, fired by the North this year, in 11 launches.

7: Conditions Iran has set for reopening the Strait of Hormuz.

13: Dead in Saturday's missile strike on Riyadh's airport, after an injured man died on Sunday.

12 million: Kronor shared by this year's economics laureates.

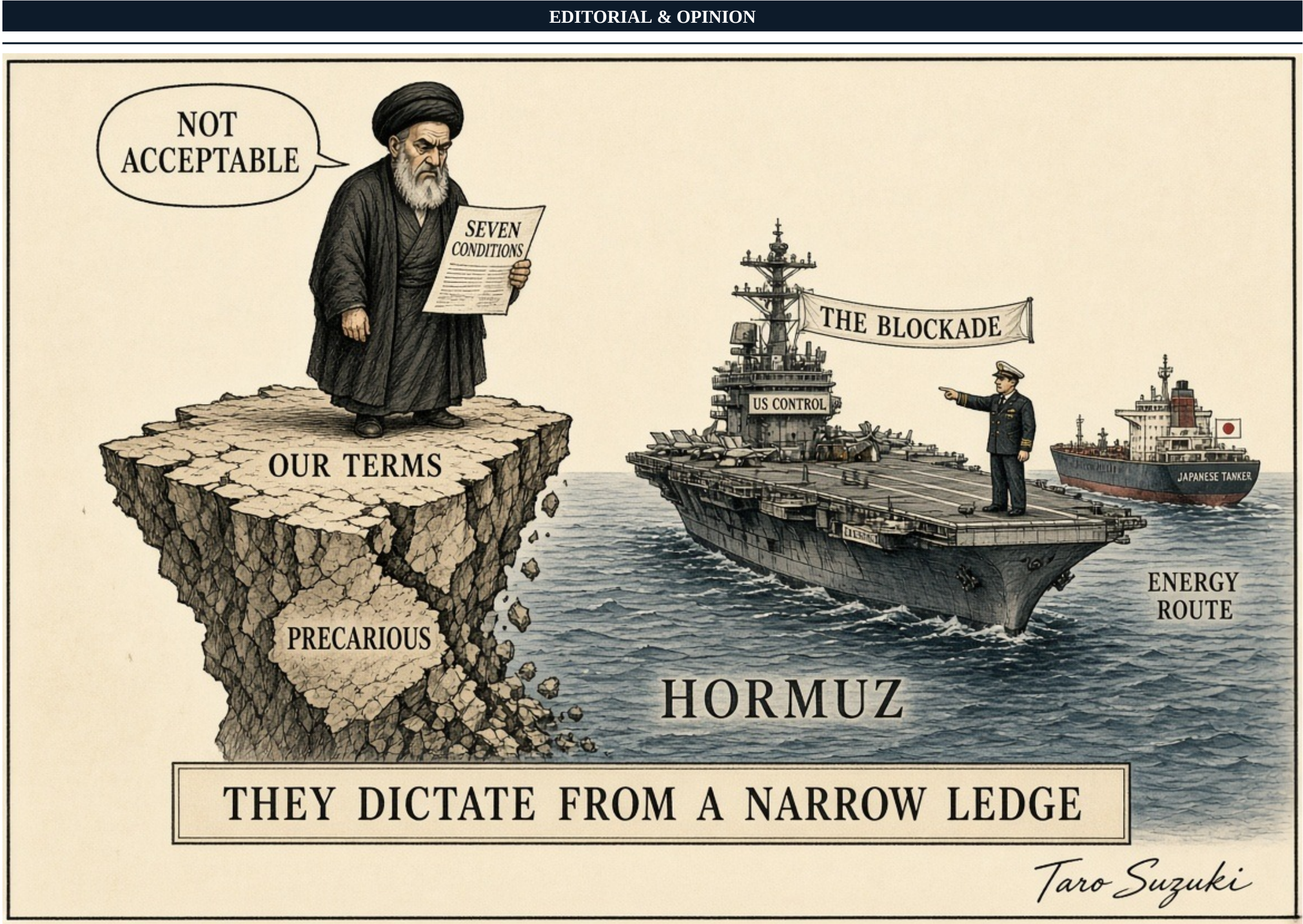
2:05:56: Waseda's winning time at Izumo, a course record.

10: Stage records broken at Izumo.

821: Exhibitors at CEATEC.

52: Days the Kyushu Shinkansen was cut after the July earthquake.

7.6: Per cent rise in wholesale prices in August, year on year.



Editorial cartoon by Taro Suzuki for The Japan Morning Post.

EDITORIAL

They Dictate From a Narrow Ledge: Iran's Seven Conditions Are Terms Issued From Weakness, and Japan Should Stand Firmly With Those Who Keep the Strait Open

Tehran calls Washington's reply inadequate and talks of 'managing' an international waterway. Japan, whose prosperity rides on that water, has every reason to reject the idea, and to carry its share of the burden of keeping the sea free

By Samantha Ortiz | Editorial Page Editor

Taro Suzuki's cartoon today needs few words, though it has some.

On the left, a bearded cleric in a black turban and robe stands on a narrow ledge of rock that is breaking away at the edges. The top of the ledge is marked Our Terms; a fissure running down its face is labelled Precarious, and stones tumble from it into the sea. In one hand the cleric holds a sheet of paper headed Seven Conditions. From his mouth comes a single verdict: "Not acceptable."

In the water below, marked Hormuz, sails a great grey aircraft carrier. Its island bears the words US Control, and from its mast streams a banner reading The Blockade. On the flight deck an officer in a white cap stretches out an arm across the water. Behind the carrier, on the stretch of sea marked Energy Route, a tanker flying the flag of Japan steams on.

