

Yana Resigns as Agriculture Minister After 28 Days, and Takaichi Says the Responsibility for Appointing Him Is Hers

The first minister to quit over a scandal since the prime minister took office goes hours after retracting his account of the free buses; a successor is to be named today as the opposition turns its fire on her judgment

By Michael Hayes | Deputy Editor, Politics & Policy



Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi at the rostrum of the House of Representatives, in a file image. She accepted the resignation of her agriculture minister, Kazuo Yana, on Wednesday night after 28 days in office, saying responsibility for appointing him rested with her; his successor is to be named today. (File photo: WPM Productions)

Kazuo Yana resigned as minister of agriculture, forestry and fisheries on Wednesday evening, ending a month-long row over his remarks about cutting road budgets for municipalities that had not backed him and over free buses that carried supporters to his election rallies.

Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi accepted his resignation at her office and said she took seriously her responsibility for having appointed him. "I am the one who made the appointment," she told reporters. "Responsibility for appointing him rests with me, the prime minister." She said his successor would be announced today.

Mr Yana, who entered the cabinet for the first time in the reshuffle of September 17, served 28 days. Kyodo News said that was the shortest tenure of any minister under a government led by the Liberal Democratic Party since the party returned to power in 2012. He is the first member of Ms Takaichi's cabinet to step down over a scandal since she became prime minister in October last year.

"No more trouble"

Mr Yana told reporters that the decision was his own. He said he could not cause any more trouble for the Diet's deliberations or for the running of agricultural policy.

Ms Takaichi said she had accepted the offer because important questions needed answers one by one, and named three: the bill to cut the consumption tax on food, the situation in the Middle East and the compilation of next year's budget. She said she did not think his explanations had been sufficiently understood, and that he should now fulfil his duty to account for himself as a member of the Diet.

A morning retreat

The day had begun with Mr Yana still insisting he would stay. Asked in the House of Representatives Budget Committee about his future, he said he would devote all his strength to his duties, to farm and fisheries policy and to securing the nation's food supply.

But he also effectively withdrew the account he had given the committee the day before. On Tuesday he had said his staff checked with the local election commission before hiring the buses, and were told the cost could be recorded as part of the venue's expenses. On Wednesday he said his secretary had told him only that the staff "may have" asked the commission how to record the costs when preparing the political funds report. Opposition lawmakers had said the commission had no record of any inquiry.

Pressure then mounted from all sides. Motohisa Furukawa, the Diet affairs chief of the Democratic Party for the People, said his party would not agree to

begin deliberations on the consumption tax bill unless the minister resigned. Hirofumi Yoshimura, leader of the Japan Innovation Party, the Liberal Democrats' coalition partner, told reporters in Osaka that Mr Yana should think hard about whether he was fit to be agriculture minister, adding that almost no members of the public were convinced.

In the afternoon, opposition parties in the House of Councillors, where the governing camp lacks a majority, decided to submit a censure motion against him. That evening he went to the prime minister's office with his resignation.

How it started

The trouble began with a recording of a Liberal Democratic Party branch meeting in Otawara, Tochigi Prefecture, on May 24, in which Mr Yana said road budgets for this fiscal year had been cut drastically for the city of Nasukarasuyama and the town of Nakagawa, both in his constituency. Their leaders had not supported him in the general election in February. He withdrew the remarks and apologised on October 5, and has since denied having any power over such budgets.

The weekly Shukan Bunshun then reported that free shuttle buses had taken supporters to his campaign launch rallies, which opposition lawmakers said could breach the Public Offices Election Act. Ms Takaichi had told him on October 8 to stay and repay the public through his work, and on Tuesday raised for the first time the possibility of replacing him.

The cost to the prime minister

The resignation is a setback for a prime minister who has enjoyed solid support. A poll by the public broadcaster NHK this week found that 78 per cent of respondents considered Mr Yana's explanation unacceptable; support for the cabinet slipped two points from last month to 51 per cent.

Opposition parties made clear on Wednesday night that they would now pursue her responsibility for the appointment. Yuichiro Tamaki, the leader of the Democratic Party for the People, said doubts remained that political intervention could change how budgets were allocated and that the government still had questions to answer. Yuichi Goto, the Diet affairs chief of the Democratic Reform Association, said Mr Yana should give up his seat in the Diet because of the suspected election law violations.

In Tochigi, the mayor of Nasukarasuyama, Junko Kawamata, said in a statement that doubts had not been dispelled and that the matter must not be allowed to end there. The town of Nakagawa said it took the matter seriously and hoped Mr Yana would keep explaining himself to the community after

DIPLOMACY

Japan Summons Russia's Ambassador Over the Detained Hokkaido Shimbun Reporter and Protests That It Has Not Been Told Anything

Tokyo has had no contact with the correspondent, who faces an espionage charge in Moscow; the Kremlin says that if there are spies, they will be caught, and Motegi calls a Chinese visit to Etorofu absolutely unacceptable

By Jonathan Mercer | Senior Editor, International Desk

Japan summoned the Russian ambassador on Wednesday and protested strongly over the detention of a Hokkaido Shimbun correspondent on Sakhalin, complaining that Russia had held a Japanese national without explaining anything to the Japanese government while releasing one-sided information about him.

The director-general of the Foreign Ministry's European Affairs Bureau asked Ambassador Nikolai Nozdrev for prompt information and for humane and fair treatment of the reporter, and asked that Japanese officials be given a chance to contact him, Kyodo News reported. Mr Nozdrev said he would convey Japan's position to Moscow.

Japan had made similar requests through its embassy in Moscow on Tuesday and its consulate general in Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk on Wednesday, the ministry's spokesman, Toshihiro Kitamura, said. Russia had not responded by Wednesday morning.

No contact

Chief Cabinet Secretary Minoru Kihara said Japanese officials had not been able to contact the reporter, whom a Moscow court record cited by Russian media identifies as Yuki Imai, aged 34. He said the government would do everything it could to protect him and would decide its next steps as the facts became clearer, adding that Russia was a neighbour with which communication was needed to resolve problems.

The foreign minister, Toshimitsu Motegi, told the House of Representatives Budget Committee that Japan would confirm the circumstances of the detention and the reporter's health, and would take further measures, including more requests to Russia.

"If there are spies"

Moscow showed no sign of softening. Dmitry Peskov, President Vladimir Putin's spokesman, said the Federal Security Service was carrying out its duties. "If there are spies, they will be caught," he said.

The service, known as the FSB, says the reporter gathered information about residents of the Kuril Islands who had been mobilised or had volunteered for the war in Ukraine, on the instructions of Japanese intelligence, and tried to pass it on. The state news agency TASS said he held a journalist's visa and was detained at a hotel in Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk on the day he was due to leave Russia, before being flown to Moscow, where a court ordered him held for two months.

Press groups speak out

The Foreign Correspondents' Club of Japan expressed extremely strong concern and asked Russia to disclose the grounds for the detention. The Japan Federation of Newspaper Workers' Unions and the union at the Hokkaido Shimbun called for his safety, his health and his early release. The newspaper has said it is establishing the facts and that his safety is its first priority.

Kyodo noted that Russia's security services have stepped up pressure on journalists from countries it regards as unfriendly, those that imposed sanctions

TODAY'S INDEX	
Diplomacy	2-4
Typhoons	3-4
Politics	2-6
International	6-8
Economy	8-9
Business	10
Technology	10-13
Society	13-17
Sports	17-19
Culture	19
Editorial & Opinion	20-23
Crossword	18
Weather	14

WEATHER — TOKYO

23°C

Low 17°C · Cloudy, sunny spells

Sapporo

18°

Osaka

25°

Fukuoka

25°

Naha

28°

Sunny and cool across most of Japan; rain in Aomori and Akita. Cold start: Sapporo 8°C, Nagano 10°C. Depression near the Marshalls to become Typhoon No. 30. Full weather, Page 14.

TODAY IN BRIEF

- Cabinet: Yana resigns as farm minister after 28 days; Takaichi says the responsibility is hers. Successor named today.
- Russia: Japan summons the ambassador over the detained Hokkaido Shimbun reporter; no contact so far.
- Security: the prime minister says nuclear-powered submarines will be considered concretely and realistically.
- Cyber: a hack at a disaster-alert mail provider hits 110 local governments; 3.1 million addresses at risk.
- Markets: the Nikkei slips 33 yen for a fifth fall; American inflation quickens to 3.7 per cent.
- Sport: DeNA shut out Hanshin 2-0 to level; SoftBank beat Nippon-Ham 6-4 and need two more wins.

THE RESIGNATION

- Yana quits after 28 days.
- PM: the responsibility is mine.
- Successor named today.
- Tax bill debate from Oct. 20?

TODAY

- New farm minister named.
- NLCS Game 3, 9 a.m.
- Climax Series, 6 p.m.
- Tokyo 23, sunny spells.

MARKETS	
Dow (Wed)	51,621.48 ▼ 48.62
S&P 500 (Wed)	7,718.94 ▼ 86.51
Nasdaq (Wed)	26,692.87 ▼ 511.51
Nikkei 225 (Wed)	67,744.29 ▼ 33.23
WTI crude	\$95.09 ▲ 0.95
Yen	about 158.3 per \$
BOJ policy rate	1.25%

INSIDE

- Typhoon No. 30 ahead, Page 3.
- Budget Committee, day two, Page 5.
- Nuclear submarines, Page 4.
- Houthis vow more strikes, Page 7.
- Starlink curbs in Ukraine, Page 7.
- US inflation 3.7%, Page 8.
- Disaster mail hacked, Page 10.
- Self-copying AI warning, Page 10.
- DeNA 2, Hanshin 0, Page 17.
- Editorial: FORTRAN at 70, Page 20.

THE WEEK

- Fri. 16: Typhoon No. 30 named.
- Tue. 20: tax bill debate.
- Sat. 24: Japan Series.
- Tue. 27: Oza Game 5.

THE TROPICS

- Depression near the Marshalls.
- Strong typhoon by Monday.

SUBSCRIBE

Home delivery and digital access. ¥3,900/month digital; ¥6,800/month print and digital. [www.japanmorningpost.com/subscribe](#)

PUBLISHING INFORMATION

Published daily by WPM Productions. Owner: Paul Carter. Managing Editor: Dixon Yan. Est. 1887. 1-2-3 Otemachi, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo 100-0004.

[www.japanmorningpost.com](#) | [newsdesk@japanmorningpost.com](#) | 1-2-3 Otemachi, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo 100-0004

© 2026 WPM Productions | Page 1 of 23

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

FROM PAGE 1

Yana Resigns as Agriculture Minister After 28 Days, and Takaichi Says the Responsibility for Appointing Him Is Hers

Continued from Page 1

leaving office. Earlier in the day the Nasukarasuyama city assembly had passed a resolution protesting against his remarks.

What comes next

The ruling parties have proposed that the lower house begin debating the consumption tax bills in a plenary session next Tuesday, October 20. With Mr Yana gone, the main obstacle the opposition had cited has been removed, though talks between the parties continue.

The new minister will inherit a crowded desk: the government plans to set out the details of its policy on rice paddies in mid-November, and the agriculture

ministry is central to the food tax cut. Under the Constitution, only the prime minister can appoint and dismiss ministers, and Ms Takaichi will be judged on whether her second choice proves sounder than her first.

NHK said the departure was bound to affect farm policy, with decisions on the paddy policy and on the food tax cut still pending. Farm organisations, which depend on the ministry for budgets and guidance, will be looking for a minister who can take up those tasks without delay.

FROM PAGE 1

Japan Summons Russia's Ambassador Over the Detained Hokkaido Shimbun Reporter and Protests That It Has Not Been Told Anything

Continued from Page 1

over the invasion of Ukraine. Late last year a Russian man in Khabarovsk who had helped Japanese media was detained on a treason charge, and his relatives say they do not know where he is.

The islands

Mr Motegi also addressed the visit to Etorofu by a delegation from China's Heilongjiang Province, announced by the Sakhalin regional government on Tuesday. He told the committee that the visit was absolutely unacceptable, that the Northern Territories were Japan's inherent territory under history and international law, and that Japan had asked both Russia and China to respond appropriately. China's Foreign Ministry declined to comment, describing the trip as private commercial activity, Japanese newspapers reported.

The detention comes after President Putin's visit to Etorofu in August, the first by a Russian leader to the islands Japan claims, and Japan's first sanctions of the Takaichi era on October 2, against 35 vessels used to export Russian oil. Japan and Russia have never signed a peace treaty to end the Second World War.

POLITICS

Twenty-Eight Days: How Kazuo Yana's Time in the Cabinet Compares With the Shortest Stays of Recent Decades

Only a handful of ministers have left faster, and most of them, like him, fell over money, remarks or the conduct of their campaigns

By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

Kazuo Yana joined the cabinet on September 17 and handed in his resignation on October 14. His 28 days in office are the shortest of any minister under a Liberal Democratic Party government since the party returned to power in December 2012, according to Kyodo News.

They are not the shortest on record. Kyodo listed several ministers whose stays were briefer still, or not much longer, and the reasons they left follow a familiar pattern.

Four days

The shortest was that of Takashi Hasegawa, appointed justice minister at the end of December 1988, who resigned after four days when it emerged that he had received money from the Recruit group, the information company at the centre of the largest political funding scandal of the era. The affair later brought down the cabinet of Noboru Takeshita.

Five days

In September 2008 Nariaki Nakayama, minister of land, infrastructure, transport and tourism in the new cabinet of Taro Aso, resigned after five days over a series of remarks, among them an attack on the Japan Teachers' Union. His departure was a damaging start for a cabinet that had been in office for less than a week.

Forty-five and fifty-one days

Two ministers appointed in Shinzo Abe's reshuffle of September 2019 left within weeks of each other. Isshu Sugawara, minister of economy, trade and industry, resigned after 45 days over reports that his office had given gifts and condolence money to people in his constituency. Katsuyuki Kawai, the justice minister, went after 51 days over allegations of election law violations in his wife's campaign for the House of Councillors that summer. Mr Kawai was later convicted of vote-buying.

What the list shows

The reasons for a quick exit rarely concern the ministry the minister was meant to run. They concern money, words, or the way the minister won his seat, matters that existed before the appointment and that a more thorough check might have caught.

That is why a short stay is usually read as a judgment on the prime minister as much as on the minister. Prime ministers have typically responded by saying they bear responsibility for the appointment, and opposition parties have used the phrase to question their judgment for weeks afterwards.

The difference this time

Mr Yana's problems were also rooted in the past: a recording of a party meeting in May and the buses that carried supporters to his rallies in the general elections of 2024 and 2026. What was unusual was how long Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi stood by him. She told him on October 8 to stay and repay the public with his work, and only on October 13 did she first raise the possibility of replacing him.

Whether his replacement, to be named today, steadies the government will depend in part on whether the new minister's own record has been examined more carefully than his was.

POLITICS

The Yana Case: From a Remark in Otawara to a Resignation in Nagatacho

By the Data Desk

FEBRUARY 8: General election. The leaders of Nasukarasuyama and Nakagawa, in Mr Yana's Tochigi No. 3 district, do not support him.

MAY 24: At a Liberal Democratic Party branch meeting in Otawara he says this year's road budgets for the two have been cut drastically.

SEPTEMBER 17: He joins Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi's reshuffled cabinet as agriculture minister.

EARLY OCTOBER: The Shimotsuke Shimbun makes a recording of the remark public.

OCTOBER 5: He withdraws the remarks and apologises.

OCTOBER 7: Shukan Bunshun reports free buses to his campaign launch rallies.

OCTOBER 8: The prime minister tells him to stay and repay the public through his work.

OCTOBER 13: In the Budget Committee he admits the buses but denies wrongdoing; Ms Takaichi first raises replacing him.

OCTOBER 14, MORNING: He revises his account of checking with the election commission. The Democratic Party for the People refuses to debate the tax bill while he stays.

OCTOBER 14, AFTERNOON: Upper house

opposition parties decide to submit a censure motion.

OCTOBER 14, EVENING: He resigns after 28 days; the prime minister accepts.

TODAY: The successor is named.

OCTOBER 20: The ruling parties' proposed start of lower house debate on the consumption tax bills.

POLITICS

What a Prime Minister Means by Taking Responsibility for an Appointment, and Why the Phrase Rarely Costs Anything

Ninmei sekinin is a political idea rather than a legal one; it acknowledges a misjudgment, invites attack and is tested at the ballot box and in the polls

By Aiko Tanaka | Senior Japan Correspondent

When a minister falls, Japanese prime ministers reach for a set phrase: they take their responsibility for the appointment seriously. Sanae Takaichi used it on Wednesday night, adding for emphasis that she was the one who had made the appointment.

The phrase, ninmei sekinin in Japanese, describes a duty that comes with the prime minister's power. Under Article 68 of the Constitution, the prime minister alone appoints the ministers of state, a majority of whom must be members of the Diet, and may dismiss them at will. Nobody shares the choice, so nobody shares the blame when it goes wrong.

No penalty attached

Yet the responsibility carries no formal consequence. There is no procedure by which a prime minister is sanctioned for a bad appointment, and none has resigned for that reason alone. In practice the words serve as an acknowledgment that the choice was a mistake and an apology to the public for the disruption.

Shinzo Abe used similar language in October 2019, when two ministers he had appointed weeks earlier resigned in quick succession, saying the responsibility for appointing them lay with him and apologising to the public. Fumio Kishida did the same when three of his ministers left in the autumn of 2022.

How it is tested

The real reckoning happens elsewhere. Opposition parties use the phrase as a weapon, asking in committee what exactly the prime minister has done to discharge the responsibility she accepts. Opinion polls register the damage, and a run of resignations can wear down a government's standing over months.

In the House of Councillors, where Ms Takaichi's camp lacks a majority, the opposition can also pass non-binding censure motions. They carry no legal force but signal the chamber's disapproval and can tie up the government's business.

The checks before an appointment

Before a reshuffle, the prime minister's office and the party look into each candidate's background, a process known informally as a physical examination. It covers political funds, past remarks, and links with organisations that could cause embarrassment. Each early resignation raises the question of what the examination missed.

In Mr Yana's case, the remarks about road budgets were made in May, four months before he was appointed, and the buses dated from the elections of 2024 and 2026. Opposition lawmakers are likely to ask whether either was known to the prime minister's office in September.

What she can still do

A prime minister can show she has learned from a mistake chiefly through the next appointment. Ms Takaichi names the new agriculture minister today, and the choice will be read as her answer to the question her own phrase invites.

DIPLOMACY

Two Months and Counting: How Pretrial Detention Works in Russia's Espionage Cases

Custody orders are routinely extended, trials are held behind closed doors and acquittals are rare; past cases involving foreigners have ended, if at all, through diplomacy

By the International Desk

The two months of custody ordered by a Moscow court for the Hokkaido Shimbun correspondent are only a first step. In Russian espionage cases, the initial period of pretrial detention is almost always extended.

Investigators of the Federal Security Service ask a court for more time, and courts usually grant it in increments of several months while the inquiry continues. Foreigners accused of spying in recent years have spent many months in custody before reaching trial.

Lefortovo

Many such cases pass through Lefortovo in Moscow, the name of both a district court that handles cases investigated by the security service and a pretrial detention centre with a long association with Soviet and Russian state security. Evan Gershkovich, the American reporter arrested in 2023, was held there.

Detainees in such cases can see lawyers, but much of the evidence is classified, and lawyers are often bound not to disclose it. Trials for espionage are usually closed to the public and the press on the ground that state secrets are involved.

Few acquittals

Russian courts acquit defendants in only a tiny fraction of criminal cases, well under one per cent by most counts, and acquittals in cases brought by the security service are rarer still. In past espionage cases involving foreigners, convictions have been followed by long sentences.

Mr Gershkovich was sentenced to 16 years in July 2024. Paul Whelan, a former American marine arrested in Moscow in 2018, received 16 years in 2020.

Ways out

Both men were freed in August 2024 in a large exchange of prisoners between Russia and Western countries. Exchanges of that kind depend on the other side holding people Moscow wants back, and have so far involved mainly the United States and European countries.

Others have been expelled rather than tried. A Kyodo News correspondent accused of gathering military information in Vladivostok in 2019 was questioned and expelled, and a Japanese consul in Vladivostok was declared persona non grata in 2022.

What comes next

The immediate questions are whether Japanese diplomats will be allowed to visit the reporter, whether he has a lawyer of his choosing, and how long investigators will seek to hold him. Russia's Foreign Ministry has said the case is not an isolated one, which suggests Moscow intends to treat it as a matter of state security rather than a misunderstanding to be settled quickly.

DIPLOMACY

The Detention: Who Said What

By the Data Desk

MINORU KIHARA, chief cabinet secretary: The government will do everything to protect its national; Russia is a neighbour, and communication is needed to resolve problems.

TOSHIMITSU MOTEGI, foreign minister: Japan has asked for information, humanitarian consideration and fair treatment, and will take further measures as needed.

THE FOREIGN MINISTRY, to the Russian ambassador: Russia has held a Japanese national without explaining anything to Japan while issuing one-sided information.

NIKOLAI NOZDREV, Russian ambassador: He will convey Japan's position to Moscow.

DMITRY PESKOV, Kremlin spokesman: The security service is doing its duty. If there are spies, they will be caught.

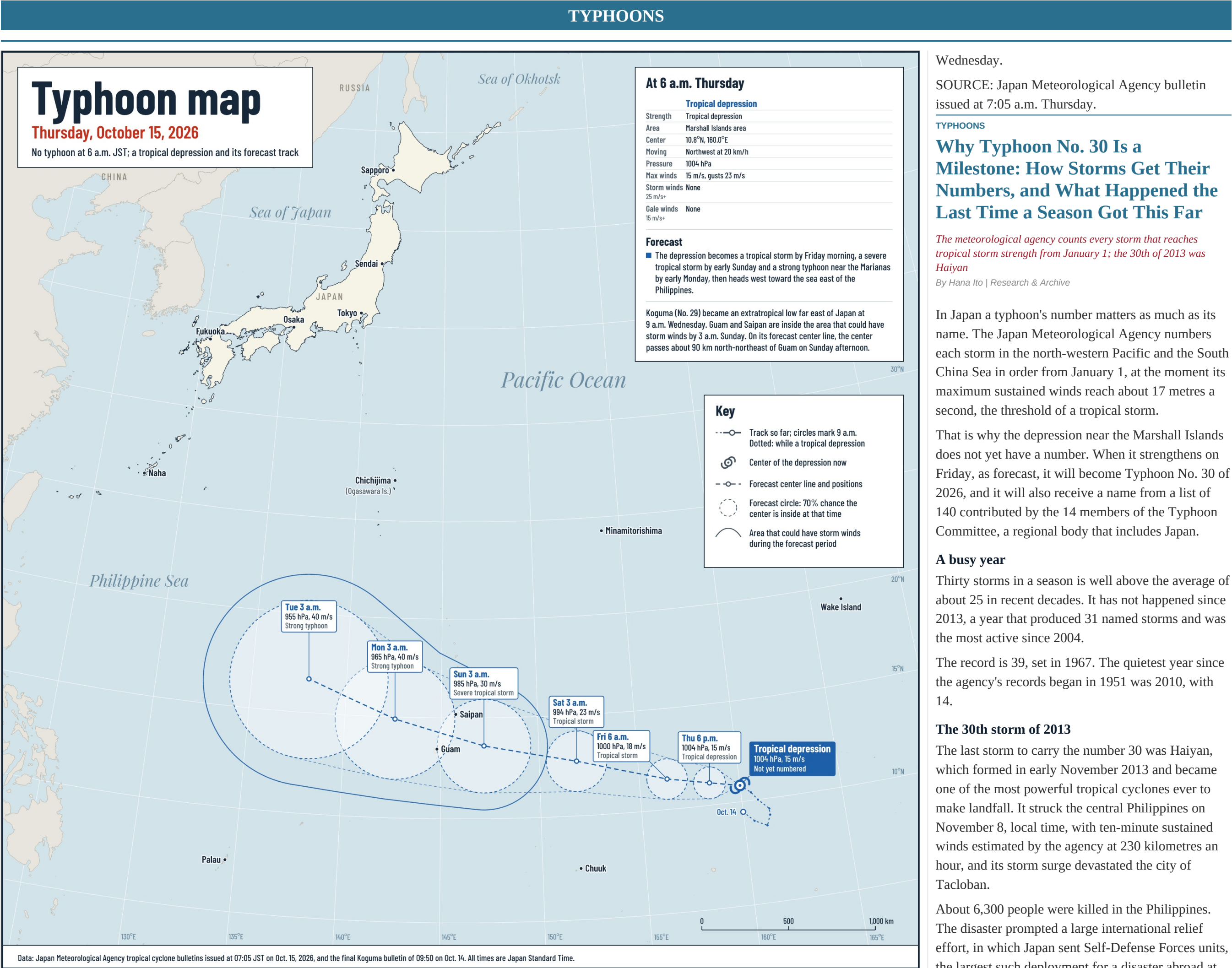
MARIA ZAKHAROVA, Foreign Ministry spokeswoman, on Tuesday: A regrettable attempt to use a Japanese correspondent to gather information, and not an isolated case.

THE HOKKAIDO SHIMBUN: It is establishing the facts, and the reporter's safety is its first priority.

FOREIGN CORRESPONDENTS' CLUB OF JAPAN: Extremely strong concern; Russia should disclose the grounds for the detention.

NEWSPAPER UNIONS: A call for his safety, his health and his early release.

TASS, the Russian state news agency: He held a journalist's visa and was detained at a hotel in Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk on the day he was due to leave Russia.



The tropical depression near the Marshall Islands at 6 a.m. on Thursday and its forecast track, in the map supplied for this edition: 1004 hPa at 10.8N, 160.0E, about 1,680 km east of Guam, moving north-west at 20 km/h. It is forecast to become a tropical storm, Typhoon No. 30, by 6 a.m. Friday, a severe tropical storm by 3 a.m. Sunday and a strong typhoon of 965 hPa near the Mariana Islands by 3 a.m. Monday, then to head west-north-west towards the sea east of the Philippines. Each dashed circle is where the centre is expected to be at that time with a probability of 70 per cent; the solid outline encloses the area that could have storm-force winds, which takes in Guam and Saipan by early Sunday. Koguma, No. 29, became an extratropical low at 9 a.m. on Wednesday. (Data: Japan Meteorological Agency bulletins issued at 7:05 a.m. on October 15 and the final Koguma bulletin of 9:50 a.m. on October 14)

TYPHOONS

Depression Near the Marshall Islands Set to Become Typhoon No. 30, the First Season to Reach That Number Since 2013

Forecast to strengthen into a strong typhoon near the Marianas by early Monday, with Guam and Saipan inside the storm-wind zone; long-range runs hint at Honshu late next week, but forecasters say the track is far from settled

By the Weather Desk

A tropical depression in the Marshall Islands area is expected to strengthen into a tropical storm by Friday morning and become this year's Typhoon No. 30, the first time a season has reached that number since 2013.

At 6 a.m. on Thursday the depression lay at 10.8 degrees north and 160.0 degrees east, about 1,680 kilometres east of Guam, according to the Japan Meteorological Agency. Its central pressure was 1004 hectopascals, its maximum winds 15 metres a second, gusting to 23, and it was moving north-west at 20 kilometres an hour. It had no gale-force winds yet.

The forecast

The agency's forecast, issued at 7:05 a.m., has the system deepening steadily as it moves over warm water. It is expected to reach 1000 hectopascals by 6 a.m. Friday, when it becomes a tropical storm and receives its number; 994 by 3 a.m. Saturday; and 985 by 3 a.m. Sunday, as a severe tropical storm with winds of 30 metres a second.

By 3 a.m. on Monday it is forecast to be a strong typhoon near the Mariana Islands, with a central pressure of 965 hectopascals and maximum winds of 40 metres a second, and by 3 a.m. Tuesday 955

hectopascals, still at that strength, as it heads west-north-west towards the sea east of the Philippines.

Guam and Saipan

Guam and Saipan lie inside the area that could have storm-force winds, of 25 metres a second or more, by 3 a.m. on Sunday. On the forecast centre line, the storm's centre passes about 90 kilometres north-north-east of Guam on Sunday afternoon. Both islands are popular with Japanese tourists, and anyone planning to travel at the weekend should keep an eye on airline announcements.

And Japan?

Weathernews says some long-range computer runs bring the storm towards the vicinity of Honshu around October 23 or 24. Forecasters stress that this is not an official forecast of a landfall: the agency's track forecasts extend only five days ahead, and the forecast circles, which show where the centre has a 70 per cent chance of being, widen considerably by Tuesday.

Late-season typhoons that reach Japan usually do so by turning north and then north-east as they meet the westerly winds, and the timing of that turn is the

main uncertainty. For now, the storm poses no immediate threat to Japan.

The end of Koguma

Typhoon No. 29, Koguma, became an extratropical low far east of Japan at 9 a.m. on Wednesday, according to the agency's final bulletin, issued at 9:50 a.m. The swell it sent towards the Pacific coast of Kanto has subsided.

A busy season

The new storm would make 2026 the first season since 2013 to produce 30 named storms. In that year the 30th was Haiyan, which struck the central Philippines in November with catastrophic force. The average in recent decades has been about 25 a year.

Japan itself enjoys fine weather today, with sunshine across most of the country under high pressure. Weathernews expects mostly fine or cloudy conditions on Friday as well, before a front brings rain to some areas from Saturday.

storm.

MONDAY 3 A.M.: 965 hPa, 40 m/s, strong typhoon, near the Mariana Islands.

TUESDAY 3 A.M.: 955 hPa, 40 m/s, strong typhoon.

GUAM: Inside the possible storm-wind area by 3 a.m. Sunday; centre line passes about 90 km to the north-north-east on Sunday afternoon.

KOGUMA (NO. 29): Extratropical at 9 a.m.

Wednesday.

SOURCE: Japan Meteorological Agency bulletin issued at 7:05 a.m. Thursday.

TYPHOONS

Why Typhoon No. 30 Is a Milestone: How Storms Get Their Numbers, and What Happened the Last Time a Season Got This Far

The meteorological agency counts every storm that reaches tropical storm strength from January 1; the 30th of 2013 was Haiyan

By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

In Japan a typhoon's number matters as much as its name. The Japan Meteorological Agency numbers each storm in the north-western Pacific and the South China Sea in order from January 1, at the moment its maximum sustained winds reach about 17 metres a second, the threshold of a tropical storm.

That is why the depression near the Marshall Islands does not yet have a number. When it strengthens on Friday, as forecast, it will become Typhoon No. 30 of 2026, and it will also receive a name from a list of 140 contributed by the 14 members of the Typhoon Committee, a regional body that includes Japan.

A busy year

Thirty storms in a season is well above the average of about 25 in recent decades. It has not happened since 2013, a year that produced 31 named storms and was the most active since 2004.

The record is 39, set in 1967. The quietest year since the agency's records began in 1951 was 2010, with 14.

The 30th storm of 2013

The last storm to carry the number 30 was Haiyan, which formed in early November 2013 and became one of the most powerful tropical cyclones ever to make landfall. It struck the central Philippines on November 8, local time, with ten-minute sustained winds estimated by the agency at 230 kilometres an hour, and its storm surge devastated the city of Tacloban.

About 6,300 people were killed in the Philippines. The disaster prompted a large international relief effort, in which Japan sent Self-Defense Forces units, the largest such deployment for a disaster abroad at the time.

Numbers are not strength

A high count says nothing by itself about how dangerous a season will be. Many storms form and dissipate far out at sea, and a single storm on the wrong track can do more damage than a dozen that stay away from land.

What a long season does mean is that the warm waters that feed typhoons are still producing them in mid-October, and that the risk to southern Japan and the islands of the Pacific does not end with the summer. Forecasters say the coming storm is the one to watch over the next week.