Beneath it all runs the caption: "They dictate from a narrow ledge."

It is a sharp drawing and a fair one. It captures, in a single image, the gap between the confidence of Tehran's language and the ground on which it stands. And it puts in the corner of the frame the ship that matters most to the readers of a Japanese newspaper: the tanker, carrying the oil on which this country's homes, factories and hospitals depend.

What Tehran said

The cartoon follows a statement on Sunday by Mohsen Rezaei, secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council. Iran, he said, had set out seven conditions for reopening the Strait of Hormuz. The United States had accepted some of them, but its reply, sent through Qatari intermediaries, was inadequate. Iranian diplomacy had changed, and there would be no return to the previous situation.

He added a sentence that should be read slowly in Tokyo. "The Gulf cannot be secure without Iran's management of the Strait of Hormuz."

The full text of the seven conditions has not been published. What has been made public is enough. Iran has proposed managing the strait jointly with Oman. The speaker of its parliament, Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf, said on October 4 that the strait would not reopen until the conditions were met. A deputy foreign minister has called it an Iranian waterway that Iran would use against its adversaries. Mr Rezaei has spoken of the economic benefits Iran could draw from it.

Put plainly, Tehran is asking the world to accept that one of the most important shipping lanes on the planet should be opened or closed, and perhaps priced, at the discretion of the government that closed it.

The ledge

The cartoon's ledge is narrow for good reason. Since the United States and Israel struck Iran at the end of February, the Iranian state has lost much of what gave its threats weight. Its supreme leader was killed in the first strikes. Its navy and its Revolutionary Guards' fleet of fast boats have been hammered. Its ports have been blockaded by the United States since April, a blockade lifted briefly under the memorandum signed in June and reimposed in July when that agreement collapsed.

The blockade means that Iran's own oil, the lifeblood of its economy, cannot move by sea. Every day the strait stays closed, Tehran denies itself the revenue it needs as surely as it denies others their supplies. A government in that position can make demands. It cannot easily wait out an adversary with deeper reserves, more friends and a navy that sails where it chooses.

That is the crack the cartoonist has labelled Precarious. Iran's leaders speak as if time were on their side. The arithmetic of a blockaded economy suggests otherwise.

The carrier

The carrier in the drawing stands for the uncomfortable truth that the freedom of the seas is not self-enforcing. It exists because someone is prepared to defend it. For most of the past 80 years that someone has been the United States, and the countries that benefit most, Japan prominent among them, have contributed far less than their share of the cost.

The American blockade is not a pleasant instrument. It has added to the disruption of world energy markets, and its enforcement has involved force against ships that tried to run it. But its purpose, as Washington has set it out, is to deny Iran the use of the strait as a weapon while refusing the bargain Tehran wants: passage in exchange for control.

Washington has rejected joint management with Oman and insisted that ships are entitled to free passage under international law. That is the correct position, and it is Japan's position too. Tokyo should say so clearly and often, so that no one in Tehran imagines that the allies can be divided.

Oman's place

Iran's proposal to manage the strait jointly with Oman deserves particular scrutiny. Oman, whose Musandam peninsula forms the strait's southern shore, has long been a discreet go-between for Iran and the West, and it held talks with Tehran in August on the future of the waterway.

But the quarrel over the June memorandum showed how differently the two countries see the strait. Oman favoured a shipping route close to its own coast; Iran's maps pushed ships towards Iranian waters and labelled the Omani side restricted. A joint arrangement in which one partner closes the sea and the other is invited to share the responsibility is no arrangement at all. Japan, which has good relations with Muscat, should encourage Oman to hold to the principle of free passage, and should say publicly that any arrangement for the strait must be consistent with international law and open to the ships of every nation.

Why the principle matters

Some will ask why Japan should care who manages the strait, so long as the oil flows. The answer lies in the law of the sea, and in Japan's own neighbourhood. Under the United Nations Convention on the Law of

the Sea, ships enjoy a right of transit passage through straits used for international navigation, a right the coastal states may not suspend. Iran signed the convention but never ratified it, and argues that the right does not bind it. If that argument prevails in Hormuz, it will be heard elsewhere.

Japan is an island nation whose trade, energy and food move almost entirely by sea, through straits and channels that run past the coasts of other states. Its prosperity rests on the principle that no single government may close or tax those waters at will. The principle has no exceptions for awkward places. If it is surrendered at Hormuz, it will be harder to defend in the East China Sea, the Taiwan Strait or the South China Sea, where Japan's own interests are even more direct.

A passage that depends on Tehran's favour is not freedom of navigation. It is a licence, and licences can be withdrawn.

The tanker

Which brings us to the ship in the corner of the drawing.

Japan buys more than 90 per cent of its crude oil from the Middle East, and before the war most of it came through Hormuz. Few large economies were more exposed when the strait closed, and the country has spent the months since living off its savings.

The government began releasing oil from the national stockpile in March, about 50 days' worth, and announced a further 20 days' worth in April. It deserves credit for having built that stockpile, equivalent to 254 days of consumption at the start of the crisis, against just such a day, and for acting quickly. In April the prime minister said that by May more than half of the country's oil imports would come by routes that avoided the strait.

But reserves are a bridge, not a destination. Every barrel drawn must eventually be replaced, at a price set by a market in which the world has lost, by the estimate of Saudi Aramco's chief executive, about three billion barrels of supply. The yen's weakness compounds the damage. In August the prices of imports measured in yen were almost a quarter higher than a year earlier, and the prices companies charge one another were 7.6 per cent higher. Those costs are now arriving on supermarket shelves and electricity bills.

EDITORIAL & OPINION

The tanker in the drawing sails on. The question is for how long, and at what cost, it can do so while the strait remains in the hands of a government that treats it as a bargaining chip.

The lesson of 1973

Japan has been here before, though never quite like this. When the Arab oil producers cut supplies in 1973, Japan, which then depended on imported oil for most of its energy, was among the hardest hit of the industrial economies. Prices soared, the government appealed to the public to save energy, and shoppers emptied the shelves of toilet paper in a panic that is still remembered.

The country drew the right conclusions. It passed a law requiring oil stocks to be held, began building a national stockpile at the end of the decade, and set about diversifying its energy, towards liquefied natural gas, coal and, above all, nuclear power. The reserves that have carried Japan through this year exist because of decisions taken half a century ago by governments that understood the country's vulnerability.

The question for this generation of leaders is whether they will show the same foresight. The crisis of 1973 produced a national strategy that lasted for decades. The crisis of 2026 should produce one too, and it should start from the same plain fact: an island nation that imports almost all its energy cannot leave the security of that energy to chance, or to the goodwill of others.

What the drawing leaves out

The cartoon shows a carrier and a tanker. It does not show the people aboard the ships that have been caught in this war, and they deserve to be remembered.

By June the International Maritime Organization had counted 46 attacks on merchant ships in and around the strait, in which 14 seafarers had been killed, and some 20,000 crew members on about 1,000 ships were reported stranded in the Gulf. Attacks have continued since, and officials said in May that dozens of Japan-related ships remained stranded in Gulf waters.

Those sailors, many of them from the Philippines, India and other countries that crew the world's merchant fleet, are the ones who pay first when a government decides that a waterway is a weapon. Any settlement that leaves the strait at Tehran's discretion leaves them exposed to the next such decision.

The temptation of a separate deal

There is a school of thought in Tokyo that Japan should seek its own arrangement with Tehran. Japan has a long history of friendly relations with Iran, it bought Iranian oil for decades, and Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi contacted President Masoud Pezeshkian directly in May to help a Japan-linked tanker through the strait. Why not use that goodwill to secure safe passage for Japanese ships, and leave the larger quarrel to others?

The temptation is understandable and should be resisted.

Iran's strategy since March has been to divide the world into friendly and unfriendly nations, letting approved ships through while keeping others out. Every country that accepts that arrangement for its own ships strengthens Tehran's claim to decide who passes. A Japanese tanker that sails through with Iran's permission is, in effect, a Japanese endorsement of Iran's control.

Nor does goodwill buy as much as its advocates suppose. When Prime Minister Shinzo Abe visited Tehran in June 2019, the first visit by a Japanese prime minister in four decades, a Japanese-operated tanker, the Kokuka Courageous, was attacked in the Gulf of Oman while he was there. The lesson of that day is that Japan's friendship is valued in Tehran when it is useful, and disregarded when it is not.

Japan should keep its channels to Iran open. Diplomacy that keeps talking is worth more than diplomacy that has stopped. But those channels should be used to press Tehran towards reopening the strait to all, not to negotiate an exemption for Japan alone.

What Japan should do

Standing with Washington on principle is necessary, but it is not enough. An alliance in which one partner provides the carrier and the other provides statements will not last, and should not.

In March President Donald Trump asked the countries that depend on Hormuz to help take care of the passage. Many in Europe declined. Japan joined 21 other nations in a statement of readiness to contribute to safe passage, and said with its European partners that it would help secure the strait once a truce allowed. That commitment should now be given substance.

First, Japan should prepare, openly, to send minesweepers to the strait as soon as conditions allow. The Maritime Self-Defence Force has some of the most capable mine countermeasure units in the world, and it has done this work before: in 1991, after the Gulf War, Japanese minesweepers cleared mines in the Persian Gulf, the force's first operational deployment abroad. When the security legislation of 2015 was debated, Mr Abe cited minesweeping in the Strait of Hormuz as precisely the kind of mission the new laws might allow. If that example was good enough to argue for the laws, it is good enough to plan for now.

Second, Japan should do more to protect ships linked to Japan within the law as it stands, through maritime policing and by sharing intelligence with the United States and other partners on the threats in the Gulf of Oman and the Arabian Sea. The precedent exists: Japanese ships and aircraft have protected merchant shipping off Somalia against pirates since 2009.

Third, Japan should treat energy security as national security, which is what it is. That means restarting nuclear reactors that have passed safety reviews, without further delay. Kansai Electric's Mihama No. 3 reactor is due to return to commercial operation on November 4; there should be many more such announcements. Every reactor that runs is a tanker that does not need to pass through Hormuz.

It also means diversifying supply, from the United States, from Australia and elsewhere, building up stocks again when prices allow, and investing in the storage and receiving capacity that make diversification possible.

Fourth, Japan should pay for its defence, and accept that the cost of a free sea is not borne by others for ever. The government has already brought forward its target for defence spending. The revision of the security documents now under way is the moment to be honest with the public about why: because the sea lanes, the missile launches and the wars on Japan's periphery are not distant problems, and because allies who carry the load expect partners who do the same.

Fifth, Japan should work with the other Asian importers that depend on the strait as much as it does, among them South Korea and India. Asian buyers take most of the oil that passes through Hormuz. Their voices, raised together for free passage, would carry weight in Tehran, which counts some of them among its customers, and would show that the defence of the sea lanes is not merely an American project.

Saudi Arabia, the other supplier

There is a further reason for Japan to watch the Gulf closely. Saudi Arabia is its largest supplier of crude oil, and the kingdom has the capacity to send oil by pipeline across the Arabian peninsula to its Red Sea coast, avoiding the strait altogether. That capacity makes the kingdom one of the few large producers able to export without passing through Hormuz.