TYPHOONS

Guam, Saipan and the Mariana Islands: A Favourite Getaway for Japanese Travellers That Sits in Typhoon Alley

The American islands lie where many of the western Pacific's strongest storms form or pass; Yutu in 2018 was the most powerful to strike them on record

By the Weather Desk

The Mariana Islands stretch in an arc about 2,500 kilometres south of Tokyo, a flight of under four hours that has made Guam and Saipan two of the most familiar foreign destinations for Japanese families, honeymooners and school trips.

Guam, the largest and southernmost island in the chain, is a territory of the United States and home to large American military bases. Saipan, Tinian and Rota belong to the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, also linked to the United States.

Typhoon alley

The islands lie in one of the most active parts of the world's most active ocean basin for tropical cyclones. Storms that form near the Marshall Islands, as the current depression did, often pass close to the Marianas as they strengthen on their way west or north-west.

The forecast issued on Thursday morning shows exactly that pattern. Guam and Saipan lie within the area that could have storm-force winds by early

TYPHOONS

Sunday, and on the forecast centre line the storm passes about 90 kilometres north-north-east of Guam on Sunday afternoon, by which time it is expected to be a severe tropical storm on its way to becoming a strong typhoon.

Yutu

The islands have suffered badly before. In October 2018, Typhoon Yutu struck Tinian and southern Saipan at its peak strength, with a central pressure estimated by the Japan Meteorological Agency at 900 hectopascals. It was the strongest storm on record to hit the Marianas and one of the strongest ever to strike American territory.

Up to 6,000 homes were reported destroyed, the islands lost electricity for months, and two people died on Saipan. Damage was estimated at more than \$800 million.

Mawar

In May 2023 Typhoon Mawar passed just north of Guam as a powerful storm, knocking out power and water across much of the island and closing its airport. Many Japanese tourists were stranded for days until flights resumed.

Advice for travellers

Travel companies and airlines usually announce changes to flights and tours a day or two before a storm arrives. Anyone due to fly to the Marianas at the weekend should check with the airline before leaving home, and visitors already on the islands should follow the instructions of local authorities and their hotels.

TYPHOONS

Late-October Typhoons Have Reached Honshu Before: Lan, Tokage and Hagibis Show Why Forecasters Keep Watching

Storms that form this late often recurve out to sea, but some ride the westerlies onto the main islands, sometimes with deadly results

By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

Some long-range computer runs suggest that the storm expected to become Typhoon No. 30 could approach Honshu around October 23 or 24. Forecasters stress that this is far from certain, but the season gives no grounds for complacency.

Lan, 2017

On October 23, 2017, Typhoon Lan, No. 21 of that year, made landfall in Shizuoka Prefecture at about 3 a.m. It was a large and powerful storm that had brought heavy rain across much of the country as it approached over the weekend, which coincided with a general election.

Seventeen people were killed in Japan. Lan showed how a late-season typhoon can move quickly once it is caught by the westerly winds, giving the areas in its path relatively little time to prepare.

Tokage, 2004

On October 20, 2004, Typhoon Tokage, No. 23 of that year, came ashore at Tosashimizu on the southern tip of Shikoku while still at typhoon strength. Its rain and wind killed 95 people in Japan, with three more missing, making it one of the deadliest typhoons of recent decades.

Tokage was the tenth typhoon to make landfall in Japan that year, a record that still stands. The previous record was six.

Hagibis, 2019

Hagibis, which reached the Izu Peninsula on the evening of October 12, 2019, was earlier in the month but showed the same danger. Its torrential rain caused rivers to burst their banks across eastern Japan, and it killed about 100 people.

Why some turn and some do not

A typhoon that forms near the Marshall Islands in mid-October usually moves west or north-west at first, steered by the subtropical high. Whether it later turns north towards Japan depends on how far west the high extends and on the position of the westerly winds. A small change in either can shift the track by hundreds of kilometres.

That is why the Japan Meteorological Agency publishes forecast circles rather than lines, and why its official track forecasts extend only five days ahead. The latest forecast ends on Tuesday morning with the storm heading west-north-west towards the sea east of the Philippines. Any forecast for Japan beyond that is guidance, not a prediction, and should be checked again each day.

POLITICS

From Resignation Letter to Imperial Attestation: How a Minister Is Replaced Mid-Session

The Cabinet Act lets the prime minister or another minister stand in at once, so the ministry is never without a head; the new appointee needs the Emperor's attestation

By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

When a minister resigns, the ministry he led does not stop. Japanese law provides for the gap to be filled the moment it opens.

Under Article 10 of the Cabinet Act, when a minister in charge of a ministry is unable to act, or when the post falls vacant, the prime minister or a minister she designates performs the duties temporarily. The arrangement keeps the ministry's decisions moving while a successor is chosen.

The choice

Choosing the successor is the prime minister's alone. Article 68 of the Constitution gives her the power to appoint ministers, with one condition: a majority of the cabinet must be members of the Diet. She may therefore pick a lawmaker from either house or, more rarely, an outside expert.

In practice, a prime minister replacing a single minister in the middle of a Diet session looks for someone who can face questioning at once. Former ministers and senior lawmakers with experience of the policy field are the usual candidates, because a new minister will be in committee rooms within days.

The ceremony

The appointment of ministers is one of the acts the Emperor performs in matters of state under Article 7 of the Constitution, which provides for him to attest it. The new minister is therefore received at the Imperial Palace for an attestation ceremony after the prime minister has made her choice. Only then does the appointment take full effect.

The new minister normally holds a first news conference the same day, often late at night, and is briefed by officials before facing the Diet.

What stays the same

The senior vice-minister and parliamentary vice-ministers, appointed separately, stay in their posts, and the ministry's officials carry on with the policies already decided. In agriculture, those include the work on the consumption tax cut on food and the details of the rice paddy policy that the governing party says it will announce in mid-November.

Speed matters

Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi said on Wednesday night that she would name the successor today. Moving quickly limits the time the opposition has to dwell on the resignation, and allows the government to argue that the consumption tax bills can proceed.

A swift appointment also carries a risk. A replacement chosen in a day has had less scrutiny than one chosen over weeks, and the reason for this replacement was a failure of scrutiny.

DIPLOMACY

Why Tokyo Keeps Asking to See Its Reporter: What International Law Says About Consular Access

The Vienna Convention on Consular Relations gives detained foreigners the right to have their consulate told and to receive its visits, but enforcement depends on the detaining state

By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

Japan's repeated requests to Russia this week, for information, for humane treatment and for a chance to contact the detained Hokkaido Shimbun correspondent, rest on a treaty both countries have signed.

The Vienna Convention on Consular Relations of 1963 sets out what a country owes to foreigners it arrests. Its Article 36 is the heart of the matter.

What Article 36 says

If a detained foreigner asks, the authorities must inform his country's consulate without delay. They must also tell him, without delay, that he has that right. Any letter he writes to his consulate must be forwarded.

Consular officers, in turn, have the right to visit a national who is in prison, custody or detention, to converse and correspond with him and to arrange legal representation. They must not act if the detainee expressly objects.

What it does not say

The convention does not let a consulate demand a detainee's release, choose his lawyer or see the evidence against him. Nor does it fix a precise number of days within which a visit must be allowed, which leaves room for delay.

Countries holding foreigners on espionage charges have sometimes used that room. When Evan Gershkovich of The Wall Street Journal was arrested in Yekaterinburg in March 2023, the American ambassador was first able to visit him in a Moscow prison only after about three weeks.

Why it matters

A consular visit is often the first independent confirmation of a detainee's health and of how he is being treated. It also allows diplomats to pass on messages from family and employers and to check that he has a lawyer.

That is why Chief Cabinet Secretary Minoru Kihara stressed on Wednesday that Japanese officials had not yet been able to contact the reporter, and why the Foreign Ministry asked the Russian ambassador for an opportunity to do so.

The limits of protest

Beyond the convention, a state's tools are diplomatic: summoning ambassadors, public statements, raising the case with other governments and, in some cases elsewhere, negotiating exchanges. Japan used the first two on Wednesday.

Russia, for its part, says it is following its own law. Its Foreign Ministry has called the case a regrettable attempt by Japan to use a journalist to gather information, and the Kremlin says the security service is simply doing its job.

DIPLOMACY

The Reporter Case: Day Two

By the Data Desk

WHO: A Hokkaido Shimbun correspondent identified in a Moscow court record as Yuki Imai, 34.

WHERE HELD: Moscow, after being flown from Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk.

THE CHARGE: Espionage under Article 276 of the Russian Criminal Code, up to 20 years in prison.

THE ALLEGATION: Gathering information on Kuril Islands residents mobilised or volunteering for the war in Ukraine.

CUSTODY: Two months, ordered by a Moscow court.

JAPANESE CONTACT: None so far, says the chief cabinet secretary.

JAPANESE REQUESTS: Embassy in Moscow, Tuesday; consulate general in Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk, Wednesday; Russian ambassador summoned in Tokyo, Wednesday.

WHAT JAPAN ASKS: Prompt information, humane and fair treatment, and a chance to contact him.

THE KREMLIN: The security service is doing its job.

PRESS GROUPS: The Foreign Correspondents' Club of Japan voices extremely strong concern; newspaper unions call for his release.

POLITICS

The Week Ahead

By the Data Desk

TODAY: The prime minister names a new agriculture minister. Hokkaido's council for vice-capital designation holds its first meeting. China and North Korea open the Yalu River bridge. Newspaper Week begins.

TODAY, 9 A.M.: NLCS Game 3, Brewers at Dodgers, with Milwaukee leading 2-0.

TODAY, 6 P.M.: Climax Series final stages, Game 2, at Koshien and Mizuho PayPay Dome.

FRIDAY 16: The depression near the Marshall Islands is forecast to become Typhoon No. 30. ALCS Game 3 in Cleveland, Friday morning in Japan.

SATURDAY 17: A front brings rain to some areas.

MONDAY 19: The storm is forecast to be a strong typhoon near the Mariana Islands.

TUESDAY 20: Proposed start of lower house debate on the consumption tax bills. Netflix reports results.

SATURDAY 24: The Japan Series opens.

TUESDAY 27: Game 5 of the Oza shogi match in Kofu. Israel holds a general election.

THURSDAY 29: The autumn garden party at the Akasaka Imperial Gardens. Saizeriya raises prices.

NOVEMBER 3: Midterm elections in the United States.

POLITICS

Takaichi Says Nuclear-Powered Submarines Will Be Considered 'Concretely and Realistically' and Leaves Room to Reword the Non-Nuclear Principles

The prime minister's answers in the Budget Committee point to two of the most sensitive questions in the revision of the three security documents

By Aiko Tanaka | Senior Japan Correspondent

Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi told the House of Representatives Budget Committee on Wednesday that the government would consider introducing nuclear-powered submarines in a concrete and realistic way, with surveillance of the Pacific in mind, the Tokyo Shimbun and other papers reported.

She also declined to rule out changing the wording of the three non-nuclear principles, under which Japan does not possess or manufacture nuclear weapons or permit their introduction. The specific wording of the principle on introduction was still under consideration in the revision of the country's security documents, she said, referring to the extended deterrence the United States provides, and there was room for consideration. She declined to predict what the final wording would be.

The documents

The three documents, the National Security Strategy, the National Defense Strategy and the Defense Buildup Program, were adopted at the end of 2022 and set out Japan's policy and its spending on defence. The Takaichi government is revising them ahead of the original schedule, citing a harsher security environment.

Both questions have been debated within the governing camp for months. The Japan Innovation Party, the Liberal Democrats' coalition partner, called in June for the swift introduction of nuclear-powered submarines, and the two parties submitted proposals on the revision later that month.

The principles

The three principles were set out by Prime Minister Eisaku Sato in 1967 and endorsed by a Diet resolution in 1971. They have never been written into law. Successive governments have said they would keep them, although secret understandings with the United States about the transit of nuclear-armed vessels, acknowledged by the government in 2010, showed that the third principle had been interpreted flexibly in practice.

Ms Takaichi has long questioned whether the principle on introduction is compatible with relying on American nuclear deterrence. At the Hiroshima peace ceremony in August she said the government maintained the principles as its policy, but declined to commit to them for the future.

The submarines

Nuclear propulsion allows a submarine to stay submerged for months, limited mainly by the endurance of its crew, whereas conventional boats must surface or raise a snorkel to recharge their batteries. Supporters say that would help Japan watch the vast waters to its south and east.

The Maritime Self-Defense Force operates more than 20 submarines, all conventionally powered, and held a launch ceremony for its newest boat earlier this month. A nuclear fleet would mean a change not only of technology but of the way the force trains and maintains its crews.

Opponents raise legal, financial and political objections, among them the Atomic Energy Basic Act, which limits the use of nuclear energy to peaceful purposes, the cost of building and maintaining reactors, the need to train crews, and the reaction of neighbouring countries. Chinese state media have already criticised the debate.

What happens next

The government aims to settle the revised documents after discussions within the governing camp and with experts. Opposition parties are likely to press for clearer answers when the Diet turns to security, and the wording of any change to the non-nuclear principles will be watched closely in Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

POLITICS



Kazuo Yana in a campaign image from Tochigi Prefecture's No. 3 district. He resigned as agriculture minister on Wednesday evening after 28 days in office, hours after revising what he had told the Budget Committee about his staff's contact with the election commission over free buses for supporters. (File photo: WPM Productions)

POLITICS

Budget Committee, Day Two: A Retraction in the Morning, Submarines and Support Payments at Midday, and a Resignation by Nightfall

The last day of basic questioning in the lower house covered security, the ICC and the reporter held in Russia, but the agriculture minister's fate overshadowed everything; the tax bills now head for the floor

By the Politics Desk

The second and final day of basic questioning in the House of Representatives Budget Committee on Wednesday ranged over nuclear submarines, sanctions on the International Criminal Court and a reporter held in Russia, but it will be remembered for the minister who began it insisting he would stay and ended it out of office.

Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi told the committee that Kazuo Yana had telephoned her on Tuesday night to report on the bus arrangements. Asked whether they were legal, she said that was for the relevant authorities to judge and that she could not answer at this point, adding that Mr Yana should explain himself. She had said she would meet him after the session.

The minister's revision

Mr Yana opened the day by effectively withdrawing what he had told the committee on Tuesday. He had then said his staff confirmed with the election commission, before hiring the buses, that their cost would be recorded as part of the venue's expenses, and that they had acted on that answer.

On Wednesday he said his secretary had told him only that the staff "may have" asked the commission how to record the costs when preparing the political funds report. He did not comment on whether the arrangement was legal. Asked whether he would resign, he said he would devote all his strength to his duties.

Beyond the minister

On security, Ms Takaichi said the government would consider the introduction of nuclear-powered submarines in a concrete and realistic way, and declined to rule out a change in the wording of the three non-nuclear principles as the government revises its three main security documents. (Report on this page.)

On the economy, she said the support payment that is to accompany the cut in the consumption tax on food might cover about 20 million people, roughly 30 per cent of the working population, calling the figure a

reference based on similar systems abroad. (Report on this page.)

On the International Criminal Court, which the United States has moved to sanction as an institution, she said Japan would keep conveying its views to Washington at various levels.

The foreign minister, Toshimitsu Motegi, said Japan had asked Russia for information about the detained Hokkaido Shimbun correspondent and for humanitarian consideration and fair treatment, and called a visit to Etorofu by a delegation from China's Heilongjiang Province absolutely unacceptable. (Report on Page 1.)

The squeeze

Outside the committee room, the pressure on Mr Yana was building. The Democratic Party for the People said it would not agree to begin debate on the consumption tax bills while he remained. The Japan Innovation Party's leader said almost no one was convinced by him, and opposition parties in the House of Councillors decided to submit a censure motion.

At a meeting of the lower house steering committee's directors, the ruling parties proposed that the tax bills be taken up in a plenary session on October 20. The opposition took the proposal away for consideration. By evening Mr Yana had resigned.

What it means for the session

The end of basic questioning means the government's bills now move to the relevant standing committees. The consumption tax bills, which cut the tax on food from 8 per cent to 1 per cent for two years from April 2027, are the centrepiece. With the minister's departure, the governing parties hope the opposition will return to the tax debate, though they face fresh questions about the prime minister's responsibility for the appointment.

About 20 million people, some 30 per cent of the working population, as a reference figure.

THE PRIME MINISTER, on the ICC: Japan will keep conveying its views to the United States at various levels.

THE FOREIGN MINISTER, on the reporter: Japan has asked Russia for information, humanitarian consideration and fair treatment.

THE FOREIGN MINISTER, on Etorofu: A Chinese delegation's visit is absolutely unacceptable.

BY EVENING: The agriculture minister resigned.

POLITICS

The Resignation: What They Said

By the Data Desk

SANAE TAKAICHI, prime minister: "I am the one who made the appointment. Responsibility for appointing him rests with me."

KAZUO YANA: He could not cause any more trouble for the Diet's deliberations or for agricultural policy; the decision was his own.

YUICHIRO TAMAKI, Democratic Party for the

People: Doubts remain that political intervention could change how budgets are allocated; the government must keep explaining.

YUICHI GOTO, Democratic Reform Association: Mr Yana should resign his Diet seat over the suspected election law violations.

A SENIOR CONSTITUTIONAL DEMOCRAT: The prime minister's responsibility for the appointment is heavy.

HIROFUMI YOSHIMURA, Japan Innovation Party, before the resignation: Almost no one is convinced; Mr Yana should consider whether he is fit for the post.

JUNKO KAWAMATA, mayor of Nasukarasuyama: Doubts have not been dispelled, and this must not be the end of the matter.

THE TOWN OF NAKAGAWA: It takes the matter seriously and hopes explanations to the community continue.

NASUKARASUYAMA CITY ASSEMBLY, earlier in the day: A resolution of protest, saying the minister had caused great anxiety among residents.

MOTOHISA FURUKAWA, Democratic Party for the People, before the resignation: No debate on the consumption tax bill unless the minister resigns.

POLITICS

Not Possess, Not Produce, Not Permit: The Three Non-Nuclear Principles and the Long Argument Over the Third

Eisaku Sato's 1967 pledge helped win him a Nobel prize; the first two principles are anchored in treaty, while the third has always depended on interpretation

By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

Japan's three non-nuclear principles state that the country shall neither possess nor manufacture nuclear weapons, nor permit their introduction into its territory.

Prime Minister Eisaku Sato set them out in an address to the Diet on December 11, 1967, as Japan negotiated the return of Okinawa, then under American administration. The Diet endorsed them by resolution in 1971, and in 1974 Sato received the Nobel Peace Prize, in large part for his work towards Japan's entry into the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

The first two

The pledges not to possess or manufacture nuclear weapons are reinforced by law and treaty. Japan joined the Non-Proliferation Treaty as a non-nuclear-weapon state, and the Atomic Energy Basic Act restricts nuclear research, development and use to peaceful purposes.

The third

The pledge not to permit introduction has always been the most difficult, because Japan relies on the nuclear deterrence of the United States, whose warships and aircraft use Japanese ports and bases.

For decades the government said that the introduction of nuclear weapons would require prior consultation under the security treaty, and that since the United States had never asked, none had been brought in. In 2010, an investigation ordered by the government of the Democratic Party of Japan acknowledged that there had been tacit understandings allowing American vessels carrying nuclear weapons to call at Japanese ports.

The issue became less pressing after 1991, when the United States withdrew tactical nuclear weapons from its surface ships, but it has returned as the security environment has worsened. Some politicians have called for discussion of arrangements under which Japan would host American nuclear weapons, which would be impossible under the third principle as now worded.

Why it matters now

Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi has questioned the third principle for years and has declined, as prime minister, to commit to keeping it unchanged in the future. On Wednesday she said its wording was under consideration in the revision of the security documents.

Supporters of a change say clarity would strengthen deterrence. Opponents, including survivors of the atomic bombings, say any weakening would damage Japan's standing as the only country to have suffered nuclear attack and its voice in calling for disarmament.

POLITICS

What Nuclear-Powered Submarines Would Give Japan, and What They Would Cost: Endurance, Expense and the Law

Nuclear propulsion is not nuclear armament; the boats would carry conventional weapons, but they raise questions about fuel, crews, money and a law limited to peaceful use

By the Politics Desk

A nuclear-powered submarine is not the same as a nuclear-armed one. The proposal under discussion in Japan concerns propulsion: a small reactor on board that drives the boat and generates its electricity. The submarines would carry conventional torpedoes and missiles.

What propulsion buys

The advantage is endurance. A conventional submarine runs on batteries underwater and must come near the surface regularly to run its diesel engines and recharge, which makes it easier to detect. A nuclear submarine can stay submerged and travel at high speed for months, its limits set by food and the crew rather than fuel.

Japan's Maritime Self-Defense Force operates conventional submarines, the newest of which use lithium-ion batteries to stay submerged longer. Advocates of nuclear propulsion say that the distances involved in watching the Pacific to Japan's south and east call for boats with far greater range.

Who has them

Only a handful of countries operate nuclear-powered submarines: the United States, Russia, China, Britain, France and India. Australia agreed in 2021, under the AUKUS partnership with the United States and Britain, to acquire them, and the United States has since indicated support for South Korea building its own.

The obstacles

The costs are large. Each boat costs far more than a conventional submarine, and a nuclear fleet needs specialised shipyards, maintenance and disposal arrangements, a trained cadre of reactor operators and a regulator.

Fuel is another question. American and British submarine reactors use highly enriched uranium, which raises concerns under nuclear non-proliferation rules; France uses low-enriched fuel.

The law

In Japan, the Atomic Energy Basic Act limits the use of nuclear energy to peaceful purposes. Governments have long taken the view that nuclear propulsion could be permitted for the Self-Defense Forces only once it had become common for ships in general, an interpretation that would need to be revisited.

The politics

Public opinion in the only country to have suffered atomic bombing remains sensitive to anything nuclear in the military sphere, even propulsion. The government's answer on Wednesday, that it would consider the question concretely and realistically, suggests the idea will appear in the revised security documents in some form, but a decision to build would still be years away.

POLITICS

Support Payment to Accompany the Food Tax Cut Could Reach About 20 Million Workers, Takaichi Says, Citing Systems in America, Britain and France

The prime minister calls the figure a reference, roughly 30 per cent of the working population; the income threshold will be set by comparing tax and social security burdens abroad

By Yuki Saito | Economics & Finance Correspondent

The income-linked support payment that the government plans to introduce alongside its cut in the consumption tax on food could cover about 20 million people, roughly 30 per cent of the working population, Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi told the House of Representatives Budget Committee on Wednesday.

She described the figure as a reference rather than a target. It was calculated by looking at similar systems abroad, she said, under which about 30 per cent of workers are eligible, citing the United States, Britain and France.

How it will be designed

The income threshold for eligibility will be set with reference to international comparisons of the burden

POLITICS

of tax and social security contributions relative to income, and to other countries' systems, Jiji Press reported. The government will decide the specifics while taking account of the Diet's deliberations.

Ms Takaichi called the payment groundbreaking on Tuesday, saying it would give help finely tuned to income, in contrast with the tax cut, which lowers prices for every shopper alike.

The tax cut

The bill cuts the consumption tax on food from 8 per cent to 1 per cent for two years from April 2027. Ms Takaichi has said the cut would save about 36,000 yen a person a year, and that deficit-covering bonds would not be used to pay for it.

The ruling parties proposed on Wednesday that the lower house begin debating the tax bills in a plenary session on October 20.

Rice paddies

Separately, a senior Liberal Democrat, Hiroshi Moriyama, said details of the government's policy on rice paddies would be announced in mid-November, and that the budget for that policy would be considered separately from the tax cut measures, the Nihon Nogyo Shimbun reported. The paddy policy will be among the first tasks for the new agriculture minister.

The questions ahead

Opposition parties are expected to ask how the government will identify eligible people, how incomes will be measured for those whose earnings fluctuate, and how the payment and the tax cut together will be paid for. Systems abroad rely on accurate income data, and in Japan the My Number identification system is likely to be central to any design.

Why 30 per cent

A threshold that covers about three in ten workers would concentrate help on lower and middle earners. Critics of the food tax cut argue that it benefits high earners, who spend more on food in absolute terms, and the payment is the government's answer to that criticism.

POLITICS

How the Countries Takaichi Cited Help Low-Paid Workers: Tax Credits That Pay Out, Benefits That Top Up Wages

America's Earned Income Tax Credit, Britain's Universal Credit and France's activity bonus all target people in work on modest incomes

By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

The support payment the government is designing resembles a family of programmes common in other rich countries: help for people in work whose incomes are low, delivered through the tax system or alongside it. Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi named three countries on Wednesday.

The United States

The Earned Income Tax Credit, introduced in 1975, is one of America's largest anti-poverty programmes. Workers on low and moderate incomes subtract it from the income tax they owe, and if the credit exceeds the tax, they receive the difference as a payment. The amount rises with earnings up to a point, then tapers off, and is much larger for families with children.

Britain

Britain long used working tax credits, paid to people in low-paid work. They have been replaced by Universal Credit, a single monthly payment that combines several benefits and is reduced gradually as earnings rise, so that working more always leaves a person better off.

France

France's prime d'activite, or activity bonus, introduced in 2016, tops up the incomes of low-paid workers. It is paid monthly by the family allowance funds and is aimed at making work pay for those on modest wages.

The common idea

All three are designed to reward work rather than replace it, and all taper off as income rises. Because the benefit is linked to earnings, they require governments to know people's incomes accurately and in good time.

Japan's long debate

Japan has discussed a refundable tax credit, known as kyufu-tsuki zeigaku kojo, for well over a decade. A 2009 tax reform law listed it among measures to be considered, and parties of the left and right have proposed versions since. The obstacles have been administrative as much as political: Japan's tax system relies heavily on employers withholding tax, and many low earners do not file returns.

The My Number system, which links tax and social security records, was designed in part to make such schemes workable. The government has not yet said whether its payment will take the form of a tax credit, a cash benefit or a combination.

The scale

Ms Takaichi's reference figure of about 20 million people, some 30 per cent of the working population, is broadly in line with the share of workers covered by programmes abroad, she said. The cost will depend on where the threshold is set and how generous the payment is.

POLITICS

Chinese Carrier Liaoning Sails Between Okinawa and Miyako Into the Pacific and Launches Fighters Inside Japan's Economic Zone

The Defense Ministry reports the carrier's movements for the first time since May and June; Beijing calls it routine training under its annual plan

By the Politics Desk

The Chinese aircraft carrier Liaoning sailed south-east through the waters between Okinawa's main island and Miyako Island into the Pacific on Wednesday and then launched and recovered fighter jets inside Japan's exclusive economic zone, the Defense Ministry's Joint Staff said.

The flight operations took place about 250 kilometres south of Ishigaki Island, the ministry said. It was the first time since May and June that the ministry had published details of the carrier's movements.

The approach

At about 11 a.m. on Tuesday the Liaoning was sailing about 390 kilometres south-west of the Danjo Islands in Nagasaki Prefecture, accompanied by three guided-missile destroyers, before heading for the Pacific on Wednesday.

The Maritime Self-Defense Force sent destroyers and patrol aircraft to monitor the group, and the Air Self-Defense Force scrambled fighters in response to the carrier's aircraft.

Beijing's account

The Chinese navy said on Wednesday that the Liaoning had been sent to the western Pacific for routine training under its annual plan.

A familiar route

The passage between Okinawa and Miyako, about 300 kilometres wide, is international waters and one of the main routes by which Chinese warships reach the Pacific from the East China Sea. Japan does not dispute the right to pass through it, but monitors each transit closely.

Chinese carriers have conducted increasingly frequent operations in the Pacific in recent years, including, in 2025, the first simultaneous deployment of two carriers there. Japanese defence officials see the exercises as a sign that China is building the ability to operate far from its coast.

The wider picture

The voyage comes at a delicate time in relations between Tokyo and Beijing, which have been strained since November last year by Chinese objections to remarks by Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi about a possible Taiwan contingency. China notified the Japan Business Federation this week that it would allow a larger business delegation to visit in mid-November, a small sign of a thaw in economic contacts.

What Japan says

The Defense Ministry said it would continue to monitor the carrier group's activities closely. Officials have in the past expressed concern about flight operations near Japanese islands, citing the risk to Japanese aircraft and vessels.

ELSEWHERE IN TODAY'S PAPER

Editorial: FORTRAN at 70, Page 20.

Weather: the map and the forecast, Page 14.

Crossword, Page 18.

POLITICS

Politics in Brief: Communists Drop Opposition Cooperation, a Vice-Capital Council for Hokkaido, and a Request to US Forces

By the Politics Desk

Short reports from Nagatacho and beyond.

Communist plenum

The Japanese Communist Party's Central Committee approved on Wednesday a draft resolution and a draft revision of the party programme for its congress in January. The draft resolution omits the language of cooperation between citizens and opposition parties, citing the new alignment of parties that followed the formation and break-up of the Centrist Reform Alliance. The party's chair, Tomoko Tamura, said it aimed to win next spring's unified local elections and reverse its decline. The draft programme calls for the eventual abolition of the consumption tax and for keeping Article 9 of the Constitution.

Vice-capital council

Hokkaido Prefecture and the city of Sapporo launch a council today to seek designation of the island as a vice-capital, a centre that could take over capital functions in a major disaster. More than ten organisations, among them the associations of Hokkaido's mayors and of its towns and villages, the Hokkaido Economic Federation and the central union of the island's agricultural cooperatives, are taking part. Some fear the designation would concentrate even more people and business in Sapporo, which is why the organisers want support from across the island.

Keen Sword

The Defense Ministry has asked the commander of American forces in Japan to keep service members' outings from their bases to the minimum necessary during Keen Sword, the joint Japan-US exercise that begins on October 19, the Kyushu Defense Bureau disclosed on Wednesday. The request follows the arrest of an American service member in Okinawa on suspicion of robbery and murder.

Japan and Turkey

The Turkish-Japanese Science and Technology University, a national university established jointly by the two governments, held its opening ceremony in Ankara on Wednesday. Yasutaka Nakasone, a parliamentary vice-minister for foreign affairs, said he hoped it would be a bridge between Turkey, Japan and the world.

China and Keidanren

China has told the Japan Business Federation that it may send a larger delegation on a visit planned for mid-November, Kyodo News reported. Keidanren had planned to send about five people and now intends to send about 20, including staff from member companies. The notice came shortly after a visit to China in late September by Takeshi Iwaya, the former foreign minister, who met Vice-Premier He Lifeng and Foreign Minister Wang Yi.

INTERNATIONAL

Iran Says a Cargo Ship Sank After Hitting a Mine in the Strait of Hormuz, Its First Acknowledgment of a Sinking Since the War Began

The Revolutionary Guards say the vessel strayed from the approved route; Washington and Israel are reported to have discussed resuming large-scale strikes

By Rachel Kim | Washington-Tokyo Liaison

Iran's Revolutionary Guards said on Wednesday that a cargo ship had struck a mine and sunk in the Strait of Hormuz, the first time Iran has acknowledged the sinking of a ship there since fighting with the United States began at the end of February, according to The Associated Press.

Iranian state television said the ship had been sailing along what it called an illegal route through the strait. It also reported the Guards as saying that a container ship had hit a mine on such a route and sunk.

Reuters reported separately that a Singapore-flagged container ship had sunk near the strait after being struck by a projectile. It was not immediately clear whether the reports referred to the same vessel, or what had happened to the crew.

A claim of control

Kyodo News said Iran's statement could be intended to assert its authority over the management of the

strait at a time when talks on ending its fighting with the United States had stalled. By describing the ship's course as illegal, Iran implies that vessels must follow routes it approves.

The strait, between Iran and Oman, is the only sea passage out of the Gulf, and the route by which most of the oil exported from Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Kuwait, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates reaches world markets.

Talk of new strikes

The sinking came a day after the American news site Axios reported that President Donald Trump and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel had discussed by telephone the previous week whether to resume a large-scale joint military operation against Iran soon.

According to Axios, they discussed whether to act before the American midterm elections on November 3 or before Israel's general election on October 27. Neither government commented on the report.