Whatever the immediate cause of the Houthis' campaign, which followed an offensive in Yemen by government forces that Riyadh backs, its effect is to put pressure on that producer. The Houthis are backed by Iran, and a kingdom under attack at home is a less reliable supplier and a less confident partner. Japan's interest in Saudi Arabia's security is therefore direct, and Tokyo should say so to Riyadh and to Washington.

The other ledges

Monday offered reminders that Hormuz is not the only place where Japan's security is being tested. North Korea fired two ballistic missiles into the Sea of Japan, one of which may have flown on an irregular path of the kind meant to complicate missile defence. The Houthis, Iran's allies in Yemen, kept up their attacks on Saudi Arabia, the largest supplier of Japan's oil, and kept the main airport of its capital closed.

These are not separate crises. They are the same lesson taught in different places: that governments willing to use force against civilians and commerce will do so wherever they believe the cost is low, and

that the cost is kept high only by those prepared to stand against them.

Answering the doubters

There are honest objections to the course we propose. Some argue that Japan's constitution and its pacifist traditions should keep it out of the Gulf altogether. But minesweeping after hostilities, the protection of merchant shipping and the sharing of intelligence are not wars of aggression. They are the work of a responsible maritime nation protecting its people's livelihoods within the law.

Others worry that standing too close to Washington will make Japan a target, or cost it influence in Tehran. Japan's tankers are already targets of a policy that closes the sea to everyone Tehran does not favour. Influence that cannot be used to open the strait is not worth preserving at the price of the principle.

And some fear the economic cost of a long confrontation. They are right to fear it. But the cost of conceding control of the strait would be greater and would never end. A country that accepts that its oil passes only with another government's permission has handed that government a hand on its throat.

The narrow ledge

The cleric in the drawing is sure of himself. He holds his paper and declares the world's answer not acceptable. But the rock beneath him is cracking, and he is looking the wrong way.

The men who govern Iran have a choice. They can reopen the strait to all ships, under the law that governs every other strait used for international navigation, and begin the long work of rebuilding an economy that their own policies have ruined. Or they can stay on the ledge, issuing conditions, until the ground gives way.

Japan cannot make that choice for them. What it can do is ensure that its own position is never in doubt: with its ally, with the law of the sea, and with the tanker in the corner of the picture, which should never have to ask anyone's permission to sail home.

ANALYSIS

The Missiles Are Aimed at Our Defences: North Korea's Irregular Flights Show Why Japan Must Finish Building Its Shield and Its Sword

By Aiko Tanaka | Senior Japan Correspondent

North Korea's two missiles on Monday morning did no damage. Both fell outside Japan's exclusive economic zone, and most people in Japan will have heard of them only on the news. It would be a mistake to conclude that they were unimportant.

The significant detail was in the Defence Ministry's careful language. The second missile, which flew more than 910 kilometres while climbing no higher than about 70, may have followed an irregular trajectory. Ten days earlier, the North said its intermediate-range missile could change course at low altitude with the help of artificial intelligence.

Whether or not the claims are true in every detail, the direction is clear. Pyongyang is building missiles designed not to hit a particular target on a particular day, but to defeat the defences that Japan, South Korea and the United States have spent two decades building.

Japan's missile defence was designed against a ballistic arc. Its Aegis destroyers are meant to destroy missiles in space, and its Patriot batteries to stop them in the last seconds of their fall. A missile that flies low and flat, inside the atmosphere, and manoeuvres as it approaches is a different problem.

That is why the government's decisions of recent years matter so much. Japan has begun to acquire long-range missiles of its own, so that it can strike the launchers that threaten it rather than relying solely on intercepting what they fire. It is developing, with the United States, an interceptor designed for faster and more agile threats. It now shares missile warning data with Seoul and Washington in real time.

Each of those steps was controversial when it was taken. Monday's launch is a reminder that none of them can now be slowed.

The numbers add to the case. Monday's launch was the 11th this year, and at least 18 missiles have been fired, against four launches and at least five missiles in all of last year. The North is testing more often, and testing more varied weapons.

The politics of the peninsula are not helping. The quarrel over the landmine in the Demilitarised Zone, Kim Yo Jong's contempt for Seoul's offer of medical equipment and the North's evident wish to answer South Korea's new hypersonic weapon all point to a period of more tests, not fewer.

Japan should also be clear-eyed about the American dimension. President Donald Trump's interest in meeting Kim Jong Un again may produce talks, and talks are better than silence. But any arrangement that limited the North's long-range missiles while leaving its shorter-range arsenal untouched would leave Japan exposed. Tokyo must make sure that its interests are represented in any such conversation.

The budget committee that opens in the Diet this morning will spend much of its time on taxes and on a minister's remarks. Somewhere in the questioning, a member should ask the prime minister how quickly Japan's counter-strike capability and its new interceptors will be ready, and what Monday's launch means for the timetable.

The missiles that fell into the sea on Monday were a test of North Korea's weapons. Japan's answer should be a test of its own resolve.

ANALYSIS

A Nobel for Tools Japan Tested First: The Economics Prize Honours Ideas Forged in Tokyo's Long Fight With Deflation, and Now Needed for the Fight With Inflation

By Yuki Saito | Economics & Finance Correspondent

The economics prize awarded to Robert Hall and Michael Woodford on Monday is, in one sense, a prize for ideas that Japan helped to test.

For more than a decade after its asset bubble burst, Japan was the world's laboratory for a problem economists had largely treated as theoretical: what a central bank can do when interest rates have fallen to zero and prices are still falling.