Shipping on edge

Shipping companies have cut back sharply on voyages through the strait since the fighting began, and insurers have raised premiums for vessels that do make the passage. A confirmed mine strike would deepen those fears, because mines can remain dangerous long after they are laid and are slow to clear.

Japan's stake

Japan relies on the Middle East for the great majority of its crude oil imports, most of which pass through Hormuz. Officials in Tokyo will be watching closely whether mines have been laid more widely in the waterway, which would threaten every tanker bound for Japan.

INTERNATIONAL

The World in Brief: The Pope Recovers, Gaza's Toll Since the Ceasefire Tops 1,500, and a Former Spy Chief Sues Netanyahu

By the International Desk

Short reports from around the world.

The Vatican

Pope Leo XIV's recovery from surgery is going well, the Holy See press office said on Wednesday, citing his surgical team. He had keyhole surgery on Tuesday to remove the lower part of his right lung, and lung adenocarcinoma was confirmed. He ate normal meals from Wednesday morning, began walking in his hospital room, and had blood tests and a chest X-ray that showed a normal post-operative course. No date has been given for his discharge.

Gaza

Gaza's health authorities said on Wednesday that 1,501 people had been killed in the territory since the ceasefire took effect in October last year, as sporadic Israeli attacks continue. Israel's military says it has killed more than 100 Hamas fighters in the past four months. A Palestinian medical aid group said 2,027 people had died while waiting for treatment outside Gaza, and that more than 21,000 injured people were seeking evacuation. The health authorities put the toll since the war began in October 2023 at 74,392 dead.

Israel

Ronen Bar, the former head of Israel's Shin Bet domestic security agency, sued Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu for defamation in a district court on Wednesday, Israeli media reported. He says he was made to bear the blame for Hamas's attack of October 2023 and seeks damages of 3 million shekels, about 150 million yen. Israel holds a general election on October 27.

The Philippines

President Donald Trump wants to visit the Philippines during the summit of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations in Manila in mid-November, a spokesman for the presidential palace said, adding that the American side had informed Manila.

Gymnastics

The Russian Gymnastics Federation said the Netherlands, host of the world championships that serve as a qualifying event for the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics, had refused visas to three Russian women gymnasts, among them the reigning all-around champion, Angelina Melnikova. It called the move a deliberate exclusion of top athletes.

INTERNATIONAL



Smoke rises beside an airport terminal as an airliner stands at a gate, in a file image supplied for this edition. A senior Houthi figure says the group will keep attacking Saudi airports and oil facilities and will respond at once to any American intervention; Saudi Arabia says an Aramco administration building in Dhahran was hit on Tuesday.

INTERNATIONAL

Houthis Vow to Keep Striking Saudi Airports and Oil Sites and Warn Washington Against Stepping In, After Aramco Offices in Dhahran Are Hit

A senior figure in the Yemeni group tells Kyodo News it will respond immediately if America intervenes and has powerful weapons it has not yet used; Trump says the group is behaving very badly but stops short of ordering strikes

By the International Desk

The Houthis in Yemen will keep attacking Saudi Arabia's airports and oil facilities and step up their campaign gradually, a senior figure in the Iran-backed group said, as Saudi Arabia reported that an administrative building of its state oil company had been hit.

Saudi Arabia's Energy Ministry said on Wednesday that the administration building of Saudi Aramco in Dhahran, in the east of the kingdom, had been attacked on Tuesday, causing a small fire. It did not say who was responsible.

"Respond immediately"

In an interview with Kyodo News on Tuesday, Mohammed al-Bukhaiti, a senior member of the Houthi movement, said the group had already decided that it would respond immediately if the United States intervened in support of Saudi Arabia, and that American ships and other vessels could become targets of missile attacks.

He said the Houthis communicated with Washington indirectly through Oman, and had sent a message that their enemy was Saudi Arabia and that they were not targeting other forces or countries. The group had very powerful military capabilities that it had not yet used, he said, and would increase its countermeasures step by step while continuing to target Saudi airports and oil-related facilities.

Trump hesitates

President Donald Trump has said he is considering strikes on the Houthis but has remained cautious. On Tuesday he criticised the group on social media, saying it was behaving very badly, without saying whether he would order an attack.

The Houthis have attacked Riyadh's main airport and

other sites almost daily. King Khalid International Airport, about 35 kilometres north of the capital, has been closed, and the attacks on Saudi airports have killed at least 20 people. Saudi Arabia's energy minister has promised a response that would be equally serious.

Oil prices climb

The attack on Aramco's offices pushed oil higher. West Texas Intermediate crude for November delivery rose 95 cents to \$95.09 a barrel in New York on Wednesday, its fifth successive gain, as traders worried about supplies from the region.

For Japan, which imports almost all its crude oil from the Middle East, much of it from Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, the attacks add to the pressure from the conflict between the United States and Iran that began at the end of February and has disrupted shipping through the Strait of Hormuz.

A war on several fronts

The Houthis say their attacks respond to Saudi air strikes in Yemen. The group's military spokesman, Yahya Saree, claimed this month that Saudi Arabia had carried out more than 1,500 air strikes and missile attacks since the latest escalation began. The claims of both sides are difficult to verify independently.

Diplomats fear that a direct confrontation between the Houthis and the United States, on top of the Saudi-Houthi fighting and the conflict with Iran, would put the Red Sea and the Gulf's shipping lanes at even greater risk.

DATES TO WATCH: Israel's general election on October 27 and the American midterm elections on November 3.

EARLIER THIS MONTH: The Houthis claim strikes on King Khalid International Airport, an Aramco refinery at Rabigh and military sites in the south-west of the kingdom.

SAUDI ARABIA: The energy minister promises a response that would be equally serious.

INTERNATIONAL

Why a Single Mine Can Paralyse a Strait: Lessons From the Tanker War and From Japan's First Minesweeping Mission

Mines are cheap, hard to find and slow to clear; in 1988 one nearly sank an American frigate, and in 1991 Japanese minesweepers cleared dozens from the Gulf

By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

Of all the weapons that can close a sea lane, the naval mine is among the cheapest and most effective. It needs no crew, can lie in wait for months, and forces every vessel that follows to wonder whether the water ahead is safe.

The Tanker War

The Gulf has seen this before. During the war between Iran and Iraq in the 1980s, both sides attacked merchant ships in what became known as the Tanker War. In 1987 the United States began escorting Kuwaiti tankers that had been re-registered under the American flag, and in July of that year one of the first escorted tankers, the Bridgeton, struck a mine.

On April 14, 1988, the American frigate Samuel B. Roberts hit a mine in the Gulf and was nearly sunk. Four days later the United States attacked Iranian oil platforms and naval vessels in an operation called Praying Mantis, one of the largest naval engagements involving American forces since the Second World War.

Slow to clear

Clearing mines is painstaking work. Minehunters must search the seabed metre by metre with sonar and remotely operated vehicles, and every suspected object must be identified and destroyed. A small number of mines can halt traffic for weeks, because shipowners and insurers will not send vessels until the route is declared clear.

Japan's mission of 1991

Japan has its own history in these waters. After the Gulf War of 1991, the Maritime Self-Defense Force sent a flotilla of minesweepers and support ships to the Persian Gulf. It was the first time the Self-Defense Forces had been sent abroad on an operational mission, and the crews cleared 34 mines over several months.

The mission was controversial at home but came to be seen as a turning point in Japan's willingness to contribute to international security, and it is still remembered in the Gulf states.

The present danger

Iran is believed to hold a large stock of naval mines of various types, from simple moored contact mines to more sophisticated weapons triggered by a ship's magnetic or acoustic signature. Its statement on Wednesday that a ship had sunk after straying from an approved route suggests that it wants shipping to believe parts of the strait are mined.

Whether or not that is true, the effect on traffic and insurance may be similar. That is why navies regard mine clearance as one of the first tasks of any lasting settlement in the strait.

INTERNATIONAL

Ukraine Says Starlink Service Has Been Restricted, Hurting Its Drones, and Musk Says Such Limits Are Decided by the US Military and the President

Zelenskyy calls the curbs a big mistake that will cost lives as Russian missiles hit Kyiv for a second night; the White House neither confirms nor denies Musk's account

By Rachel Kim | Washington-Tokyo Liaison

Ukraine said on Wednesday that its use of Starlink, the American satellite internet service its armed forces rely on for communications, had been partly restricted, in a move its officials warned could affect the course of the fighting.

A Ukrainian military official in Kyiv told Kyodo News that the reason was unknown and that the service was closely tied to the operation of drones. An adviser to President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said service had been limited without warning overnight for terminals moving at more than 100 miles an hour, about 160 kilometres an hour, which restricted Ukraine's ability to fly drones that use the satellite link, Al Jazeera reported.

Musk's answer

Elon Musk, the chief executive of SpaceX, which operates Starlink, wrote on X that the American government and military controlled the speeds of Starshield, the company's service for government customers. "Any limits on speed or usage are decided by the US military and ultimately" the president, he wrote.

The White House neither confirmed nor denied his account, and the Pentagon did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

"A big mistake"

Mr Zelenskyy, in an interview with the British broadcaster Piers Morgan, called the restriction a big mistake that would bring a lot of human losses, and said it was painful that President Donald Trump

appeared to be choosing a side other than Ukraine's.

Serhii Beskrestnov, an adviser on defence technology, said on Telegram that Ukraine had been deprived of one of its few chances of defending itself against Shahed attack drones, and that front-line logistics and long-range missions had been disrupted. He said the timing could not be a coincidence.

Warnings withheld

The restrictions came as Russian ballistic missiles struck Kyiv for a second night, killing at least nine people. Mr Zelenskyy said Ukraine had not received its usual warnings of the attacks from Western partners for a second day, without naming them.

Reuters has reported that the United States threatened to cut off intelligence used for early warning of missile strikes unless Kyiv stopped attacking Russian oil refineries. Mr Trump said on Tuesday that the United States had not stopped sharing intelligence and that he was talking to both Russia and Ukraine about ending the war.

Reaction abroad

Senator Jeanne Shaheen, a Democrat, wrote that the restrictions must stop immediately because lives were at stake. Poland's foreign minister, Radoslaw Sikorski, whose government pays for many of Ukraine's Starlink subscriptions, asked Mr Musk whether he was playing politics with his products.

The dispute comes as Mr Trump faces criticism from within his own party over an agreement, announced after a telephone call with President Vladimir Putin on October 9, to ease sanctions on Russian diesel. Some Republican candidates in next month's midterm elections have publicly distanced themselves from the deal.

INTERNATIONAL

Starlink, Starshield and the War in Ukraine: How a Private Satellite Network Became a Weapon of War

Thousands of terminals keep Ukraine's units and drones connected; that dependence gives whoever controls the network enormous leverage

By Ethan Cole | Technology & Science Editor

Starlink is a network of thousands of small satellites in low orbit, built and operated by Elon Musk's SpaceX, that provides internet access through compact dish terminals almost anywhere on Earth.

Into the war

Within days of Russia's full-scale invasion in February 2022, Ukraine's digital minister asked Mr Musk on social media for help, and terminals soon began arriving. They became essential to the Ukrainian armed forces, providing communications where mobile networks had been destroyed or jammed.

Drones, in particular, came to depend on them. Satellite links allow operators to fly drones beyond the line of sight and far behind the front, and to relay video back to command posts.

Starshield

Starshield is SpaceX's business line for government and military customers, using Starlink technology with additional security and features. Mr Musk's statement on Wednesday that the American government and military control Starshield's speeds suggests that at least some of the service used in Ukraine is provided under arrangements with the United States government.

The restriction Ukraine described, limiting terminals moving at more than about 160 kilometres an hour, would affect aircraft and fast drones while leaving ground units largely unaffected.

Who pays

The cost of many of Ukraine's subscriptions has been met by allies. Poland says it has paid for a large number, which is why its foreign minister was among the first to protest this week.

Earlier controversies

The service has been at the centre of disputes before. In 2023 a biography of Mr Musk reported that he had declined in 2022 to enable coverage for a Ukrainian drone attack on Russian ships near Crimea, fearing escalation, a decision that drew criticism in Kyiv. In 2025 he said Starlink would never turn off Ukraine's terminals.

The lesson

The episode illustrates a dilemma faced by militaries everywhere, including Japan's. Commercial satellite

INTERNATIONAL

networks offer capabilities that would take governments years to build, but relying on them means relying on the decisions of a company, and of the government that regulates it. Japan has been examining the use of commercial satellite communications for the Self-Defense Forces and for disaster response, and the question of who controls the switch will be part of that debate.

INTERNATIONAL

China and North Korea Open the New Yalu River Bridge Today, Twelve Years After It Was Finished

The road crossing between Dandong and Sinuiju, a symbol of warming ties, follows the resumption of passenger trains and more direct flights this year

By the International Desk

China and North Korea are to open a new road bridge across the Yalu River, which forms part of their border, on Thursday, the Chinese state news agency Xinhua reported, ending a wait of about 12 years since the main structure was completed.

The two countries will hold a joint opening ceremony. Kyodo News described the opening as a symbol of the recovery in relations between Beijing and Pyongyang.

A long wait

The bridge links the Chinese city of Dandong, in Liaoning Province, with the North Korean city of Sinuiju. Its main structure was completed in the autumn of 2014, but it never opened, amid strained relations, North Korea's nuclear tests and the international sanctions that followed, and later the closure of the border during the coronavirus pandemic.

Dandong, a city of about two million people on the river's northern bank, is the largest Chinese city on the border with North Korea.

China paid for the bridge, which cost about 2.2 billion yuan.

An unusually long gap between completion and opening, Kyodo noted, reflected the ups and downs in relations between the two neighbours.

Signs of a thaw

This year international passenger train services between China and North Korea resumed after about six years, and direct flights between the two countries have increased. October 6 marked the 77th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations.

The new bridge is expected to become a major transport route, increasing the movement of people and goods. Most of North Korea's trade passes through Dandong, and the existing crossing, the Sino-Korean Friendship Bridge, completed in 1943, carries both a railway and a single lane for road traffic.

Sanctions

United Nations Security Council sanctions imposed over North Korea's nuclear and missile programmes restrict many kinds of trade with the country. China says it implements the resolutions, but Western governments and United Nations experts have repeatedly reported evasion along the border.

Why it matters to Japan

Closer ties between China and North Korea, alongside North Korea's military co-operation with Russia, complicate Japan's efforts to press Pyongyang over its missile programme and the abduction of Japanese citizens. Today marks 24 years since five abductees returned to Japan from North Korea, on October 15, 2002.

INTERNATIONAL

Germany Moves to Ban Social Media for Children Under 13, With Gradual Limits for Teenagers, as Europe Debates a Common Minimum Age

Chancellor Merz's cabinet approves a policy direction meant to bridge the gap until an EU law is passed; a digital identity app for age checks is planned for 2027

By the International Desk

The German government of Chancellor Friedrich Merz approved on Wednesday a policy direction under which children under 13 would in general be banned from using social media, Kyodo News reported from Berlin.

Mr Merz, a Christian Democrat, has led a coalition with the Social Democrats since May last year.

Services that are shown to be suitable for children would be exempt. Young people aged 13 to 17 would face restrictions that are relaxed in stages as they grow older.

Waiting for Brussels

In September the European Commission proposed legislation to protect children in digital spaces. The German measures are intended as an interim step until an EU law is passed and sets a minimum age across Europe.

The policy is based on the recommendations of an expert commission on protecting children and young people in the digital world.

Checking ages

Age limits are only as strong as the checks behind them. From 2027 the government plans to offer a digital identity app that would allow reliable age verification.

Learning about AI

The government also said children and young people needed to be able to recognise apps that use artificial intelligence and to judge their benefits and risks, and it plans an education programme to teach the basics of AI to elementary school pupils.

In Germany schools are the responsibility of the 16 federal states, so the programme will depend on their co-operation.

A global trend

Germany joins a growing number of countries restricting children's access to social media. Australia's law setting a minimum age of 16 for many platforms took effect in December last year, requiring companies to take reasonable steps to keep younger users off.

Under the Australian law, platforms that fail to take such steps face fines of up to 49.5 million Australian dollars.

Supporters of such measures cite concerns about mental health, bullying and exposure to harmful content. Critics warn that bans can push children towards less regulated corners of the internet and that age checks raise privacy questions.

Japan's approach

Japan has no legal minimum age for social media beyond the terms set by the platforms themselves, and has relied mainly on filtering services for minors and on education. The German and Australian experiments are likely to inform the debate in Tokyo as concern grows about children's use of smartphones.

INTERNATIONAL

Eight American States Sue OpenAI, Saying ChatGPT Harmed Children and That the Company Misled the Public About Its Safety

Iowa and Kansas lead the action in state courts; Iowa also asks a court to halt testing of advanced models until outsiders verify their safety

By Rachel Kim | Washington-Tokyo Liaison

Eight American states have sued OpenAI, the developer of ChatGPT, in their own courts, accusing the company of harming children and of misleading the public about the safety of its chatbot, Kyodo News reported from New York.

The states, led by Iowa and Kansas and joined by Nebraska, West Virginia, Arkansas, Arizona, Idaho and Montana, announced the lawsuits on Wednesday.

The group spans party lines: most of the eight have Republican attorneys-general, while Arizona's is a Democrat.

The allegations

They allege that ChatGPT harmed children by responding to them on the subjects of suicide and harming others, and by giving dangerous medical advice. They say OpenAI made false statements that led people to believe the chatbot was a safe tool.

The states ask the courts to declare those statements unlawful, to order the company to stop making them, and to impose civil penalties.

A halt to testing

Iowa goes further, asking its court to halt the testing of advanced AI models until a third party has verified that they are safe. Such an order, if granted, would be an unusual intervention by a state court in the development of the technology.

Earlier cases

The suits follow a lawsuit filed in June by Florida against OpenAI and its chief executive, Sam Altman, seeking damages. Florida alleges that ChatGPT gave advice to the man accused of a mass shooting in the state.

OpenAI has said in the past that it is working to improve how its systems respond to people in distress, including by directing them to sources of help and by introducing controls for parents.

The wider fight

The cases add to pressure on AI companies from state governments, which have moved to regulate the technology while Congress has not passed comprehensive legislation and President Donald Trump has opposed federal rules he sees as hampering innovation.

Why it matters beyond America

Chatbots are used by millions of young people around the world, including in Japan. How American courts judge the companies' responsibility for what their products tell children could shape safeguards far beyond the United States.

ECONOMY

American Inflation Quickens to 3.7 Per Cent on Fuel, Beating Forecasts and Reviving Bets on a Rate Rise; Nasdaq Falls 512 Points

Energy prices are up 20.4 per cent from a year earlier as the conflict with Iran keeps oil high; chip stocks lead the decline while health care gains, and the yen briefly weakens towards 159

By Yuki Saito | Economics & Finance Correspondent

Consumer prices in the United States rose 3.7 per cent in September from a year earlier, faster than economists had expected, the Labor Department said on Wednesday, as high fuel costs linked to the conflict with Iran continued to feed through.

The rate was up from 3.4 per cent in August and above the market forecast of 3.6 per cent. It was the first time in four months that the annual rate of increase had accelerated, Kyodo News reported.

Fuel leads

Energy prices were 20.4 per cent higher than a year earlier, reflecting oil prices that have stayed high with no end in sight to the fighting between the United States and Iran that began in February. Food prices rose 2.5 per cent.

Core prices, which exclude volatile food and energy, rose 2.6 per cent, up from 2.4 per cent in August. Compared with the previous month, the overall index rose 0.6 per cent and the core index 0.3 per cent.

Wall Street

The figures revived expectations that the Federal Reserve could raise interest rates again soon, and shares fell. The Dow Jones Industrial Average slipped 48.62 points to 51,621.48, its second daily loss, while the broader S&P 500 dropped 86.51 points, or 1.11 per cent, to 7,718.94.

The technology-heavy Nasdaq Composite fell 511.51 points, or 1.88 per cent, to 26,692.87, its third successive decline, and the Philadelphia Semiconductor Index lost 4.3 per cent. Nvidia fell 3.2 per cent, Advanced Micro Devices 5.7 per cent and Micron Technology 4.1 per cent. Goldman Sachs also fell, Kyodo said, while UnitedHealth Group rose and health care was the strongest sector.

Bank of America fell after federal regulators fined it more than \$1.2 billion over failures in its controls against money laundering and its third-quarter profit disappointed, according to market reports.

Yields and the yen

The yield on ten-year Treasury notes jumped to about 5.3 per cent after the release before easing. In currency markets the dollar briefly rose to 158.95 yen, its highest since September 25, as traders expected the gap between American and Japanese interest rates to widen. The yen recovered later as long-term yields fell back, ending at 158.26 to 158.36 in New York, a little stronger than the day before.

Gold for December delivery fell \$69.40 to \$4,107.90 an ounce, as the prospect of higher American rates and a firmer dollar weighed on the metal. Oil rose for a fifth day.

What comes next

Figures on American retail sales and producer prices for September are due tonight, Japan time, and will be studied for signs of whether high fuel costs are beginning to weigh on consumer spending. The

Federal Reserve's next policy decision is due on October 28. John Williams, president of the Federal Reserve Bank of New York, said on Tuesday that one more increase in interest rates this year would be appropriate.

Mortgage applications fell 2.7 per cent in the latest week, separate data released on Wednesday showed.

Why it matters for Japan

Faster American inflation makes the Federal Reserve more likely to keep rates high or raise them, which tends to weaken the yen against the dollar. A weaker yen raises the cost of Japan's imports of energy and food, and complicates the Bank of Japan's own decisions. Markets widely expect the central bank to leave its policy rate unchanged at its meeting at the end of the month.

ECONOMY

GlobalFoundries to Build a Chip Plant in New York With Japanese Partners for Up to \$21 Billion, Expected to Be the Third Project Under the Tariff Deal

Output is to go to Renesas Electronics and Tokyo Electron is to supply the equipment; Trump hails the investment as rebuilding America's industrial base

By Yuki Saito | Economics & Finance Correspondent

GlobalFoundries, the American contract chipmaker, said on Wednesday that it would build a new semiconductor plant in New York State in partnership with Japanese companies, at a cost of up to about \$21 billion, or about 3.32 trillion yen, Kyodo News reported.

The project forms part of the investment and lending in the United States that Japan promised in last year's tariff negotiations, and is expected to be the third project under that framework.

Who does what

The plant will make chips for cars, industrial equipment and telecommunications infrastructure, and its output will go to Renesas Electronics, the Japanese chipmaker. Tokyo Electron, the country's largest maker of chip-making equipment, will supply the production machinery.

GlobalFoundries already runs a large factory in Malta, in New York State. Renesas, based in Tokyo, is one of the world's biggest suppliers of microcontrollers for cars, and Tokyo Electron's shares were among the chip stocks that turned lower in Tokyo on Wednesday afternoon, before the plan was announced.

The rationale

The production of advanced chips is concentrated in Taiwan and South Korea. The project is intended to strengthen supply chains between Japan and the United States and to prepare for geopolitical risks such as a contingency over Taiwan.

Kyodo noted another reason. During the Kumamoto earthquake in July, some semiconductor plants in Kyushu, where many of Japan's chip factories are concentrated, stopped operating. Spreading production across countries reduces the risk that a single disaster can halt supplies.

Trump's verdict

President Donald Trump highlighted the plant on social media, saying it would revive America's industrial base and create jobs: 27,000 in construction and supply chains, he said, and more than 1,000 in advanced manufacturing. He presented it as the fruit of the historic agreement he had led with Japan, and said investments from Japan, South Korea and Taiwan were boosting chip production, energy security and employment.

Mr Trump has often cited foreign investment at rallies ahead of the midterm elections in November.

The bigger promise

Under the agreement reached in July last year, Japan committed to \$550 billion, about 87 trillion yen, of investment and financing in the United States in exchange for lower American tariffs on Japanese goods. Two batches of projects have been announced so far.

For Renesas, a long-term source of chips made in America could help it serve customers there and diversify its supply. For Tokyo Electron, the plant adds to orders for equipment at a time when investors have been nervous about the outlook for chip stocks.

ECONOMY



The Tokyo Stock Exchange at Kabutocho. The Nikkei average rose more than 630 yen on Wednesday morning before chip stocks turned lower after ASML's results, and closed 33.23 yen down at 67,744.29, its fifth straight fall; in New York the Nasdaq lost 511.51 points after hotter-than-expected inflation data. (Photo: TG2 (CC))

ECONOMY

Nikkei Gives Up a 630-Yen Morning Rally and Slips 33 Yen for a Fifth Straight Loss as ASML Results Weigh on Chip Stocks

Bargain-hunting lifts the average above 68,400 before chip-related shares turn lower in the afternoon; trading is cautious ahead of American inflation data, and the ten-year JGB yield holds at 3.000 per cent

By Yuki Saito | Economics & Finance Correspondent

The Nikkei Stock Average edged lower on Wednesday for its fifth losing session in a row, after a strong morning rally led by semiconductor shares faded in the afternoon.

The 225-issue average closed at 67,744.29, down 33.23 yen, or 0.05 per cent. The broader TOPIX index fell 13.89 points to 4,096.78.

Up 630, then down

The average opened with a gain of more than 100 yen as investors bought back shares that had fallen sharply over the previous four sessions, including Tuesday's drop of 1,253 yen. Semiconductor stocks led the advance, and at one point the average was up more than 630 yen, trading in the 68,400s. It ended the morning session 415 yen higher at 68,193.

The mood turned in the afternoon after the quarterly results of ASML, the Dutch maker of chip-making equipment, weighed on related stocks. Shares in AI and semiconductor companies such as Advantest, Tokyo Electron and Lasertec reversed lower, the Nihon Keizai Shimbun reported, and at one point the average was more than 200 yen below Tuesday's close, in the 67,500s.

Many investors were also unwilling to take big positions ahead of the American consumer price data for September, due that evening, Japan time.

Winners and losers

Oil and coal products, other products and non-ferrous metals were among the best-performing sectors, while banks, securities companies and precision instruments were among the weakest. Trading on the Prime market was worth about 7.45 trillion yen, and

about 2.19 billion shares changed hands.

Among individual stocks, FIG, a maker of robots and automation equipment, rose by its daily limit after announcing a mobile manipulator robot developed for semiconductor makers. Daikokutenbussan, a discount retailer, plunged after reporting a sharp fall in profit for its first quarter.

Bonds and the yen

Government bond futures for December delivery rose 0.06 to 124.99 after an auction of five-year bonds drew solid demand, having fallen early on concern that higher oil prices would push up inflation in Japan. The yield on the newly issued ten-year bond was unchanged at 3.000 per cent.

The yen was little changed at around 158.3 to the dollar in Tokyo trading. The Bank of Japan reported that the money stock, as measured by M2, was 2.0 per cent higher in September than a year earlier, the same pace as in August.

What came next

The American data, released that night, showed consumer prices rising faster than expected, and technology shares fell in New York, with the Philadelphia Semiconductor Index down more than 4 per cent. That points to another difficult start for chip stocks in Tokyo today. (Report on this page.)

In the two sessions since the Sports Day holiday, the average has lost a combined 1,286.63 yen.

ECONOMY

Markets at a Glance

By the Markets Desk

NIKKEI 225 (Wednesday): 67,744.29, down 33.23 (0.05 per cent); fifth straight fall.

TOPIX (Wednesday): 4,096.78, down 13.89.

PRIME MARKET TURNOVER: About 7.45 trillion yen.

DOW JONES (Wednesday): 51,621.48, down 48.62.

S&P 500 (Wednesday): 7,718.94, down 86.51 (1.11 per cent).

NASDAQ (Wednesday): 26,692.87, down 511.51 (1.88 per cent); third straight fall.

PHILADELPHIA SEMICONDUCTOR INDEX: Down 4.3 per cent.

YEN: 158.26 to 158.36 per dollar in New York at 5 p.m., after weakening to nearly 159.

EURO: 176.59 to 176.69 yen; \$1.1152 to \$1.1162.

TEN-YEAR JGB: 3.000 per cent, unchanged.

WTI CRUDE, NOVEMBER: \$95.09 a barrel, up 95 cents; fifth straight rise.

GOLD, DECEMBER: \$4,107.90 an ounce, down \$69.40.

ELSEWHERE IN TODAY'S PAPER

Editorial: FORTRAN at 70, Page 20.

Weather: the map and the forecast, Page 14.

ECONOMY

The American Inflation Report at a Glance

By the Data Desk

HEADLINE INFLATION, SEPTEMBER: 3.7 per cent from a year earlier.

AUGUST: 3.4 per cent.

MARKET FORECAST: 3.6 per cent.

ON THE MONTH: Up 0.6 per cent, after 0.4 per cent in August.

CORE, EXCLUDING FOOD AND ENERGY: 2.6 per cent, from 2.4 per cent; up 0.3 per cent on the month.

ENERGY: Up 20.4 per cent from a year earlier.

FOOD: Up 2.5 per cent.

THE TREND: The first acceleration in the annual rate for four months.

THE MARKET REACTION: The ten-year Treasury yield briefly about 5.3 per cent; the dollar near 159 yen; Nasdaq down 1.88 per cent.

NEXT: American retail sales for September, due tonight at 9:30 p.m. Japan time.

ELSEWHERE IN TODAY'S PAPER

Typhoon No. 30 ahead, Page 3.

Budget Committee, day two, Page 5.

Nuclear submarines, Page 4.

ECONOMY

Why a Price Report in Washington Moves the Yen in Tokyo: Interest Rate Gaps, Expectations and the Cost of Imports

Currency traders care less about today's rates than about where they are heading; American inflation data reshape those expectations within seconds

By the Markets Desk

At 9:30 p.m. Japan time on Wednesday, the United States released its consumer price data for September. Within minutes the yen had weakened by nearly half a yen against the dollar. The speed of the reaction says something about how the currency is priced.

The rate gap

Investors compare what they can earn on money held in different currencies. American ten-year government bonds yield around 5 per cent; Japanese ten-year bonds about 3 per cent. The wider that gap, the more attractive it is to hold dollars rather than yen, other things being equal.

Expectations rule

Markets move on expectations of where rates are going, not only on where they are. A higher-than-expected inflation figure makes it more likely that the Federal Reserve will raise its rate, or keep it high for longer. Traders adjust their bets at once, and the dollar rises against currencies whose central banks are expected to move more slowly.

That is what happened on Wednesday. The September figure of 3.7 per cent beat forecasts, the ten-year Treasury yield jumped, and the dollar rose to nearly 159 yen before falling back as yields eased.

The Japanese side

The Bank of Japan has raised its own rate to 1.25 per cent, but the gap with the United States remains wide. Each time American data surprise on the upside, the gap that markets expect to persist widens too.

Why it matters at home

A weaker yen raises the price in yen of everything Japan buys from abroad, from oil and gas to wheat and animal feed, and that feeds through to household bills. It helps exporters, whose overseas earnings are worth more when converted into yen, and lifts the profits of companies with large foreign operations.

The limits

Interest rates are not the only influence. The yen has at times strengthened in moments of global stress, when investors seek safety, and the Ministry of Finance has intervened in the market when it judged moves to be excessive. Comments by officials, trade flows and the price of oil all play a part.

For now, with American inflation quickening and oil above \$95 a barrel, the pressure on the yen is more likely to come from Washington than from Tokyo.

ECONOMY

The \$550 Billion Promise: How Japan's Investment Pledge to America Works, and Why It Is Turning Into Chip Plants

The money flows through government-backed lenders into projects chosen in Washington; the terms were the price of lower tariffs on Japanese cars and other goods

By Rachel Kim | Washington-Tokyo Liaison

The chip plant announced in New York on Wednesday is the latest product of an agreement reached in July last year between Japan and the United States, after months of negotiation over President Donald Trump's tariffs.

The bargain

In exchange for tariffs of 15 per cent on most Japanese goods, including cars, lower than the rates Mr Trump had threatened, Japan committed to \$550 billion of investment and financing in the United States. At current exchange rates that is about 87 trillion yen, a sum larger than a year's revenue of Japan's central government from taxes.

How it works

The money does not come from the government's budget directly. It is provided mainly through government-backed institutions such as the Japan Bank for International Cooperation and Nippon Export and Investment Insurance, which lend to or insure the projects, often alongside Japanese companies.

Under a memorandum signed in September last year, projects are selected by the American side, and Japan

provides the funds. Cash flows from the projects are shared equally until Japan has recovered its investment, after which most of the returns go to the United States, an arrangement critics in Japan called lopsided.

The projects

Two batches of projects have been announced so far, and the GlobalFoundries plant is expected to be the third. The emphasis on semiconductors, energy and infrastructure reflects both American priorities and areas in which Japanese companies have expertise.

The case for

Supporters argue that the investments give Japanese companies a stake in America's industrial revival and strengthen supply chains for strategic goods such as chips, while avoiding a damaging trade war.

The doubts

Critics in Japan worry that the terms leave risks with Japanese taxpayers and companies while handing most of the rewards to the United States, and that projects chosen in Washington may not be the best use of Japanese capital. Economists also note that the jobs Mr Trump promises will be created in America, not Japan.

What to watch

The pace at which projects are announced, and whether they earn returns, will determine whether the agreement is remembered as a shrewd bargain or a costly concession. With the American midterm elections three weeks away, Mr Trump is likely to keep highlighting each new plant.

ECONOMY

China's Exports Jump 36 Per Cent in September for an 11th Monthly Rise, While Consumer Prices Creep Up Just 0.9 Per Cent

The trade surplus widens to \$133.5 billion; factory-gate prices rise 5.0 per cent, the fastest pace in the current run

By Yuki Saito | Economics & Finance Correspondent

China's exports rose 36.3 per cent in September from a year earlier to \$447.1 billion, about 70 trillion yen, the General Administration of Customs said on Wednesday, the 11th consecutive monthly increase.

Imports rose 31.0 per cent to \$313.6 billion, leaving a trade surplus of \$133.5 billion, up from \$119.0 billion in August, Kyodo News reported from Beijing.

A huge surplus

The surplus for the first nine months of the year reached \$938.1 billion. China's annual trade surplus exceeded \$1 trillion for the first time in 2025, and this year's figure is on course to be larger.

The scale of China's surplus has become a source of friction with its trading partners, many of whom complain that cheap Chinese goods, from steel to electric vehicles, are undercutting their industries.

Prices at home

Separate figures from the National Bureau of Statistics showed consumer prices rising 0.9 per cent in September from a year earlier, the 12th month in a row of increases. The rate was 0.1 percentage point higher than in August, but inflation remains low.

The producer price index, which measures prices at the factory gate, rose 5.0 per cent, its seventh month of increases, and the pace quickened by 1.2 percentage points from August.

What the numbers suggest

Rising factory-gate prices alongside subdued consumer prices suggest that higher costs for energy and raw materials are squeezing manufacturers' margins, while household demand remains weak. Strong exports have helped offset that weakness.

Japan's stake

China is one of Japan's largest trading partners. Robust Chinese demand for imports helps Japanese exporters of machinery and components, while competition from Chinese exporters affects Japanese companies in third markets. Relations between the two governments have been strained since November last year, though business contacts are showing signs of reviving.

ELSEWHERE IN TODAY'S PAPER

Disaster mail hacked, Page 10.

Self-copying AI warning, Page 10.

DeNA 2, Hanshin 0, Page 17.

Editorial: FORTRAN at 70, Page 20.

BUSINESS

BUSINESS

Oriental Land Names Japan's First Disney Cruise Ship the Disney Imagination, a 140,000-Ton Liner Due to Sail From Tokyo in Spring 2029

The 330 billion yen ship will have 1,250 cabins and room for up to about 4,000 passengers; Ariel from The Little Mermaid will adorn the stern
By the Business Desk

Oriental Land, the operator of Tokyo Disney Resort, announced on Wednesday that its first cruise ship will be called the Disney Imagination, and that it will begin sailing in the spring of 2029.

The ship, about 340 metres long and of about 140,000 tons, will have 1,250 cabins and be able to carry up to about 4,000 passengers, Jiji Press reported. Construction and related costs are about 330 billion yen.

The ceremony

The name was revealed at a ceremony in Tokyo attended by Yumiko Takano, Oriental Land's chairperson and chief executive, and executives of The Walt Disney Company. Ms Takano said the company aimed to create a new style of family entertainment cruise that would welcome everyone from children to the elderly and make every guest feel part of the story.

The ship will carry a figure of Ariel, the heroine of The Little Mermaid, on its stern, chosen to reflect its theme of imagination, according to Cruise Industry News.

The ship

The vessel is being built by Meyer Werft in Papenburg, Germany, and is based on the design of Disney's Wish class, the newest ships operated by Disney Cruise Line. It will sail itineraries from Tokyo, operated by Oriental Land's cruise subsidiary under licence from Disney. Reservations are expected to open about six months before service begins.

Why a cruise

Oriental Land, whose parks in Urayasu attract tens of millions of visitors a year, sees cruises as a way to grow beyond the limits of its land in Chiba Prefecture, and to offer families who already know the parks a new way to spend several days with the same characters.

Japan's cruise market is small compared with those of the United States and Europe. Supporters of the project say a ship of this size, built around famous characters, could help expand cruising in Japan as a whole.

The risks

The investment is large, and the cruise business depends on fuel costs, port capacity and demand that has yet to be tested in Japan on this scale. With the first sailing more than two years away, the company has time to set prices and itineraries, which it has said will be announced later.

BUSINESS

Business in Brief: Saizeriya Raises Prices, Yoshimoto Teams Up With SBI, World and TSI to Merge, and a Record Year for Hokkaido's Horse Sales

By the Business Desk

Short reports from the business world.

Saizeriya

Saizeriya, the Italian restaurant chain, will raise prices across its menu by an average of 6 per cent from October 29, citing soaring costs of ingredients and energy. Its signature Milanese-style doria will rise from 300 yen to 320 yen, and dishes priced at 400 yen will go up to 420 or 430 yen. Lunch and breakfast menus and its house wine keep their prices, and beer will be cut from 400 yen to 390 yen to compete with rival chains.

Yoshimoto and SBI

Yoshimoto Kogyo Holdings, the entertainment company, and the financial group SBI Holdings agreed to form a business alliance covering the planning and development of content and expansion overseas. They will set up a joint venture to use Yoshimoto's intellectual property for global markets, and Yoshimoto will invest in an entertainment-focused fund of about 100 billion yen that SBI is preparing.

World and TSI

The apparel makers World and TSI Holdings announced that they would integrate their management under a joint holding company.

Netflix

Netflix plans to cut about 1,000 jobs worldwide, about 6 per cent of its workforce and its largest reduction since 2022, The Wall Street Journal reported. Most of the cuts will fall in product and technology, legal and human resources. The company reports results on October 20.

Hokkaido horses

Thoroughbred auctions held in Hokkaido this year raised a record of about 19.09 billion yen, 3.41 per cent more than last year, the Hidaka Thoroughbred Breeders' Association said after the final sale ended in Shinhidaka on Wednesday. It was the first record for two years.

Nagasaki's stadium

Nagasaki Stadium City, the privately built and run complex developed by the mail-order company Japanet Holdings for about 100 billion yen, marked two years since opening on Wednesday. Visitors this year are projected at 5.35 million, up 14 per cent. Its hotel is 70 per cent occupied and its offices are almost full, but profitability remains a challenge, Kyodo News said.

TECHNOLOGY

Hack at a Disaster-Alert Mail Provider Hits 110 Local Governments; Up to 3.1 Million Residents' Addresses May Have Leaked

Many towns suspend the email warnings residents signed up for; the company finds signs of intrusion into a separate service for fire brigades, and the national fire agency tells municipalities to make sure they have other ways to warn people
By Ethan Cole | Technology & Science Editor

A cyberattack on a company that sends disaster warnings by email on behalf of local governments has affected 110 prefectures and municipalities, the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications said on Wednesday, forcing many to suspend the alerts residents rely on in emergencies.

The ministry said that, as of 5 p.m., 110 local governments had reported a possible leak of information or the suspension of their disaster email service following unauthorised access to the systems of Arcadia, a company based in Minoh, Osaka Prefecture. It did not name them, and asked the company for a report on the damage.

Nippon Television reported that the ministry's tally covered six prefectures and 104 cities, towns and villages, plus one association of municipalities, and that 46 local governments had halted their mail distribution. In the morning, Kyodo News had counted 36.

Millions of addresses

Arcadia said the email addresses of up to about 3.136 million registered residents might have leaked. It has not yet set a date for restoring the service.

The company also found signs of unauthorised access to a separate system that sends fire and disaster information to fire departments, members of volunteer fire brigades and news organisations across the country, and said personal data in that system might also have leaked. It is considering filing a complaint with the Osaka Prefectural Police.

Towns tell residents

Many local governments, including the city of Yokote in Akita Prefecture, the city of Okayama and Oita Prefecture, have told residents that their addresses may have been exposed. In Hokkaido, the Iwamizawa fire defence association, which covers the city of Iwamizawa and the town of Tsukigata, said 284 records might have leaked, the Hokkaido Shimbun reported. The town of Yorii in Saitama Prefecture said the addresses of about 2,900 people might have been affected, according to the Yomiuri Shimbun.

Other ways to warn

The Fire and Disaster Management Agency asked every municipality on Wednesday to make sure it had other means of passing information to residents in a disaster. Emergency alerts broadcast to all mobile phones in an area, sirens and loudspeakers, television and radio are not affected.

For residents, the immediate risk is that their

addresses could be used for phishing. Officials advise caution with any email claiming to come from a local government or disaster service, especially one that asks recipients to click a link or enter personal details.

A season of attacks

The attack is the latest in a series of incidents that have exposed how much of Japan's public and corporate infrastructure depends on a handful of outside providers. Earlier this month a ransomware attack on IDC Frontier, a cloud provider owned by SoftBank, disrupted services for hundreds of companies and public bodies. IDC Frontier said on Wednesday that its investigation with outside experts had found no sign that data had been taken out, and that some data it had considered difficult to restore could be partly recovered.

Experts say the pattern shows the risk of concentrating many customers' systems with a single provider: one breach can spread to hundreds of organisations at once. The disaster email case is particularly sensitive because the service exists for the moments when people most need reliable information.

TECHNOLOGY

How Disaster Warnings Reach You: Why the Mail You Signed Up For Is Only One of Several Channels

Area-wide emergency alerts, the J-Alert system, broadcasts and loudspeakers work independently of the registered email services hit by the attack
By the Technology Desk

The cyberattack on a disaster email provider has left many residents wondering whether they will still be warned of an earthquake, a typhoon or a missile. The answer is yes: the service that has been suspended is one of several layers.

Registered email

Many prefectures and municipalities run services to which residents can subscribe, giving an email address to receive warnings, evacuation information and other notices. These are the services provided by companies such as the one attacked, and they depend on stored lists of addresses, which is why a breach can expose personal data.

Area-wide alerts

Emergency alerts sent through the mobile phone networks are different. They are broadcast to every compatible phone in an area, without any need to register, and they hold no personal data. Earthquake early warnings, tsunami warnings, evacuation orders and missile alerts are distributed this way, usually with a distinctive alarm.

J-Alert

The national instantaneous warning system, known as J-Alert, is run by the Fire and Disaster Management Agency. It transmits warnings from the government via satellite and terrestrial lines to municipalities, which can automatically sound outdoor loudspeakers and trigger alerts. It has been in operation since 2007.

Broadcast and local channels

Television and radio carry warnings and evacuation information, and NHK and commercial broadcasters interrupt programmes when needed. Many towns also use community radio, outdoor loudspeakers and vehicles with loudspeakers, as well as their websites and social media accounts.

Apps

Smartphone apps from the government, broadcasters and private weather services can also deliver alerts. Some local governments have their own apps that duplicate the email service.

What to do now

Residents whose local service has been suspended should make sure the emergency alert setting on their phones is switched on, check their local government's website or social media for updates, and know where their nearest evacuation site is. The suspension does not affect the most urgent warnings, but the registered services often carry useful detail, such as which shelters are open, that residents will now need to find elsewhere.

ELSEWHERE IN TODAY'S PAPER

DeNA 2, Hanshin 0, Page 17.

Editorial: FORTRAN at 70, Page 20.

Weather: the map and the forecast, Page 14.

Crossword, Page 18.

TECHNOLOGY

Small AI Models May Be Months From Copying Themselves Across Poorly Secured Home Devices, Anthropic Researchers Warn

In tests on cheap TV boxes and a network of virtual devices, one model spread to all eight machines; the company says no fully self-replicating AI exists yet, but urges makers to harden their gadgets now. Some experts call the warning overstated
By Ethan Cole | Technology & Science Editor

Small artificial intelligence models could within months become capable of copying themselves and spreading across internet-connected household devices such as smart ovens and cheap television boxes, much as a computer virus does, researchers at the AI company Anthropic warned this week.

In a report published on Monday, American time, the company's researchers said their experiments suggested that "small AI models may be months away" from that ability. A replicator of this kind would be hard to shut down, they wrote, because "there's no centralized point to shut off".

The warning drew wide attention in Japan, where the Yomiuri Shimbun and the Nihon Keizai Shimbun were among the papers to report it.

Three experiments

According to accounts of the report by the Korean broadcaster SBS and American media, the researchers bought 15 inexpensive television boxes for about \$55 each, connected them, and showed that a small open model from Google could run on them, though slowly.

In a second test, a model with about 9 billion parameters succeeded in installing and running another AI model on an unfamiliar device in eight of nine attempts.

In the third, the researchers built a test network of eight virtual devices with deliberately weak security, planted an AI on one of them and asked it to find, install and run AI on the others. Only one model succeeded, GLM-5.2, made by the Chinese company Zhipu AI. It spread to all eight devices in four of five rounds and to seven in the remaining one. Because the model is large, it took its instructions from an external server rather than running entirely on the devices.

Not yet, but soon

The researchers stressed that a fully self-replicating AI does not yet exist and that any such spread would be slow. But on current trends, they said, small models could reach the level of the Chinese model by the end of this year and replicate directly on devices. They described a realistic worst case as a swarm of different models on different types of hardware using a variety of replication schemes, likening such systems to a kind of digital slime mould, according to CBS News.

They noted that more home and business devices now contain chips designed for AI, which would make them more attractive targets. Their advice was to harden systems so that replicators find it difficult to spread, and to prepare for a world in which such programmes, once released, persist.

Sceptics

Not everyone was alarmed. Ciaran Martin, the former head of Britain's National Cyber Security Centre, told Reuters that succeeding in running a small model on a cheap TV did not constitute a security crisis, calling the report an interesting technical paper mixed with no small amount of vendor hype. Jessica Ji of Georgetown University's Center for Security and Emerging Technology said it was not yet known how likely such a thing was: the chance was not zero, but not certain either.

The lesson for device makers

Whatever the timeline, the weaknesses the experiments exploited are familiar ones: devices sold with weak security, rarely updated and connected to the internet for years. Japan introduced a security labelling scheme for internet-connected products last year, and the case for buying labelled devices, changing default passwords and installing updates has only grown stronger.

ELSEWHERE IN TODAY'S PAPER

Crossword, Page 18.

Typhoon No. 30 ahead, Page 3.

Budget Committee, day two, Page 5.

Nuclear submarines, Page 4.

TECHNOLOGY

TECHNOLOGY

From the Morris Worm to Mirai: Self-Copying Programs Are as Old as the Internet, and Home Gadgets Have Been Their Favourite Prey

A 1988 experiment that went wrong and a 2016 botnet built from cameras and routers show why researchers worry about software that can think as well as copy

By Maya Suzuki | Science & Innovation Desk

The idea of a program that copies itself from one computer to the next is not new. What worries researchers now is the prospect of combining that ability with the problem-solving of modern AI.

The Morris worm

On November 2, 1988, a graduate student at Cornell University, Robert Tappan Morris, released a program onto the early internet that was meant to spread quietly. Because of a flaw in its design, it copied itself far more aggressively than intended and slowed thousands of computers to a crawl, by some estimates around a tenth of the machines then connected.

Mr Morris became the first person convicted under America's Computer Fraud and Abuse Act. The episode led to the creation of the first computer emergency response team, a model later copied around the world, including in Japan.

Mirai

In 2016, a program called Mirai showed what could be done with ordinary household devices. It scanned the internet for cameras, video recorders and routers still using their factory-set passwords, took them over and harnessed them into a botnet, a network of hijacked machines.

In October 2016 the botnet was used in an attack on Dyn, a company that helps direct internet traffic, temporarily disrupting access to major websites in the United States and Europe. Its code was later published, and variants continue to circulate.

The difference with AI

Worms like Morris and Mirai follow fixed instructions: they exploit known weaknesses and fail when they meet a defence they were not programmed for. An AI agent could, in principle, adapt, finding new ways onto devices and choosing how to hide. That is the scenario Anthropic's researchers say may be approaching.

Japan's defences

Japan has tried to clean up its own devices. Since 2019, the National Institute of Information and Communications Technology has run a project known as NOTICE, which checks devices on Japanese networks for weak passwords and alerts their owners through their internet providers.

In 2025 the Information-technology Promotion Agency began a labelling scheme, JC-STAR, under which makers can certify that internet-connected products meet security standards. The scheme is voluntary, but government bodies have been encouraged to buy labelled products.

The simple steps

The best protections are old ones: change default passwords, apply updates, and switch off devices or features that are not needed. A gadget that cannot be updated is a gadget that will eventually be someone else's.

TECHNOLOGY

Police and Microsoft Take Down a Seller of Phishing Tools Behind About Half of the Fake Sites Imitating Japanese Companies

The operation seizes 34 domains; the seller's kits were used to send more than 100 million fake emails aimed at Japan since May, Microsoft says

By the Technology Desk

The National Police Agency and Microsoft said on Wednesday that they had taken down the operation of a seller of systems used to send phishing emails, which lure recipients to fake websites designed to steal credit card numbers and other information.

The police agency confirmed about 120,000 fake websites imitating Japanese companies in 2025, and the seller's systems were used to create about half of them, Kyodo News reported.

According to Microsoft's analysis, the system had been used since May to send more than 100 million fake emails targeting Japan.

A year of work

From October last year, the police agency, Microsoft and the Japan Cybercrime Control Center, a non-profit foundation, worked together to identify the seller. This month 34 internet domains associated with the operation were placed under Microsoft's control, a step that cuts off the infrastructure the seller's customers relied on.

What was on sale

The seller offered several products. One, called Yam Store, sold cloud service accounts that had been obtained illegally. Two others, known as Kogui and Iron Man, were kits for building fake sites that imitated financial and medical institutions, allowing criminals with little technical knowledge to set up convincing scams.

Where the emails come from

Over the past year, the police agency's analysis of phishing emails estimated that China was the most common presumed country of origin, accounting for 45 per cent.

Why it matters

Phishing has become one of the most common forms of cybercrime in Japan, and losses from the unauthorised use of stolen card details and from illegal bank transfers have risen sharply in recent years. Taking down a widely used toolkit can reduce the volume of attacks for a time, though experts warn that criminals often move to new services.

Protecting yourself

The police advise against clicking links in emails or text messages that claim to come from banks, card companies, delivery firms or government bodies, and recommend going directly to an official website or app instead. Emails exploiting the news, such as messages claiming to be from a disaster alert service after this week's breach, are a common tactic.

TECHNOLOGY

A Robot Inspects Seibu's Substations and Driverless Buses Edge Closer as 'Physical AI' Moves From Exhibition Halls Into Daily Operations

The railway tests a remote-controlled inspector that reads meters by itself; Isuzu and Tier IV aim for a Level 4 electric bus in fiscal 2027, while carmakers warn that no defence against hacking is perfect

By Maya Suzuki | Science & Innovation Desk

Seibu Railway showed reporters in Tokyo on Wednesday a robot that inspects electrical substations by itself, one of several demonstrations this week of what the industry calls physical AI, artificial intelligence that drives machines in the real world.

The inspector

The robot can be operated remotely and extends from 60 centimetres to 180 centimetres in height. A camera captures a full 360-degree view, and its AI reads the meters on substation control panels. It moves on its own and has a display that shows facial expressions and messages to alert workers nearby.

Seibu runs 34 substations along its Ikebukuro and Shinjuku lines, and staff travelling from their office to a substation can take up to about an hour and a half. Keeping a robot at each site would allow routine inspections and quick checks when problems arise, and storing video and temperature data over time would allow repairs based on the actual condition of the equipment, the company said.

A Seibu official said the trial would help work out how to divide roles between people and robots, as the railway prepares for a shortage of workers.

Driverless buses

At Japan Mobility Show Bizweek 2026, a trade show for businesses organised by the Japan Automobile Manufacturers Association that opened on Tuesday, carmakers displayed their latest self-driving technology.

Isuzu Motors showed an electric bus fitted with an autonomous driving system developed with Tier IV, aiming for Level 4 operation, in which no driver is needed under specified conditions, in fiscal 2027. Subaru exhibited infrastructure-co-operative driving, in which vehicles communicate with equipment along the road to improve safety, and showed a test vehicle.

A warning on security

The industry is increasingly worried that AI could be used in cyberattacks on connected cars. "There is no such thing as a perfect guard," Koji Sato, the

association's chairman and vice-chairman of Toyota Motor, told reporters on Tuesday, adding that each company must work to limit damage and respond quickly.

At CEATEC

At CEATEC 2026 in Makuhari, which continues until Friday, Murata Manufacturing is showing a glove-type controller made by Melt Interface Technologies that uses Murata's small, high-sensitivity antenna to track hand movements, part of a partnership the two companies announced last month to develop new ways of feeding human movement and touch into AI systems.

The common thread

From substations to buses to gloves, the demonstrations share a purpose: using machines to make up for a shrinking workforce. Their success will depend as much on reliability and security as on the cleverness of the AI.

TECHNOLOGY

The Week in Technology

By the Technology Desk

DISASTER MAIL: 110 local governments report leaks or suspended alerts after an attack on Arcadia, a provider in Minoh, Osaka.

CLOUD: IDC Frontier, hit by ransomware on October 7, says it found no sign that data left the company.

AI SAFETY: Anthropic researchers warn small AI models may soon copy themselves across poorly secured home devices.

PHISHING: Police and Microsoft seize 34 domains of a seller of phishing kits.

ROBOTS: Seibu Railway tests a substation inspection robot; Isuzu and Tier IV aim for a Level 4 bus in fiscal 2027.

CEATEC 2026: Continues at Makuhari Messe until Friday.

SPACE: Hokkaido's first satellite launch site, LC1, is unveiled in Taiki; Interstellar Technologies will soon start using its assembly building.

LAWSUITS: Eight American states sue OpenAI over ChatGPT's effect on children.

STREAMING: Netflix plans to cut about 1,000 jobs.

SOCIAL MEDIA: Germany moves to ban social media for children under 13.

TECHNOLOGY

1783: A Paris Science Teacher Rises Into the Sky on a Tethered Montgolfier Balloon, the First Human Ascent

Jean-Francois Pilatre de Rozier's few minutes aloft opened the age of flight; he would also become one of its first casualties

By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

On October 15, 1783, Jean-Francois Pilatre de Rozier, a young teacher of science in Paris, climbed into the basket of a hot-air balloon built by the brothers Joseph-Michel and Jacques-Etienne Montgolfier and rose into the air.

The balloon was held by a tether, and he climbed only a few dozen metres before it was hauled back down. But the flight, lasting several minutes, is generally regarded as the first time a human being had been lifted from the ground by a craft of his own making.

Sheep, duck and rooster

The Montgolfiers, paper makers from Annonay in southern France, had discovered that a large bag filled with hot air would rise. A month earlier, on September 19, they had sent a sheep, a duck and a rooster aloft before King Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette at Versailles. The animals landed safely, and the way was open for a human passenger.

The first free flight

After several tethered tests, Pilatre de Rozier and the Marquis d'Arlandes made the first free flight on November 21, 1783, taking off from the garden of the Chateau de la Muette, on the western edge of Paris. They stayed aloft for about 25 minutes, reached an altitude of about 3,000 feet and travelled about nine kilometres, stoking the fire with straw as they went.

Ten days later, Jacques Charles and Nicolas-Louis Robert flew a balloon filled with hydrogen from the Tuileries gardens, beginning a rivalry between hot air and gas that lasted for decades.

A tragic end

Pilatre de Rozier tried to cross the English Channel from France in June 1785 in a balloon of his own design that combined a hydrogen cell with a hot-air chamber. It caught fire and came down near Wimereux, killing him and his companion, Pierre Romain. They are the first known victims of an air crash.

His legacy

His hybrid design, known as the Roziere balloon, outlived him. Balloons of the type were used in long-distance record flights in the 20th century, including the first non-stop flight around the world by balloon, by Bertrand Piccard and Brian Jones in 1999.

From balloons to aircraft

Within 120 years of his ascent, the Wright brothers had flown a powered aeroplane, and within 200, airliners were carrying hundreds of millions of passengers a year. Every aviator since has, in a sense, followed the teacher who agreed to be the first to leave the ground.

TECHNOLOGY

1928: The Graf Zeppelin Lands at Lakehurst After the First Transatlantic Passenger Flight by Airship; A Year Later It Would Visit Tokyo

Hugo Eckener's airship took 111 hours to reach New Jersey, survived a torn fin over the ocean and opened an era of intercontinental air travel

By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

On October 15, 1928, the German airship LZ 127 Graf Zeppelin landed at Lakehurst, New Jersey, completing the first transatlantic crossing by an airship carrying paying passengers.

The flight from Friedrichshafen on Lake Constance covered about 9,926 kilometres and took 111 hours and 44 minutes, then the longest non-stop flight ever made. The airship was commanded by Hugo Eckener, the head of the Zeppelin company, who had promoted airships as the future of long-distance travel.

A tear over the ocean

On the third day, fabric covering the port tail fin was torn away in a squall in mid-ocean. Volunteer riggers, among them Eckener's son Knut, climbed outside the hull to make repairs. Eckener had a distress message sent, and many people feared the airship had been lost until it appeared safely over the American coast.

Among those on board were Grace Drummond-Hay, a journalist and the only woman passenger, and Charles Rosendahl, an American naval airship officer. The crew and passengers were welcomed in New York with a ticker-tape parade.

Around the world, via Tokyo

The Graf Zeppelin's most famous voyage came the following year, when it flew around the world. Leaving Lakehurst on August 8, 1929, and heading east, it reached Tokyo on August 19, where huge crowds turned out to see it.

It spent several days at the naval air station at Kasumigaura, in Ibaraki Prefecture, in a hangar that had been brought from Germany after the First World War, before crossing the Pacific to Los Angeles. The circumnavigation took 21 days, 5 hours and 31 minutes.

The end of an era

The Graf Zeppelin made hundreds of flights, including regular passenger services between Germany and South America in the early 1930s. But the age of the great airships ended abruptly on May 6, 1937, when the Hindenburg caught fire while landing at Lakehurst, killing 36 people.

Why it mattered

For a few years, airships offered something no aeroplane could: comfortable travel across oceans, with cabins, dining rooms and promenades. Their flights proved that intercontinental air travel was possible and created a public enthusiasm that aeroplanes would later satisfy, and the Graf Zeppelin's visit in 1929 gave many Japanese their first sight of a machine that had crossed the world by air.

ELSEWHERE IN TODAY'S PAPER

Starlink curbs in Ukraine, Page 7.

US inflation 3.7%, Page 8.

TECHNOLOGY

TECHNOLOGY

1932: J.R.D. Tata Flies the Mail From Karachi to Bombay in a Single-Engine Puss Moth, the First Flight of What Became Air India

India's first licensed pilot launched an airline that was nationalised in 1953 and bought back by his family's group almost 70 years later

By the Technology Desk

On October 15, 1932, Jehangir Ratanji Dadabhoy Tata, known as J.R.D., took off from Karachi in a small single-engine de Havilland Puss Moth carrying airmail bound for Bombay, now Mumbai. It was the first flight of Tata Air Lines, the forerunner of Air India.

From Bombay the aircraft continued to Madras, now Chennai, flown by Nevill Vintcent, a former Royal Air Force pilot who had helped persuade the Tata group to enter aviation.

A pilot first

J.R.D. Tata was passionate about flying. In 1929 he received the first pilot's licence issued in India, and he flew the inaugural mail run himself.

The airline began with two Puss Moths and a weekly mail service between Karachi and Madras, carrying letters and the occasional passenger. Its aviation department was part of Tata Sons, the conglomerate his family controlled.

Nationalisation

After independence the airline, renamed Air India, expanded into international flights. In 1953 the Indian government passed the Air Corporations Act and took control of the airline, buying a majority stake from Tata Sons. J.R.D. Tata stayed on as chairman until 1977.

Coming home

For decades Air India remained a state-owned carrier, often loss-making. In October 2021 the government agreed to sell it back to the Tata group for 180 billion rupees, about \$1.9 billion, and the airline was formally handed over on January 27, 2022, ending 69 years of government ownership.

The group has since set out to rebuild the airline, placing one of the largest aircraft orders in aviation history in 2023 and merging its other airline businesses into Air India.

Why it mattered

The 1932 flight connected India's commercial centres by air at a time when aviation in Asia was in its infancy. It also showed how a private company, led by an enthusiast, could build national infrastructure.

Today

India is now one of the fastest-growing aviation markets in the world, and its airlines fly to Tokyo and other Japanese cities. The single-engine Puss Moth that started it all could carry only a pilot, a passenger or two and a few sacks of mail.

TECHNOLOGY

1956: IBM Issues the Programmer's Reference Manual for FORTRAN, the First Widely Used High-Level Language, Seventy Years Ago Today

John Backus's team promised that scientists could write formulas instead of machine code, and that the result would run almost as fast; they were right

By Ethan Cole | Technology & Science Editor

On October 15, 1956, IBM issued the Programmer's Reference Manual for the FORTRAN Automatic Coding System for its 704 computer. The date is now marked as the moment FORTRAN, short for Formula Translation, was first shared with the people who would use it.

The first compiler, the program that translates FORTRAN into the instructions a machine can execute, was delivered in April 1957.

The problem

In the early 1950s, programming meant writing instructions in machine code or a symbolic assembly language, line by line, for a particular computer. It was slow, error-prone and expensive. By some accounts, the cost of programming and debugging a computer could exceed the cost of the machine itself.

The proposal

In late 1953 John Backus, a programmer at IBM, proposed to his managers the development of a more practical alternative to assembly language for the

IBM 704 mainframe. He assembled a small team that included Richard Goldberg, Sheldon Best, Harlan Herrick, Roy Nutt, Irving Ziller, Lois Haibt and David Sayre.

Many programmers were sceptical. Earlier systems for automatic programming had produced code so inefficient that experts preferred to write by hand. Backus's team therefore devoted enormous effort to making their compiler produce fast code, a goal they largely achieved.

Formulas, not instructions

FORTRAN allowed a scientist to write an equation much as it would appear on paper, with variables, arithmetic and loops, and leave the translation to the machine. A program that might have taken weeks to write in assembly could be written in days.

The language spread quickly to other computers. The American Standards Association published the first standard version in 1966, and the language has been revised repeatedly since; the latest international standard, Fortran 2023, was published in November 2023.

Recognition

Backus received the Turing Award, computing's highest honour, in 1977, for his work on FORTRAN and on methods of describing the syntax of programming languages, including the notation known as Backus-Naur form.

Seventy years on

FORTRAN is still in use for some of the most demanding calculations in science and engineering, from weather prediction to the programs used to rank the world's fastest supercomputers. Our editorial today considers what its long life says about technology that is declared dead.

TECHNOLOGY

1991: A Detector in the Utah Desert Records the 'Oh-My-God' Particle, a Cosmic Ray With the Energy of a Thrown Baseball

Its energy defied theory; three decades later a Japanese-led team in the same desert found a rival and named it after the sun goddess Amaterasu

By Maya Suzuki | Science & Innovation Desk

On October 15, 1991, the Fly's Eye detector of the University of Utah, at the Dugway Proving Ground in the western desert of the state, recorded the most energetic cosmic ray ever observed.