The Bank of Japan's pledge in 1999 to keep rates at zero until deflationary concerns were dispelled is often cited as one of the first examples of forward guidance, the practice of steering the economy by telling markets where policy is headed. Mr Woodford's analysis with Gauti Eggertsson of policy at the zero bound drew heavily on Japan's experience, and his work shaped the response of the Federal Reserve and other central banks after 2008.

Japan, in other words, paid for some of the lessons the Nobel committee honoured on Monday. The country's economists and officials deserve a share of the credit, even if no Japanese name appeared on the citation.

The more urgent question is what the laureates' work has to say about Japan now, when the problem is no longer falling prices but rising ones.

The answer begins with expectations. The central insight of the models the laureates helped to build is that what households and companies expect about the future shapes what they do today. A central bank that is believed when it says it will keep inflation under control has to do less to achieve it. One that is not believed has to do more.

The Bank of Japan has raised its policy rate to 1.25 per cent, cautiously and in steps, while wholesale prices have been running at more than 7 per cent above last year's level. Its communication about where rates are going is as important as the rate itself. A bank that leaves markets guessing invites the very volatility it wants to avoid.

The models also have something to say about fiscal policy, which the laureates' work treats as a tool of stabilisation, best used when it is well timed and temporary. The government's plan to cut the consumption tax on food to 1 per cent for two years from April 2027 is presented as relief from rising prices. Whether it stabilises or destabilises will depend on how it is financed, how it interacts with the Bank of Japan's efforts, and whether the two-year limit is believed.

That last point matters more than it might seem. Mr Hall's most famous paper argued that people spend on the basis of what they expect over their lives, not just what they have today. A tax cut that households expect to become permanent will be treated differently from one they expect to end. A government that wants its cut to be temporary must make sure the public believes it.

ANALYSIS

The prize is a reminder that good policy depends on credibility, and that credibility is built over years and lost quickly. Japan learned that lesson the hard way once. It should not have to learn it again.

ANALYSIS

The Food Tax Cut Needs a Number: The Budget Committee Is the Place for the Prime Minister to Say How She Will Pay for It

By Michael Hayes | Deputy Editor, Politics & Policy

For a week, the prime minister has answered the same question with the same sentence. How will the cut in the consumption tax on food be paid for? The funding, Sanae Takaichi has said, will be designed after deliberation.

Today, in the Budget Committee, the deliberation begins in earnest. It is time for the answer to change.

The cut is the centrepiece of her government. The bill sent to the Diet on Friday would reduce the tax on food from 8 per cent to 1 per cent for two years from April 2027. Ms Takaichi says it will save about 36,000 yen a person a year and that the lower rate should basically be reflected in shop prices. Households squeezed by rising food prices will welcome it.

But the arithmetic is unforgiving. Removing the tax on food entirely would cost about five trillion yen a year by the Finance Ministry's earlier estimates, and a cut to 1 per cent would cost most of that. Part of the revenue belongs to prefectures and municipalities, which have asked how they will be compensated.

The prime minister has ruled out paying for the cut with deficit-covering bonds. That is the right commitment, and it makes the question more pressing, not less. If not borrowing, then what? Spending cuts, other taxes, or revenue the government expects from growth? Each answer has consequences, and the public is entitled to know which the government intends.

There is also the matter of the end. The cut is meant to last two years. Nikkei has reported that the government intends to move afterwards to income-linked benefits paid once a year from fiscal 2030. That plan deserves scrutiny now, before the cut takes effect, not in 2029, when restoring the tax will be politically painful.

None of this is an argument against the policy. There is a respectable case that a temporary cut, quickly felt at the till, is a reasonable response to a period of sharply rising prices. It is an argument for explaining it properly.

The Budget Committee will also spend time on the agriculture minister, Kazuo Yana, and his remarks about road budgets. That questioning is legitimate. Ministers must answer for what they say. But it would be a pity if the session ended with a great deal said about Mr Yana and nothing new said about five trillion yen.

Ms Takaichi came to office promising strong economic management. Strong management means telling the country what things cost and who will pay.

The opposition will ask. The country will be watching. A number would be a good start.

ANALYSIS

The Enemy State Clauses Must Go: Japan Should Keep Pressing, and Make Beijing and Moscow Explain Why They Want a Relic of 1945 to Survive

By William | Senior Political Analyst

Eighty-one years after the United Nations Charter was signed, three of its articles still describe Japan, Germany and their wartime allies as enemy states. The General Assembly declared the clauses obsolete in 1995. The world's leaders resolved to delete them in 2005. They remain.

For most of that time they were an embarrassment rather than a threat, a piece of history left in the text because no one wanted to reopen the charter to remove it. That has changed.

Since Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi's remarks on Taiwan last November, China has cited Article 53 as if it gave Beijing a licence to act against Japan without the approval of the Security Council. Russia has invoked the clauses in its dispute over the islands off Hokkaido. North Korea has joined in, and the Yomiuri Shimbun reports that the three are now

coordinating their criticism.

The legal argument is weak. Japan has been a member of the UN for almost 70 years, contributes heavily to its budget and to its peacekeeping, and has not fought a war since 1945. No serious lawyer believes the clauses authorise an attack on a member state in 2026.

But propaganda does not need to be legally sound to be effective. The clauses give Beijing and Moscow a story to tell audiences in the developing world: that Japan is a defeated aggressor on probation, whose rearmament should alarm everyone. Every time Japan raises its defence spending, the story is told again.

Ms Takaichi was right to raise the issue at the General Assembly last month and to say that the clauses must be deleted. The government is right to strengthen its explanation abroad, as the Yomiuri reports it is doing.

The aim should be to turn the argument round. China and Russia hold vetoes over any amendment to the charter. If they block deletion, they should be made to explain, in every forum, why they want to keep a provision the General Assembly has declared obsolete. Their answer would reveal more about their intentions than about Japan's.

Japan should also enlist Germany, Italy and the other former enemy states, all now members of the UN in good standing, to make the case together. A joint initiative from democracies that rebuilt themselves after 1945 would be harder to caricature than a Japanese campaign alone.

None of this will remove the clauses quickly. Amending the charter requires the consent of all five permanent members of the Security Council, and two of them see advantage in the status quo. But the campaign is worth waging for its own sake, because it places Japan where it belongs: on the side of the rules, and its critics on the side of the past.

The clauses were written for a world that ended long ago. Japan has spent 81 years proving it. It should not be shy about saying so.

ANALYSIS

A Railway That Stops for Safety: Kyushu's Suspended Shinkansen Is an Inconvenience Worth Accepting, and a Reminder of What Rail Means in a Crisis

By Emi Kondo | Society & Local News

Commuters in Fukuoka, Kumamoto and Kagoshima had a frustrating start to the week. The Kyushu Shinkansen did not run on Tuesday morning, from Hakata to Kagoshima-Chuo, while JR Kyushu inspected its overhead wires after finding a fault on a train's pantograph.

The frustration is understandable. The line returned to full service only on September 18, after the July earthquake had cut it for 52 days, and people in southern Kyushu spent most of the summer without a direct high-speed link to Fukuoka. A fresh suspension, even for a morning, will have felt like a setback.

But the decision to stop was the right one, and the instinct behind it deserves defending.

A damaged pantograph can mean a damaged wire, and a damaged wire can damage the next train that passes, or bring down power on a stretch of line with trains stranded between stations. The cautious response is to stop, inspect and only then resume. It costs a morning. The alternative risks far more.

That instinct is why the Shinkansen has carried billions of passengers since 1964 without a single passenger killed in a derailment or collision. It is easy to take that record for granted, and easy to forget that it rests on decisions like Tuesday's, taken many times a year by engineers who would rather explain a delay than an accident.

There is a wider point. The government is considering, Kyodo News reports, whether to count spending on railways as part of its defence-related expenditure, on the grounds that rail lines would carry supplies and people in an emergency. Kyushu, which faces the East China Sea and lies on the routes south towards Okinawa, is where such planning would matter most.

Whatever one thinks of the accounting, the principle is sound. A railway that can be relied on in a crisis must be maintained, inspected and repaired with the same seriousness in peacetime. The summer's

earthquake showed how long it can take to restore a line once it is badly damaged. Tuesday showed the value of catching a problem before it becomes one.

JR Kyushu should explain what went wrong once its inspections are complete, and passengers are entitled to know. They are also entitled to some patience in return.

Japan's railways are not perfect. They are, however, among the safest and most reliable in the world because they treat small faults as potential large ones.

A morning without the Shinkansen is a nuisance. A railway that never stopped for safety would be something much worse.

ANALYSIS

Physical AI Plays to Japan's Strengths, if Its Companies Move Fast: The Lesson of CEATEC and Omron's American Deal

By Ethan Cole | Technology & Science Editor

For most of the past decade, Japan has watched the artificial intelligence boom from the sidelines. The large language models that captured the world's attention were built in the United States and China, by companies with resources that no Japanese firm could match.

CEATEC, which opens at Makuhari Messe today, is built around the idea that the next phase of AI will be different, and that it will suit Japan better.

The organisers call 2026 the first year of physical AI: artificial intelligence that does not merely produce words and images but sees, moves and acts in the real world, in robots, vehicles, factories and infrastructure. That is a world Japanese companies know intimately. They are among the leading makers of industrial robots, factory automation, sensors and the precision components that machines need to perceive and to move.

The logic is persuasive. AI that acts physically needs bodies, eyes and hands as much as it needs software. Japan has the bodies, the eyes and the hands.

But the opportunity comes with a warning. Hardware without the software that gives it intelligence becomes a commodity, made to the specifications of others and sold on price. Japan learned that lesson in consumer electronics, where it made the best televisions in the world until others made the platforms that mattered more.

That is why the deal reported this week by the Nikkei is worth noticing. Omron, the Kyoto maker of factory controllers and sensors, has agreed to buy OnLogic, an American maker of the rugged computers that run AI on the factory floor, for about 100 billion yen. It is an attempt to own more of the system, from sensor to computer to control, rather than supplying one piece of it.

More Japanese companies will need to make choices of that kind, through acquisitions, partnerships with software companies at home and abroad, and investment in their own AI capabilities. The record level of mergers and acquisitions involving Japanese companies this year suggests that many are already thinking along those lines.

There is a national dimension too. Japan's shrinking workforce means that factories, warehouses, construction sites and care homes will need machines that can do varied work with little supervision. Physical AI is not only an export opportunity. It is part of how the country will keep working.

The government can help by funding research, by making data from public infrastructure available to developers under sensible rules, and by setting clear standards for safety and liability, so that companies know where they stand when an autonomous machine makes a mistake.

The halls at Makuhari this week will be full of impressive demonstrations. The question is whether, five years from now, the systems they show are designed and owned in Japan, or merely assembled from Japanese parts.

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Waseda's Izumo record, Page 16.

Fighters reach final stage, Page 16.

ANALYSIS

Waseda's Record Run Was Built on Freshmen, and It Has Reopened a University Ekiden Season That Looked Settled

By Oliver Brooks | Sports Desk Editor

Before Monday morning, the university ekiden season seemed to have a familiar shape. Kokugakuin, winners of the Izumo Ekiden for two years running, were favourites for a third. Komazawa and Aoyama Gakuin, the dominant forces of the past decade, were expected to contend.