Its energy was about 3.2 times ten to the power of 20 electronvolts, roughly 51 joules. That is about the kinetic energy of a baseball thrown at around 100 kilometres an hour, packed into a single subatomic particle. Scientists nicknamed it the Oh-My-God particle.

How it was seen

Cosmic rays that strike the upper atmosphere set off cascades of secondary particles called air showers. The Fly's Eye watched the night sky for the faint fluorescent light such showers produce as they pass through the air, and from that light researchers could estimate the energy of the original particle.

Why it surprised

Theory suggested that particles of such energy travelling across intergalactic space should lose energy by colliding with the faint radiation left over from the Big Bang, setting an apparent ceiling known as the GZK limit. The Oh-My-God particle was far above it, which meant it had either come from relatively nearby or that something in the theory was incomplete.

Its energy is about 40 million times that of the most energetic protons produced by any accelerator on Earth. What it was, and where it came from, remain unknown.

Japan's part

Japan has been at the forefront of the search. The Akeno Giant Air Shower Array in Yamanashi Prefecture, operated by the University of Tokyo's Institute for Cosmic Ray Research, recorded several extremely energetic events in the 1990s.

Today the largest detector in the northern hemisphere, the Telescope Array in Utah, is a collaboration between Japan, the United States and other countries. In 2021 it detected a particle with an energy above 2.4 times ten to the power of 20 electronvolts. When the discovery was announced in 2023, Toshihiro Fujii of Osaka Metropolitan University and his colleagues named it the Amaterasu

particle, after the sun goddess of Japanese mythology.

A mystery that remains

The Amaterasu particle appeared to come from the Local Void, a region of space with very few galaxies, deepening the puzzle. Hundreds of ultra-high-energy events have since been recorded, but the sources of the most energetic remain one of the great open questions of astrophysics.

TECHNOLOGY

1997: Cassini Lifts Off for Saturn on a Titan Rocket, Beginning a Twenty-Year Voyage That Found Oceans and Lakes on Its Moons

The American, European and Italian mission carried a probe that landed on Titan and ended with a deliberate plunge into Saturn in 2017

By Maya Suzuki | Science & Innovation Desk

On October 15, 1997, a Titan IVB rocket with a Centaur upper stage lifted off from Cape Canaveral, Florida, carrying the Cassini spacecraft and the Huygens probe on their way to Saturn.

The mission, named after the astronomers Giovanni Domenico Cassini and Christiaan Huygens, was a joint project of NASA, the European Space Agency and the Italian Space Agency. It cost about \$3.26 billion.

A long way round

Cassini was too heavy to be sent straight to Saturn. Instead it swung past Venus twice, Earth once and Jupiter to gain speed, arriving in orbit around Saturn on July 1, 2004, Universal Time, the first spacecraft to do so.

Because sunlight is so weak at Saturn, the spacecraft was powered by three radioisotope thermoelectric generators containing about 33 kilograms of plutonium-238. Protest groups in the United States challenged the launch, fearing an accident could spread radioactive material.

Landing on Titan

On January 14, 2005, the Huygens probe, built by Europe, descended by parachute through the thick atmosphere of Titan, Saturn's largest moon, and landed on its surface. It was the first landing in the outer solar system.

Oceans and lakes

Cassini's discoveries transformed planetary science. In 2005 it observed jets of water ice erupting from the south pole of the small moon Enceladus, and later evidence pointed to a salty ocean beneath its icy crust, making Enceladus one of the most promising places to look for conditions suitable for life.

On Titan, radar images revealed lakes and seas of liquid methane and ethane, the first bodies of surface liquid found anywhere beyond Earth.

The Grand Finale

With its fuel running low, Cassini was steered into Saturn's atmosphere on September 15, 2017, to avoid any chance of contaminating the moons it had studied. It sent data until the end.

Twenty years of data

Scientists are still analysing its observations, and future missions, including NASA's Dragonfly, a drone-like lander due to fly to Titan, build directly on what Cassini found.

TECHNOLOGY

2003: Yang Liwei Orbits the Earth 14 Times in Shenzhou 5, Making China the Third Country to Send a Person Into Space on Its Own

The 21-hour flight from the Gobi Desert came 42 years after Gagarin; China now runs its own space station

By the Technology Desk

On October 15, 2003, at 9 a.m. Beijing time, a Long March 2F rocket lifted off from the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Center in the Gobi Desert carrying Shenzhou 5, China's first crewed spacecraft.

On board was Yang Liwei, a 38-year-old lieutenant colonel in the People's Liberation Army and a former fighter pilot.

Fourteen orbits

The flight lasted 21 hours, 22 minutes and 45 seconds, during which Shenzhou 5 orbited the Earth 14 times. The capsule landed in Inner Mongolia early on October 16, Beijing time, a few kilometres from the planned site.

With the flight, China became the third country, after the Soviet Union and the United States, to launch a person into space independently. Yuri Gagarin's first flight had taken place 42 years earlier, in April 1961.

A national hero

Mr Yang became a national hero. It was his only spaceflight, but he went on to hold senior posts in China's human spaceflight programme.

From capsule to station

China built steadily on that first flight. It launched space laboratories in the 2010s and completed its own space station, Tiangong, in 2022. Chinese crews now live aboard it in rotations of about six months, and China has said it aims to land astronauts on the Moon by 2030.

Japan's path

Japan has taken a different route. Its astronauts have flown aboard American and Russian spacecraft and have worked for long periods on the International Space Station, where Japan operates the Kibo laboratory module. Japan does not have its own crewed launch vehicle, and has concentrated on robotic missions, such as the Hayabusa asteroid probes, and on cargo spacecraft.

A changing landscape

With the International Space Station due to be retired around 2030, China's station may for a time be the only permanent outpost in orbit run by a single government. That prospect has added urgency to American and Japanese plans for commercial stations and for co-operation on the Moon.

TECHNOLOGY

2016: Nearly 200 Nations Agree in Kigali to Phase Down HFCs, the Coolants That Saved the Ozone Layer but Heat the Planet

The amendment to the Montreal Protocol could avoid as much as half a degree of warming by 2100; Japan's air-conditioner makers helped lead the shift to alternatives

By Maya Suzuki | Science & Innovation Desk

On October 15, 2016, at a meeting in Kigali, Rwanda, the parties to the Montreal Protocol adopted an amendment to phase down the production and consumption of hydrofluorocarbons, or HFCs.

The problem

HFCs were introduced to replace chlorofluorocarbons, the chemicals that had been destroying the ozone layer and that the Montreal Protocol of 1987 set out to eliminate. HFCs do not harm the ozone layer, but many are extremely potent greenhouse gases, trapping hundreds or thousands of times more heat than carbon dioxide.

As demand for air-conditioning and refrigeration grew, especially in fast-growing hot countries, HFC emissions were rising quickly.

The deal

Under the Kigali Amendment, developed countries must cut their HFC consumption to 15 per cent of a baseline level by 2036. A group of developing countries including China and Brazil must reach 20 per cent by 2045, and some countries with hot climates, including India and Saudi Arabia, have until 2047.

The amendment entered into force on January 1, 2019. As of April this year, 172 countries and the European Union had ratified it. Japan accepted it on December 18, 2018, after revising its law on protecting the ozone layer to cover HFCs.

The benefit

Eliminating these emissions could avoid about half a degree Celsius of warming by the end of the century, and more than 80 billion tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent by 2050, by some estimates. It was described at the time as one of the most important single steps that could be taken against climate change.

Japan's role

Japanese manufacturers have been central to the shift. Daikin Industries launched what it said was the world's first air conditioner using the refrigerant R32, which has a much lower warming effect than the gas it replaced, in Japan in 2012, and later opened up many of its patents to encourage others to use it.

The model

The Montreal Protocol became the first treaty in the history of the United Nations to be ratified by every member state. Its success in repairing the ozone layer,

TECHNOLOGY

which scientists expect to recover to 1980 levels around the middle of this century, is often held up as proof that international environmental agreements can work.

TECHNOLOGY

2018: Microsoft Co-Founder Paul Allen Dies at 65, Leaving a Legacy in Software, Brain Science and the Discovery of the Battleship Musashi

The man who named Micro-Soft spent his fortune on research, sports teams, rockets and the search for lost warships

By Ethan Cole | Technology & Science Editor

On October 15, 2018, Paul Allen, who founded Microsoft with Bill Gates, died in Seattle at the age of 65, from complications of the cancer non-Hodgkin lymphoma.

The founding

Allen and Gates, friends from school in Seattle, founded Microsoft in 1975 in Albuquerque, New Mexico, to sell a version of the BASIC programming language for one of the first personal computers. Allen came up with the company's original name, Micro-Soft.

Microsoft grew into the world's dominant software company. Allen stepped back from daily work in the early 1980s after being diagnosed with Hodgkin's lymphoma, remaining on the board until 2000.

Brain science

His fortune funded a wide range of interests. In 2003 he founded the Allen Institute for Brain Science in Seattle with an initial gift of \$100 million, later giving \$500 million in total. Its freely available maps of the brain are used by researchers around the world.

Rockets and sports

He financed SpaceShipOne, which in 2004 became the first privately built craft to carry a person into space, and later founded Stratolaunch, which built an aircraft with a record wingspan to carry rockets aloft. He owned the Portland Trail Blazers basketball team and the Seattle Seahawks American football team.

The Musashi

For Japan, his most notable legacy may lie on the seabed. In March 2015 a team using Allen's research vessel announced the discovery of the wreck of the Imperial Japanese Navy battleship Musashi in the Sibuyan Sea in the Philippines, where it was sunk in October 1944 with heavy loss of life.

His teams also found the wreck of the American cruiser Indianapolis and other warships lost in the Pacific War, and shared the images with veterans and families.

Philanthropy

Allen gave more than \$2 billion to causes including science, education, conservation, the arts and health care, and pledged to give away most of his fortune.

A different kind of founder

Where Gates became the public face of Microsoft, Allen was the quieter partner, more interested in ideas than in management. His life showed how the wealth created by the software industry could be turned to research that markets alone would not pay for.

TECHNOLOGY

October 15 in Technology and Science

By the Data Desk

1783: Pilatre de Rozier makes the first human ascent, in a tethered Montgolfier balloon in Paris.

1910: The airship America leaves New Jersey in the first attempt to cross the Atlantic in a powered aircraft.

1928: The Graf Zeppelin lands at Lakehurst after the first transatlantic passenger flight by airship.

1931: Birth of A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, the Indian aerospace engineer who became president of India.

1932: Tata Air Lines, later Air India, makes its first flight, from Karachi.

1956: IBM issues the reference manual for FORTRAN.

1970: A span of the West Gate Bridge in Melbourne collapses during construction, killing 35 workers.

1991: The Oh-My-God particle, the most energetic cosmic ray ever observed, is recorded in Utah.

1997: Cassini and Huygens launch for Saturn.

2001: NASA's Galileo passes within 180 kilometres of Jupiter's moon Io.

2003: China launches Shenzhou 5, its first crewed spaceflight.

2016: The Kigali Amendment to the Montreal Protocol is adopted.

2018: Paul Allen, co-founder of Microsoft, dies.

SOCIETY

University of Tokyo's First Woman President Faces Questions Over a Selection That Passed Over the Winner of the Staff Vote

Yuko Fujigaki, a scholar of science and society, takes office in April 2027 for the university's 150th year; the education minister has asked for a careful explanation

By Naomi Kato | Culture & Society Editor

The choice of the first woman to lead the University of Tokyo has become one of the most debated appointments in Japanese academia, with some newspapers welcoming it as a milestone and others demanding a fuller account of how it was made.

Yuko Fujigaki, a professor at the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences who specialises in science, technology and society studies and in scientometrics, the measurement of research, was named on September 28 as the university's next president. She is to take office in April 2027 as the 32nd president, for a six-year term, subject to appointment by the education minister.

Born in 1962, she has served since 2021 as an executive vice-president under the current president, Teruo Fujii, with responsibilities including admissions.

The vote

The controversy concerns the advisory vote among faculty and staff. In its second round, the vice-president Takao Someya, an engineer, received 1,107 votes and Professor Fujigaki 553, according to figures reported by the Todai Shimbun, the student newspaper. The university's selection council, after interviews and statements of policy, chose Professor Fujigaki, citing an overall assessment.

Passing over the clear winner of the vote was described in the press as unprecedented. The council, which has internal and external members, is chaired by the journalist Hiroko Kuniya.

Calls for an explanation

The education minister, Yoshihiro Seki, said this month that it was important for the council to explain its process and reasons carefully, NHK reported. Shiori Yamao, a lawyer and former lawmaker, has argued that a vague explanation could create the impression of preferential treatment for women.

This week, editorials in the Nihon Keizai Shimbun and the Asahi Shimbun welcomed the appointment of a woman to lead the country's most prestigious university, while the Sankei Shimbun called for the selection process to be accounted for.

Her response

At a news conference after her selection, Professor Fujigaki noted that the university would mark the 150th anniversary of its founding in 1877 in the year she takes office, which she said gave the appointment of its first woman president particular meaning. She said she hoped more women would choose careers in research.

The wider issue

Women remain a small minority among professors at Japan's leading universities, and the government has pressed institutions to raise the share. Supporters of the choice say that leadership is part of the answer; critics say that a process meant to reflect the views of the university community should not be overridden without a clear public explanation. Both sides agree that the council's explanation will shape how the new president's term begins.

ELSEWHERE IN TODAY'S PAPER

DeNA 2, Hanshin 0, Page 17.

Editorial: FORTRAN at 70, Page 20.

Weather: the map and the forecast, Page 14.

Crossword, Page 18.

Typhoon No. 30 ahead, Page 3.

Budget Committee, day two, Page 5.

Nuclear submarines, Page 4.

Houthis vow more strikes, Page 7.

Starlink curbs in Ukraine, Page 7.

WEATHER

A Crisp, Clear Autumn Day for Most of Japan After a Cold Night: Sapporo Wakes to 8 Degrees, While Rain Lingers Over Aomori and Akita

High pressure brings sunshine from Kagoshima to Sapporo and highs of 24 to 27 in the west; Tokyo is cloudy with sunny spells at 23

By the Weather Desk

Japan enjoys one of the clearest days of the autumn so far today, as high pressure settles over the country after Wednesday's cold front, according to the weather map for 19 cities.

Sunshine is forecast from Kagoshima and Fukuoka in the south-west to Osaka, Nagoya, Niigata, Sendai and Sapporo, with highs of 24 to 27 degrees in western Japan.

The exception in the north

Northern Tohoku is the exception. Rain reaches Aomori this morning and Akita this afternoon, and is heaviest from midday into the late afternoon before Aomori clears tonight. Aomori has a high of 21 after a low of 13; Akita, cloudy with rain at times, also reaches 21.

Tokyo

Tokyo is cloudy with sunny spells, with a high of 23 after a morning low of 17, one of the mildest mornings on the map outside Okinawa. It should be a comfortable day for being outside, though a light jacket will be welcome in the evening.

A cold start

The night was cold across much of the country under clear skies and light winds, which allow the ground to lose heat quickly, a process forecasters call radiative cooling. Sapporo fell to 8 degrees, the coldest reading on the map, and Nagano to 10. Sendai dropped to 11 and will reach 23 this afternoon, a rise of 12 degrees, as will Nagoya, which climbs from 14 to 26.

Nihonkai Television reported that inland parts of the San'in region were also expected to see their coldest morning of the season, with temperatures below 10 degrees in some places.

The warmest

Kagoshima, at 27, is the warmest city on the main islands, and Kochi and Nagoya reach 26. Naha, sunny with some cloud, has a high of 28 and a low of 23, the smallest daily range on the map.

Dress for the gap

With mornings cool and afternoons warm, Weathernews advises layers that can be taken off during the day. Under the high pressure, conditions for drying laundry and for outings are good in many areas, and ultraviolet levels are moderate.

Looking ahead

Friday should be mostly fine or cloudy across the country. A front is expected to bring rain to some areas from Saturday. Far to the south-east, a tropical depression near the Marshall Islands is forecast to become Typhoon No. 30 by Friday morning; it poses no threat to Japan for now. (Typhoon map and forecast in the front section; full forecast on this page.)

SOCIETY

About 1 Million Yen Taken From Suspects in Custody Goes Missing From a Safe Inside Saitama's Omiya Police Station

The shortfall was found in April but announced only on Wednesday; only station staff could reach the safe, and investigators are treating the case as a possible theft

By Emi Kondo | Society & Local News

About 1 million yen in cash held for suspects in custody has gone missing from a safe inside the Omiya Police Station in Saitama, the Saitama Prefectural Police said on Wednesday.

The money had been taken from several suspects held in the station's detention facility and was being kept on their behalf, as is standard practice when people are taken into custody.

Found in April

The shortfall came to light in April, when staff at the station checked the balance in the safe and found it about 1 million yen short of the amount recorded as having been put in and taken out, according to KSB Setonaikai Broadcasting.

A periodic audit by the prefectural police

headquarters in July last year had found that the balance matched the records, but no further checks were carried out after that, the police said.

Only staff had access

Only station personnel could reach the place where the safe is kept. The police are questioning staff and investigating the case as a possible theft.

Trust at stake

Money and belongings taken from people in custody must be returned to them when they are released, and the police are responsible for keeping them safe. A loss inside a police station, where the public expects property to be most secure, is a particular embarrassment for the force.

Police forces in Japan have faced a number of cases in recent years in which officers or staff stole cash held as evidence or as property of detainees, and several have tightened their procedures as a result.

What comes next

The prefectural police said they would establish how the money went missing and review how cash is managed at their stations. Residents and lawyers representing the suspects whose money was held are likely to ask how much was lost, from whom, and whether it will be repaid.

SOCIETY

Shizuoka Prefectural Engineer Arrested on Suspicion of Leaking Estimated Prices to a Contractor That Won Two River Bridge Contracts

Police also arrest two directors of the winning company; the bids, for bridge rebuilding tied to flood prevention, were worth about 350 million yen

By Emi Kondo | Society & Local News

Shizuoka Prefectural Police on Wednesday arrested an official of the prefecture's Fukuroi civil engineering office on suspicion of leaking the estimated prices of two public works contracts to a construction company, which then won both.

The official, Masaaki Yamamoto, 57, of Kakegawa, a team leader in the office's construction section, is suspected of obstructing public bidding and of violating the law that prohibits bid-rigging involving public officials, Kyodo News reported.

The contractor

The police also arrested two directors of Akiyama, a civil engineering and construction company based in Iwata, Shizuoka Prefecture: Hiroyuki Akiyama, 71, of Hamamatsu's Chuo Ward, and Koichi Tomita, 63, of Hamamatsu's Hamana Ward. They are suspected of obstructing public bidding. None of the three has said whether he admits the allegations.

The bids

According to the police, in February this year the three conspired over two general competitive tenders for the replacement of bridges as part of river disaster prevention work. Mr Yamamoto allegedly told the company the estimated prices, helping it win both contracts.

The two winning bids totalled about 350 million yen, excluding consumption tax. One of the contracts was later put out to tender again and won by a different company.

Access and acquaintance

Mr Yamamoto was in charge of ordering works and managing budgets, which gave him access to the estimated prices, the police said. He and Mr Tomita are said to have got to know each other about 20 years ago while working on a construction project.

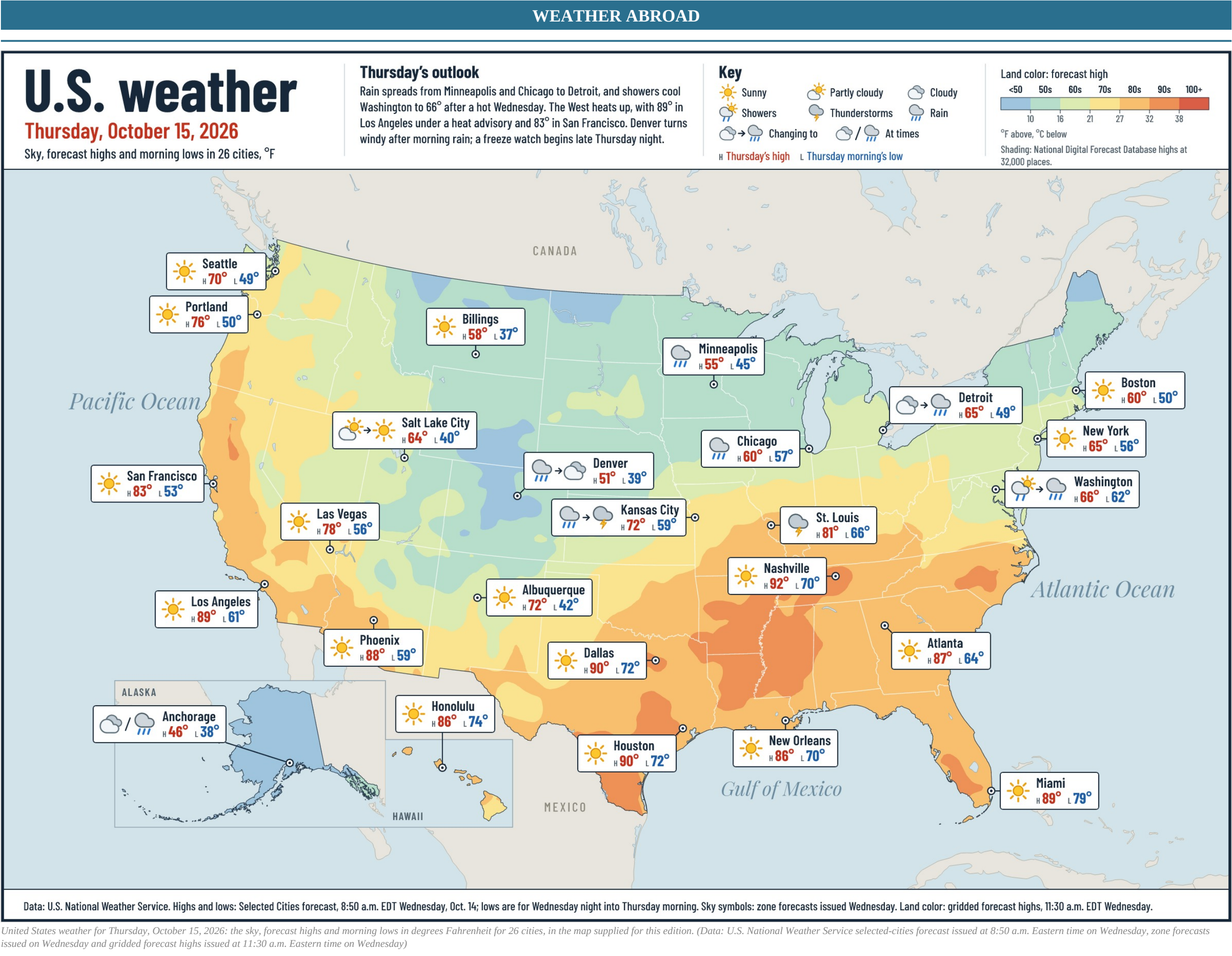
The police are investigating whether he received money or other benefits in return.

Why estimated prices matter

Public bodies calculate an estimated price for each contract and often set a ceiling or a minimum price based on it. A bidder who knows the estimate can pitch an offer just inside the limits and beat rivals who must guess, undermining the competition that is supposed to secure value for taxpayers.

The prefecture responds

The Shizuoka prefectural government is expected to review how estimated prices are handled in its offices. Cases of this kind often prompt authorities to restrict the number of staff who can see the figures and to tighten records of who accesses them.



WEATHER ABROAD

United States: Rain Spreads Across the Upper Midwest and Showers Cool Washington, While Los Angeles Heats to 89 Under a Heat Advisory

Nashville reaches 92 and Dallas and Houston 90; Denver turns windy after morning rain, and a freeze watch begins late tonight

By the Weather Desk

Rain spreads from Minneapolis and Chicago to Detroit on Thursday, and showers cool Washington after a hot Wednesday, while the West heats up, according to the United States weather map for 26 cities supplied for this edition.

All temperatures are in degrees Fahrenheit, with Celsius equivalents in brackets.

The Midwest and the north-east

Minneapolis has rain and a high of 55 (13) after a low of 45 (7). Chicago, also wet, reaches 60 (16) from a mild 57 (14). Detroit turns from cloud to rain with a high of 65 (18).

In the north-east the sun shines on Boston, at 60 (16), and New York, at 65 (18). Washington changes from showers to rain and reaches only 66 (19) after a warm

night of 62 (17).

The South

The South stays hot and mostly sunny. Nashville is the hottest city on the map at 92 (33), Dallas and Houston reach 90 (32), Atlanta 87 (31) and New Orleans 86 (30). Miami has a high of 89 (32) and the warmest night on the map, 79 (26).

Further north on the Mississippi, St. Louis has thunderstorms and a high of 81 (27), and Kansas City turns from rain to thunderstorms at 72 (22).

The mountains

Denver has rain in the morning, then cloud, with a high of only 51 (11), and turns windy; a freeze watch begins late Thursday night. Billings, sunny, has the coldest morning in the lower 48 states, at 37 (3). Salt

Lake City clears to sunshine at 64 (18), and Albuquerque is sunny at 72 (22).

The West Coast

The West heats up. Los Angeles, under a heat advisory, reaches 89 (32), and San Francisco 83 (28), unusually warm for the city. Las Vegas is 78 (26) and Phoenix 88 (31). In the Pacific Northwest, Portland reaches 76 (24) and Seattle 70 (21), both in sunshine.

Alaska and Hawaii

Anchorage is cloudy with rain at times and a high of 46 (8), the coolest on the map. Honolulu is sunny at 86 (30).

About the map

The map cites the U.S. National Weather Service. Highs and lows are from its selected-cities forecast

issued at 8:50 a.m. Eastern time on Wednesday, the lows for Wednesday night into Thursday morning; the sky symbols from zone forecasts issued on Wednesday; and the colour of the land from gridded forecast highs issued at 11:30 a.m. Eastern time on Wednesday. Travellers should check the latest forecasts before setting out.

WEATHER ABROAD

A Freeze Watch in Denver and a Heat Advisory in Los Angeles on the Same Day: Why October Is America's Season of Extremes

Cold air spilling south from Canada meets lingering summer heat; on the West Coast, autumn is often the hottest time of year

By the Weather Desk

Thursday's map of the United States shows the country pulled in two directions at once: a freeze watch for Denver and a heat advisory for Los Angeles.

The freeze watch

A freeze watch is issued by the National Weather Service when temperatures may fall to freezing or below within the next day or two, at a time of year when crops and garden plants are still growing. It is a signal for farmers and gardeners to protect tender plants and for householders to take care of outdoor pipes. If a freeze becomes likely, the watch is upgraded to a warning.

In Denver, a mile above sea level, the first freeze of

autumn often comes in October, when cold air from Canada pushes south along the Rocky Mountains behind a front, bringing wind, rain and sometimes snow.

The heat advisory

A heat advisory, by contrast, warns that temperatures are high enough to cause illness, especially for older people, children and those working outside. In Los Angeles, the threshold is lower in the cooler coastal areas than in the inland valleys.

Why the coast is hot in autumn

For much of Southern California, September and October can bring some of the hottest days of the year. In summer, cool air from the ocean often keeps the coast mild under a layer of low cloud. In autumn, high pressure inland can reverse the flow, sending dry air down from the deserts and mountains towards the sea. The air warms as it descends, and the marine layer disappears.

The strongest of these offshore winds, known as the Santa Ana winds, also raise the risk of wildfires, because they combine heat, very low humidity and strong gusts.

San Francisco's late summer

San Francisco is famous for cool, foggy summers, and its warmest weather often arrives in September and October, when the fog retreats. A high of 83 on Thursday would be warm even by those standards.

For travellers from Japan

Visitors to the United States this week will need very different clothes depending on where they go: a jacket for the Rockies and the Midwest, and summer clothing for Los Angeles, Texas and Florida.

SOCIETY

Fire Burns Two Escalators at Sapporo Stellar Place Beside JR Sapporo Station; Shoppers and Cinema Audiences Evacuated

Smoke was reported at about 7:35 p.m.; firefighters needed about three hours to put out the blaze, and the mall was to stay closed on Thursday

By Emi Kondo | Society & Local News

A fire broke out on Wednesday evening at Sapporo Stellar Place, the shopping centre in the JR Tower complex directly connected to JR Sapporo Station,

burning two escalators and forcing shoppers and staff to evacuate.

An emergency call reporting smoke coming from an escalator was made at about 7:35 p.m., the Hokkaido Shimbun reported. Two escalators running between the second and fourth floors of the mall were burned, and the fire appeared to have started on the third and fourth floors.

Three hours to extinguish

Sapporo's fire department took about three hours to put the fire out. Fire engines gathered in the plaza in front of the station, one of the busiest spots in Hokkaido, as crowds watched.

Film screenings at the cinema in the building were stopped part-way through, and customers were evacuated, the broadcaster HBC reported. The Hokkaido Shimbun said no one was injured, while STV reported that one person had complained of feeling unwell.

Closed today

Stellar Place was to remain closed on Thursday, the Mainichi Shimbun reported. Shoppers and

SOCIETY

commuters should check the operator's announcements before travelling.

The cause

The Sapporo Chuo Police Station is investigating the cause of the fire with the fire department.

A landmark

JR Tower, which opened in 2003, houses the Stellar Place shopping centre, a hotel, offices and an observation deck, and sits at the heart of the city's main transport hub. Escalator fires in large commercial buildings are rare, but they can spread smoke quickly through open floors, which is why evacuation procedures are drilled regularly.

Busy station

JR Sapporo Station is the busiest railway station in Hokkaido and is being redeveloped ahead of the planned extension of the Hokkaido Shinkansen to the city.

SOCIETY

When the Leak Comes From Inside: How Japan's Law Against Bid-Rigging Involving Public Officials Works

Enacted in 2002 and toughened in 2006, it lets the competition watchdog demand reforms from public bodies and sends officials who betray tenders to prison

By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

Bid-rigging among construction companies has a long history in Japan, and so does the suspicion that officials sometimes help it along. The law under which the Shizuoka engineer was arrested on Wednesday was written to deal with that second problem.

The law

The Act on the Elimination and Prevention of Involvement in Bid-Rigging, commonly called the law against official involvement in bid-rigging, was enacted in 2002 and took effect in 2003. It targets cases in which officials of national or local governments, or of certain public corporations, are involved in collusion among bidders.

Involvement includes telling bidders in advance who should win, leaking confidential information such as estimated prices, and hinting at a preferred result.

What the watchdog can do

When the Japan Fair Trade Commission finds that officials were involved in a case of bid-rigging, it can demand that the public body concerned take measures to improve, and the body must investigate, report what it has done and consider whether to seek damages from those responsible.

Prison for officials

An amendment in 2006 added criminal penalties. An official who harms the fairness of a tender, for example by leaking the estimated price, can be sentenced to up to five years in prison or fined up to 2.5 million yen.

Companies and individuals who obstruct public bidding can also be charged under the Penal Code, as the two company directors in Shizuoka were.

Recent cases

The Fair Trade Commission is examining whether staff of the Tokyo Metropolitan Bureau of Transportation were involved in rigged bids for Toei subway track maintenance, a case in which it plans to order five companies to pay surcharges of about 500 million yen. The Asahi Shimbun reported that the commission also intends to issue cease-and-desist orders to the five.

Why it persists

Public works are often divided among local companies that know each other well, and officials who have worked with them for years can come to see helping a familiar contractor as harmless. Investigators say that is exactly the attitude the law is meant to change: a single leaked figure can cost taxpayers money and shut out more efficient competitors.

ELSEWHERE IN TODAY'S PAPER

DeNA 2, Hanshin 0, Page 17.