By lunchtime Waseda had rewritten the picture, winning in a course record of 2:05:56, almost two minutes inside the old mark, with two first-year students among their four stage winners.

Records at Izumo depend partly on the weather, and the cool, cloudy morning helped. Ten stage records fell, five on the fifth stage alone. But conditions were the same for everyone, and Waseda beat a strong field by nearly a minute.

What makes the win significant is its composition. A team that wins with its seniors is having a good year. A team that wins with freshmen on two winning stages is building something.

The first of them, Honda, passed six runners on the second stage to take the lead. The second, Niizuma, broke the fourth-stage record to win it back after Nihon University's Kipkemei had taken the lead on the third. Between them, a second-year, Suzuki, ran inside the old record on the third stage, and a third-year, Shunpei Yamaguchi, set a record on the fifth. The fourth-year Shinsaku Kudo brought it home.

That spread across the years is what coaches dream of. It means that next season's team will not be rebuilt from scratch.

Caution is in order. Izumo is the shortest of the three great relays, with stages that reward speed. The All-Japan in November and Hakone in January demand depth over far longer distances, and the climb and descent of Hakone's fifth and sixth stages have humbled many a fast team. Aoyama Gakuin, eleventh on Monday, have a habit of peaking in January.

Still, Waseda's history gives the result an added resonance. Their last Izumo title came in the 2010-11 season, when they won all three great relays. Only five universities have ever done so.

The broader story of the morning was the strength of the field. The Ivy League select team finished third, its best result, and Juntendo, Chuo and Teikyo were all within a minute and three-quarters of the winners. University distance running in Japan is deep, and the season ahead looks more open than it did a day ago.

For Waseda's coach, Katsuhiko Hanada, the challenge now is to manage expectations. For everyone else, the challenge is simpler: catch them.

MORE INSIDE TODAY

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Iran Says Washington's Reply to Its Seven Conditions Falls Short as Houthi Missiles Keep Riyadh's Airport Shut — Page 1

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EDITORIAL & OPINION

CORRECTIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

The Japan Morning Post corrects errors of fact as soon as they are identified. Correction requests may be sent to corrections@japanmorningpost.com, giving the date, page and headline of the article concerned.

The notes supplied for today's edition date North Korea's missile launch to Tuesday; the missiles were fired on Monday morning, at about 9:19 a.m. and 9:36 a.m., and Japan counted at least two. They give the agriculture minister's name as Yanagi; he is Kazuo Yana. They say Shohei Ohtani scored the Dodgers' run after his first hit in 12 at-bats; according to the game reports, he scored in the second inning after drawing a walk, and his single came in another at-bat. They describe the Communist Party as lowering its vote target to 4.5 million; the draft resolution presented on Monday sets a target of 4.5 million votes and at least 7.5 per cent, and the meeting's main decision was to drop the party's policy of cooperating with other opposition parties. They say foreign acquisitions by Japanese companies exceeded last year's level; the Nikkei reported that acquisitions of Japanese companies by foreign buyers had done so. They describe Omron's target as a PC maker; it is OnLogic, a maker of industrial computers.

The notes give the given names of two Waseda freshmen who won stages at Izumo; their readings could not be confirmed, and they are identified by family name. A visit to Aomori by Princess Aiko, which the notes report, could not be confirmed; the Emperor and Empress ended their own visit to the prefecture on Sunday, as reported on Monday. Items in the notes that could not be confirmed from primary reports are not used, among them the accident involving a festival float in Tarumi, the factory fire in Nakagawa, a child's death in Toyota, a survey of school toilets, several arrests and an indictment, an earthquake off Iwate, a concern about driving licence data, services for airline frequent flyers, measures on the supply of ECMO machines, a data-centre computing trial, a new share listing, the week's Asian Champions League fixtures and a shogi result. The judo team title, Hayato Sakamoto's decision to play on and Tomoyuki Matsushita's world record were reported on Monday and are not repeated as news.

THE WEEK AHEAD

TUESDAY, OCT. 13: Budget Committee basic questioning, from 9 a.m.; corporate goods prices, 8:50 a.m.; the IMF's World Economic Outlook; Prudential Life's sales suspension begins; CEATEC opens; Pope Leo XIV enters hospital.
WEDNESDAY, OCT. 14: Budget Committee, second day; Climax Series final stages begin; ASML results; Germany v Japan, women's football, 12:45 a.m.; Nada no Kenka Matsuri, to Thursday.
THURSDAY, OCT. 15: TSMC results; Kannamesai, to Saturday. OCT. 17 AND 18: Kawagoe Festival.
OCT. 22: Jidai Matsuri. OCT. 24: Japan Series. OCT. 25: Niigata mayoral election. OCT. 29 AND 30: Bank of Japan policy meeting.

TYPHOON AND MARINE ADVISORIES

6 a.m. Tuesday. No. 29 (Koguma): strong typhoon; about 1,040 km east-south-east of Tokyo; moving north-east at 30 km/h; 975 hPa; winds near the centre 35 m/s; storm-force winds 95 km from the centre; gales 280 km to the east and 220 km to the west. Forecast: weakening to a severe tropical storm by this evening; an extratropical low by early Thursday; moving north-east over the open Pacific, away from Japan.

Pacific coasts: swell from the distant storm can raise waves even in fine weather. Keep off breakwaters and rocky shores exposed to the open sea. Western Japan: rain spreads from mid-afternoon, reaching Fukuoka, Matsue, Hiroshima and Kochi by tonight. Sea of Japan: after Monday's missile launches the coast guard advised vessels not to approach any fallen objects and to report them. Emergencies at sea: 118.