Editorial: FORTRAN at 70, Page 20.

Weather: the map and the forecast, Page 14.

Crossword, Page 18.

Typhoon No. 30 ahead, Page 3.

Budget Committee, day two, Page 5.

SOCIETY

Votes, Councils and Final Say: How the University of Tokyo Chooses Its President, and Why the Staff Vote Is Only Advisory

Reforms since national universities became corporations in 2004 shifted power from faculty votes to selection councils with outside members

By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

For much of the postwar period, the presidents of Japan's national universities were in effect elected by their faculties. The faculty vote was the decisive step, and the formal appointment by the education minister followed.

The 2004 reform

That changed when national universities were turned into national university corporations in 2004. Each corporation was required to set up a council to select its president, including members from outside the university, with the aim of strengthening management and accountability.

Many universities continued to hold votes among their staff, but these became advisory: the council could take account of the result but was not bound by it.

Further tightening

Later reforms strengthened the role of presidents and of the councils that choose them, and the government encouraged universities to explain the reasons for their choices. In some universities, councils have since chosen candidates who did not top the staff vote, often leading to protests from faculty.

Tokyo's process

At the University of Tokyo, a council made up of internal and external members selects the president. It first narrows the field of candidates, then the faculty and staff vote, and finally the council interviews the leading candidates and makes its choice.

This year it narrowed the field to five, held two rounds of voting, and then chose Yuko Fujigaki, who came second in the final round.

The arguments

Supporters of the council system say that a university president must manage a large organisation with a budget of hundreds of billions of yen, deal with government and industry and raise money, and that a council with outside members can weigh those needs more broadly than an internal vote. They also argue that votes can reflect the preferences of the largest faculties.

Critics say that ignoring the result of a vote undermines academic self-government and the legitimacy of the president, and that councils must give clear reasons when they do so.

What happens next

The education minister formally appoints the president on the university's application. The minister, Yoshihiro Seki, has said the council should explain its decision carefully, and the university's response will be watched by other institutions where similar disputes have arisen.

SOCIETY

Senji Kuroi: A Life in Letters

By the Data Desk

1932: Born in Tokyo as Shunjiro Osabe.

1955: Graduates in economics from the University of Tokyo and joins Fuji Heavy Industries.

1958: Makes his literary debut.

1970: Leaves the company to write full-time; wins the Art Encouragement Prize for New Artists for Time.

1984: Wins the Tanizaki Jun'ichiro Prize for Gunsei.

1994: Wins the Yomiuri Prize for Literature for Curtain Call.

2006: Wins the Noma Literary Prize for Ichinichi Yume no Saku.

2014: Named a Person of Cultural Merit; becomes president of the Japan Art Academy.

OCTOBER 12, 2026: Dies of pneumonia in Tokyo, aged 94.

ALSO: President of the Japan Writers' Association; Akutagawa Prize selector; chair of the Japan-China Cultural Exchange Association.

SOCIETY

Miyuki Miyabe, Kotaro Yoshida and Astronaut Takuya Onishi Among About 1,750 Invited to the Emperor's Autumn Garden Party

The Emperor and Empress host the gathering at the Akasaka Imperial Gardens on October 29; guests are recommended by government ministries

By the Society Desk

The novelist Miyuki Miyabe, the actor Kotaro Yoshida and the astronaut Takuya Onishi are among about 1,750 people invited to the autumn garden party hosted by the Emperor and Empress, the Imperial Household Agency said.

The party will be held on October 29 at the Akasaka Imperial Gardens in Motoakasaka, in Tokyo's Minato Ward.

Who is invited

Guests are people who have distinguished themselves in various fields, recommended by central government ministries, together with members of the Diet, senior civil servants, local government officials and their spouses.

The guests

Ms Miyabe is one of Japan's most widely read novelists, known for crime and historical fiction as well as fantasy. Mr Yoshida is a stage and screen actor and director who has appeared in many popular television dramas. Mr Onishi, an astronaut of the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency, has made long stays on the International Space Station.

The custom

The Emperor and Empress and other members of the imperial family, including Crown Prince Akishino and Crown Princess Kiko, walk through the gardens and talk with guests. Garden parties are held twice a year, in spring and autumn.

Guests are served food including Genghis Khan, the grilled lamb dish associated with Hokkaido, which has become a tradition at the parties.

A glimpse of the year

Each guest list offers a snapshot of the people the nation chose to honour that season, from scientists and athletes to volunteers and local leaders. Conversations between the imperial couple and guests, captured by television cameras, often become talking points.

The date

The party falls at the end of a busy month for the imperial family, which included the opening of the national sports festival in Aomori on October 10, attended by the Emperor and Empress.

SOCIETY

Every Taxi in Chiba to Carry an Escape Hammer After a Passenger Drowned When Floodwater Trapped Her in a Car

The prefectural taxi association buys about 5,000 hammers and warns that services may be suspended in disasters; drivers are told not to make judgments alone

By Emi Kondo | Society & Local News

The Chiba Prefecture Taxi Association has decided to equip all of its members' taxis with emergency hammers for breaking windows, after a passenger died in August when a taxi was submerged by floodwater during heavy rain, the association confirmed on Wednesday.

The woman, in her 60s, was trapped in the taxi when it was swamped by water in the city of Sakura on August 13.

Five thousand hammers

The association bought about 5,000 hammers in bulk, enough for about 90 per cent of the roughly 5,500 vehicles operated by its member companies. It also drew up a policy on responding to heavy rain and on gathering weather information, and notified its members on Wednesday.

A notice posted for passengers on its website says taxis may suspend operations during disasters for safety reasons. "Our aim is to protect the lives of passengers and drivers," an official said.

The operator's report

Details of the accident that the taxi operator reported to the national government have also come to light. As a measure to prevent a recurrence, the company said it had told drivers not to make decisions on their own when they lacked clear information about the

situation.

Why doors will not open

The Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism warns that in floods the pressure of water can make car doors and windows impossible to open, and that electrical failures can disable power windows. It recommends keeping a hammer in vehicles and has published a video showing how to break a window.

Advice for drivers

Experts say drivers should avoid underpasses and roads that have flooded, because even shallow water can stall an engine and deeper water can lift a car. If a vehicle begins to fill with water, occupants should try to get out as early as possible, before the water outside rises too high.

A wider lesson

Heavy rain of the kind that has become more frequent in recent summers has led to similar deaths elsewhere in Japan. The Chiba association's step is one that other operators, and private drivers, may consider before next year's rainy season.

SOCIETY

Judges Walk the Isahaya Bay Reclamation Land and Fishing Grounds as Nagasaki Fishermen Press Their Case to Open the Dike Gates

The court hears how the shellfish catch vanished after the bay was closed in 1997; three earlier groups of fishermen lost, and the Supreme Court has backed keeping the gates shut

By Emi Kondo | Society & Local News

Judges of the Nagasaki District Court visited the Isahaya Bay reclamation project on Wednesday in a lawsuit brought by fishermen who want the government to open the drainage gates of the dike that closed off the inner part of the bay.

The judges toured nine sites, including the reclaimed farmland and the fishing grounds of the Ariake Sea, and heard from plaintiffs about how conditions had changed since the project began, Kyodo News reported.

The shellfish

One fisherman told the judges that tairagi, a large pen shell prized in the region, had been abundant before construction. "I want them to understand the situation as it is now," he said.

The project

The national government closed off the inner part of Isahaya Bay with a seven-kilometre dike in April 1997, when a row of steel plates was dropped into the water in a scene broadcast across the country. The aim was to create farmland and to protect low-lying areas from floods and high tides.

Fishermen around the Ariake Sea have long blamed the project for a decline in their catches, including the collapse of shellfish harvests and damage to the cultivation of nori seaweed, and have sought to have the gates opened to let seawater flow again. Farmers on the reclaimed land oppose opening them, fearing salt damage to their crops.

Conflicting rulings

The courts produced conflicting rulings for years, some ordering the gates opened and others forbidding it. In 2023 the Supreme Court finalised a ruling that the gates need not be opened, a decision widely seen as ending the long legal battle.

The current suit, the fourth in a series filed by Nagasaki fishermen, was brought in 2019. Rulings rejecting the opening of the gates have been finalised in the first three.

Why the visit matters

On-site inspections are relatively rare in civil suits, and the plaintiffs had asked for one so that the judges could see the bay for themselves. Whatever the outcome, the case keeps alive a dispute that has divided the region for nearly three decades.

ELSEWHERE IN TODAY'S PAPER

US inflation 3.7%, Page 8.

Disaster mail hacked, Page 10.

Self-copying AI warning, Page 10.

DeNA 2, Hanshin 0, Page 17.

Editorial: FORTRAN at 70, Page 20.

Weather: the map and the forecast, Page 14.

Crossword, Page 18.

SOCIETY

SOCIETY

Principals Say Teachers Have Enough Time to Prepare Lessons; Most Teachers Disagree, Tokyo Survey Finds

Six in ten principals say there is enough preparation time, against about three in ten teachers; homeroom teachers feel the squeeze most

By the Society Desk

Principals and teachers in Tokyo's public schools see the pressures of the job very differently, according to a survey by the Tokyo Metropolitan Board of Education.

Asked whether their schools provided enough time to prepare lessons, 61.3 per cent of principals and 56.6 per cent of vice-principals agreed or somewhat agreed. Among chief and instructing teachers the figure was 32.6 per cent, and among senior teachers 29.3 per cent.

The survey

The board surveyed all teachers at public schools in Tokyo in July and August. It received 32,077 valid responses, a response rate of 46.5 per cent. Overall, 35.7 per cent said they had enough time to prepare lessons.

Time for pupils

The same gap appeared on time for responding to pupils' worries and consultations. Around 50 to 60 per cent of principals and vice-principals said there was enough, compared with about 40 per cent of chief and instructing teachers.

Homeroom teachers were more likely than other staff to say they lacked time both for preparing lessons and for counselling pupils.

Long hours

Long working hours have become one of the most serious problems facing Japanese schools, contributing to a shortage of teachers and falling numbers of applicants. Reforms in recent years have sought to reduce paperwork and the burden of supervising club activities.

What the gap means

Education experts say that when managers believe conditions are adequate while those doing the work disagree, reforms aimed at cutting hours can stall. The board is expected to use the findings in its plans for reducing teachers' workloads.

Next steps

The survey's results suggest that measures such as hiring support staff and simplifying administrative tasks need to reach classroom teachers, especially those responsible for homerooms, if they are to make a difference.

SOCIETY

Poisonous Mushrooms Look Just Like Edible Ones: The Health Ministry's Autumn Warning to Foragers

More than 540 people were poisoned in the decade to 2025; the tsukiyotake, mistaken for shiitake and hiratake, causes the most cases

By the Society Desk

The Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare is warning people heading into the hills this autumn not to eat poisonous mushrooms that closely resemble edible varieties.

Mushroom poisoning occurs every year, mostly in autumn. Between 2016 and 2025 more than 540 people were sickened, and there were deaths, according to the ministry.

When they sprout

Many mushrooms appear when a hot summer is followed by moderate rain and cooler mornings and evenings, the ministry says, conditions that have been seen in many parts of the country this year.

The usual suspects

The mushroom most often mistaken for an edible one is the tsukiyotake, which looks like the hiratake, or oyster mushroom, and the shiitake. The kusaurabenitake has also caused many cases and is easily confused with the prized honshimeji and the hatakeshimeji. The tengutake and the deadly dokutsurutake, or destroying angel, also require great care.

The symptoms

Symptoms such as vomiting and diarrhoea can begin 30 minutes to an hour after eating, and severe cases

can be fatal.

The advice

The ministry stresses that people should not assume they can tell the difference. If there is any doubt about whether a mushroom is edible, it should not be picked, eaten, sold or given to others. Identification from images on the internet should not be relied on.

Local health centres in some areas can check mushrooms brought in by foragers. Anyone who feels ill after eating wild mushrooms should seek medical help at once and, if possible, take any remaining mushrooms with them.

A safer option

For those who simply enjoy autumn's flavours, the safest mushrooms are those bought from shops and markets, where cultivated varieties dominate.

SOCIETY

Around Japan: Scarecrow Ohtanis in Iwate, 100,000 Salvias Beneath Mount Daisen, and a Rocket Base in Tokachi

By the Society Desk

Short reports from around the country.

Iwate

A scarecrow festival at the Shiwa Furusato Center, a farm produce shop in the town of Shiwa, features 82 figures made by local farmers from old clothes and farm materials, among them Shohei Ohtani of the Los Angeles Dodgers, who comes from Iwate, his teammate Roki Sasaki, also from the prefecture, and the hero of the television drama VIVANT. The Ohtani scarecrow, with bold eyebrows and round eyes, won an effort prize in a popularity vote. The head of the producers' co-operative said visitors smiled as they debated whether the figures looked like the real thing, and that he hoped they would enjoy that moment. The festival runs until November 3.

Tottori

About 100,000 red salvias are in full bloom on the Flower Hill at Tottori Hanakairo, the prefectural flower park in the town of Nanbu, with Mount Daisen, the highest peak in the Chugoku region, behind them. The display covers about 10,000 square metres and can be seen until early November, and cosmos and roses are also at their best.

Hokkaido

The town of Taiki in Tokachi unveiled LC1, Hokkaido's first launch site for satellite rockets, at a ceremony on Wednesday. Interstellar Technologies, a rocket company based in the town, will soon begin using its assembly building and aims for a launch next fiscal year.

Asahikawa

Part of a building's outer wall fell into the Kaimono Koen pedestrian shopping street in Asahikawa on Wednesday, and strong wind is thought to have been the cause, the Hokkaido Shimbun reported.

Newspaper Week

Newspaper Week begins today. To mark it, the Japan Newspaper Association and its members interviewed Kenta Kawabe, the former chairman of LY Corp., the company behind LINE and Yahoo Japan, who said fact-checked journalism matters more than ever when AI can easily produce convincing falsehoods. (Report in the Culture pages.)

SPORTS

DeNA Shut Out Hanshin 2-0 at Koshien to Level the Central League Final Stage, Wiping Out the Champions' One-Win Head Start

Taira holds the Tigers to three hits in five and two-thirds innings, Sano homers and the bullpen escapes a seventh-inning jam; Hanshin's heart of the order goes hitless

By Oliver Brooks | Sports Desk Editor

The Yokohama DeNA BayStars beat the Hanshin Tigers 2-0 at Koshien Stadium on Wednesday in the first game of the Central League Climax Series final stage, drawing level in a series the champions began with a one-win advantage.

DeNA, third in the regular season, needed only three hits. They scored first, in the opening inning, on a run-scoring hit by Toshiro Miyazaki, and added a second run when Keita Sano hit a home run in the sixth, Kyodo News reported.

Taira's command

Kentaro Taira, DeNA's starter, allowed three hits in five and two-thirds innings, and the bullpen kept the Tigers scoreless the rest of the way, with Reynolds recording the save, according to Nippon Television.

Hanshin out-hit DeNA seven to three but never found the decisive blow. Their best chance came in the seventh, when they put runners on first and second with nobody out, only for the first three batters in the order to be retired in turn.

Shota Morishita and Teruaki Sato, the heart of the Tigers' order, went a combined 0 for 7.

A familiar threat

DeNA reached the final stage by beating the Yomiuri Giants two games to none in the first stage, and they have now won all three of their play-off games this autumn. The BayStars won the Japan Series as the Central League's third-placed team in 2024, a precedent the Tigers will not need reminding of.

The format

Hanshin, champions for the second year running, started the series with one win credited for winning the pennant, so the series now stands at one win each. The first team to four wins, counting the advantage, goes through to the Japan Series, and the series can run to six games.

Game 2

Game 2 is at 6 p.m. today at Koshien, with Hanshin expected to start Takahashi. Games 4 and 5, if needed, are at 2 p.m. on Saturday and Sunday.

The stakes

The Tigers dominated the regular season and will be under pressure to avoid the stumble that has befallen strong champions in short series before. For DeNA, a team that seems to save its best for October, a second win at Koshien would put the champions on the brink.

SPORTS

SoftBank Score Five in the Fourth, Helped by Two Fighters Errors, to Beat Nippon-Ham 6-4 and Move Within Two Wins of a Third Straight Japan Series

Shoji's bases-loaded single ties the game and Kondo's double puts the Hawks ahead; seven pitchers protect the lead after Moineau leaves early

By Haruto Yamamoto | Sports Reporter

The Fukuoka SoftBank Hawks came from behind to beat the Hokkaido Nippon-Ham Fighters 6-4 at Mizuho PayPay Dome on Wednesday in the first game of the Pacific League Climax Series final stage, scoring five runs in a single inning.

Trailing 3-1 going into the fourth, the Hawks sent ten batters to the plate. With the bases loaded and one out, Yudai Shoji lined a single to right that tied the score, and Kensuke Kondo followed with a run-scoring double, Kyodo News reported.

Costly errors

Two errors by the Fighters in the inning, a wild throw and a dropped ball, together with two walks or hit batsmen, opened the door, the Hokkaido Shimbun reported, calling it a fourth inning from which the Fighters never recovered.

Early exit

The Hawks' starter, Livan Moineau, lasted only two and two-thirds innings and allowed three runs, but SoftBank used seven pitchers in all and held on to win.

Two wins away

SoftBank, Pacific League champions for the third successive year, began the series with a two-win advantage under a new rule for a champion that finishes at least ten games ahead of the second-placed team. With Wednesday's victory they have three wins and need two more to reach the Japan Series for a third year running.

Nippon-Ham, third in the regular season, reached the final stage by beating the Saitama Seibu Lions. They now need to win five of the remaining games, a task that leaves almost no margin for error.

Game 2

Game 2 is at 6 p.m. today in Fukuoka. Naoyuki Uwasawa is expected to start for SoftBank and Koki Kitayama for Nippon-Ham.

The manager's view

For Hiroki Kokubo, the Hawks' manager, the evening confirmed the depth of a team that can absorb a short start by its ace and still win, and the crowd at Mizuho PayPay Dome celebrated the big inning as if the pennant were being won again.

The winner's prize

The Japan Series opens on October 24 at the home ground of the Central League's representative.

SPORTS

Asia University Win the Tohto League for the 28th Time and the First in Nine Seasons, Beating Kokugakuin 5-3 for an Eighth Straight Win

The captain drives in the go-ahead run in the ninth at Jingu; Asia go on to the Meiji Jingu Tournament next month

By the Sports Desk

Asia University won the autumn title of the Tohto University Baseball League on Wednesday, beating Kokugakuin University 5-3 at Jingu Stadium for their 28th league championship and their first in nine seasons.

The victory, in the second game of a doubleheader, was Asia's second in a row against Kokugakuin and their eighth straight since the season opened, Kyodo News reported.

The winning hit

The captain, Takara Yamasato, drove in the go-ahead run in the ninth inning, the Mainichi Shimbun reported, before Asia held on to clinch the title.

Settled on percentage

Chuo University could still finish level with Asia on points, but Asia's higher winning percentage means the championship is already decided.

A powerhouse returns

Asia were long one of the dominant teams in the Tohto league, which is known for its strength in depth and for the number of players it sends to professional baseball. Nine seasons without a title, an unusually long gap for the university, made Wednesday's celebrations on the Jingu field all the more emotional.

Next stop

Asia will represent the Tohto league in the Meiji Jingu Tournament, the national championship for university and corporate-league champions, which begins on November 19.

The draft

The autumn season is also the final showcase for players hoping to be chosen in the professional baseball draft this autumn, and scouts have been regular visitors to Jingu throughout the league's campaign.

The league

The Tohto league, made up of universities in and around Tokyo, plays in a system of promotion and relegation between divisions, which makes every season a fight at both ends of the table.

SPORTS

Scoreboard

By the Data Desk

CLIMAX SERIES, CENTRAL, GAME 1: DeNA 2, Hanshin 0.

CLIMAX SERIES, PACIFIC, GAME 1: SoftBank 6, Nippon-Ham 4.

TOHTO LEAGUE: Asia 5, Kokugakuin 3. Asia win their 28th title.

LEVAIN CUP: Fukuoka 1, Tosu 2; Matsumoto 0, Hiroshima 1; Urawa 4, Yokohama FC 0; Kawasaki 4, Iwata 0; Cerezo Osaka 3, Tottori 2; Shimizu 1, Yokohama F. Marinos 2; FC Tokyo 0, Mito 1; Nagoya 3, Okayama 3 (Nagoya win 4-3 on penalties).

SHOGI, OZA, GAME 4 (Kobe): Hirose beat Ito in 94 moves. Series 2-2.

TRACK CYCLING WORLDS (Shanghai): Japan fourth in the men's team sprint.

NLCS GAME 3: Brewers at Dodgers, 9 a.m. today, Japan time. Brewers lead 2-0.

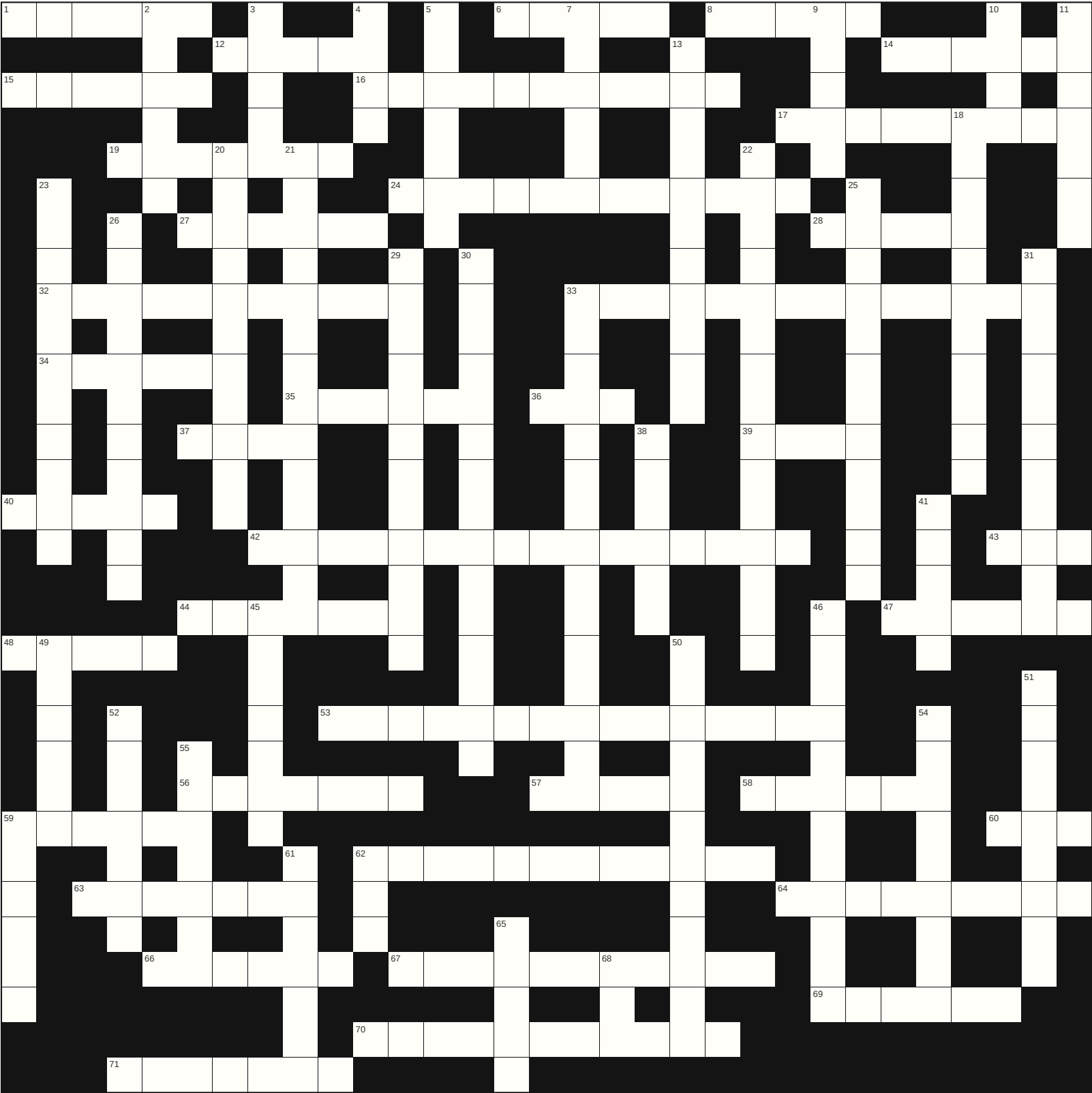
ALCS: Guardians and Rays level 1-1; Game 3 in Cleveland on Friday morning, Japan time.

TODAY: Climax Series Game 2 in both leagues, 6 p.m.

SHOGI, OZA, GAME 5: October 27 in Kofu.

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

Today's Professional Puzzle — Constructed by James O'Neill — 74 Words



Solution will appear in tomorrow's edition. Puzzle difficulty: Professional.

ACROSS

- Brand of cars made by Fuji Heavy Industries (6)
- First name of the trade minister who went after 45 days (5)
- Botnet built from cameras and routers in 2016 (5)
- Hawk whose double put SoftBank ahead (5)
- Island across the strait from Okinawa's main island (6)
- ___ watch, beginning late tonight near Denver (6)
- What small AI models may soon achieve, researchers warn (11)
- Russian all-around champion refused a visa (9)
- Warning in force in Los Angeles (12)
- Novel that won the Tanizaki Prize in 1984 (6)
- Railway testing a substation inspection robot (5)
- Grilled lamb dish served at the garden parties (11)
- France's activity bonus for low-paid workers (14)
- City that woke to 10 degrees (6)
- City where a Turkish-Japanese university opened (6)
- Prime minister whose new cabinet lost a minister within five days in 2008 (3)
- Russian state news agency (4)
- Coolants being phased down (4)
- Milanese-style dish rising to 320 yen (5)
- Discount retailer whose shares plunged after a profit fall (16)
- Robot maker whose shares rose by the daily limit (3)
- Battleship whose wreck Allen's team found in 2015 (7)
- Television drama whose hero appears among the scarecrows (6)
- University baseball league won by Asia (5)
- Britain's single monthly benefit that tapers as earnings rise (15)
- Departure point of the first Tata flight (7)
- Lois ___, only woman on the FORTRAN team (5)
- Breeders' association behind record horse sales (6)
- Rwandan capital that gave its name to the HFC amendment (6)
- Typhoon No. 21 of 2017 (3)
- ___ Technologies, rocket company in Hokkaido (12)
- Rays pitcher with six shutout innings (7)
- German town of the shipyard (9)
- Index that lost \$11.51 points (6)
- Ukrainian adviser on defence technology (11)
- The 30th named storm of 2013 (6)
- Days Kazuo Yana served as minister (11)
- Senator who said the curbs must stop immediately (7)

DOWN

- Pilat de ___, first person to ascend (6)
- Phishing kit sold alongside Iron Man (5)
- ___ prices, which exclude food and energy (4)
- Mail-order company behind Nagasaki Stadium City (7)
- Attack drones Ukraine says it can now counter less well (6)
- Mermaid who will adorn the ship's stern (5)
- DeNA's home run hitter (4)
- Thirty-four of them were placed under Microsoft's control (7)
- Landfall point of Tokage (11)
- Ibaraki naval air station visited by the Graf Zeppelin in 1929 (11)
- Mushroom most often mistaken for an edible one (11)
- Tochigi city whose assembly passed a protest resolution (14)
- Lake Constance home of the Zeppelin works (15)
- Disney ___, Japan's first Disney cruise ship (11)
- Units of the depression's central pressure (12)
- Brothers who built the first balloon to lift a person (11)
- American cruiser also found by Allen's teams (12)
- Contract chipmaker building a plant in New York (15)
- What the agriculture minister handed the prime minister on Wednesday evening (11)
- Status declared on a Japanese consul in Vladivostok in 2022 (15)
- Typhoon No. 29, now an extratropical low (6)
- Ryogoku temple chosen for the novelist's funeral (5)
- Coldest morning on today's map, at 8 degrees (7)
- Health insurer whose shares rose on Wall Street (12)
- Astronaut Takuya, also invited (6)
- Company that built an aircraft with a record wingspan (12)
- Business federation allowed a larger delegation to China (9)
- Spacecraft that still calls home (7)
- NASA lander due to fly to Titan (9)
- Iwata contractor that won both bids (7)
- Former LY Corp. chairman interviewed for Newspaper Week (6)
- Saitama city with a festival of ornate floats (7)
- Peninsula reached by Hagibis (3)
- City cloudy with rain at times (5)
- Financial group preparing an entertainment fund (3)

SPORTS

The Climax Series After Game 1

By the Data Desk

CENTRAL, GAME 1 (Koshien): DeNA 2, Hanshin 0. Series level at 1-1, counting Hanshin's one-win advantage.

WINNING PITCHER: Kentaro Taira, 5 2/3 innings, 3 hits. HOME RUN: Keita Sano (DeNA).

PACIFIC, GAME 1 (Mizuho PayPay Dome): SoftBank 6, Nippon-Ham 4. SoftBank lead 3-0, counting a two-win advantage.

THE BIG INNING: SoftBank's five-run fourth, with a tying single by Yudai Shoji and a run-scoring double by Kensuke Kondo.

TODAY: Game 2 in both leagues at 6 p.m.

PACIFIC STARTERS: Naoyuki Uwasawa (SoftBank) v Koki Kitayama (Nippon-Ham).

TO ADVANCE: Four wins in the Central; five in the Pacific, counting the advantage.

THE JAPAN SERIES: Opens October 24 at the Central League team's ground.

HITS: Hanshin out-hit DeNA seven to three but could not score.

PITCHING: SoftBank's Livan Moinelo lasted two and two-thirds innings; the Hawks used seven pitchers.

SPORTS

Ohtani Drops to Sixth in the Order as the Dodgers, Down 0-2, Turn to Snell in Game 3 Against the Brewers This Morning

It is the first time he has batted sixth since 2020; Game 4 is moved up to 9 a.m. on Friday, Japan time

By Oliver Brooks | Sports Desk Editor

Shohei Ohtani was listed sixth in the Los Angeles Dodgers' batting order for Game 3 of the National League Championship Series against the Milwaukee Brewers at Dodger Stadium, which begins at 9 a.m. today, Japan time.

It is the first time he has started in the sixth spot since 2020, the Dodgers Digest website noted. He plays as the designated hitter. The result of the game was not known when this edition went to press.

Down two games

The Dodgers trail 0-2 after losing both games in Milwaukee, 2-1 and 7-4. Ohtani is 3 for 20 in the postseason and went 0 for 4 with two strikeouts on

Monday.

Kyle Tucker bats cleanup, and Max Muncy, a left-handed hitter, sits out against the Brewers' left-handed starter, Robert Gasser, with Miguel Rojas at third base.

Snell on the mound

Blake Snell, also left-handed, starts for the Dodgers. Teams that have led a best-of-seven postseason series 2-0 have gone on to win it about 83 per cent of the time, but the Dodgers return home, where they will play Games 3, 4 and 5.

Schedule

Game 4 has been moved up an hour and starts at 9 a.m. on Friday, Japan time. Game 5, if needed, is at 10 a.m. on Saturday, Japan time.

Honours

Ohtani is a finalist for the Major League Baseball Players Association's player of the year award, and his teammates Andy Pages and Max Muncy are finalists for Gold Gloves, the awards for fielding excellence.

Yamamoto

Yoshinobu Yamamoto, who lasted only two and two-thirds innings in Game 2, would be in line to pitch again later in the series if the Dodgers extend it.

The American League

In the American League Championship Series, the Cleveland Guardians and the Tampa Bay Rays are level at one game each. Game 3 is in Cleveland on Thursday, early on Friday morning Japan time.

SPORTS

The Major League Postseason So Far

By the Data Desk

NLCS GAME 1 (Milwaukee): Brewers 2, Dodgers 1. NLCS GAME 2 (Milwaukee): Brewers 7, Dodgers 4. Brewers lead 2-0.