MARKET REFERENCE

New York, Monday: Dow Jones Industrial Average 51,850.55, up 195.60; S&P 500 7,807.24, down 4.30; Nasdaq Composite 27,245.90, down 120.27. Sandisk down more than 6 per cent; Lumentum down almost 10 per cent. American bond markets closed for Columbus Day. West Texas Intermediate crude, November, \$93.22 a barrel, up \$1.37. Tokyo, Friday's close: Nikkei 225 at 69,030.92, down 11.19; TOPIX 4,104.81, up 13.35. Yen about 158 to the dollar;

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Japanese ten-year government bond yield above 3 per cent. Bank of Japan policy rate: 1.25 per cent. Corporate goods prices in August: up 7.6 per cent on a year earlier.

PHOTOGRAPHS AND MAPS IN THIS EDITION

Front page: a missile rising from a coastal launch site at dusk (file photo, WPM Productions). Nobel Prize: the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences' announcement of the economics laureates (file photo, WPM Productions). Politics: Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi in the House of Representatives (WPM Productions). International: Navi Pillay, image supplied for this edition. Economy: the Tokyo Stock Exchange (TG2, CC). Society: a Kyushu Shinkansen 800 series train in Tsubame service (Japan Rail). Weather: the Japan and United States maps supplied for this edition. Editorial page: cartoon by Taro Suzuki.

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THE RECORD BOOK

North Korea, Monday: two missiles; about 220 km and more than 910 km flown; maximum altitudes about 20 km and 70 km. This year: 11 launches, at least 18 missiles; last year: four launches, at least five missiles. Riyadh airport strike, Saturday: 13 dead, more than 300 injured. Nobel economics prize: 12 million kronor, shared equally. Izumo Ekiden: Waseda 2:05:56, course record, 1 min 55 sec inside the old mark; ten stage records. CEATEC: 821 exhibitors, 338 new; more than 110,000 visitors expected. Kyushu Shinkansen: about 600 places of damage after the July earthquake; 52 days to full service. Shinjuku: 3,775 registered minpaku as of July 15. Japan's oil reserves: 254 days at the start of the crisis.

THE SYMBOLS ON THE WEATHER MAP

A sun: sunny. A cloud: cloudy. A cloud with strokes beneath it: rain. Two symbols joined by an arrow: the first sky gives way to the second during the day, as in the four western cities that turn from cloud to rain today. Two symbols separated by a slanting stroke: the first sky, with the second at times. The figure in red is the forecast high and the figure in blue the low observed this morning, in degrees Celsius. On the United States map the figures are in degrees Fahrenheit; a sun partly hidden by cloud means partly cloudy, a cloud with a small sun and strokes means showers, and a cloud with a flash means thunderstorms.

UNITS AND CONVENTIONS

Wind speeds are given in metres a second; one metre a second is 3.6 kilometres an hour. Pressure is in hectopascals. Temperatures are in degrees Celsius except on the United States map. Times are Japan Standard Time unless another place is named; Japan is at present nine hours ahead of Greenwich Mean Time, seven ahead of Bremen and Rome, six ahead of Riyadh, Moscow and Kyiv, five and a half ahead of Tehran, two ahead of Bangkok, 13 ahead of New York and Washington, 14 ahead of Milwaukee and 16 ahead of Los Angeles. Japanese names are given with the family name last. A person arrested or charged is presumed innocent until convicted.

USEFUL NUMBERS

Police: 110. Fire and ambulance: 119. Coast guard, for emergencies at sea: 118. Disaster message dial: 171. Police consultation, not an emergency: #9110. Consumer hotline: 188. Rail travellers in Kyushu should check JR Kyushu's service information before setting out. Anyone who receives a message about a refund, a data leak or an account problem should not follow its links, and should contact the company through its official site. Travellers to the Middle East should check the Foreign Ministry's safety information before leaving.

ABOUT THE OPINION PAGES

The editorial states the view of the editorial page and is written by its editor; it takes its subject from the day's cartoon. Articles headed Analysis are the judgment of the writer whose name they carry. The news pages report; the opinion pages argue, and say that they are doing so. Letters in reply are welcome at letters@japanmorningpost.com.

SOURCES FOR THIS EDITION

Reports in this edition draw on the Tuesday morning papers and Monday's wires and broadcasts: Yomiuri Shimbun, Asahi Shimbun, Nihon Keizai Shimbun, Sankei News, Kyodo News, Jiji Press, NHK, the Hokkaido Shimbun, the Kumamoto Nichinichi Shimbun, EE Times Japan, Al Jazeera, The National, Iran International, Gulf News, Euronews, AFP, Reuters, the Associated Press, CBS Sports, Fox Sports, NBC, MLB.com and The Motley Fool; on the statements of Japan's Defence Ministry, South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences, JR Kyushu, Fujitsu, JEITA, the Japan Football Association and the Vatican; on the Bank of Japan's price statistics; on the Japan Meteorological Agency for weather and typhoons; and on the United States National Weather Service for the map of American cities. Where accounts differ the difference is stated.

READER SERVICES

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TOMORROW'S EDITION

Wednesday's edition carries the first day of questioning in the Budget Committee; the IMF's new forecasts and the corporate goods price index; the second game of the NLCS, with Yoshinobu Yamamoto on the mound; the opening day of CEATEC; the cause of the Kyushu Shinkansen suspension, if JR Kyushu has given it; the pope's admission to hospital; previews of the Climax Series final stages; and the latest from the Gulf and the Korean peninsula.

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