NLCS GAME 3 (Los Angeles): Today, 9 a.m. Japan time. Gasser v Snell.

NLCS GAME 4: Friday, 9 a.m. Japan time.

ALCS GAME 1 (Tampa Bay): Guardians 7, Rays 3. ALCS GAME 2 (Tampa Bay): Rays 3, Guardians 1. Series level 1-1.

ALCS GAME 2 STAR: Freddy Peralta, six shutout innings for the Rays.

ALCS GAME 3 (Cleveland): Friday morning, Japan

time. Griffin Jax v Gavin Williams.

OHTANI IN THE POSTSEASON: 3 for 20.

NLCS GAME 5, IF NEEDED: Saturday, 10 a.m.

Japan time.

SPORTS

Seiya Suzuki Named a Gold Glove Finalist, Bidding to Be the First Japanese Winner Since Ichiro; White Sox Want Murakami to Stay 'for a Long Time'

The Cubs right fielder is one of three National League finalists; Chicago's other club is negotiating an extension with the slugger who hit 35 home runs in his first season

By Haruto Yamamoto | Sports Reporter

Seiya Suzuki of the Chicago Cubs has been named one of three finalists for the National League Gold Glove award in right field, giving him a chance to become only the second Japanese player to win the award for fielding excellence, Kyodo News reported from Los Angeles.

The finalists were announced on Wednesday, American time. The other two play for the Arizona Diamondbacks and the New York Mets.

After Ichiro

Ichiro Suzuki is the only Japanese player to have won a Gold Glove, which he did for ten successive seasons with the Seattle Mariners from 2001. If Seiya Suzuki wins, it will be 16 years after Ichiro's last.

Suzuki, 32, is in his fifth major league season and is a finalist for the first time. Winners are chosen mainly by the votes of managers and coaches, combined with defensive statistics, and will be announced on November 1.

Murakami

Across Chicago, the White Sox are negotiating a contract extension with Munetaka Murakami, their general manager, Chris Getz, told reporters on Wednesday.

Getz said the talks were private and would be handled carefully, but called Murakami very important to the club and said he hoped the slugger would stay for a long time. Murakami is under a two-year contract that runs through next season.

A breakthrough season

Murakami hit 35 home runs and drove in 77 runs in his first major league season, and his performance helped the White Sox reach the postseason after three successive seasons of 100 or more defeats. Getz said

his first half had pushed the team into contention and exceeded expectations.

Japanese stars in America

With Ohtani, Yamamoto and Sasaki still competing for a World Series place with the Dodgers, and Suzuki and Murakami among the season's success stories, Japanese players have rarely had a larger presence in the major leagues.

SPORTS

Tosu Knock Out Avispa Fukuoka 2-1 to Be the Only Second-Division Side Left in the Levain Cup; Holders Hiroshima Edge Matsumoto

Urawa and Kawasaki win 4-0, Marinos come from behind against Shimizu, and Nagoya need penalties after a 3-3 draw with Okayama

By the Sports Desk

Sagan Tosu of the second division beat Avispa Fukuoka of J1 2-1 on Wednesday to become the only club from outside the top flight to reach the next round of the YBC Levain Cup, Kyodo News reported.

The Nikkan Sports newspaper said it was Tosu's second successive win over a J1 club in the competition.

The holders

Sanfrecce Hiroshima, the defending champions, beat Matsumoto Yamaga of the third division 1-0 at Sanpro Alwin in Matsumoto.

The other results

Urawa Reds beat Yokohama FC 4-0, and Kawasaki Frontale beat Jubilo Iwata by the same score. Cerezo Osaka beat Gainare Tottori 3-2, Yokohama F. Marinos came from behind to beat Shimizu S-Pulse 2-1, and Mito Hollyhock beat FC Tokyo 1-0.

Nagoya Grampus drew 3-3 with Fagiano Okayama and won the penalty shootout 4-3.

A Kyushu derby

Tosu's victory over Fukuoka, their neighbours across the prefectural border, will be celebrated in Saga. The two clubs' grounds are only about 30 kilometres apart, and the rivalry has been one of the fiercest in Kyushu since Tosu were in J1.

Cup magic

The Levain Cup, the league cup for J.League clubs, has a history of upsets, and the chance to beat higher-ranked opponents is one of its attractions for

SPORTS

smaller clubs and their supporters.

The calendar

The J.League has moved to an autumn-to-spring season from this year. The draw for the next round will determine whether Tosu face another J1 side.

The holders' hopes

Hiroshima won the cup last season and are trying to retain it. Their narrow win in Matsumoto was a reminder that the gap between the divisions can be small on the night.

SPORTS

Hirose Beats Ito in 94 Moves in Kobe to Level the Oza Match at 2-2 and Force a Deciding Game in Kofu

The 39-year-old challenger, a former Ryuo, keeps alive his bid to take a title from the 24-year-old holder; the fifth game is on October 27

By the Sports Desk

Akihito Hirose, the challenger, beat Takumi Ito, the holder, in the fourth game of the 74th Oza title match in Kobe on Wednesday, levelling the best-of-five series at two wins each, Kyodo News reported.

Hirose, a 39-year-old ninth dan who played second, won in 94 moves.

To the wire

The title will be decided in the fifth game, to be played in Kofu, Yamanashi Prefecture, on October 27.

Ito, 24, had led 2-1 after winning the third game, in Niseko, Hokkaido, on October 2, and could have retained the title with a win in Kobe.

The players

Hirose is a former holder of the Ryuo, one of shogi's most prestigious titles, which he took from Yoshiharu Habu in 2018. He is known for his strength in the endgame and for the depth of his preparation.

Ito belongs to the generation of young professionals who have grown up with computer analysis, and is regarded as one of the strongest rivals of Sota Fujii.

The Oza

The Oza is one of the eight major titles in professional shogi. Its title match is played over a maximum of five games, each with a time limit of five hours per player.

What to watch

Deciding games in title matches often turn on opening preparation, and both players have nearly two weeks to plan. A win for Hirose would bring him back to the ranks of title holders; a win for Ito would confirm his place at the top of the game.

SPORTS

Sports in Brief: Track Cyclists Miss a Medal in Shanghai, Volleyball Plays Abroad, and Golf's Japan Open

By the Sports Desk

Short reports from the world of sport.

Cycling

The track cycling world championships opened in Shanghai on Wednesday. Japan's men finished fourth in the team sprint, beating France in the first round before losing to China in the race for bronze. The women's team sprint team was eliminated in qualifying, finishing 18th, and both team pursuit squads were eliminated in qualifying, each finishing 11th.

Volleyball

Japan's SV League has opened its season with official matches in Thailand, part of an effort to ride the sport's popularity in Asia, Kyodo News reported, though empty seats at the overseas games have shown the challenge of building a following abroad.

Golf

The Japan Open, the men's national championship, and the Fujitsu Ladies on the women's tour are being played this week and run until Sunday.

Gymnastics

Russia's gymnastics federation said three of its women had been refused visas by the Netherlands for the world championships, among them the reigning all-around champion, Angelina Melnikova.

Baseball

The professional baseball draft is to be held later this month, and the autumn university leagues and high

school regional tournaments are giving scouts a final look at prospects.

CULTURE

In the Age of AI, Be Someone People Like: Kenta Kawabe, Who Created Yahoo Comments, on What Newspapers Must Do as Newspaper Week Begins

The former LY Corp. chairman, now running a business on his own with AI, says fact-checked reporting matters more than ever but that opinion and personality may be how papers survive

By Naomi Kato | Culture & Society Editor

Newspaper Week begins today, and to mark it the Japan Newspaper Association and its member papers interviewed Kenta Kawabe, who until June was chairman of LY Corp., the company that runs LINE and Yahoo Japan.

Mr Kawabe launched the reader comments section of Yahoo News in 2007 and has spent most of his career at the meeting point of the internet and the press. Since leaving LY Corp. he describes himself as an AI solopreneur, running a business on his own with the help of artificial intelligence, and since July he has been travelling around Japan in a camper van looking for business ideas.

Being liked

He told the interviewers that as AI makes most work highly standardised, people's decisions about whom to buy from will depend more on whether they like someone. He wants to be liked, he said, not just to be capable, according to Kyodo News.

Since September last year he has streamed a segment on his YouTube channel in which he reads the morning papers for the first time on camera and reacts to the articles.

Facts first

He said that in an age of social media, when false information spreads easily, fact-based articles by professionally trained journalists were essential, and that their value had grown now that AI could easily produce convincing fakes.

But a shrinking population makes it hard for papers to make money from facts alone, he said. Opinion pieces that reflect the personality of each paper and each writer could be one way forward, and he suggested fan-style promotion of columnists and even mascot characters representing each paper's editorial stance.

The comments section

Of Yahoo's comments, he said he had opposed one-way communication from established media to readers and had expected a backlash when he proposed letting readers post opinions. He still believed that media accepting criticism and adjusting their views was good for public debate.

How he started

Mr Kawabe began reading newspapers after a clipping assignment in his third year of high school. As a university student around 1995 he saw the word internet appearing again and again in the papers, which sparked his interest, and he founded a mobile internet company while still a student. It later merged with Yahoo Japan, which he joined in 2000.

Why papers matter

He said newspapers matter because they provide reporting backed by facts and a range of viewpoints, both of which support democracy. Newspaper Week runs until October 21.

CULTURE

Nintendo to Open a 'Super Family Restaurant' at Its Museum in Uji, With a 4,900-Yen Platter Decorated in the Style of the Nintendo 64

Mario characters greet diners at the entrance and a three-dimensional Link watches over the room; only museum visitors can eat there

By the Culture Desk

Nintendo will open a restaurant called the Super Family Restaurant at the Nintendo Museum in Uji, Kyoto Prefecture, in November, Kyodo News reported.

The restaurant will open on set days and only visitors to the museum, an exhibition and hands-on facility, will be able to eat there.

The decor

Characters from the Super Mario games will greet diners at the entrance, and the dining room will

feature a three-dimensional figure of Link, the hero of The Legend of Zelda series.

The menu

The centrepiece is Pakupaku Island, a large platter of meat and fish priced at 4,900 yen and decorated with illustrations in the style of the Nintendo 64, the home console released in 1996. Pasta in two flavours costs 2,600 yen, and a children's plate 1,200 yen.

The museum

The Nintendo Museum opened in October 2024 on the site of a former Nintendo factory in Uji, south of Kyoto, where the company once made its hanafuda playing cards and other products. Its exhibits trace the company's history from cards and toys to video game consoles, and visitors can play interactive games.

Nintendo itself was founded in Kyoto in 1889 by Fusajiro Yamauchi as a maker of hanafuda cards, and the museum's displays begin with the cards that made its name.

Tickets are sold by advance lottery or reservation, and the museum has drawn visitors from around the world.

Nintendo's world

The restaurant is the latest step in Nintendo's expansion beyond games into films, theme park areas and physical spaces built around its characters. Fans have queued for attractions based on the company's games in Osaka, Hollywood and Orlando.

A family theme

The name echoes the Japanese family restaurant, a staple of postwar dining, and the Nintendo Entertainment System, known in Japan as the Family Computer, or Famicom, which brought the company's games into Japanese living rooms from 1983.

CULTURE

Quotes of the Day

By the Data Desk

"I am the one who made the appointment. Responsibility for appointing him rests with me." Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi, on the resignation of her agriculture minister.

"If there are spies, they will be caught." Dmitry Peskov, the Kremlin's spokesman, on the detention of a Hokkaido Shimibun reporter.

"Any limits on speed or usage are decided by the US military and ultimately" the president. Elon Musk, on restrictions to Starlink service in Ukraine.

"Small AI models may be months away." Anthropic researchers, on the prospect of AI that copies itself across home devices.

"There is no such thing as a perfect guard." Koji Sato, chairman of the Japan Automobile Manufacturers Association, on cyberattacks on connected cars.

"Absolutely unacceptable." Toshimitsu Motegi, the foreign minister, on a Chinese delegation's visit to Etorofu.

"Almost no members of the public are convinced." Hirofumi Yoshimura, leader of the Japan Innovation Party, on the agriculture minister before his resignation.

"Doubts have not been dispelled, and this must not be allowed to end here." Junko Kawamata, mayor of Nasukarasuyama.

"A big mistake." President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, on the Starlink restrictions, which he said would bring a lot of human losses.

"It is not zero, but it is not certain either." Jessica Ji of Georgetown University, on the chance of self-replicating AI spreading across devices.

CULTURE

October 15 in History

By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

1582: The Gregorian calendar takes effect in Italy, Spain, Portugal and Poland; the day before was October 4.

1783: Pilatre de Rozier makes the first human ascent, in a tethered balloon in Paris.

1815: Napoleon begins his exile on Saint Helena.

1910: Edwin O. Reischauer, the scholar of Japan who later served as American ambassador in Tokyo, is born in Tokyo.

1917: Mata Hari is executed by a French firing squad as a German spy.

1923: Germany introduces the Rentenmark to fight hyperinflation.

1946: Hermann Goering kills himself hours before his scheduled execution at Nuremberg.

1956: IBM issues the reference manual for FORTRAN.

1966: The Black Panther Party is founded in Oakland, California.

1990: Mikhail Gorbachev is named winner of the Nobel Peace Prize.

1997: The Cassini spacecraft is launched towards Saturn.

2002: Five Japanese abducted by North Korea return home, 24 years after they were taken.

2003: China launches its first crewed spaceflight, Shenzhou 5.

CULTURE

Festivals and Events This Week

By the Culture Desk

HIMEJI, HYOGO: The Nada no Kenka Matsuri, the fighting festival of Matsubara Hachiman Shrine, ends today with portable shrines clashed together.

CHIBA: CEATEC 2026 at Makuhari Messe, until Friday.

NIIHAMA, EHIME: The Niihama Taiko Matsuri, with towering decorated floats, from Friday to Sunday.

KAWAGOE, SAITAMA: The Kawagoe Matsuri, with ornate floats in the old merchant district, on Saturday and Sunday.

SHIWA, IWATE: Scarecrow festival at the Shiwa Furusato Center, until November 3.

NANBU, TOTTORI: Autumn festival at Tottori Hanakairo, with 100,000 red salvias, until November 1.

KUSATSU, GUNMA: The Yugama crater lake on Mount Kusatsu-Shirane, open to visitors again after an eight-year restriction.

KYOTO: The Jidai Matsuri, the festival of the ages, on Thursday, October 22.

KYOTO: The Kurama Fire Festival, with giant torches carried through the mountain village, on the night of October 22.

ISE, MIE: The Kannamesai, the Ise Grand Shrine's festival offering the year's first rice, until Saturday.

NATIONWIDE: Newspaper Week, until October 21.

TOKYO: The autumn garden party at the Akasaka Imperial Gardens, by invitation, on October 29.

CULTURE

Words of the Week

By Hana Ito | Research & Archive

NINMEI SEKININ: Responsibility for an appointment. The phrase prime ministers use when a minister they chose has to go.

JININ: Resignation from a post. Kazuo Yana's lasted 28 days before his.

MONSEKI KETSUGI: A censure motion, the upper house's way of rebuking a minister without forcing him out.

HIKAKU SANGENSOKU: The three non-nuclear principles: not possessing, not producing and not permitting the introduction of nuclear weapons.

GENSHIRYOKU SENSUIKAN: A nuclear-powered submarine, which the prime minister says will be considered concretely and realistically.

KYUFU-TSUKI ZEIGAKU KOJO: A tax credit that pays out to those whose tax is too small to absorb it.

KANSEI DANGO: Bid-rigging with the involvement of officials.

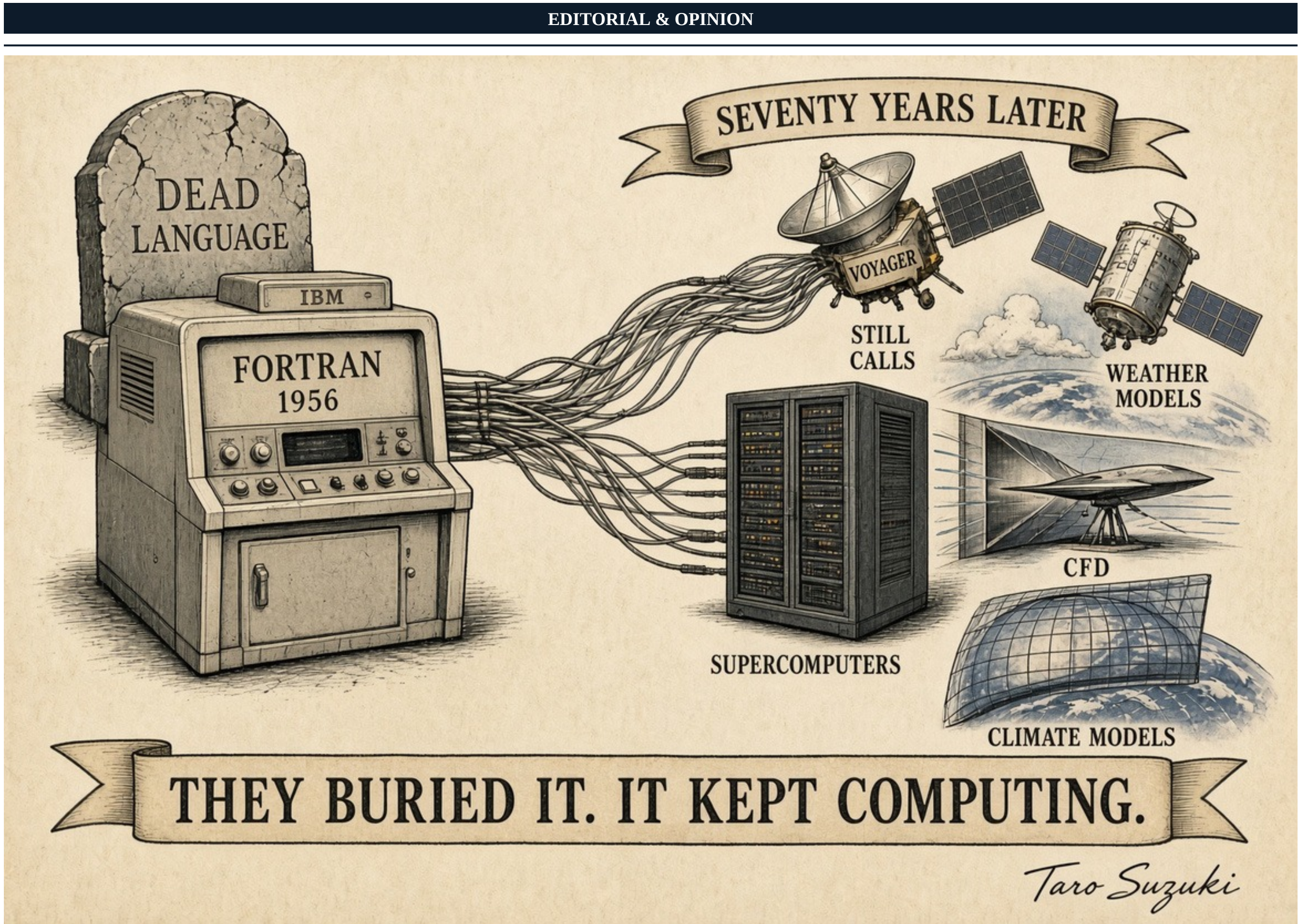
NAIKO NO SEDAI: The Introverted Generation, the writers, among them Senji Kuroi, who turned inward in the 1970s.

FUKUSHUTO: A vice-capital, the role Hokkaido and Osaka seek in case Tokyo is disabled by disaster.

SHINBUN SHUKAN: Newspaper Week, which begins today.

TSUKIYOTAKE: The mushroom most often mistaken for an edible one; it glows faintly in the dark.

KAKASHI: A scarecrow. Iwate's festival has 82 of them, Shohei Ohtani among them.



Editorial cartoon by Taro Suzuki for The Japan Morning Post.

EDITORIAL

They Buried It. It Kept Computing. Seventy Years of FORTRAN, and What a 'Dead' Language Teaches a Country Afraid of Its Old Machines

On October 15, 1956, IBM published the manual for a programming language that experts have been declaring obsolete for half a century. It still forecasts our weather, models our climate and designs our aircraft. Japan, wrestling with ageing systems, fragile suppliers and code that may soon copy itself, should study why

By Samantha Ortiz | Editorial Page Editor

Taro Suzuki's cartoon on this page needs little explanation, and that is its genius. On the left, a grey IBM console marked FORTRAN 1956 sits in front of a cracked tombstone engraved DEAD LANGUAGE. From the back of the console, a thick bundle of cables runs across the page to the things that a modern society depends on: a cabinet of supercomputers, a weather satellite over a swirl of cloud, an aircraft in a wind tunnel labelled CFD, a globe criss-crossed by the grid of a climate model, and the Voyager spacecraft, which, the caption notes, still calls. Above it all, a banner reads SEVENTY YEARS LATER. Below, the verdict: THEY BURIED IT. IT KEPT COMPUTING.

Seventy years ago today, on October 15, 1956, IBM issued the Programmer's Reference Manual for the FORTRAN Automatic Coding System for its 704 computer. The first compiler followed in April 1957. A language that was meant to make life easier for scientists and engineers has outlived the machine it was written for by decades, the company's early rivals, several generations of its critics and a good many of the fashions that were supposed to replace it. This is not an exercise in nostalgia. FORTRAN's long life raises questions that matter urgently in Japan this autumn: about how we treat the old systems on which daily life still runs, about the people who understand them, about the dangers of depending on a single supplier, and about our responsibility for software that will outlast the people who write it. This week's news has touched on every one of those questions.

What Backus promised

In the early 1950s, programming a computer meant writing long sequences of instructions in the machine's own code, or in a symbolic assembly language barely removed from it. Each program was tied to a particular machine. The work was slow, expensive and full of errors, and the cost of the programmers and the time they spent finding

mistakes could rival the cost of the computer itself.

In late 1953 John Backus, a programmer at IBM, proposed something more ambitious: a system that would let scientists write their problems in something close to the notation of mathematics, and leave the machine to translate it into efficient instructions. He assembled a small team, among them Richard Goldberg, Sheldon Best, Harlan Herrick, Roy Nutt, Irving Ziller, Lois Haibt and David Sayre. Many experienced programmers doubted it could work. Earlier attempts at automatic programming had produced code so slow that experts preferred to write by hand.

Backus and his colleagues understood that a convenient language would be worthless if its programs ran badly, so they devoted much of their effort to making the compiler produce fast code. They succeeded. FORTRAN programs ran nearly as fast as those written by hand, and took a fraction of the time to write. The language spread from IBM's machines to those of other manufacturers, became the first to be formally standardised in the United States, in 1966, and turned computing from a craft practised by a few specialists into a tool used by thousands of scientists and engineers.

Backus received the Turing Award, computing's highest honour, in 1977. Fittingly, he used his Turing lecture, published in 1978, to criticise the style of programming that FORTRAN had helped establish and to argue for something better. The people who build lasting things are often their own sternest critics.

The funeral that never happened

The obituaries began early. In 1975 the Dutch computer scientist Edsger Dijkstra, one of the most influential figures in the field, wrote that FORTRAN, then nearly 20 years old, was hopelessly inadequate for whatever computer application you had in mind. Generations of students were taught that it was a

relic, and newer languages arrived with promises to replace it: Pascal, C, C++, Java, Python and many more.

Some of those promises came true in particular fields. Few people today would write a web browser or a smartphone app in Fortran, as the language has been spelt since the 1990s. But the funeral never quite took place. The language was revised again and again, through standards issued in 1977, 1990, 1995, 2003, 2008 and 2018, acquiring modules, array operations, object-oriented features and support for parallel computing. The latest international standard, Fortran 2023, was published three years ago.

Meanwhile the programs written in it kept running, and kept being extended, because they did what they were meant to do, and did it fast.

Where it lives now

The cartoonist's cables are not an exaggeration. Numerical weather prediction, the calculation of tomorrow's weather from today's observations by solving the equations of the atmosphere on a vast grid, remains one of the strongholds of Fortran. The models run by major forecasting centres, among them the European Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasts, Britain's Met Office and America's National Weather Service, are written largely in the language. The forecast you consulted this morning almost certainly passed through code whose ancestry runs back to the 1950s.

The same is true of climate science. Many of the global climate models whose projections inform the reports of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, including models developed in Japan, are written largely in Fortran, and have been refined over decades by scientists who needed above all to trust their results.

The language is woven into the history of the supercomputer itself. The benchmark used to rank the world's fastest machines grew out of LINPACK, a library of Fortran routines for solving systems of linear equations published in 1979. Jack Dongarra, one of its authors, received the Turing Award in 2021. Japan's own Fugaku, which topped the world rankings from 2020 to 2021, runs scientific codes in Fortran among other languages, as every major supercomputer must.

Engineers use computational fluid dynamics, the

simulation of air and water flowing around objects, to design aircraft wings, car bodies, ships and turbines. Many of the codes used for that work began in Fortran, and a good number are still maintained in it, because they have been tested against wind tunnels and real flights over many years.

Japan's part in the story

Japan has its own chapter in this history. In the 1980s Fujitsu, Hitachi and NEC built vector supercomputers that competed with the best American machines, and they were designed above all to run Fortran programs quickly, because that was what their scientific customers wrote. In 2002 the Earth Simulator, built by NEC for research on the climate and the solid Earth, became the fastest computer in the world, a position it held for more than two years. The shock in the United States was such that some commentators called it Computenik, after the Soviet satellite that had shaken American confidence in 1957.

Its successors, the K computer in 2011 and Fugaku in 2020, also reached the top of the world rankings, and much of the scientific code that Japanese meteorologists, oceanographers and engineers run on such machines continues to be written in Fortran.

And then there is Voyager. The two spacecraft launched by NASA in 1977 are now the most distant human-made objects, beyond the edge of the bubble of the solar wind, and they still send data home. In 2024 engineers revived Voyager 1's ability to send usable science data after months of garbled transmissions, by working out how to move code around the memory of a computer designed half a century ago. The cartoonist's point stands: the oldest systems are not always the ones that have stopped working.

Why it survived

Why has a language that so many experts consigned to history proved so durable? The reasons are worth understanding, because they apply far beyond scientific computing.

The first is that Fortran did one job extremely well. It was designed for numerical calculation, and its compilers have been refined for seven decades to turn arithmetic on large arrays of numbers into fast machine code. Languages designed for other purposes have caught up in many respects, but for the heaviest numerical work, Fortran remains

EDITORIAL & OPINION

competitive.

The second is trust. A weather model or a structural analysis program is not just code; it is a record of decades of scientific judgment, checked against observations and corrected when it went wrong. Rewriting it in a newer language risks introducing errors that may take years to find, in calculations on which lives and fortunes depend. Scientists are rightly reluctant to throw away code that has earned their confidence.

The third is cost. Large scientific programs can contain millions of lines. Translating them is expensive, and the result, if all goes well, is a program that does exactly what the old one did. Funding bodies have rarely been eager to pay for that.

The fourth is that the language did not stand still. Its standards committees kept it alive by adding features without breaking old programs. That combination of continuity and renewal is rarer than it should be in technology, where the temptation is always to start again.

The fifth is that standards made the language portable. A program written to the standard could be moved from one manufacturer's machine to another's, which encouraged users to invest in it and to share their code. Libraries of routines for linear algebra, statistics and differential equations, refined by thousands of scientists, became a common inheritance that no single company owned.

The cost of pretending the old is gone

There is, however, a darker side to the story of durable software, and it is one with which Japan is uncomfortably familiar. Old systems keep running whether or not anyone still understands them. When they fail, or must be changed, the absence of that understanding can be expensive.

In April 2020, as the coronavirus pandemic sent unemployment claims soaring, the governor of New Jersey appealed publicly for volunteers who knew COBOL, a business programming language of the same era as Fortran, because the state's benefits system, written in it decades earlier, could not cope. The language was not the problem. The problem was that the state had allowed the knowledge needed to maintain its own system to wither.

Japan has had its own warnings. In 2018 the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry published a report on digital transformation that warned of a 2025 digital cliff: if companies failed to modernise ageing, complex and poorly documented systems, it said, the economy could suffer losses of up to 12 trillion yen a year from 2025. The cliff did not arrive as a single event, but the warning was sound. In 2021 a series of system failures at Mizuho, one of the country's largest banks, which at one point left customers' cards trapped in cash machines, led regulators to order the bank to improve its management of its systems.

Local governments are in the middle of a national project to standardise their core information systems, which has seen delays in some municipalities. Railway companies, utilities and hospitals all depend on software written years ago by people who have since retired.

The lesson of Fortran is not that old systems are good and new ones bad. It is that age is not the measure that matters. What matters is whether a system is understood, maintained, documented and tested, and whether there are people who can change it safely. A seventy-year-old language in the hands of experts who know it intimately can be more reliable than a system installed last year that nobody fully understands.

This week's warnings

This week's news brought those questions home in new forms.

On Wednesday the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications said that 110 local governments had reported leaks or suspended services after a cyberattack on a single company in Osaka Prefecture that sends disaster warnings by email on their behalf. Up to about 3.1 million residents' addresses may have been exposed. Earlier this month, a ransomware attack on a cloud provider disrupted hundreds of companies and public bodies at once. In both cases, the systems were not old. The weakness lay in concentration: many organisations had placed something essential with one provider, without, in some cases, keeping a way to carry on if that provider failed.

The cartoon's bundle of cables is a reminder that

modern infrastructure is layered. The newest services rest on older ones, and every layer depends on someone keeping it working. When a single cable carries too much, its failure cascades.

Then there is the warning, published this week by researchers at the AI company Anthropic, that small AI models may within months be able to copy themselves across poorly secured household devices. Experts disagree about how imminent or serious that threat is, and some called the report overstated. But the weaknesses it describes are old ones: devices sold with default passwords, rarely updated and left connected for years. Software that outlives the attention of its makers has always been a security problem. Software that could act on its own would make that problem more serious.

Criminals, too, understand the value of durable tools. The phishing kits dismantled this week by the National Police Agency and Microsoft had been used to build about half of the roughly 120,000 fake websites imitating Japanese companies that the police confirmed last year. Useful software and harmful software share a property: once written, they spread, and they persist until someone takes deliberate action.

Fortran's history suggests a principle that applies to all these cases. Code is not a product that is finished when it ships. It is something that will be used, depended on and built upon long after its authors have moved on. Whoever writes it, whether a team at IBM in the 1950s, a contractor for a town hall today or, increasingly, an AI system, takes on a responsibility to the people who will rely on it in decades to come.

The people who keep it running

The romance of technology lies with invention. The reality lies with maintenance. The engineers who coaxed Voyager back into sending data, the meteorologists who refine weather models line by line, and the programmers who keep banking and benefit systems running are rarely celebrated, and their work is often the first to be cut when budgets are tight.

Japan's demographic situation makes that neglect dangerous. The people who built many of the country's critical systems in the 1970s and 1980s are retiring. Their knowledge, often undocumented, leaves with them. The shortage of IT workers that the government has warned about for years is not only a shortage of people who can build new things; it is a shortage of people who can look after the old ones.

Universities and research institutes have begun to recognise the role of research software engineers, specialists who write and maintain the code on which science depends. Their careers remain precarious in many places, including Japan, where software is often treated as a by-product of research rather than an asset to be cared for.

It is worth remembering, too, who built FORTRAN in the first place. Lois Haibt, who joined Backus's team in the mid-1950s at the age of 21, was its only woman, at a time when programming was an occupation in which women were more common than they would later become. Efforts to bring more women into computing and research, including the choice this autumn of the first woman to lead the University of Tokyo, have a longer history than is often assumed, and a stronger case.

What Japan should do

We would draw five conclusions from seventy years of a language that refused to die.

First, governments and companies should stop treating age as a reason to replace systems and start treating understanding as the measure of risk. Every critical system should have an owner who knows how it works, documentation that a newcomer can follow and tests that show it still does what it should. Systems that fail that test should be fixed or replaced, whatever their age.

Second, public procurement should value maintainability and resilience, not only the lowest price for initial delivery. The disaster email case shows the cost of concentrating essential services with a single supplier. Local governments should be required to keep an alternative means of warning residents, and national guidelines should limit how much personal data such services store.

Third, the maintenance of software that underpins science and public services deserves funding in its own right. Weather and climate models, structural analysis codes and the libraries on which they rely

are public goods. The Ministry of Education and research funding bodies should support the people who maintain them with stable careers.

Fourth, universities should teach the craft of reading and maintaining existing code alongside the excitement of writing new code. Most programmers will spend more of their working lives changing software written by others than writing their own from scratch. Numerical computing, including the languages in which much of it is written, deserves a place in the curriculum.

Fifth, as AI systems begin to write and run code themselves, those who build and deploy them must accept the same responsibility as Backus's team did: to make tools that are reliable, that can be understood and checked, and that do not escape the control of the people who depend on them. Device makers, too, must design products that can be updated for as long as they are in use, and buyers, including government agencies, should insist on it.

Seventy years on

There is a wry humility in the cartoon. The tombstone was carved by people confident that the future had moved on. The future, it turned out, was still running on the thing they had buried.

The same will be true of what we build today. Some of the code written this year, by people or by machines, will still be running in 2096, in systems we cannot imagine, maintained by people not yet born. Whether it serves them well depends on choices we make now: to build carefully, to document honestly, to keep the knowledge alive and to respect the unglamorous work of keeping things running.

Seventy years ago today, a group of programmers at IBM published a manual for a language that would let scientists write formulas instead of machine code. They could not have known that their work would still be forecasting the weather in 2026. It is a reminder that the most important question about any technology is not how new it is, but whether it works, and whether someone still knows how to keep it working.

Takaichi's Resignation Problem Was Not Yana's Remarks but the Week She Spent Defending Him

The prime minister was right to accept responsibility; she should now show what she has learned, starting with how her new minister was vetted

By William | Senior Political Analyst

Kazuo Yana's resignation was inevitable from the moment his own account of the free buses began to unravel. What was not inevitable was the week it took to arrive.

When the recording of his remarks about road budgets became public, Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi chose to keep him, telling him on October 8 to repay the public through his work. It was a defensible instinct. A minister who withdraws a foolish remark and apologises deserves a chance, and a prime minister who dismisses colleagues at the first sign of trouble invites a stream of demands for more.

But the facts kept moving against him. The magazine report on the buses raised a question not of words but of law. His explanation in the Budget Committee on Tuesday, that his staff had checked with the election commission in advance, collapsed within a day. By Wednesday morning the Democratic Party for the People was refusing to debate the government's flagship tax bill while he stayed, and even the Japan Innovation Party, the Liberal Democrats' partner, was saying that almost no one believed him.

The cost of delay

Each day Ms Takaichi stood by him, the story moved closer to her. The question became less what Mr Yana had said in Otawara in May than what the prime minister knew, and when, and why she had appointed him. An NHK poll found 78 per cent of respondents unconvinced by his explanation.

She has now said, plainly, that responsibility for the appointment is hers. That is the right thing to say. It is also, in Japanese politics, a phrase that costs nothing unless it is followed by something.

What should follow

Three things would give her words substance. The first is the choice of successor, to be announced today. The agriculture ministry faces a heavy agenda, from the food tax cut to rice policy, and the new minister must be someone whose record has been

examined with the care that Mr Yana's evidently was not.

The second is an honest account of the vetting. Opposition parties will ask whether the prime minister's office knew of the remarks or the buses in September. A straightforward answer, even an embarrassing one, would do less damage than weeks of evasion.

The third is to leave the legal questions where they belong. Whether the buses broke the election law is for investigators to decide, as Ms Takaichi has said. Mr Yana remains a member of the Diet and should explain himself there, as she has urged. The government should neither shield him nor prejudge him.

The tax bill

With the main obstacle removed, the governing parties want the consumption tax bills debated from October 20. They should resist the temptation to rush. The opposition's questions about how the cut and the accompanying payment will be paid for are legitimate, and a government that has just lost a minister would do well to show it can listen.

Ms Takaichi still has a solid base of support. She will keep it if this episode is remembered as a mistake corrected, not the first of a series.

ANALYSIS

Russia Owes Japan Consular Access, Evidence and the Basic Respect Due to a Reporter

Tokyo should press its case firmly and with allies, while keeping open the channels a detained citizen needs

By Jonathan Mercer | Senior Editor, International Desk

Two days after Russia's security service announced the detention of a Hokkaido Shimbun correspondent on Sakhalin, the Japanese government still had not been able to contact him. That alone is a reason for concern.

Under the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations, to which both countries are party, a detained foreigner's consulate must be informed without delay if he asks, and consular officers have the right to visit him. Japan has asked three times, through its embassy, its consulate in Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk and the Russian ambassador in Tokyo. Russia has so far offered only one-sided statements to its own media and a video of the arrest.

A reporter is not a spy

The allegation, that the correspondent collected information on how many Kuril Islands residents had been mobilised or had volunteered for the war in Ukraine, describes the kind of question any journalist covering the region might ask. Counting the human cost of a war is reporting, not espionage.

Russia has a record of using espionage charges against foreigners who later become bargaining chips. That record is why the Kremlin's assurance that if there are spies, they will be caught persuades no one outside Russia.

What Japan should do

The government has done the right things so far: it has protested, requested information and asked for humane treatment. It should now do three more.

First, it should insist publicly and repeatedly on consular access, and make clear that each day without it will be recorded and raised. Second, it should enlist its partners. The Group of Seven and the many governments whose own citizens and journalists have been detained in Russia have an interest in resisting the use of journalists as hostages. Third, it should keep channels open. Japan and Russia are neighbours with fisheries, energy and the fate of the Northern Territories to discuss. A detained citizen needs his government to be able to talk to Moscow, not merely to denounce it.

The press

The Foreign Correspondents' Club of Japan and newspaper unions have spoken out, and other news organisations should do the same. A reporter detained for doing his job is a concern for every reporter, and for every reader who relies on independent reporting from difficult places.

The bigger picture

The detention comes alongside President Vladimir Putin's visit to Etorofu in August and a Chinese delegation's tour of the island this week. Moscow appears intent on demonstrating that it can act against Japanese interests with impunity. Japan's answer

ANALYSIS

should be steady rather than shrill: clear statements of principle, practical demands, and patience. The reporter's safety must come first.

ANALYSIS

If Japan Is to Rethink Its Non-Nuclear Principles or Build Nuclear Submarines, It Must Do So in Daylight

These are among the gravest choices a democracy can make; they deserve full Diet debate, not a quiet change of wording in a security document

By Michael Hayes | Deputy Editor, Politics & Policy

Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi told the Diet on Wednesday that the government would consider nuclear-powered submarines in a concrete and realistic way, and that there was room for consideration of the wording of the three non-nuclear principles. Both statements deserve to be taken seriously, and so does the process by which they are decided.

Two separate questions

The questions are different, and should not be blurred. Nuclear propulsion for submarines does not make them nuclear-armed. It would give the Maritime Self-Defense Force boats with far greater endurance, at great cost and with legal and practical hurdles, including the Atomic Energy Basic Act's restriction to peaceful use. There is a serious case for it and a serious case against.

The non-nuclear principles concern the weapons themselves. Changing the third, on not permitting their introduction, would touch the foundation of Japan's postwar identity as the only country to have suffered atomic attack and a leading voice for disarmament.

The case for openness

Supporters of change argue that the security environment has worsened, that China's arsenal is growing and North Korea's threats are real, and that ambiguity weakens deterrence. Those arguments should be made openly, tested in the Diet and put before voters.

What would be wrong is to change course by revising a sentence in a document drafted by officials and approved by the cabinet, with the public left to discover the implications later. The secret understandings of the past, under which American vessels carrying nuclear weapons called at Japanese ports while governments denied it, damaged public trust for decades. Japan should not repeat that history.

What the government should do

The government should publish the options it is considering and the reasoning behind them. It should hold full debate in the Diet before the security documents are finalised, and consult the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and the survivors of the bombings, whose moral authority is part of Japan's diplomatic strength.

It should also be clear about cost. Nuclear submarines would require shipyards, reactor expertise, fuel arrangements, a regulator and crews trained over years. A decision to build them would shape the defence budget for decades.

A test of democracy

How a country decides such questions says as much about it as what it decides. Ms Takaichi has been candid about her views for years. She should now give the public the same candour about the choices before it, and let them be made in daylight.

ANALYSIS

One Company's Breach Should Never Be Able to Silence the Disaster Warnings of 110 Local Governments

The attack shows the danger of concentration and of storing more data than a warning service needs; the remedy lies in procurement and redundancy

By Ethan Cole | Technology & Science Editor

In a country of earthquakes, typhoons and floods, few public services are more important than warnings. That is why the breach at a disaster email provider, which has led many of the 110 local governments affected to suspend their alerts, deserves more attention than a routine data leak.

The good news

The most urgent warnings are not affected. Emergency alerts broadcast to every mobile phone in an area, the national J-Alert system, sirens,

loudspeakers, television and radio all continue to work. Japan's layered system did what it was designed to do.

The bad news

But the registered email services matter. Many residents, particularly older people and those who do not watch television, rely on them for evacuation information, shelter openings and updates. And because they hold lists of addresses, a breach exposes residents to phishing at the very moment they are anxious about safety.

The deeper problem is concentration. Many local governments chose the same provider, which made sense for cost and convenience. It also meant that one breach could affect hundreds of communities at once. The same pattern appeared earlier this month, when ransomware at a single cloud provider disrupted hundreds of customers.

What should change

First, local governments should be required to maintain an alternative means of sending the same information if their main provider fails, and to test it. The Fire and Disaster Management Agency's request on Wednesday should become a standing rule.

Second, providers should store as little personal data as possible, and protect what they keep with the strongest available measures. A warning service needs to deliver messages, not to accumulate a database that is valuable to criminals.

Third, the national government should set security standards for companies that provide critical services to many local governments, and audit them. Small municipalities cannot be expected to assess the security of their suppliers on their own.

For residents

In the meantime, residents should make sure emergency alerts are enabled on their phones and treat any email claiming to come from a disaster service with suspicion. Criminals are quick to exploit the news.

The goal should be simple: no single breach, anywhere, should be able to leave a town unable to tell its residents where to go when the water rises.

ANALYSIS

Take the Warning About Self-Copying AI Seriously, but Not Literally: The Real Lesson Is About Insecure Devices

The experiments were limited and the timeline uncertain, but the weaknesses they exploited are real and fixable now

By Maya Suzuki | Science & Innovation Desk

A warning from researchers at an AI company that small AI models may soon be able to copy themselves across household devices made headlines around the world this week. It deserves careful reading rather than alarm.

What was shown

The experiments were limited. Researchers ran a small model on cheap television boxes, showed that a mid-sized model could install another model on an unfamiliar device, and found that one large model, guided by an external server, could spread through a test network of eight virtual devices whose security had been deliberately weakened. They said plainly that no fully self-replicating AI yet exists.

What was claimed

The prediction, that small models could reach that ability within months, is an extrapolation from current trends. Such forecasts in AI have sometimes proved too fast and sometimes too slow. Critics, including Britain's former cyber security chief, called the report part technical paper and part hype, and readers should note that warnings about AI risks can also serve the interests of companies that sell AI safety.

Why it still matters

Yet the weaknesses the researchers exploited are not speculative. Cheap internet-connected devices are often sold with weak security, rarely updated and left running for years. The Mirai botnet of 2016 showed what could be done by hijacking such devices with simple, unthinking code. Code that could adapt would be more dangerous.

What to do now

The response does not depend on knowing the exact timeline. Device makers should ship products without default passwords, provide security updates for their

whole working lives and make it easy to disable unneeded connections. Japan's JC-STAR labelling scheme should become the norm for products sold here, and government bodies should buy only labelled devices.

AI developers, for their part, should test whether their models can be used to spread themselves, publish the results and build safeguards against it, whether their models are open or closed.

Households can help by changing passwords, applying updates and replacing devices that are no longer supported.

A sense of proportion

The image of AI spreading like a slime mould through our ovens and televisions is vivid. The practical lesson is mundane: insecure devices are a risk whether or not AI becomes more capable, and fixing them is something we can start on today.

ANALYSIS

The University of Tokyo Was Entitled to Choose Its First Woman President. It Owes Everyone an Explanation of Why

A selection council that overrides a clear staff vote must give reasons; doing so would strengthen, not weaken, the new president

By Naomi Kato | Culture & Society Editor

The choice of Yuko Fujigaki as the first woman to lead the University of Tokyo should be a moment of celebration. In a country where women remain a small minority among professors and university leaders, the symbolism is powerful, and her record as an executive vice-president suggests she is well qualified.

Yet the celebration has been clouded by the way the decision was made. In the advisory vote among faculty and staff, another candidate received roughly twice as many votes. The selection council chose Professor Fujigaki anyway, citing an overall assessment.

The council's right

The council was within its rights. Since national universities became corporations in 2004, staff votes have been advisory, and councils with outside members were created precisely so that they could weigh considerations beyond the preferences of the faculty. A university with a vast budget and a central role in national research needs leadership chosen for more than popularity.

The council's duty

But the right to decide carries a duty to explain. When a council overrides a clear vote, it must say why: what qualities it valued, what it found lacking, how it weighed the candidates. Without that, critics will fill the silence with their own explanations, including the corrosive suggestion that the decision was made on grounds of gender rather than merit.

That suggestion is unfair to Professor Fujigaki, who deserves to begin her term on the strength of her own record. A clear account from the council would protect her better than silence.

What should happen

The council should publish a detailed statement of its reasons, as the education minister has urged. It should explain how it assessed each finalist against the criteria it set. And the university should consider whether its process, which asks staff to vote and then sets their verdict aside, serves anyone well.

The larger goal

Japan needs more women in academic leadership, and decisions that advance that goal should be made with enough transparency to command broad acceptance. The best outcome would be a president who takes office in the university's 150th year with the confidence of a community that understands how she was chosen.

ANALYSIS

A Satellite Switch Is a Lever of War: The Starlink Dispute Holds a Lesson for Japan

Commercial networks offer capabilities governments cannot match quickly, but dependence on them is dependence on someone else's decisions

By Rachel Kim | Washington-Tokyo Liaison

Ukraine's complaint that its access to Starlink has been restricted, and Elon Musk's reply that the American military and the president decide such limits, illustrate a dilemma that reaches far beyond Ukraine.

The value

Since 2022, Starlink has given Ukraine's armed forces a communications network that Russia has struggled to destroy. Its terminals connect units at the front and allow drones to be flown far beyond the line of sight. No government could have built such a capability in weeks; a private company provided it almost at once.

The vulnerability

The same dependence creates a vulnerability. A service that can be switched on can be restricted, and the decision may rest with a company, a foreign government or both. Whatever the reasons behind this week's restrictions, Ukraine learned of them without warning, in the middle of a war.

Japan's interest

Japan should take note. Its Self-Defense Forces, its disaster responders and its remote islands increasingly rely on satellite communications, and the most capable commercial networks are American. The alliance with the United States is the foundation of Japan's security, and co-operation in space is part of it. But even close allies can have different priorities at moments of crisis.

What Japan should do

Japan should diversify. It should maintain its own satellite communications for core military and government needs, use several commercial providers rather than one, and negotiate clear terms on continuity of service in emergencies. It should also invest in domestic capabilities, from launch services to satellite constellations, as companies in Hokkaido and elsewhere are beginning to do.

Rules for a new era

More broadly, governments need rules for an era in which private companies own infrastructure that can decide the course of wars. Who may switch a service off, on whose authority, and with what notice to the people who depend on it, are questions that should be settled before the next crisis, not during it.

Ukraine's soldiers and civilians are paying the price of leaving those questions open. Japan should not wait to learn the same lesson.

EDITORIAL

Today's Numbers

By Kenta Sakamoto | Data & Visualization

28: Days Kazuo Yana served as agriculture minister, the shortest under an LDP government since 2012.

78: Percentage of respondents in an NHK poll who found his explanation unacceptable.

20 MILLION: People who might receive the support payment that accompanies the food tax cut, about 30 per cent of the working population.

110: Local governments reporting leaks or suspended alerts after the attack on a disaster email provider.

3.136 MILLION: Residents' email addresses that may have leaked.

3.7: Per cent rise in American consumer prices in September.

33.23: Yen the Nikkei average fell on Wednesday, its fifth straight loss.

30: The number this year's next typhoon will carry, the first season to reach it since 2013.

1 MILLION: Yen in cash missing from a safe at Omiya Police Station.

140,000: Tons, the size of Oriental Land's Disney Imagination.

70: Years since IBM published the manual for FORTRAN.

MORE INSIDE TODAY

Yana Resigns as Agriculture Minister After 28 Days, and Takaichi Says the Responsibility for Appointing Him Is Hers — Page 1

Japan Summons Russia's Ambassador Over the Detained Hokkaido Shimbun Reporter and Protests That It Has Not Been Told Anything — Page 1

Twenty-Eight Days: How Kazuo Yana's Time in the Cabinet Compares With the Shortest Stays of Recent Decades — Page 2

The Yana Case: From a Remark in Otawara to a Resignation in Nagatacho — Page 2

What a Prime Minister Means by Taking Responsibility for an Appointment, and Why the Phrase Rarely Costs Anything — Page 2

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.

Wednesday's front-page report quoted the agriculture minister, Kazuo Yana, as telling the Budget Committee that his staff had checked with the election commission before hiring buses for supporters. On Wednesday he revised that account, saying only that his staff may have asked the commission how to record the costs; he resigned that evening (Page 1). Wednesday's weather page said the tropical depression near the Marshall Islands was forecast to become a tropical storm by Thursday morning; the Japan Meteorological Agency's latest forecast expects that by Friday morning.

The notes supplied for today's edition give the agriculture minister's name as Yanagi; he is Kazuo Yana. They spell the AI company as Anthrope; it is Anthropic. They say Typhoon No. 29 weakened into a tropical depression; the meteorological agency says it became an extratropical low. They name Shohei Ohtani as the Dodgers' Game 3 starter; Blake Snell starts, with Ohtani as designated hitter. They place Asia University in the Tokyo Metropolitan University League; it is the Tohto University Baseball League. The naming of Mr Yana's successor falls after this edition's deadline.

Items in the notes that could not be confirmed from primary reports are not used, among them remarks by Fumitake Fujita on the prime minister's attendance at the Diet, a statement attributed to the president of the ICC's Assembly of States Parties, the value of startups backed by Tokyo, an overturned fire engine in Ota Ward, chickens loose in Miyagi, a data error at Japan Post, the reported death of an archaeologist, and several sports items.

THE WEEK AHEAD

THURSDAY, OCT. 15: The new agriculture minister is named; NLCS Game 3, 9 a.m.; Climax Series Game 2, 6 p.m.; the Yalu River bridge opens; American retail sales, 9:30 p.m. FRIDAY, OCT. 16: The depression is forecast to become Typhoon No. 30; NLCS Game 4, 9 a.m.; CEATEC closes. OCT. 17 AND 18: Kawagoe Festival. MONDAY, OCT. 19: Keen Sword exercise begins. TUESDAY, OCT. 20: Proposed start of lower house debate on the consumption tax bills; Netflix results. OCT. 22: Jidai Maturi and Kurama Fire Festival. OCT. 24: Japan Series. OCT. 25: Niigata mayoral election. OCT. 27: Oza Game 5, Kofu; Israeli general election. OCT. 29: Autumn garden party; Saizeriya raises prices. OCT. 29 AND 30: Bank of Japan policy meeting. NOV. 1: Gold Glove awards. NOV. 3: American midterm elections.

TYPHOON AND MARINE ADVISORIES

6 a.m. Thursday. No typhoon active. Tropical depression: 10.8N, 160.0E, in the Marshall Islands area, about 1,680 km east of Guam; 1004 hPa; maximum winds 15 m/s, gusts 23 m/s; moving north-west at 20 km/h. Forecast: tropical storm (Typhoon No. 30) by 6 a.m. Friday, 1000 hPa; severe tropical storm by 3 a.m. Sunday, 985 hPa; strong typhoon near the Mariana Islands by 3 a.m. Monday, 965 hPa, 40 m/s; 955 hPa by 3 a.m. Tuesday, heading west-north-west. Guam and Saipan lie inside the possible storm-wind area by early Sunday. No. 29 (Koguma): extratropical since 9 a.m. Wednesday.

Pacific coast of Kanto: the swell from Koguma has subsided. Hokkaido: strong westerly winds; showers possible on the Sea of Japan side; snow possible on the highest peaks. Northern Tohoku: rain in Aomori this morning and Akita this afternoon. Emergencies at sea: 118.

MARKET REFERENCE

New York, Wednesday: Dow Jones Industrial Average 51,621.48, down 48.62; S&P 500 7,718.94, down 86.51; Nasdaq Composite 26,692.87, down 511.51; Philadelphia Semiconductor Index down 4.3 per cent. Ten-year Treasury yield briefly about 5.3 per cent after the inflation data. West Texas Intermediate crude, November, \$95.09 a barrel, up 95 cents; gold, December, \$4,107.90 an ounce, down \$69.40. Dollar 158.26 to 158.36 yen at 5 p.m. Tokyo, Wednesday: Nikkei 225 at 67,744.29, down 33.23; TOPIX 4,096.78, down 13.89; Prime market turnover about 7.45 trillion yen; newly issued ten-year JGB 3.000 per cent. Bank of Japan policy rate: 1.25 per cent. American consumer prices, September: up 3.7

THE JAPAN MORNING POST

Japan-first, alliance-first. Founded in service of accurate coverage of Japan's security, industry, families and culture.

OWNER: Paul Carter | PUBLISHER: WPM Productions

MANAGING EDITOR: Dixon Yan

SENIOR EDITOR, INTERNATIONAL DESK: Jonathan Mercer

POLITICS & POLICY: Michael Hayes, Deputy Editor | William, Senior Political Analyst

JAPAN BUREAU: Aiko Tanaka, Senior Japan Correspondent | Emi Kondo, Society & Local News

ECONOMICS & FINANCE: Yuki Saito | DATA & VISUALIZATION: Kenta Sakamoto

JAPAN-U.S. COVERAGE: Rachel Kim, Washington-Tokyo Liaison

INVESTIGATIONS & LONGFORM: Daisuke Ito

TECHNOLOGY & SCIENCE: Ethan Cole, Editor | Maya Suzuki, Science & Innovation

CULTURE & SOCIETY: Naomi Kato, Editor

SPORTS: Oliver Brooks, Desk Editor | Haruto Yamamoto, Reporter

FOOD & RESTAURANTS: Grace Park | REAL ESTATE & URBAN DEVELOPMENT: Kenji Fukuda

EDITORIAL PAGE: Samantha Ortiz, Editor

PHOTO EDITOR: Hiroshi Nakamura, Tokyo | GRAPHICS DIRECTOR: Claire Reynolds

STAFF CARTOONIST: Taro Suzuki | CROSSWORD: James O'Neill, Editor & Constructor

COPY DESK: Benjamin Lee, Chief | Olivia Martinez, Features

MULTIMEDIA & VIDEO: Akira Watanabe | RESEARCH & ARCHIVE: Hana Ito

PAGE DESIGN & PRODUCTION: Daniel Foster

1-2-3 Otemachi, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo 100-0004 | www.japanmorningpost.com | newsdesk@japanmorningpost.com

SUBSCRIBE TO THE JAPAN MORNING POST

Japan's security, industry, families and culture, reported every morning. Choose the subscription that suits you.

DIGITAL

¥3,900 per month

Full access to the daily edition on web and mobile, the article archive, the crossword and the puzzle archive.

PRINT + DIGITAL

¥6,800 per month

Home delivery of the broadsheet edition every morning, plus everything in the digital subscription.

HOW TO SUBSCRIBE

Online at www.japanmorningpost.com/subscribe, by email to subscriptions@japanmorningpost.com, or by telephone through Reader Relations during business hours.

HOME DELIVERY

Available across the Tokyo metropolitan area and major cities nationwide. Delivery to other areas is by post and arrives the following day.

GIFT SUBSCRIPTIONS

Digital and print subscriptions may be purchased as gifts for any term from one month. The recipient receives a welcome note with the first delivery.

CORPORATE, EDUCATIONAL AND LIBRARY RATES

Available on request for organisations requiring multiple copies or seats. Contact Reader Relations for terms.

CANCELLATION

Subscriptions may be cancelled at any time. Print subscriptions require five business days' notice to stop delivery.

CUSTOMER SERVICE

Reader Relations handles delivery problems, address changes, holiday suspensions and billing queries. subscriptions@japanmorningpost.com

per cent on a year earlier; core up 2.6 per cent.

PHOTOGRAPHS AND MAPS IN THIS EDITION

Front page: Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi at the rostrum of the House of Representatives (file photo, WPM Productions). Typhoons: the typhoon map supplied for this edition. Politics: Kazuo Yana in a campaign image (file photo, WPM Productions). International: smoke beside an airport terminal, a file image supplied for this edition. Economy: the Tokyo Stock Exchange (TG2, CC). Weather: the Japan and United States maps supplied for this edition. Editorial page: cartoon by Taro Suzuki.

Photographs made by employees of the United States government in the course of their duties are in the public domain and are used with credit. Agency news photographs remain copyrighted and are not reproduced.

THE RECORD BOOK

Shortest ministerial stays: Takashi Hasegawa, four days, 1988; Nariaki Nakayama, five days, 2008; Kazuo Yana, 28 days, 2026; Isshu Sugawara, 45 days, and Katsuyuki Kawai, 51 days, both 2019. NHK poll: 78 per cent found the minister's explanation unacceptable; cabinet support 51 per cent. Disaster email attack: 110 local governments; up to 3.136 million addresses. Phishing takedown: about 120,000 fake sites confirmed in 2025, about half built with the seller's tools; more than 100 million fake emails since May; 34 domains seized. GlobalFoundries plant: up to about \$21 billion. China's exports in September: up 36.3 per cent, to \$447.1 billion. Disney Imagination: about 140,000 tons, 1,250 cabins, about 330 billion yen. Hokkaido thoroughbred sales: about 19.09 billion yen, a record. Typhoons: 31 named storms in 2013; the record is 39, in 1967. Cassini: about \$3.26 billion; 33 kilograms of plutonium-238.

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 Aomori, where rain gives way to sunshine. Two symbols separated by a slanting stroke: the first sky, with the second at times, as in Tokyo, cloudy with sunny spells, and Akita, cloudy with some rain. 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 Berlin, six ahead of Moscow, Kyiv, Riyadh and Ankara, five and a half ahead of Tehran, one ahead of Shanghai, 13 ahead of New York, Washington and Cleveland, 14 ahead of Milwaukee and 16 ahead of Los Angeles; Guam is one hour ahead of Japan and Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk two. 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. Japan Poison Information Center, for suspected mushroom poisoning and other emergencies: Osaka, 072-727-2499, 24 hours; Tsukuba, 029-852-9999, 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. Residents whose local disaster email service has been suspended should check their local government's website and make sure the emergency alert setting on their phones is switched on. Anyone who receives an email asking for a password or card number should not reply, and should contact the organisation through its official site.

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 Thursday morning papers and Wednesday's wires and broadcasts: Yomiuri Shimbun, Asahi Shimbun, Nihon Keizai Shimbun, Mainichi Shimbun, Sankei News, the Tokyo Shimbun, the Nihon Nogyo Shimbun, Kyodo News, Jiji Press, NHK, Nippon Television, STV, HBC, KSB, Nihonkai Television, the Hokkaido Shimbun, Nikkan Sports, Shukan Bunshun, AAP, Xinhua, The Associated Press, Reuters, Axios, Al Jazeera, CBS News, ABC News, SBS, TheStreet, the Seoul Economic Daily, Cruise Industry News and Dodgers Digest; on the statements of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, the Fire and Disaster Management Agency, the National Police Agency, the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, the Imperial Household Agency, the Tokyo Metropolitan Board of Education, the Bank of Japan, the Holy See press office, Oriental Land, Microsoft, Seibu Railway and Anthropic; 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

The Japan Morning Post, Volume 2026, Number 287, is published daily by WPM Productions, Tokyo. Subscriptions, delivery and back issues: subscriptions@japanmorningpost.com. Letters to the editor: letters@japanmorningpost.com; letters should include a name, address and daytime telephone number and may be edited. Advertising: advertising@japanmorningpost.com. Corrections are published on this page. The solution to today's crossword appears with tomorrow's puzzle; the solution to Wednesday's is published with today's.

TOMORROW'S EDITION

Friday's edition carries the appointment of the new agriculture minister and the opposition's response; the results of Game 2 in both Climax Series final stages; Game 3 of the NLCS, played this morning; the naming of Typhoon No. 30 and its forecast track towards the Mariana Islands; the opening of the bridge between China and North Korea; the first meeting of Hokkaido's vice-capital council; American retail sales; and the latest on the Hokkaido Shimbun correspondent held in Moscow.

MORE INSIDE TODAY (CONTINUED)

Two Months and Counting: How Pretrial Detention Works in Russia's Espionage Cases — Page 2

The Detention: Who Said What — Page 2

Depression Near the Marshall Islands Set to Become Typhoon No. 30, the First Season to Reach That Number Since 2013 — Page 3

The Depression at a Glance — Page 3

Late-October Typhoons Have Reached Honshu Before: Lan, Tokage and Hagibis Show Why Forecasters Keep Watching — Page 4

Budget Committee, Day Two: A Retraction in the Morning, Submarines and Support Payments at Midday, and a Resignation by Nightfall — Page 5

How the Countries Takaichi Cited Help Low-Paid Workers: Tax Credits That Pay Out, Benefits That Top Up Wages — Page 6

Houthis Vow to Keep Striking Saudi Airports and Oil Sites and Warn Washington Against Stepping In, After Aramco Offices in Dhahran Are Hit — Page 7

China and North Korea Open the New Yalu River Bridge Today, Twelve Years After It Was Finished — Page 8

Nikkei Gives Up a 630-Yen Morning Rally and Slips 33 Yen for a Fifth Straight Loss as ASML Results Weigh on Chip Stocks — Page 9

Oriental Land Names Japan's First Disney Cruise Ship the Disney Imagination, a 140,000-Ton Liner Due to Sail From Tokyo in Spring 2029 — Page 10

From the Morris Worm to Mirai: Self-Copying Programs Are as Old as the Internet, and Home Gadgets Have Been Their Favourite Prey — Page 11

1932: J.R.D. Tata Flies the Mail From Karachi to Bombay in a Single-Engine Puss Moth, the First Flight of What Became Air India — Page 12

2018: Microsoft Co-Founder Paul Allen Dies at 65, Leaving a Legacy in Software, Brain Science and the Discovery of the Battleship Musashi — Page 13

Today's Extremes — Page 14

United States: Rain Spreads Across the Upper Midwest and Showers Cool Washington, While Los Angeles Heats to 89 Under a Heat Advisory — Page 15

When the Leak Comes From Inside: How Japan's Law Against Bid-Rigging Involving Public Officials Works — Page 16

Principals Say Teachers Have Enough Time to Prepare Lessons; Most Teachers Disagree, Tokyo Survey Finds — Page 17

The Climax Series After Game 1 — Page 18

Hirose Beats Ito in 94 Moves in Kobe to Level the Oza Match at 2-2 and Force a Deciding Game in Kofu — Page 19

They Buried It. It Kept Computing. Seventy Years of FORTRAN, and What a 'Dead' Language Teaches a Country Afraid of Its Old Machines — Page 20

Takaichi's Resignation Problem Was Not Yana's Remarks but the Week She Spent Defending Him — Page 21

www.japanmorningpost.com | newsdesk@japanmorningpost.com | 1-2-3 Otemachi, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo 100-0004

© 2026 WPM Productions | Page 23 of 23